American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
Homelessness Prevention and
Rapid Re-housing Program

Homelessness Prevention &
Rapid Re-housing:
Community Perspectives

*Homelessness Prevention*
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Homelessness Prevention

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First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
Homeless Prevention: Problem Statement

- Too often, evicted families enter shelter system. More cost effective to maintain these families in their permanent housing than to temporarily house at a cost of $2,000-$4,000 a month in emergency shelter.

- Funding and strategies for diverting at-risk families from the shelter system are not prioritized or coordinated within the SF CoC system of care (June 2006)

- Eviction prevention emergency assistance was a one-time only grant. Extremely low-income families living in a very expensive rental market may become at-risk of losing their housing more then once.

- Emergency homeless prevention interventions assist families in avoiding homelessness and the subsequent trauma and disorganization that accompany it.
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
The Road to 2009

- Since 1997, Hamilton Family Center has been providing homeless families with short-term rental assistance in the form of security deposits & first months rent, household grants, and 12 months of home-based case management.

- This program was generically coined, “Housing and Aftercare”; operating within the confines of Hamilton’s continuum of care.

- 2005: Received foundation funding and began a pilot, Rapid Re-housing & Homeless Prevention Program. Foundation wisely granted a six-month “Ramp-Up” period.
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
The Road to 2009

- Took six months to educate organization, program staff & incoming staff; redesign all existing positions; establish terms & processes; build in fiscal capacity; and effectively outreach to community.

- The goal was to Rapidly Re-house families out of the emergency shelter we operated; and conduct outreach and education to families in shelter & in our “aftercare” program about our eviction prevention funds.
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
The Road to 2009

- 2005: Received formal support on Housing First Initiatives from the Mayor of San Francisco,

- 2006: Hamilton’s Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing pilot played a critical role in informing a new “Family Shelter Redesign Initiative” and subsequent similar programs

- 2006: Hamilton re-directed existing City funds away from one of our emergency shelters, toward Short & Medium-term rental subsides. Prior to this, there was no dedicated funding to Housing First initiatives—but that would soon change.
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
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- 2006: Launched new program, First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families, which was a re-branding and extension of an existing program.
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
The Road to 2009

- 2006: First Avenues housed over 80 families into market-rate units, with medium-term subsidies. Preventing over 135 evictions with short-term grants.

- 2006: Board of Supervisors allocates $3 million toward Rapid Re-housing & Homeless Prevention activities

- 2007: A Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative was formed. Six primary organizations providing Short-term rental assistance and other services

- 2007: The Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative standardized the intake form
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
In Accord: Homeless Prevention & SF CoC Plan

SF CoC Plan 2008-2013

Established as one of six “priority sectors of action”, the following:

- Initiatives to Prevent Homelessness through Eviction Prevention and Intervention, including:
  - Coordinate services and economic assistance to prevent eviction
  - Outreach and education about eviction prevention resources and tenant rights laws
  - Provide short-term rental support and wraparound services to address issues underlying housing instability
  - Provide legal services for individuals and families at risk of eviction
  - Develop standard eviction policies for city-funded projects
First Avenues Stable of Services

- Housing Search and Placement
- Rapid Re-housing: Medium term rental subsidies for 18-24 months; depth of subsidy limited to $500 per month
- Security and First Month short-term grants offered
- Home-Based Case Management provided to all households assisted with both short-term and medium-term rental assistance
First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families
Service Model: Stable of Services

Services Continued…
- Medium-Term Rental recipients must stay in monthly contact with HBCM
- Short-Term Rental Assistance
- Rep-Payee Services available to medium term rental subsidy families
- Household Goods Move-in Grant
- Pathway’s to Technology (Free computer, tech assistance, and one year of free internet service)
- Myhousing.org; a consumer oriented website
- Monthly Emergency Food Box
- Subsidized Furniture Program
- Quarterly Newsletters
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Service Model: Budget & Stakeholders

First Avenues Budget

- Family Medium-term Subsidies: $232,000 Annually
- Family Short-term Subsidies: $134,200 Annually
- Security Deposits: $87,500 Annually
- Total Program Budget: $868,800

SF Homeless Prevention Budget

- $1.506,500 Funding allocated w/in the Eviction Prevention Collaborative; includes short-term subsidies, security deposits, barriers to housing grants (salaries not included)
- Fiscal Year 07-08: Collaboration funded 844 applicants for prevention assistance
- 26% SF Housing Authority residents
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Service Model: Budget & Stakeholders

Stakeholders

- SF Board of Supervisors
- Human Services Agency: Housing & Homeless Programs, General Fund Support
- Mayor’s Office of Housing
- First 5 San Francisco
- Local Foundations
- Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative
- Local Homeless Coordinating Board
- Eviction Prevention Working Group
- Local homeless advocacy organizations
# First Avenues Homeless Prevention

## Service Model: Nuts & Bolts

### First Avenues Staffing

- **2.0 FTE Management Staff**

- **4.0 FTE Homeless Prevention CM Staff:**
  - 1.0 Focus is Housing Search, Outreach, Placement & Security Deposits
  - 1.0 Focus is Short-term rent assistance, landlord mediation, six and twelve month follow-up
  - 2.0 Focus is Development of individualized housing & service plan, home-based CM for medium-term rental recipients; housing stabilization, including employment & childcare resources

- **0.1 FTE Support Staff**
  - .05 FTE Focus Fiscal activities
  - .05 FTE Focus is data collection & analysis, report development, website development
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Service Model: Nuts & Bolts

2008-2009 Data
- 76 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 47 families received Security Deposits
  *Program had Funding for only 13 Medium-term rental subsidies this year*
- $939 Average Short-term rental grant
- $2,377 Average back rent owed (range $400-$8,400)
- $1,659 Average income for Short-term rental assistance households

2007-2008 Data
- 97 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 59 Families received Security Deposits

2006-2007 Data
- 135 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 101 Families received Security Deposits
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Service Model: Current Program Terms & Process

- **Income Limits**: Household must be at 30%, or below local AMI
- Must be a San Francisco resident; unless in medium-term rental assistance program out of county
- Eviction Notice (14, 10, 3-Day Notice) or current ledger from landlord showing how much back rent is owed
- Lease in name of applicant*
- Income verification
- W-9 from landlord
- Grant must be used to prevent an eviction, versus stall one for 30 days
- Maximum grant limited to $1000 per household
- All funds issued directly to third parties
Applicants need to complete the RAP intake form with First Avenues.

Over 20 agencies referring to the Collaborative; pre-screen applicants; email documents.

Consultation with FA Homeless Prevention staff member tasked w/Eviction Prevention applications.

All documents must be submitted and household budget completed prior to checks processed.

Promissory note issued to landlord to stave off eviction while check is being processed.

Household must agree to a six and twelve month phone follow-up by Homeless Prevention EP staff.

If amount owed is over $1,000 limit, Homeless Prevention staff work with Eviction Prevention Collaborative Network to obtain additional funds.
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Current System Limitations

- Maximum dollar limit at $3,000 over five years
- Most often, families owe such large amounts, they use up all funding eligibility at one time. (Average grant is $2,377)
  - Capacity constraints:
    1.) Staffing limits-Impact is lottery systems and limited set appointment slots
    2.) Short-term assistance limitations-Impact is allocative inefficiency of scale. Homeless Prevention staff use limited time cobbling together resources within network of providers.
  - Very limited utility arrears funding in system*.
  - Very limited rental arrears funding available*.
  - No funding available for moving costs, or short-term storage fees for families*.
  - Data collection within system of providers varies widely. Analysis and reporting of data to network of providers limited.
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Lessons Learned

- Systems, Staffing & Stakeholder ramp up important consideration if currently not engaged in similar activities
- Homeless Prevention requires quick check processing; important to have sound fiscal checks & balances between Program and your Fiscal Dept.
- Limited success in tracking long-term impact of emergency assistance grants
  Families difficult to reach and survey after check is cut; consider incentives, e.g. gift cards, etc.
First Avenues Homeless Prevention
Lessons Learned

- Build collaborative systems and partnerships that are efficient and will work in your community
- Online applications and submissions save time
- For communities where CBO’s are the access points, efficiency improves with consistent eligibility and documentation requirements across collaboration
- Funding commitment to collection and analysis of data to inform and adapt your model, funding, or policies
- Regional Coordination
First Avenues Homeless Prevention

Influence of HPRP on System of Care

- SF Community will devote lions share of resources toward homeless prevention activities.
- Allocation toward Housing Relocation and Stabilization activities very limited.
- Expect to see increase in grant limit to allow the collaboration to be more efficient.
- Expansion of current Homeless Prevention collaborative network of partners (singles, homeless youth, seniors, veterans, etc.)
- Expect expansion of legal services.
- Development of new assessment tools in homeless prevention area.
- Expansion of outreach to targeted areas in community.

First Avenues found families often more then 2 months behind in rent payments.
Community Perspectives on Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing

Beyond Shelter’s “Housing First” Program for Homeless Families

Presented by Tanya Tull
President/CEO

Ryan Macy-Hurley
Director, Institute for Research, Training & Technical Assistance
Origins of Agency and Program

- Early 1980s – emergence of family homelessness
- 1986-1988 – helped to develop two of the first family shelters in LA
- Inadequate response to problem: families cycling from one program to another, or falling back out of housing due to lack of adequate support
- Founded Beyond Shelter in 1988 to create a more comprehensive approach to serving homeless families
- The Beyond Shelter “Transition Program” was the first rapid re-housing program in the country
Initial Program Model

- Built into the existing “system” of shelter programs
- Invited 20 family shelters to become “referring agencies” – responsible for crisis intervention, emergency shelter and short-term stabilization
- Beyond Shelter provided the “next step”
- Goal (then & now): to assist homeless families back into permanent housing as quickly as possible
- Was told – “It couldn’t be done. No affordable housing.”
- First hire: a housing relocation specialist, followed by a case manager
Why We Chose to Separate Housing & Case Management Functions

**Case Management**
- Accessing Needed Resources & Services
- Problem Solving
- Life Skills
- Parenting Support
- Money Management
- Household Management
- Crisis Intervention
- Other Supports

**Housing Resources & Relocation**

**FOR PARTICIPANTS**
- Housing Assistance
- Tenant Education
- Rental Assistance Programs

**FOR OWNERS/MANAGERS**
- Available to assist with tenant/landlord issues
Initial Program Model - Cont’d

- Funded by two US Dept of Health & Human Services Demonstration Project grants (1990-1995) and some private foundations

- No funding sources via homeless programs at the time

- Housing relocation followed by one full year of intensive, home-based case management

- 1991: Partnership with local PHA for Homeless Section 8, in response to Federal RFP

- Served an average of 150 – 200 per year in early years
How the Model Created Systems Change

HUD Continuum of Care Model: 1994 Prototype

Outreach
Intake
Assessment

Emergency Shelter

Transitional Housing

Traditional Housing, no services

Supportive Housing
Implications & Priorities of “Old Model”


- Mid-1990s: Only 20% of homeless families reported receiving help finding housing. Source: National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, 1999

- Homeless families spent an average of 37 hours per week trying to access basic necessities from various service providers. Source: The 1991 Stanford Studies of Homeless Families, Children and Youth
Service-Enriched Permanent Housing Outreach
Intake Assessment

Emergency Shelter → Transitional Housing

Indicates Modifications

Traditional Housing, no services
Supportive Housing
Service-Enriched Permanent Housing
Permanent Housing with Time-limited, Home-Based Case Management

Systems Change: Modifications to the Continuum of Care
Current Program Model at Beyond Shelter

- More than 70 referring agencies countywide
- Offices located in Long Beach, LA, and Pacoima
- Eligibility criteria:
  - Homeless family with custody of a minor
  - Must have a stable source of income: a job, CalWORKs/TANF, etc
  - History of substance abuse: in recovery for at least six months
  - Recent DV: at least four months away from batterer and be participating in, or have already completed, counseling
  - Must be receptive to receiving case management support for min. 6 months after moving into housing
Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

- Pre-screen families to be referred
- Handle some of the emergency needs of the family so Beyond Shelter staff can focus on long-term case management
- Complete necessary paperwork, including referral form (help access vital documents!)
- Inform families that the Housing First Program is a *Case Management* program, not a rental assistance program
- Serve as a reference for the family if any questions arise during intake at Beyond Shelter
Target Population

- Single, female-headed households
- Dependent on welfare
- Majority African American and Latino
- Unstable employment and housing histories
- Histories of involvement with other systems of care (child welfare, mental health, etc.)
- Multiple housing barriers: poor credit, eviction histories, criminal records, etc.
Staffing Structure and Program Flow

- Housing Resources Department and Case Management Department

- Staffing Ratios
  - 1 Houser: 50 families
  - 1 Case Manager: 25 families

- Other Staffing
  - Children’s Services Specialists
  - Employment Specialists

- Program flow…
Beyond Shelter’s Housing First Program

*May include short-term transitional housing

**Family Action Plan Developed**

Family Stabilized & Integrated into Community

Family participates in a variety of case management activities during a transitional period of time (6-12 months), while also being connected to resources & services in the community at-large, including employment opportunities.

Family Moves To Permanent Housing

FAMILY “GRADUATES” FROM PROGRAM
Family Assessment & Triage

- Upon referral, families undergo extensive screening, assessment, and planning.
- Screening includes detailed histories of health, education, employment, housing, substance abuse, family violence, and other agency contacts.
- Intake process may occur over several meetings.
- Family Action Plans developed, and housing-related activities begin immediately.
- Housing and service plans are individualized based on family need and available resources.
Housing Search, Landlord Outreach & Recruitment

- Program principle: Promote housing & neighborhood choice among families as much as possible

- We market program to landlords and management companies: program brochures, informational flyers

- We emphasize and “sell” program benefits
  - Case Management Support
  - Pre-screened Tenants
  - Financial & Non-Financial Incentives

- We use a variety of outreach strategies: Cold calls and community searches, landlord referrals, program orientations/peer testimonials, networking: e.g., Apt Owner’s Association Conferences
Housing Placements

- Many different "housing destinations:"
  - Market-rate with relocation assistance, e.g. move-in funds
  - One year subsidies (e.g., former HAP or DPSS Programs)
  - Affordable housing complexes
  - Tenant-based Section 8

- Family always is leaseholder

- Currently have over 100 landlords and property management companies in our network

- Assisted over **600 families** in 2008, and over 4,300 since 1989
Housing Stabilization Services

- Voluntary, home-based service model; generally 6-12 months in duration

- Intensive (particularly first 3 months), individualized, & family-centered

- Guided by Family Action Plan(s)

- Case management functions: life skills development and services coordination/linkages

- *Family Survival Guide* and *Household Money Management Manual*
Lessons Learned

- Partnerships & collaboration are key
- Training and regular communication with partners is important and can prevent problems (e.g., “dumping,” slow referrals, referrals without vital documents, etc.)
- Maximize the use and coordination of existing resources
- Flexible program design is critical
Lessons Learned – Cont’d

- Creativity a must (e.g., during Section 8 freeze a few years ago)
- Families are more responsive to services from a stable housing base
- Importance of addressing the trauma of homelessness
- First 90 days after re-housing is critical
Lessons Learned - Cont’d

- Don’t cluster families in buildings
- Check the property status of prospective rental units/buildings due to the foreclosure crisis
- Teamwork between housing specialists and case managers is key to success
- Case management is a big selling point for landlords
- Proof is in the pudding: landlords call us when they have vacancies
Program Direction Under HPRP

- Expansion of existing program model but with a variety of target populations
- New potential partnerships
- Less intensive home-based service model expected
- Piloting of new tools and procedures to assess needs and target resources, including rent subsidies
- New administrative responsibilities: e.g., directly administering rental assistance
- Projecting increased income – or at least sustainable income – after subsidy ends could be unrealistic, given the current economic recession