Housing First

A Paradigm Shift in Providing Services to the Homeless
The Federal Government has Embraced Housing First.

“Housing First is a proven method of ending all types of homelessness and is the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness.”

— “The Housing First Checklist” USICH
WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

• **In the Past:**
  – Clean & Sober required
  – “Job Ready” or Employed
  – Sometimes resulted in “Creaming” of clients

• **Consequences**
  – Greatest need clients were not served
  – Services provided for a limited time and clients had to move
WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

• What Housing First Looks Like:
  – Focus on accessing housing as quickly as possible
  – No time limits on the housing
  – Lease in the client’s name
  – Service delivery follows housing placement
  – Services are time-limited and scaled to need
  – Services are voluntary
WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

• **Housing First works best as a Community Wide philosophy**
  – Communities work together to fill any gaps

• **Can be program specific:**
  – Clients accepted regardless of sobriety or use of substances
  – Seldom rejected based on credit or financial history
  – Referrals from Shelters
  – Supportive Services are emphasized. Tenant-driven.
  – Use of alcohol and drugs are not considered a reason for eviction. (Lease violations are between tenant and landlord.)
WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

• Easy Checklist:
  – Are the applicants required to have a job/income prior to admission?
  – Are applicants required to be “clean and sober” prior to admission?
  – Are tenants able to be evicted for not following through on their service and/or treatment plan?

• If YES, not a housing first program.
WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

The ICH’s draft working definition of Housing First is as follows:

*Housing First offers homeless individuals and families access to permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible in a manner that is not time limited, connects tenants to optional supportive services; and has a low threshold for entry or ongoing tenancy, including no employment, income, or clinical prerequisites.*