# CoC 101: A Guide for PHAs

## August 26, 2013

# Overall Objectives

- Review the core purpose of a Continuum of Care
- Review the functional elements of a Continuum of Care's system
- Understand how to partner

# Continuum of Care: The People

*Continuum of Care (CoC)* means the group organized to carry out the responsibilities required under the CoC Interim Rule and that is composed of representatives of various organizations to the extent these groups are represented within the geographic area and are available to participate, including:

- Nonprofit homeless providers
- Victim service providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Governments
- Businesses
- Advocates
- Public housing agencies
- School districts
- Social service providers

- Mental health agencies
- Hospitals
- Universities
- Affordable housing developers
- Law enforcement
- Organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans
- Homeless and formerly homeless persons

# Context

## CoC Program Interim Rule

- Implements the CoC Program
- The major provisions relate to how to establish and operate a CoC, how to apply for funds under the program, and how to use the funds for projects approved by HUD.

## CoC Program

- Funding for PH (PSH and RRH), SSO, TH, HMIS, and Homelessness Prevention (for HPCs only)

## CoC

- Planning body for a defined geographic area
- Establish and operate a system to prevent and end homelessness for the defined geographic area
- Apply for CoC grants

**HEARTH Act**

Streamlines HUD's homeless grant programs by consolidating the SHP, S+C, and SRO grant programs into one grant program: the Continuum of Care program.

# CoC Program Competition

- Annual application to HUD
  - Reports needs, resources, project performance
  - Requests funding for specific projects
    - Transitional Housing
    - Permanent Housing: Permanent Supportive Housing
    - Permanent Housing: Rapid Rehousing
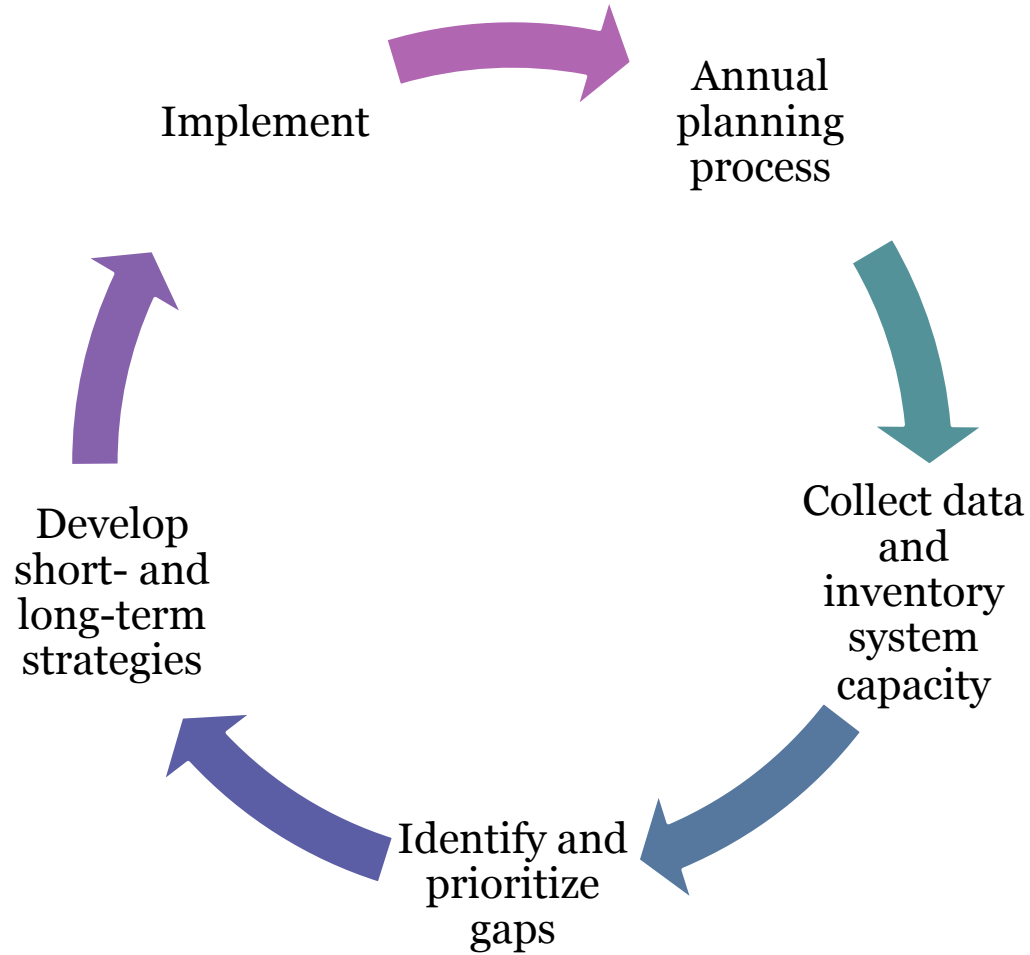    - Supportive Services
    - HMIS

# Why is a CoC Important?

- Develop proactive solutions rather than reactive stop-gaps
- Coordinate targeted homeless resources and mainstream resources for a more efficient and effective system
- Identify common goals for which to advocate
- Increase community "buy-in" and access to mainstream resources
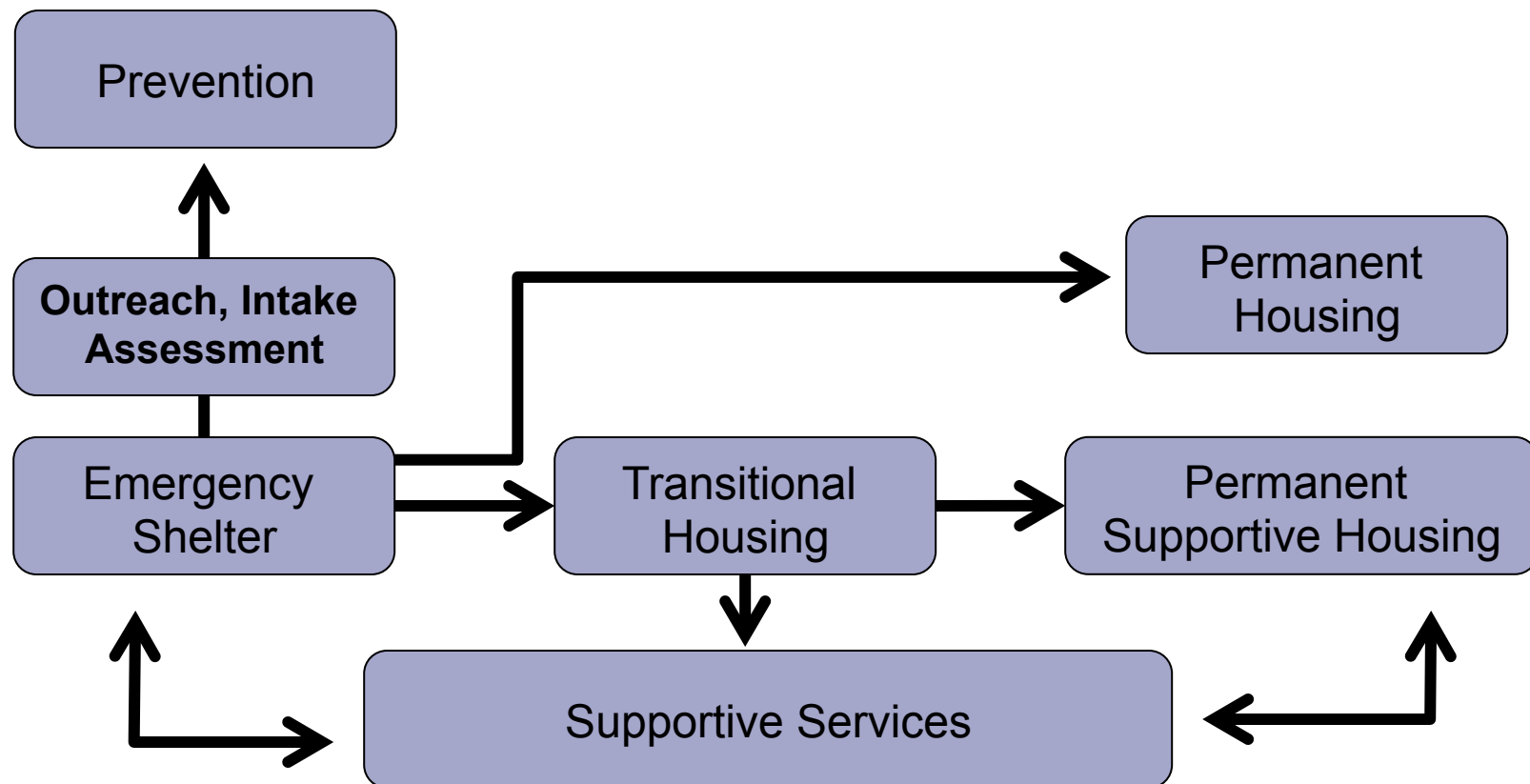
# CoC Planning Cycle

# Homeless Persons

## HUD defines "homeless" as:

- **Category 1 – Literally Homeless**

- Category 2 – Imminent Risk of Homelessness

- Category 3 – Homeless under Other Federal Statutes

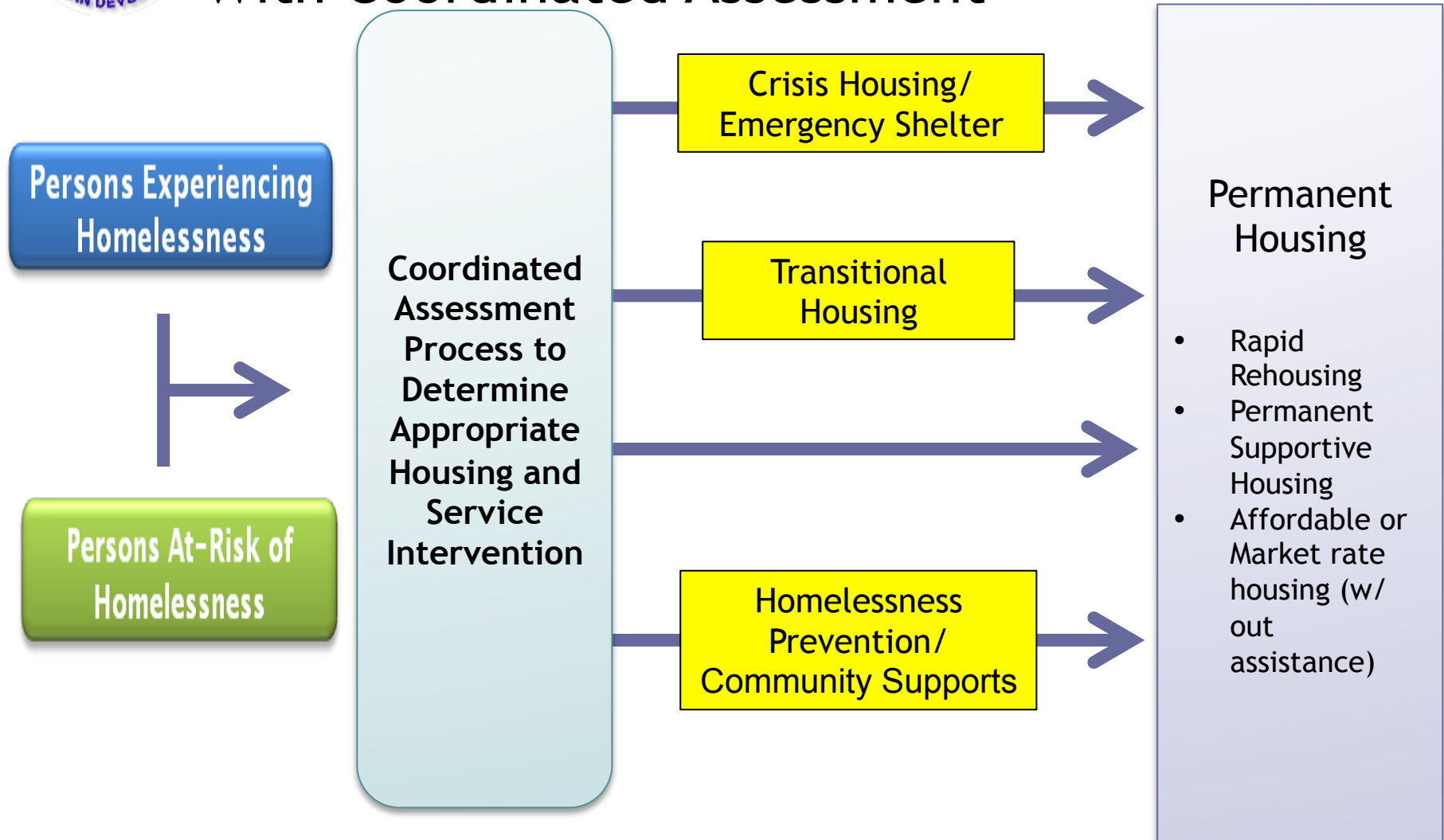- **Category 4 – Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence**

# Housing and Service Intervention: Pre-Coordinated Assessment

```
Prevention
   ↑
Outreach, Intake
Assessment
   ↑                                              Permanent
   │                                              Housing
Emergency ──────→ Transitional ──────→ Permanent
Shelter            Housing              Supportive Housing
   ↑                   ↓                      ↑
   └──────→ Supportive Services ←──────┘
```

# Housing and Service Intervention: With Coordinated Assessment

**Persons Experiencing Homelessness**

**Persons At-Risk of Homelessness**

**Coordinated Assessment Process to Determine Appropriate Housing and Service Intervention**

Crisis Housing/ Emergency Shelter

Transitional Housing

Homelessness Prevention/ Community Supports

Permanent Housing

- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Affordable or Market rate housing (w/ out assistance)

# Prevention

Assisting individuals and households at risk of homelessness to maintain their housing by providing housing relocation and stabilization services and/or short-term emergency financial assistance

Examples:

- One-time or limited emergency rental assistance to prevent eviction
- Financial counseling to handle housing crises
- Landlord-tenant mediation
- Legal services

# Outreach and Intake Assessment

Services target the most vulnerable of the homeless population who are often unable or unwilling to accept emergency shelter services

Examples:

- Street outreach to people residing in parks, campgrounds, and places not fit for human habitation
- Mobile health care
- Street outreach
- Hotlines

# Emergency Services

First stop; often the point of entry into the homeless system

## Examples:

- Congregate building for households with children
- Congregate building for homeless single adults
- Hotel and motel vouchers
- Short-stay apartments
- Soup kitchens or drop-in day centers

# Supportive Services

Supportive services are those services needed for a person to move towards self-sufficiency and independent living

## Examples:

- Job readiness and job skills training
- Benefits counseling
- Housing search and placement services
- Substance abuse, mental health, and health care services
- Family reunification services

# Transitional Housing and Services

Interim placement for persons or households who are not ready for or who do not have access to permanent housing. Opportunity for clients to gain the personal and financial stability needed to transition to and maintain permanent housing.

Example:

- 24-month housing program with supportive services provided on-site, including recovery services, life skills training, and mental health counseling for individuals fleeing domestic violence

# Permanent Housing

Permanent affordable housing is long-term, safe, decent, and affordable housing for individuals and households

Examples:

- Rehabilitation of existing rental housing into affordable housing units
- Housing vouchers
- Mainstream Housing; rental and homeownership
- Tenant Based Rental Subsidies
- Project Based Subsidies
- Reunification with families

# Rapid Rehousing

Rental assistance combined with supportive services aimed to help individuals and families attain and retain permanent housing with limited stays in homelessness

Example:

- HPRP; ESG; CoC
- Financial assistance in the form of short/medium term rental assistance, security deposits, first/last months rent
- Services tailored to the needs of the tenant, including housing search and placement, landlord negotiations, case management, legal services...

# Permanent Supportive Housing

Combines housing assistance and supportive services; supportive services can be provided onsite or through partnering agencies, depending on individual and community needs

Example:

- The use of tenant-based rental assistance to lease one-bedroom units in scattered sites for veterans who are homeless and have co-occurring substance use and mental illnesses

# PHA & CoC Partnerships

All PHA efforts to end homelessness are enhanced when implemented in partnership with other organizations.

PHA resources are precious- use them to leverage others.

Each of the ideas in these slides is being implemented somewhere in the country- they are possible to replicate!

# Ways to Partner

## 1. Establish Homeless Preferences

Homelessness and waitlists don't mix well.

- Link to referrals from partners that can provide housing-focused services (housing search and case management).
- To help those most in need, identify candidates through a data match and/or a vulnerability registry.

➢ Reduces time people are homeless.

➢ Increases utilization rates.

➢ Increases housing stability

# Ways to Partner

## 2. Move-up Strategy Implementation

Establish a preference that would allow for a "move up" strategy

- Identify persons or families in PSH that meet criteria: no longer need supportive services to remain stably housed but need affordable housing

➢Helps a formerly homeless person stay stably housed.
➢Opens a PSH slot.

# Ways to Partner

## 3. Screen "In"

Many homeless people are screened out because of past behaviors.

- Adopt screening criteria that mirrors the federal requirements for the HCV program.
- Consider the provision of services as a mitigating circumstances for criminal records.

➢ Replaces complex screening procedures with more effective risk mitigation: supportive services.

➢ Creates stable communities by reducing recidivism.

# Ways to Partner

## 4. Streamline Application Processes

Navigating multi-layered application and lease-up processes can be very challenging when living outside, in a shelter or in a car.

- Train providers on application requirements so that they can bring in completed forms with documentation.
- Allow for flexible intake times rather than strict appointments.

➢ Reduces time people are homeless.
➢ Reduces time wasted on "no shows."

# Ways to Partner

## 5. Create an Eviction Prevention Program

People with subsidy are at least half way to stability and may need services to help them remain in housing.

- Connect existing prevention programs with PH and HCV programs.
- Establish direct communication channels between property management staff and service providers.

➢Prevents homelessness.

➢Reduces costly evictions.

➢Improves morale for staff who don't want to evict but need help keeping families housed.

# Other Promising Practices

6. Connect applicants with security deposit assistance to reduce delays in lease-up.

7. Project-base vouchers to create supportive housing with on-site services.

# Additional Resources

- Look out for future webinars with additional information about PHA and CoC partnership.
- To find a local CoC visit hudhre.info and search "CoC Maps"