

# **Roundtable Series Session 5**

## **Innovation in RRH Session**

**0:00:03.0 Ben:** Alright, so as I said, this is the fifth and final session of the Rapid Re-housing Roundtable series. We have frankly been overwhelmed by the interest in the engagement around these sessions. We've had well over 1000-1500 more of you registering for each session, we've been maxing out our live audience capacity. You all have been very active in the chat with tons of questions, you've started an email thread with some of you, I think, to share more information and have even deeper conversations on these topics. So I think the biggest takeaway is there's obviously a lot of energy and a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of attention, and a lot of questions around the topic of rapid re-housing.

**0:00:46.4 Ben:** So we're grateful to have had this space together to ask those questions, just to have this conversation in a really public forum that we can share out with others and... But we do hope, I think that the series is really the start of the conversation and of the innovation that is needed to continue making rapid re-housing a critical tool in our tool box of ending homelessness. And that this is the beginning of the conversation.

**0:01:16.5 Ben:** This is not by any means an end, in and itself, and that is... The future is exactly what we're gonna be focusing on in today's session. So if you've joined us in any of the previous four sessions, hopefully you're seeing some familiar faces on here. We are pleased to have many of our panelists from previous sessions re-joining us today. And the focus today is really gonna be to talk about the lessons learned from the past two years of re-housing amidst the disruption of the pandemic. But also the vision for what's needed to make rapid re-housing work in the future as we strive towards a more equitable system. I think somebody you haven't seen on before, are some friends from HUD, Latoya Young and Norm Suchar, who have graciously joined us today, and you'll be hearing from towards the end of the session. But some questions were coming up in the chat throughout this around, how are we gonna have HUD hear this? And what's HUD's role gonna be in responding to some of these things? So it was... HUD is the ones who brought us here and invited here and created the space for us all along, so they have been listening and paying attention and hearing all of these things. But I wanted to really make sure too their presence is seen and felt today and you'll hear from them as well.

**0:02:42.2 Ben:** So thanks to our HUD friends for joining today. As I said earlier, as a reminder, this session is being recorded. It is gonna be shared out as soon as possible, along with a transcript of the conversation and the chat log. So all of those things will be posted online for you within the next couple of days. And I believe all previous four sessions are already up, and the transcripts and the chat logs are already posted on the website, so we'll put that link in the chat throughout the session today and throughout the conversation. So, before we turn it over to our fabulous panelists and kick today's conversation off, I just want to take just three minutes to highlight a few key themes that have emerged from the previous session so that as we enter and engage in today's conversation, we kinda keep that front of mind. What are the things we've talked about?

**0:03:33.3 Ben:** What are the opportunities? What are the challenges? And just what are the sort of consistent things that we've been hearing and they keep coming up in conversation after conversation? Whether we're talking about landlord engagement or case management or rapid exit or whatever we may be talking about, what keeps coming up? And I think probably first and foremost, something that we continue to hear is that advancing equity through inclusive program design through decision-making, the places, people with lived experience of homelessness at the center, is so critical to this work. And increasingly we're recognizing the need for a system and for programs that utilize explicit strategies to deliver services that are culturally specific and that

address disparities that we know exist in our system and in the systems that feed into homelessness as well.

**0:04:21.4 Ben:** And very related to that, along with that, we've talked about the need for authentic partnerships as a critical component of the ongoing success of this intervention and really our systems more broadly. And that is partnerships, certainly with people with lived experience of homelessness who are receiving services in our system, but it also means authentic partnerships and engagement with landlords and with other systems that engage people experiencing homelessness. And it even comes up as we talk about our own staff and the people who are delivering services, that there's meaningful relationships, opportunities for input into how this work is done is important from a variety of perspectives. And we've certainly heard about your challenges, a market that was already very high cost and very low vacancy before the pandemic, and that has been super charged and making housing location difficult in really every community doing this work.

**0:05:22.7 Ben:** The challenges of serving people who have very little or no income. We've heard a lot from folks who are very small organizations and talking about the challenges of building capacity within your organization, that they have a limited budget and staff who are trying to be case managers and landlord recruiters and outreach staff, and a host of other services with maybe one or two staff with a lot of competing demands. So the challenges of doing this work in that context. We've heard about at all levels, at all size programs, staffing shortages and turnover, which is something that I know has been a challenge in the field for many years, but again, has been accelerated in recent months.

**0:06:02.3 Ben:** We've heard about some regulatory barriers and funding limitations that keep us from providing services at the scope and scale of the need. And of course, protecting the health and safety of our staff and participants in the midst of a global pandemic has come up again and again. I would say, just in summary and above all, what we have seen and heard most is just really a desire to engage in these kinds of conversations and to go beyond just the nuts and bolts of how to deliver services or structure programs, but digging much deeper into why we do this work, and how we design programs and how we design systems with equity at the center, with the best interest of people experiencing homelessness as the driving force of why we do what we do. And that can address those challenges that I just named in ways that are not just a temporary solution, but that really addressed those things at their core and long-term.

**0:07:02.5 Ben:** So we've heard real talk, we've heard honesty, we've heard vulnerability about the challenges and the struggles, the adaptations and the successes, both from our panelists and from you all in the chat and in the questions that have come in, so we thank all the panelists, we thank all of you for joining us, and we look forward to just really doing more of that today, and hopefully more of this in the future. And so, with that, I think I'm gonna turn it over to Michelle Williams, who is gonna help us facilitate the conversation today. So over to you, Michelle.

**0:07:33.7 Michelle Williams:** Thanks, Ben. Good afternoon everyone. We have a wonderful panel with us today, some of our returning guests, so I wanna take a minute and allow everyone to introduce themselves, so I will get the first person started and then we'll kind of popcorn it from there. Okay. So today's check-in question, or introduction question is your name, your location or community that you're in, and what is the one word that describes the why you do this work. Alright. So I'm gonna start with... I'm just gonna go top of my screen, I'm gonna start with Lynn.

**0:08:17.1 Lynn Phillips:** Hi good afternoon. My name is Lynn Phillips, I am with Southern Management Companies. We are based in Northern Virginia and the Maryland area around Washington DC and Baltimore area, and we have a lot of workforce housing. So my why is that we raised generations here. We've been here for many years, and so a lot of generations have come through our apartment home. Thank you.

**0:08:40.0 Ben:** Thank you. Denise?

**0:08:46.3 Denise Neunaber:** Denise Neunaber, I'm with Redesign Collaborative in Raleigh, North Carolina, and I'm working at the state level with a couple of states to make sure that we are thinking about re-housing systems and getting assistance out the door. My one... If I have to have one word here for my why, I'm gonna pick dignity, because I really firmly believe deep in my soul that people... Everyone should get the chance to live with dignity, and a big piece of that is being able to have a home. And I will ask Summer to go next.

**0:09:24.3 Summer Wright:** Thank you. I'm Summer Wright, I'm located in Austin, Texas, and my why, to keep it short and simple, is a basic human empathy, I will pass it to Ree.

**0:09:40.9 Ree:** Hi, Ree she, her, hers. I'm mixed, white and Arab. I am in Austin. My word is... This is a hard question. I don't want anybody else to go through this ever again, so we can stop this if we get all the collective brilliance together, that was a lot. That was not one word. I'm sorry, I'm gonna pass it over to Renee.

**0:10:04.3 Reneer Ensor Pope:** Thanks, Ree. I'm Renee Ensor-Pope and I am with Prince George's County Maryland, Continuum of Care lead, she, her hers. And I think my one word is belief. I really believe that collectively, if you invest in this work and you put your whole self into it, we can really make a difference and we can change the trajectory of so many lives, and that we are gifted to have that opportunity and it's a blessing. So I believe. I'm gonna turn it over to Chris.

**0:10:42.0 Chris Freed:** Chris Freed. I am in LA. One word. Solvable, I have a million words, but I'll make it one. Solvable, solvable. And I'm gonna give it to Kathy.

**0:10:58.3 Kathy Zahl:** Hey, Kathy Zahl, I'm from New London, Connecticut. We operate an emergency shelter and rapid re-housing program. My couple of words is that all might be housed, and I will turn it over to Mikaela.

**0:11:20.5 Mikaela:** Thanks Kathy, sorry my mouse was missing. Hi, I'm Mikaela. I am the program manager at Your Way Home in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, which is a suburb outside of Philadelphia. And my word is connection. None of us can solve this alone and no one can solve their homelessness by themselves, and so understanding that we are all in this together is the only way I think we'll ever get through it. I will pass this to Mary.

**0:11:53.4 Mary Francis Kenyan:** Thanks, Mikaela. I'm Mary Frances Kenion, she, her pronouns. I'm a HUD TA provider based in Southern Maryland, and I cannot just do one word, I'm gonna do a two-word combo, but three words. Housing is a fundamental right. I did five. But it's a fundamental right. That's what I'm sticking with, Michelle, sorry, I'm gonna popcorn it over to Lola.

**0:12:17.8 Lola:** I'm not even gonna lie, I'm not giving one word... I'm sorry, if I had to give one

word, it would be myself, like the previous me. I've experienced housing. Hi, I'm Lola. I'm the current chair of the YAB in Baltimore City, and I also am chair of the YHAC and COC board. I'm just an activist in Baltimore City 'cause I've experienced homelessness, and I don't want anyone, any of you, for anyone to have to experience homelessness, so I do my portion to give back and make my experience not in vain, so my previous self, my older self, and everyone else who has those experiences. I'm gonna popcorn it, my bad. I forgot. I was trying to keep it short and simple. Latoya Young.

**0:13:15.3 Latoya Young:** Good afternoon, I'm Latoya Young, I work for HUD in the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs as a SNAP specialist, and my word would be free, and I'm thinking about Dr. Martin Luther King's quote of, "No one is free until we all are free," and I will go ahead and pop corn it over to Tim.

**0:13:43.6 Timmy:** Hello, everybody. My name is Timmy [0:13:48.9] \_\_\_\_ I am the Director for Training and Technical Assistance for DASH, the District Alliance for Safe Housing, and my word would be love. Love for people, love for partnerships, love for systems. And so, yeah, that's it for me. I think I will kick it off to Norm.

**0:14:10.7 Norm Suchar:** Hi, Norm Suchar, I'm with the SNAPS office at HUD. He, him. And my word is inclusion, since that we're all in this together. I'm gonna pop things over to Kira.

**0:14:24.6 Kira Zylstra:** Thanks, Norm. Hey, Kira Zylstra. I use she, her pronouns, and I'm a HUD technical assistance provider at ICF, and my one word is relationship. And I will turn it over to Michael? Have you not gone yet?

**0:14:46.7 Michael Raposa:** Hey everybody. I'm Michael Raposa, I'm the CEO with St. Vincent de Paul CARES. We cover almost the entire west coast of Florida, including the county's inland doing rapid re-housing, and we basically have our own mini continuum of care within our organization, 'cause we have everything from outreach all the way into permanent housing and permanent supportive housing on the back end of it. And my one word is mercy, and I chose the word mercy because it's about our heart, my heart and the heart of our organization connecting with the hearts of the people did, or did not have a bed to sleep in last night, and I will popcorn it over to... Oh my God, who hasn't gone? Raise your hand... Curtis.

**0:15:27.5 MW:** It's Curtis.

**0:15:31.0 Curtis:** I'm always last.

**0:15:32.7 MR:** Aww, I thought that I was gonna be the last one. [laughter]

**0:15:38.0 Curtis:** My name is Curtis Howard, and I'm in San Diego. I am the lead organizer for All Of Us Or None, San Diego Chapter. We have 27 chapters nationwide. We're an advocacy group for formerly incarcerated people and their families. I work with the Regional Homeless Task Force as a lived experience consultant, and my word is prevention, which is to prevent anyone from going through what I did. Thank you.

**0:16:07.9 MW:** Thank you, Curtis.

**0:16:11.5 Curtis:** And I believe Derek.

**0:16:13.6 MW:** We're gonna make Derek come off of...

**0:16:20.7 Derek Wentorf:** I can jump in. Hey everybody, Derek Wentorf, he him pronouns. So lucky to be here. I work at CSH based in Seattle. My one word is absolutely is, was already taken, but it's absolutely just the people that we're walking with. We're all in this together. I think Norm highlighted that, this is a community effort. And for me, this work is all about that, so I'll pass it back to you, Michelle. Thanks everybody.

**0:16:48.3 MW:** Great, thank you everyone. My one word is all of your words, so I'm gonna take everybody's word because they all made a ton of sense to me, and we'll make a word cloud that we send out with them. So we wanna jump right into hearing from our panelists today and talking with you as we think about innovation and how it applies to rapid re-housing. We have to start with what we want to innovate. So my question for the panel today, and we're gonna round-robin is, what did the pandemic expose in our systems as ineffective? Go ahead, Chris.

**0:17:30.8 CF:** So I think it was something that Ben talked about early on, and that was that we already had communities across... Well, every community I can think of across the US that was talking about already having low vacancy rates and really high rents, and so that wasn't necessarily new and it wasn't exposed during the pandemic, we knew it, but what was exposed during the pandemic was just how tight the rental market was going to... How much tighter it could become, one, and two, that we have a shortage across the country in one-bedroom and studio apartments, the planners didn't plan for people being by themselves, they planned for families. And so a tight rental market became even more tough to be able to access relative to be able to move people in and to practice Housing First, moving people in very quickly, getting them situated.

**0:18:31.0 CF:** So for me, it really exposed the need to think of something creative and outside the lines to be able to bring in more landlords and for people who know me, I talk about shared housing forever, and I think that shared housing should not be the only toolbox, but it absolutely needs to be tool. And I think the pandemic brought that forward, carrying it with master leasing the need to actually take over units so that you can encourage landlords to sign on and up.

**0:18:57.3 MW:** Great. Thank you, Chris. Kathy?

**0:19:02.6 KZ:** I think what it exposed to me in a positive way is that rapid re-housing used to be a boutique program. So we would spend hours and hours trying to think about who were the five people that we could give access to rapid re-housing to. And the pandemic, I think has shown us that with the right investment, we should be doing rapid re-housing, rapid exit, whoever, with the vast majority of people. And that's my hope, is that somehow, we can keep that level of investment and not drop back down to a situation where you can offer this to only some select few. Thanks.

**0:19:47.6 MW:** Thanks, Kathy. Mary Frances?

**0:19:51.3 MK:** Just echoing what both Chris and Kathy have shared, but from my lens, I think one of the greatest inefficiencies that were exposed in light of the pandemic was how siloed we operate, how we operate as a homeless response system here and as a housing ecosystem on the other side. That was exposed. But we've had a number of communities throughout the country that have been

able to bridge those silos and really partner together to put some oomph behind getting people housed, some of the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness across the country, and I think that that demonstrates to us that we can use rapid re-Housing as an effective strategy for people that are unsheltered, for folks that are chronically homeless, for youth, for a range of different people experiencing homelessness, just to resolve that immediate crisis, whether they may need an additional housing intervention down the line, this is a really great opportunity.

**0:21:05.5 MW:** Thank you. Denise, do you wanna give us the last reflection on what did the pandemic expose in our systems that's ineffective? Okay. You're on mute, Denise.

**0:21:19.3 DN:** Thank you. I really agree with Mary Frances with what it's exposed of siloing, but I think in general, pandemic has shown all of us just how connected we are. In our sector, in housing, in services, but also just in our daily lives. And so for me, what it has exposed the most is how we have planned our system in scarcity. So because we've been living in scarcity, we've planned for scarcity. So we've planned whole systems around screening folks out, thinking about who's out and who's in. And we have planned all of our systems around how much money we have, which has not been enough. So for me, it's a lot of pieces have been exposed all around that of our backbone systems aren't strong enough, big enough, fast enough to get this level of assistance out quickly, whether that's just being able to get rent out quickly, or whether it's services of making sure that we have a large enough workforce, not only on admin, but also on housing navigation and on case management, it's definitely shown how interconnected we are, like with what Chris said, if we haven't planned for one bedroom or studio apartments, that we're not connected there, which I think just highlights the silos again. So I think most of it for me is really that we've been designed around scarcity and how...

**0:22:42.1 DN:** I think we really have to move out of that, and hopefully that's with continued investments that we can move out of that to really design a system that will allow us to continue to house people and allow us to continue to see success. We've seen such success, but I think we now really all appreciate that a roll of toilet paper doesn't just show up on the shelf, right? There's a lot of systems that have to be there and a lot of different individual pieces that have to be there in place, and so I'm hoping moving forward, that's what we really do, is think about each component and think about what we need to do to scale.

**0:23:17.3 MW:** Great. Lola, I'm gonna ask you if you can kick us off with the next stage of question, which is what's needed to respond and make rapid re-housing work in the current environment that we have with high housing costs and the stagnant wages and benefits, low vacancy rates in communities.

**0:23:38.6 Lola:** That's a long question.

**0:23:39.6 MW:** I know. I know. [chuckle]

**0:23:41.9 Lola:** And I need to have time to think about it. But I think what's needed is the first step, which we have already... A lot of us have already acknowledged that it doesn't work. And I think for so long it was like, it's a system already in play, let's just make it work or figure out how can we make it work? But, now that we all have realized it doesn't work, let's take a step back and revamp this and see what parts of it doesn't work. And let's fix those parts before we keep working a broken machine. So that's my answer that I came up with on the spot, I'm proud of me.

**0:24:20.3 MW:** Thank you Lola. [chuckle] Ree? Oh Ree, you're on mute too.

**0:24:31.2 Ree:** Sorry, I wish I had been on your panel Lola, 'cause you're giving me so much, I don't know, life. I just adore you and you're making my life brighter. I think what's needed... Yeah, can somebody drop the question in the chat? 'Cause it was a really long question, but, my... Yeah, just so that...

**0:24:44.8 MW:** I'm gonna say it again for you too. What's needed to respond and make rapid re-housing work in our current environment that has high housing costs, low wages, low vacancy rates, maybe staffing shortages. What's really needed to make rapid re-housing work in our current environment?

**0:25:05.8 Ree:** Yeah, so I think that this is gonna get a little ephemeral probably for folks, like a little higher level, but I think a really huge thing that's needed is for the systems that are in place, there's this whole movement right now around, "Oh, let's embrace people with lived experience," and I stay out of this personal lived experience 'cause that shit is sometimes kind of frustrating 'cause it's virtue signaling versus actually doing the work. And I think that part of that also means that the power players, power positions have to be open to what we've been doing hasn't been working, and we have to be willing to stop being so risk-averse. We have to take risks. We have to do that. And if we're not willing to do that, we're not gonna see change. And we have to change the way we approach things. Right? This is getting deeper and this is not about a HUD thing. This is about a world thing. But that white dominant culture piece that tells us this way works this, this way works this, this way works that. Those ways do not work.

**0:26:02.1 Ree:** They work to serve one group of people, and it is not the people that we're trying to serve today right now to make sure nobody's outside tonight in the cold. Right? So we have to have our own kind of transformation as internal individuals, but also as a system that is saying we are willing to embrace that we're gonna make mistakes and we're gonna hear from something... Somebody put in the chat box, "Nothing About Us Without Us," which is something you hear in [0:26:24.9] \_\_\_\_ Waishiki all the time. That has to be fully embraced. And to fully embrace it means to take some chances that are scary for people that are positioned to power and used to how things go. If things worked, then we wouldn't all be on this call right now. The way that things have been going, if they worked, we wouldn't be needed. And we're still here. So let's try a new thing, that's all.

**0:26:47.0 MW:** Thanks Ree. Curtis, I wanted to see if you have any thoughts on what we can do to make rapid re-housing more effective in our current environment.

**0:26:57.2 Curtis:** Sure, absolutely. I would have to go with people who care and people with a passion to be involved on the staff. You have people who care and you have people who have jobs. When you're dealing with people who have jobs, they're there to do their job. Just because they have that job, does not mean they care. If they don't care, they're not gonna take the time out to understand the needs of the people. And when we started during the pandemic and opened up housing programs, I noticed there were a lot of... There were people housed, that was the easy part, getting people in. But after that, to understand the people's needs and to move them on and to serve them service-wise, that was not there because there were a lot of people who did not care, there were a lot of people who were there for jobs, that looked at people as problems because of the needs

that they had, rather than understanding the people. If you don't care about this business, then it's gonna be ineffective. So we need people who care, and who will take the time out to understand the needs of other people in order to make it successful. Thank you.

**0:28:07.8 MW:** Thank you, Curtis. I'm gonna interject my own thoughts on this one just based on what you said, I've been doing a lot of thinking and working and soul searching around this concept of empathy. We always talk about it, that we want people to have empathy. We want them to come to us with empathy, and I think that's all wonderful and great. And this is what I will always say, there's two types of empathy, one is emotional empathy and one is cognitive empathy. And so I love it that we're all emotionally empathetic, we bring that to our work and that's great, but that's not where we stop. The highest level of intellect is cognitive empathy, when you use your energy and your creative power to make an outcome better for someone else. And so I just wanna put that challenge out to the community at large here, to say, what we're looking for is not that we feel all the pain, that's great, but what are we gonna do to make that pain stop? And that's where we bring all of our skill set. So I encourage you all out there and the people, the thousand people who are watching, to add that to your interview questions for staff. And [chuckle] I will Kathy, thank you. If you wanna respond.

**0:29:24.5 KZ:** Yeah, I think the other thing I would point out, and people have said this before, is to really get serious about being person-centered and to really get serious about helping, recognizing the people of agency and that they're seeking to build their capacity. And that means flexibility, that means so many things that we don't have right now, and so much of our system is set up for the benefit of providers and not really radically for the benefit of people. And I think we're gonna have to somehow figure out how to change that, and that's not gonna be easy, and it's gonna require flexibility, which doesn't seem to go in the same sentence, unfortunately with government sometimes. But I think that's going to have to be part of what we do, is think about how do we really get centered on people as opposed to systems? Opportunities rather than problems.

**0:30:18.3 MW:** Thank you, Kathy. Michael?

**0:30:21.6 MR:** So, there's two ways to view the question, and there's an external answer to this, and then of course there's an internal answer to this. And I live my life by the core constructs of that serenity prayer, to make change where I can affect change and to accept some areas where I can't and staying focused on what we can change, to me, is the most critical piece. So I don't know that I agree that all of the systems failed is part of this, I do think that there was inefficiencies. But we work across 10 Continuum of Cares. And I'll tell you that the systems where we work that took the time to document their services by cohort, 'cause every map looks different. The systems that took the time to make sure the coordinated injury was real and functioning, really have fared well to process large volumes of people and dramatically drop the homeless numbers down and house an inordinate amount of people in a very, very fast pace, in a fast amount of time. Conversely, the systems that did not do that, or were not prepped for that, had really at best been organized chaos. And that part to me is just a huge challenge. And I think that communities across the nation, if you don't have documented system maps, if you don't have an understanding of the resources that you have, the pathways to get those resources, and you're just operating blindly, it's like trying to land a plane at an airport with no air traffic controllers.

**0:32:00.4 MR:** It just doesn't work, and someone's gonna... There's gonna be a crash. There's just no way about it. And then the second thing, lesson learned, that I really think that we have to keep

in mind long-term for the civilians is very similar to the work that the VA is doing with Child Care Subsidy long-term for the veterans that are being processed on a SSV [0:32:21.5] \_\_\_\_\_. The market moved faster than income could ever move because of the... Truthfully, I honestly... Our experience has been... It's because of the moratorium, and there are so many large companies that lost bazillions of dollars in fair market housing, they've doubled, tripled the rent, and they forced all of those people onto the marketplace that we're targeting, and so it drove the demand up, dramatically where I don't know how long it's gonna take to recover from that, but our concern is that all of the ESG-CV money that's out there, we're panicked, and we are very, very good at sustainability. But I have to tell you that the difference between the income and even that affordable... Affordable rents that we're looking at right now, the lowest rent in the community, that gap is so strong that long-term, we're gonna be in a lot of trouble, and I fear that a lot of these households are gonna go back into the system. They are gonna recidivise.

**0:33:25.9 MW:** Thanks Michael. Mary Frances?

**0:33:27.0 MK:** Yeah, I have two comments here. Building off of what Kathy said earlier about being a truly person-centered, I think we need to start presuming competence of the people that are experiencing homelessness and allowing them to direct and inform and shape the decisions that are made at the systems level, at the program implementation level and virtually every other level within our structures. I also think now is the time to do some serious coalition building, right? We've had this huge investment and infusion of funding, much of it being allocated towards rapid re-housing. HUD is not the only funder. I'm gonna say it again. HUD is not the only funder, and local governments, state governments also need to have a stake in the game. They need to recognize that there's an opportunity, a very rare opportunity to continue to invest and to not maybe match exactly what we've gotten through CARES Act funding, but to continue to invest until nobody in their state, nobody in their local jurisdiction is experiencing homelessness. And if that means doing a regional collaboration across CoCs, then they need to do it. If that means reaching out to make sure that we're braiding funding at every potential opportunity across the different federal funding streams, then we need to do that. We have an incredibly rare opportunity, now is the time for us to be coalition building and reaching out to our stakeholders at every level to say, "Hey, we've got an opportunity"

**0:35:04.1 MK:** "Let's not blow it", Right? Let's not blow this change that we have to make a change in a long-term sustainable impact on people, our neighbors, our friends, our relatives, someone's mom, someone's aunt, someone's daughter, someone's brother, to make sure that they have the basic fundamental human right of housing.

**0:35:24.2 MW:** Thank you. Chris?

**0:35:28.0 CF:** Yeah, first of all, I just wanna point to something that Ree put in the chat. Sorry Ree, stealing your thunder right here, but it's really impactful to me because I'm one of those people that antagonize... I guess that's a bad word. Try not to be antagonistic, but I think it's really... It's important to not be quiet when things aren't working and to be... And be the voice for push for movement in a different direction, 'cause innovation, creativity, thinking outside the lines, and for the love of God, stop being risk-averse, particularly in the moment. So going back to what Mary Frances just said, there is a real opportunity right now to identify everything that isn't working and to start systematically listening to some of the really good suggestions that are out there, start making movement. Because dragging your feet and talking about, "Yeah her that sounds really

great."

**0:36:25.3 CF:** Let's think about that. Things that can actually start facilitating fast movement of people into housing fast, correct, right movement, looking at throughput, but in a different way, ensuring that you have the people on the right type of housing. When you first meet someone, it's almost impossible to determine what their needs are gonna be, it's through continued movement, and as you're working with people and houses, there's all kinds of different things that we've learned, I think just along our paths to where we're at today, but also through just what's happened in the pandemic.

**0:36:52.8 CF:** So I am gonna finish though, with what Ree said 'cause I think this is incredibly impactful here. For those of you that missed it in that chat, which is that I'm here for Angela Davis' take on this Serenity Prayer, I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change, I'm changing the things I cannot accept. And I think that with collaboration, with coalition building, with push of the innovative people, like people we have today on both as panelists, but also the people that are in chat, to actually help facilitate movement and create the change that we need so that it can have a positive impact on the people that we serve. Because ultimately, we're here to ensure that the people that we're working with, the privilege of being able to work with these individuals and families to... And veterans and whoever, whatever sub-population you're working with, but really the privilege of being able to help someone facilitate movement back indoors, that's why we're all here, working to ensure that people have a place to sleep that's safe.

**0:37:49.4 MW:** Thank you, Chris. Lola?

[pause]

**0:38:02.2 Lola:** I'm sorry, the chat was going off and I was trying to unmute. [chuckle] My thing is kind of going off of what Mary Frances and Michael said. The system is perfected. Literally, the system works to do what it's supposed to do, which is to keep the gap. It's supposed to keep the rich rich and the poor poor. At this point, we can no longer... We can't ignore it anymore. If the basic minimum wage doesn't match the cost of basic living, like even for studio apartments, it just doesn't make sense. It's just so blatant. I think since it's 2022, and we're all more aware and it's more [0:38:42.8] \_\_\_\_\_ prominent, I think that's the word and I think I said correct, but we can't ignore it anymore. It's just blatant. This doesn't even make sense.

**0:38:53.1 Lola:** So at this point, more than just finding the things that doesn't work, it's creating a new system, like dismantling what's our... Just starting from scratch. We know that people weren't... No, not the call. We know that people weren't included. The people that mattered and that it affects weren't included in the process of building it. So now including those people is what makes the change.

**0:39:27.0 MW:** Thank you. Ree, you wanna give us the last word on this one and we'll move on to our next question?

**0:39:33.4 Ree:** Okay, I'll be quick. I'm trying to keep myself timed. Again, Lola, we need to connect and I wanna just know you as a human 'cause I really do. I hate that I have to follow you every time 'cause you're brilliant, so it was just like overflowing. It took me four tries to get off the street, when I finally got the street, it wasn't through the system at all. In fact, the three times before

that was all through the system and every single time it wasn't successful. And so I think when we look at our numbers, 'cause I know everybody wants to look at numbers, but you see, you see. And so I think I'm really just trying to echo everything. This is like we are at a point in time. This is a moment, right? This is like... What's that line from that ridiculous... This is a movement not a moment, right? And that means we have to keep pushing forward. And I'm gonna be quiet 'cause actually, I legit... The next question is what I wanna... I'm gonna have my hand up, Michelle, but I will wait, but you just take us on to the next question.

**0:40:36.0 MW:** Okay. Alright, I'm gonna take us on to the next question, and I just wanna thank you all for that very candid discussion. I think one of the things that we can take away from the pandemic is that we learned a lot about ourselves as a system, about our communities, and we know that there were things that we were doing that worked well, right? And we just didn't have enough resource to do more of it. And so now we understand what more resource can do and where we have to figure out how to effectively utilize it, whether that's in terms of our staffing resources and trying to have staff, whether that's units, whatever that may be, we have really learned how to include the people that we're working so hard to serve. And as I said in the equity session, I encourage everyone to let go of what you hold on to as your personal fear that continues to keep someone from accessing the housing that they need, okay? So only you know what that is.

**0:41:36.3 MW:** So just moving on to our next question, which is, when we think about rapid re-housing in 2022 and beyond, what would it look like? What do we think that should look like and what would it look like if we were to move beyond equity to liberation? And I know Ree is waiting. Lola, is your hand up? Okay. Alright. [chuckle] I'm gonna give Ree that first question then 'cause I know she's chomping at the bit there.

**0:42:08.5 Ree:** Me?

**0:42:09.2 MW:** Yeah.

**0:42:09.4 Ree:** Okay. So I'm gonna tell y'all somethings. It's gonna suck and I'm gonna be really fast. But listen, here's the deal. What it looks like, we talked a lot about it in a sort of engagement, which I used to joke and call aggressive engagement, just low key 'cause you should. It's funny, fun little joke behind the scenes. But we talk about progressive engagement, and when we were talking, like we were talking liberation, and what liberation means is that you trust the person sitting across you to know what it is that they need for their own lives, right? That full agency of being a whole human. And so it gets frustrating 'cause I feel like a lot of folks are coming to the space and y'all are in this space of going, "Please just tell us what the steps are? How do we do this? We're in this place where we've got a shitty housing market, there's no..."

**0:42:57.7 Ree:** We can make the most incredible prioritization, but if we're just putting people on a list because there's no housing stock, what are we supposed to do? And so it looks like bringing those closest to the problem to building a new table. Liberation looks like, "I don't wanna sit at your table, your table is garbage for me." That led from that table, my work, that's a piece of the table top, we can use those pieces. But what does it look like to have a landlord at the table, for example, or a coalition of landlords in your community? But what does it also look like to share power? Right? Y'all people holding on to power like it's the only thing you've gotten and it's gonna give you life for the rest of your life. It ain't gonna do nothing for you. That power is steeped in white supremacy, that power is steeped in keeping people, meaning to keep people where they are. So

when we talk about, "What do we need next?" I know, you want bullet points. I'm here for you, I hear that. But start with authentically engaging, start with doing some internal, like what is race equity? What is all equity? What does equity look like in our space? 'Cause we're talking about how do we go from equity to liberation. Half these communities ain't outta equity yet.

**0:44:04.2 Ree:** That's alright, you know, that's okay, but it's like, don't just give up when it's hard. This isn't gonna be an easy thing. And it's not gonna happen next month, I swear to you. We want it to. We don't want people out there, but we have to... It's that edge. Michelle, what's your quote? That's the answer, that quote you always... That people have it up on on slides and shit, talking about urgency versus intentionality, and having people at the table come through with that. I'll be quiet, I'm done. Can that be the close to what I'm saying, is your quote?

**0:44:33.5 MW:** Yeah, I think it can, if I can say it properly. So urgency and equity don't have to be in competition, right? When we know what needs to be done, we can move urgently to do it. So, anyone else who would like to take a stab at that question? And I'll repeat it for you.

**0:44:54.6 S?:** I don't think...

**0:44:55.1 MW:** What does... Go ahead.

**0:44:56.5 S?:** I don't know that I'll get it as wholly, in its wholeness. But I think a big part of what needs to happen is a change in how we do use power and make sure that we're using it for the common good. And also a change in how we view responsibility. So I think it should not be... If I'm a case manager, it should not be my responsibility to come up with the plan for someone who is trying to get back into housing or experiencing homelessness. That's their responsibility to come up with a plan. My responsibility is to support that plan. If I am an agency, it should not be my responsibility to make sense of all the government forms, it should be the state's responsibility, or whoever the funder is that's coming up with the requirements, it should be their responsibility to come up with forms that makes sense to me that I have to fill out as an agency.

**0:45:57.1 S?:** So I just think, I've seen a lot of... I'm very good at critique. I've seen a lot of colleagues that were very good at critique. And I think it's a lot easier to look at what someone else is doing and say, "They should do it differently this way," than for us to look at our own power, wherever that is, and say, "This is what I can do differently." So I think some of it, for me, is just a real shift in, I guess, accountability. A lot of accountability and how we think about it and making sure that we're not gatekeeping.

**0:46:28.9 MW:** Thank you. I'm gonna get Chris and then Michael, and then I'm wondering if we could hear from Tim, Jeff, after that? So, on the same question.

**0:46:41.8 CF:** Mine's really quick. So moving on to people who know more than I do in this space, for sure. But what I would say is dismantle the fair housing laws that are absolutely 100% not fair and set up to create so much of the inequity that's happening. So I think, for me, we have to, as a system, anyway, that's one of the first things that we need to attack.

**0:47:03.9 MW:** Thank you. Michael?

**0:47:06.5 MR:** So when I use the word system, I'm not talking about a greater economic system in

the entire country. When I think of it, I'm thinking that I'm talking about the homeless system in each of the communities where we serve, and through that lens, I think that the one thing that we've seen is that rapid re-housing is the one intervention that will get the numbers down fastest. It will get people housed in both in theory and in practice. And we've been exploring the work that Chris started out in LA, or at least has done great in developing with shared housing. It has really proven to make a huge impact in our community by putting two people in a two-bedroom versus trying to put each one person in a one-bedroom.

**0:47:52.3 MR:** So, that has to happen. The homeless systems that we're working in are making a mad dash to not turn back this ESG-CV money, whether it has a one or a two or 10 after it. We're panicked. We're running in panic mode to get people out. And we need more time. The fact is the systems need more time to get this money out the door and get people housed by it before they start making foolish decisions with it. I think that the biggest fear that we're seeing on the ground, and I think it's real from the homeless system side, is that there's gonna come a day when we're gonna go back to no ability to ever house a homeless individual again. I think that the politics are there. The support is there in Washington to keep the federal money for veterans alive, but there is an inordinate amount of fear that we're gonna go back to the day that we're not going to have any funded RRH money for homeless individual men, individual women, or even families with children, for that matter. And so we're functioning out of panic, and I think that no good can come from decisions that are made in panic mode.

**0:49:02.2 MR:** And I don't know the process to get more time with this, but I have to tell you that with more time, you're going to see a dramatic... You're gonna see much better outcomes and much better results in the community. Even if CV2 could have six months or nine months or a year more, it would make a huge impact. We have some CoCs that are making decisions that technically are okay, but morally are reprehensible.

**0:49:29.9 MW:** Alright. So we're gonna move to Renee.

**0:49:38.1 RP:** Yeah. And I know you were moving some folks that I think could have a really interesting perspective from a lived perspective, but I think a lot of what we've been talking up till now contributes to the response to this last question, right? We need to be looking at what we don't see. We are very good as homeless systems at knowing what we do see, right? What data we have to produce, what reports we have to produce, what limitations there are, and how we cobble together the limited housing assets that we have regardless of what its structure is, permanent sort of housing, THR, [0:50:12.9] \_\_\_\_ RRH, but there's always that group of individuals that don't fit in any of those boxes. So how do we look, in the future toward what is it that our system needs to do to be fully responsive, and what are all the different partners and pieces that we need to grab that are already in play, and how do we build sort of this universal ownership?

**0:50:36.3 RP:** I often hear that folks will say, "Oh, you guys do homeless, we do behavioral health," or "We do criminal justice." And getting to that point where people understand that homelessness is not a group or a class of people, it's a group of individuals who have the housing circumstance that has resulted in the loss of housing. And that cuts across every pipeline in our partner and sister agencies, and so how do we fund that? How do we collectively invest in behavioral health responses that provide the right kinds of support and returning citizen responses that provide the right support? And how do we bring in our landlords, and one of ours is on this call, how do we bring in our landlords to the table and say, "We need you to suspend belief. We

need you to believe that this person is gonna be successful just like any other person who come to your facility or to your complex, and we need you to help us work within that structure. And how do we create that opportunity that's different? What aren't we doing? What aren't we seeing?" And it's sometimes the absence of something is harder to quantify, but we still also have to... As continuum of care leads and as system leaders, we still have to report to somebody. And we know that the reporting triggers that allow the funding to flow are not necessarily aligned with the service delivery system that we wish we could provide at the local level, right?

**0:52:00.6 RP:** Vouchers for a single person in a single unit, but what if we wanna put two people in a unit 'cause they wanna house share, but now we have to use two vouchers instead of being able to use vouchers differently? So how do we think differently about all the assets beyond just what's coming into a CoC, and how do we allow for the voices of the majority who could tell us what's missing? Right? And then look at how we build a revenue stream or a resource, an asset that allow us to deliver that service. Rather than saying "We have to take this round peg and shove it into this square hole," we need to say, "Well, we got a round peg and a round hole, but we also have a square hole. What are we gonna do about that?" And how we system address the continuity of care across all of the pathways and across all of the elements of daily living, how do we do social-emotional well-being? How do we support [0:52:56.9] \_\_\_\_ when we have only a piece of the pie?

**0:53:00.5 MW:** Thank you. Summer?

**0:53:04.8 SW:** Hi. Thank you. I think my thought is that if we talk about moving beyond equity towards liberation, which, I guess, I don't understand 'cause I think there would still be need for equity in a liberated society. But I think that there's a fundamental flaw in the fact that we aren't focusing as heavily as I think we should on just building public housing. When we talk about the eviction moratorium leading to a lack of flow in units, that's because our systems rely on calculating something like fair market rent, which red lines our systems into housing everyone with private landlords in the poorest neighborhoods, and then when people aren't being evicted, our system fails, which seems like if our systems are relying on the eviction of our clients into our system, then we're not really doing anything, we're just milling clients through a system.

**0:54:06.4 SW:** We need more units. I've seen people say that we need more humanity, not more housing. We need both. You know the old adage, "There are more empty houses in America than there are homeless people," is not relevant because those empty houses are not in places where people experiencing homelessness need housing. And we need to be talking about zoning laws, we need to be talking about public housing, we need to be talking about fair market rent. This problem is man-made, it is deliberate. The system is working as was intended by the people who originally made it. But the issue comes down to what policies are we changing? And when we talk about this large influx in funding, pouring it all into a yearly pool where we have to siphon it off to private landlords as our predominant strategy means that unless we receive that same influx of funding year after year, it's going to fail. We need to take these investments and invest them in something permanent, something that doesn't require us to constantly lose money to a private entity, and instead focus on putting our funds towards housing people and providing them services.

**0:55:21.4 SW:** And so I think in a liberated system, that gap would be met. And again, I think there's also... It hasn't been stated, maybe because it doesn't need to be stated, but a lot of these questions come down to things that are beyond our control as just homeless response system people. When we talk about reaching functional zero in a community, that's making outflow match

inflow, but when the inflow keeps increasing because of things we don't have control over, like the fact that private landlords have bought up a bunch of housing that otherwise would have gone to first-time home owners, or that minimum wage isn't increasing even as inflation does because the government has subsidized corporations rather than its poorest citizens, then that's not something we have control over.

**0:56:13.5 SW:** And so making the outflow match the inflow into the homeless response system, is what we have control over. But our goal as a society, beyond just people who work within the homeless response system, should be to make that inflow as minimal as possible. We don't want people in rapid re-housing, we want people in housing. And so I think that's what a liberated system looks like. It's hard for me. On some level, I almost see rapid re-housing as semi-oxymoronic when it comes to a liberated housing system, because people who need significant investment in mental health treatment and those sorts of things, might need permanent support housing programs, and people who don't, could simply be offered housing and there would be no need for this rapid turnover that siphons clients through a system that is built for the system to have numbers to show rather than clients.

**0:57:10.2 SW:** If we believe that our clients know how to operate housing, that we believe that our clients are people who know how to operate their own lives, then all we need is a system that has enough housing that is affordable, and frankly, that's owned by clients, and then that solves a vast majority of our problems. Our crisis is not based on and has not been shown to change with mental illness or addiction as a larger picture. It has to do with the cost of housing, and so simply getting people housing, not siphoning off money every year, that's a liberated system. So, sorry. I was sort of waiting for the round robin to get to me, and then I realized I had to raise my hand, so I had a whole bunch of stuff, but...

**0:57:57.5 MW:** You have to raise your hand. Right. In this group...

**0:57:58.8 SW:** Alright, I got it.

[chuckle]

**0:58:01.4 MW:** In this group, all of these great minds thinking, yeah, we have to raise our hand. I'm gonna... I do wanna give opportunity for folks we haven't yet heard from. So if we could have Lynn, and then Jeff, and Tim, and Mikaela, I think we haven't heard from a lot. Lola, I saw your hand so if I have time, I'm gonna come back to you, okay? So we'll start with Lynn.

**0:58:25.0 LP:** Thank you. So as I look at my long-term partnerships that we work with in the company, through this pandemic, our relationships got stronger because they educate me and they allow me to educate them. And my partner invited me to this conversation, and so... But I've learned about so many new rapid re-housing in the metropolitan area, from Virginia to... But it's being thrown at me and we don't have those relationships. And the thing that is solid about the ones, the relationships that we do have is that we have built a level of trust for one another, and whether it's, she's calling me or the organization is calling me at 9:00 at night, or I'm calling them, it's a give-take and we're all there for the greater good. I'm trying to build those relationships with some of the new rapid re-housing, but sometimes the phone is not picked up. And when a crisis hits, if the phone's not picked up from a landlord standpoint, then we're told to treat like everyone else, and it's like people come with support.

**0:59:34.7 LP:** I believe Renee is the one that taught me wraparound services. And, I said before, you guys speak a language that we don't necessarily speak in the private industry, but why is that when we're all just trying to house people and give them somewhere to go, and lay their head at night? Again, I thank you for letting me in the space. I'm constantly learning. I share it with the rest of our team. But there's a whole bunch of us that would love to probably be in the conversation to see how we can learn and make all of our area better. I said last time, we don't want them to just live, we want them to come work with us, because we've seen people get an apartment, but if they don't have a job, it does create a whole 'nother aspect of it, so I don't know how those different systems work in your world, but we would love to continue to be a part of it, but tie it all together so that we can see people be productive in our community and make them feel a part of it, not like they were just dumped in the community.

**1:00:37.7 MW:** Thank you. I'm gonna go to Jeff.

**1:00:40.2 Jeff:** Okay. Several things. In listening, I listened to Michael earlier and looking at some of the innovations such as shared housing and some of the other innovations that have come out. I'm noticing in a lot of the conferences that we're discussing, that these are average things in some areas, but in other areas of the country, they're not even heard of. You got people still asking what is shared housing, how do you do that? If we can get some direction from higher than just our CoCs, much higher, as in from Washington, to come in and define this and make this a general practice, this is something that needs to come from a place where we're all getting the same messaging.

**1:01:30.7 Jeff:** I was cheering when Michael was talking because there are CoCs, there are agencies who stay within the legal bounds, but then do things that are morally reprehensible and we see them all the time. But what do you do? They're staying within the guidelines, but some of their practices are just horrible, horrible practices, equity, with equity not being considered in a large percentage of these situations. The problem itself is evolving. We've been seeing gentrification coming. It's not something new, but it is happening at a much faster pace, and because of the awareness of some people, such as us who are doing the things that we do, they're trying to become novel about it. You have some governments or some agencies, some cities that are starting to say that you have to put in some affordable housing as well, but then the, of course, the way to get around that is, we'll put in some senior housing and that's gonna qualify, so don't have to do the other because we really don't want those people in our neighborhood.

**1:02:35.0 Jeff:** There has to be some teeth to it and it has to be some definition to it that it can't just be senior housing. You don't get to cherry pick who are the easiest, because we're creating a system that at some point is gonna explode. When you exclude the masses and continue to exclude the masses, you're making the masses larger. And what do you think is gonna happen when you start to disenfranchise an entire group of people who just simply can't get into housing? You can't build prisons fast enough to house everybody. So as the system is moving, as fast as gentrification is coming in, as fast as the housing market is tightening, as fast as the prices are raising, we need to be as innovative just as fast. There has to be... We have to have to have something in place or have some pressure in place on the powers that be that fair housing has to happen. You have to have affordable housing.

**1:03:31.0 Jeff:** We need to have people in office who are gonna be sensitive to that, who are gonna understand that, "Hey, if I wanna be here four years from now, then I better listen and I've gotta try

to make some of these things happen." And I'm not trying to be partisan either. We need to put it in on both sides. We need to make it aware to every party that you have to do this or we're not gonna support you, because we are creating a system. It was said earlier, this system, and I think Lola said it, this system is doing exactly what it was designed to do. It was designed to make the rich get richer because they make the decisions. It was designed to make the poor poor, or to at least make them ignorant to what's happening. Give them just enough to keep them quiet and let them know that, "Hey, at least you're better off than this group, so you stay quiet because we're not gonna put you at the bottom, we put you just a step above the bottom, so now you should be quiet while we disenfranchise the bottom."

**1:04:30.1 Jeff:** We just have to change that. We have to change that, and the beginning of that is awareness. We have to keep the pressure on, we have to keep the awareness going. This woke generation is not gonna go for it. So we gotta make sure that they are aware that they have the tools and that they have the knowledge as to what the system was before, what's happening right now, and now you guys, who had the new ideas, this is what's in place now. Now, you tell us, you come together with a partner, tell us how we change this.

**1:05:01.1 MW:** Great. Thank you, Jeff.

**1:05:03.0 Timmy:** Thank you so, so much.

**1:05:03.1 MW:** Okay. Go ahead, Tim. And...

**1:05:06.1 Timmy:** Thank you so much.

**1:05:06.2 MW:** And after Tim, we're gonna do Mikaela, and then Curtis, you'll give us the last word on this question and we'll move forward in our agenda.

**1:05:13.4 Timmy:** Thank you so much, Jeff. If my connection is a little bad, I'm on a military base. I'm providing technical assistance. I definitely agree with everything Jeff said. I even feel like for a specific population with domestic violence survivors, we're also facing some hardships and some gaps in those systems. And I'll give you a perfect example. If we have a survivor in Washington DC who is going through domestic violence and wants to flee, and she wants to go into rapid re-housing, she's only stuck with a certain population. She is only stuck in that certain population. He or she's stuck in that certain population, and we can't provide rapid re-housing for survivors who are fleeing. So if I'm a fleeing survivor, I literally cannot get rapid re-housing because of jurisdictional issues. And so, we have survivors who are stuck in situations where they can't leave. If they have limited income, they're limited to only a certain section of Washington DC based on their income, and they can't leave their abusers.

**1:06:10.0 Timmy:** These are like... This is just an example of the systemic issues that we're having, and when we come as a team, what I challenge my team to do is to bring up these solutions and bring up these gaps in systems. And I challenge all the organizations here to have a team, to have a moment where your team gets together to talk about these gaps in these systems and figure out a solution on how to address these systems. And one of the things that I've presented to different organizations that I work with, to say, "Hey, even if you don't have... Even if you can't expand rapid re-housing, do we have private funds to where survivors can have a spend down plan where we can still provide rapid re-housing to survivors who want to flee. So we try our best as much as possible

to address these gaps in rapid re-housing, but there're still plenty, plenty of challenges that we're still facing, but we do have solutions to them, but we're just hoping that we have the funding and the backing to address these issues and these gaps that we do see.

**1:07:08.0 MW:** Thanks, Tim. Mikaela.

**1:07:10.5 Mikaela:** Sure. As I was listening to everybody talk, my first look at the question before this actually, but honestly, this question as well, what's needed? My initial guess was more housing. And that probably seems stupid and simple, but the only... I think Summer was talking, the only way to end homelessness is give people housing. And I think what was getting in my way is understanding that this is all a bigger picture than just giving people housing. It's advocacy work and it's political work, and it's making sure you're voting for people who are going to help further all of this interconnected, the marriage of domestic violence resources and mental health resources and housing resources, and understanding that you can't change the system if you just change it in one place. And I'm always...

**1:08:08.0 Mikaela:** I work, technically, I work for our local county government and I'm always in meetings with townships and municipalities and smaller government organizations and people who work as far from housing as one can get, and they're always talking about, "I would like to see this change. And I would like to see that change, and I think this is a very legitimate and devastating problem existing in my community," but no one ever wants to make any change. And I think that is where I would like to see rapid re-housing go. I would like to see people brave enough and willing enough to make those systemic changes in order to help everybody get housing and then change your zoning and change your building practices and engage with landlords like Lynn who are willing to help. I think it's all interconnected and you can't pull one string without the whole ball of twine exploding.

**1:09:07.4 MW:** Thanks, Mikaela. Alright, Curtis, you have our last word, and then we will move on. I'm so sorry, Lola. I know, I'm so sorry, but put it in a chat. Okay. [chuckle]

**1:09:21.5 Curtis:** Okay, great. I'm gonna have to say that there has to be a more, an all-inclusive view of the needs to address housing and rapid re-housing, meaning that, me as a formally incarcerated person, I'm not even on the list when it comes to housing. You got seniors, you got disabled, you got mentally ill. There's nothing right there that says formerly incarcerated people. Strange enough that formerly incarcerated people are 27 times more likely to be un-housed than the general public, seven times more likely to re-offend when un-housed on survival mode. But the catch is this: Formerly incarcerated people reduces, when housed, reduces recidivism by 60%. So these aren't things that have to be hugely taken into account, and what All Of Us Or None does is we address legislation because you can ask people to do the right thing, but sometimes you have to have it graven in stone for them to do the right thing. And these are things that people will say, "Okay, we'll work with you. We see these numbers. You're right, we'll work with you," but they may work with you for six months or a year and then fall off. So we address legislation to get policy and to get laws made.

**1:10:53.8 Curtis:** And it's a shame that we have to go down that road, because right now, we're addressing AB... It was AB 328, but it is now AB-1816. And it addresses housing for formerly incarcerated people. That's a huge amount of people that have to be taken into account when you address housing, so an all-inclusive manner of addressing everyone's needs, you have to factor in so

many other things. Also, un-housed black people. Black people here in San Diego are 6% of the population, but they represent 26% of homeless. How can that be when we're only 6% of the population but 26% of the homeless? So when you're factoring in all of these things, you have to factor in everything, and some of these things are gonna make people uncomfortable because they don't wanna address things on race.

**1:12:00.4 Curtis:** Everybody wants to run away from that. We're not gonna discuss that, we want to throw in everything else, but when it comes to race, and when it comes to people who are formerly incarcerated, it's like the bad crop bunch. Hey, we're not gonna put formerly incarcerated people before people that's out here working and just came up homeless. Look, everything has to be factored in in order... And when you talk about equity, it has to be factored in like that because there are a lot of formerly incarcerated people that are formerly incarcerated as a direct result of being homeless.

**1:12:40.1 Curtis:** I've been there. I've been down that road, and I've seen the pandemic show me that there would be a lot more people, if necessary, when on survival mode. Look at the people who refused to close their stores, look at the people who refused to close their gyms, who told the police, "I'm not closing anything because I have to feed my family. I'm on survival mode." These are working class citizens that have never been arrested before, who were putting their hands behind it and defying the law and saying, "Take me to jail." Why? "Because I'm on survival mode, because I have to feed my family and take care... And if I have to go to jail or break the law, I'm willing to do it." Look at all the people who did that. So don't turn around and say anything to me now about what you will and won't do when you're on survival mode. Include everybody in this... That's what I'm talking about. Formerly incarcerated people, everybody, address the whole issue, all-inclusive.

**1:13:44.0 MW:** Thank you, Curtis. That's great. Thank you all for your very candid participation on our panel today. I so appreciate it. Thank you all in the chat, I'm gonna turn it over to Kira to take us to our next section.

**1:14:00.5 KZ:** Thanks, Michelle, and oh my gosh, this time goes so quickly with such amazing voices, talent and wisdom in the room. Thank you all so much. So we are going to wrap up this five-week series. There's no easy way to do that. There's been so much tremendous content discussed here and ideas and solutions, and we wanna just give a little bit of time though to hear from our partners at HUD. And I wanna turn to Norm, the Director of the SNAPS office, to just share a little bit about your reflections and what sticks out to you most, what do you see as most critical to how we move forward?

**1:14:36.2 NS:** Thank you, but like... I wanna hear what Lola has to say. [chuckle] So, if you don't mind, can I give some amount of to whatever to Lola to...

[overlapping conversation]

**1:14:47.3 Lola:** I want to hug you!

**1:14:48.6 NS:** I know you got something you wanna say. I wanna hear it.

**1:14:51.6 Lola:** Oh my goodness, okay. So I took notes, you guys and like, ooh, I'm getting goosebumps, but... So Jeff said something about gentrification. I feel like America, if we look at our

country as a whole, if we look at how America was started, people in power and who had money saw value somewhere, so they came and did some shysty, dirty, grimy stuff to get what they wanted. Gentrification is built on people seeing value where there once was no value. To me, I'm from New York City and I live in Baltimore City. I don't know if you all know how New York City is laid out, but it's like Manhattan, all the industrial stuff, and then you have Brooklyn right here. It's a coastline. People were living in Brooklyn and they weren't in the city. People always went to the city to work. But now that there's this view of the city, all these warehouses and all the stuff where people were residential areas, they're moving them out and putting in condos, and it vexes me so bad 'cause I'm like, "This is my home, and y'all are... All of New York cannot be just rich people living. It doesn't make sense, like you're taking people's homes. So it's like, "Oh, we see the value here. You can see the city, we can see this." So it's like, we're gonna take.

**1:16:08.0 Lola:** In Baltimore, there are housing projects and ghettos, hoods, where they used to house people, and there used to be livable wages, you're on Section 8 or you have a voucher or whatever, but now that they're trying to build up the harbor, they are moving those projects out and putting in apartments and stuff that is no longer affordable. They see the value in which they saw no value in those areas, and then they're like, "Okay, let's take it. It's all about take." So it's like, how do we create the change? We need a Boston Tea Party. We need to start doing some things that they used to do back in the day, 'cause that's the only way to dismantle the system that seems to work.

**1:16:50.6 Lola:** We need a Sherman March. Sherman marched from Atlanta to Savannah and was just doing stuff. I'm not gonna say what. But you gotta shake it up. We need to find out where the power is, we need a power map, power map and see where we need to dismantle that power and take that power from people, and we need holistic focuses for humanity. People who experience homelessness, it's not just homelessness, it's like, what else is there? Is there mental health? Is there trauma? Is there a lot of things, but when you look at a person on an entirety as a person, then you can make change. It's like, "Well, okay, you need money." No, it's more than money. I don't know how to function. I don't know how to do whatever. It's not all the same. It's not a one-size-fits-all, and I had to try to get that out and thank you so much, Norman, I could kiss you, 'cause I was busting at the seams. Ooh now, my dog's barking.

**1:17:49.9 NS:** So although I'm just gonna awkwardly transition to a few reflections here. That was great, Lola. So just a few quick reflections here. It feels so weird to try and sort of jump in after this incredible discussion. One thing that constantly impresses and amazes me is the degree to which sort of a sense of justice animates all our work and how we try to translate that into everything we do and sort of energize everything we do with that sense of justice and that sort of core purpose of promoting justice. And I think it's probably one of the best parts of what we do, and when our work is centered in that justice, it's just better. So it's just great to hear that play out. I think I wanna point out some of the more boring stuff that I think is really also kind of important about what we've learned over the past couple of years in the pandemic and where I think we need to strengthen to move forward.

**1:19:10.3 NS:** One is that there was definitely the capacity, and by that, I mean like, how many people are out there doing this work? How do we hire more people doing this work is really important, and I think one of the things we realized is that it's not enough just to put money into the system, there's some building, system building work that needs to happen. And I just, a couple... We don't pay people enough in the homelessness system. I'm not sure why that is, but we should probably pay people more. I'm starting to see some super interesting stuff with peer support and

peer navigation and peer, like employment, that is, I think really important and I don't know how to build on that, but that feels like a sort of a really promising path forward for communities that are really struggling with sort of building the capacity of their programs and systems. That goes with the pay question though, right?

**1:20:21.7 NS:** Like we gotta just pay people more and I think part of the... Part of my job, I think, is to figure out how to sort of incentivize that a little more, and I'm really gonna have to give that some thought. I do think there's a question about who gets... Like who do we prioritize for assistance, that is really troubling to me. And I don't know quite what to say about this, but there's definitely this hierarchy of who is worthy of assistance in the world? And like you heard... I don't know, there were a ton of comments here, Curtis, I think just nailed it, and how do we sort of get past that? But like if you're a single adult, you don't have children, you're not a veteran, it's really tough to get help.

**1:21:14.4 NS:** It's not that it's easy for everybody else, but it's just tough to get any help, and we talk about PSH and prioritization and rapid re-housing, the thing we do most for people, especially like single people who don't have children and who aren't veterans, the thing we do most for them is really nothing. Most people just don't get any assistance, and so how do we build the support and partnerships to really change that dynamic? I think we've seen you can be successful at reducing homelessness and we've seen it with veterans, we've seen it with families, and it's not like the jobs are done, but you can definitely see how...

**1:22:01.5 NS:** You can see the formula for moving forward, and so how do we get to that point where we see everybody else also in that category of needing help and support? And then I think the small things really matter a lot. One of the things I noticed is working with communities that we're really struggling to implement stuff, is that when you unpack the process for getting from like, "Okay, I enroll you in a program to like here's a unit and some help with the rent and stuff," there's so much documentation and just crap that we make people go through, and some of it, I know, I work at HUD, I know we require a bunch of it, and again, my job is to try and fix that and to try to make that work better, and we've been trying, but obviously have not done a good enough job, but we gotta look at these things and figure out, are we doing this just because it's convenient? Are we doing it because it's the way we did it last year? Are we doing it because one... It caused a problem once, like five years ago, and we still do it because we wanna prevent whatever that one case was?

**1:23:25.9 NS:** Just going back and trying to figure out how to make a process that works just better and quicker and... That maybe it's not the best process for us as people running programs or funding programs, but it's a process that works best for people being assisted by programs, like that sort of set of steps in that sort of redesigning how we do things is really, really important. I do think that this is the reason it's so important to have people who have experienced homelessness and who have used our programs in every step of the process, is because they have definitely felt the impact of decisions like, do we make people show us their driver's license or state ID before we move to the next step of the process? And thus it takes an extra two weeks to get off the streets and into an apartment? Like that stuff's really, at the end of the day, that stuff's kind of important, but it's important in a million small ways rather than in one gigantic way. So how we sort of think about that and how we take those steps is, I think, gonna be a challenge going forward.

**1:24:54.7 NS:** But the couple last quick things I wanna say is, I get asked about, the question... One

of the questions I get asked most is like, what does HUD want? And I can't speak for all of HUD, but I can speak for a big part of HUD, and we really wanna end homelessness. It really is like, no one works in the SNAPS office because writing regulations is fun or whatever else, we work because we believe in this stuff and we wanna make it happen. So what we wanna see is fewer people experiencing homelessness and the experience of homelessness is less crappy, so that's...

**1:25:41.0 NS:** And really, when we hear that someone didn't follow a regulation or whatever, our first question is, was there a good reason? Things that are... I don't remember who said it, I think it was Michael or maybe it was Curtis, but the things that are legally allowed, but just terrible practice, we just want like... I hate that, that just... Nothing gets me more than... Anyway, I'll pause there. I think everyone sort of gets what we're going at here, but we really want people to do the right thing. And if you don't know how to do the right thing within the regulations, call us, we will troubleshoot it with you and we will try to figure out how to get... How to get to the right place.

**1:26:28.3 NS:** So the other thing I just wanna say really quickly is, we're in this for the long haul, we're not gonna fix this tomorrow, the next day. Equity, ending homelessness, these are long-standing problems that are really big, and we're gonna sort of have to patiently take these things apart and figure them out. But that's the work, and so we're here for it, and we will be here with you through all of it. So thanks, I'll turn things back to Kira, I think...

**1:27:14.2 KZ:** Yeah, thank you, Norm. Thank for joining us today, Norm. And I think I speak for everyone that we're all in it for the long haul, and we're glad that you could join us to be a part of this conversation. There is no time left. I wanna wrap up simply by saying a huge thank you to everyone who has joined us in these conversations in any way, shape or form, really grateful for all of the energy that folks have brought. I think just in a simple recap, I think Norm said it, there is this tremendous energy in this space, and that's for a reason, we are all here to make change, to see the difference that we know is possible, so I challenge you to spread that energy, keep these conversations going in your communities, keep exploring what is possible, and lean in to know what is possible and move beyond words to action. That's what we all know is... That's why we know it's possible. So again, thank you for your time, the recordings, the chat, all the materials from our five sessions are going to be available on the exchange if they're not already, today's session will be added to that. And we thank you again. Have a wonderful afternoon, everyone.