Housing First Toolkit – Resource Guide

Section 1. Topic Overview

Housing First follows a basic principle - that everyone is ready for housing regardless of the complexity or the severity of their needs, and is more than a project or program model, it is a system-wide orientation.

This toolkit includes materials, resources, and tools that were published and/or created by HUD, USICH, NAEH, and other partners over the course of the last several years and is intended to assist coaches in providing guidance and technical assistance to communities working to end veteran and chronic homelessness.

Section 2. HUD & USICH Materials & Resources

2.1 HUD SNAPS In Focus: Why Housing First [July 2014]

This memo from HUD discusses the basis of Housing First as a best practice and as a system-wide orientation and response, and outlines key features of the approach and steps for CoC’s to take to ensure that the model is being implemented to the maximum extent possible.

2.2 HUD SNAPS In Focus: Increasing Housing Placements of Homeless Veterans [August 2015]

This memo from HUD outlines strategies to help move veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, in light of the many challenges communities face in tight housing markets, where developing a diverse and large number of housing partners is key to the success of the HUD-VASH program. The page also includes a listing of links to additional tools and resources from HUD, USICH, and the VA regarding veteran homelessness, HUD-VASH, and landlord engagement.

2.3 HUD Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing [July 2014]

This brief provides an overview and core components of Housing First in the context of permanent supportive housing models. It also offers steps for providers seeking to adopt a Housing First approach, as well as a number of links to other Housing First resources.

2.4 USICH The Housing First Checklist: A Practical Tool for Assessing Housing First in Practice

This easy-to-use tool serves as a basic assessment of whether and to what degree a particular program is utilizing a Housing First approach. Separated into two sections, the tool examines the core elements of Housing First both at the project level, and at the community level.

2.5 HUD & USICH Core Principles of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing - Slides & Webinar [July 2014]

This webinar is intended for homelessness service providers, communities, and policymakers to review the core components of the Housing First approach and the Rapid Re-Housing model, and how the two function in tandem to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness obtain and maintain permanent housing.
2.6 USICH *Blog Post: Four Clarifications about Housing First* [June 2014]

USICH's Richard Cho clarifies a number of misconceptions about Housing First in this blog post. Topics include Housing First as a whole-system orientation, the role of services in a Housing First approach, housing as a platform for health and well-being, and mainstream systems change.

2.7 USICH *Resources to Implement Housing First - Slides* [May 2014]

This presentation outlines the guiding principles of Housing First, reviews the core elements of USICH’s Housing First Checklist, and discusses the approach's impact on Transitional Housing programs.

2.8 USICH *Implementing Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing*

This fact sheet discusses permanent supportive housing and a Housing First framework as complementary tools for ending chronic homelessness and helping people with disabilities live independently in the community. The document provides links to and summarizes key elements essential to tenants’ success from SAMHSA's PSH KIT and USICH's Housing First checklist.

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**Section 3. VA Materials**

3.1 VA *Housing First Implementation Brief* [April 2014]

This brief explains the VA's adoption of a Housing First approach as national policy, and describes the background and outcomes of the VA's Housing First Pilot, which demonstrated that the approach can be both a clinically effective and fiscally efficient model of permanent supportive housing.

3.2 VA National Center on Homelessness among Veterans *Housing First: Veteran Centered Care*

The VA National Center on Homelessness among Veterans has developed a series of videos to assist VA staff with implementing Housing First at their medical center and in their community.

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**Section 4. NAEH Materials**

4.1 NAEH *What is Housing First?* [November 2006]

This memo discusses critical elements shared by all Housing First programs, as well as some of the ways the approach and program models can vary depending on the client population, availability of affordable rental housing and/or housing subsidies, and the level of service intensity. The memo also provides examples of outcome measures for the approach.

4.2 NAEH *Housing First Partnership & Accountability Matrix* [2009]

This tool helps communities identify possible partners and accountable agencies within their housing first system. This tool is based on the three main outcomes of a Housing First system: prevention of homelessness, reduction in the length of time of homelessness, and decreased recidivism. If a community is in the planning phase of moving to a Housing First system, this tool is valuable for making sure that all of the private, public, and nonprofit partners the community may need are brought to the planning table. If a
community is implementing a Housing First system, this tool can be used to help hold partners accountable to the roles they should be playing.

4.3 NAEH *Organizational Change: Adopting a Housing First Approach* [July 2009]

This document was prepared by Abt Associates Inc. for the National Alliance to End Homelessness and is intended to guide the planning of organizations as they adopt a Housing First approach. The document includes sections on: why to adopt a Housing First approach, phases and steps to adopting a Housing First approach, and a sample design matrix, service delivery flowchart, and an organization transition plan template.

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**Section 5. Domestic Violence and Housing First**

5.1 WSCADV *Domestic Violence Housing First: Survivor Impact* [May 2015]

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) created this one-page visualization of how housing first supports survivors as they gain stability and rebuild their lives.

5.2 WSCADV *DV Housing First Landlord Outreach and Education Toolkit* [June 2015]

This toolkit was put together by the WSCADV for the Domestic Violence Housing First (DVHF) Pilot to help organizations and communities gather information to determine what needs to be done to successfully implement housing first for DV survivors.

5.3 WSCADV *DV Housing First FAQ’s*

This document is a list of frequently asked questions about DV and Housing First.

5.4 WSCADV *Expanding Services & Cultivating Relationships: Family Resource Center* [June 2013]

This short video, made by WSCADV and 9 Elephants Productions, shows how one program in Washington state is developing community relationships and expanding services to address the unique needs of survivors who are facing homelessness and housing instability.

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**Section 6. Other Housing First Materials & Resources**


This one-page document was created by Community Solutions for the Zero: 2016 Initiative and provides a very brief overview of what Housing First means and why it is a cheap and effective solution.

6.2 100,000 Homes *Housing First Self-Assessment* [2013]

This self-assessment tool was created as part of the 100,000 Homes Campaign to assess the extent to which a community and/or program is Housing First. The tool includes separate assessments for outreach programs, emergency shelter programs, permanent housing programs, and system and community level stakeholder groups.
6.3 Zero2016 Housing First Assessment Tool [September 2015]

This simple self-assessment tool was created by CSH for the Zero: 2016 Initiative and incorporates questions from the USICH Housing First Checklist. The tool helps communities do a quick assessment of their CoC’s alignment with the Housing First philosophy.

6.4 Zero: 2016 Ending Homelessness through Housing First [May 2015]

This post is from Zero: 2016 National Movement Manager Linda Kaufman, who breaks down Housing First and explains how implementing housing first can make a huge impact in communities (includes a link to a short video).

6.5 CSH Housing First Training [January 2014]

These slides are from a Housing First training from CSH that outlines the “why” and “how” of Housing First.

6.6 DESC Why Housing First?

This link takes you to the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) webpage which describes DESC’s Housing First philosophy, including their Housing First principles and the Seven Standards of DECS’s Housing First Approach.

6.7 Calgary and Toronto: Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Homeless Hub Canadian Housing First Toolkit [2014]

This toolkit was developed to assist communities that are interested in adopting the Housing First approach and is based on the experience of the Canadian At Home/Chez Soi project that used the Pathways to Housing model of Housing First for homeless people with mental illness. While the toolkit has a mental health focus, it is applicable to and can be adapted to other segments of the population. The toolkit is organized into several modules, including: planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability.