

Hoosiers Need Housing First: Advocating for What We Know Works



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



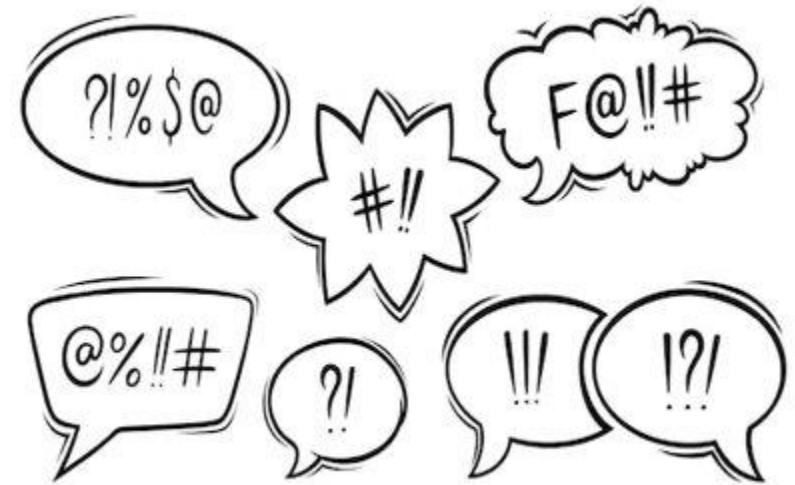
- Vice President Programs and Policy, National Alliance to End Homelessness
- Former frontline staff, federal employee, federal technical assistance provider
- Hoosier-adjacent
- She/her pronouns

Session Objectives

- Revisit the Principles of Housing First
- What We Have Learned
- Implications for Policy and Advocacy

Warm Up: First Word that Comes to Mind

In one word, what is the first feeling/thought that comes to mind when you think of Housing First?



Housing First Defined



Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, **without preconditions**, as quickly as possible and connects them to voluntary services and **supports necessary to sustain that housing.**

A Paradigm Shift: Fixing Systems Not People

Mindset Prior to Housing First

- People experiencing homelessness have too many barriers to be successful in housing
- People must first be ready for housing
- Prioritize those households most likely to succeed
- Stairstep, project-level approach

Housing First Mindset

- All people are ready for housing
- People cannot address their needs without the basic need of housing met
- Prioritize those households with the most complex needs
- Whole-system orientation

Housing First: A Timeline

1990s:
Pathways to
Housing
developed the
Housing First
Model

2010: First
Federal Plan,
*Opening
Doors*,
embraces
Housing First

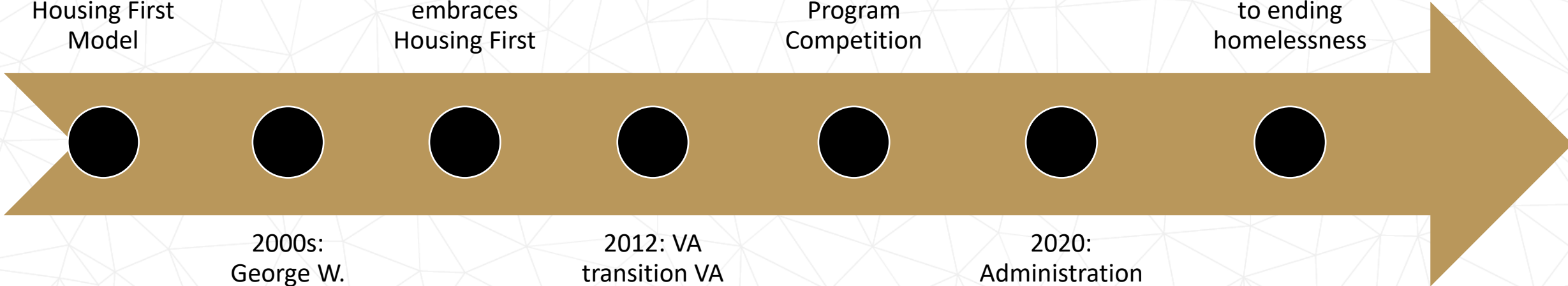
2013-2014:
HUD first
includes
Housing First in
Annual CoC
Program
Competition

2022: *All In*
recommits to
Housing First as the
Federal approach
to ending
homelessness

2000s:
George W.
Bush
Administration
Begins
to Promote
Housing
First

2012: VA
transition VA
Homeless
Program
operation for
incorporation
of Housing
First into
HUD-VASH
nationwide.

2020:
Administration
promotes anti-
Housing First
policies



Five Basic Principles



Consumer Choice

Choice in housing and services and emphasis on self-determination



Separation of Housing & Treatment

Immediate access to housing without treatment or sobriety as prerequisites



Provide Services to Match Needs

Program provides or coordinates access to all needed services



Recovery Oriented Philosophy

Ongoing, positive, hopeful, affirming support



Social Community Integration

Supporting a life in the community

Housing First: The Evidence

- There is extensive evidence of the effectiveness of Housing First:
 - The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends Housing First based on evidence from systematic review of 26 studies which found Housing First decreases homelessness, increases housing stability, and improves quality of life.
 - There have been four randomized controlled trials, all of which found that Housing First resulted in large improvements in housing stability.
 - Recent studies have found:
 - Housing First programs reduce homelessness, increase housing stability, and improve quality of life for people who are experiencing homelessness
 - Housing First can lead to better treatment outcomes
 - Housing First can reduce healthcare and other costs

Impacts on Housing First Fidelity



Dangerous Narrative and Rhetoric

- Increased visibility of unsheltered homelessness resulted in backlash against effectiveness of Housing First despite evidence
- Led to increased state and local laws to criminalize homelessness
 - Camping or sleeping in public places
 - Sitting or lying in public
 - Living in vehicles
 - Panhandling
- Pushing harmful practices and policies that do nothing to solve the complex problem of homelessness
- Introduction of federal legislation that could undermine ability to effectively implement that Housing First approach

Overview: Housing PLUS Act

- H.R. 3405, Housing Promotes Livelihood and Ultimate Success (PLUS) Act
 - Introduced by Representative Andy Barr (R-KY)
 - H.R. 3405 harms efforts to end homelessness by:
 - Undermining HUD's ability to prioritize evidence-based solutions, including the Housing First model.
 - Diverting scarce resources to outdated, ineffective, and costly strategies, wasting limited federal resources on underperforming programs.
 - Punishing individuals struggling to address substance use disorders, pushing them back into homelessness when they face challenges.
 - Undermining access to effective treatment. Housing First is more effective at increasing service utilization than non-Housing First programs.

Excerpt: Rep. Barr's May 17, 2023, Press Release

Housing First prevents providers who require wraparound services from receiving federal funds to curb homelessness in our communities,” said Congressman Andy Barr. “

These wraparound services are oftentimes necessary to ensuring a person can safely and fully attain permanent housing on their own...

The Housing PLUS Act will ensure that HUD grant funding is reaching providers who are helping people transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency, without unneeded restrictions.”

27 Cosponsors of the Housing PLUS Act (H.R. 3405)

Davidson (R-OH-8)

Sessions (R-TX-17)

Ogles (R-TN-5)

LaMalfa (R-CA-1)

Tenney (R-NY-24)

Cloud (R-TX-27)

Palmer (R-AL-6)

Hill (R-AR-2)

Jackson (R-TX-13)

Posey (R-FL-8)

Weber (R-TX-14)

Lesko (R-AZ-8)

Van Duyne (R-TX-24)

Cline (R-VA-6)

De La Cruz (R-TX-15)

Roy (R-TX-21)

Baird (R-IN-4)

Self (R-TX-3)

Wittman (R-VA-1)

Steil (R-WI-1)

Williams (R-TX-25)

Lamborn (R-CO-5)

Crenshaw (R-TX-2)

LaTurner (R-KS-2)

Mann (R-KS-1)

McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)

What's Next for Housing PLUS Act?

How will the Housing PLUS Act (H.R. 3405) be considered?

- Hearing in House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance
- Mark up in House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance (optional)
- Mark up in House Financial Services Committee
- Considered on House floor on its own or as part of a larger bill

What Can You Do?

- Do outreach to your legislators
 - Cosponsor
 - Potential Cosponsor
 - Potential Ally
- There is no Senate companion bill yet, however, include them in your outreach

Making a Strong Case for Housing First

1. Understand their aspirations and what promises they've made
2. Make an explicit connection between the work to end homelessness and their priorities
3. Describe how the whole community wins by using effective strategies like Housing First to address homelessness
4. Highlight the successes!
5. Help them see the specific role they can play to bring Housing First to scale

Reinforce Key Messages

1. Housing First is not a program—it is an approach to housing and service provision, and it is a whole-system orientation and response.
2. Housing First can be successful for anyone, regardless of actual or perceived need. Meet people where they are.
3. Housing First is not Housing Only—the services and engagement must be offered, too.
4. Housing First is about health, recovery, and the ability to thrive.
5. System and organizational limitations can impact fidelity to the model.

Resources

- [Housing First - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [The Playbook for Building Public and Political Will for Ending Homelessness](#)
- [Research on Housing First \(nlihc.org\)](#)
- [The Housing PLUS Act Undermines Proven Solutions To Homelessness \(nlihc.org\)](#)