



UMASS DONAHUE INSTITUTE • RESEARCH & EVALUATION GROUP



United Way Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
**Housing First for Families Initiative
Year 3 Evaluation Report**

August 2010



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Executive Summary: Housing First for Families Year 3 Evaluation

In 2007, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (UWMBMV) embarked on a three-year initiative to support community-based agencies in their efforts to develop and implement Housing First for Families programming. The third and final year of the initiative began on July 1, 2009. In Year 3 of the initiative, UWMBMV provided \$722,000 in Housing First for Families funding to 13 grantees, 12 of which were among the original 14 grantees. One funded organization had not previously participated in the initiative. Similar to Year 2, all but one grantee was funded to provide direct services to homeless families or families at immediate risk for homelessness, and one grantee worked solely in the areas of capacity building and advocacy.

As part of its commitment to Housing First for Families, UWMBMV contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct an evaluation of the initiative. Although there was a desire to document family-centered outcomes and cost-effectiveness from the start, UWMBMV recognized that grantees needed time to build the capacity and infrastructure necessary to provide quality Housing First programming before being held accountable for achieving family-level outcomes. As such, the first year evaluation focused on describing how the UWMBMV's Housing First Initiative was implemented across organizations and assessing the extent and nature of changes in programmatic capacity. In Years 2 and 3 of the initiative, the evaluation focused on documenting services provided to families and the outcomes associated with those services.

Unlike the Year 1 evaluation that focused solely on capacity building efforts, Years 2 and 3 tracked service provision and family-level outcomes. In both years, grantees were required to complete Midyear and Yearend Progress Reports, as well as submit family-level data detailing service provision and progress toward housing and economic stability goals. Data submitted in Year 3 documented the following major activities implemented by the grantees throughout the course of FY10:

- Two grantees reported that staff attended 30 training sessions related to Housing First (some sessions were part of multi-day training series).
- Four grantees provided training directly to more than 300 families as part of the grant and 2 grantees engaged more than 100 families in 19 training series. The majority of the training sessions and series were related to financial literacy and skills.
- Seven grantees provided pre-housing placement case management to 254 families.
- Ten grantees provided post-housing placement case management to 853 families.
- Nine grantees provided housing search and placement services to 465 families (two of the nine provided this as a solo activity, and the remaining seven incorporated it into pre-placement case management).
- Two grantees developed or acquired 25 Housing First units.
- Five grantees secured 105 housing subsidies.

Although the type of services provided in FY10 was consistent with FY09, the amount of service provided and the number of families reached increased significantly. In addition to providing direct services, several grantees engaged in capacity-building efforts as part of their grant, including the following:

- Developing and implementing training models
- Expanding or restructuring Housing First service delivery
- Improving data collection systems
- Developing early warning systems

- Developing partnerships and building collaborations
- Expanding financial services including education and support

The impact of grantees' efforts is evident in the outcomes achieved by families. In Year 3, outcomes reporting forms documented service delivery and housing status for 488 adults and 621 minor children through this grant initiative. However, it is important to note that this represents only a fraction of all families impacted through this initiative. As noted above, 254 families received pre-placement case management, 853 families received post-placement case management, and 465 families received housing search services. While these numbers may reflect some duplication (one family counted three times for receiving all three services), there is no doubt that more families received services than are documented on the outcomes reporting forms. This discrepancy is due to the decision to limit family-level reporting to a maximum of 40 families per grantee in order ease the burden of data collection on the grantees.

By far, the most important outcome associated with the Housing First for Families Initiative is for families to attain and maintain permanent housing. As shown in Table 8, 77.1% of the families served were housed at the end of the Year 3 grant period, with 42.9% having been homeless at intake and an additional 34.2% of housed families maintaining their permanent housing status. Of the families served, 75 (21.2%) were homeless at intake and at yearend, and six families lost their housing over the course of the grant period.

Housing Outcomes				
	FY09		FY10	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Change in Housing Status from Intake (or July 1, 2009) to Yearend				
Homeless at Intake, Permanent Housing at Yearend	84	48.6	152	42.9
Homeless at Intake and Homeless at Yearend	43	24.9	75	21.2
Housed at Intake and Housed at Yearend	44	25.4	121	34.2
Housed at Intake and Homeless at Yearend	2	1.2	6	1.7
Total	173	100.1	354	100.0

One of the defining characteristics of Housing First models is the recognition that individuals and families need stabilization and support services in order to both attain and maintain permanent housing. As such, it is not surprising that 36.9% of the forms submitted represented families in permanent housing, including 87 families that had been in housing for one year or more (Table 5). In some cases, families in permanent housing had been receiving services through this initiative prior to July 1, 2009, and as such, were likely homeless when services originally began.

Housing Status at Intake or as of July 1, 2009		
	FY10	
	Number	Percent
Doubled-up with Family or Friends	47	12.7
Shelter	161	43.6
Transitional Housing	25	6.8
Permanent Housing for Less than 1 Year	49	13.3
Permanent Housing 1 Year or More	87	23.6
Total	369	100.0

In accordance with funded activities in Year 3 of the initiative, outcome data related to economic self-sufficiency and meeting financial responsibilities were gathered. As shown in the Table, more than half of housed families always paid their rent on time over the course of the year. For the housed families who had a rental or utility arrearage, 74.7% made progress toward reducing their arrearage. A budget was developed by 81.5% of families; however, for those families who

Financial Responsibility Outcomes		
	FY10	
	Number	Percent
Of Housed Families, those who Always Paid Rent On Time	165	58.3
Families that Developed a Budget	308	81.5
Of the Families that Developed a Budget, those who Always Lived within Budget	115	38.2
Of the Housed Families who had an Arrearage, those who made Progress toward Reducing the Arrearage	109	74.7
Families that Increased Income / Resources from Entitlement Programs	156	41.3
Families that Increased Income/ Resources from Earned Wages or Child Support	97	25.7
Families that Contributed Funds to a Savings Account or Plan	87	23.0

developed budget, only 38.2% always adhered to it. Slightly more than one-quarter of families were able to increase their income or resources through earned wages or child support and 41.3% through entitlement programs. Lastly, 23.0% of families contributed funds to a savings account or plan.

However, the numbers alone do not adequately describe the progress grantees have made in implementing a Housing First model for families. **The overall assessment of this grant initiative found that UWMBMV successfully supported service providers in their efforts to develop and implement Housing First programming.** Throughout Year 1, grantees continually shared the barriers to fully adopting Housing First. Barriers ranged from confronting resistance to the philosophic shift inherent in adopting a Housing First model to the lack of quality case management models and training tailored to the needs of homeless families. Rather than being deterred by the many challenges and barriers encountered in Year 1, grantees developed strategies to address the known barriers. Because funds are generally not available for capacity building and infrastructure development, organizations' ability to use UWMBMV funds to support such efforts clearly had an impact on programs. Overall, the implementation-specific barriers and challenges identified in Years 1 and 2 were addressed. Unfortunately, the systemic and structural hurdles to ending family homelessness were not as readily addressed throughout the initiative.

UWMBMV's commitment to this initiative was particularly timely in that it coincided with significant changes in the Commonwealth's funding and delivery of services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Moreover, the distinctiveness of this grant initiative was UWMBMV's recognition of the need for funds to support the transition from traditional programming to Housing First. This turned out to be a much-needed support during a time of significant statewide organizational and funding changes.

Of the many lessons learned about adopting and adapting the Housing First model for families experiencing homelessness, one experience was shared by nearly all of the grantees. During the course of implementation grantees discovered that Housing First for Families can not be implemented as a one-size-fits-all program. Factors such as family size, employment history, physical and mental health status, the presence of disabilities in the household, history of domestic violence, immigration status, and criminal history create a complex constellation of needs unique to each family. However, many of the low income housing options assume that the level of assistance needed by families is uniform and offer little or no flexibility in how assistance is provided. For Housing First for Families to be successful moving forward, a range of affordable housing options will need to be available with the degree of flexibility that matches the unique needs of each family.

I. Introduction

In 2007, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (UWMBMV) embarked on a three-year initiative to support community-based agencies in their efforts to develop and implement Housing First for Families programming. This initiative was grounded in the following beliefs:

- Efforts must move away from managing homelessness to ending homelessness.
- Quickly moving individuals and families experiencing homelessness into housing first helps them to more effectively and efficiently stabilize their lives and become more self-sufficient.
- Individuals and families who are free from the stress and worry about finding shelter are more receptive to the services that will keep them stable in the long-run.

Beginning July 1, 2007, UWMBMV funded 14 homeless and housing-related organizations to adopt a variety of self-determined strategies designed to build organizational capacity to implement Housing First for Families programs. Specifically, UWMBMV provided over \$775,000 in grants to help agencies move toward programming that is in line with the Housing First philosophy. This significant financial commitment not only demonstrated UWMBMV's commitment to homeless families, but also recognized that existing service delivery systems cannot be expected to change course overnight and that significant resources are required to fully adopt and implement successful Housing First programs.

On July 1, 2008, UWMBMV provided \$767,000 of continued funding to 13 organizations to support their efforts to implement Housing First for Families programming. Of the 13 grantees, 12 were funded to provide direct services to homeless families or families at immediate risk for homelessness, and one grantee worked solely in the areas of capacity building and advocacy. Only those organizations that received funding the first year were invited to reapply. All but one of the first year grantees received funding for Year 2.

In Year 3 of the initiative, UWMBMV provided \$722,000 in Housing First for Families funding to 13 grantees, 12 of which were among the original 14 grantees. One funded organization had not previously participated in the initiative. Similar to Year 2, all but one grantee was funded to provide direct services to homeless families or families at immediate risk for homelessness, and one grantee worked solely in the areas of capacity building and advocacy.

As part of its commitment to Housing First for Families, UWMBMV contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct an evaluation of the initiative. Although there was a desire to document family-centered outcomes and cost-effectiveness from the start, UWMBMV recognized that grantees needed time to build the capacity and infrastructure necessary to provide quality Housing First programming before being held accountable for achieving family-level outcomes. As such, the first year evaluation focused on describing how the UWMBMV's Housing First Initiative was implemented across organizations and assessing the extent and nature of changes in programmatic capacity. In Years 2 and 3 of the initiative, the evaluation focused on documenting services provided to families and the outcomes associated with those services.

This is the third and final report to UWMBMV evaluating the initiative. The report consists of a summary of services and outcomes documented throughout Year 3, as well as a summary of lessons learned over the course of the Housing First for Families Initiative. Data related to Year 3 services and outcomes were gathered through progress reports and outcomes reporting forms. Information about lessons learned was largely gathered through discussion with grant leaders but was also based on feedback provided throughout the initiative. Detailed descriptions of data collection efforts are provided in the following section.

II. Year 3 Data Collection Methodology

Progress Reports

As part of the Year 3 application process, Housing First for Families grant applicants submitted logic models as part of their proposals. Similar to the process in Year 2, grantees' logic models were used to develop templates for midyear and yearend progress reporting. In January 2010, Housing First for Families grantees completed midyear progress reports, and in June 2010, they completed yearend progress reports. The Year 3 progress reports were similar in content to the Year 2 reports with one notable change; a section on "Client Training and Support" was added as several grantees included these services in their grant-funded activities.

The Progress Reports requested information about the extent to which grantees had implemented the activities outlined on their logic models. In addition, the report template requested information about barriers experienced in providing services, steps taken to overcome barriers, and specific strategies utilized in service provision.

Outcomes Reporting Forms

As part of the Year 2 evaluation, an Outcomes Reporting Form was designed to gather data on individual families, including the type and amount of service received, as well as changes in housing status. After generating several iterations that incorporated UWMBMV and grantee feedback, the uniform tool was distributed during the February 2009 peer learning group meeting. Grantees received an overview on how to complete the forms, as well as instruction for submitting forms at the conclusion of the grant. Each grantee was required to complete one form for up to 20 families receiving services during the grant period. The actual number of submitted forms varied depending upon each grantee's target service numbers. The determination to require reporting for a maximum of 20 families was based on the fact that completing the forms required a fair amount of client-level record review and data extraction. As such, a decision was made to keep the additional reporting burden to a minimum while ensuring that there would be a sufficient number of forms for analysis.

During the December 2009 peer learning group, grantees again had a chance to review the Outcomes Reporting Tool developed in Year 2 and offer feedback on the instrument. Several significant changes to the tool were made as a result of that discussion. One question about crises experienced during program participation was deleted because of significant confusion among staff about how to respond to the question. Several questions were added, including a question about the householder's limitations and impairments and a series of questions about the family's experiences paying rent, adhering to a budget, reducing arrearages, increasing income, and contributing to savings. In addition, the section of the form documenting the amount of service provided to each family was expanded. Specifically, grantees were required to document landlord negotiation or mediation services and various types of client training or support activities, such as life skills training, financial literacy training, job training, and peer or support groups.

In Year 3, each grantee was required to complete one form for up to 40 families receiving services during the grant period. The actual number of submitted forms varied depending upon each grantee's target service numbers. The determination to require reporting for a maximum of 40 families (up from 20 families in Year 2) was based on the fact that nearly all of the UWMBMV funding was being used to support service delivery, whereas in Year 2, significant funds were still being used for capacity-building activities. Although grantees were generally

servicing more families in Year 3 than in Year 2, UWMBMV recognized that completing the forms for 40 families required a fair amount of client-level record review and data extraction, and therefore chose to continue to limit data reporting to minimize the burden.

Table 1 summarizes the number of forms expected from each grantee and the number of forms submitted. It is important to note that one agency, Crittenton Women’s Union, did not submit any Outcomes Reporting forms.

Table 1: Outcome Forms Submitted by Grantee FY10			
Grantee	Expected Number of Outcomes Forms	Actual Number of Outcomes Forms	Percent of Total
Community Teamwork, Inc.	30	40	10.6
Crittenton Women's Union	40	0	0.0
Father Bills & MainSpring	40	40	10.6
Heading Home	20	30	7.9
Homestart	40	40	10.6
Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership	20	20	5.3
Project Hope	40	40	10.6
Quincy Community Action Programs	40	40	10.6
Serving People In Need	40	15	4.0
Somerville Community Corporation	40	40	10.6
Somerville Homeless Coalition	40	37	9.8
Travelers Aid Family Services	40	36	9.5
TOTAL	430	378	100.1

Grantees were required to submit information about services provided and outcomes achieved during the FY10 grant year only. However, a number of families began receiving services prior to July 1, 2009. For “multi-year” families, intake-related information (i.e., date of intake or housing status at intake) was recorded as or as of July 1, 2009 and not the original date of intake. Of the 378 forms submitted, 168 (44.4%) had intake dates of July 1, 2010. Although it is possible that intake did in fact occur for some of these families on July 1, it is presumed that the vast majority of these were receiving services before the start of the fiscal year.

Peer Learning Discussion Groups

UWMBMV’s Housing First for Families Initiative required that grantees participate in peer learning groups. In Years 1 and 2 of the initiative, the groups served as an opportunity for grantees to discuss progress toward adapting and implementing the Housing First model with families, as well as to discuss barriers to implementation. In Year 3 of the initiative, the groups served as a vehicle for gathering feedback about the grantees’ experiences and lessons learned over the course of the initiative.

In spring 2010, each of the Year 3 grantees was invited to participate in one of three discussion groups about specific Housing First topics, including Housing Search and Placement, Post-placement Engagement and Case Management, and Prevention and Economic Stability. Grantees were selected for the groups based upon the focus of their grant activities throughout the initiative. Table 2 summarizes the grantees that participated in each group.

Table 2: Peer learning discussion groups		
Topic Area	Date	Participating Grantees
Housing Search and Placement	April 14, 2010	Homestart, Heading Home, Traveler's Aid Family Services, Homes for Families
Prevention and Economic Stability	April 20, 2010	Somerville Homeless Coalition, Quincy Community Action Programs, Project Hope, Somerville Community Corporation
Post-placement Engagement and Case Management	April 21, 2010	Father Bills & Main Spring, Community Teamwork, Crittenton Women's Union, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, Serving People in Need

A discussion guide was developed for each of peer learning discussion groups. In addition to being asked to reflect on changes in their perceptions of the definition of Housing First as it pertains to families, questions also focused on service components and experiences, client characteristics, implementation issues, barriers, required resources, and necessary partners. A final question asked grantees to describe what effects, if any, were experienced as a result of the state's changes in the organization and delivery of homeless and housing services.

III. Summary of Year 3 Findings

This section of the report summarizes the progress made by grantees in implementing their Year 3 programs. In addition, this section provides a summary of Outcomes for families served during the third year of this grant program.

Implementation

Of the 13 Housing First for Families grantees, 12 were funded to provide direct client services, and one (Homes for Families) was funded to engage in advocacy and capacity-building efforts. Tables summarizing the 12 service delivery grantees' planned activities, midyear progress, and yearend progress can be found in Section VI of this report. The following is a summary of major service delivery activities implemented by the grantees throughout the course of the Year 3 grant:

- Two grantees reported that staff attended 30 training sessions related to Housing First (some sessions were part of multi-day training series).
- Four grantees provided training directly to more than 300 families as part of the grant and 2 grantees engaged more than 100 families in 19 training series. The majority of the training sessions and series were related to financial literacy and skills.
- Seven grantees provided pre-housing placement case management to 254 families.
- Ten grantees provided post-housing placement case management to 853 families.
- Nine grantees provided housing search and placement services to 465 families (two of the nine provided this as a solo activity, and the remaining seven incorporated it into pre-placement case management).
- Two grantees developed or acquired 25 Housing First units.
- Five grantees secured 105 housing subsidies.

In addition to providing direct services, several grantees engaged in capacity-building efforts as part of their grant. Detailed descriptions of these efforts can be found in Section VII of this report. Common areas addressed within capacity building included:

- Developing and implementing training models
- Expanding or restructuring Housing First service delivery
- Improving data collection systems
- Developing early warning systems
- Developing partnerships and building collaborations
- Expanding financial services including education and support

Homes for Families

In each of the three grant years, Homes for Families received funds to engage in advocacy efforts and to assist housing and homeless services providers throughout the Commonwealth in building advocacy and service delivery capacity. Because Homes for Families did not provide direct services to families, they were not required to complete the outcomes reporting form. As a result, the only information available about their efforts was gathered through the midyear and yearend reports. The following is a summary of activities accomplished during Year 3:

- Homes for Families conducted 10 trainings for shelter providers over the course of the year. In all, 222 shelter providers attended training. However, it is unknown if the 222 were unduplicated training participants.
- Topics included advocacy, consumer involvement, implementing various housing first service components, ethics, and self-care. Specific training dates and topics include:
 - 11/3/2009 Public Policy Advocacy
 - 1/27/2010 Public Policy Advocacy & Consumer Involvement
 - 2/17/2010 Motivational Interviewing
 - 3/10/2010 Affordable Housing Search
 - 4/14/2010 Eviction Prevention: The Court Process
 - 5/12/2010 Income Maximization
 - 5/26/2010 Financial Literacy
 - 6/9/2010 Ethics/Boundaries
 - 6/23/2010 Self Care
- The training sessions listed above represent somewhat of a departure from Homes for Families proposed FY10 activities. Originally, Homes for Families proposed holding three trainings examining policy advocacy and consumer involvement. While two sessions were held on public policy advocacy and one session addressed consumer involvement, the organization did not meet its goal. Instead, Homes for Families was given the opportunity to administer a training series designed to improve the skills and knowledge necessary to rapidly re-house families and provide prevention and stabilization services. Focusing on providers' skill was timely as shelter providers were dealing with a growing number of families due to the recession.
- On August 12, Homes for Families held a Visioning Day event at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. The event brought together over 140 shelter and service providers, consumers of homeless services, and employees from several state agencies to discuss the status of homelessness and possible solutions. Lieutenant Governor Murray, accompanied by Bob Pulster of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), gave the keynote address. The event also included break out groups designed to gather information from stakeholders about the work being done and issues faced on the ground. Information was documented in order to develop Homes for Families' policy agenda for FY2011 and was submitted to leaders at DHCD. Evaluations indicated that attendees found the event useful and gave them an opportunity to voice their concerns and solutions in a way that they felt heard by the Patrick Administration.
- During the Visioning Day discussions, participants asked for the creation of a blog to facilitate information sharing across the state. As a result, Homes for Families created the "Opening Doors" blog at homesforfamilies.wordpress.org. The purpose of the blog is to share information about DHCD resources,

upcoming events, job openings, media, links, etc., and to facilitate open discussions among providers based on the blog's materials. Visitors are given the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers from providers in the community. The new blog, which is complimentary to the Homes for Families Web site, provides another web-based tool to distribute materials related to systems change and facilitate discussion about issues, concerns, and solutions. To date, the "Opening Doors" blog has been highlighted in the National Alliance to End Homelessness blog and has received over 2,000 hits.

- On November 9, Homes for Families held the first forum in this grant cycle. The forum sought to build or strengthen ties between shelter providers and housing authorities on a regional basis. Good working relationships between housing authorities, one of the primary resources for housing, and shelters is crucial to ending family homelessness and transitioning to a statewide system based on the Housing First philosophy. The event, which was co-sponsored by MassNAHRO, The Family-to-Family Project, and UWMBMV attracted 155 attendees including 20 representatives from housing authorities. The forum featured presentations by Amy Schectman, Associate Director of Public Housing and Rental Assistance at DHCD; Katy Trudeau from the Citizens Housing and Planning Association; Liz Curtis, Executive Director of the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness; and representatives from a collaborative model of shelters and a housing authority in Louisville, KY. The afternoon session featured regional discussion groups to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders. Based on evaluations, attendees were able to make new connections, which they believed laid the foundation for future collaboration.
- On June 16, Homes for Families held the second forum in this grant cycle. The forum sought to address historical, economic, social, and institutional factors that cause family homelessness. In order to end family homelessness, the systemic factors that perpetuate poverty and ultimately feed homelessness should be understood to provide a well-rounded perspective of the issue. This event, which was co-sponsored by The Family-to-Family Project and UWMBMV, attracted 175 attendees from over 60 organizations. The morning session featured presentations from Brian Miller, Executive Director of United for a Fair Economy, and members from Community Change, Inc., who discussed institutional racism and poverty. The afternoon session featured six break-out groups examining a variety of topics, such as healthy relationships, the role of fathers, domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, substance abuse, health and nutrition, education with parents and children, and employment in short-term subsidies.

Outcomes

In total, grantees submitted 378 outcomes forms. Thirty-nine of these forms represented single adults or families with no minor children. The remaining 339 forms provided information about families with children 17 years of age or younger. Although it appears that reporting was submitted for 39 clients that do not meet UWMBMV's definition of family (having one or more minor children) under this Initiative, data from these clients are included in the Outcomes Summary. For ease of reporting, all are referred to as families throughout this section.

The outcomes reporting forms document service delivery and housing status for 488 adults and 621 minor children through this grant initiative. However, it is important to note that this represents only a fraction of all families impacted through this initiative. As noted in the Implementation section of this report, 254 families received pre-placement case management, 853 families received post-placement case management, and 465 families received housing search services. While these numbers may reflect some duplication (one family counted three times for receiving all three services), there is no doubt that more families received services than are documented on the outcomes reporting forms. This discrepancy is due to the decision to keep data reporting at a minimum to ease the burden on the grantees.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of the families served consisted of single women with one or more minor children (63.6%), followed by couples with minor children (22.0%). In addition, 15 of the families consisted of single men with minor children. Of the 339 families with minor children, 44.2% had one child, 36.0% had two children, and 19.8% had three or more children.

Additional family characteristics include the age of the head of household, his or her primary language, prior experience with domestic violence, and limitations or impairments of the householder (Table 3). Overall, the age of the head of household ranged from 18 to 74 years with an average age of 34 years. Slightly more than one-quarter of the householders primarily speak a language other than English, and 36.0% have a history of domestic violence. Family composition and head of household characteristics were consistent with Year 2 of the grant.

Table 3: Family and Head of Household Characteristics				
	FY09		FY10	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Family Composition				
Single Female	14	8.0	24	6.4
Single Male	6	3.4	3	0.8
Single Female with Minor Children	108	61.4	238	63.6
Single Male with Minor Children	12	6.8	15	4.0
Two Adults, No Children	7	4.0	11	2.9
Two Adults with Minor Children	29	16.5	83	22.0
Head of Household				
Average Age	176	34 years	369	34 years
Primary Language NOT English	56	31.8%	95	25.7%
History of Domestic Violence	66	40.2%	121	36.0%
Limitations or Impairments	--	--	117	31.5%

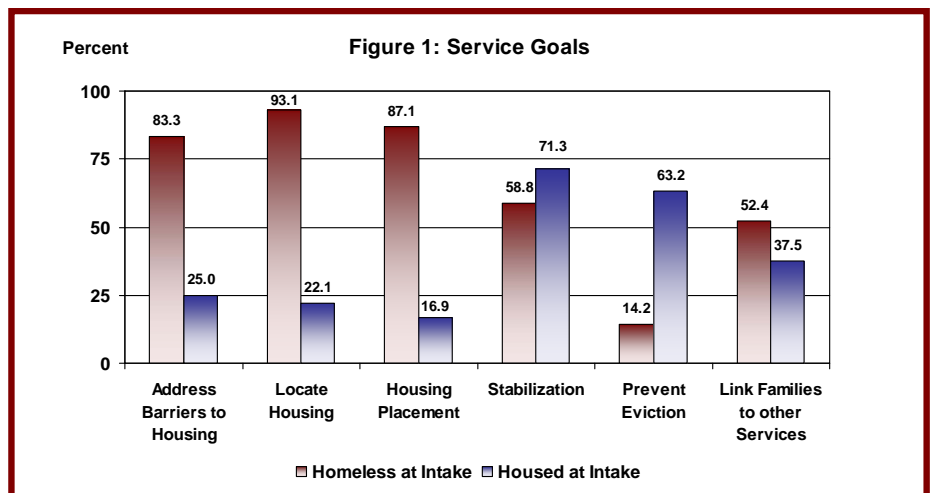
Overall, 117 householders had at least one limitation or impairment. Of these, 38.5% had two or more disabilities (Table 4). Of the reported limitations or impairments, 60.7% of householders had a mental health condition, 36.8% had a chronic health condition, and 17.1% had a substance abuse disorder.

Table 4: Head of Household Limitations or Impairments		
	FY10 (n=117)	
	Number	Percent
Mental health condition	71	60.7
Chronic health condition	43	36.8
Substance abuse disorder	20	17.1
Other disability	15	12.8
Mobility	14	12.0
Cognitive impairment or brain injury	5	4.3
Developmental disability	4	3.4
Vision or hearing	3	2.6
1 Disability	72	61.5
2+ Disabilities	45	38.5

One of the defining characteristics of Housing First models is the recognition that individuals and families need stabilization and support services in order to both attain and maintain permanent housing. As such, it is not surprising that 36.9% of the forms submitted represented families in permanent housing, including 87 families that had been in housing for one year or more (Table 5). However, the vast majority of individuals and families served were homeless (63.1%).

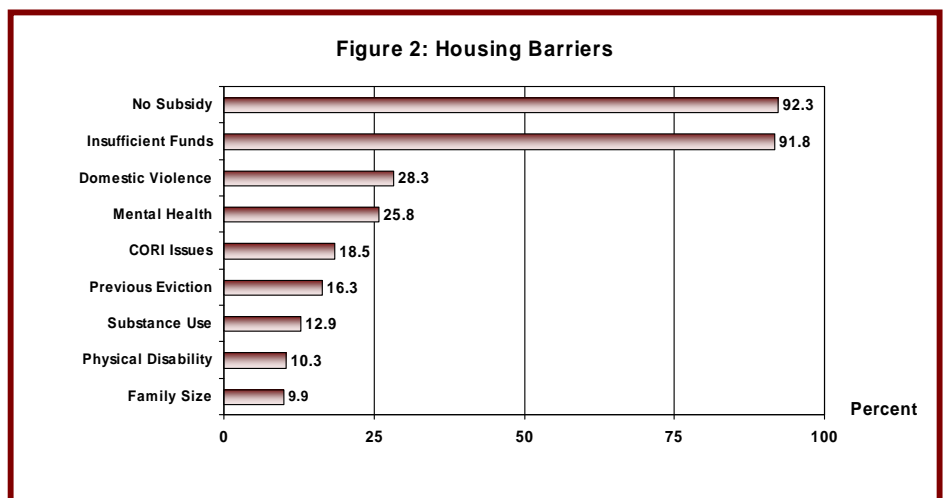
Table 5: Housing Status at Intake or as of July 1, 2009		
	FY10	
	Number	Percent
Doubled-up with Family or Friends	47	12.7
Shelter	161	43.6
Transitional Housing	25	6.8
Permanent Housing for Less than 1 Year	49	13.3
Permanent Housing 1 Year or More	87	23.6
Total	369	100.0

Comprehensive assessment and individualized service planning are critical components of Housing First. Given that families receiving services through this initiative are at different places in their housing needs, it is not surprising that overall service provision goals varied by housing status at intake or as of July 1, 2009 (Figure 1). Among those families already in permanent housing, stabilization and eviction prevention were the primary goals of service.



However, for families experiencing homelessness at intake, services focused on addressing barriers, housing search and placement, and stabilization.

Information about barriers to housing was provided for the 233 families that were homeless at intake (Figure 2).



Among homeless families, lack of a housing subsidy (93.2%) and

insufficient rental funds (91.8%) were the leading barriers to securing permanent housing. Although these were the most commonly reported barriers, only 73 homeless families (31.3%) had one or both of these barriers alone. On the other hand, 151 families with financial and/or subsidy-related barriers also had one or more additional barriers; this represents 64.8% of all families homeless at intake.

Additional barriers to housing reported among homeless families were related to domestic violence (28.3%) and mental health issues (25.8%). Relatively few families had barriers related to physical disability (10.3%) or family size (9.9%). Of the 233 homeless families, 2 families reported no barriers, only 7.3% had a single reported barrier, and an additional 30.5% had two reported barriers. The remaining families (61.3%) had three or more reported housing barriers.

The outcomes reporting forms also gathered information about the type and amount of service provided to each family as part of the grant. As shown in Table 6, the most common services included providing referrals, service planning, and assessment. Given that grantees were asked to report only those services provided during the FY10 grant year, it is important to recognize that the actual number of families that were assessed or had a service plan developed is likely much higher. However, because the grantees have been working with some of the families over the course of the initiative and not just in FY10, the assessment and service planning may have occurred in the previous grant year.

Of the 334 families that received referrals, the mean number of referrals provided to each was 3.8. Just over half of the families received between two and four referrals, and 26.0% received five or more service referrals (Table 7). One-half of families received referrals to entitlement programs, making this the most common referral. Other common referrals included those to various state agencies, child care, and food pantries.

Housing search services were provided to 207 families (54.8%), with 4,765 housing applications submitted for an average of 23.0 applications per family (Table 6). Post-placement case management and financial assistance were provided to more than half of the families. On average, families receiving these services participated in 13.4 case management sessions and received an average of \$3,324 in financial assistance. While pre-placement case management was less common, those families that received this service participated in an average of 19.3 sessions, which is higher than the average for post-placement case management (13.4 sessions).

More than one-third of families (36.5%) received some form of landlord mediation services, with an average of 3.3 sessions per family (Table 6). A similar percentage of families participated in average of 4.7 financial literacy training sessions during the grant year. Other services provided to families included 71 families attending an average of 8.7 life skills training sessions, 30 families attending an average of 17.3 peer or support groups throughout the grant period.

Table 6: Service Provision

	FY10 (n=378)			
	Families Served		Amount of Service Provided	
	Number	Percent	Total	Average
Assessment	227	60.1%	--	--
Service Planning	253	66.9%	--	--
Pre-housing Placement Case Management	173	45.8%	3,343 sessions	19.3
Housing Search	207	54.8%	4,765 applications	23.0
Housing Placement	165	43.7%	--	--
Post-housing Placement Case Management	213	56.3%	2847 sessions	13.4
Financial Assistance	200	52.9%	\$664,866	\$3,324
Mediation/ Negotiation with Landlord	138	36.5%	459 occurrences	3.3
Training	--	--	--	--
Life Skills Training	71	18.8%	616 trainings	8.7
Financial Literacy Training	136	36.0%	644 trainings	4.7
Job Training	27	7.1%	16 completed job training	--
Peer or Support Group	30	7.9%	518 groups	17.3
Referrals	334	88.4%	1,255 referrals	3.8

Table 7: Type of Referrals

	Families Served (n=334)	
	Number	Percent
Entitlement programs	167	50.0
State agencies	126	37.7
Child care	111	33.2
Food pantry/ survival center	103	30.8
Training or education	93	27.8
Mental health treatment	89	26.6
Legal services	84	25.1
Other	84	25.1
Employment	80	24.0
Health care	70	21.0
Domestic violence services or counseling	62	18.6
Child/ youth development	37	11.1
Immigration services	25	7.5
Substance abuse treatment	16	4.8
Representative payee services	0.0	0.0
1 referral	72	21.6
2 to 4 referrals	175	52.4
5+ referrals	87	26.0
Total	334	100.0

By far, the most important outcome associated with the Housing First for Families Initiative is for families to attain and maintain permanent housing. As shown in Table 8, 77.1% of the families served were housed at the end of the Year 3 grant period, with 42.9% having been homeless at intake and an additional 34.2% of housed families maintaining their permanent housing status. Of the families served, 75 (21.2%) were homeless at intake and at yearend, and six families lost their housing over the course of the grant period.

Table 8: Housing Outcomes

	FY09		FY10	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Change in Housing Status from Intake (or July 1, 2009) to Yearend				
Homeless at Intake, Permanent Housing at Yearend	84	48.6	152	42.9
Homeless at Intake and Homeless at Yearend	43	24.9	75	21.2
Housed at Intake and Housed at Yearend	44	25.4	121	34.2
Housed at Intake and Homeless at Yearend	2	1.2	6	1.7
Total	173	100.1	354	100.0

Housing outcomes in FY10 are generally consistent with those achieved in FY09. However, there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of families that were housed at intake and remained housed at yearend. This

increase is likely attributable to increased efforts in the are of prevention, as well as the fact that multi-year families (i.e., those who began receiving service before July 1, 2010) may have been homeless at their original intake, but housed at the start of the 2010 fiscal year.

While the housing outcomes among families served are encouraging, outcomes associated with self-sufficiency were less promising (Table 9). Fewer than 4 in 10 heads of household were employed at the conclusion of the grant, and even fewer were enrolled in school (14.3%) or in a training program (6.8%). Although these percentages are not high, it is encouraging that 70.1% of families are continuing services beyond the grant year and may, as a result of continued services, achieve greater self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency outcomes have remained generally consistent from FY09 to FY10.

Table 9: Self-Sufficiency Outcomes				
	FY09		FY10	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Continuing Services Beyond Yearend				
Yes	125	76.2	253	70.1
No	39	23.8	108	29.9
Total	164	100.0	361	100.0
Head of Household Employed at Yearend				
Yes	62	36.9	135	37.7
No	106	63.1	223	62.3
Total	168	100.0	358	100.0
Head of Household Enrolled in School at Yearend				
Yes	22	13.3	51	14.3
No	144	86.7	306	85.7
Total	166	100.0	357	100.0
Head of Household Enrolled in Training at Yearend				
Yes	28	16.8	24	6.8
No	139	83.2	330	93.2
Total	167	100.0	354	100.0

In Year 3 of the grant, a series of questions about meeting financial responsibilities was added to the outcomes reporting form. As shown in Table 10, nearly 60% of housed families always paid their rent on time over the course of the year. For the housed families who had a rental or utility arrearage, 74.7% made progress toward reducing their arrearage. A budget was developed by 81.5% of families; however, for those families who developed budget, only 38.2% always adhered to it. Slightly more than one-quarter of families were able to increase their income or resources through earned wages or child support and 41.3% through entitlement programs. Lastly, 23.0% of families contributed funds to a savings account or plan.

Table 10: Financial Responsibility Outcomes

	FY10	
	Number	Percent
Of the Housed Families, those who Paid monthly rent on time		
Yes, always	165	58.3
Sometimes	107	37.8
Never	11	3.9
Total	283	100.0
Developed a budget		
Yes	308	81.5
No	30	7.9
Not sure	40	10.6
Total	378	100.0
Of the Families who Developed a Budget, those who Lived within Developed Budget		
Yes, always	115	38.2
Sometimes	168	55.8
Never	18	6.0
Total	301	100.0
Of the Housed Families who had an arrearage, those who made progress toward reducing a rental or utility arrearage		
Yes	109	74.7
No	14	9.6
Not sure	23	15.8
Total	146	100.1
Increased income/ resources from entitlement programs		
Yes	156	41.3
No	158	41.8
Not sure	64	16.9
Total	378	100.0
Increased income/ resources from earned wages or child support		
Yes	97	25.7
No	216	57.1
Not sure	65	17.2
Total	378	100.0
Contributed any funds to a savings account or plan		
Yes	87	23.0
No	152	40.2
Not sure	139	36.8
Total	378	100.0

IV. Lessons Learned

This section of the report presents lessons learned by grantees over the course of the Housing First for Families Initiative. Most of the information presented in this section is based upon the three peer learning group Discussions held in April 2010. However, where appropriate, references are made to information gathered throughout the three year grant program.

Defining Housing First

At the start of the Housing First for Families Initiative, peer learning group members developed the following working definition of Housing First for the initiative:

***Housing First** is an approach that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing stabilization services as needed. There is an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing. Housing First must have the ability to:*

- A. *Provide barrier free housing by streamlining the eligibility process and minimizing existing traditional barriers such as CORI and service participation in order to have immediate access to housing.*
- B. *Focus on participants self determination by setting expectations of a responsible tenancy and “treating participants like adults” by holding them accountable for decisions and actions.*
- C. *Believe that housing is a right, and foundation that provides economic stability and self sufficiency for all things including recovery and healthy children and stable families.*
- D. *Offer a range of supportive services and approaches from voluntary, transitional, or intensive; and based on the assessed need of the family. Ideally the support is transitional in nature, and recognizes that not all communities have mainstream resources with which to integrate individuals and families.*

Furthermore, as part of the Baseline Leaders Survey conducted in Year 1, grantees were asked to define the key components and attributes of Housing First. Consistent with the working definition, the majority of written responses touched upon three significant attributes:

1. Barrier-free housing with minimal compliance requirements;
2. Rapid placement in housing; and
3. A sustained array of services to stabilize tenants and provide ongoing support.

In addition to these core features, leaders also mentioned other components believed to be necessary for a Housing First model: immediately assessing barriers to housing, offering support and services to foster positive tenancies, developing partnerships with landlords and other providers, connecting clients with sufficient funds and resources to support tenancy, and encouraging systems change from funding shelter to funding housing.

At the conclusion of Year 1, Leaders were asked to describe how their understanding of the Housing First concept may have changed over the course of the grant year. Although none of the grantees expressed a major change in definition of Housing First or its key components, nearly all felt that their understanding of the model was more

“nuanced” or “deepened” compared to the start of the initiative. One grantee noted having “a heightened awareness of the pivotal components of the model which are necessary for its long-term success.”

In addition, grantees cited a realization that Housing First is inherently different and more complex for families than for individuals. Grantees cited a number of differences or challenges encountered with families, including problems engaging and retaining families, barriers to housing, difficulty with array of support services and collaboration necessary, and challenges encountered when working with landlords, property managers, and housing authorities.

During the Year 3 Discussion Groups, Leaders were once again asked to reflect upon their perceptions of Housing First and how those perceptions may have changed over the course of the Initiative. In addition, Leaders were asked to compare the implementation of the Housing First for families and individuals. The following key points emerged from the discussions:

- Housing First, as a guiding principle, is applicable to both families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Everyone has the right to housing regardless of past housing history.
- Successful implementation of Housing First requires that barriers to housing be identified and addressed to ensure permanent housing placement as quickly as possible. Service providers must help individuals and families eliminate barriers to housing and refrain from creating additional barriers or hurdles to housing whenever possible.
- Although the basic theoretical framework of Housing First can be applied to families and individuals, there are significant differences in the characteristics and needs of individuals and families, as well as in how programs are implemented. For instance, leaders noted that individual units are easier to locate and financially sustain, whereas families are more difficult to place, and once placed, can be more difficult to sustain. Unlike individuals who are generally placed in SRO or efficiency apartments, families need sufficient space to accommodate the children. Furthermore, families need a range of housing options that not only match their physical needs, but also match the likelihood of the housing becoming self-sustainable.
- There is a general sense that individuals are more difficult to engage initially, but once engaged and placed in housing, are more accepting of ongoing support services. Families, on the other hand, tend to be easy to engage, but once housed they often are difficult to retain in ongoing supportive services.
- Working with families is more complicated than working with individuals because there are barriers not only for the family as a whole, but also for each individual. Families need a range of supports, and child-specific issues, such as daycare, add another layer to the Housing First process.
- Staff members who work with individuals need more of a clinical background because clients have a greater need for substance abuse and mental health support. However with families, there is less of a need for a clinical background and more of a need for vocational and training experience.

Although each of the points addressed above provides a deeper understanding of the differences in working with families versus individuals, perhaps the most interesting and important distinction made between Housing First for families and individuals was about the “end game” (i.e., the overall goal of the model). Leaders noted that the characteristics of individuals generally involved in Housing First programs are such that attaining and maintaining housing are the ultimate long-term desired outcomes. Many of these individuals are older, have chronic, persistent conditions or disabilities, and may be low-functioning. For the most part, there is little or no expectation that these individuals will become self-sufficient. With families, on the other hand, attaining and maintaining permanent housing is just the starting point on the road to self-sufficiency. Housing provides the foundation necessary to achieve long-term economic stability, which may take years of accessing supportive services.

Housing First Components

Housing Search and Placement

The Housing Search and Placement process generally begins with a homeless family entering shelter or some other homeless services program. Upon arrival and willingness to engage in Housing First, the family is assigned a housing search specialist, case manager, or a team of staff depending on the program. In addition to housing search specialists and case managers, team members may include an employment specialist, a stabilization worker, or a financial advisor. During the housing search and placement process, staff members assess barriers, develop individual service plans, and begin searching for affordable housing. Successful housing search and placement nearly always involves securing a subsidy and establishing a strong relationship with landlords and property managers.

Without doubt, the number one barrier to implementing Housing First for Families is the lack of affordable housing and housing subsidies. This issue was consistently identified as a major barrier to success from the beginning of the grant initiative and was repeatedly acknowledged in each of the peer learning discussion groups. The enduring lack of affordable units for families and the lack of long-term deep subsidies make housing search and placement a formidable task.

Although the lack of affordable housing has been an identified barrier since the beginning of the initiative, an equally difficult barrier early on was staff reluctance to adopt the philosophy of the model particularly as it relates to “barrier free” housing. The notion that everyone has a right to housing regardless of past housing history was difficult for some staff to accept. For example, a staff survey conducted in Year 1 found that more than half (54.3%) of the respondents felt that “demonstrating readiness should be a requirement for housing.” Such perceptions were acknowledged by leaders who often discussed the difficulties in achieving a paradigm shift from homeless services to housing services. However, as staff received training and organizational culture shifted, leaders perceived a greater acceptance among staff to adopt the Housing First model and philosophy. In fact, in Year 2, staff training activities moved beyond efforts to shift staff opinion of the Housing First model to comprehensive training programs related to implementation of the model.

During the peer learning discussion groups, leaders identified an emerging barrier related staff reluctance to rapid re-housing of homeless families. However, the reason offered for staff reluctance was not related to philosophy but to the negative consequences that may result when a family is rapidly re-housed with a shallow subsidy. While housing attainment is clearly a priority outcome for homeless families, maintaining that housing is equally important, and when staff feel that the family will not be able to sustain the housing beyond the life of the shallow subsidy, they become reluctant to place a family and risk losing the family’s place on public housing waiting lists. Without a mechanism for holding a family’s place in the queue for public housing, staff do not want to risk the eventual option for long-term support in order to place families in what may be a short-term housing fix.

Post-placement Engagement and Case Management

Once a family is housed, post-placement engagement and case management services are provided to enhance the stabilization process and increase a family’s likelihood of maintaining housing. Based on feedback gathered from grantee progress reports and the peer learning discussion groups, there is generally one primary case manager or stabilization worker who works intensively with a family. However, some programs may utilize multiple staff depending on the needs of the family.

Unlike the assessment process associated with housing search and placement, which focuses on identifying barriers to housing attainment, post-placement assessments focus on barriers to maintaining housing. During the assessment process, case managers or stabilization workers identify barriers that may hinder long-term housing stability and strive to identify community services and supports to address these barriers. Commonly required supports include counseling, childcare, vocational training, and employment services. Strategies for accessing needed services and supports are generally documented in individual service plans for the family.

The frequency and intensity of case management services varies across programs and families. Generally, programs do weekly or monthly “check-ins,” with the hope that the case manager or stabilization worker will become less involved over time as the family becomes more stabilized. The length of involvement a family may have with a program ranges from six months to ongoing and is dependent on the type of subsidy a family may have, the unique needs of the family, and the family’s willingness to engage in services.

Maintaining consistent engagement with families can be difficult. Once housing and financial needs are met or the immediate crisis is resolved, families tend to disengage until they need assistance again. During the peer learning discussion groups, participants noted the need for more “leverage” to keep consistent contact with families. This was of particular concern for families housed with short-term subsidies as they have relatively little time to plan for the loss of the shallow subsidy. It was acknowledged that the need for more leverage to ensure ongoing engagement should not result in creating barriers to housing. However, participants felt that without something in place to ensure ongoing engagement with a family that there is a high likelihood of the housing placement being in jeopardy from the outset.

Again, it is interesting to note that the primary barrier to successful case management and stabilization perceived at the conclusion of the initiative was different from the primary barrier identified in Year 1. Of primary concern in Year 1 was the lack of best practice models in post-placement engagement for families, as well as the lack of quality training in the implementation of post-housing placement case management.

Prevention and Economic Stability

Within the Housing First model, maintaining housing is as critical as attaining it. As such, housing search and placement and post-placement stabilization must be coupled with prevention efforts and activities designed to promote economic stability. As with all components of Housing First, the prevention process generally begins with screening or assessment and the development of a service plan for the family. Typically, a case manager will work with the family to address barriers and help them with the issue(s) that initiated their involvement with the program. For example, in the case of an arrearage, the case manager would work the family and landlord to develop a payment plan. The length of involvement can vary from a one-time contact to regular assistance over the course of several years, with all efforts designed to “close the front door to homelessness.”

A key component to successful prevention efforts is a strong relationship with landlords and property managers. Early warning systems and established referral processes with landlords and property managers ensure that families receive needed assistance. Early detection of a looming housing crisis is critical to avoiding insurmountable arrearages and eviction. Successful early detection requires that landlords, property managers, tenants, partner agencies, and community members are aware of available services and how to access those services. As a result, prevention efforts require a fair amount of visibility and outreach.

However, managing the immediate housing crisis is only one part of prevention. As with post-placement case management, services must be offered to bolster long-term economic stability. As such, prevention efforts are coupled with financial education and economic stabilization efforts, including services focused on skills training, income maximization, fuel assistance, and food assistance.

Similar to experiences with post-placement case management, continued engagement beyond the resolution of the immediate crisis is difficult. Whenever possible, financial assistance with arrearages is spread out in order to maintain contact with family for as long as possible. In doing so, prevention specialists buy the time needed to work with families on longer-term economic stability.

Factors Influencing Housing First Implementation

Barriers

In addition to the implementation-specific barriers discussed in the sections above, there are a number of systemic issues impacting the successful implementation of Housing First for Families. The following issues were identified during the peer learning group discussions:

- As discussed in the Housing Search and Placement section above, the most significant barrier to implementing Housing First for Families is the widespread lack of affordable housing appropriate for families. However, high market rents and the lack of long-term subsidies are only part of the problem. The issue is further exacerbated by the fact that there is a lack of appropriately suited units for families. Unlike individuals who can be placed in efficiency apartments, families need more space. Furthermore, when programs seek to develop low income units that can accommodate families, they find that developing housing for families is more challenging in that it requires more money and more space than when developing units for individuals.
- The Commonwealth lacks a centralized information system about available, affordable properties. As a result, programs are forced to expend significant effort locating units and often work in competition with other agencies to secure the available units. In addition, state's housing services infrastructure lack a uniform, integrated early warning system to identify tenants in crisis.
- Housing First for Families is not a one-size-fits-all program, but many of the low income housing options assume that the level of assistance needed by families is uniform. For instance, the current system for issuing long-term subsidies is not set-up for the degree of flexibility that is needed for families.

Resources

During the peer learning discussion groups, a number of resources and partners were identified as crucial aspects of Housing First. Housing subsidies and vouchers were repeatedly cited as essential resources to program implementation. Other necessary resources included daycare vouchers, translation services, and training sites. Collaboration with other community organizations and businesses was also viewed as vital to successfully implementing Housing First. In addition to strong partnership with community agencies and business, additional partners include landlords/property managers, low-income developers, adult-education centers, housing authorities, community colleges, credit reporting agencies, and legal services.

Housing First in a Changing Service Delivery Climate

Over the past three years of implementing Housing First, there have been significant changes in the organization and delivery of homeless and housing services in Massachusetts. Following the Patrick-Murray Administration's reinstatement of the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness, \$8 million was awarded to eight regional pilot networks around the state. The purpose of the networks is to better coordinate, integrate, and implement innovative services focused on securing permanent housing options for homeless individuals and families. In addition, oversight homeless and housing services for families was shifted from the Department of Transitional Assistance to the Department of Housing and Community Development, thus shifting the focus from emergency assistance service to housing services.

In discussing these changes and the impact they had on housing and homeless services, participants in the peer learning discussion groups generally agreed that "it is too early to tell if the changes are beneficial or not." However, most agreed that the new focus on housing suggests that there is movement in the right direction but that there is a lack of evidence showing success. There needs to be a focus put on tracking outcomes to show whether or not new programs and "innovative practices," such as the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) are cost-effective over time.

Finally, regional coordination was viewed as both positive and negative. For some regions, it has increased coordination, flexibility, communication, and training among homeless and housing providers. In other regions, it has added layers of complication through inconsistent eligibility requirements, duplication of services, and confusion over which agencies are assuming responsibility for which service areas.

V. Conclusion

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (UWMBMV) made a commitment to support the implementation of Housing First for families programming through a three-year targeted initiative. Beginning July 1, 2007, UWMBMV funded 14 homeless and housing-related organizations to adopt a variety of self-determined strategies designed to build the organizational capacity necessary to implement Housing First for families programs. Specifically, UWMBMV provided approximately \$775,000 in grants to help agencies move toward programming that is in line with the Housing First philosophy. In Year 2, UWMBMV provided \$767,000 of continued funding to 13 of the original 14 grantees to support capacity building and service delivery. And in the final year of the initiative, UWMBMV provided \$722,000 in Housing First for Families funding to 13 grantees, 12 of which were among the original 14 grantees.

In designing this three-year initiative, UWMBMV recognized that organizations were at a variety of stages in terms of moving toward Housing First models. As such, FY08 funding primarily focused on increasing organizational capacity to implement Housing First models. In doing so, UWMBMV recognized that traditional shelter and housing service delivery systems cannot be expected to change course overnight and that resources supporting the transition to a new model would be required to fully adopt and implement successful Housing First programs.

Although UWMBMV recognized the need to support organizations as they transitioned to Housing First, the plan from the outset envisioned that grantees would move from a focus on capacity-building to full implementation of a Housing First model over a three year period. As shown in the table below, in Year 2, funded organizations were expected to use capacity building resources to specifically address barriers identified in Year 1, as well implement a Housing First for families model of service delivery. Finally, in Year 3 grantees were expected to fully implement programs with minimal focus on capacity building, as well as strive to expand the field's understanding of best practices and approaches, continuing challenges, and how to move forward.

Year 1 FY08	Year 2 FY09	Year 3 FY10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building and infrastructure development • Limited service delivery through pilot programs and/or adoption of key Housing First components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal capacity building focused on barriers identified in Year 1 • Service delivery through Pilot Programs or full implementation of a Housing First model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal capacity building focused on barriers identified in Year 2 • Full implementation of a Housing First for families model • Identification of best practices and unique challenges or opportunities associated with applying the model to families

The overall assessment of this grant initiative found that UWMBMV successfully supported service providers in their efforts to develop and implement Housing First programming. At the conclusion of Year 1, evaluation data suggested that all of the grantees had adopted the Housing First model for families to some extent. As expected, this occurred either through adapting an existing Housing First program targeting individuals to one addressing the unique concerns of families or by refining existing shelter and housing services to align with the Housing First philosophy of ending homelessness.

In Year 2, all but one of the service delivery grantees demonstrated the competence and commitment necessary to fully implement Housing First for families programming. Of the organizations that had experience with the Housing First model for individuals prior to the start of the initiative, Year 2 brought full implementation of the model for families. Organizations with little or no Housing First experience prior to Year 1 were able to develop and implement pilot programs serving families over the course of Year 2.

In Year 3, all of the service delivery grantees were able to fully implement the Housing First model in its entirety or to fully implement specific components of the model. Capacity-building activities, such as those focused on staff training, were minimal in Year 3. On the other hand, there was a marked increase in the number of families served and the scope of services provided.

The progress made in serving families is clearly demonstrated in the numbers served and outcomes achieved. For example in Year 1, 188 families received housing search and placement services as part of their grant compared to 367 families in Year 2, and in Year 3, the number of families receiving housing search and placement increased further to 465. Similarly, post-housing placement stabilization and case management services, services to prevent repeat occurrences of homelessness, and training focused on life skills and tenancy preservation all increased significantly from Year 1 to Year 3. Furthermore, outcomes data gathered about families served demonstrate that the funded organizations are able to move families experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, as well as assist families in maintaining their housing through crisis situations. In fact, 77.1% of families for whom outcomes data are available were in permanent housing at the conclusion of Year 3 funding. However, the numbers alone do not adequately describe the progress grantees have made in implementing a Housing First model for families.

The distinctiveness of this grant initiative was the recognition of the need for funds to support the transition from traditional programming to Housing First. Throughout Year 1, grantees continually shared the barriers to fully adopting Housing First. Barriers ranged from confronting resistance to the philosophic shift inherent in Housing First to the lack of quality case management models and training tailored to the needs of homeless families to the pervasive lack of affordable housing options. Rather than being deterred by the many challenges and barriers encountered in Year 1, grantees developed strategies to address the known barriers.

By far, the most common capacity-building activity among grantees in Years 1 and 2 was the implementation of comprehensive training programs for staff. In some cases, programs developed in-house training to fill the gap in what was readily available, and in other cases, programs took advantage of a myriad of external training opportunities. However, some capacity-building efforts and program implementation efforts were developed to directly address specific barriers. For example, to address issues related to maintaining ongoing contact with housed families (an activity critical to monitoring stability), grantees are developing early warning systems. These systems, designed to work in partnership with landlords and property managers, are meant to uncover potential family crises before issues escalate and eviction becomes an option. In addition, several grantees engaged in activities to improve overall tracking of families both for service provision and outcomes measurement. These grantees identified specific weaknesses in assessment and intake forms or data collection systems and used UWMBMV funds to make needed improvements.

The ability to use UWMBMV funds to support capacity building efforts clearly had an impact on programs. Overall, the implementation-specific barriers and challenges identified in Years 1 and 2 have been addressed. In

discussing challenges moving forward, feedback gathered in Year 3 focused more on systemic and structural hurdles instead of staff or organizational capabilities readily identified earlier on during the initiative.

Presently, the primary barrier to successfully implementing Housing First for families is the lack of affordable housing and housing subsidies. While a number of grantees have been quite successful in securing housing units or subsidies, others were not able to secure as many as planned. Furthermore, the increased reliance on shallow, short-term subsidies has created a new barrier to housing placement in the form of staff reluctance. Without a clear and achievable plan to assist families with maintaining their housing beyond the life of the subsidy, providers are hesitant to make use of the resource for fear that families will lose their opportunity to attain public housing. In other words, they are reluctant to seize an opportunity for a short-term fix at the expense of a longer-term solution.

During the peer learning discussion groups, one participant articulated the dilemma associated with using the short-term subsidy. She noted, “We’ve said that Housing First is to get people housed without jumping through hoops, but with what subsidy? When we started this particular program, we matched folks with long-term vouchers. That was very different from matching them to subsidies that last one year or less.” With increasing pressure to house families, programs are forced to make the difficult decision to risk a longer-term placement for rapid housing. Although the focus on rapid re-housing fits the Housing First model, the lack of long term supports necessary to assist families with maintenance is not aligned with the Housing First philosophy.

The lack of long-term subsidies, combined with the lack of units suitable for families is a formidable barrier to attaining housing. However, it’s not the only barrier. The lack of statewide or even regional lists of affordable units and the incompatible eligibility requirements for various short-term programs from town-to-town make the housing search and placement process more difficult. However, once grantees were able to secure affordable units or long-term vouchers housing vouchers, they could house families and keep them housed. If the goal is to end family homelessness, then addressing this barrier is and will continue to be the single most difficult issue to overcome.

VI. Progress Toward Proposed Activities by Grantee

This section includes a comparison of planned activities detailed on each grantee's logic model and the progress to date articulated in the Midyear Reports. The following abbreviated names for each grantee are used:

1. Community Teamwork, Inc.	CTI
2. Crittenton Women's Union	CWU
3. Father Bills & MainSpring	Father Bills
4. Heading Home (formerly Shelter Inc.)	Heading Home
5. HomeStart, Inc.	HomeStart
6. Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership	MBHP
7. Project Hope	Project Hope
8. Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc.	QCAP
9. Serving People In Need, Inc.	SPIN
10. Somerville Community Corporation	SCC
11. Travelers Aid Family Services	TAFS

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training / Groups / Workshops	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
CTI <i>Planned</i>	20 CTI Caseworkers 2 Outside Caseworkers 3 ICHH Coordinators	Peer Support Groups 8-10 families 8-10 individuals	Supportive Casework 30 families 30 individuals	NONE	NONE	Newsletter (120 sent quarterly) Legislative advocacy
<i>Progress</i>	Scheduled to begin January 2010	NONE	Pre-CM (20) Post-CM (20)	NONE	NONE	NONE
<i>Yearend Report Not Submitted</i>						
CWU <i>Planned</i>	NONE	Pre-placement (58 families) Post-placement (offered)	Post-placement Follow-up	NONE	NONE	Quality Redesign of Housing Stabilization Training Model
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Post-CM (31)	NONE	NONE	Model Revised
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	3 Sessions with 44 families	Post-CM (60)	NONE	NONE	New Model implemented beginning 4/10

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
Father Bills <i>Planned</i>	CM Staff on Agency Dash CM Staff in 3 workshops on various topics	NONE	Assessment (52) ISP (52) Weekly meetings (26)	Part of Pre-CM	12 families interviewed? 7 families enter program?	Purchase Agency Dash software and train staff in use
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (31) Post-CM (213)	Part of Pre-CM (31)	HF Units (15) Subsidies (15)	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (52) Post-CM (234)	Part of Pre-CM (52)	HF Units (15) Subsidies (15)	NONE
Heading Home <i>Planned</i>	NONE	NONE	Weekly CM (10 PIT, 20 annually)	Part of Pre-CM	NONE	NONE
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (14) Post-CM (14)	Part of Pre-CM (14)	Units (10)	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (25) Post-CM (25)	Part of Pre-CM (25)	Units (11)	NONE

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
<u>HomeStart</u> <i>Planned</i>	NONE	NONE	NONE	Solo Activity (40 DV families)	NONE	NONE
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	NONE	Solo Activity (55)	NONE	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	NONE	Solo Activity (55)	NONE	NONE
<u>MBHP</u> <i>Planned</i>	NONE	NONE	Post-CM (FY08–5) Post-CM (FY09–15)	Part of Pre-CM	NONE	NONE
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (10 total: 5 ongoing / 5 new) Post-CM (10 total: 5 ongoing / 5 new)	Part of Pre-CM (10: 5 previous year / 5 new)	HF Subsidies (5)	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (20) Post-CM (20)	Part of Pre-CM (20)	HF Subsidies (17)	NONE
<u>Project Hope</u> <i>Planned</i>	NONE	NONE	Assessment (110, 20 from shelter and 90 families at-risk of eviction) Home-based CM (15)	20 Shelter Families	NONE	NONE
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (16) Post-CM (45)	Part of Pre-CM (16)	NONE	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-CM (29) Post-CM (112)	Part of Pre-CM (29)	NONE	NONE

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
QCAP <i>Planned</i>	NONE	NONE	Post-placement/prevention Stabilization CM (175)	NONE	NONE	NONE
<i>Progress</i>	1 training (3 staff)	5 trainings (71 clients)	Pre-CM (24) Post-CM (93)	Solo Activity (75)	NONE	Data/tracking systems and pre-screening form
<i>Completed</i>	16 trainings (29 staff)	20 trainings (197 clients)	Pre-CM (108) Post-CM (129)	Solo Activity (175)	NONE	Data/tracking systems in process Pre-screening form in use
SHC <i>Missing Logic Model</i>	?	?	?	?	?	?
<i>Progress</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-placement CM (5) Post-placement CM (16)	Part of pre-CM (35)	NONE	NONE
<i>Completed</i>	NONE	NONE	Pre-placement CM (10) Post-placement CM (37)	Part of pre-CM (37)	NONE	NONE

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
SPIN Planned	NONE	NONE	Financial Stability Center (28)	NONE	15 Units	Strengthen Financial Stability Center: 10 MOUs 10 Foundation applications Increase programs offered
Progress	NONE	8 series (30 HF families)	Pre-placement CM (5) Post-placement CM (5)	Part of Pre-CM (5)	5 Units 5 Subsidies	- 6 new partnerships - 3 existing partners offering additional services \$75,000 grant from Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development
Completed	NONE	12 training series (44 HF families)	Pre-placement CM (10) Post-placement CM (10)	Part of Pre-CM (10)	10 Units 10 Subsidies	- 9 new partnerships - 3 existing partners offering additional services - \$75,000 grant from Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development - Added Earned Income Tax Credit Preparation - Secured tax prep, child care, & budget coaching volunteers from 1 state college & 3 businesses

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
SCC Planned	NONE	2 Financial Literacy Courses (20 clients per course for 6 sessions) Financial Literacy Peer Groups (6-15) - Financial Literacy Workshops (1-session trainings)	Emergency Assistance (150) Client Counseling/CM (150) Individual Development Account (5)	NONE	NONE	NONE
Progress	3 trainings (4 staff)	2 trainings (33 participants) 1 series (15 participants)	Post-placement CM (72)	NONE	NONE	NONE
Completed	14 trainings (17 staff)	7 trainings (93 participants) 7 series (57 participants) 1 support group	Post-placement CM (161)	NONE	NONE	NONE

Agency	Staff or Stakeholder Training	Client Training	Pre- or Post-Placement Case Management	Housing Search and Placement	HF Units or Subsidies	Capacity Building and Advocacy
TAFS Planned	NONE	Community Advisory Board (8 members) CAB presents 6 workshops attended by 40 HOHs CAB Mentoring (10 families)	Post-placement CM (6)	120 families in Scattered Shelter 24 families in Rapid Re-housing 10 families with disabilities	NONE	Reorganize services under a Housing First Division with a Housing Director
Progress	NONE	6 workshops <u>scheduled</u> to begin January 2010 Community Advisory Board mentoring to <u>begin</u> January 2010	Post-placement CM (6)	Part of Pre-CM (6)	NONE	Housing First Division has been created. A Housing Director has been hired.
Completed	NONE	0 workshops 0 mentor matches	Post-placement CM (65)	Part of Pre-CM (62)	Subsidies (52)	Housing First Division has been created. A Housing Director has been hired.