This deck presents Rapid Rehousing (RRH) best practices based on national research and evidence from communities across the country. The content reflects proven approaches that strengthen housing outcomes. These practices do not represent the required standards for Multnomah County providers.

The goal is to offer a shared understanding of evidence-based RRH practice, explore how these practices align with current work in Multnomah County, and identify areas where additional guidance or support would be helpful.

Rapid Rehousing Best Practices

The Multnomah County Homeless Services department requested an overview of Rapid Rehousing best practices in the following areas:

- **Defining Rapid Rehousing**
- **Target population**
- **Housing First**
- **Staffing Models and Caseload Sizes**
- **Core Components**
- **System Coordination**
- **Performance Measures**

Defining Rapid Rehousing

What is Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is a time-limited program model that helps people quickly exit homelessness and move into permanent housing in the community. It uses private-market units and provides flexible financial and housing-focused support without preconditions.

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Rapid Rehousing (RRH) supports people to exit homelessness quickly by moving into and sustaining permanent housing. Participants lease units in the community—often private-market units—and those units become their long-term homes.
RRH provides flexible, right-sized financial assistance and housing-focused case management. Programming focuses first on making sure the housing can be sustained and then on strengthening income and addressing any barriers that could prevent the household from keeping that housing. RRH is delivered without preconditions such as income, employment, sobriety, or service participation.

RRH differs from traditional Transitional Housing models in that when participants move into an RRH unit, that unit becomes their new home from the start, rather than a time-limited placement.

Understanding Rapid Rehousing

There are three core components of Rapid Rehousing. All must be available, but depending on program design, a single provider may not deliver all three. Not every household will need each component. In 2014, NAEH and federal partners, including HUD and the VA, issued guidance defining these components as:

HOUSING IDENTIFICATION

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

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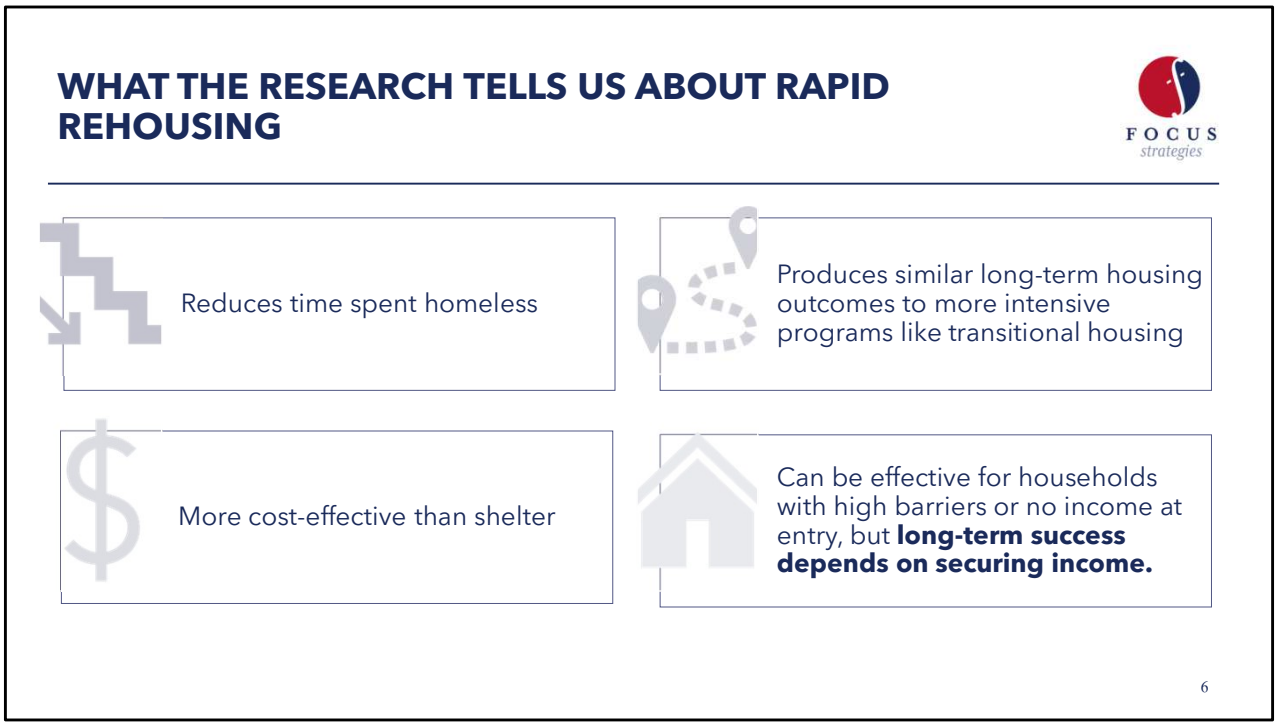
Every Rapid Rehousing program is built around three core components that work together to help people quickly move into housing and stay there.
These components are:

- Housing identification;
- Rent and move-in assistance; and
- Case management and services.

Programs must make all three components available, but how they're delivered can vary. In some cases, one agency provides all three. In others, different providers coordinate, for example, one organization might handle housing navigation and landlord relationships, while another manages financial assistance or case management.
The key is coordination and communication. When partners work together seamlessly, participants experience a unified, housing-focused program rather than separate services.

And not every household will need every component. The support should be flexible and scaled to what each household needs to secure and maintain housing. Rapid Rehousing works best when it feels coordinated, flexible, and person-centered.

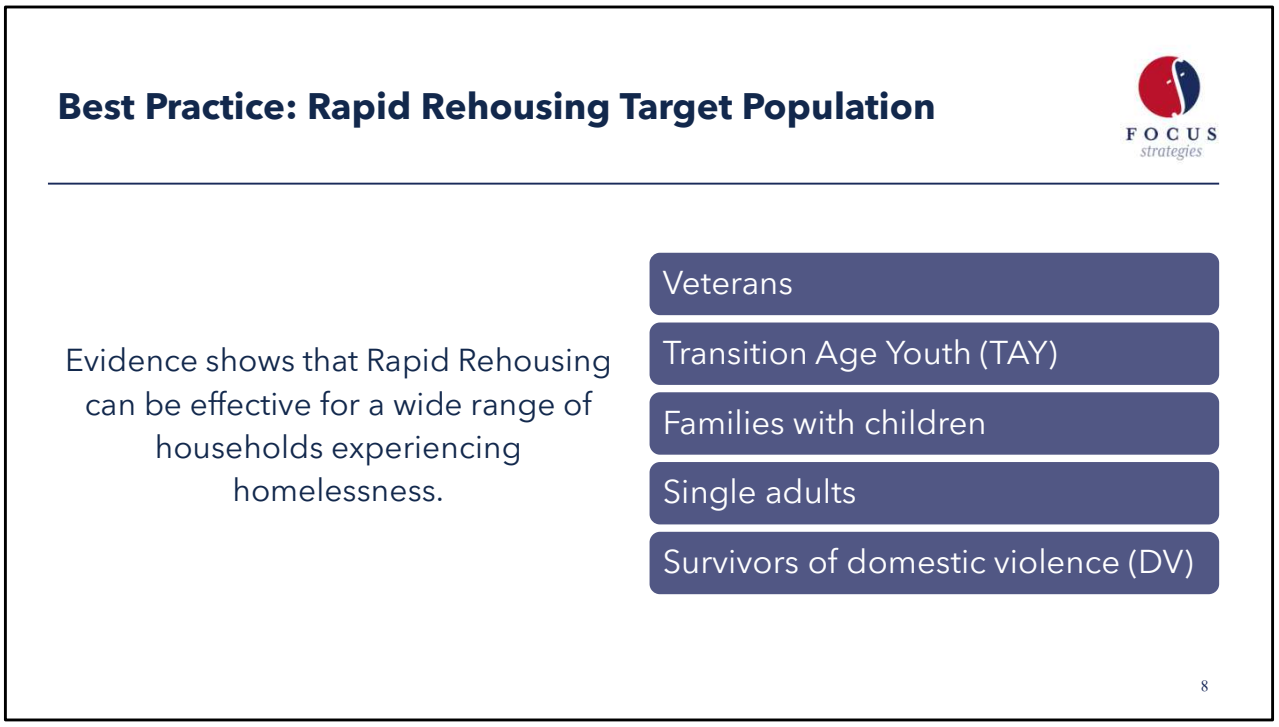


Research consistently shows that Rapid Re-Housing reduces the amount of time people spend homeless and achieves strong long-term outcomes. The *HUD Family Options Study*, a large national evaluation of family homelessness interventions, found that families offered Rapid Rehousing exited shelter faster than any other group, with a median of about two months homeless compared to three to five months for transitional housing or usual care (HUD, 2015). The same study found that, over time, families in Rapid Rehousing were just as likely to remain stably housed as those in more intensive programs, including transitional housing and permanent subsidies. After 18 months, about 81 percent of families in RRH were in permanent housing, nearly identical to outcomes for transitional housing (HUD, 2015; 2016).

Rapid Rehousing is also significantly more cost-effective. According to the *Family Options Study's three-year analysis*, RRH cost an average of $6,580 per family, compared with $32,500 for transitional housing, while achieving comparable housing outcomes (HUD, 2016; NAEH, 2022).

Importantly, it works for people with significant housing barriers, including those with no income. The *VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)* program found that, even among veterans entering with no income, 73 percent exited to permanent housing, and most increased their income by the time of program exit (VA SSVF Annual Report, FY2022). Equally important is that stable income by program exit is strongly correlated with maintaining housing and reducing returns to homelessness.

Best Practices



Evidence from national studies shows that Rapid Rehousing can be effective for a wide range of households.

- Veterans: The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) National Evaluation demonstrates strong housing placement rates and relatively low returns to homelessness for both families and single adults.
- TAY: Findings from HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) show that flexible assistance and developmentally appropriate support help many young people achieve stability.
- Families: The HUD Family Options Study and evaluations of HPRP (Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program) show that RRH quickly ends homelessness and supports long-term stability when assistance matches household needs.
- Single Adults: The HPRP evaluations and HUD's Systematic Review of Rapid Re-Housing find that many adults, including those with higher barriers, successfully exit homelessness when programs provide adequate financial assistance, tenancy support, and progressive engagement.
- DV: Research from the Domestic Violence Evidence Project and DV Housing First evaluations shows that RRH paired with flexible financial assistance, safety planning, and mobility options supports strong housing and safety outcomes.

Best Practice: Eligibility and Screening

The only eligibility requirement for RRH is literal homelessness. Programs should **not screen based on readiness, disability, income, or assumptions about who will succeed.** Income is not required at entry, but households need a **sustainable housing plan at exit.**

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RRH has a single eligibility criterion: the household must be experiencing literal homelessness. Guidance from national research and multiple federal and philanthropic evaluations consistently shows that screening out participants based on "readiness," disability, income, or assumptions about who will succeed has no evidence base and can create inequitable access.

The reason this guidance exists is that front-line workers, assessors, and program staff are not able to reliably predict who will or will not succeed in RRH based on an initial encounter. Studies of coordinated entry assessments, prevention targeting, and RRH programs show that:

- Demographic and personal characteristics are poor predictors of RRH success. *SSVF national reports* and HUD's Systematic Review of Rapid Re-Housing found that neither income at entry, disability status, behavioral health, nor family composition strongly predicted exits to permanent housing or returns to homelessness. In these studies, participants with higher "barriers" often achieved the same outcomes as lower-barrier households when assistance was adequate.

- Provider judgments are often inconsistent and biased. Research from coordinated entry evaluations (e.g., Houston, Minneapolis, and LA) shows wide variation between staff on who they believe is "RRH appropriate," with decisions influenced by perceptions of behavior, disability, or income, even though these factors do not reliably predict success.

- Programs that reduce screening see improved equity and outcomes. SSVF's shift to Housing First and low-barrier eligibility produced higher exits to permanent housing and reduced racial disparities, particularly for Black veterans and veterans with disabilities.

Transparency matters: households need a path to sustaining housing after the RRH subsidy ends. But "sustainable income" does not mean every participant must cover rent on their own. Sustainability looks different across households and may include employment, benefits, shared housing, roommates, multigenerational households, or transitions to longer-term subsidies when available. Programs should partner with participants to define what sustainability means for them and build a realistic plan based on their goals and strengths.

High-need households can and do succeed in RRH when the program is structured to support them. This includes flexible financial assistance, strong housing navigation, tenancy support, and consistent problem-solving aligned with Housing First.

Eligibility and Screening: Other Interventions

Rapid Rehousing	Transitional Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing
Broadly accessible to households experiencing literal homelessness, providing short-term, flexible assistance and tailored supports.	For populations with specific stabilization needs, such as youth, survivors of trafficking, or those in recovery, where a structured residential setting may be helpful.	For people with chronic homelessness and a disabling condition needing long-term supports and a permanent subsidy.

RRH can be an effective first option for many households, even those with higher needs, when programs provide flexible assistance and strong tenancy supports.

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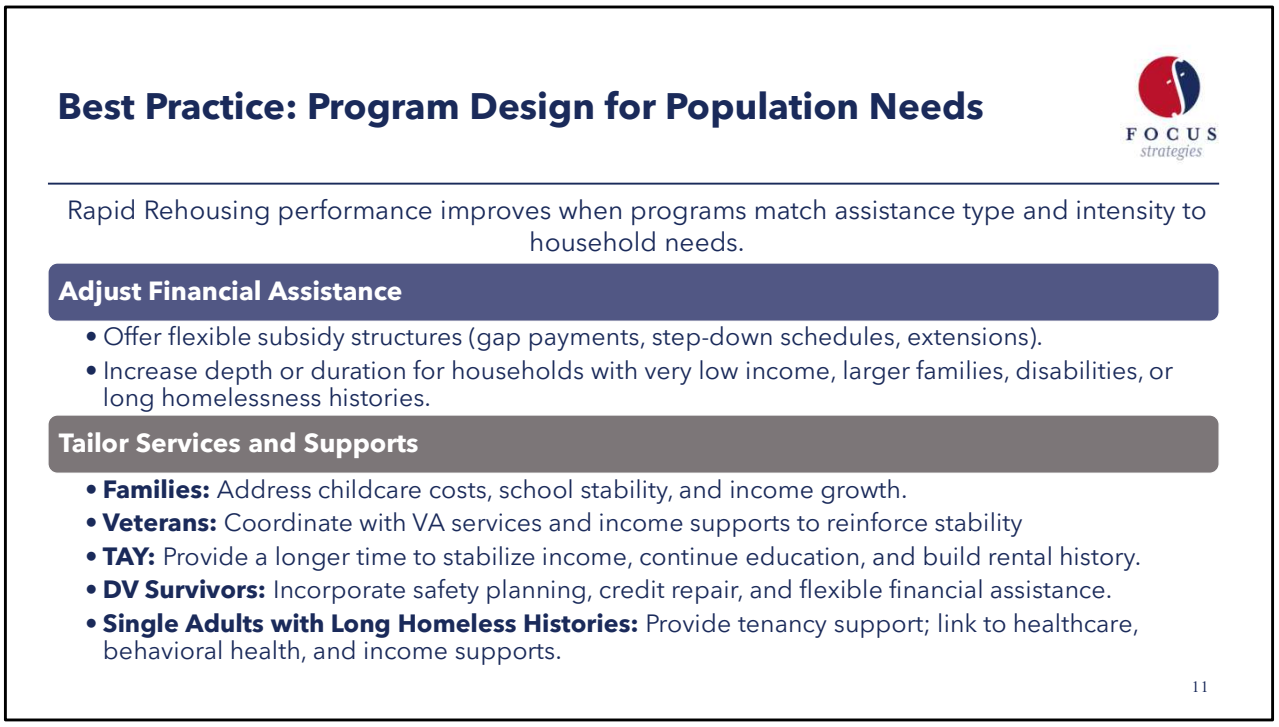
We often cannot determine at the point of entry which households will need which level of support. National research backs this up. Findings from HUD's Rapid Re-Housing evaluations, the Family Options Study, and the VA's SSVF program all show that the best predictor of what someone needs is what happens after they are housed, not what we assume beforehand. Many of the indicators of higher need, such as difficulty maintaining tenancy, functional impairments, untreated behavioral health issues, or safety concerns, are only visible once a household is in housing, and we can see what supports work and which gaps remain.

Because of this, RRH programs need strong tenancy support, flexible financial assistance, and consistent, participant-centered problem-solving built into the model from the beginning. These elements allow households to stabilize and give providers enough information to understand whether RRH is sufficient or whether a household needs a more intensive intervention. RRH also needs clear pathways to higher levels of assistance when appropriate, such as access to deeper subsidies, specialized services, or transitions to Permanent Supportive Housing.

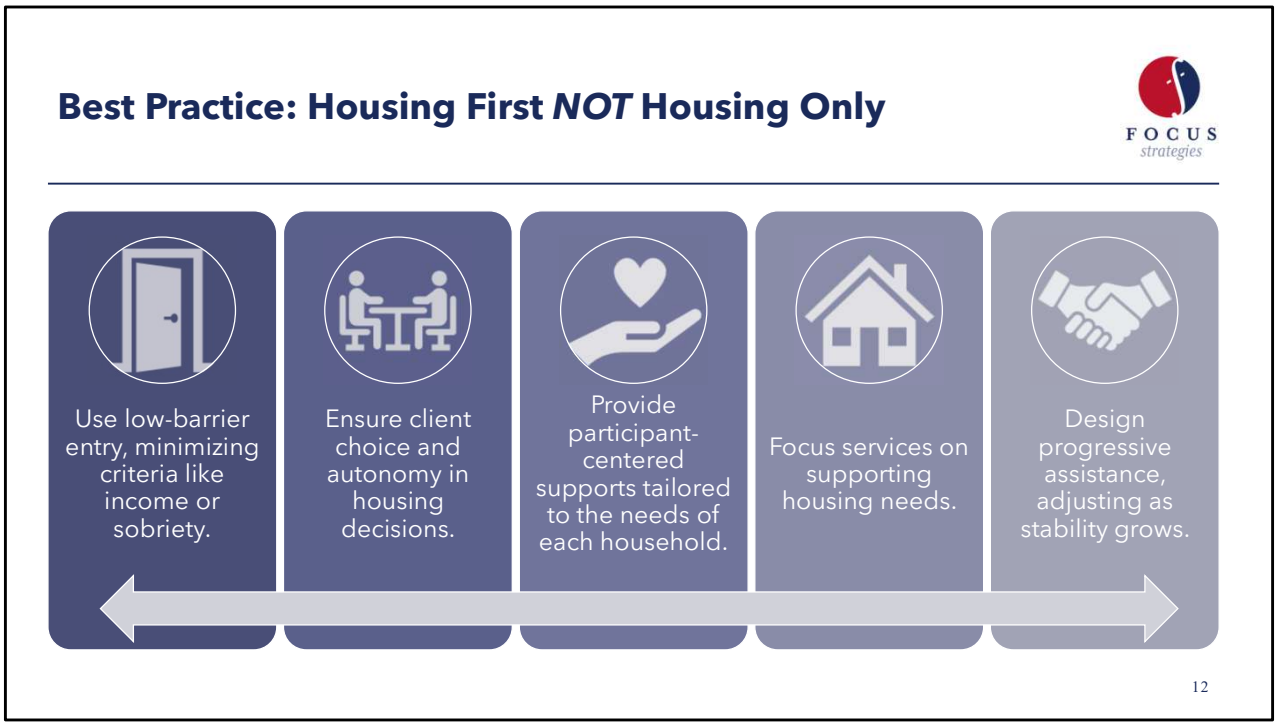
A helpful way to understand when someone may need PSH is this: ***even if the rent were free, the household would not be able to sustain housing without ongoing support***. That level of need is not always identifiable at enrollment. It frequently becomes apparent only after the household is housed and supported through RRH. This is why RRH and PSH are not competing models; they are complementary parts of a housing continuum. RRH offers a starting point for most households, and the system must remain flexible and responsive when a household's needs signal the need for a more intensive, long-term intervention.

Cost also plays an important role in how communities structure that continuum. RRH is significantly less expensive per household than Transitional Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing. Because RRH relies on short-term, right-sized financial assistance rather than long-term subsidies or residential facilities, communities can serve more households with the same resources. This makes RRH the most scalable intervention and the most practical starting point for most households—while still ensuring that higher-intensity, higher-cost interventions like TH and PSH remain available for the smaller subset of households who need them.



Rapid Rehousing works best when the level of financial assistance matches what households actually need to stabilize in their local housing market. Programs should offer flexible subsidy structures, and be willing to adjust assistance when households face higher barriers. This means increasing the depth or duration of support for households with very low income, larger families with high childcare costs, people with disabilities, or individuals with long histories of homelessness. These adjustments do not change the model; they are part of delivering RRH with fidelity by right-sizing assistance to the circumstances a household faces.

Services and supports should also align with the realities of each population. For families, RRH programs should focus on childcare affordability, school stability, and pathways to increased income. For veterans, stability improves when programs coordinate with VA resources, benefits, and employment supports. Transition-age youth often need more time to stabilize income, stay connected to school or training, and build a rental history, so RRH should allow for that developmental runway. Survivors of domestic violence benefit from flexible financial assistance, mobility options, and safety planning, along with help repairing credit and addressing economic abuse. For single adults with long experiences of homelessness, RRH can still be effective when paired with strong tenancy supports and clear links to health care, behavioral health services, benefits, and income supports.



Research shows that Rapid Rehousing is most effective when it is grounded in Housing First principles, meaning that access to housing is not dependent on compliance, readiness, or treatment participation. Programs should maintain low barriers to entry. People should be housed first and then supported to address the issues that may have contributed to their homelessness.

It is equally important to support choice and autonomy in housing decisions. Participants should be able to make informed choices about where they live, just as anyone else would, while programs help balance those preferences with real market conditions.

Services should be offered as supports, not conditions of tenancy. Housing should never be contingent on treatment, employment, or case management compliance. However, it is also important to clarify that ESG and CoC-funded Rapid Rehousing programs are required to offer and document monthly case management contacts, and some programs choose to conduct home visits to support tenancy. When done well, these contacts are Housing First–aligned: voluntary in tone, focused on housing stability, and delivered in partnership with participants.

Finally, programs should design progressive, tailored assistance, adjusting both financial and service supports as stability grows. For example, someone who has experienced long-term homelessness or has no rental history may initially need more frequent contact and more support with budgeting, landlord communication, and community connection. In contrast, a household that became homeless after a short-term job loss might need only light-touch assistance and brief rent help.

Best Practice: Staffing Models

FOCUS strategies

Best practice is to maintain dedicated housing navigation or landlord engagement staff, with case management staff focused on stability support.

When capacity is limited, one person may perform both functions if roles are clearly defined and balanced.

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Best practice in Rapid Rehousing staffing emphasizes dedicated capacity for housing navigation and landlord engagement, distinct from ongoing case management. Research and field experience documented through *Opening Doors–era HUD initiatives*, National Alliance to End Homelessness guidance, and multiple evaluations by Abt Associates show that programs with dedicated, housing-focused staff achieve faster placements, strengthen landlord partnerships, and reduce the time between referral and move-in. Clear and distinct staff roles also improve coordination and help programs focus on the core elements that drive housing outcomes.

That said, smaller programs often have limited capacity. In those cases, one person can effectively perform both functions if the roles are clearly defined, balanced, and supported by strong supervision. What matters most is that all core functions;housing access, housing stabilization, and partnership development, are fully covered, even if performed by the same staff member.

Best Practice: Staffing Models

FOCUS strategies

Housing Navigator

- Focus on housing search and placement
- Recruit and retain landlords
- Match households to available units
- Negotiate leases and resolve barriers
- Understand local rental market

Case Manager/ Housing Stability Specialist

- Focus on long-term stability
- Support tenancy and landlord relationships
- Help households increase income and access to benefits
- Problem solve tenancy challenges and promote independence

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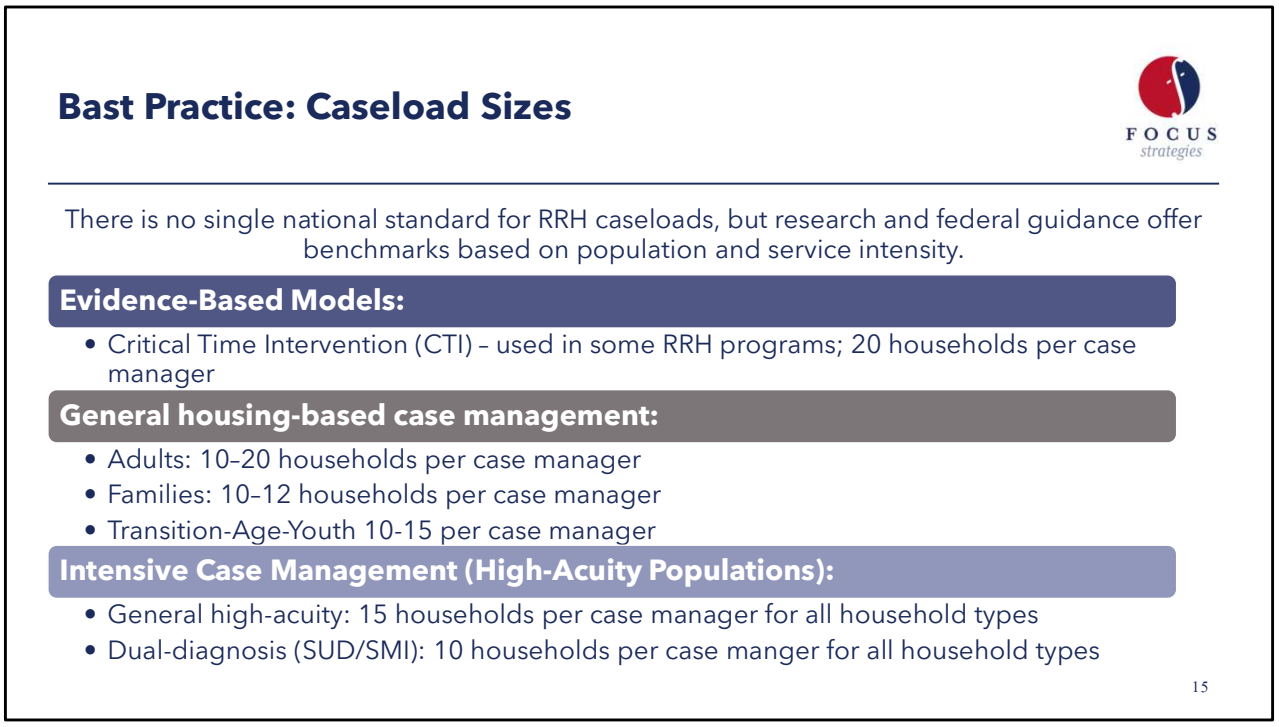
The most effective Rapid Rehousing programs are intentional about how staff roles are structured. The housing navigator's role is all about access to housing. They're focused on helping participants locate and secure housing as fast as possible. Understanding the local rental market Case managers/ Housing Stability Specialists focus on supporting participants to maintain housing. The key is that both housing access and housing stability receive dedicated attention. When each role is clear and supported, move-ins happen faster, landlord relationships last longer, and households are more likely to remain housed after assistance ends.



There's no single national standard for Rapid Rehousing caseload sizes, but HUD's *Homeless System Response: Case Management Ratios* and related research identify some widely accepted benchmarks. For most programs, general housing-based case management falls between 10 and 20 households per staff, depending on population and program design, typically 10–12 for families, 10–15 for transition-age youth, and up to 20 for adults with lower service needs.

Programs using Critical Time Intervention, or CTI, often operate around a 1:20 ratio. CTI is an evidence-based, time-limited case management model that provides intensive support during critical transition periods — like moving from homelessness into permanent housing. The model helps people build stability and connect to long-term supports while gradually decreasing contact over time.

For participants with higher service needs or co-occurring behavioral health conditions, smaller caseloads are recommended, typically 1:10 to 1:15. These lower ratios allow for the more frequent, intensive contact required to maintain housing stability. This matches recommended case load sizes for Assertive Community Treatment Teams supporting high needs households.

Core Components

Best Practice: Culture and Capacity Building

Strong Rapid Rehousing programs invest in culture and capacity.

Core Philosophy & Orientation	Staff Skills & Competencies	Organizational Infrastructure
• Housing First • Trauma-informed, participant-centered engagement • Belief that households can succeed	• Motivational interviewing • Problem-solving and conflict resolution • Tenancy support and landlord communication	• Strong supervision • Manageable caseloads matched to service intensity • Consistent expectations and unified service approach

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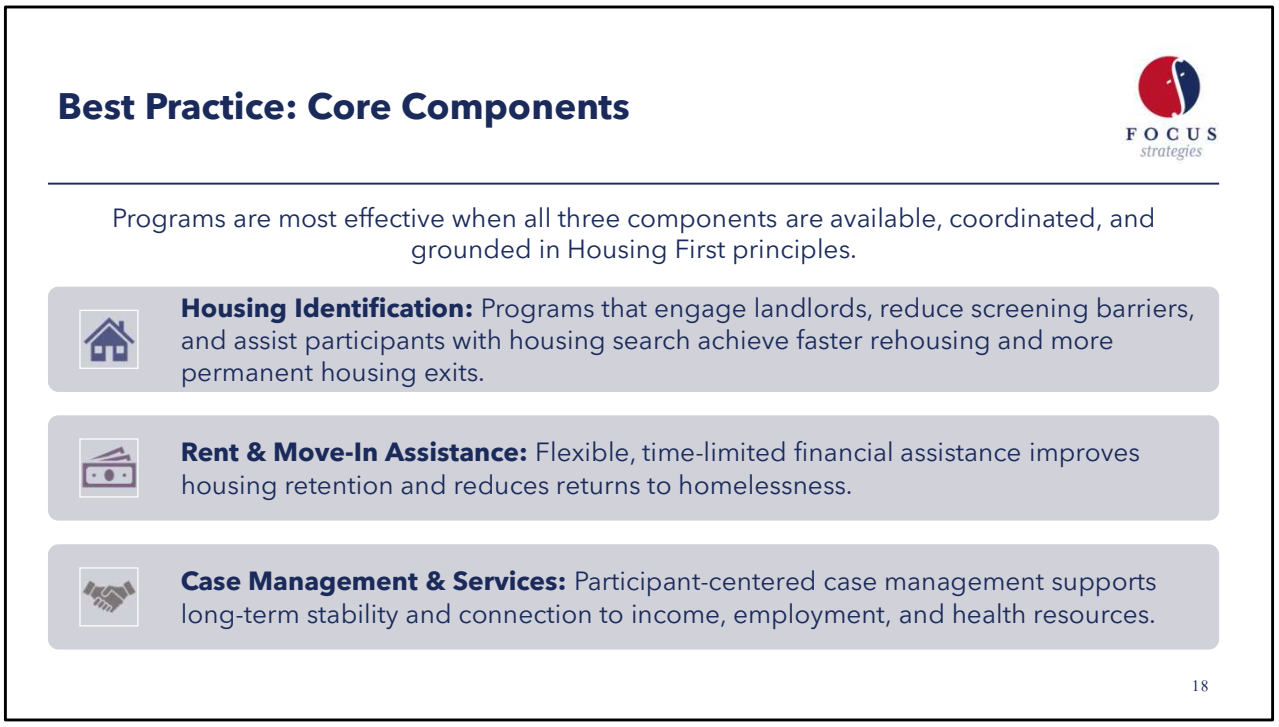
Culture and capacity building are critical to the effective implementation of a Rapid Rehousing program. The strongest programs begin with a Housing First orientation, ensuring that access to housing is not dependent on compliance or perceived "readiness." This keeps the focus on removing barriers and supporting participants as they stabilize in their own home, rather than filtering people out or requiring them to prove capacity first.

Equally important is a trauma-informed approach. Households entering Rapid Rehousing often carry trauma related to homelessness, violence, system involvement, or instability. Trauma-informed engagement means creating safety, offering choice, practicing transparency, and using non-punitive responses to setbacks. This approach reduces disengagement—especially in the critical pre–move-in phase—and strengthens long-term retention.

Effective programs also invest in a shared belief in participant success. Staff mindset influences outcomes: when staff assume households can succeed, they are more persistent in problem-solving, more effective in landlord relationships, and more committed to resolving barriers rather than prematurely escalating households to deeper interventions.

Capacity building includes training in motivational interviewing, problem-solving, tenancy support, landlord mediation, and de-escalation. These are essential skills in early tenancy, when challenges and conflict are most common. Strong supervision reinforces consistent practice, supports staff through emotionally complex work, and keeps the team aligned with Housing First and trauma-informed principles.

Finally, programs must maintain manageable caseloads that match service intensity. Smaller caseloads are essential when households need more frequent contact or deeper tenancy support. A unified service philosophy across the team ensures that all staff, navigators, case managers, and supervisors communicate consistent expectations and deliver stable, housing-focused engagement.



Rapid Rehousing is centered around three key components: housing identification, financial assistance, and case management and services. Each component serves a specific purpose, and programs are most effective when all three are available, well-coordinated, and based on Housing First principles.

Housing Identification involves having dedicated staff and/or processes for recruiting and cultivating a network of landlords for long-term use, minimizing screening barriers, and maintaining a steady pipeline of available housing. Programs that prioritize this function consistently and actively support participants with housing search, reduce the time it takes to secure housing and increase the number of individuals who successfully transition to permanent housing.

Rent and Move-In Assistance provides short-term, flexible financial support that can include rental subsidies, deposits, and utility payments. The critical aspect of this assistance is its flexibility; the amount and duration are tailored to meet the unique needs of each household. Research indicates that this type of progressive, time-limited financial support enhances housing stability and decreases the likelihood of returning to homelessness.

Case Management and Services are essential for maintaining long-term stability in housing. In Rapid Rehousing, case management is participant-centered, focusing on helping households improve their tenancy, increase their income, and connect with employment and health resources. The most effective programs adjust service intensity based on household needs.

Best Practice: Landlord Engagement

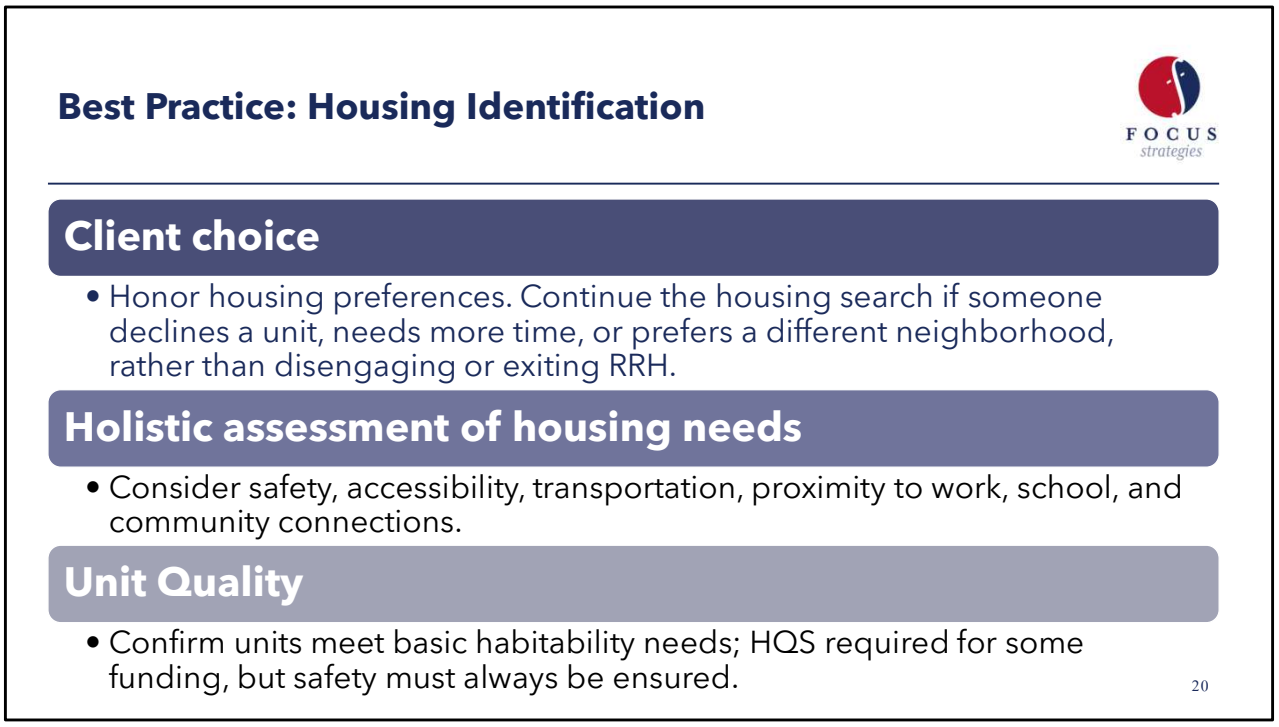
Landlord engagement is one of the most critical functions in Rapid Rehousing — and one of the most easily overlooked. Programs that build strong, ongoing relationships with property owners consistently achieve faster lease-ups and higher retention rates.

Best practice starts with recruitment, building a broad network of landlords willing to work with the program. Messaging should highlight what landlords value most: on-time rent, reduced vacancies, and staff support if problems arise.

Once landlords are on board, the key is relationship management. Regular communication, even when there are no issue, builds trust. Many programs designate a housing navigator or landlord liaison as the single point of contact to make problem-solving quick and consistent.

Incentives can help bring new landlords in: small signing bonuses, damage funds, or guarantees to cover unpaid rent. This not only brings in new landlords but makes it easy for them to participate.

Finally, retention matters. Recognize the landlords who participate by sending thank-you notes, sharing success stories, and hosting small recognition events. These gestures reinforce partnership and help sustain your housing pipeline.



Client choice is foundational to an effective housing search. Each household's preferences should guide the process because people have valid reasons for wanting or avoiding certain neighborhoods or building types. These preferences often reflect safety concerns, proximity to work or school, access to childcare, or wanting to stay near supportive family or community networks. Some households may need distance from unsafe individuals or environments linked to trauma or recovery triggers. For these reasons, programs should not deny or end assistance simply because someone declines a unit, needs more time to decide, or expresses interest in a different neighborhood. Housing identification is meant to be a collaborative process rooted in respect and partnership, not a test of compliance or readiness.

A holistic assessment of housing needs helps inform those choices. This means exploring whether a neighborhood or building poses safety risks for survivors of domestic violence, youth at risk of trafficking, or people in recovery who may encounter triggers in certain areas. It also involves assessing accessibility for people with disabilities, availability of transportation for work or school, and whether the location supports rather than isolates the household. These factors are central to housing stability and should be openly discussed in a way that empowers households to make informed decisions.

Unit quality is another essential part of the housing search. While some funding sources require a full Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection before move-in, all RRH programs should ensure that the units they help households secure meet basic habitability needs. This includes checking that the unit is safe, functional, and free of hazards that could jeopardize the household's health or stability. Ensuring even a basic level of habitability protects households and sets them up for long-term success in their new home.

Best Practice: Housing Identification Continued

Income and Sustainability

- Income not required at entry, but households need a realistic plan for sustaining housing at exit.

Market Transparency

- Discuss rental costs, availability, and screening barriers early to set realistic expectations and support participants in making informed choices about long-term housing sustainability and income needs.

Progressive assistance:

- Tailor support to each household's needs, from housing leads to helping with applications or accompanying clients to view units.

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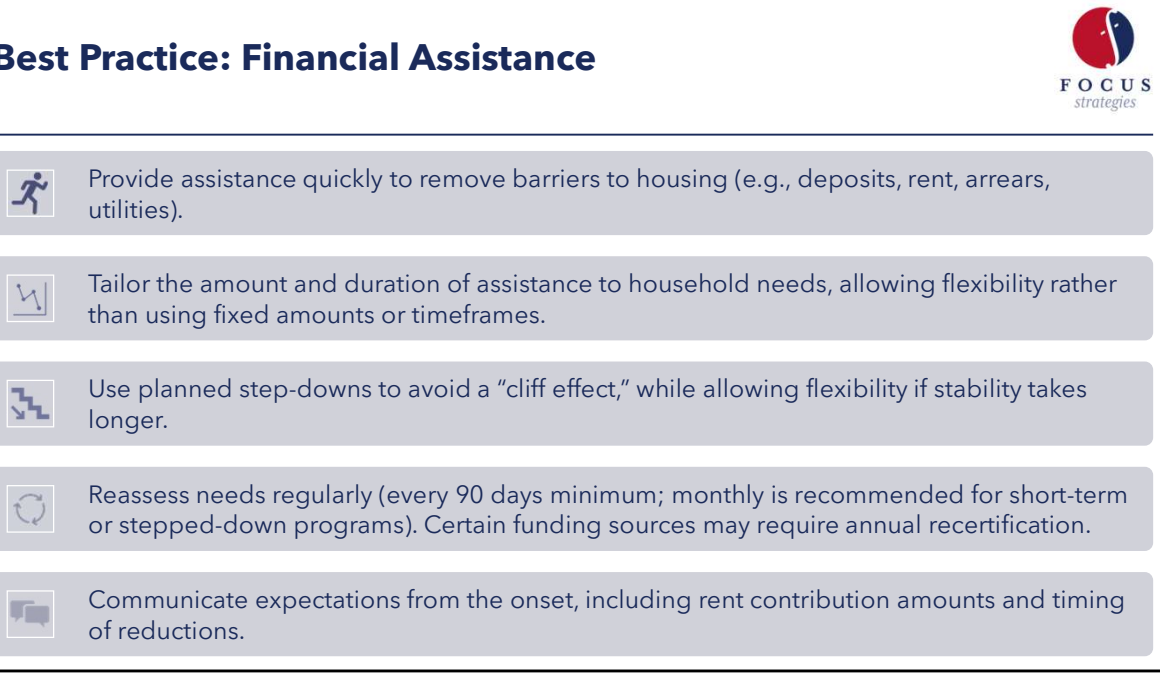
Income and sustainability are important topics to address early in the housing search. Although income is not required at entry into Rapid Rehousing, households do need a realistic plan for sustaining their housing once financial assistance ends. Sustainability can look different for different households: wages, disability or other benefits, contributions from adult household members, or shared housing arrangements. The goal is not to screen people out based on income, but to help them think through a long-term plan that aligns with their goals and the local rental market.

Market transparency is also important. Having honest conversations about rents, vacancies, available unit types, and potential landlord screening barriers helps households make informed choices and understand what is feasible. This transparency aligns expectations and helps connect housing choices with long-term income planning. It also reduces the likelihood that a household will move into an unaffordable unit after the RRH subsidy ends.

Progressive assistance ensures that support is tailored to need. Some households may only need housing leads and light-touch guidance, while others may need help completing applications, talking with landlords, or being accompanied to view units. Households with more complex barriers may need additional guidance, landlord advocacy, or ongoing tenancy supports. The idea is to provide the right level of support at the right time, so each household can navigate the market, secure a unit, and sustain housing over time.

Best Practice: Financial Assistance



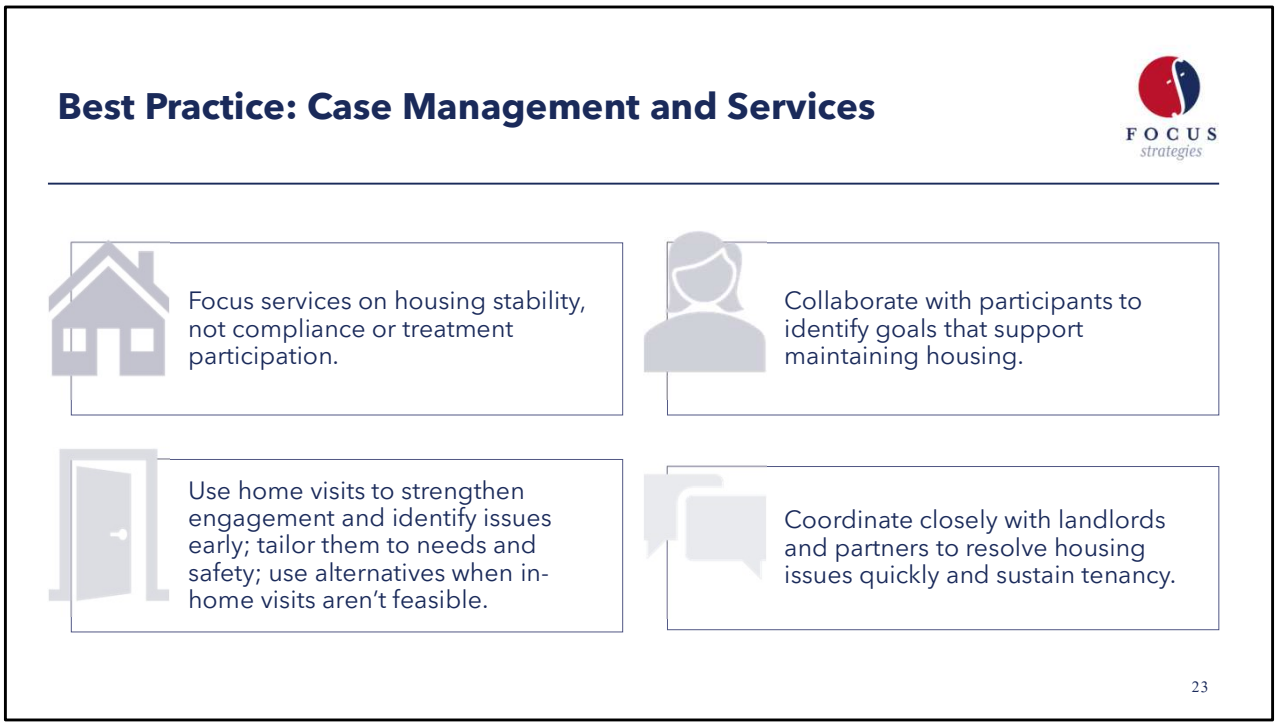
Rapid Rehousing financial assistance should be delivered quickly so households can move into housing without unnecessary delays. Acting quickly means completing key steps within a matter of days. For example, approving a unit within 24–72 hours, completing a basic habitability inspection within two to three days, issuing deposits or first month's rent within three to five business days, and clearing arrears or utility debts as soon as documentation is received. These timeframes help households secure units in tight markets where landlords may move on to the next applicant if RRH assistance is slow. Speed at this stage is a core element of effective RRH practice because it reduces time in shelter or unsafe situations and ensures that viable units are not lost due to administrative delays.

Once a household is housed, the level and duration of assistance should be tailored to their actual needs rather than determined by preset caps or rigid timelines. Households vary widely in income, family composition, disability-related needs, and experiences of homelessness. Flexible, right-sized assistance supports stability and prevents households from being pushed off assistance too soon. This approach aligns with NAEH guidance, emphasizing adjustments based on real needs rather than fixed program rules.

Planned step-downs can help prevent the "cliff effect" at the end of assistance, but they should never be rigid. If a household has a delayed job start, loses childcare, or experiences a temporary crisis, staff should be able to pause or slow down reductions. Assistance should match the household's pace of stability, not an artificial timeline.

Reassessment is essential for keeping support aligned with the household's evolving circumstances. HUD requires a reassessment at least every 90 days to confirm continued eligibility, but programs, especially those with short-term or stepped-down models, often benefit from reassessing monthly because circumstances can change quickly after move-in. Monthly reassessment helps providers identify tenancy issues, income changes, or emerging risks early and adjust assistance before problems escalate. Some funding sources also require annual recertification of eligibility, which is a compliance step, but it should not replace regular and meaningful reassessment throughout the household's participation.

Finally, programs should set expectations early and clearly. Households should understand rent contribution expectations, when reductions may occur, and how reassessment informs changes in assistance. Transparent communication supports planning, builds trust, and helps households prepare for long-term stability once RRH assistance ends.

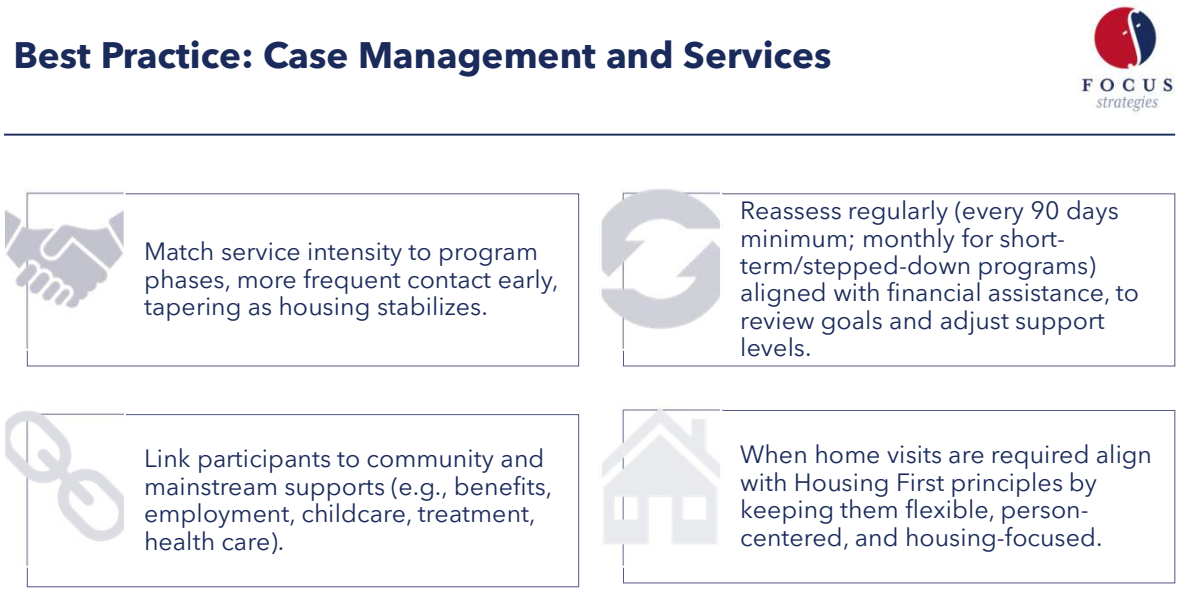


Case management in Rapid Rehousing centers on helping participants remain housed and build the skills, confidence, and stability needed for long-term success. Services are voluntary and focused on housing, not compliance, treatment participation, or proving readiness. The role of the case manager is to partner with participants, identify barriers early, and provide the right level of support to prevent housing loss. Effective case management includes support that directly contributes to stability. This can look like building a realistic household budget, applying for benefits, increasing income through employment supports, connecting to childcare, or accessing primary and behavioral health services. It also includes coaching on tenant responsibilities, effective communication with landlords, and resolving issues such as noise complaints, overdue utilities, or unit upkeep challenges. Goal setting works best when it is collaborative and clearly tied to supporting housing stability. For example, a participant might want to increase income in order to take on more of the rent, or they might need support resolving a conflict with a neighbor before it becomes a risk to tenancy. Goals should be realistic and match household needs, capacity, and desired pace.

Home visits are a best practice because they allow case managers to strengthen engagement, understand how the household is adjusting, and catch potential tenancy issues early. However, home visits are not always feasible, safe, or appropriate for every household. When home visits are not possible, programs should offer flexible, person-centered alternatives that still allow meaningful engagement and monitoring of stability. These alternatives can include porch or hallway visits, meeting in neutral community spaces, safe office meetings, virtual check-ins via video or phone, or structured, extended phone conversations that allow staff to assess tenancy conditions and emerging needs. During th COVID19 pandemic, virtual check ins were used frequently when home visits were not feasible.

Strong coordination with landlords is another essential component of RRH case management. Regular communication helps sustain positive relationships and resolve issues before they escalate. If a landlord reports concerns about rent, behavior, or the condition of the unit, the case manager can intervene quickly to mediate, problem-solve, and prevent eviction. Landlord engagement builds trust on all sides and supports long-term tenancy success.

Best Practice: Case Management and Services



Matching service intensity means tailoring the level of case management to the household's current needs and often aligns with the RRH phase they are in. It is not one-size-fits-all. Early in the program, participants often need more frequent contact as they adjust, learn to manage expenses, and rebuild stability. As confidence and independence strengthen, contact can taper to reflect progress. For example, a participant who has been homeless for several years may need more hands-on assistance in the first few months. The case manager might visit weekly to help set up rent payments, explain the lease, and coach on landlord communication. In contrast, a TAY participant who is new to renting may need coaching on budgeting, daily routines, and handling maintenance requests. Those with prior rental experience might need only brief check-ins. Start where the participant is and provide the amount of support that matches their situation.

Service intensity should remain flexible because stability is not always a straight path. A participant who has been doing well may experience changes such as loss of income, health issues, or conflicts with their landlord. When these situations arise, the case manager should increase contact and provide support until the participant is back on track. Once the issues are resolved, contact can be reduced again. Reassessment of service needs is also critically important and should align with financial reassessment. Each reassessment should involve reviewing progress toward goals, identifying any new or emerging barriers, and adjusting service intensity or focus accordingly.

Linking participants to community and mainstream supports is another critical part of the process. Case managers connect households to resources that strengthen their ability to remain stably housed over time, such as benefits enrollment, employment and training programs, childcare assistance, health care, or behavioral health services. These connections help participants sustain stability even after financial or program assistance ends.

As mentioned before, home visits are a best practice and should be incorporated whenever possible. If funders require home visits, they should be conducted in a way that remains consistent with Housing First: supportive, flexible, and focused on housing-related needs.

Best Practice: Preparing for Exit

Start exit planning early with clear expectations about income, rent sustainability, and the time-limited nature of assistance.

Develop a clear plan for rent affordability, income pathways. And budgeting.

Strengthen landlord relationships and ensure participants know how to navigate repairs, communication, and lease obligations.

Ensure continuity of care by facilitating warm handoffs to longer-term or community-based providers and offering aftercare or light-touch follow-up when possible.

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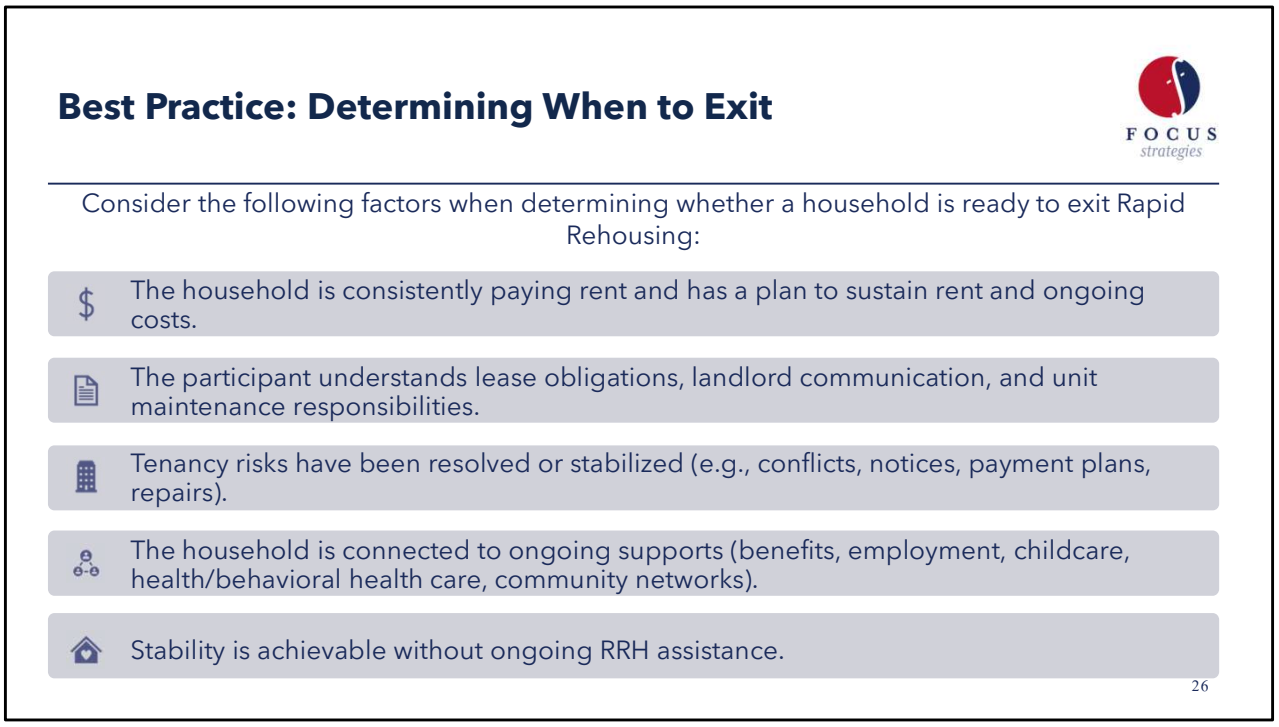
Exit planning begins at enrollment. Staff should explain how the program works, how long assistance typically lasts, and what steps help support long-term housing stability. Early expectation-setting helps prevent confusion and reduce stress later. A core part of exit planning is developing a realistic plan for rent affordability. This includes income pathways, budgeting, shared-housing options, and the real costs of maintaining the unit. The plan must reflect the household's preferences and circumstances. Participants do not need perfect stability to exit, but they do need a practical approach to covering rent and basic expenses over time.

Landlord relationships are another key part of exit planning. Participants should understand lease obligations, how to request repairs, and how to address issues that could jeopardize the tenancy. Case managers can coach participants on these skills and help resolve problems early.

Warm handoffs are critical when households benefit from ongoing supports. Staff should introduce participants directly to employment programs, benefits specialists, childcare supports, health or behavioral health providers, or community resources so they do not have to navigate these transitions alone. Aftercare or light-touch follow-up can help prevent returns to homelessness. Even brief check-ins can surface issues and allow staff to help before challenges escalate.



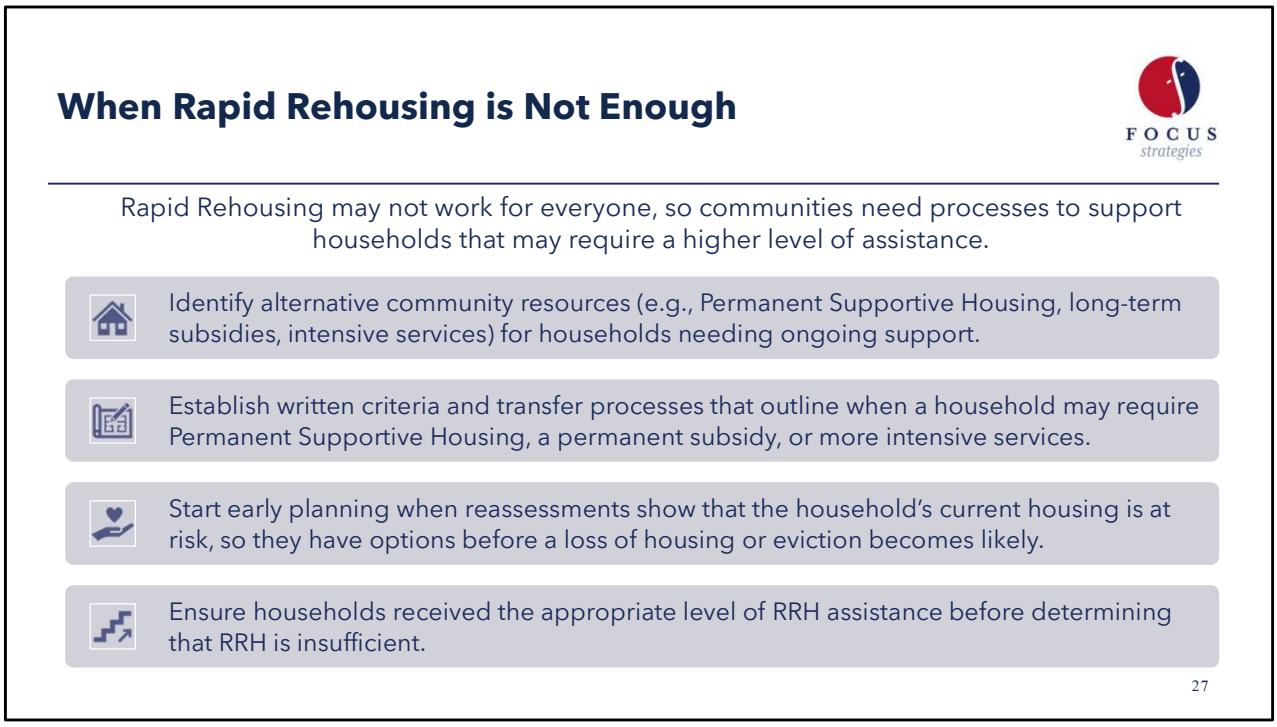
Exit readiness is determined by stability, not perfection. The clearest sign that a household is ready to exit Rapid Rehousing is whether they are paying rent consistently or have a clear and workable plan to do so. Many participants rely on income that is irregular or informal, and programs may not fully understand how they piece together their budgets. If rent payments are steady and the household can explain how they will continue to cover costs, that is a strong indicator of readiness.

Sustainability planning should be realistic and participant-driven. Many households exit into poverty or carry high rent burdens. Housing First teaches that stability can exist even when income is limited, as long as the household can maintain the basic conditions of their tenancy. The plan may include wages, benefits, shared housing, or contributions from other adults, as long as it reflects what has been working for the household.

Understanding lease obligations is essential. Participants should know how to communicate with landlords, request repairs, manage utilities, and maintain the unit. RRH case management supports these skills, and exit readiness requires that households can manage these responsibilities without ongoing program support. Tenancy risks must also be resolved or stabilized. This includes conflicts with neighbors, payment concerns, or earlier notices. Reassessment provides information about progress in these areas and highlights where additional support may be needed before exit.

Households are more ready to exit when they have ongoing supports in place. Benefits, employment resources, childcare, primary or behavioral health care, recovery supports, and family or community networks all help maintain stability after RRH ends. Many people who maintain stable housing still seek regular help with problem solving, staying organized, addressing health needs, or navigating daily stressors. Programs can help participants prepare for this transition by building connections to reliable community providers and making warm handoffs that reflect how housed people naturally use support systems. Access to these supports after exit is part of what sustains stability, not a sign that the household is unready to leave the program.

Some participants may feel scattered, stressed, or overwhelmed even when they are meeting their lease obligations. This is common. Stability is not the absence of stress. Stability is the ability to meet tenancy responsibilities, maintain communication with the landlord, and access the supports that help them stay housed.



Rapid Rehousing is effective for many households, including people with significant barriers. A small subset will not stabilize even when the program is delivered with fidelity. When a household is not meeting basic lease obligations, continues to face unresolved tenancy risks, or cannot sustain the unit even with flexible and individualized support, staff should consider whether a different level of assistance is needed.

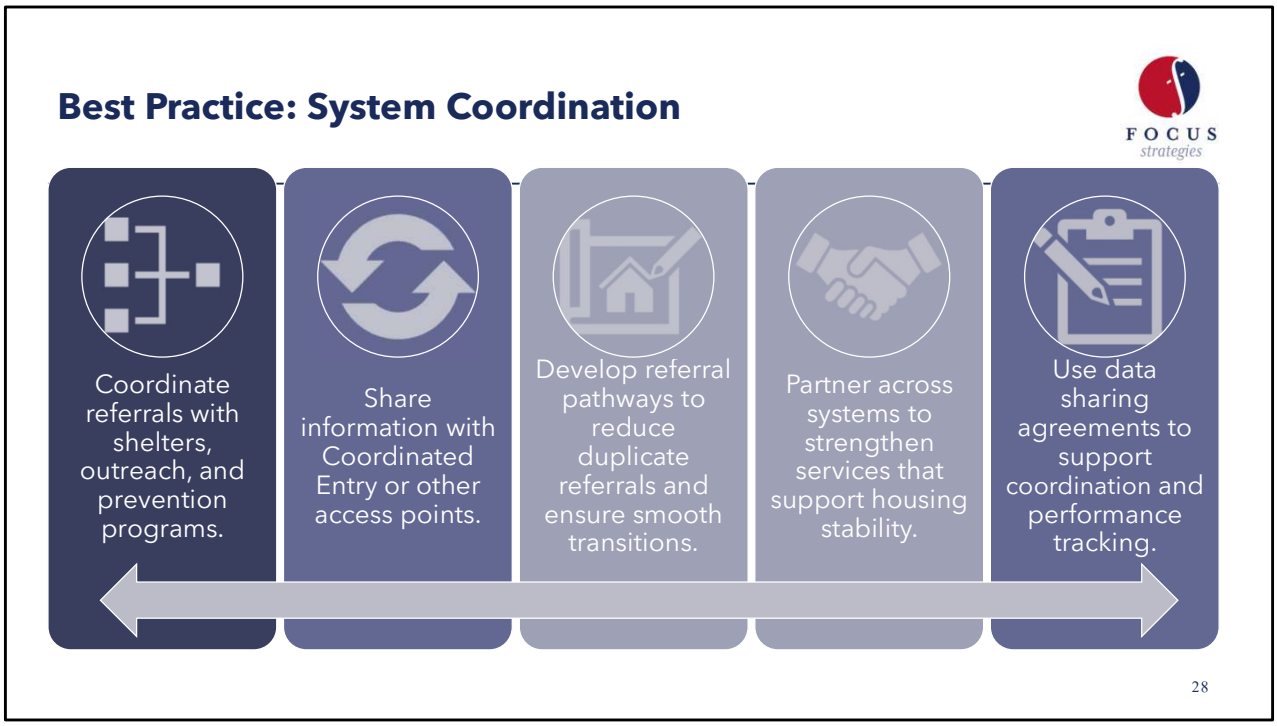
A key part of this process is understanding what alternative resources exist in the community. Staff must know which programs are available, which populations they serve, how to refer, and what documentation is required. This includes Permanent Supportive Housing, long-term rental subsidies such as Housing Choice Vouchers and Mainstream vouchers, locally funded subsidies, and programs that offer more intensive tenancy or clinical support. Clear understanding of the resource landscape helps providers guide participants through options early, rather than waiting until the household faces imminent loss of housing or eviction.

Communities also benefit from clear written criteria for transfers. Written criteria create consistency and transparency. They help determine when a household may require Permanent Supportive Housing, a permanent subsidy, or more intensive services. Written criteria also reduce subjectivity by outlining specific indicators that Rapid Rehousing may not be the right fit. These indicators may include persistent tenancy risks, repeated difficulties meeting lease obligations, or needs that require ongoing support.

Reassessment is the tool that helps determine whether Rapid Rehousing can meet the household's needs. There is no fixed timeframe for deciding that Rapid Rehousing is not enough. The determination comes from repeated reassessments showing ongoing instability or tenancy risks even when staff provide individualized support. Reassessment highlights the areas that still need attention and helps distinguish between households that need more time and households whose needs exceed what Rapid Rehousing can offer.

Before considering a transfer, programs should confirm that Rapid Rehousing was delivered with fidelity. This includes right-sized financial assistance, active housing navigation, landlord engagement, housing-focused contact after move-in, and support with budgeting, income, and tenancy skills. Some households struggle because support was too limited or did not adapt when new needs emerged. Reviewing fidelity ensures that decisions reflect the household's needs rather than gaps in service delivery.

Because transfers take time, early planning matters. When reassessments show that the household's current housing is at risk, staff can prepare documents, review eligibility, and talk with the household about goals and preferences. Early planning supports a smooth transition rather than a rushed response after a notice or housing loss.



System coordination helps ensure Rapid Rehousing programs operate smoothly within the larger homeless response system. Programs should align referrals and eligibility with shelters, outreach, and prevention providers to create consistent processes and avoid duplication of assessments and referrals.

Information sharing through Coordinated Entry or other access points supports appropriate referrals and smooth transitions between programs. Strong coordination also means building partnerships with workforce, benefits, behavioral health, and healthcare systems to promote income stability and long-term housing success.

Finally, programs should use data-sharing agreements responsibly to monitor performance, track outcomes, and protect participants' privacy. Effective coordination reduces gaps, streamlines services, and helps households move more quickly into and through housing.

Best Practice: Rapid Rehousing Performance Measures

Average time to housing
Typical Range: 30–60 days in well-functioning programs and markets

Exits to permanent housing
Typical Range:70–85%

Returns to homelessness
Typical Range:<10% within 6 months, <15% within 12 months

Cost per housing outcome
Typical Range: Varies by market, significantly lower than transitional housing

Equity in outcomes by population type
Typical Range: ≤5 percentage-point difference

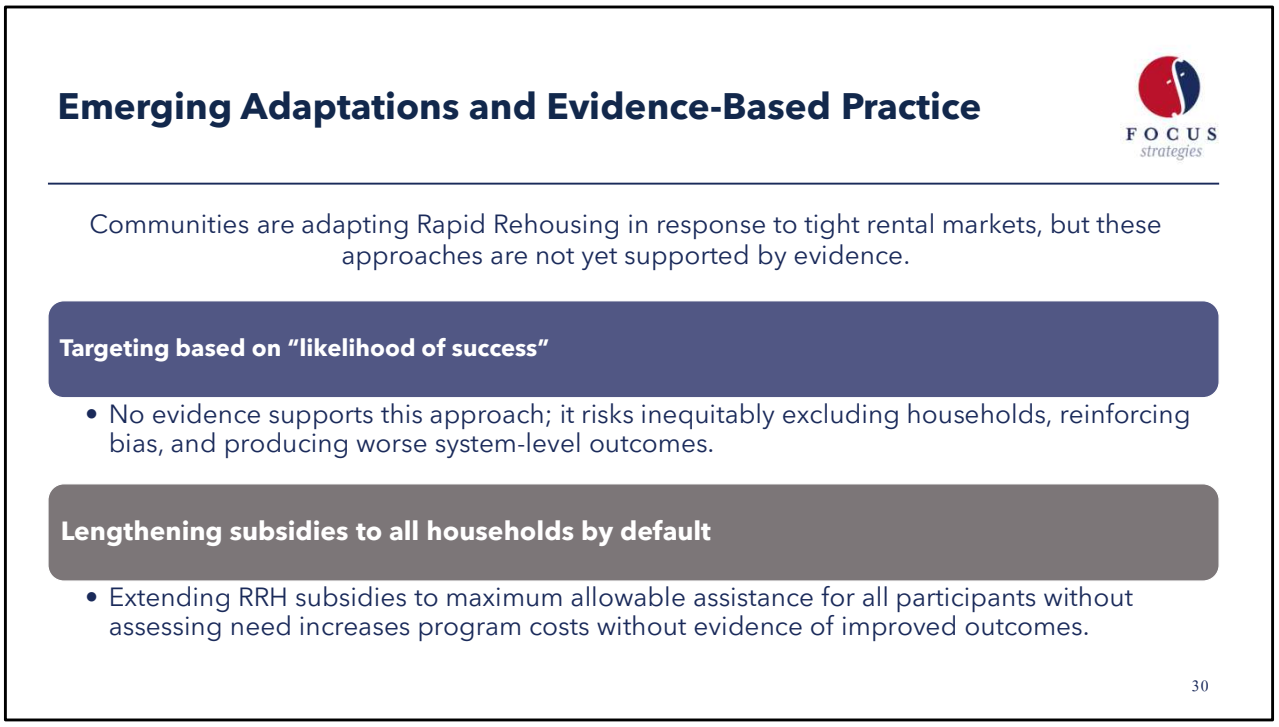
Participant outcomes (satisfaction, income, and connection to ongoing supports)
Typical Range varies by metric

These are the key measures used to understand how well Rapid Rehousing programs are working. Together they help communities assess effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. Key Performance measures include:

- Average time to housing measures how quickly participants move from enrollment to permanent housing. Shorter timeframes indicate an effective process and strong coordination between outreach, case management, and financial assistance. It should be noted that timeframes can also be impacted by particularly tight housing markets.
- Exits to permanent housing show how many households leave the program for stable destinations such as a rental unit or reunification with family. This is one of the strongest indicators of program success.
- Returns to homelessness measures long-term stability by tracking how many participants re-enter the homeless system within six and twelve months after exit. Lower return rates reflect effective support and lasting outcomes.
- Cost per housing outcome helps programs evaluate efficiency. It measures how much is spent on each successful housing placement and allows comparison across programs to ensure resources are being used effectively.
- Equity in outcomes focuses on fairness and inclusion. Programs review results by race, ethnicity, gender, and household type to ensure no group experiences lower housing success or higher rates of homelessness.

- Participant outcomes capture the participant's perspective. This includes satisfaction with services, changes in income, and connection to community supports that help maintain housing. Tracking these outcomes provides a fuller picture of success beyond housing placement alone.

By monitoring these measures together, communities can identify strengths, pinpoint gaps, and continuously improve the impact of their Rapid Rehousing programs.



Communities are adapting Rapid Rehousing in response to tight rental markets, rising rents, and limited resources. These pressures are real, but the emerging strategies do not yet have an evidence base and may create unintended consequences for both households and system performance.

One adaptation is targeting based on a perceived likelihood of success. In this approach, programs restrict access to RRH and prioritize only the households they believe can stabilize quickly with short-term assistance. There is no research supporting this strategy. Evidence from RRH, Housing First, and coordinated entry all show that screening people out based on perceived readiness or predicted success leads to inequitable access, reinforces bias, and produces weaker system outcomes over time. RRH was designed to serve a wide range of households, not just those deemed easiest to assist, and narrowing access undermines its core purpose.

Another is lengthening subsidies by default. Instead of extending assistance based on a documented need, some communities now provide 18–24 months of RRH for everyone. While this may address high rents, it shifts RRH toward a long-term subsidy model, without evidence that most households require this level of support. Extending assistance universally may reduce turnover, but it also increases costs and limits the number of households the program can serve.

The central issue is not a flaw in RRH itself but the shortage of affordable housing and widening affordability gaps. Without evaluation and clear criteria, these changes can reduce capacity, increase costs, and drift away from practices that have evidence behind them—without guaranteeing stronger outcomes for households.

Losing participants before move-in:
This challenge connects back to the earlier slides on housing identification and client engagement. The period before move-in is one of the moments when households are most likely to disengage. Participants may feel overwhelmed by the housing search or unsure about the next steps. Maintaining frequent and proactive contact, just as discussed in the slides on engagement and early case management, helps prevent people from dropping out. Staff can use the same flexible engagement strategies described earlier, including phone, text, office meetings, and community-based check-ins. Active housing search support, which was emphasized in the housing identification section, remains essential during this stage.

Units that are too expensive:
This point mirrors the earlier focus on long-term affordability and sustainability planning. When households choose units that exceed their long-term income plan, it creates instability from the start. Staff should draw on the conversations introduced in the housing identification slides about market transparency, realistic budgeting, and aligning unit choices with the household's sustainability plan. Motivational interviewing (MI) can help when providers have concerns about a unit's affordability, but participants prefer the unit. MI supports collaborative conversations, helps clarify the participant's goals, and creates space for honest reflection about what will work long term. Flexible financial assistance and negotiation strategies, which were introduced in the financial assistance slides, help stabilize the first months while still keeping the focus on long-term affordability.

Rigid step-down schedules:
This point directly reinforces the earlier slide on financial assistance structure. Fixed step-downs do not reflect the guidance that assistance should be right-sized and responsive to household needs. Step-downs should align with the regular reassessment process introduced earlier. Reassessment looks at income progress, rent burden, and overall tenancy stability. If earlier slides emphasized progressive assistance and flexible support, this is one of the most important places to apply those principles. Step-down decisions should follow the same individualized approach described earlier rather than use preset timelines that create unnecessary pressure.

Weak or late transition planning:
This connects back to the exit planning slide, where we highlighted the need to begin sustainability conversations at enrollment. Transition planning is strongest when it is consistent with the early expectation-setting reviewed in that earlier section. Talking with households from day one about rent expectations, budgeting, income strategies, and the supports they may need in the long term helps avoid crises later. Revisiting these topics during each reassessment ensures the sustainability plan remains current and matches the household's real situation. This reinforces the earlier message that exit planning is not a last month task but an ongoing part of case management.

High risk period after move-in:
This point draws directly from the earlier case management slides. The first few months after move-in are when households are most vulnerable. The earlier slides stressed frequent contact early in tenancy, tailored engagement approaches, and strong landlord communication. Those same practices are essential for preventing tenancy problems from becoming lease violations or threats to stability. Home visits, when appropriate, and flexible engagement alternatives should be used exactly as discussed before. Coordination with landlords, which was introduced in the case management section, is especially important during this time to catch small issues before they escalate.

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