Transitional Housing

Welcome and Introduction

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HUD Perspective

• Transitional housing is a vital and useful component of the CoC
• HUD plans to continue funding Transitional Housing
• Advantages of TH:
  – Prepares people for permanent housing
  – Critical in a dynamic system
Background

- TH has a long history
- The SHP and TH for homeless families
- Growth of TH for homeless people
  - Very little when McKinney passed in 1987
  - 1996 – 4,400 programs, 160,000 beds
  - 2004 – 7,000+ programs, 220,000 beds
  - About half are for families
- Need for research

“Characteristics of Transitional Housing for Homeless Families”

Life After Transitional Housing: Following Families After They Leave TH – HUD $

- 3 levels – communities, programs, families
- Selected 5 CoCs – Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, San Diego, Seattle, and their counties
- Inventoried family TH, interviewed up to 15 per CoC that had at least 11 beds (4+ families)
  - Reporting on responses from the 53 responding family TH programs
Program Size and Configuration

• Size – ours are larger
  – 3-9 units: 57% nationally, 17% our sample
  – 10-19 units: 26% nationally, 38% our sample
  – Up to 40+ units: 5% nationally, 15% our sample

• Housing Configuration
  – 58% single site
  – 26% scattered site
  – 15% clustered-scattered
  – 23% could be “transition in place”

Length of Stay

Maximum length of stay – as policy
  – Average: 21 months
  – Range: 12 months or less (21%) up to 24 months (68%)

• Actual average length of stay – all families enrolled – much lower
  – Average: 12 months
  – 1-6 months: 31% of programs
  – 7-12 months: 30% of programs
  – 13-23 months: 37% of programs (23% at 13-18 mo)
Program Entry

• Referral sources
  – 2 were overwhelmingly most common – emergency shelters (89%) and CBOs (79%)

• Proportion of applicants accepted
  – 25% take almost all, but applicants for these were prescreened by referral sources
  – 12% take half, and 16% take about 3 in 4
  – 47% take 1 in 3, or fewer

Family Characteristics Required at Entry

• 100% – poor rental history, multiple evictions
• 91% – literally homeless; able and willing to carry out a treatment plan
• 87% – parent 18 or older
• 85% – clean and sober – but
  – Some require only a day or two of sobriety, most asks for 30-60 days, and a few require up to a year
Family Characteristics that Will Lead to Rejection

- 89% – active substance abusers, meaning those with no intention of stopping
- 72% – sex offenders (but not other felonies, mostly)
- 51% – parent is perpetrator of violence
- 34% – SPMI, alone or co-occurring (but an even greater proportion specialize in SPMI and co-occurring)

Most Common Reasons for Rejection

- Availability – this overwhelms all other reasons. Many programs do not keep a waiting list, do not even consider applicants until they have a unit opening
- Unwillingness to “work the program”
- Incomplete applications
- Not fitting the program – not being homeless, having children, DV, teen mother, whatever the special program focus is
Tenant Family Characteristics

- Length of current homeless spell
  - 0-12 months: 81 percent
- Came to TH from (on average):
  - The streets – 6%
  - Emergency shelters – 57%
  - Other TH programs – 8%
  - Somewhere else – 29% (includes treatment program, institution, conventional dwelling)

Income and Benefits

- Employment, at time of survey (on average):
  - 34% full-time work; 21% part-time work
- Benefits at time of survey (on average):
  - TANF/GA – 40%
  - SSI – 7%; DI – 1%
  - Food stamps – 68%
  - Medicaid – 56%
  - Medicare – 4%
Health and Mental Health

• Few have physical disabilities or HIV/AIDS
• Mental health (on average):
  – 16% SMI; another 13% co-occurring
  – But 24% of moms are on psychotropic meds
  – 9% had been hospitalized for SMI
• Substance abuse (on average):
  – 39% history but not active
  – 16% with alcohol, 25% with drugs

TH Program Services Most Likely to Be In-House

• 96% – case management; budgeting and money management
• 87-89% – tenant stabilization; developing support systems; daily living skills training
• 75-79% – assistance to access housing, benefits; conflict resolution training; basic needs (clothing, food)
• Arrangements for delivering many other services are split between (1) guaranteed receipt through on-site provision or (2) off-site provision with a clear commitment with off-site providers to serve the TH program families
TH Program Services Least Likely to Be In-House

- 72-74% – veterans services, representative payee services
- 53-60% – general health care; psychotropic meds prescribing, dispensing, monitoring
- Substance abuse-related services are most frequently offered off-site, and about evenly split between guarantee/clear commitment and “all we can do is refer.”

Most Common Collaborative Partners

- Public benefit programs
- Mental health and substance abuse agencies
- Legal aid
- Case management agencies
- TH programs for families are also likely to have active partnerships with employment services, child care and health care providers, and services that help with accessing housing
Most-Used TH Program Services

- Case management, by a mile
- Counseling, of many varieties
  - Employment-related
  - Life skills, including money management, crisis management, scheduling (time management), and daily living skills
- During follow-up, after families leave the program, the most frequently used services remain the same, and help with entitlements and benefits is also popular

Program Outcomes – Successful Exits

- Programs had a hard time defining “successful exit”, but generally focused on housing and employment
  - Have permanent housing
  - Have a job (or a way to afford the housing)
- Other goals that were part of TH program definitions of success were: maintaining sobriety, handling one’s mental illness, better parenting, making better decisions, and, for DV programs, living violence-free
- On average, programs say that 77% of their families leave successfully.
- On average, successful leavers are TH program residents for about 13 months; programs tend to think they could have used a bit longer – meaning that most programs feel that even their successful leavers might still be a bit shaky on their own
Outcome Indicators

• Housing, and housing stability
  – 98% of programs track what types of housing families go to when they leave the program
  – 85% track whether families are still in housing a significant period of time after leaving the program

• Employment, and employment stability – 89% of programs track whether families obtain and keep a stable income source

• Length of follow-up: 9% do only 1-3 month follow-up, 36% do 4-6 months, 43% do 6-12 months, 11% do 18-24 months

Housing Outcomes

• 70%, on average, go to permanent housing
  – 35% go without a subsidy or supportive services
  – 22% go WITH a subsidy, but without services
  – 13% go with BOTH subsidy and services, although mostly this is not formal PSH

• 13% reunite with family – could be good or bad

• 2% go to institutions

• 4% go back to homelessness

• 10% go to unknown destinations
Subsidy Differences by CoC

- Our study design included different communities so we could look at contextual differences, of which housing policies was one
- On average, 35% of TH families with successful exits leave with a housing subsidy
  - 16% in Houston, of 70% going to permanent housing
  - 26% in Detroit, of 65% going to permanent housing
  - 33% in Cleveland, of 54% going to permanent housing
  - 42% in San Diego, of 77% going to permanent housing
  - 5% in Seattle, of 78% going to permanent housing
- Most common reason for not going to permanent housing is that family could not afford it

TH Challenges

- Will know more about the impact of TH once we have completed the family interviews
- Some of the issues and challenges we will be able to address are:
  - Creaming – does not appear very common
  - Importance/effect of the need to move, vs. transition in place – 1 in 4 offer, but mostly families can't do
  - Need for TH at all – certainly not for all families, but for families with multiple barriers and multiple housing failures, may work and be needed
Where to Find the Full Report

- [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)
- Search by author, for Burt, Martha R.
- Click on “homelessness”
- Sorry, it won’t be up for about a week, so I don’t have the full URL