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

Homelessness Prevention
& Rapid Re-housing:
Community Perspectives

2009 REGIONAL HPRP TRAINING

Sponsored by:
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS)
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Introduction

Homelessness prevention in New York City

- New York City Department of Homeless Services
- CAMBA Homebase
Planning: Goals

- Make homelessness prevention the cornerstone of system transformation
- Create a continuum of prevention services
- Establish public/private partnerships to enhance innovation and shape systems change
- Mayoral commitment to continual quality improvement
Planning: Stakeholders

- Public sector: Mayoral support combined with sister agency cooperation, including local housing authority and housing court administration
- Private: Non-profit community experts and Continuum of Care input
- Researchers and academics
- Community voices
Planning: Data Groundwork

- Partnered with Vera Institute of Justice to identify prior housing sources, conditions and precipitating events that lead to family homelessness
- Performed data matches with other city agencies
- Established geographic analysis of poverty and shelter entry
Implementation: Service Continuum

- Anti-Eviction Legal Services
  - City-wide legal assistance

- Human Resources Administration (TANF administering agency) Diversion Units
  - Homeless diversion units at Job Centers
  - Housing Court assistance
  - Specialized unit at homeless intake
Implementation: Service Continuum

- All Community Residents
  - Public Awareness, Outreach, and Referral Info
- Vulnerable/Formerly Homeless
  - Assessment, Advocacy, Advice, Community Workshops
- Urgent Risk of Homelessness
  - Comprehensive Services, Financial Assistance, and Housing Vouchers
- Homeless Shelter Applicants
  - Mediation/Short-Term Placement and Long Term Housing Plan
Implementation: Program Model

- 6 community pilot
- Combination of casework and financial assistance
- Flexible model with customized services
- Intensive screening to find “at risk” of shelter entry, including home visits
- Outreach to service resistant
Implementation: Targeting

- Created assessment tool with input from leading researchers and practitioners
- Created community-specific profiles and maps of shelter entrants
- Established performance measures
  - Targeting
  - Client outcomes
  - Community Impact
Implementation: Community Maps

HELP I HomeBase
SHELTER MOVE-OUTS & ENTRANTS
CD 201 & 203 & 206

Legend
- Geocoding Result: MOVES_9-13-07 HELP I
- 2nd Quarter Eligible HELP I
Implementation: Community Profile

Age of Head of Household

Family Size (Number of Individuals)

Primary Tenant Reason for Homelessness

Secondary Tenant Reason for Homelessness
# Implementation: Shelter Applicants

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES**  
**HOMELESS FAMILY EMERGENCY SHELTER SYSTEM**  
**INTAKE CENTER ARRIVALS**  
*Referral Date: 04/10/2006, Referral Source: All Intake Centers, Sorted By: Prevention Community Districts: (111, 201, 206, 303, 304, 412)*

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Implementation: Expansion

- Four additional contracts were added, resulting in 10 service areas and 13 centers across the city.
- Funding increased from 12 million to over 20 million dollars.
- Services were expanded to include aftercare and rapid re-housing at the shelter door.
- Contracts increased from 10% to 50% performance-based.
Implementation: Expansion

HomeBase City-Wide Coverage

To look up community districts by address, go to http://gis.nyc.gov/dchp/ft1.jsp
Lessons: Summary

- Improving Targeting
  - Public Awareness and 311 screening
  - Brief/full services
  - Aftercare
  - Move services to shelter door

- Continue to leverage mainstream resources to offer housing options in the community

- Enhance performance-based contracting & cost effectiveness
Lessons: Improving Targeting

- Targeted public education campaign in high-demand communities
- Developed screening and referral service through 311
- Established referral system with courts and sister agencies
Lessons: Improving Targeting

“Brief” Services

- Addressing service gap
- “Open House” service model, short consultation
- No wrong door to services
- Seamless transition to full services if necessary

Aftercare

- Universal availability, client/landlord initiated
- Targeting augmented by outreach, early warning systems, landlord hotline, and assistance for re-applicants
- Services: subsidy remediation and renewal, converting to Section 8, employment, landlord mediation, relocation, legal assistance.
Lessons: Improving Targeting

Shelter Diversion
- Some applicants need some assistance, but don’t necessarily need shelter
- Instituted mandatory referrals to diversion team at shelter intake
- Homebase staff also targets applicants in temporary shelter placements
  - Temporarily returning family
  - Restoring housing
  - Rapid relocation
  - Targeting applicants have no immediate option but do have resources
Lessons: Improving Targeting
Lessons: Improving Targeting
Lessons: Leveraging Mainstream Resources

The provision and maintenance of affordable, stable housing is essential to the achievement of a broad range of social service goals.

- **Service Provision**
  - Cast the widest possible service net
  - Provide “future ability” to pay & targeted long-term social services

- **Maximum funding flexibility & Cost Effectiveness**
  - Leverage dollars, expand range of allowable expenditures
  - Build full range of services, from shallow to deep

- **Two key resources:**
  - TANF funding for moving expenses and short-term subsidies
  - Priority Section 8 vouchers from housing authority for at-risk in community
Lessons: Performance-Based Contracting

HOMEBASE Shelter Diversions, Cumulative to date

- Target
- Actual

Chart showing cumulative diversions from July 2007 to April 2009.
Program: Community Assessment

- Fits shelter profile
  - Young head of household, young children, frequent moves, shelter history, little work and educational experience, foster care involvement

- At-risk of shelter entry
  - Discord, loss of benefits, pending eviction, recent shelter application/stay

- Full or brief service
Program: Data Collection

- Prescreen
- Housing History
- Foster Care
- Financial
- Criminal Justice
- Work Experience
- Health
- Household Discord
Program: Diversion Assessment

- Income
  - PA, SSI, Employment
- Education/Employment history
  - Employed or able to quickly be placed in job
- No serious barriers to immediate re-housing
  - Imminent birth, recent criminal history
- Motivation and expectations
  - Willingness to put in immediate effort to achieve housing goals
Program: Staffing & Roles

Program Director
Managers for Rapid Re-housing, Community & Aftercare
5 Program Supervisors
2 Housing Specialists
2 Subsidy Specialists
3 Senior Case Managers
19 Case Managers
1 Community Liaison
2 Job Developers
1 Legal Counsel
2 Support Staff
Program: Services

- Resolve underlying risk factors
  - Develop an individualized short-term service strategy
  - Develop long-term plan for assisting clients in achieving housing stability
- Empower and Enhance ability to live independently through HOUSEHOLD LEADERS Training
- Tenant’s rights and responsibilities training
- Education
- Employment Services
- Baby Buggy
- Entitlements Review
- Advocacy
- Informal/Formal landlord Tenant Mediation
Program: Outreach

Invest in making presence known in the community, particularly to service resistant households

• Advertisements: Target people who might not identify as at risk

• Community Settings: Barbershops, stores, meetings places, public assistance centers, schools, churches, check cashing facilities etc.

• Community Events: Baby shower, Halloween party, movie night, Section 8 and tenancy workshops, financial empowerment services
Key Lessons & Policies: Summary

- Using Data/Technology
- Financial Assistance
- Home Visiting
- Engagement & Retention
- Housing Assistance/Landlords
Key Lessons & Policies: Data

- Using Data/Technology
  - Query specific reports
  - Manage Case Manager case loads
  - Assist with targeting
  - Case Reviews
  - Evaluate Service Plan Goals
Key Lessons & Policies: Data
Key Lessons & Policies: Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance
- Types of financial assistance
- Procedures for distribution
  - Case Manager makes the case
  - No direct client payments
  - Mandatory financial literacy course
  - Home visit
Key Policies & Lessons: Home Visiting

Home Visiting
- Partnership in Action
- Levels the playing field
- Allows Case manager to see realistic environment
- Opportunity for individualized services
- Better understanding of client stressors/strengths
- More realistic treatment plans
- Actually see results of advocacy
Key Policies & Lessons: Engagement & Retention

- Engagement & Retention
  - Relationship = Retention
  - Incentivize Behaviors that will assist the clients to become good tenants and good neighbors
- Honest Communication
- Contact daily, weekly and bi-monthly
- Case Conferences
Key Policies & Lessons: Landlords

Housing Assistance/Landlords

- Need a large database of brokers and landlords who understand your mission and you can call on at anytime.
- Real Estate agencies are more comfortable renting to our clients once they understand that the social services are ongoing.
- Need a Housing Specialist or a full-time staff person dedicated to making contacts on a higher level with brokers, real estate, and private landlords.
- Landlords need to understand we are not desperate and have standards.
- Pictures & Apartment Inspection Form.
Replication

- Data is vital to targeting and service success.
- Bring mainstream resources to the table
- Create multiple access points, and multi-layered financial assistance and service approach
Outcomes

- Over 14,000 households served since October 2004. Over 90 percent of these households did not enter shelter within one year of service.
- Since the beginning of the diversion program, over 1,100 households have been diverted from shelter, and over 98% have remained housed for at least one year.
- Over 4,400 priority Section 8 applications have been filed for families most at risk of shelter entry.
- DHS Advantage aftercare recidivism is less than one percent after one full year in the community.
Future of Homebase

- Restore cuts and add dollars where demand has increased
- Foreclosure initiative
- Implementing rigorous external evaluation