

Eastern PA Training Series

Session Four: Using Data to be More Effective; and Taking Action

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Kay Mosher McDivitt

Josh Johnson

Senior Technical Assistance Specialists,
Center for Capacity Building



Your Trainers

Josh Johnson

jjohnson@naeh.org



Kay Moshier McDivitt

kmoshiermcdivitt@naeh.org



Training Series Overview

Week One

- Effective Homeless Response Systems
- Role of Emergency Shelter
- Housing First Approach in Shelter

Week Two

- Role of Shelter in Diversion and Problem Solving
- Transitioning Shelter to a Low Barrier Model
- The role of rules and guidelines for effective shelter

Week Three

- Housing Focused Shelter
- Rapid Exits
- Creating a Housing Focused Environment

11/21/2023

Week Four

- Using Data and Outcomes to Measure Success
- Taking Action
- Wrap-up



Virtual Session Logistics



In Chat...

- Your name
- Shelter
- Region
- What are you thankful for this morning?



Review

Housing Focused Shelter



Why Housing-Focused Shelter?

REALITY CHECK:

Few households will receive RRH or PSH.

Shelter is **not a waiting place** for interventions.

SHIFT FROM:

“Our guests cannot exit shelter without interventions.”



TO:

“Most households can find permanent living situations quickly without intensive interventions.”

- Shelter IS NOT an access point to something special...
- Shelter IS NOT a destination...
- Shelter **IS** a jumping-off point to your own solutions for housing!

Housing-focused, Rapid Exit

Philosophy Shift

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
- Shelters are not employment, recovery, or mental health programs
- Shelter stays are very short



Practice Shift

- Plan for rapid exit **to housing** at entry
- “If you’re not talking about housing, you’re having the wrong conversation” – problem solving “housing” conversations continue
- Environment reflects a housing focus
- All meetings, policies, procedures, job descriptions, signage, client handbooks, etc. reflect focus on quick exits to housing

The Reality and Your Role

Real challenges to this work:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Not enough resources/funding
- Higher need clients
 - Usually, a very small amount
- High turnover/limit

AND

We must **believe** clients can be successful!



Bias/ Beliefs



Housing-Focused Supports

Practice: Messaging

- **Create a sense of urgency to identify a housing solution to exit shelter quickly**
 - Waiting in shelter for something better is NOT an option
 - Every day is a day to find a housing solution
- **Incentivize quick housing exits**
 - When you leave, you can access...
- **Facilitate Self Resolution**
 - From “What can we do to help you?” to “What is YOUR plan to quickly exit shelter?”



Assignment

In the next week, come in the front door of the shelter and then take time to walk around your entire facility and make detailed observations.

1. What does the signage look like?
2. Is there easy access to materials on finding housing?
3. Is language person-centered, empowering, and does it create a sense of urgency?
4. What are some simple changes you can make to ramp up your housing focused messaging
5. Be ready to report out next week.



Report Out

Housing-Focused Supports

Messaging

Shelter environment is housing-focused

- Reframe messaging throughout the shelter
- All signage reflects a housing message
- Shelter environment incentivizes engagement in self-resolution and quick moves to permanent living situations

Create a sense of urgency

- “You are the best captain of your housing plan.”
- “You CAN Find Housing!”
- “You can choose to say no to a housing option, but not continue to stay in shelter forever.”

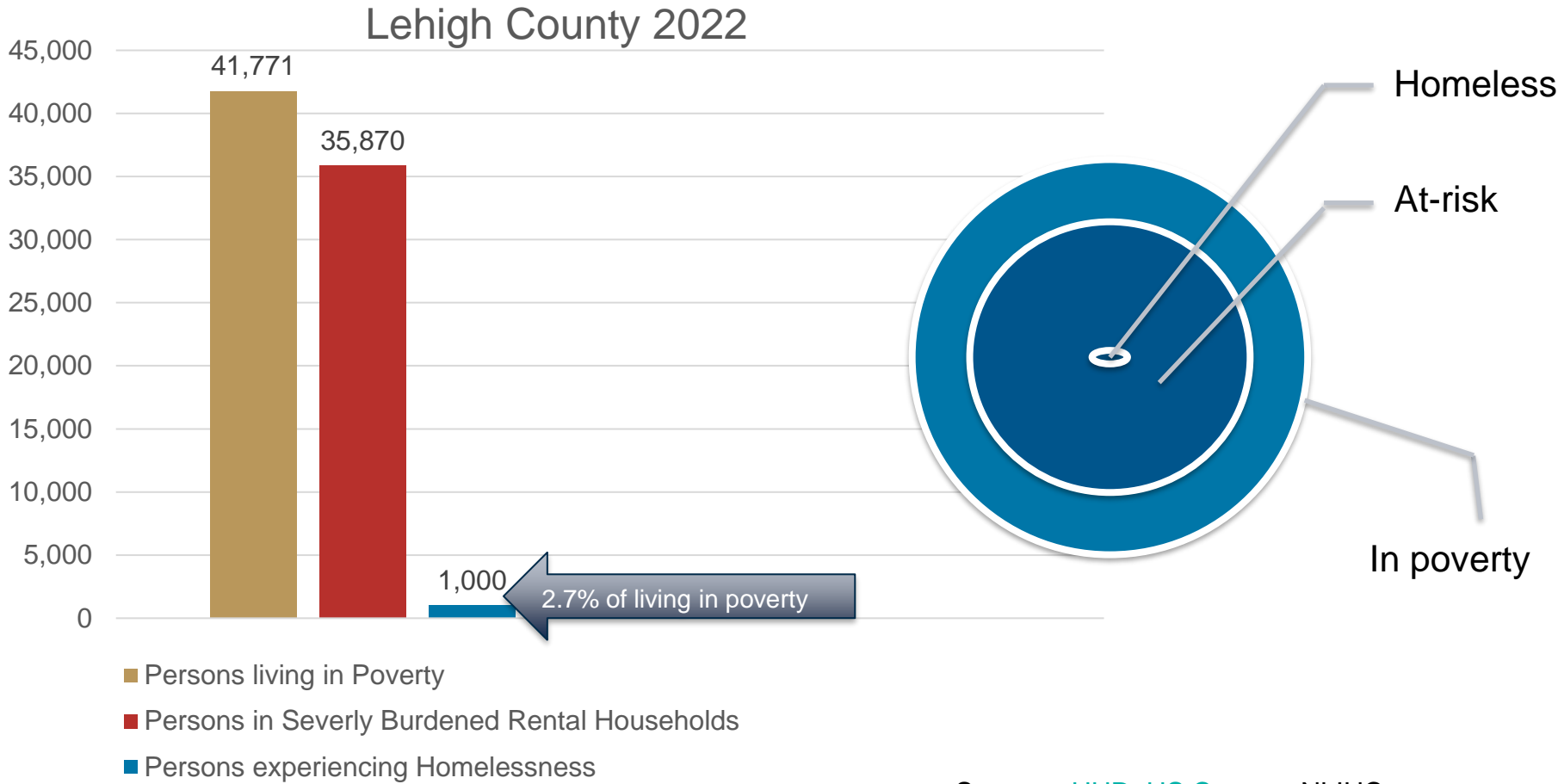
MORE ON BEING A HOUSING FOCUSED SHELTER



Brainstorm Discussion

If we are not moving folks from shelter to housing, what is happening to all those unsheltered folks staying outside and long waiting lists?

Homelessness and Poverty in Lehigh County



Sources: [HUD](#), [US Census](#), NLIHC

When times get tough, we need to be innovative

Think outside the box

We can't...

- House people who have no housing
- Risk that people with high needs will be left behind due to limited resources
- House people who can't have the resources they need
- House people who are not interested



We can...

- Be creative in finding housing options in this market (shared housing, housing focused problem solving etc.....)
- Trust that people will be successful as people who look like them are housed
- Focus all shelter policies, available resources, and services geared toward housing
- Change how we offer services to people to meet their need (housing) (not ours (to be needed))

BRAINSTORM

- Creating a support network – how NOT to be the end all for those experiencing homelessness

Breakout Activity

Creative Housing Solutions

- **In five minutes, brainstorm any potential housing solutions that can help people exit shelter more quickly.**
- **Who has the best list!**
- Debrief
- Now, in chat identify one thing you heard that you can try in your shelter in the next month.

Reflections and Questions



Five Minute Stretch Break!!



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- Housing First Approach
- Safe & Appropriate Diversion
- Immediate and Low-barrier Access
- Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services
- **Data to Measure Performance**



Why is data important?

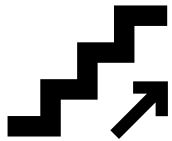
Why data?



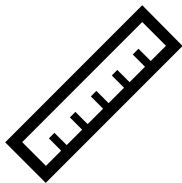
Tells a story



Informs decision-making

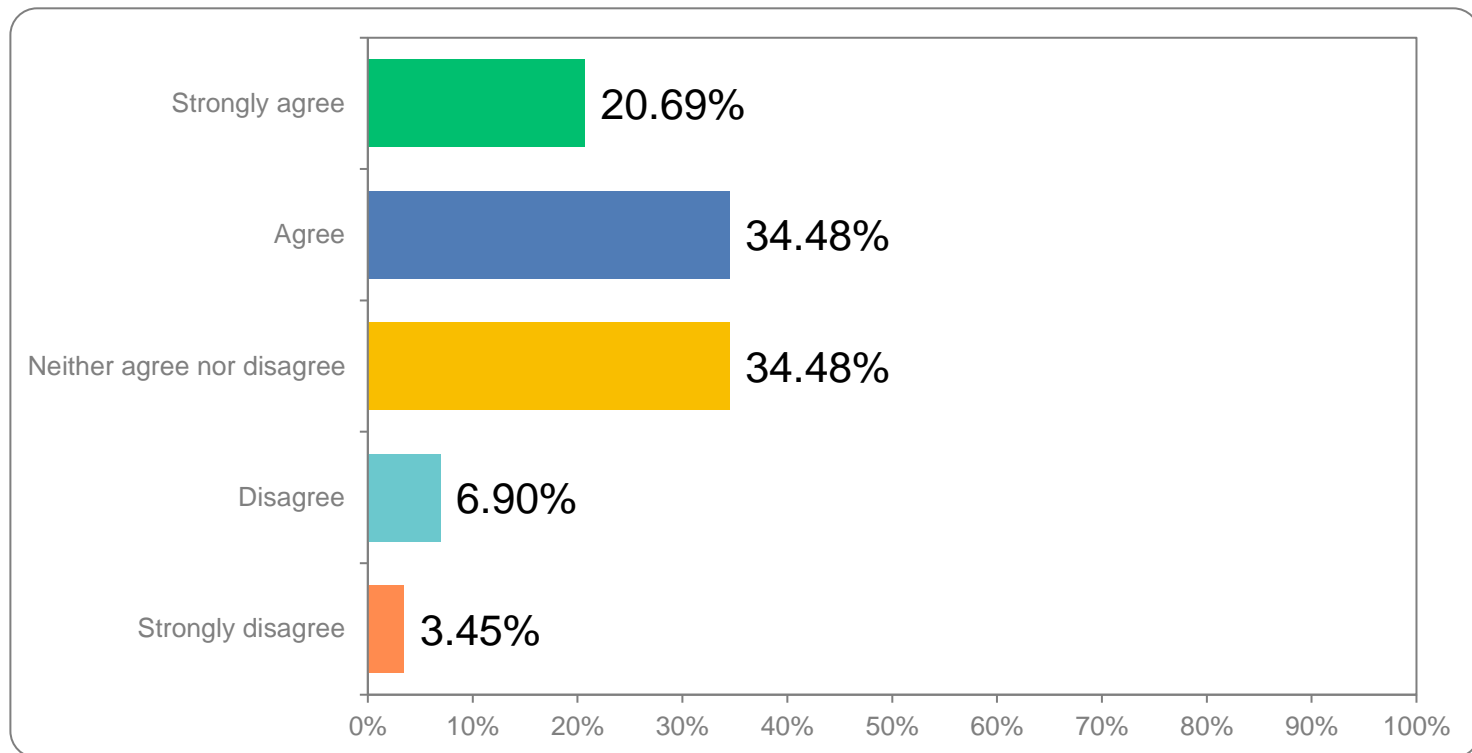


Helps to set, track, and monitor goals



Measure Impact

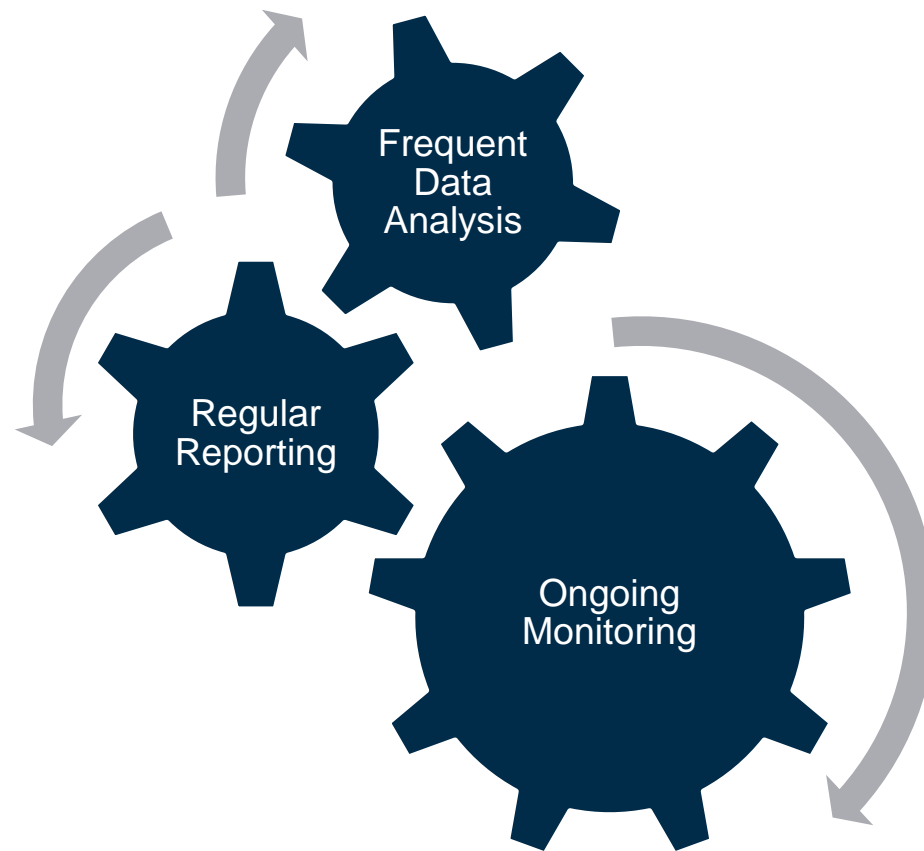
Our community collects, reviews, and analyzes street outreach, coordinated entry, and shelter data, both CoC-wide and at a program level, to understand, track, and monitor our goals.



**ARE WE MEASURING THE
RIGHT “STUFF” TO BE A
“BETTER” SHELTER?**



Report Performance Emergency Shelter Outcome Metrics



Using Data to Improve Shelter



MEASURE: Using Data to Improve Performance Outcomes

Philosophical Shift

Embrace the belief that data drives the program

↓ DECREASE Length of stay

↑ INCREASE Exits to permanent housing

↓ DECREASE Returns to shelter (homelessness)

↑ INCREASE Shelter utilization

Especially if there are people who are unsheltered

EVALUATE Data to Measure Performance - Philosophical Shift

- **These outcomes work together!**
- Decreasing the length of stay **WITHOUT** decreasing exits to homelessness = **NOT** a good outcome
- **Do not institute arbitrary lengths of stay** in shelter to reduce shelter stays and LOS
- Rather, consider increasing exits to permanent housing and decreasing the length of time someone spends being homeless.
- The only way to end people's homelessness is to help them obtain permanent housing

MEASURE and REPORT Performance Emergency Shelter Outcome Metrics

#	Measure	June 2021
1	Total number of beds a. Total beds for unaccompanied individuals b. Total beds for families	
2	Total unique households served	
3	Total households entering shelter	
4	Total households exiting	
5	Total households exiting to a permanent housing destination	
6	Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting the shelter to any destination	
7	Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting to a permanent housing destination	
8	Total household stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)	
9	Average length of shelter stay in days for all stayer households	

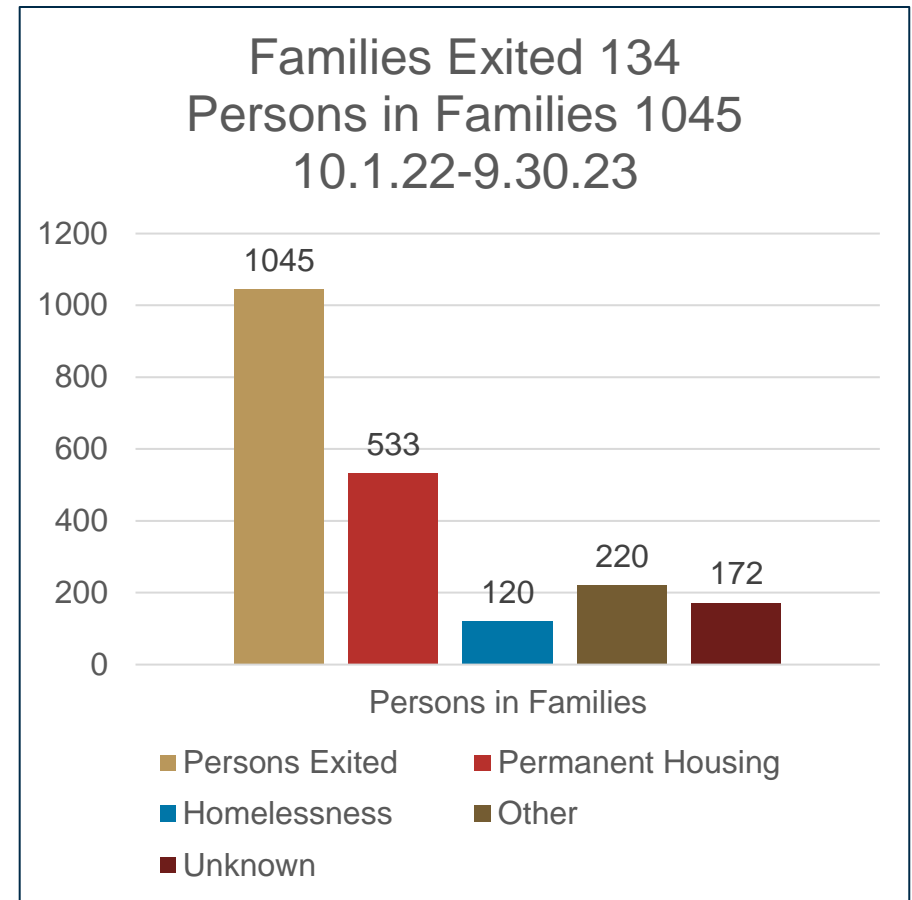
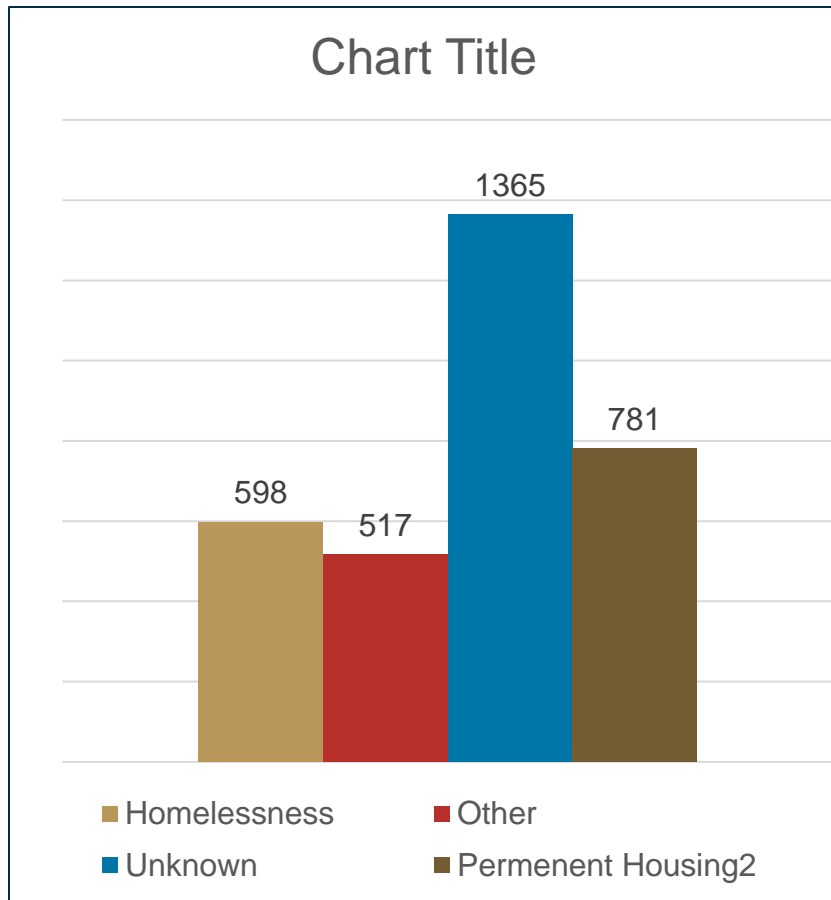
Measure and report monthly

Households not persons

Answer based on activities that occurred during reporting month

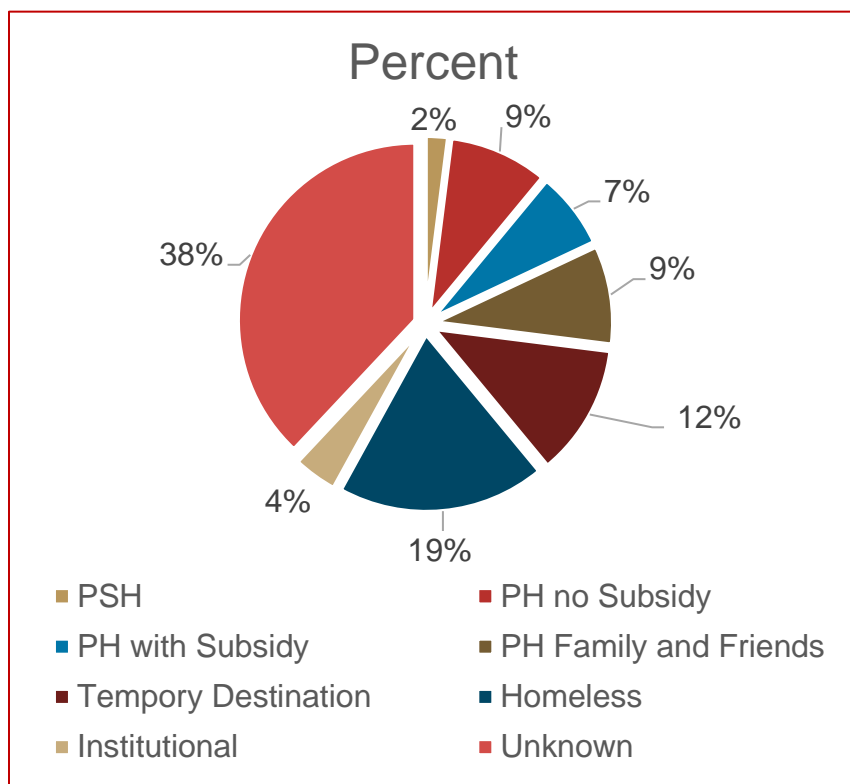
Emergency Shelter Exits

How are we impacting System Performance?

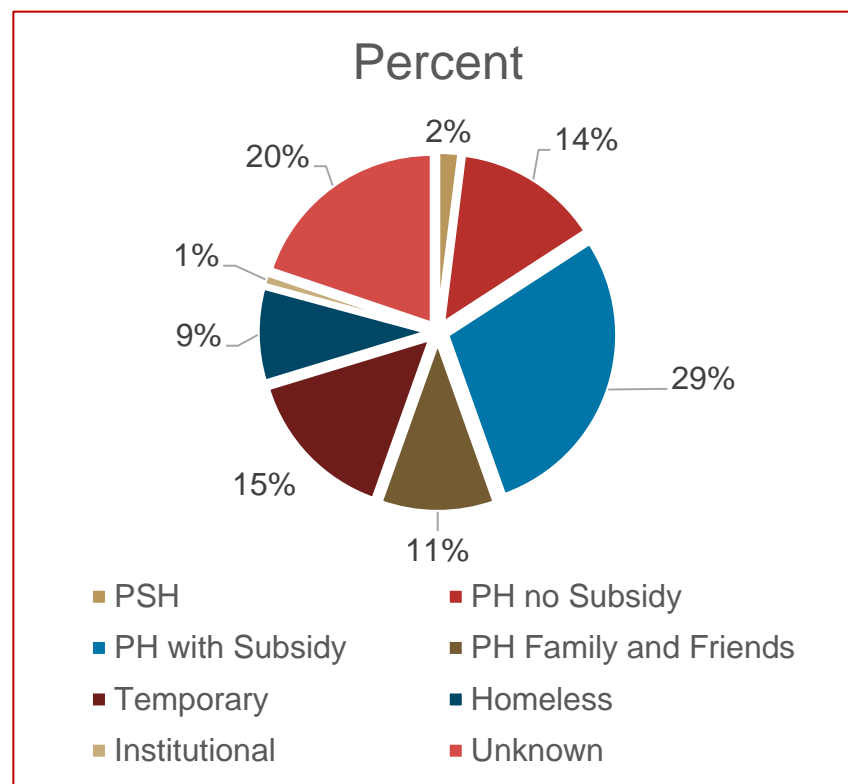


Exit Destinations from Shelter National 2020 Data (AHAR)

Individuals

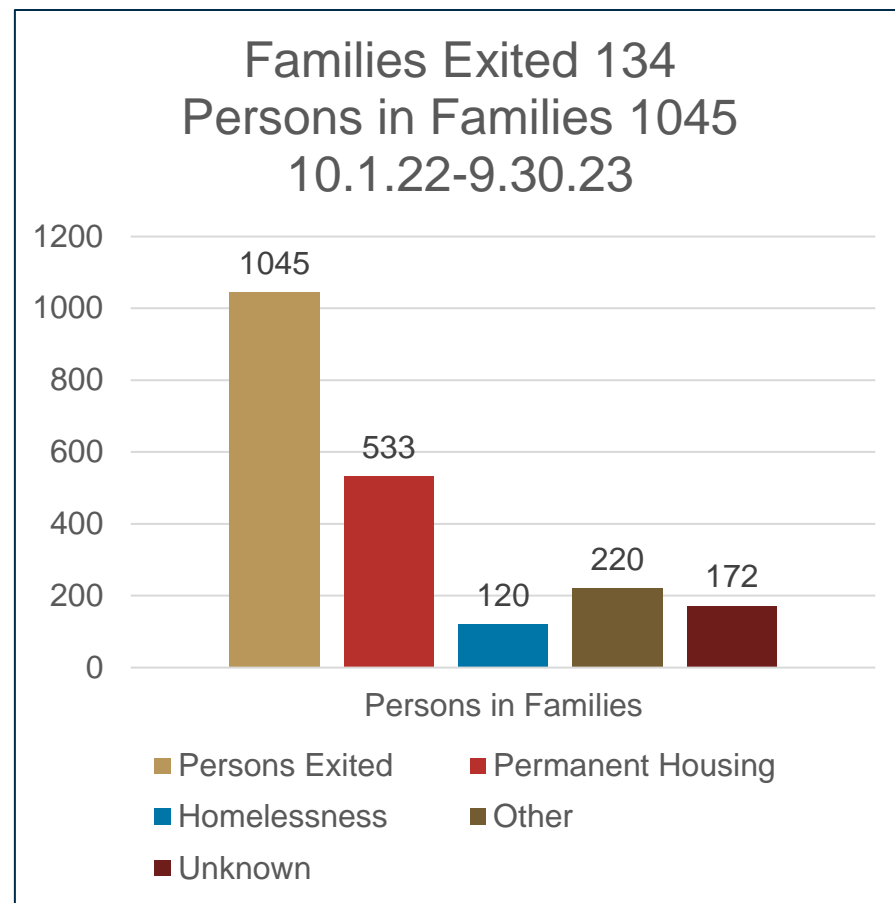
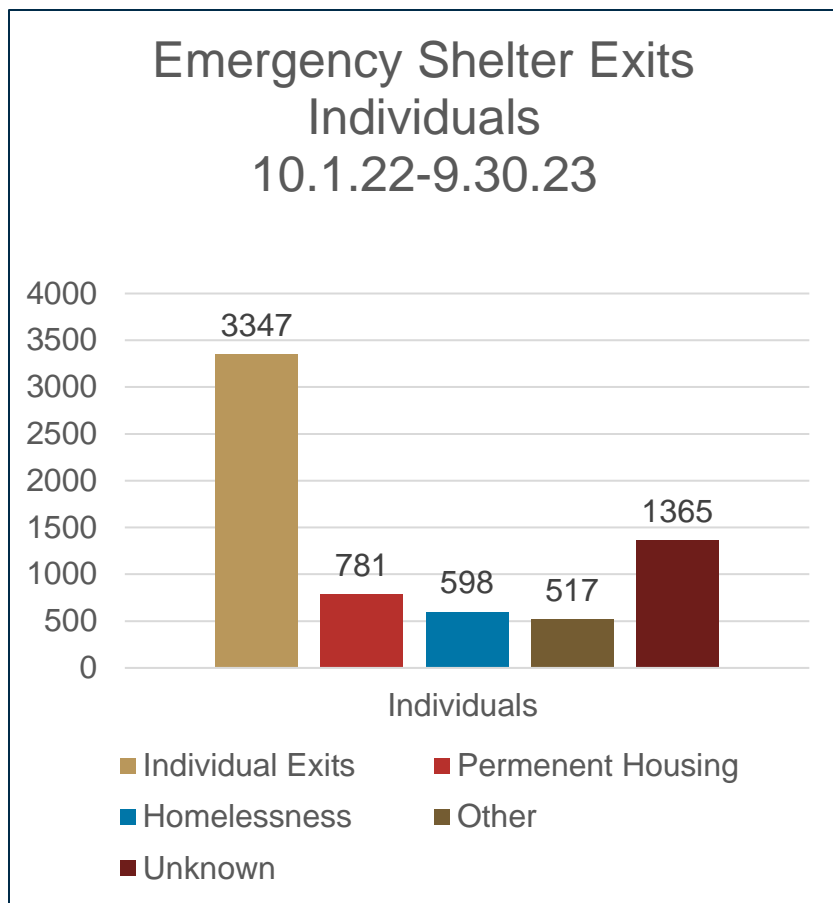


Families



Emergency Shelter Exits

How are we impacting System Performance?



Emergency Shelter LOS

How are we impacting System Performance?

Emergency Shelter Leavers - 12/31/22-5/31/23; Length of Stay			
Total Leavers (Households)	1095		
Average LOS Leavers	38 days		
# Leavers Exiting in 0-7 days	427		
# Leavers Exiting in 8-30 days	271		
# Leavers Exiting 31+ Days	397		

DATA AND RACIAL EQUITY



IMPROVE: Use Data to Be More Effective

Operational Shifts

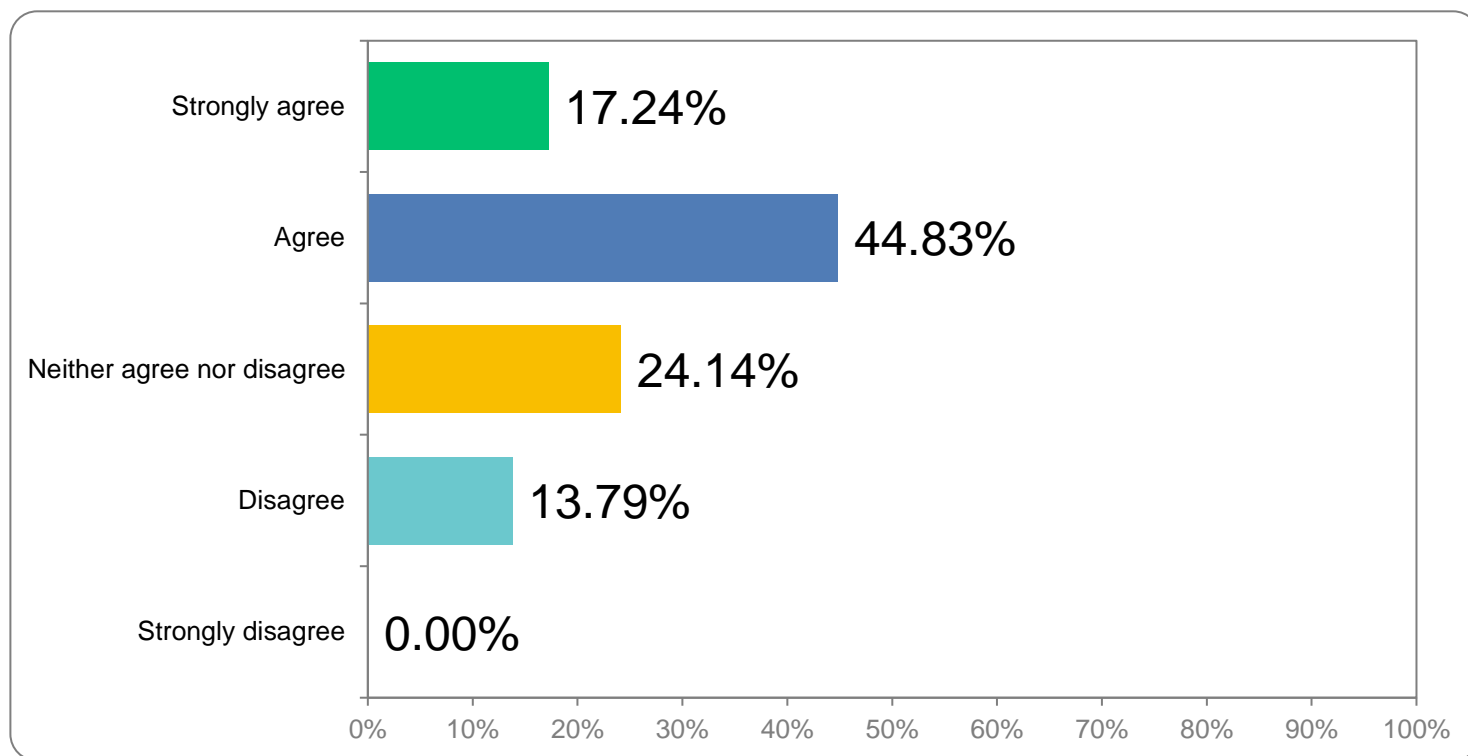
Analyze data for racial disparity

- Does your shelter population reflect the make-up of your general population/those living in poverty?
- Does your staffing reflect those you serve?
- Look at your shelter inflow and outflow – who is more likely to return to homelessness, and who leaves for housing ?
 - Is there disparity in length of stay?
 - What about prioritization for interventions?
- Are there racial differences in who is exited due to compliance issues?

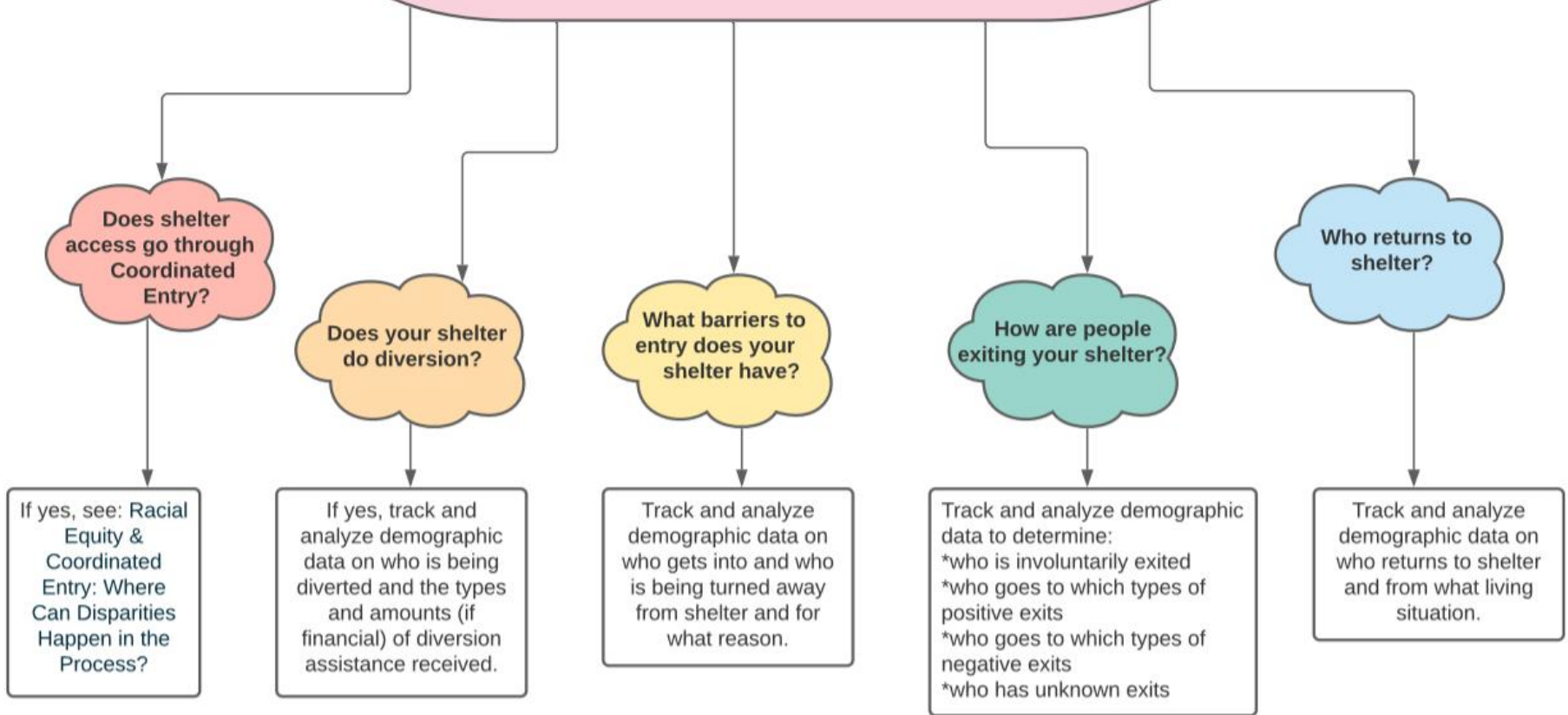
NAEH resources:

[Racial Equity Network Toolkit](#)
[Racial Equity Network Action Steps](#)

Homeless outreach, coordinated entry, and shelter are racially equitable in our community, where there aren't different outcomes or experiences that vary by the race or ethnicity.



Racial Equity and Emergency Shelter: Access and Outcomes



TAILORING YOUR DATA COLLECTION



Output vs Outcome

An **output** should be:

- ▶ Focused on what the client and/or program will do to achieve the outcome.
- ▶ Quantified in terms of the frequency and intensity of the activity from the client's perspective.
- ▶ Specific to the activity described for the program.
- ▶ Feasible.
- ▶ Attainable.
- ▶ Understandable to someone outside of the program

An **outcome** should be:

- ▶ Focused on what the participant will gain from that program.
- ▶ Quantified in terms of the client-level impact with clear targets and methods.
- ▶ Specific and attributable to (a result of) that program.
- ▶ Meaningful.
- ▶ Attainable.
- ▶ Understandable to someone outside of the program

Be a Cake Boss!



Think of the outputs as the recipe and the outcomes as the cake.

- How much of each ingredient do you need for the cake to taste good?
- How many case management meetings or service engagements did it take to achieve your goal with clients?

IMPROVE: Use Data to Be More Effective

Practice Shift

Old “outcomes”

- Number of people served
- Bed nights provided
- Number of meals served
- Number of volunteer hours

Negative Outcomes to Analyze:

- Disciplinary discharges (compliance)
- Exits to homelessness
- Unknown exits
- People with long lengths of stay

INSTEAD: Measure impact:

- How many people exit to permanent housing?
- How long do people stay in shelter?
- Are positive outcomes equitable?

IMPROVE: Use Data to Be More Effective

Practice Shift

Staff Performance:

- Create expected outcomes specific to each staff
- At a minimum, review each staff's outcomes monthly
- Use data to look at results for each staff;
 - Peer learning/mentoring
 - Race Equity Outcomes
 - Identify Training Needs

SET GOALS :

Where are we now, and where do we go?

Who are the long stayers?

- Who is working with them?
- What is their housing plan?
- What housing options have been explored with them?
- Are they “waiting” because they think that if they stay long enough, they will get something?

What can we learn from short stayers?

- Where do they exit to?
- Who was working with them?
- Could they have been diverted?

What about the “unknown exits”?

- What do we know about those persons?
- Can we get better information? How?
- Who is working with those persons?

**Set goals within your
organizations and as
a system.**



Example: 1st Month/Week

SHORT-TERM (FIRST MONTH/WEEK)

- **Outputs:** What do you expect the client will do during the first month in the program? Ninety-five percent, or 85 out of 90 clients, will work with a housing counselor and primary case manager to assess housing needs and appropriate housing placement.
- **Outcomes:** What change will the client experience within the first month of his/her involvement with the program? Eighty percent (72) will be placed in permanent stable housing within 30 days. Another 13 percent (12) are placed within 60 days, and 7 percent (6) are not ever successfully housed.

Tailoring Your Data Collection

Just because you don't have to report it doesn't mean you shouldn't collect it.

Better understand the impact of your shelter outcomes on the overall system to reduce homelessness!



Using Data to Improve Performance

Philosophy

- There is always room to improve

Practice

- Measure outcomes, not outputs
 - Decrease length of stay in homelessness
 - Increase exits to permanent housing
 - Decrease returns to shelter



Brainstorm Activity

Shelter A has an average length of stay of 200 days (just shy of 8 months). The shelter has set a goal to decrease their average length of stay to 120 days (about 4 months).

List the outputs the shelter and system can engage in to accomplish this goal.

Instructions:

- Spend 10 minutes brainstorming
- Identify a reporter to report out from your group

USING QUALITATIVE DATA



What Is Qualitative Data

- Qualitative data is non-numerical data. This means that it represents the aspects of experiences that are often difficult to measure through tools and assessments or are open-ended in nature. The overall objective of qualitative research is to:
 - Capture snapshots of the perspectives,
 - Characteristics,
 - Experiences,
 - Habits of communities.
 - Lived Experience

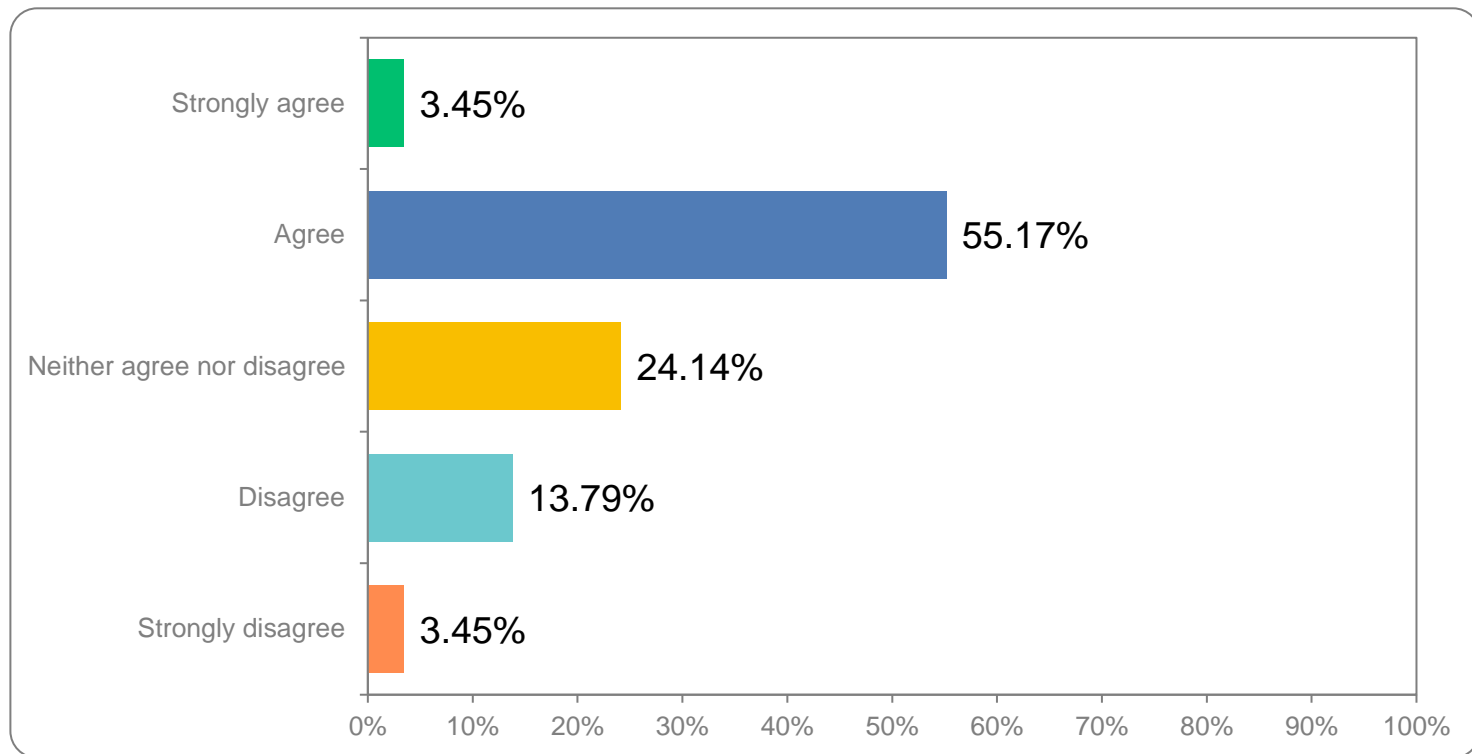
Source: [Qualitative Data 101](#)

Ways to Collect Qualitative Data

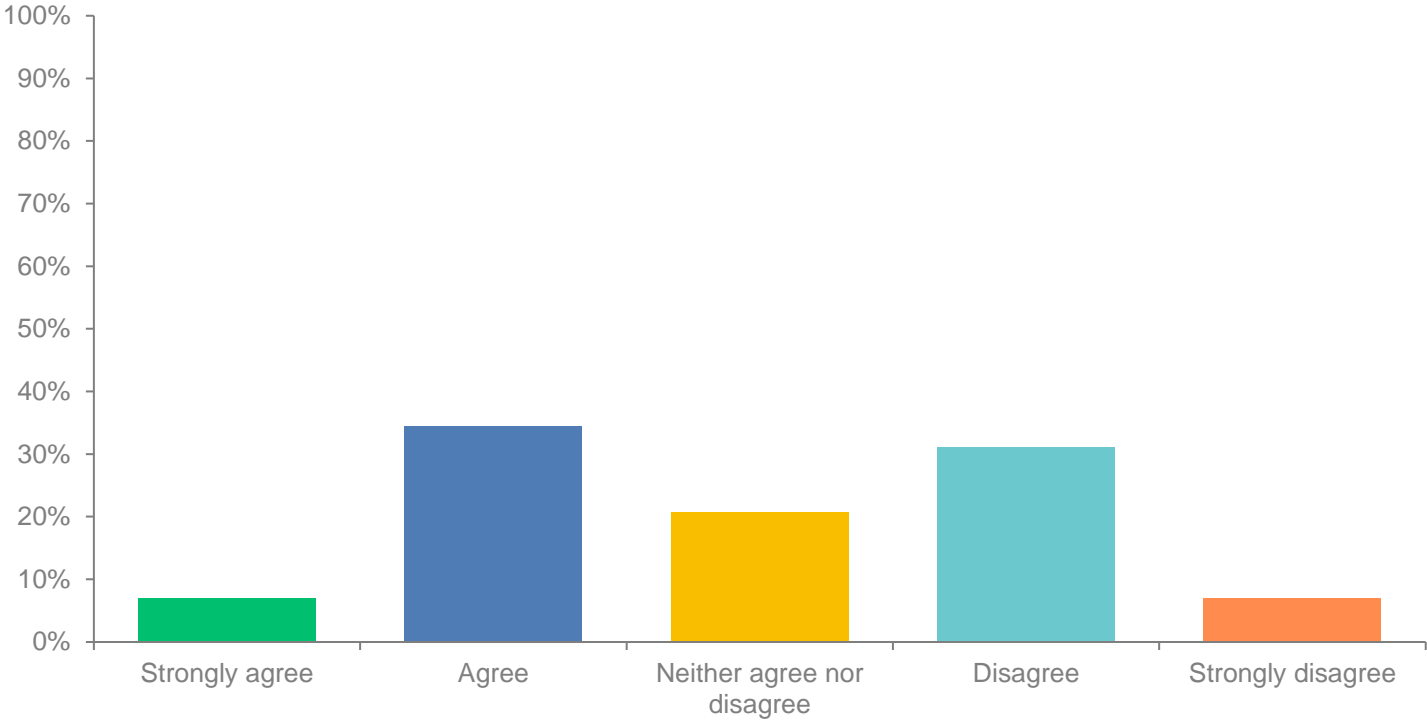


- People with lived expertise
 - 1 on 1 interviews
 - Focus groups
 - Surveys*
- Observation*
- Ethnographies*
- Digital storytelling
- Case notes
- Case conferencing

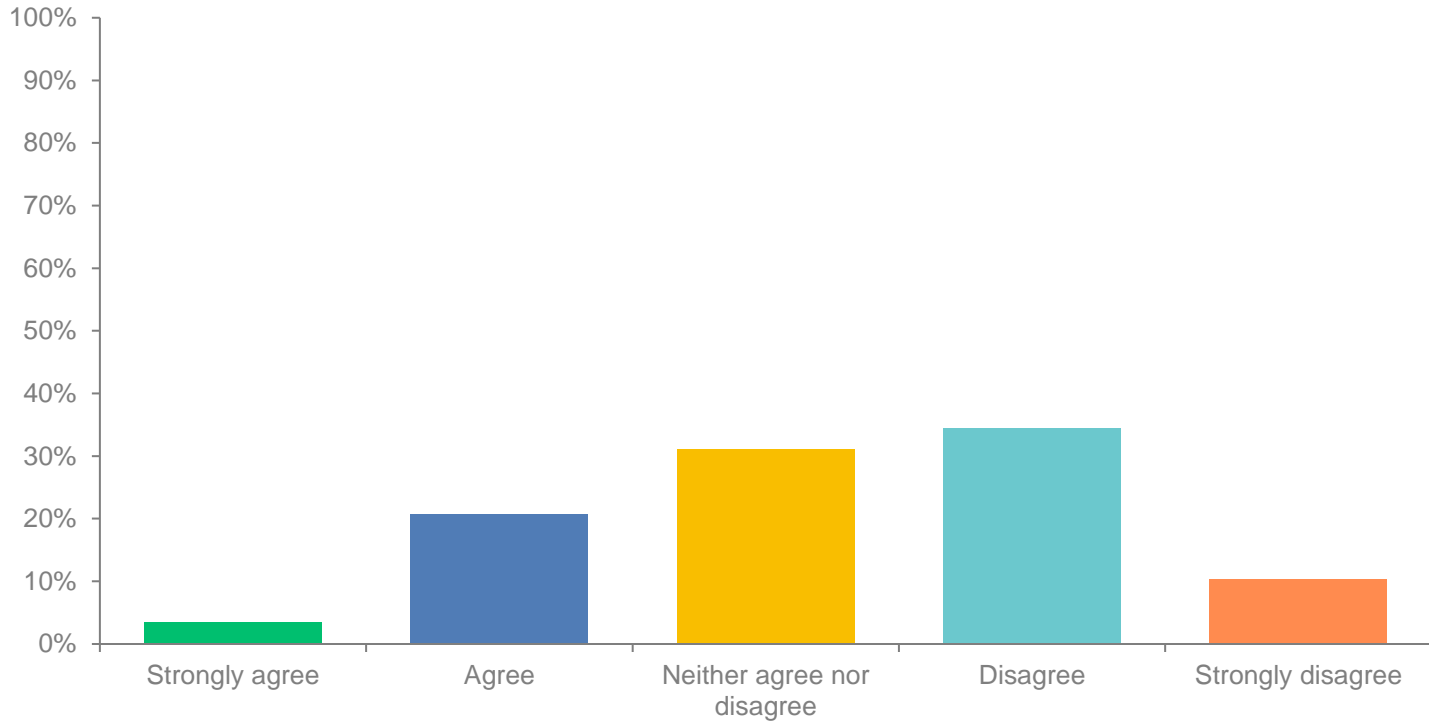
Our community engages people with lived experience of homelessness in program design, service delivery, policy decisions, and other decision-making within the Eastern Pennsylvania CoC.



Shelters in our community are low-barrier and easily accessible to our fellow neighbors experiencing homelessness.



All people experiencing homelessness are housing ready and should be supported to immediately move into permanent housing.

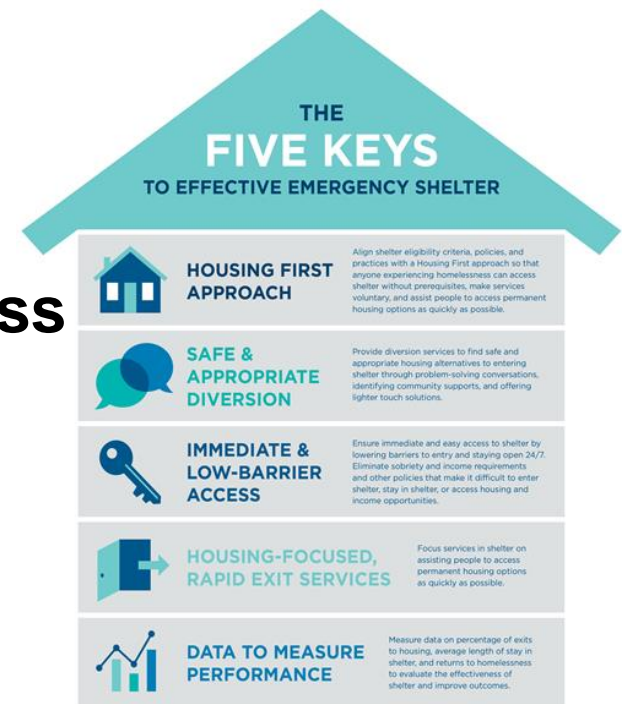


WRAP UP!



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- **Housing First Approach**
- **Safe & Appropriate Diversion**
- **Immediate and Low-barrier Access**
- **Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services**
- **Data to Measure Performance**



Session One: Effective Homeless Response System: Increase System Flow

System Flow:

An efficient and coordinated process that moves people from homelessness to housing as quickly as possible



Session One: Housing First Approach

Philosophy

- Not a “program,” it is a system-wide orientation and response
- Everyone is ready for housing
- Homelessness is a housing problem
- Housing First means housing fast



Practice

- Few to no pre-requisites to shelter entry
- Not screening for “housing readiness”
- Staff embrace “housing first” approach
- Services are voluntary and all are housing-focused
- Services come after housing

Session One: Housing First Approach

Philosophical Shift

- Homelessness is a housing problem, and everyone is ready for housing now
- Housing first is NOT housing only
- Issues that may have contributed to a household's homelessness can best be addressed once they are permanently housed

Operational Shift

Shift job descriptions, mission statement, and policies and procedures should reflect Housing First philosophy

Practice Shift

Eliminate "Housing Readiness" Conversation

Strength-based, Client-centered service provision

Housing-focused services that are voluntary (no consequences)

Session Two: Safe and Appropriate Diversion

Shift From	Shift Towards
Are you willing to enter shelter and follow our rules?	Is the place you were staying safe? What can we do to help you remain there? What can we do to help you find a safe place other than shelter?
What programs are you eligible for? Who has a bed?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?
Beginning with eligibility determinations and intake questions	Begin with brainstorming and structured problem-solving conversations about household's situation and resources
Beginning with screening and assessment tools and shelter waitlists	Support crisis resolution to avoid shelter entry through problem solving conversation

Session Two: Immediate and Low-barrier Access

Philosophy Shift

- Shelter is life saving
- It should be easy to access
- It should be easiest for the most vulnerable



Practice Shift

- Few to no prerequisites to shelter
- No sobriety requirement
- No waiting list
- Coordinated entry
- Prioritize households with the most needs
- 24/7 access
- Equal Access Rule compliance
- Rules should only pertain to safety

Session Two: Immediate and Low-barrier Access

- Requires **checking our own biases** about who we think "should" be in shelter and why we might feel anxious about serving different populations
 - We should be supporting change in people, rather than trying to change their behaviors
- The most acute, highest need people are prioritized for shelter **such as unsheltered individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered.**
- Fill your shelter with those that **need it the most**, not those that got there first or can "comply" with the rules
- **Do not require** service participation to stay in shelter

Session Three: Housing-focused, Rapid Exit

Philosophy Shift

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
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Practice Shift

- Plan for rapid exit **to housing** at entry
- “If you’re not talking about housing, you’re having the wrong conversation” – problem solving “housing” conversations continue
- Environment reflects a housing focus
- All meetings, policies, procedures, job descriptions, signage, client handbooks, etc. reflect focus on quick exits to housing

Session Four: Using Data to Improve Performance

Philosophy

- There is always room to improve



Practice

- Measure outcomes, not outputs
 - Decrease length of stay in homelessness
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 - Decrease returns to shelter

PUTTING CHANGE INTO ACTION



Group Activity: Action Planning

Group Topics

- **Groups 1 and 2:** Implement a Housing First Approach
- **Groups 3 and 4:** Increase Rapid Exits to Permanent Housing

Each group will have 10 minutes to develop Actions Steps for their topic.

2-3 immediate, short-term, and long-term actions your community can take

Group Debrief

Long-term Action Steps

Short-term Action Steps

Immediate Action Steps

Group Topics

- Groups 1&2: Implement a Housing First Approach
- Group 3&4: Increase Rapid Exits to Permanent Housing

In Chat

What is one thing you're going to do before the end of November as a result of this training?



Q&A



Contact

Kay Moshier McDivitt

Senior Technical Assistance
Specialist

kmoshiermcdivitt@naeh.org

Josh Johnson

Senior Technical Assistance
Specialist

jjohnson@naeh.org

