

RRH Series Session 1
Equity as a Foundation

0:00:02.9 Michelle Williams: For joining. We are so excited to have all current 476 participants joining our session today. This is amazing. We're asking when you come in, you are not muted, so you will need to mute yourself as you come in. Little bit of too much information got out there in the world for everyone, so please mute yourself as you come in, you can do your introduction in the chat 'cause we'd love to know where now our 527 participants are from. This is wonderful. We're gonna give everybody a chance to kinda get in the room. Again, your phones are not muted when you come in, so you will need to mute yourself. Mute is the top left button, is what I'm seeing someone said. Yep, it is top left. Great. All right, you can introduce yourself in the chat.

[background conversation]

0:01:36.2 MW: If you are called in and you're not on mute, you'll need to mute your line. You'll have to do it yourself, we're not able to do it from our end. Mute is in the top left. I think it... Is it the phone or the speaker Cherita that...

[background conversation]

0:02:01.4 MW: You can just mute yourself on your phone too that's the option, just use the mute button on your phone. So when you come into the room, you are not muted. Please mute yourself when you come in, so we can make sure you can hear all of our wonderful presenters today. All right. Very good, lots of folks putting in their intros. Wonderful. I'm gonna give it one more minute and then we're gonna get started. All right. Again, once you enter the room, if you're new coming in, you are not muted, you'll need to mute your phone. And then you can do your introduction in the chat. We'll see your name and where you're from. Again, you're not muted, so you'll need to mute your phone. Okay. All right, we're gonna jump right in and get started today.

0:03:37.8 MW: Welcome everyone to the Rapid Rehousing Roundtable Discussion series. This is a series of five candid conversations with Homeless Service System providers, advocates and people with lived expertise, in which we're seeking to identify, imagine, and increase trends that support innovation in Rapid Rehousing Services programs and the development of best practices in the community. So please mute yourself as you come in, and we're gonna move into this. So each conversation in this series is a hosted discussion amongst the specially invited small group, as well as a question and answer discussion with you all as participants and the broader audience. Over the course of the next five weeks, we will cover equity as a foundation, assertive engagement, landlord engagement, and unit acquisition, rapid exit and rapid resolution, and finally, innovation and rapid rehousing. All of the sessions will be on Tuesdays at the same time, starting today through March 1, 2022. The sessions will be recorded, and they will be posted shortly following each session.

0:04:51.9 MW: After you hear the amazing presentation today, you're gonna wanna share it with your friends and colleagues and so you will be able to do that. And also, share with all of the folks who are working to end homelessness in your community. So before we introduce our experts, I wanna remind you once more that we want your question. As we're moving through the session today, if you have questions, please put them in the chat. Our audience is very large, and so we are asking that you put yourself on mute unless you're on the panel or a facilitator. We're gonna monitor that chat throughout the session, and we'll bring your questions in as we go along. We may not be able to get to all questions 'cause there's currently getting close to 800 participants on this call. I just want to be clear, we will not be able to answer 800 questions in 90 minutes. So, please make sure

you put it in and we will work to get in as many as we can.

0:05:52.7 MW: Again, when you come into the session, you are not on mute, so you will need to mute your phone directly. Okay. I'm Michelle Williams. I'm a HUD CA provider and your facilitator for today's roundtable. I'm joined by an exciting group of folks who are active forces in their communities all across the country. And so I'm gonna ask each person to introduce themselves with their name, the community they represent, and one word that describes the energy that they bring to addressing homelessness in their community. So I will start. Michelle Williams, I live in Prince George's County, Maryland. We need you to mute your phones directly please. One word that describes the energy I think I bring to addressing homelessness in my community and in others is creativity. Okay, so I need everybody to mute your phones directly. You have to mute your phone directly.

0:06:55.2 MW: Okay, I'm gonna... One more time, everyone, everyone, everyone all 799, 801, you have to mute your phone if you are not a presenter or a panelist, okay? So please mute your phone directly. All right, we're gonna get our introduction started. I'm Michelle Williams. I live in Prince George's County, Maryland, and the energy that I bring to addressing homelessness is creativity, so I'm gonna turn it over... The first person I'm gonna ask to go is Mary Francis Kenion.

0:07:30.3 Mary Francis Kenion: Thanks Michelle. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Mary Francis Kenion. I use she/her pronouns. I am also a HUD CA provider with ICF and based out of Southern Maryland, Charles County specifically. My one word is... I'm going with resolute, that's how I approach it. I'm always resolute. We can do this.

0:07:53.8 MW: Very good. Thank you Mary Francis. Curtis Howard?

0:08:00.9 Curtis Howard: Yes, it's Curtis Howard. I am director of All of Us or None, San Diego chapter organization, the national organization that advocates and supports formally incarcerated people and their families. My word and energy is personal because I'm a lived experience person and I'm coming from a personal angle on my outlooks. Thank you.

0:08:27.5 MW: Thank you Curtis. DaeJanae?

0:08:35.0 DaeJanae Day: My name is DaeJanae Day. I use she/her pronouns. I'm the co-chair for the Youth Action Board in Prince George's County, Maryland, and I think one word I would use is ambition. Like Mr. Curtis, I do have personal experience but also I always have believed that things can work out as long as you work hard, and even if it doesn't some way somehow there's always a way, and I also look at my YAB members and I get inspired by them all and they give me a lot of ambition also.

0:09:12.7 MW: Great. Thank you DaeJanae. Renee?

0:09:18.7 Renee Ensor Pope: Thank you. I'm Renee Ensor Pope, and I represent Prince George's County, Maryland. I'm the Continuum of Care lead there, and I would say passion. I really, I'm driven by the passion to help, I'm driven by the passion to make a difference, I'm driven by the passion that I see in my co-workers and my partners across the country that are in this work, and I'm driven by the passion that I see in the people that we meet every day who may meet us for a minute but who are headed for bigger and better things.

0:09:58.1 MW: Thank you Renee. Jeff?

0:10:03.3 Jeffrey Rawlings: I'm Jeffrey Rawlings from Raleigh, North Carolina with [0:10:04.8] ____ state and I'm the supportive services only coordinated entry regional lead for our region seven here. For my one word, it's gonna be a word with an adjective. I need [0:10:19.8] _____. It's objectivity but my adjective is compassionate. Compassionate objectivity because I have lived experience, so been there done that, but I also want to be able to relate to where you are in this situation because I've been there, but also be objective in how this service is going to be distributed.

0:10:44.8 MW: Okay. Thank you Jeff. We have a couple more folks that I'm not sure if you're able to have connection but... Vivian?

0:10:57.6 Vivian: Good morning. Can folks... Or good afternoon depending on where you are. Can folks hear me?

0:11:02.5 MW: Yes.

0:11:04.7 Vivian: Great. I'm having video issues apparently. But so great to be here with you. I am the chief operating officer with Abode Services, we're a regional housing provider in six counties in the San Francisco Bay area, and we serve about 5000 folks through Rapid Rehousing every year about 15,000 total and my word for the day is...

[background conversation]

0:11:35.6 Vivian: I'm gonna say patience and learning.

0:11:40.0 MW: Thank you.

[background conversation]

0:11:45.0 MW: I'm gonna ask everyone to please mute your phone. We've had a little error...

[background conversation]

0:11:53.7 MW: Whoever is looking for the keys, can you please mute your phone? We've had a little bit of an error, in that, you all got your phone number for the audio and that was not supposed to happen. So we're gonna ask that you mute your phones directly, so if you can't mute it on a computer, you just mute it on your regular phone, on your desk phone or your cell phone, just please mute yourself so that we don't have to know all your personal business that's happening while you're listening with us today. Okay, so we also have a couple of other folks from the Rapid Rehousing Round Table team. I'm gonna just introduce Kira Zylstra... Why can't I say your last name. Zylstra, okay, and then Cattell Noll who are helping to answer questions in the chat. So again as we're moving through, please put your questions in the chat.

0:12:44.5 MW: Okay, so guiding our discussion today we have some prompt questions, so we're gonna just jump right in and I'm gonna ask our panelists to weigh in on the question. So our first question is why is it critical for us to design and implement rapid rehousing with a focus on equity.

And I'm gonna ask Mary Francis to take the first answer to that.

0:13:09.7 MK: Sure, thank you, Michelle. Super excited to be a part of this team of panelists here. I wanna preface my answer first with the, my shameless plug, to let everyone know that it's critical to design all elements of the homeless response system with an explicit focus on racial equity, and the reason why I say that is when we lead with race, 'cause we know that racial inequities are embedded within our systems and impact virtually every experience that a person of color is going to have with these systems, whether it's within our homeless response system or other systems of care, we take that as a starting point. We don't stop there. I'm getting a lot of feedback.

0:13:58.1 MW: Yeah, please mute your phones.

0:13:58.3 MK: Can folks mute their line?

0:14:03.9 MW: Please mute your phones.

0:14:09.6 MK: Even though we lead with race Michelle, we don't stop there, because we are trying to achieve equity across all of our systems, and to have truly equitable systems we have to look at those inequities that also exist due to intersectional identities that people hold, whether that's gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, geographic location, household type, age. And the list goes on and on. But I can remember back in 2009, I think it was, I was working at an agency that was selected as one of the rapid rehousing demonstration project sites out of Montgomery County, Maryland, and I can recall that time as an agency that was a part of that pilot, it was sort of a remarkable pivot, even though this was a foreign concept, we were pretty much transitioning from transitional housing to rapid rehousing, it was foreign. It was uncertain. We didn't know what the outcomes would be, but I really recognize that today as the beginning of a really powerful shift and how many communities would ultimately begin to approach homelessness across the country, and I see rapid rehousing as an intervention when you maintain fidelity to the rapid rehousing program model.

0:15:29.4 MK: I look at it similar to the way that I receive housing problem solving, and it's not... Rapid rehousing isn't an intervention that is rooted in some of the historically marginalizing practices that we have maintained from the past, whether it's shelter wait list and high barrier shelters and things of that nature. But I think at its core, there are really some innate equity principles that are part of the rapid rehousing model, and when you have a strong rapid rehousing program, it's one that's going to acknowledge that households need different levels of financial support for rent and to pay for utilities or moving cost. So rapid rehousing can really ensure that the program isn't operating from a one-size-fits-all approach. We want to make sure that we're using rapid rehousing to right-size any given household's needs. And then critical time intervention, that's one of those principles when used in rapid rehousing that can really serve as a bridge to community services, specifically community services that are culturally responsive, practice cultural humility and can house people quickly.

0:16:39.9 MK: Because when we get people in a permanent housing quickly through rapid rehousing, we have an opportunity to then assist them reaching and achieving some of those other goals, like finding a job or getting settled at school. And some of those things that we wanna help people with after they're permanently housed, they fit intersecting root causes of some of the racial disparities that we see in homelessness. And then a third principle that I think of when it comes to

rapid rehousing and how the model really promotes equity is that it's proven in reducing family homelessness, and it works well in rural communities because it connects those households to housing stability. So, as a program model, it is more of a strength-based program model that really highlights household's resiliency and uses that strength-based approach to move folks into stability, greater stability and self-sufficiency.

0:17:41.5 MK: And of course [0:17:42.3] ____ case management services are voluntary and are designed to be client-driven along with the tailoring to everyone's needs and strengths and self-defined goals. Those are some of the things that we have an opportunity to design our rapid rehousing project with a focus on equity, and there's way more to that, but I also recognize we have some brilliant minds on today's panel. So I would love to hear from other folks too.

0:18:14.6 MW: I do wanna just ask, because I think just to set our framework for today, we've had a question in the chat about what is the definition of equity and what's the difference between equity and equality? And so I do wanna put that out there for our panelists, so if anyone would like to weigh in to provide the answer for that?

0:18:36.7 RP: So this is Renee, and actually, we have a Health Equity Council here in Prince George's and had an interesting cartoon that demonstrated the difference between the two, and it was a surface on one side of a fence, and three people on the opposite side of the fence, and one was about 2 feet tall and one was about about 4 feet tall, one was about 6 feet tall, and the fence was 8 foot tall, and equality would say that say that everybody gets a box to stand on, and the box is say 2 feet tall, but at the end of the day, the shorter people still can't see over the fence, equality would be that each person gets a box, the height and size that's necessary for them all to equally see across the fence. That's equality versus equity.

0:19:20.0 MW: Equity versus equality.

0:19:23.3 RP: Yes exactly, but it's a great visual, right? Each person gets what they need to achieve the same level of opportunity that everybody else gets to achieve.

0:19:37.7 MW: Would anyone like to add to that?

[pause]

0:19:46.3 MW: Okay, just wanted to establish a framework and get that question answered. Let's move to our next question which is really what does it mean to embed equity in rapid rehousing and what does an equitable rapid rehousing project look like, feel like for the participant and how do we know if we're making progress? And Vivian, are you able to take that one to start us off? Oh, we might have lost her. Okay, Renee, are you able to weigh in on question two, what does it mean to embed equity in a rapid rehousing?

0:20:32.9 RP: Sure. And actually, I just wanna piggyback on some things that Mary Francis said earlier around, and sort of spinning off of this equity conversation is really about helping to meet people where they are and really analyzing families and individuals as they come to you with whatever that is that they might need. So for example, in rapid rehousing, so what does it look like? So for us, it looks like the availability of housing in every area of our jurisdiction, not just the poor, low rent areas of our jurisdiction, how are we working with our rapid rehousing landlords and our

private market to build opportunity in every area of our community? What does that look like? It looks like perhaps offering, and I know many communities do this, we offer incentives to landlords to lease up, but it's also not just about leasing up, but it's incremental incentives, so it's not only leasing up, but it's also renewing that lease, so you get a lot of landlords that perhaps may respond to a market request, but they're only gonna do it for a short period of time, and then they're going to move on and take in a customer that perhaps they feel is more appropriate for their community.

0:21:52.4 RP: But when you overlay the equity lens, you're building in incremental incentives that really allow the investment in housing of homeless clients, allow us to invest in them in the long term and incentivize over time, so that you begin to break down some of those barriers and those challenges to housing. Sometimes it looks a little bit like for us, for example, and many communities got EHP vouchers. I mean, EHB vouchers, for example, right? For us, that looked like working with landlords, doing pre-inspections, so that as soon as we're identifying a customer that has a need or access to the voucher, it looks like an immediate connection to that landlord, the landlords already step forward, not knowing who the customer is and making that match quickly, working with the community organizations to go with customers and help represent them in the interviews with the landlords or completing paperwork with landlords, not this presumption that everyone has the same educational capacity or the same ability to complete the application process that somebody else might have.

0:23:08.8 RP: So really looking for what is missing from the system, we often look at what exists in the system and how we're gonna fix that thing, but we don't often look at what's missing from our system and how our customers have a need for that thing, and then how we problem solve for something that isn't as visible?

0:23:24.9 MW: Great. Thank you. I also wanted to just, if I can add on that. Just when I think about what an equitable rapid rehousing project can look like. A lot of times, we structure our rapid rehousing programs in such that there is a set period of time, you can receive assistance for a period of time, and that's it, and that is an equality approach. It is not an equitable approach. So an equitable approach would be that we look at what does this particular person or household actually need, and we design our service intervention to support that person and what they need, and not something that has this pre-determined necessarily deadline or everybody gets X, and there's no accounting for the differences that may exist within households and their capacity or ability to be able to survive with just the standard level of support, and that also works conversely, where a lot of folks that we support who don't need all of our support, right?

0:24:35.7 MW: When we approach a program in such a way that it is we only do X, then we're not being equitable because we're not looking at that person or household itself as an individual and making sure that our system supports them in the best way possible, so just to kind of talk about that and I wanted to... Did we get Vivian back yet? Nope, she keeps getting kicked out. We're having some technical issues. It's a great thing we can record and have this available at a later time, so we will continue to work on that. I did wanna, if I can, I'm gonna just ask Mary Francis to weigh in on question three, which is how has rapid rehousing fallen short in the past? And I also wanna encourage Curtis, DaeJanae, Jeff, anything that you wanna add, if Mary Francis gets us started on that one.

0:25:35.9 MK: Yeah, and I'm gonna continue to pull on a thread that we've already kind of opened up which is the boutique approach, which is the equality... The equality approach, which is saying,

"Okay, for X number of folks that are entering this project, we're gonna give them three months' worth of assistance," and that is not maintaining fidelity to what the rapid rehousing model was intended to do. This is supposed to be a flexible intervention that is tailored to an individual household's needs, and quite frankly, you can't serve a single adult male in the same way that you would serve a dually-headed household with three kids. That is not gonna work. They're not gonna need the same level of financial assistance, they may not need the same level of time, they may not even need the same type of case management.

0:26:35.0 MK: Their needs are gonna look different, their connections to community-based resources are gonna look different, so you can't use rapid rehousing as a cookie-cutter approach. That's doing exactly the opposite of what the model was developed for and intended to do. So I think that's a starting point of where it's fallen short, but that's not to be attributed to the model itself. That's to be attributed to the ways in which people and providers in some instances have chosen to interpret what they can do with the program model.

0:27:10.3 MK: I also think that one of the other ways I've seen rapid rehousing projects fall short, not listening to the people that they're serving, not creating a continuous feedback loop with those individuals to ensure that their needs are getting met, and assessing outcomes by quantitative measures only. One of the things about the work that we do in the homeless response system that can be very much grounded in quantitative data and metrics, those are important, but they are a wholly incomplete picture if you don't have the human experience and the stories behind those numbers to support it.

0:27:52.8 MK: So when we are looking at evaluating rapid rehousing, we've not done the most effective job as a system as a whole in doing so because we discredit the human experience and we discredit... We need to rethink who we call experts, and for the longest time, I think CA providers, service providers... I'm a former CoC lead, CoC leads get thrown in that bunch too. We see ourselves as the experts and that is wrong. We need to start looking at the people who happen to have lived experience of homelessness and lived experience in navigating our systems and the resources. We don't rely on them. We don't invite them into conversation so that they can help us identify the barriers, identify the pain points, and offer solutions to help make the systems better for the folks that are to come behind them.

0:28:49.5 MW: Thank you.

0:28:53.0 RP: And, Michelle, if I could, I just wanna piggyback on something that Mary Francis was saying and that you were saying earlier around this idea of the cookie-cutter approach and providing the same thing to everybody, and even to the point where we're evaluating the pro rata portion that a program might pick up in the rapid rehousing over time. We sort of tend to do them in blocks of one month, two months, three months, and it doesn't allow us as a system to pivot when there's an unexpected crisis that occurs in a family or a household at say month two, to go back and then rework that document to account for that rental assistance. We calculate it in blocks of time and not necessarily in real time based on the ever-changing needs of a particular family. And the other thing is, is that we do have these data reports that are available to us at CoCs that allow us to really uncork even equity within communities of color.

0:29:53.5 RP: And looking at, so for example, one of the things that we've been looking at is the recidivism rates, and so you look at overall recidivism rates, but once you start to unpack that, you

look at that within your community of color, you may see these unusual trends that you need to be thinking about what the implications of that are for your rapid rehousing. So we might see a projected recidivism rate at six, for example, which we did, and then we saw it again at 18, and our cookie-cutter follow-up was 12 months, so we were seeing this bump, but then we could get them to 12 where we weren't seeing a bump, but then it was happening again at 18, and so what does that tell us?

0:30:31.3 RP: And you're seeing recidivism [0:30:34.6] ____ that are attributed to different types of housing circumstances versus the African-American community, and so we were seeing recidivism even within our communities of color at different points in time, and so as a rapid rehousing response, taking an equity lens and saying, "Okay, why is this happening? What are we seeing? What's different about this culture that we're not seeing in this culture, and how do we make sure that we are providing the supports and services that they need when they need it?" And using data to help us begin to at least explore it. It's not the whole answer. Our clients with lived experience, our partners with lived experience within those communities are the ones that are gonna have to inform that richly. But there is data, there are data elements, there are reports, things that we can use to begin to have that conversation in our own community.

0:31:26.5 MW: Great, thank you, Renee.

0:31:30.3 DD: I also want to piggy-back off of what Mary and Ms. Renee were saying. [0:31:34.0] ____ the youth and from being around my peers before I've been in this work, I think it's all about having the wraparound services with the rapid rehousing, just like you have the services in emergency shelters where you provide them with mental health services or some food stamps and everything like that, maybe try to keep that going even after they're out of the program, 'cause I believe that's where the [0:32:03.0] ____ is right there, where, "Okay, your three months or your 12 months or your 24 months is up. Okay, you're good." When in reality, I can say if somebody's [0:32:14.5] ____, then everything kind of falls apart. So probably keeping up with the clients even after the [0:32:26.5] ____.

0:32:30.2 MW: Right, yeah, definitely maintaining that connection to identify when... What's happening with folks after their time is up in our program? Like what's happening? Are they coming back? Where is the point at which people may face challenges again? And really designing our programs to ensure that we're helping everybody get to the desired outcome. And that that doesn't look the same for everyone. Right, thank you DaeJanae. Jeff, I'm gonna ask you if you could take our next question. This is where...

[background conversation]

0:33:07.6 MW: Okay, we got feedback. We got feedback. Everyone, could you please mute your phones? I know people are having some difficulty. There's a lot of folks on the call and that may be affecting some bandwidth issues. We are doing our very best. If we could fix it on our end, we would have already. So I'm asking that you all please mute your phone directly, so that we can eliminate the feedback that we're getting. And computer noises. If your computer just went off, you need to mute your phone. Okay? All right. So Jeff, if you could answer our next question, which is really, where have we failed to account for racial disparity in rapid rehousing?

0:33:47.6 JR: Okay. I'm a difficult time not answering three. Because three and four kinda run right

into each other. So this could be a perfect segue to move into that, because with some of the things have already been mentioned, one of the ways that we missed it, I think was... As stated, the program itself was written correctly, but we didn't have education on how to implement it.

[background conversation]

0:34:12.3 JR: So you have... It was done differently in different areas. And everyone was interpreting how it should be implemented and going on what we had had previously. Which of course did not work because everybody stayed with it [0:34:27.6] _____ and implementing the housing first model into it. We had a problem with the amount of time and the amount of assistance that we were given. You can't go in with a cookie-cutter approach, which of course was mentioned earlier as well. Also, I'm doing a lot of piggybacking here 'cause all of the best things and all the things that we're talking about permeate different areas. So I don't have an issue with that at all. The equality approach, we came in with the equality approach, and that has been very proven many, many times over that it doesn't work. You can't give everyone the exact same set of [0:35:06.4] _____ coming from completely different backgrounds, facing completely different challenges, coming with a whole different set of prejudices or advantages being given to them, and expect them to all come out with the same results. It doesn't work that way. In an ideal society, yes. But in reality it just doesn't.

[background conversation]

0:35:32.8 MW: Okay. Please, please, please, please mute your phone. Okay, thank you. All right, go ahead Jeff.

0:35:39.0 JR: Also kind of in rapid rehousing, the things that I've dealt with mostly that have given me the biggest grief has been the assessment. The assessment to even get into rapid rehousing have been a major, major problem because they're not realistic. I think most of us in the country used to be [0:35:55.2] _____ it's absolutely not realistic to the majority of people who are experiencing homelessness. I find myself having to break the questions apart. I have to read a portion of it and then separate into another portion, because you group some things together that are unsavory, along with some things that are kind of normal. So when they hear the unsavory part, you may not get a good response or an accurate response. So I think that as far as assessments, we have really, really failed on that point. And it's good to know that there's some conversations going on. I know we're having here in North Carolina about what comes after the [0:36:32.1] _____, because it very clearly is not working.

0:36:37.5 JR: You kind of handicap persons going in. Especially people of color going in, because of traditional bias and traditional discrimination. When you hear things like, "Have you sold your medication?" that's the end of that question. The moment you say that, that's the end of an honest answer to that question for a lot of people. When you ask them, "Do you owe someone?" Traditionally, it has been stated, it's just society that you don't wanna owe or you don't wanna be looked down upon. So you don't answer that question legitimately either. Mental health. There is a stigma in the black community regarding mental health, so you don't answer that question honestly as well. So, I think that in [0:37:16.4] _____ we have seriously failed in those areas, and I'm hoping that over the next year or year or two, that we're gonna be working on trying to get those things taken care of as well.

0:37:26.5 JR: And lastly, something that I deal with, because I deal with landlords directly, is educating landlords. Landlords come in with their own set of prejudices, but they have a commodity that we need. We need the dwellings that they have. We don't have the luxury of saying, "Well, you're prejudiced, so we're not gonna use you at all." We don't have that luxury. We have to try to find a way to work with them. And we have to also realize that we're trying to house people from all different backgrounds and from all different races as well. So even though you may not particularly care for a particular landlord, you're gonna have to find a way to work. And I think in the past, we've not done that. We haven't had anything in place as far as educating landlords about the potential clients that they'll have coming forward into the program.

[background conversation]

0:38:27.2 MW: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. Who's talking about dialing in? We can hear you. Can you put your phone on mute? Thank you so much. All right. Thank you Jeff. I so appreciate that. Lots of support for what you're saying. Lots of comment about assessment. I just wanna say... Some of you may have heard me say it before. We took... We operated so long with very few solutions or solutions that were hard to come by or we only had one at a time, we couldn't have all the solutions at one time. And so we took something that looked like it worked in one environment and we applied it to every other environment. And it's the same as trying to put in a screw with a hammer. Right? Or pull out a nail with a set of... I don't know tool... With a wrench, I don't know... But...

0:39:20.6 MW: We have to look at that and say, is this tool the appropriate tool for our community, for the population of people that we're serving, and we may need to look at things differently and maybe not have as much of a standard result, we... Instead of looking to say, "Where do I put this person?" We should be looking to say, "What services does this person need to be successful?" And we adapt our services, we don't try and mold people to fit in to boxes, so I just wanted to kind of provide that. Curtis, are you wanna say something? I see you waving hands.

0:40:02.4 CH: Actually yes, I did, I wanted to... Because Jeff laid out some stuff, you know, and I just couldn't help but wanting to comment on that because of where we fail on racial disparity that, is I think that we're being unfair in order to be fair, and everybody is so concerned about... When race comes up, it's a big word and it's a big issue, so everybody wants to... They wanna be fair and they don't want to prioritize any certain person because they feel it would be unfair to others, and in doing so, it is being unfair to the people who are impacted by it. If we have the surveys and the data, the statistics and everything that points to these disparities, then we should by all means be entitled to be prioritized within the system based upon that, because if we're not going to acknowledge the stats and all the surveys that we conduct, and all that point to these racial disparities, then why even have them? What's the need to do surveys, if you're not going to acknowledge us in that way? So stick to the script man. It's like, you know, if we have shown and proven that these disparities exist, then prioritize them without regards to offending anyone else, because you're offending us and being unfair to us at the same time and not doing so.

0:41:45.5 MW: Exactly. Thank you, Curtis. Yeah, I think you're getting snapped all around right? Definitely in the chat everywhere. That's great. So I wanna just note some comments that were made in the chat, so first is commenting on the barriers to get into programs, some of the barriers that we find... Are the income guidelines that are required to qualify individuals for the program. Wanna be very clear that Rapid Rehousing as a program model does not have an income guideline, it's a low-barrier approach, it does not require a minimum income, it does not require employment,

right? So as Mary Francis said, come back to the model, right? When you back to the model, you'll see that many of the things that we are putting in place are not things that are consistent with that model, and they are things that continue to perpetuate the racial disparities, the things that don't help us get everybody to the point of success. And so, in your community, if you're struggling, go back and review that model and go "Why did we put this in place and do we need it? And are we gonna be true to the model or not?" And make that determination.

0:43:00.8 MW: Okay, because we can't keep playing both sides of the fence. Other comments are about... From [0:43:09.0] _____, the history of racial subordination throughout this colonial history warrants adding extra supports for BIPOC communities, especially when we are on indigenous lands that were illegitimately acquired to begin with. Exactly. We know that our society, it has a history of discrimination, it is embedded in our communities, in our activities, in our program design, and it takes us going the extra step. And as Curtis said if you are saying something and you're feeling like, well, if we prioritize BIPOC communities for this resource, then the person you're seeking to protect is not the BIPOC community; you are then continuing to perpetuate what already exists. Right? If we looked at... Are people really able to access services and get the support they need on a bigger scale, not just about where they are in their homeless journey at this point, but as a bigger scale.

0:44:18.6 MW: A very prime thing to look at is the difficulty that people of color have getting employment. So if our program says you need to have employment in three months, but we know that it takes black people twice as long to find employment, then that requirement itself is completely unfair and it is discriminatory in practice. So I just wanted to say that. People are looking for resources on how to educate landlords. We can provide those people full information, we will share with you how to educate landlords. And so just moving to the next kind of question and then we'll come back. So Curtis, this is a question that I wanted you to answer, and this is, what do we need to be mindful of undoing as we innovate for the future? I know we've touched on it in your previous, but I'm asking you to give us some more.

0:45:20.6 CH: All of the above Michelle. All of the above. It's out with the old and in with the new because we have already shown that previous programs and methods have failed, because that's why we're here today. We wouldn't be here today if it was all good. So it's not all good. What we need to do is out with old and in with the new. Everything that we have done, each surveys and focus groups and everything that all the information and data that we've collected that points to the ineffectiveness of these programs, we need to trash them, and slowly and replace them gradually with the new stuff that we have found. I mean, we can't just pull everything out at one time. But we need to gradually start injecting new things that we have discovered into the system. This is a world of technology. It's moving, things are changing ideas and thoughts, and everything are changing. Programs are changing, things that are not working, we have to change.

0:46:42.5 CH: And like I said, we have to acknowledge things that have prevented us from succeeding in the past, like biases, personal biases that we have towards people, towards homeless people, towards black people, towards brown people, towards... We have to... We have to educate and acknowledge that we have these issues, because it's always the first thing that we have to acknowledge when we're being treated for everything else. When it comes to substance abuse, the first thing they tell us is you can't get help for the problem if you don't admit you have it. So the first step is to acknowledge the problem, raise your hand, "My name is Curtis, I'm an addict." But I've never seen anybody say, "My name is Curtis, I'm a racist."

0:47:36.0 CH: See, nobody's gonna do that. "My name is Curtis, I'm biased." Nobody's gonna do stuff like that. But that's why we're not being treated. That's why the treatment's not gonna work, because we have to acknowledge it first. So we got to get rid of all of this, we have to ask our own selves the same questions about personal biases that we have. I've had to do it with myself countless times and stuff I've had to do it with myself. I'm a formerly incarcerated person. I'm a former gang member. I come from a world where it's tough in its own and everything you know to where I look at other things differently that I have to stop and train myself and educate myself on this. And if I could do it, then the people out here in the world that's been calling me the bad guy, then they gotta be able to do it, "Look at the bad guy, he's doing better on biases and racial issues than you are." So yeah, that's the issue I think that we have to out with the old, in with the new. Get rid of everything that hasn't proved effective in the past and check ourselves in issues that we have with ourselves.

0:48:57.5 MW: Great. Yeah, I know... More snacks [0:49:01.7] ____ more snacks. I just wanna... Okay, I'm supposed to be facilitating not necessarily talking. But you know, this is a candid conversation, and I am just loving it. So I just wanna make a point that... A lot of times we have justified our rule based on the fact that we didn't have enough to support everyone, right? So we have said, "Oh, we have to limit, right," because we just don't have enough resource. Well, I don't know if you guys know this. But we have more resource than we have ever seen. And so the idea of operating with that scarcity mentality is harmful. Right? It is harmful.

0:49:42.1 MW: And I wanna say this, the people who created the opportunity for us to have the resources that we have now, if we don't start getting past ourselves, and spending this money and getting people out of homelessness, we will never see it again. So don't think that like, we don't... We won't... This will all be... You know, we have to continue operating because they're gonna take it away. They're gonna take it away if you don't use it. And so it says to the general world, that you guys always said you needed money to be able to address this problem more appropriately. We gave you money and you did nothing with it. So let's make sure that we are doing something with the resources that we have to save people. To give them the same opportunity that we want to be able to have a home to go to, a bed to sleep in, and a place to shower. Okay, there you go.

0:50:37.1 RP: And Michelle, I agree with you. This is Renee, and I love... I love Curtis' passion. That was my word when we started, but I feel like I gotta tip my hat on the passion thing. I might have to trade words with Curtis today. But you know, the other thing that I think we have to put in the room, is the anxieties that systems have about what this needs to look like for us. When you start looking at every level of your policy and you start lifting up, the hardest, like, we tend to, particularly for rapid rehousing, gotta be a little bit easy to work with 'cause we only have a certain period of time to deal with them. And that's not necessarily true. But we have to also own that, that means that we're gonna have to find other ways to fund other parts of our system.

0:51:25.7 RP: Rapid rehousing is just one project, it's a concept of taking someone who's homeless, getting them permanently housed, and whatever it takes to make that happen. And as quickly as we can make that happen, that's rapid rehousing in the broadest sense. And so, as systems, we have to recognize that, that we have to look for more beyond what is coming to us through perhaps the HUD system or other systems, that we can't do it all with that, there are things that we're gonna have to do, and it means that we might have to look... We might look in our community and we're doing it one way because we don't have the assets in our community that we think we need to really truly deal with, and really embed our work in serving incarcerated individuals or serving people that

are actively using, or serving people, those are hard in our system. Behavioral health responses across our country, at least in our jurisdiction in particular are hard to find; continuity of care, system connection, keeping people engaged when they're opting out on a regular because it's gonna take time to build that trust.

0:52:32.5 RP: So we have to at least uplift the fact that... And I agree with Curtis, there's so much that we need to do to pull it out, look at it, ask ourselves the question, "Did we put this in there, and can we take it out, right?" And in the event that we could take it out, we could take it out, but we also need to recognize the systems if there's a heavy lift attached to that transformation, and we can't be afraid of it, but we do have to talk about it in our communities, we have to own what we don't know, we have to own what we don't have, and we have to find ways collectively across our systems to have it and build it.

0:53:08.8 MW: Great, thank you, Renee. I'm gonna ask Vivian, she's on the phone. I'm gonna ask Vivian to also weigh in on this question. Vivian, it's about what we need to be mindful of undoing as we innovate for the future.

0:53:23.9 Vivian: Thank you and apologies for no video, but one of the things, as all of the brilliant panelists have been talking. I've been cheerleading behind agreeing with everything, but I think one of the major challenges that I see is that the individual nature of everything, of assessments, of how we serve people. Rapid rehousing, I've said over and over again, of course, it has to catered to each individual, but racial disparity is a community issue. We undervalue our systems. We know that racism is systemic. It's not an individual failure. It's a system failure, yet all of our programs and assessments are so individually focused. So, what I'd say is, we need to find a better way to value the informal networks, and where I see this most is really at program exit with rapid rehousing. I stood up in front of many groups saying, "Hey, we have to leave people, and they're still paying 50%, 60%, 70%, sometimes 80% of their income towards rent."

0:54:43.2 Vivian: That means something different, depending on your community network. Do you have someone who can back you up if your tires blow or is that gonna put you back into homelessness? So I think we need to do a better way at valuing, at engaging [0:55:01.6] _____ because it's not all about a social worker, it's really about the families and the communities that support us, that's really what I see is as who goes into homelessness and who goes back after our program, so that's what I think that we need to look at at undoing.

0:55:23.2 MW: Yeah, thank you Vivian, that is an excellent point because I think it has to do with what is our service approach that frankly has been rooted in racially discriminatory practices that assume that a person of color has fewer resources or assume that there's not a level of support that can be provided through what is a natural network. And so I definitely wanna just highlight that, I always say we're of two minds in some ways. When people are doubled up at the beginning, we are like "Oh my gosh, they're doubled up." We wanna end that. But at the end, "Oh, you're going to live with family and friends. That's great." So we have to be consistent. We have to figure out a way to support people, support them in the way that they need it, and not in ways that replace their natural networks, not in ways that allow us to take away really or drive away what that person is really gonna need long-term because we are temporary.

0:56:29.7 Vivian: Even the idea of doubled up, that is such a unique Anglo-American Western idea of who should be living in what... That we just need to call ourselves on that.

0:56:44.4 MW: Right, exactly, right. When we look to... That's a... I don't wanna say communal living, but multi-generational households, all that is a feature of some cultures, including African-American cultures, and so when we teach people that you have to have your own place, we are kinda taking that away, but it also doesn't mean that we force people into a shared housing situation. It means that we leave the door open for someone to say, "Hey, this is what works for me." And we figure out as a system a way to support that. So I see a lot of comments in the chat around landlord engagement. And so I wanna just make a comment on that before we move on. I certainly heard in my work in every single community I've ever been in, and I do a lot of work around housing, is that there is no unit. Every community says we don't have any units, and in every situation, we are able to identify units.

0:57:48.4 MW: And so, it's gonna take on the ground, like staff, it's gonna take building relationships in your community. I'll just give an example from when I worked in the Continuum of Care in Washington DC; Washington DC is a tight market, has always been. And what we did when we started doing rapid rehousing efforts was really cultivate a network of landlords who could continue, and I'll tell you right now, those were not your major property companies, not going to... I'm looking for that building owner who has one to four units. One to four units. That person is a business person. They are trying to support their family, and if we can get in with them and create an opportunity for them to add more, that's what they did, and they committed their units. Anything that they had and anything that they could get, they committed to our process. And that is about building relationships in your community, and looking beyond your mainstream management company.

0:58:52.2 MW: Go to your city roads and find out who owns small buildings, who owns one apartment, right? And call that person up and talk to them about what you're trying to do and how it's an opportunity for them to also achieve the goals that they have. And that conversation, that relationship got us through all of the things that we talk about. It got us through minimum income requirement, it got us through damage deposits, right? It got us through all those things because it's about the relationship. I was in a community just last month. I'm not gonna name it, that said that they have no housing, and in one event, we were able to bring forth 116 rental units from a place that said they had no housing available.

0:59:37.5 MW: So, we just gotta look in the right place. So we can do a session on that, we'll come back. We are doing a session on that, what do you know, in this rapid rehousing round table series. So we will welcome you all back for that. All right, I'm gonna move us to our next question, and DaeJanae I think this is you. How has the YAB... Was it Youth Advisory Board? Youth Action Board? Youth Action Board been involved in improving rapid rehousing programs? And what role did the YAB have in selecting organizations that receive funding? And what impact do you think that had for your community?

1:00:18.1 DD: I can say, since the very beginning of implementing the Youth Action Board, especially within Prince George's County, we had an equal space in the room within all our projects, especially the rapid rehousing portion, where we selected different portions of how rapid rehousing would work. So I can use myself as an example. I said earlier in the conversation, I had personal experience. But I was going back and forth between Prince George's County and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, where I wasn't eligible to really get rapid rehousing because I was going back and forth, back and forth. So I was in the emergency shelter up until my

graduation. So we created one of the programs with transitional housing, rapid rehousing where we cater to the education portion, where college students can have a place to go during their breaks, if they are a Prince George's County resident or if they are in the Prince George's County public university, or what do they call it... Or like a community college, excuse me.

1:01:32.0 DD: And with the rapid rehousing that we use, some of what the YAB has said, the Youth Action Board has said... Because again, each member had different experiences. Some people didn't have the experience that I had, so as a co-chair I took, what they said about the barriers that have circled around it, like for example, if somebody had a record on their background. That can kinda hinder them from getting into rapid rehousing sometimes, or any housing sometimes. And that can create homelessness within the community, or if they didn't have a particular income coming in, or if you're a man. It's different, it's so different. Like you said earlier in the conversation to where it's different for a female, whether you have kids or if you have one, two, three kids or not. It's totally different.

1:02:28.8 DD: And I believe some services are catered around women and children, and they kind of dismiss the males in a way where it's a lot harder, and the mental stigma that surrounds, especially the African-American community, where whether you're male or female, you don't wanna say, "Okay, there's something going on. Okay, there's something going on with my mental or there's something going on with my income," because sometimes pride gets in the way, especially if you are a young adult, you don't want people shunning you, looking down on you. You don't want your peers, your friends looking down in a way. Even though they may not, it's something that pops up in the mind. And that popped up in my mind from time to time.

1:03:16.6 DD: But with everything that's going on, with the growth of our transitional house and rapid rehousing, with the growth of our rapid rehousing and our permanent supportive services and us growing within our community with our rapid rehousing services, I can see an improvement within the services [1:03:33.4] ____ presented here from five years ago. And I'mma steal what Mr. Curtis said a little while ago, "times have changed and times will keep changing," so with the work that we're doing now, it may have to be updated five years from now, and we have to keep it going, so we don't go backwards. We keep moving forward.

1:04:00.7 MW: Great. Thank you, DaeJanae. DaeJanae, can I ask you a question? Because I want you to talk about how the YAB was involved in selecting the organizations that receive funding.

1:04:11.0 DD: This is a good one. Mr. [1:04:12.7] ____ freaked out a bit, but we actually conducted the interviews with our partner, so the YAB had a very big role in interviewing the partners before I went to the bigger CCP or a bigger provider, so like Lisa Pinkham [1:04:30.2] ____ and it was like, yeah, they're not really, like really catering to the needs that you need or they may need a little bit more training. Then we either [1:04:45.2] ____ them out or be like, maybe they'll be good if they get a little bit more training in what they need to do, so had a big role in that... We had a big role in creating the question, we had a role in how we voted upon it, so majority rules or if it was 50:50, which was about one time me as a coach or I'll have to split the vote which was fine.

1:05:16.4 DD: But yeah, just sticking out in the corner, just like oh my goodness everything went well and I can say the YAB made a good decision and the providers we did, excel, and the providers that we do have on the table today really [1:05:32.7] ____ different. That kind of message

[1:05:37.2] ____ gives a way for other communities to look within Prince George's County and kinda copy or create their own vibe on how they wanna handle things. Montgomery County is different from Prince George's County. DC is different from Prince George's County. All areas are different from Prince George's County, but we have a starting ground, so you can work your way up.

1:06:04.3 MW: Great. Thank you. Renee, do you wanna talk about the benefit to the community from that process?

1:06:09.4 RP: I do. Yeah, I do. And obviously DaeJanae is an amazing partner. Most days I work for her and that's okay. The YAB is a pretty amazing group of young people and they've done a lot. They've lobbied legislation, they've gotten tuition labors for homeless youth, they've gotten minor rights consent laws. So minors can access shelter for safety. They've done such a tremendous amount of work, and they're on some national panels with the Center for Law and Social Policy and really influencing national policy. So, they're just an amazing team. But I would say one thing that DaeJanae did leave out, and I wanna call it out because I think what is amazing is the young people actually sat at the table with landlord negotiations. They met with the landlords, looked at all the sites that were being considered, interviewed the landlords, answered landlords' questions and concerns. Were very instrumental in a selection of resident advocates that were used with lived experience, who were actually hired then to be the onsite campus, if you will asset resource to use.

1:07:21.2 RP: So a lot of peer support there that was really very different than what we had done before in a traditional rapid rehousing program and the landlords absolutely love our youth, they want more. They wanna give us more units, and sometimes that landlord engagement is really around helping landlords to see that it's not as scary as they think, and the YAB was really instrumental in doing that. And now, the YAB and the landlords have ongoing conversations around youth housing, what it could look like, what they should expect and they recognize that the YAB members provide additional sort of support to the landlord if they're struggling with a young person, they can reach out to the YAB and they get peer consult, which is helpful, so I think there's some amazing things happening in that space when you bring forward the amazing expertise of lived experience and you really open your ears to hearing what needs to be said, and you really sit down and problem solve around what that looks like in actuality.

1:08:23.0 RP: I'm not saying it wasn't scary at first when the YAB got to interview all of the YHDP applicants and if they said "no, it didn't even go to committee for consideration," it was dead in the water, but you just have to trust and have faith and belief, and they were amazing. And they said no to providers and providers knew going in that if the YAB interviewed them and said, "You're not legit, you're not real, I don't think you're really taking a position that's in the best benefit of young people in our community," that they weren't gonna be advanced and we didn't have any folks filing appeals. We didn't have anybody questioning the process. They were face-to-face interviews with the YAB, and I just think it was a really unique experience and one that we're now embedding in a lot of our ongoing work, beyond the youth community but into our adult community as well. And so I just say "Shout out! We've got the best YAB in the country. Sorry, but it is what it is."

1:09:30.8 MW: Thank you. DaeJanae, we have a follow-up question for you. So, we'd like you to speak a little bit more about your lobbying efforts for a minors right to shelter.

1:09:43.2 DD: So, we were working with an organization, a higher education organization in

Baltimore and they came to us a little earlier in the year before they started legislation in Maryland, they're bringing it up to us, so we started planning out [1:10:02.8] _____ as a Youth Action Board and figuring out how to give minors right to consent, because me personally, I didn't know that was a thing in Maryland where, okay, a minor goes into a shelter, okay, you have to call their parents. I thought, okay, they can at least spend the night there. And then you kind of notify the parents. So, the Youth Action Board all came together with personal experiences, either being homeless or seeing, wonder their peer is homeless, and we kind of formatted an idea of how to present it to the senators and the delegates.

1:10:38.3 DD: So, I had a chance to first be in a room with the delegates and kind of discussed what the YAB does and why it's so important to pass this law, and then we started going to each delegate's office and me personally, I worked there during college, so I kinda went around to just be like, "Yeah, this is what we're doing," and the senator and Youth Action Board had the privilege to really gain a little bit more, I can say, encourage and speaking about their experience, and some of them interrupted me speaking and they started speaking about, "Okay, this is what we need to do. How are you gonna implement this?" There's youth out here that need a place to go, there's youth out here that sometimes escape from a serious situation and then you're just putting them right back in there at sometimes, and then sometimes you need to have family unification. So I think with that law and us coming in and advocating, it really made a difference.

1:11:47.5 DD: First, it was like people were very adamant about passing the law [1:11:54.8] _____ very unsure. After we came, they voted unanimous to pass the law in Maryland. So that got passed in July. So now, we [1:12:07.5] _____ with the Youth Action Board and YHDP and Prince George's County and it's working throughout different communities in Maryland, we kinda provide more services to youth under the age of 18 when it comes to having housing. Even though you still have to reach out to somebody at Social Services, they still get the mental health services, and sometimes it's a little easier to do family unification, and sometimes you can kind of figure out what the youth need and what the family need and figure out if the household is a fit for them or if they need other services. So that's what we did. We just spoke up. And we were proud. And we passed a law.

1:12:50.4 MW: All right, great job, DaeJanae. We're so grateful for you. So, thank you. All right, we have just... We're getting close to our time, so we're gonna have, we have one more question on our list and then we have... We're gonna have a final question that'll be kind of a round robin amongst our panelists. So, Vivian, if you're still here, I wondered if you could go first on what do we do about challenges and barriers that are seemingly out of our control, such as landlord screening practices.

1:13:25.0 Vivian: No, absolutely, and honestly, I think the landlord screening practices are easier to deal with. What I think is more challenging is sort of the segregated nature of our neighborhood, and that rapid rehousing is an intervention in which, of course, our participants take over the rent, so it has to be affordable to them at the end. And we know that there are some parts of our community that are [1:13:53.9] _____ and less affordable, so by nature, sometimes they choose housing that is in the lower income, more impoverished, racially segregated neighborhoods, and I say it's seemingly out of our control, but I do think there are some things that if we thought creatively we could address, such as when we exit people from rapid rehousing, maybe we attach a shallow subsidy.

1:14:22.7 Vivian: Again, looking at equity versus equality. If maybe to make up that difference of

a higher income neighborhood with better school choices and better community resources, grocery stores, that sort of thing. Maybe if we had a shallow long-term subsidy to follow folks, that could even the playing field a little bit. So I think that, while Michelle, I totally agree with you, I go to communities all over the place and I live in the San Francisco Bay area. My house is literally 10 minutes from Google. The competitiveness for housing is insane, and we find housing all the time, it's just where we find the housing changes as the market changes. So I think that's the biggest barrier when I'm really looking at racial disparity is making sure that we are putting people where they're gonna thrive and have all of the resources that they deserve.

1:15:26.2 MW: Thank you. Mary Francis, can you weigh in on that one as well?

1:15:32.7 MK: Sure, Michelle. Echoing everything that Vivian just shared, I think that, by nature I'm a problem-solver, and I think if we reframe the work that we do as problem-solving, every problem has at least one solution. I find that when we are in spaces as service providers, or CoC leads, or faith-based communities, who are around the table and we're having conversations and we're stuck on the problem, that's an indicator that we don't have all of the right people around the table to help us do some solution-ing to come up with a menu of options to address that particular problem. And I share that to say that, in many communities where we have seen... In many communities where we have really seen... Seen them not be able to effectively address some of those barriers or challenges that come up, it's because of not having the right people around the table, it's because we're not engaging the true experts.

1:16:45.3 MK: I don't need to reaffirm what DaeJanae just shared, but those are some really practical solutions to problems, big problems, big problems that they face, not just in Prince George's County, but in the entire state of Maryland. And I'm sure that the work was hard, but the way that those youths were able to put their heads together, were able to unify their collective voice and affect change, that's how it works. There isn't a challenge or a barrier that's insurmountable, we just have to make sure that we have the right people working on that problem and guiding the solutions to those problems in the driver's seat. And that's really the only thing that I would add, Michelle.

[overlapping conversation]

1:17:27.8 MW: Thank you. All right, we're at our...

[overlapping conversation]

1:17:30.4 MW: Yes, go ahead.

1:17:33.8 RP: I'm sorry, I just wanted to piggyback on something Mary Francis said, 'cause I think it's really important. Part of the discussion around housing, locally, has to involve housing. If they're not aware of the challenges that you're experiencing with landlords, if you can't marshall the collective force of a Housing Authority or a Department of Housing and Community Development, then you're missing an opportunity. And so, having those conversations around what means affordable housing, we all know it's not really affordable, we need deeply affordable housing and we need it spread throughout our community. And we need a targeted solution for that to happen. So, when your housing agencies are having those conversations around housing opportunities for all and building plans for the next 10 years, etcetera, the voice has to be at the table, the lived

experience has to be at the table, CoCs have to be at the table, the serving communities have to be at the table.

1:18:23.3 RP: And we have to be able to make the business case. We have to demonstrate value-added. When you're having conversations with landlords, it's the business case, "Well, if you let me know when your unit's available, I can fill it for you in three days, you don't have to do advertising, you don't have to re-do pre-evaluations, we can get it expedited for inspection. We come with case management support. You have a 911 to call." How do you make the business case for what the value-added is that isn't just money? And how do you build long-term housing opportunities in your community by partnering with the organizations that do the build-up, re-development, housing agencies, etcetera?

1:19:02.4 MW: Thank you. Great. Okay, so our last question. This has been so great today, I just wanna say that, people. So... [chuckle] As we jump into this, this has been one of the most exciting things. So, one of our questions from the chat that I wanna just use for, I think, Mary Francis and Renee and Vivian kind of answered this question, so I'm gonna look to Jeff and DaeJanae and Curtis. What can our CoC partners and direct service providers be doing that will be culturally sensitive and actively empowering for folks with lived experience to help shape programs? It's a long question. What can we do that would be culturally sensitive and actively empowering for people to come... To bring their expertise to shaping programs?

1:19:50.9 CH: Okay, I'll get it, I'll get it. We used to have a saying a while back that we would say, "It's a Black thing, you wouldn't understand." So, to keep it 100 on that, it's true. But as well, it's important to educate of culture as well. So there's a lot of people who don't belong to certain cultures that know a lot about it, there's people who know how to cook, who know how to do certain other things that cultures do and they know how to... And if you educate yourself enough at heart, you can see and view things better in the eyes of those people. So this is a... Being Black is a natural thing to me, but it's not to other people. So we have to educate... We have to educate ourselves and other people on what the obstacles and barriers and stuff like that that we face. I think that we just have to educate.

1:21:02.0 CH: We're in the right... We're on the right path right now of what we're doing, we're definitely on the right path about it, but I personally have found out that education and how important it is from my past and lived experience, I have found out how it is. I'm a former gang member. I walked the street. I threw up gang signs. I'm from the Crips. I'm not supposed to understand none of this stuff, but I do. But I do. Because why? Because I'm able to humble myself and place myself in another person's position to be able to see and understand and view things from their angle. Even though I'm not that, I'm able to stop and accept and view things. I'm not supposed to, but I do, because I've adopted that philosophy and understanding in order to make things better. So my answer is to educate. Thank you.

1:22:07.1 MW: Thank you. Right, you got a lot of 'amen' captured in the chat.

[laughter]

1:22:13.2 MW: So, Jeff?

1:22:18.2 JR: That's absolute key, is that we try to live up to what we espouse to be. As I've

mentioned earlier, when we were talking about rapid rehousing, the implementation of rapid rehousing, the policies were there and the policies were right, it's how we implemented them that were wrong. If we could educate and if we could go by... I don't wanna break out into a chorus of "We are the world," but if we could get to actually living what the Constitution says, we all have a right to it, we claim to be the melting pot. It's gonna be about understanding each other, it's gonna be about accepting that different doesn't mean wrong, that if it's not like me, that doesn't make it wrong because it's not like me. And to Curtis's point, it's a Black thing, it's time for us to teach the Black thing to other people so that they understand as well because a lot of times it's met with a little bit of apprehension because that's not the story, 'cause it's not what I came from, so therefore, I'm not the best [1:23:21.4] _____ to say because it's not how I was taught or how I was raised. I will say... That's pretty hold music. There we go.

1:23:29.8 MW: Right, I'm like... I don't... I was like, "What is that music?" Is that... Does it mean something for us? Is that what that music is for? [laughter] Okay, I thought you just always set all your comments to music, Jeff. I thought that was just your trademark, so...

[laughter]

1:23:48.1 JR: No, I thought that was my one-minute warning.

1:23:50.2 MW: Right, right.

[laughter]

1:23:52.4 JR: But I'm... That's okay. It's about education and living up to what we espouse to be.

1:24:00.4 MW: Thank you so much. DaeJanae, would you like to add anything?

1:24:05.1 DD: Yeah. They both did great, so I'm just adding a little bit. [laughter] But as I said, with my work in general, just killing the bias and killing, basically, the stigma that's going around, basically, whether it's mental, whether it's physical. Well, it's like Mr. Curtis said, "It's a Black thing," I'm like, we all have to have an open mind, personally and within the work, 'cause if you don't have an open mind to anything, then what are you doing here? Sorry to sound blunt, but what are you doing here in this work if you're not opening your mind to different situations and people's situations and stuff like that? So having an open mind within this work, and personally will really open the doors and the floodgates to change.

1:25:00.6 MW: Great, thank you so much. I just wanna thank all of our panelists for being here, for their candid comments, for the discussion. I hope you all have enjoyed it as much as I have, and I hope that this leads to you having these types of conversations in your community, sitting down and talking about what you're doing, what your programs are doing, "How can we do better?" Just a reminder, next week, next Tuesday, same time, same place, better audio, we will be having a deep-dive on assertive engagement and tackling a lot of the questions that came up today, like things around case management, working with people who have no income, increasing income, those type of things. And then the following week, we're gonna focus on landlord engagement. And so the questions you have about how to find housing, please bring those to those sessions. We look forward to engaging with you for the next four Tuesdays after today. So we appreciate you all, thank you all panelists. And we will let you guys have three minutes back of your day. Thank you.