



National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

Prevention Strategies

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IMPROVING POLICY | BUILDING CAPACITY | EDUCATING OPINION LEADERS

Assessing Adequacy of Existing Efforts

- **Scale** – existing programs lack resources to serve all households seeking assistance
- **Eligibility** – existing programs may screen out populations most likely to become homeless
- **Depth of assistance** – financial assistance limits inadequate to prevent homelessness
- **Targeting/outreach** – households at greatest risk may not seek assistance

**Providing homelessness &
eviction prevention assistance
is not the same as preventing
homelessness!**

Understanding Pathways/Target Population

- How do homeless individuals, youth, and families find their way to your shelter program?
 - Where did they live prior to coming to shelter?
 - What programs were they involved with?
 - What programs did they seek help from?
 - What are their demographic characteristics? (Age, family composition, income, etc.)
 - What neighborhoods did they reside in?

Improving Prevention Efforts

- Improve Targeting
 - Revisit eligibility standards – incentivize working with households least likely to succeed
 - Incorporate outreach strategies
 - Expand services offered
 - Develop partnerships with agencies serving high-risk populations (early head start, child welfare, TANF)
 - Move intervention closer to front door of shelter system
 - Deepen the financial and case management assistance provided, tailor assistance

Revisit Eligibility Standards

- Secondary tenants
- Poor or no rental history
- Received assistance in the past
- Prior homeless episode
- No employment or immediate source of income
- *Adjust performance expectations accordingly!*

Incorporate Outreach Efforts

- Utilize your knowledge of ‘pathways to homelessness,’ demographics, and systems individuals and families touch before entering shelter to target outreach.
 - WIC, Head Start/Early Head Start, TANF, Child Welfare, Jails, Foster Care, Police
 - Neighborhood based service centers and churches in high impact neighborhoods

Expand Service Offerings

- Offer rapid re-housing services from unsustainable housing placements as a prevention activity
- Home visiting/family mediation
- Accept referrals from sheriffs, courts, and landlords
- Build or enhance capacity to engage in landlord mediation and provision of legal assistance
- Service brokerage for those with more intensive needs

Develop Key Partnerships

- What are the organizations/agencies individuals and families turn to before entering shelter? How can they be helpful identifying at risk families/individuals earlier?
- What are the organizations/agencies individuals and families need supportive services from to stabilize? How can services be expedited?
- Developing a win-win framework: meeting service goals across service sectors
- *Demonstrate outcomes!!!!!!*

Interventions Closer to ‘Front-Door’

- Ensure prevention and re-housing assistance resources are available at shelter intake (Washington, DC)
- Interventions at ‘crisis points’ or junctures in individuals’/families’ pathways to shelter (second or third move, motel stay, eviction filing, utility cut-off, birth of child in overcrowded home)

Deepen & Differentiate Assistance Provided

- Offer no more than, but as much needed, to help individual/family sustain housing or relocate to new housing
- One-size-fits all package of financial assistance and case management may be poor use of resources
- Check values/cultural relevancy/approach to work
- Develop engagement skills, ability to use voluntary approach with individuals/families
- Develop rich service network for ongoing supports

Next Steps: Reducing Vulnerability

- Work to reduce affordable housing gap in your community (income and housing side)
- Address social safety net gaps –
 - Discharge planning – ex-offenders, youth and adults in institutionalized settings, foster care
 - Income/supports available to at-risk populations (mental health, substance abuse treatment, TANF, unskilled workers)