

# Operating a Low Barrier Crisis Response System



AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE  
**HOME MATTERS**  
 IN FLORIDA



# Operating a Low Barrier Crisis Response System

System-level Perspective

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Homeless Services Network  
of Central Florida

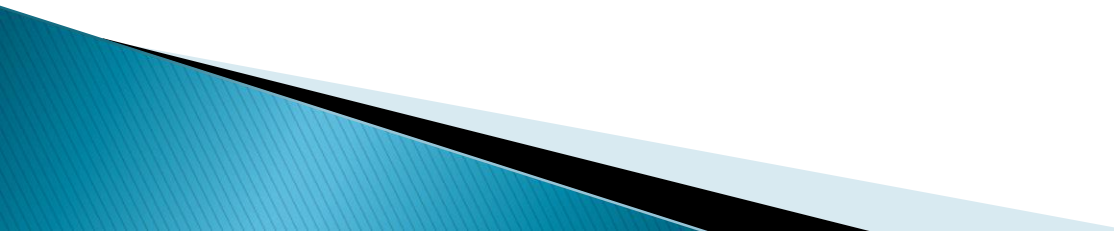
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# Central Florida

- ▶ Tri-County Regional Complexity
- ▶ Success of “Rethink Homelessness” Public Relations Campaign
- ▶ Cross Sectoral Engagement (PPP)
- ▶ Large Private Gift
- ▶ Massive Reallocation in 2015
- ▶ Pulse Effect
- ▶ System Disruption



# Movement to Low Barrier System

- ▶ Lead Agency centralized and streamlined resource allocation
  - ▶ Developed Robust Street Outreach
  - ▶ Chronic Pilot Program Success
  - ▶ Biggest Shelter jumped on the bandwagon
  - ▶ Jurisdictions backed best practices
  - ▶ LGBTQ+ advocates engaged service providers
  - ▶ Recent embrace of shelter diversion/rapid exit strategies
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# Challenges to Low Barrier Transition

Philosophical opposition

Technical gap

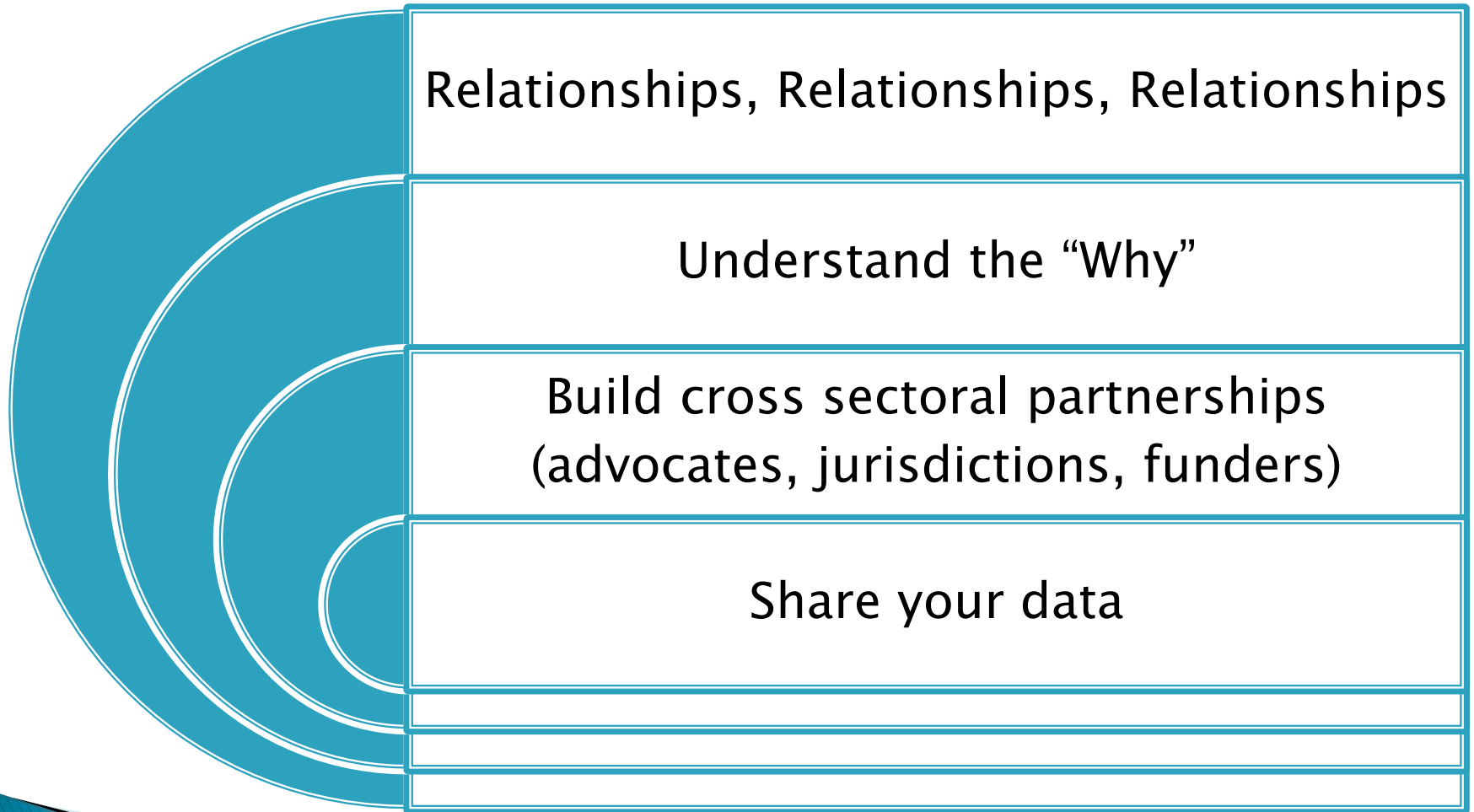
Facility capacity

Special populations (Youth, LGBTQ, complex families)

Funding disincentive



# Low Barrier Apologetics



# Low Barrier Apologetics



Creative redundancy with housing first & low barrier key messages

Support the early adopters

Nurture and sustain collaborative ethos

ABC (Always Be Closing)

Three empty rectangular boxes are located at the bottom of the right-hand column, below the 'ABC' box.

# Resources

- ▶ NAEH Emergency Shelter Learning Series  
<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/emergency-shelter/>
- ▶ LGBTQ and Shelter Best Practices  
<https://forge-forward.org/>
- ▶ Southern Legal Council (Gainesville): Training on Inclusive Housing and Homeless Services for LGBTQ Individuals [www.southernlegal.org](http://www.southernlegal.org)





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## *A Housing First Shelter*

# Agenda

**Housing First Defined**



**Coalition for the  
Homeless of Central  
Florida**



**Housing First  
Outcomes**

# Agenda

- Housing First Defined
- Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida
  - Overview
  - Housing First Journey
  - Challenges
- Housing First Outcomes

# Housing First

## Housing Readiness (or Treatment First)

A model in which an individual or household must address other issues that may have led to the episode of homelessness prior to entering housing.

## Housing First (NOT Housing Only)

A low-barrier approach to quickly and successfully connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent **housing** without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.

## Housing First Model

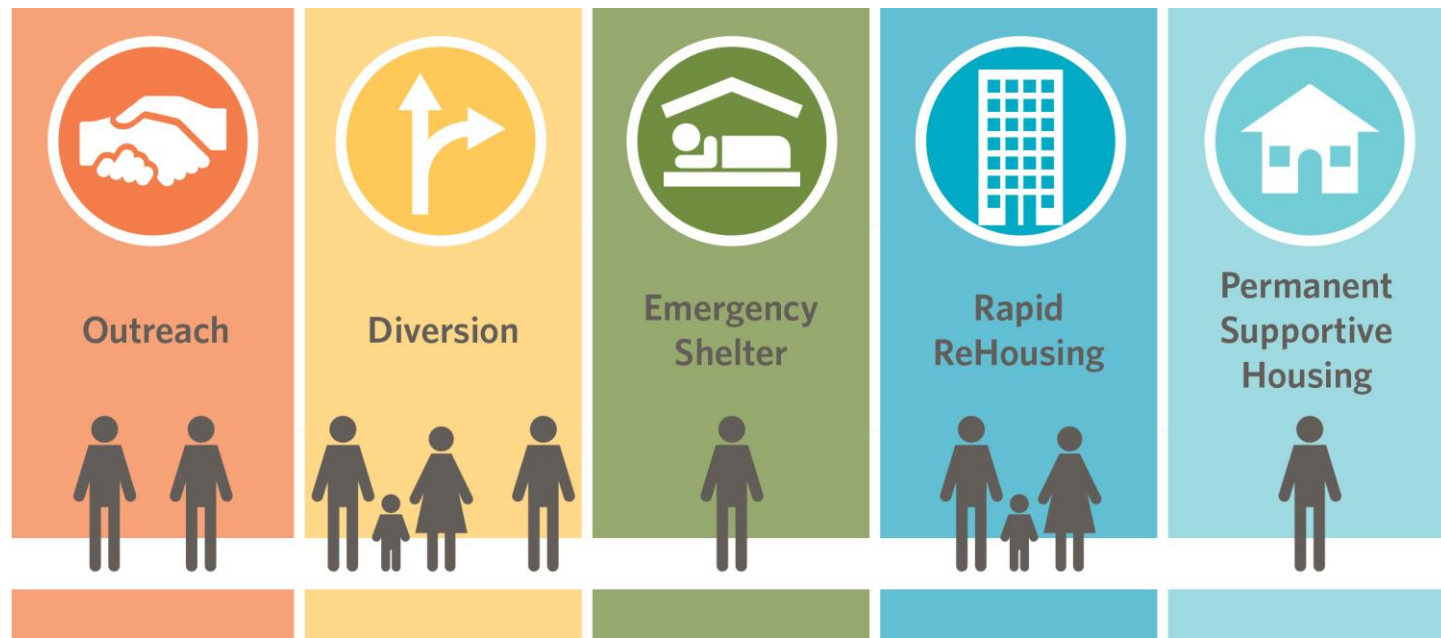
### Underlying Theory and Values:

- Placing homeless individuals directly into permanent, supportive housing gives them hope for their future.



# Housing-Focused System

*as part of the Housing First Approach*



# The Role of Emergency Shelters in Housing First

## They are a place to:

- Serve the most in need
- Facilitate self-resolution of their housing crisis
- Rehouse people quickly
- Eliminate readiness expectations
- Reduce unsheltered homelessness
- Focus on housing search and resources to help people stabilize once housed
- Connect people to mainstream and community resources
- Provide a temporary shelter for people who want housing
- Encourage independence

# The Role of Emergency Shelters in Housing First

## They are not a place to:

- Fix/heal “broken” people
  - Substance abuse/mental health treatment/compliance
  - Budgeting/savings/financial literacy
  - Education/employability classes
  - Parenting and life skills
- Solve problems for our guests
- People to “shop” for desires, encourage an entitlement mentality
- Promote dependency
- Allow people who interested in non-housing activities to linger
- Charge program fees



# Coalition for the Homeless: Overview

- Housing First Shelter serving more than 600 men, women and children daily
- Case management focused on housing and income
- Low barrier
- Connect guests to mainstream benefits and community resources
- Use of Coordinated Entry and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

# Coalition for the Homeless: Overview

- Last year over **1,500** guests moved from one of our programs to permanent housing
- Served over **250,000** nutritious meals; including nearly 45,000 through our community meal serve program
- Provided services to over **100** unsheltered homeless individuals daily through our drop-in services
- On-site DCF licensed child care center able to serve up to **38** children per day with hopes to expand services to the community

# Coalition for the Homeless: Programs

- **Outreach:** Since January 2018, 43 guests have entered our programs through outreach efforts around perimeter of campus
- **Diversion:** Over 1,200 successful diversions since February 2018
- **Community Health Initiative:** Since April 2018, we've served over 1,500 people
- **Center for Women and Families:** 240 Bed residential program; single women; single women with children; single men with children; families
- **Men's Service Center:** 250 Bed residential program for single men

# The Coalition's Progression from **Housing Readiness to Housing First**

- Lowered barriers
- Recognized role in the homeless services system
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Moved from in-house waiting list to Coordinated Entry System (CES) and Shelter Prioritization list for families
- Diversion Services
- Bridge Housing

# Housing-Focused Shelter Diversion Services

- Launched community's first-ever Diversion program in February 2018
  - Assists guests in exploring housing alternatives by providing advocacy, referrals and limited resources
  - Each guest meets with a Housing Counselor prior to referral to Intake
- Goals:
    - Ensures shelter beds are being used by those most in need
    - Prevents those already in crisis from having to enter the homeless services system
  - Over 1,200 successful diversions in 15 months, including 611 exits to Permanent Housing

# Fully Embracing Housing First

Create consistent message from intake to housing

Replace visual messaging agency-wide

Change case management service delivery

Enhance/expand landlord relationships

Progressive training from frontline staff to Board of Directors to ensure success

Education of homeless services community, funders, and partners

# Housing First as a best practice is only effective if fully utilized.

- Hybrid approach is confusing for marketing/development/program services
- Programs must be intentional and direct
- No evidence that readiness services assist with a guest finding or retaining housing
- Shelters should not be “comfortable,” they are not home
- Sets the housing expectation from entry to exit
- Need to eliminate any distractions that could deviate from the target of housing

# Implementation Challenges at the Shelter Level

- Lack of affordable housing
  - Funding for supportive services
  - Staff and Board buy-in
- Security
  - Client choice vs rent-reasonableness
  - Integrating gender identity needs
    - Showers
    - Restroom facilities



# Housing First Outcomes

1. Number or percent of guests who exit to permanent housing – both subsidized and unsubsidized
2. Number or percent of guests who maintain or increase their income
3. Length of Stay
4. Recidivism



THANK YOU!

*For more information, please contact:*  
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**CARRFOUR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

**Operating a Low Barrier Crisis  
Response System**  
***Permanent Supportive Housing***

**Florida Housing Coalition  
Statewide Conference, Orlando, Florida  
August 27, 2019**





## Carrfour Supportive Housing

1398 SW 1st Street, 12th Floor, Miami, FL 33135,

Tel (305) 371-8399 Fax (305) 371-1376

[www.carrfour.org](http://www.carrfour.org)



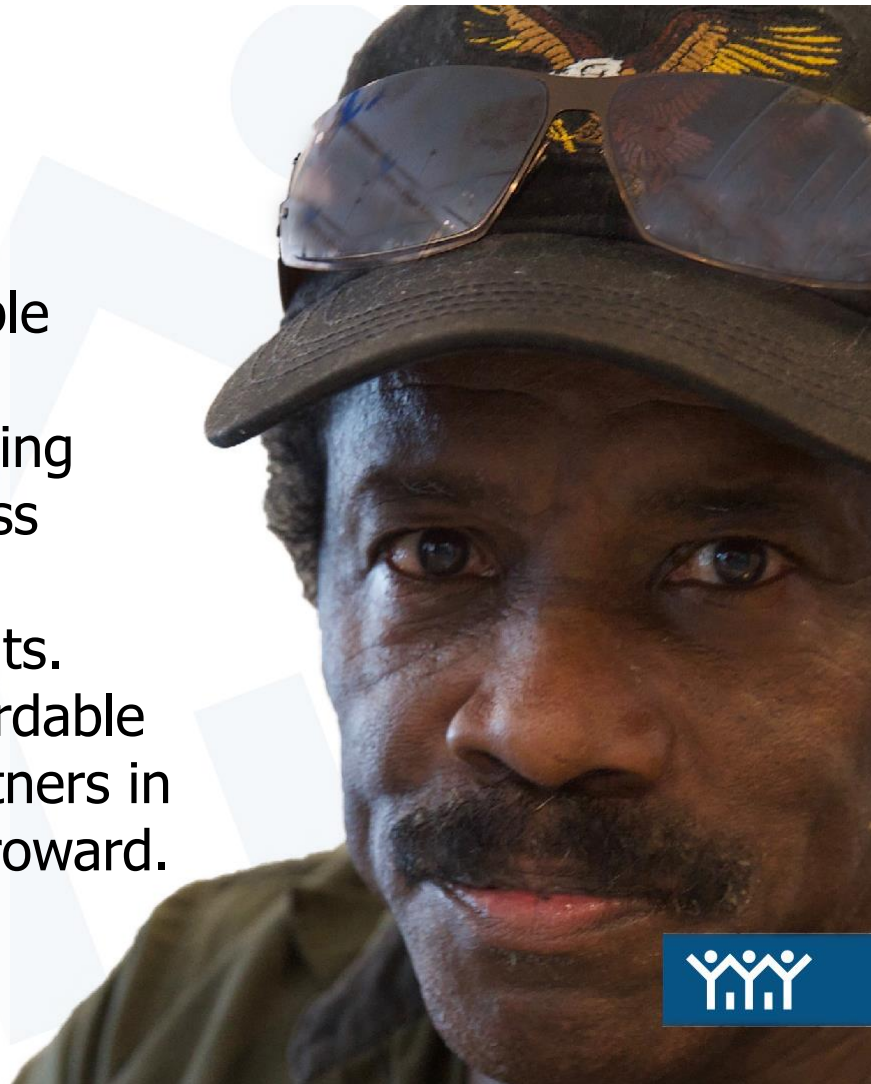
## WHO IS CARRFOUR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

- Nonprofit organization established in 1993 by the Homeless Committee of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.
- Develops, operates and manages innovative housing communities for individuals and families in need through a unique approach combining affordable housing with comprehensive, on-site supportive services.
- As the leading not-for-profit provider of supportive housing in Florida, Carrfour has supplied homes for more than 15,000 formerly homeless men, women and children.



## CARRFOUR TODAY

- Develop and manage 1,892 affordable units.
- 915 are Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) set aside for formerly homeless individuals and families.
- Currently serving over 5,000 residents.
- Developing more than 200 new affordable housing units with not for profit partners in Melbourne, West Palm Beach and Broward.







## MISSION

Carrfour's mission and vision is to **confront homelessness** by developing affordable housing and providing **supportive services** as a pathway to self-sufficiency. We are guided by a vision where everyone has safe and decent housing and is self-reliant.



## **WHO MAKES PSH SUCCESSFUL?**

- **Supportive Service Team**
- **The Property Management Team**
- **The Residents**
- **The Community**





## COMPONENTS OF PSH

- Resident pays no more than 30 percent of income for rent and utilities.
- Resident has a lease.
- Services are flexible.
- Services are resident-driven they write their story.
- Services are voluntary.
- Level of services and need changes over time.
- Community integration.



## HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLES

- Safe and affordable housing.
- All people can achieve housing stability in permanent housing; supports may look different.
- Everyone is “housing ready”.
- Improved quality of life, health, mental health, and employment can be achieved through housing.
- Right to determination, dignity and respect.
- Configuration of housing and services based on participants needs and preferences.



## WHO IS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES?

- On-site social services team includes Program Director, Assistant Director, Service Coordinators, Peer Specialist, and Waitlist & Intake Manager
- 65 employees under the direction of the Vice President of Resident Services
- Manage over \$8 million funding through the HUD CoC grants in Miami
- Specializes in working with residents with complex needs
- Coordinate resident councils
- Provides on site services to residents
- All service are voluntary
- All services are driven by the resident –they write their story and we support



# CARRFOUR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

**Carrfour helps residents achieve self-sufficiency and success by offering an array of supportive services, including:**

## **Referrals/Advocacy:**

- ☐ Mental health and medical services, legal assistance, recovery support, transportation.

## **Life Skills:**

- ☐ Balancing a checkbook, grocery shopping, simple cooking or time management.

## **Job Search and Placement:**

- ☐ Clothing for interviews, bus passes, uniforms, tools.

## **Children and Youth Programming:**

- ☐ Social skill building activities, tutoring, family therapy, leadership skill building.



## WHO IS CROSSROADS MANAGEMENT LLC?

- Created in 2007 as a not-for-profit –wholly-owned subsidiary of Carrfour.
- Operates and manages 23 properties
- 70 employees under the direction of the Vice President of Operations
- Full-service management company-specializing in management of supportive housing units
- Acts as a third party manager for other not-for profits
- Specializes in the complex compliance issues related subsidies programs including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME, CoC, Section 8, VASH, Legacy Shelter Plus Care, SRO, CDBG, Surtax, SAIL, HOPWA, Veteran's Affairs and Neighborhood Stabilization Program.
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## WHY DID WE CREATE CROSSROADS?

- Frustration with the lack of expertise and capacity to navigate the complexity of complex subsidies
- Resulting in operating deficits and unbilled eligible expenses
- Not sensitive to the needs and challenges of residents with special needs
- Emphasis on screen out versus screen in
- Lack of coordination between onsite services staff
- Not appropriately trained and/or unwilling to support our mission and values



## What are the primary objectives of CROSSROADS?

- Manage affordable housing developments efficiently and effectively using sound management principles and best industry practices taking into account the requirements of the owners and partners.
- Provide value of expertise to enhance management of affordable housing units.
- Coordinate management services with applicable case management services to further the mission and goals of the specific development.
- Our overall goals will be driven by the needs of our clients/residents and our partners.





## COORDINATING WITH PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

- All staff are **CROSS TRAINED**
- Shared goals on performance measures (housing stability is core value).
- Shared responsibilities on decision making.
- Tenant rent collection reviewed together monthly.
- Monthly resident meetings.
- Screen in versus screen out.





## SHARED PERFORMANCE GOALS

- The Team (Property Management & Services) will ensure that vacancies are reported and filled promptly reducing vacancy to less than 3% at any given time, meet monthly to ensure that rent is paid on time, rent collections is (95%) or higher. The maintenance issues reported must be addressed (1) emergencies have to be resolve immediately and (2) the routine request must be resolve no later than 48 hours after the request.
- To strengthen the collaboration between Property Management and Services teams, health and safety of families and the community, the PD and PM will be working together to visit the families, reviewing the facilities, providing the necessary services to ensure the well-being of families and the community as a whole."



# ROLE OF PROPERTY MANAGER AND PROGRAM MANAGER

## **Property Management**

- Eligibility Screening
- Lease Signing
- Rent Collection
- Lease Enforcement
- Repairs/Maintenance
- Compliance
- Asset Management

## **Program Management**

- Case Management
- Compliance with the lease
- Increasing household income
- Employment services
- Housing stability
- Grant management
- Community activities



## WHO DO WE SERVE IN PSH?

In 2018 we served, 3,329 homeless individuals with disabling conditions. The demographics of these individuals include:

- 32% were chronically homeless
- 73% had annual income below \$10,000
- 47% had no income upon referral to Carrfour
- 61% were male and 39% were female
- 41% were between 35 -54 year's old
- 39% had been diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness
- 53% had co-occurring disorders



## RESIDENTS RESPONSIBILITY

**Housing first removes barriers to obtaining housing, but a resident still has to legally abide by a lease.**

**Residents still responsible for:**

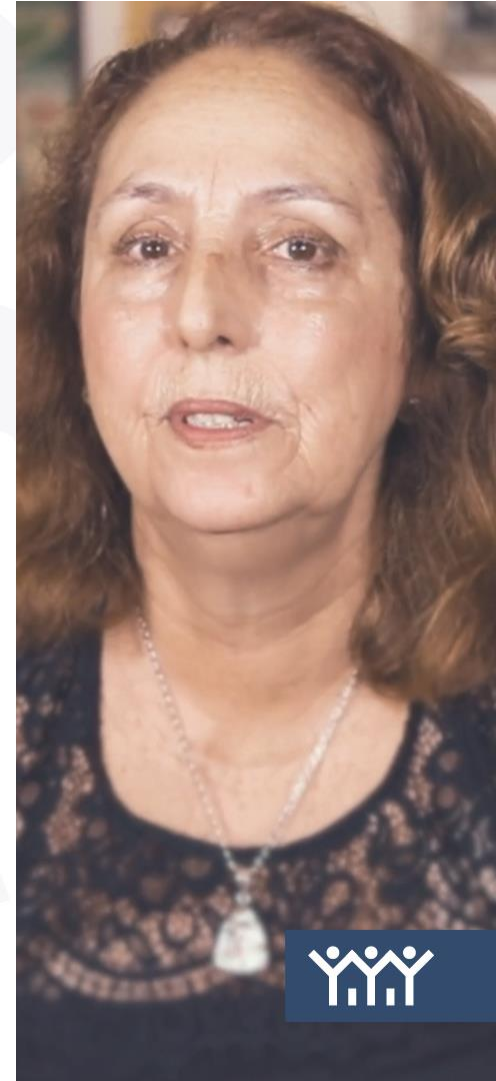
Rent payments


No criminal activity on site

Must be able to live harmoniously in a community

**When residents do not abide by the lease, give them the opportunity to rectify the circumstances (i.e. offering substance abuse services, mental health services, behavior modification, payment plan, etc.).**

**Once we exhaust all possibilities then we recommend alternative housing or request an eviction.**





# **WORKING WITH THE COORDINATED ENTRY & ASSESSMENT PROCESS**



## **How to work with COORDINATED ENTRY PROCESS?**

- **One point of contact-Waitlist & Intake Manager**
- **Participates in all ByNameList Meetings**
- **Strong relationships with PHA and CoC**
- **Manages & tracks referral to point of lease up**
- **Works with multiple subsidies and advocates to expedite all referral, inspections, and move-authorizations**
- **Helping residents move up through strong relationship with PHA**





## **MAKING COORDINATED ENTRY WORK FOR YOU**

- Be at the table.
- Advocate for your target population.
- Attend the CoC meetings.
- Understand the CoC and HUD Priorities.
- Help develop those priorities.
- Understand your role in the CoC.





# QUESTIONS?







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we build community.