



Head Leasing: An Imperfect Solution to a Complicated Problem

CHOICES FOR YOUTH

Through innovative programming and social enterprises, we help at-risk youth secure and maintain stable housing, education and employment, while working toward family stability and better health.

WHAT WE OFFER

HOUSING

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

FAMILY

HEALTH

OUTREACH

HOUSING



- Choice for Youth focuses first and foremost on supporting youth to find stable housing, as a critical step to reduce crisis and as an important springboard for accessing additional supports.
- We operate a range of housing options with varying levels of support to reflect the unique needs of individuals and to better meet the needs of each young person we meet.
- Housing Supports and Services Program currently include:
 - Shelter for Male and Male Identifying Youth
 - Rally Forward Program
 - The Lilly Program
 - Soft Landing Rapid Rehousing Program

Soft Landing Rapid Rehousing Program

- Rapid Rehousing has been identified as a critical strategy to meet the goal of ending homelessness. (Cunningham, Gillespie, & Anderson, 2015)
- Rapid Rehousing programs for youth need to be youth-appropriate and provide more supports to ensure that youth can achieve long-term outcomes related to housing (Hsu, Rice, Wilson, Semborski, Vayanos, & Morton, 2019; National Network for Youth, 2018).
- More research is needed to fully understand the impacts of Rapid Rehousing Programs over time.

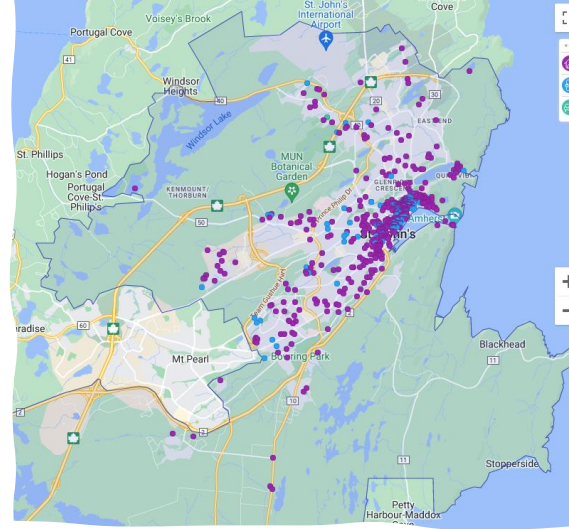
Soft Landing Rapid Rehousing Program

- Created in October 2021 and was initiated in February 2022
- Developed in response to gaps in services within our Housing Programs and Services.
- Created a streamlined, centralized referral process for all housing supports and services.
- Creating stability in our youth.



Soft Landing Rapid Rehousing Program

- Between 2020 and the fall of 2023, the vacancy rate fell by half, continuing to decline
- Come Home Where? Airbnb's impacts on housing in St. John's
- Impact of refugees on housing
- Youth shelters are at capacity and emergency shelters are often not suitable for youth.



You can't rapidly rehouse youth
without a space to house them...

Choices for Youth Head Leasing Pilot Program: *The Imperfect Solution*





SOFT LANDING RESPONSE TO HOUSING CRISIS

The Idea

- Creation of our own property management style response to develop housing stock, i.e. Head Leasing.
- Soft Landings program will act as Landlord for private properties in exchange for priority for our clients.





SOFT LANDING RESPONSE TO HOUSING CRISIS

Implementation- How We Started

- Rooms for rent in a 5 Bedroom home listed on July 6th, utilities included for \$600 each (\$3000 total rent)
 - 5 room rentals at \$700 per room/per month
 - \$3500 collected - \$3000 rental = \$500 per month to cover monthly cleaning, internet/Tv, toilet paper, dish and laundry detergent as well as any damages that may occur.
- Rental agreement signed and first youth moved in July 15th with 5 tenants in place by August 1st.
- From July to November, 6 properties added to our housing stock, housing 26 youth



CURRENT LEARNINGS

As mentioned, Head Leasing is an imperfect solution to our current housing needs. Concerns fall into the following categories

1. Financial
2. Neighborhood Relations
3. Tenancy Act
4. Property Maintenance
5. Staff/Youth Relations

FINANCIAL

- This program requires significant funding as the costs associated with acting as the landlord to our youth comes with responsibilities,
 - Repairs to properties.
 - Turnover costs.
 - Rent and Utilities costs when rooms are vacant during transitions.
 - Unpaid rent by tenants.





NEIGHBOUR RELATIONS

- Current programming is not a 24/7 supportive housing program. Soft Landings is there to help youth gain access to housing and offer supports to maintain housing. This arrangement has led to some issues, including;
 - Misinformation leading to neighbors assuming that properties are “programs”, “shelters” or “group homes”.
 - Complaints made to media when incidents have occurred at locations.

TENANCY ACT

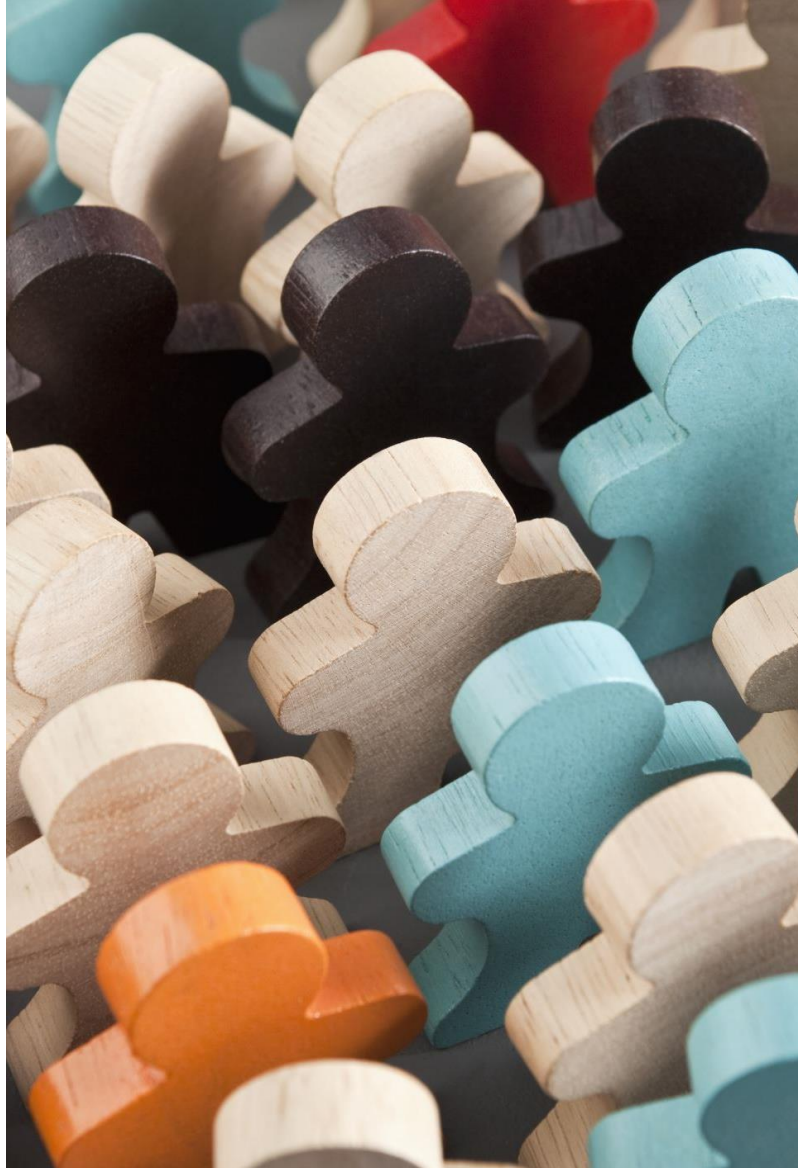
- Our head leasing program is similar to sub leasing; therefore we are bound by the NL Tenancy Act.
- Any evictions, visits, or changes to lease agreement must follow Tenancy Act guidelines.
- Any formal complaints can be taken and arbitrated at the Tenancy Board.



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE



- Another major concern and learning from our pilot program to this date.
- Having adequate, efficient and timely property maintenance support is key.
- If you must do this with an outside contractor, it can get expensive.



STAFF/YOUTH RELATIONS

- One of the biggest concerns with the “Head Leasing” program.
- Can frontline staff be a support worker/property manager/repair expert??
- Can impact supportive relationship between staff and youth.



OUTCOMES

- The Impact
 - 10 Homes added to our housing stock
 - 5 private market landlords enjoying a successful socially conscious business partnership, with more willing to partner
 - Positive relationship with the City of St. John's Housing division.

OUTCOMES

- Savings to government programs as it lessens time spent by youth in emergency shelter.
- 36 youth have been provided a safe, affordable **Home** in addition to our other youth that have found a Home with other landlords



OUTCOMES



- Government partnerships, at this point, seem to be a better fit for head leasing program.
- Government staff have more experience working in affordable housing.
- Government is not profit driven, allowing us to lower cost to youth.

What are your Questions?

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References

Cunningham, M., Gillespie, S., & Anderson, J. (2015). Rapid re-housing: What the research says. Washington, DC: Urban Institute

Hsu, H., Rice, E., Wilson, J., Semborski, S., Vayanos, P., & Morton, M. (2019). Understanding wait times in rapid re-housing among homeless youth: A competing risk survival analysis. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 40, 529-544.