

Learn with the Learning Community!

Follow our new blog at:

lcrcweb.com



Decreasing Family Homelessness Session 3



September 14, 2016

Cynthia Nagendra, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Kay Moshier McDivitt, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Samantha Batko, National Alliance to End Homelessness



Purpose: To analyze Community Action outcomes and identify effective, promising and innovative practice models that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty.

BUILD OUR CAPACITY TO FIGHT POVERTY!

Anti-Poverty Work



The “Heart” of Who We Are

The Promise of Community Action

*Community Action changes people's lives,
embodies the spirit of hope,
improves communities, and
makes America a better place to live.*

*We care about the entire community and
we are dedicated to helping people
help themselves and each other.*

The National Webinar Series

Focuses on themes related to the specific anti-poverty approaches and is a way to showcase innovative strategies to the broader CSBG network.

Homelessness Prevention: How to Target Prevention Resources and Divert People from Becoming Homeless



Samantha Batko, National Alliance to End Homelessness
Kay Moshier McDivitt, National Alliance to End Homelessness
Cynthia Nagendra, National Alliance to End Homelessness

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION • INFLUENCING FEDERAL POLICY • BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

Today's Webinar

- What role can a CAA play in prevention?
- What does research tell us about prevention?
- What is the difference between “prevention” and “diversion”?
- How can prevention resources and services work to divert people from homelessness?

What Roles Do Community Action Agencies Play In Diverting People from Homelessness?

- Provide prevention assistance to people imminently at risk of homelessness
 - Supportive Services for Veteran Families
- CAA's can also provide:
 - Landlord mediation services
 - Rent or utility arrears
 - Emergency assistance funds
 - Connections to other services to sustain people's housing stability

Homelessness Prevention

Research and Implications

The Cost of Homelessness

- Costs for Families and Individuals
- First-time homelessness costs: \$1,634 to \$20,031
 - Families vs Individuals
 - Long-stayers vs short stayers
- Broader Societal costs

Measuring the Effectiveness of Prevention

Community A

100 people ask for emergency assistance

0 people given prevention

5 people become homeless

Community B

100 people ask for emergency assistance

100 people given prevention
(\$500 per person=\$50,000)

2 person becomes homeless

Community B prevented 3 PEOPLE from becoming homeless at a total cost of \$50,000 = \$16,667 per person

NYC: Home Base

- Geographically targeted prevention program: Reduced number of families entering shelter, costs offset
- Additional analyses:
 - It does not appear that prevention services helped “low risk” families;
 - The “higher risk” a family served was, the more impactful prevention services became
 - Highest risk: previous episode of homelessness (as an adult)

Chicago

- Non-targeted prevention: reduces homelessness, do not offset homeless system costs
- If targeted to very low-income individuals and families: more significant reductions in homelessness, cost savings

Implications for Communities

- Resource Decisions
- Prevention Intervention Points
- Deep Targeting
 - Consider Developing and/or Adapting Existing Screening Tool
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Prevention in Practice: ***Diversion from Homelessness***

**Diversion is a prevention strategy
moved to the “Front Door of the
Shelter”**



What is Homelessness Diversion?

- A strategy that prevents homelessness by helping people experiencing a housing crisis and seeking emergency shelter to preserve their current housing situation or make immediate alternative arrangements without having to enter shelter
- Diversion is NOT a separate “program” but rather part of the entire crisis response system – problem solving and solution focused
- Diversion should always be safe and appropriate for the client.

Reasons to Use Prevention Resources at the “Front Door of Shelter”

- Many people experience a housing crisis -- far fewer actually become homeless
- Traditional prevention typically starts further upstream and often screens out those closest to homelessness
- Traditional eviction prevention has not been shown to reduce homelessness

Reasons to Use Prevention Resources at the “Front Door of Shelter”

- Improves system outcomes by reducing entries into homelessness
- Improves quality of life by helping people avoid the stress of shelter stays
- Conserves and targets resources – shelter beds used only when needed
- Cuts down on shelter wait lists

Diversion and Prevention

Housing Situation	Intervention	Services Provided
At imminent risk of losing housing/being evicted	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental subsidy • Financial assistance • Housing search • Problem solving • Housing retention and stabilization follow-up • Mediation • Connection to mainstream resources and natural supports
Requesting shelter	Diversion	
In shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation	Rapid Re-Housing	

Keys to Successful Diversion

- ✓ Coordinated entry process and shelter front door
- ✓ Resourceful staff trained in mediation
- ✓ Strength based and problem solving
- ✓ Recognizes client choice and safety
- ✓ Linkages to mainstream services and natural supports
- ✓ Flexible dollars



dreamstime.com

Approach at Coordinated Entry

FROM	TO
What programs are you eligible to enter and who has a bed?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?
Assessment/eligibility Checklist Tool	Structured problem solving conversation about household situation and resources
Intake or put on waitlist	Support crisis resolution to avoid shelter entry

The Four C's of Diversion

- Commitment/Culture
- Conversation
- Creativity
- Continuous

Diversion Culture

- Mainstream and homeless service providers must believe households are better served outside of homelessness system
- Funders and providers are committed to use of use of prevention resources (personnel and financial) at the shelter front door is the best way to target resources and have the most impact on reducing homelessness in the community

Diversion Conversation

- Diversion is a problem solving, strength based conversation, not an assessment tool with a list of questions
- Conversation should be realistic discussion on client's housing, employment and financial needs and opportunities
- Provide tips on making a “doubled up” situation more tolerable (ex. contributing to household supplies)
- Essential to explain the harsh realities of shelter life - and that shelter is not an automatic entry point for Rapid Re-Housing

Diversion Creativity

- Help clients think of creative solutions and explore every option
- More about creative solutions than financial assistance
 - More about staff time and less about rental assistance
- What other options might be available; help clients identify their current supports
 - Is there someone in another community that could be a resource
 - Bus tickets home or to relatives

Continuous Diversion

- Diversion conversation may need to happen more than once
- Not a one time “service
- Follow-up should be incorporated into services provided, particularly in roommate arrangements

Community Examples

Southeastern Connecticut

- Reduced shelter beds from 83 to 53
- In 2015 diverted 79% of families
- Average cost is \$1,649

Montgomery County, PA

- 85% of cases handed in under an hour
- In 2015 diverted 64% of clients
- Average cost is \$1,325
- Where did they go?
 - 35% stayed doubled up
 - 15% stayed in their housing
 - 12% moved to their own housing

Summary

- Maximize community resources, use prevention dollars at the “front door of shelter”
- Important not to think of homeless prevention/diversion as a program, but rather as problem solving across the system
- Many people will stay where they are or end up back where they came from; that may be better than shelter **as long as it is safe**
- Empty shelter beds/dissolving waiting lists is a good indicator communities are using prevention resources to effectively divert households from homelessness (as long as the unsheltered population is decreasing)
- Remember the 4 C’s – Commitment, Conversation, Creativity and Continuous

Questions?

- Cynthia Nagendra: cnagendra@naeh.org
- Samantha Batko: sbatko@naeh.org
- Kay Moshier McDivitt:
KMoshierMcDivitt@naeh.org

National Webinar Series

National Poverty Trends Session 4

September 28, 2016 1pm ET

Social and economic conditions have changed dramatically since the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Yet 46.7 million people in the U.S. live in poverty, 15.5 million of whom are children. As the U.S. Census Bureau reported in its annual estimates on income, poverty and health insurance coverage, the poverty rate for 2014 was 14.8 percent, unchanged from 2013. This Poverty Trends webinar series will offer in-depth information on the state of poverty in America and will provide participating agencies with resources on how to analyze their community data on the poverty level and provide tools for anti-poverty advocacy on the local and state level. This webinar is FREE, but [Registration](#) is required.

National Webinar Series

Decreasing Family Homelessness Session 4

November 9, 2016 2pm ET

This webinar series, hosted in collaboration with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance), is the virtual discussion forum for the Decreasing Family Homelessness Learning Community Group. It is designed to improve the effectiveness of Community Action Programs (CAP) agencies working on the frontline of addressing family homelessness. This webinar event is FREE, but [Registration](#) is required.

Please Give Us Your Feedback!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/familyhomelessnesssession4>

LCRC Staff Contact Info:

Tiffney Marley, CCAP, NCRT, Project Director
tmarley@communityactionpartnership.com

Jarle Crocker, PhD, Director of Training and Technical Assistance
jcrocker@communityactionpartnership.com

Hyacinth McKinley, Program Associate
hmckinley@communityactionpartnership.com

This presentation was created by the National Association of Community Action Agencies – Community Action Partnership, in the performance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services Grant Number, 90ET0452. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Learn with the Learning Community!
Follow our new blog at:
lcrcweb.com

