

National Alliance to End Homelessness.
July Conference 2014.

1.5 Right-Sizing Your Homeless Assistance System

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1.5 Right Sizing Your Homeless Assistance System: Tools & Strategies

National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Conference 2014

Megan Kurteff Schatz
July 29, 2014

www.focusstrategies.net



We believe the HEARTH Act and Opening Doors lead the way to finally ending homelessness.

ABOUT FOCUS STRATEGIES



FocusStrategies.net

What is a Right-Sized System?

A Housing Crisis Resolution System, which:

- Diverts many households to housing so they never enter the homeless system
- Houses everyone who becomes homeless within 30 days

Characteristics of a Right-Sized System

- Effective diversion
- Accurate targeting: least expensive intervention that solves homelessness for each household
- Skilled housing services at every door
- Fast and accurate connection points

Housing Crisis Resolution System

Creating a HCRS takes 5 things:

1. Know what you are doing now
2. Decide whether what you are doing now is adequate
3. Understand what needs to be improved
4. Develop initiatives and make changes as needed
5. Measure results & continuously tweak

Right-Sizing Tools

To know what you are accomplishing now and model alternatives:

- National Alliance's Spending Plan
- Performance Improvement Calculator
- System Performance Predictor (tentative name, to be released in next couple months)

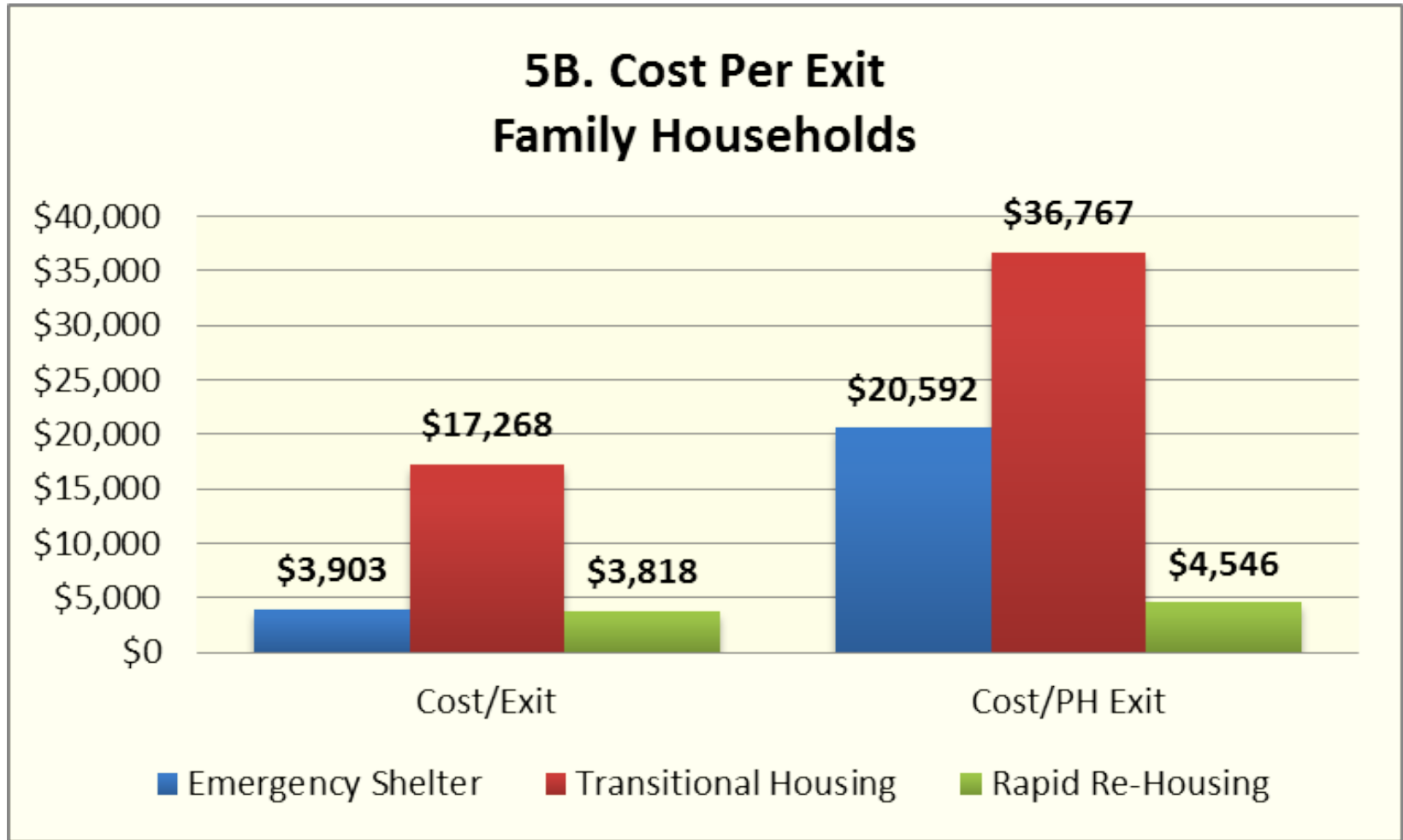
Performance Improvement Calculator

- Shows what your current system is accomplishing
- Allows you to model changes to your system by program type:
 - Exit to permanent housing rates
 - Length of stay
 - Investments
 - Returns to homelessness

Orange County, CA

- Urban County with 34 incorporated cities, no large city
- Total population: 3,010,232
- 2013 PIT Homeless Count: 4,251

Key PIC Result for OC in 2013



Impact of Using PIC - 1

Married HUD policy with PIC results

- 2013 CoC NOFA round reallocated 5 TH projects to RRH & PSH
- 2014 CoC NOFA plan is additional shift TH to RRH

Impact of Using PIC - 2

Helped community leadership to:

- Made additional investments in performance reports to further right-sizing efforts over time
- Invested in development of a coordinated entry & exits system

System Performance Predictor

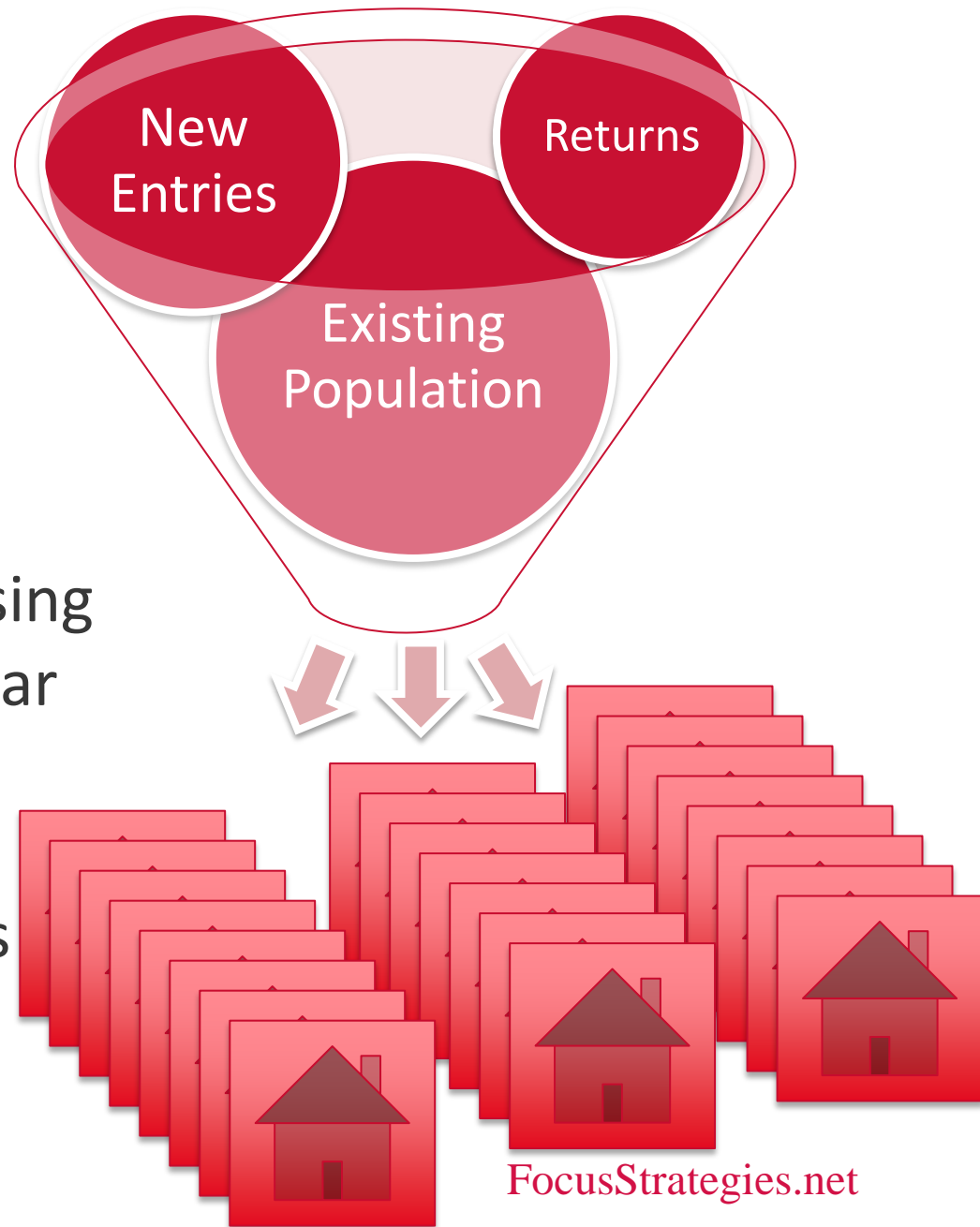
Models annual changes for 5 years at the program level in:

- Unsheltered population
- System entries
- *Exit rates to permanent housing*
- *Lengths of stay*
- *Investments*
- *Returns to homelessness*

System Performance Predictor

In a Right-Sized System:

Exits to permanent housing must be greater each year than the total of new entries and returns so homelessness decreases



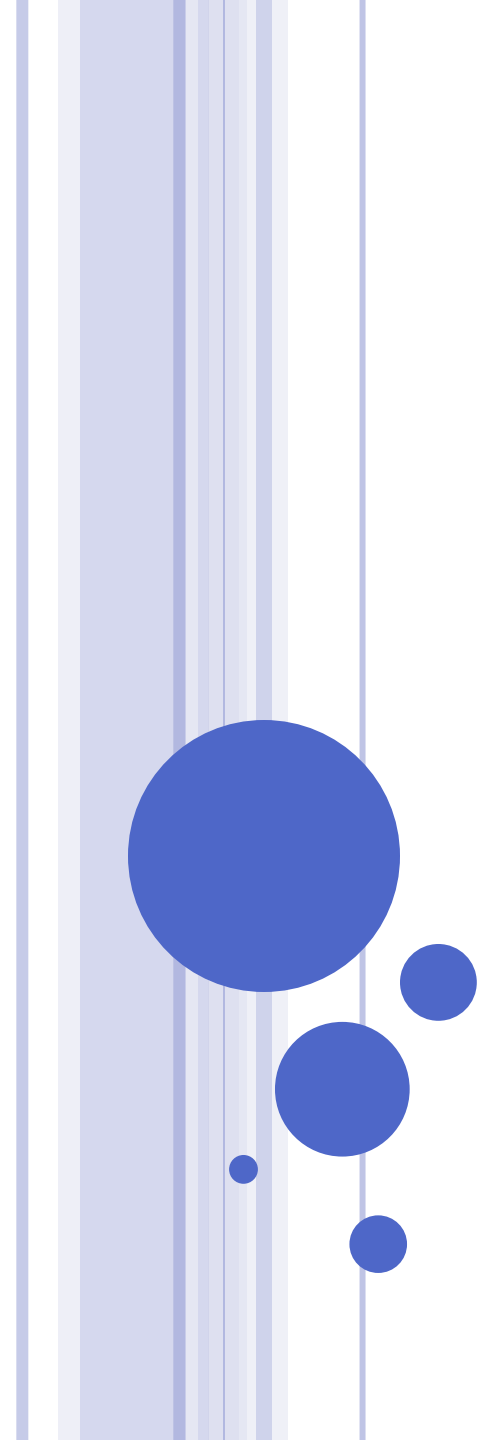
Right-Sizing Requires Courage

Stumbling blocks:

- Wishing and then stopping
- Opening tools, taking one look, and closing it
- Thinking it's too hard, expensive, or intimidating
- Getting feedback it's too hard, expensive, or intimidating

Beware of Distraction:

There are a few strategies to right-size. There are endless ways to work on homelessness.



RIGHTSIZING YOUR HOMELESS ASSISTANCE SYSTEM – DAYTON- MONTGOMERY COUNTY CoC

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DAYTON-MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- 2013 Montgomery County population – 535,846
- 2014 PIT
 - 569 in shelter or streets
 - 222 in transitional housing
- 2013 CoC funding – \$7.8 million annual renewal demand

Homeless Solutions Community 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness and Reduce Overall Homelessness adopted in 2006

- Commitment to housing
- Coordinated funding
- Decisions made from data



WHAT IS RIGHTSIZING?



BEFORE THE FRONT DOOR ASSESSMENT

- Implemented August 2010
- Background
 - Hard to serve people living at shelter for years
 - Program level decision-making about who to serve
 - Concern that not all people being served were homeless
 - HEARTH length of stay and return to shelter outcomes
 - Needed client level data for system planning
- Principles
 - Rapidly exit households from homelessness to stable housing
 - Ensure that the hardest to serve are served
 - Serve households as efficiently and effectively as possible
 - Be transparent and accountable throughout the referral and assessment process



FRONT DOOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- Defined target populations for every program
- Closed the side doors – everyone had to enter system through gateway shelters
- Referrals for transitional housing, Safe Haven and PSH from a centralized waiting list
- Adopted policies:
 - Providers must accept 1 in 4 referrals
 - All openings must be filled through the Front Door process
 - Households must accept first appropriate housing referral (with exceptions for vulnerable households)
 - Households with at least \$700 income must use it for housing



SYSTEM AFTER THE FRONT DOOR

- Program changes due to performance and/or occupancy issues:
 - 3 **programmatic shelters** have closed and 1 is in the process of closing
 - 2 **transitional housing programs** have lost or are losing funding
 - **Safe Haven program** substantially reallocated to PSH program serving same population
 - **SSO grant for PSH** households refocused
 - **SSO grant for non-PSH** households redesigned by CoC to focus on services in rapid rehousing
 - 80% of ESG funding committed to **rapid rehousing**
- System Investments:
 - Housing focused case management framework developed as minimum standard for services



HOUSING INVENTORY COMPARISON

	2006 (N=857)	2014 (N=1,483) *	2013 National (NAEH)
Shelter	42%	29%	33%
Transitional Housing	17%	13%	26%
Rapid Rehousing	0%	5%	3%
Permanent Supportive Housing	41%	53%	39%

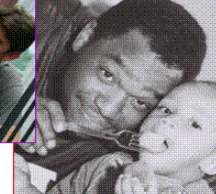
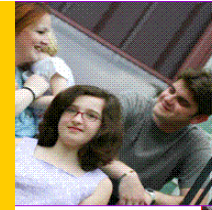
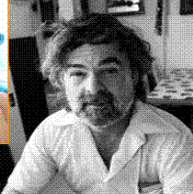
* 2014 includes 200 units of shelter and housing for veterans.



CURRENT WORK

- Performance Review
 - Conducted with every funding process
 - Established 2015 System Targets by program type
- Coordinated Funding
 - Manage the CoC process as Collaborative Applicant
 - Combined funding City, County & United Way
 - CoC review for State funding





The **regional voice** on homelessness and related human services for the Richmond region since 1998.

The **planning and coordinating agency** for regional homeless services.

A 501(c)(3)

Our mission is to prevent, reduce and end homelessness

by facilitating creative solutions through the collaboration, coordination and cooperation of regional resources and services.

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Community Background

- 2014 Point-in-time = 846 (25% decrease from peak in 2009)
- HUD \$ = approx. \$4 million
- Many providers
 - Most are high quality and housing-focused
- We love data.

Keys to Right-Sizing

- Data, outcomes, & reporting
- Money
- Funders
- Committees
- Unintended consequences
- Partnership development

Data, outcomes, & reporting

- Reliable trend data 2007 – 2014
 - Review subpopulations and housing barriers
- Performance Improvement Clinic (2013)/
System Design Clinic (2014)
- Performance Improvement Calculator (2012-
2013)
- Rapid re-housing pilot (2010 – 2013)
- Focus on HMIS data quality (so that APR's
were reliable source of information for
planning and funding decisions)

Money

- Mapping of public funds for homeless services to gauge size of systems and where leverage points were
 - Many funders; single largest was HUD at 10% of system
- Virginia Spending Plan
- Reviewed cost per outcome
 - Cost per exit to permanent housing was the most compelling data point for providers

Funders

- Homeward has worked to engage funders in the CoC and to educate funders about what was possible.
 - Funders agree that we can end homelessness.
 - Funders can recognize effective services and providers.
- Increased investment in CoC priorities
 - Funding to implement coordinated assessment so that we can streamline access to rapid re-housing and reduce waiting lists for critical services

Committees

- CoC Governance is helping us to transition from a planning agency with a lot of data (and a vision) to a community that uses data to end homelessness for our neighbors.
- Committees have reinforced message of system transformation
- Biggest challenge: we need to always remember to educate our providers on the vision for system change and what it means
 - Don't assume others even agree on the basics or the goal of ending homelessness

Unintended consequence?

- Closure of a transitional shelter/ “soup kitchen” (2013)
 - Attributed closure to rapid re-housing and shift in funding to rapid re-housing
 - Response to community & key stakeholders about the direction we are headed and the impact we are seeing
- Our “customers” are our neighbors experiencing homelessness, but providers are the key to helping our neighbors exit homelessness.

Strategic partnerships

- Use data to determine which partners to target for engagement
 - Richmond City Jail study
 - Employment
- Translate
 - Acronym list