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What Will it Look Like? Shaping Your Housing First Program

Home Free's Housing First Program

- Scattered-site model staffed by mobile advocates
- Earmarked funds for direct client assistance (\$360,000 in FY 11/12)
- Capacity: 70-100 households/yr
- Duration of services: 6 months financial assistance, up to two years advocacy
- Shorter-term assistance also provided to support stabilization goals



Core Elements

- Approach
- Eligibility
- Structure
- Requirements
- Partnerships
- Assessment



Approach

“Our program doesn’t expect people to live in a way that we wouldn’t live our own lives. It seems to be a fairly radical concept in a lot of circles.”

- Home Free Advocate

Key Questions

- What core values/beliefs guide our program?
- How do we ensure that our practices align with these values?
- What are we aiming to do?
- Who/how many are we aiming to help?
- How can we make our services accessible?
- How can we best promote success?



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I



Eligibility

“I've taken women onto my caseload who seemed less than ideal who have blown me away by their dedication to make the most of this opportunity. It has never been my experience that people don't want their situation to change. There are no undeserving survivors.”

- Home Free Advocate

Key Questions

- How do we determine who will get these services?
- What kind of screening process will we use?
- Will we require any particular proof of need or prerequisites?
- How will referrals come to us?
- Will we prioritize specific populations?
- What outreach should we do to ensure survivors can access services?
- *How do our decisions about Eligibility align with our Core Values?*



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I



Structure

“I have some participants who love to have me in their home and want to have all of our visits there. Others want to meet at a coffee shop or somewhere else. We also talk about what they want to talk about; we always talk about rent stuff, but they lead the conversations.”

-Home Free Housing Advocate

Key Questions

- How will we staff the program, and what training will be needed to equip them?
- What is the advocate's scope of work, and how do we deliver these services?
- How will participants move through the program, from intake through exit?
- What policies, forms, and systems do we need?
- How do we determine level and duration of financial support for each participant?
- *How do our decisions about program Structure align with our Core Values?*



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I

Requirements

“Maybe having required services or hoops people have to jump through to prove that they deserve help is an attempt to see how successful someone may be in maintaining their own housing. Ability to hoop-jump doesn't seem to be very good predictor of success in housing to me.”

- Home Free Housing Advocate

Key Questions

- What will we be asking participants to agree to when they enter services?
- What information will they be asked to disclose?
- How do we arrive at a plan for each household, and what does it include?
- How do we ensure that participants are working on their goals, and how will we respond if they are not?
- What is our policy around ongoing services if survivor reconciles with abuser?
- *How do our decisions about participant Requirements align with our Aims and Core Values?*



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I



Partnerships

“She was originally denied the grant because she wasn’t ‘unsafe’ enough.”

- from SHARE interview



Key Questions

- What relationships do we have in place that will enhance the program's effectiveness?
- Do we have partnerships with anti-poverty programs, homeless services programs, and our local housing authority?
- What cross-system connections should we be building on or cultivating?
- *How do our efforts to work with partners align with our Aims and Core Values?*



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I



Assessment

“The individual attention that the advocate was able to give to me, which was to find out what my needs were, what I was looking for and then she just, she just stayed on it. She just didn’t give up.”

-from SHARE interview

Key Questions

- What is “success” and how do we measure it?
- Can we describe the population we’re serving?
- What do our funders need to know, and how can we track it?
- What do we want to know and how can we track it?
- How can we invite survivors to help us shape the program?
- How can we use our data to spread our message?
- *How does our program assessment align with our Aims and Core Values?*



Examples

- Home Free
- Cohort I