HOMES FIRST

Everyone Needs A Home

Measuring for Success: Creating Your Own Housing First Data Dashboard

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Presentation Objectives

1. Discuss in clear language learnings from Homes First experience of creating a Housing First Data Dashboard that other homeless service providers could draw on
2. Discuss cost effective ways agencies could explore creating their own Data Dashboard
3. Explore effective approaches to using Housing First Data Dashboards
4. Present limitations of Housing First Data Dashboards

Outline

1. Overview of Homes First
2. Overview of Data Dashboards
3. Housing First Principles
4. Development of Housing First Data Dashboard
5. Implementation Strategy
6. Strategies for using Housing First Data Dashboards
7. Learnings from Experience
8. Limitations Learned through Experiences
9. References
10. Questions

HOMES FIRST

Everyone Needs A Home

Homes First develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for the people with the fewest housing options.

Our Mission

Overview of Homes First

Historical Context

- Homes First was established in 1983 by a group of organizations working with individuals experiencing homelessness on the streets of Toronto.
- Homes First supports those experiencing homelessness who have complex needs to access shelters and housing solutions.
- As part of these housing solutions, Homes First operates supportive housing that ranges from 24-hour supports to low need supportive housing.

Homes First develops and provides affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for the people with the fewest housing options.

Our Mission

Overview of Homes First cont.

Homes First operates the following emergency shelters:

1. **Delta Hotel**
2. **Bathurst Lakeshore**
3. **Kennedy Shelter**
7. **Lawrence Shelter**
8. **Placer**
9. **St. Clair Shelter**
10. **Willowdale**
11. **22-Metro Refugee**
12. **Pacewood- 1322 Bloor Street West**

- Operates approximately 23% of the shelter beds in the City of Toronto.

- Homes First operates over 440 units from the following housing sites:

1. **Huron**
2. **Jarvis**
3. **Pleasant Manor**
4. **Sheila Miller**
5. **Shuter**
6. **Bellevue**
7. **Brandon**
8. **Vaughan**
9. **Meegwetch**
10. **Northcote**
11. **Spindina Houses**
12. **Wales**
13. **224 Spadina 24-hour supportive housing**
14. **Dundalk- 24-hour supportive housing**

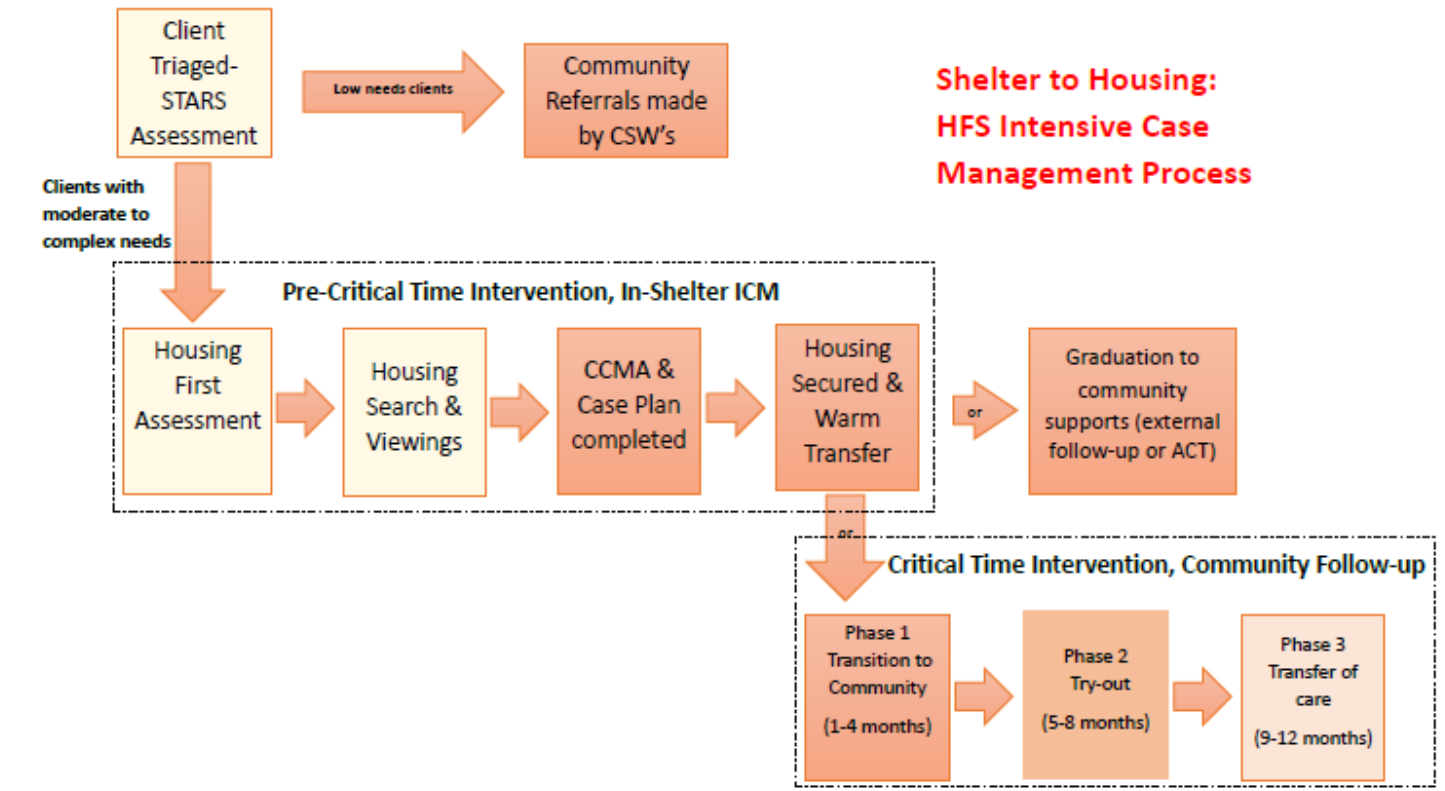
Housing First

Homes First is dedicated to carrying out Housing First in its programs and services. The following housing first principles are used to achieve this goal (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013, p.5-6):

1. Immediate access to permanent housing with no readiness requirements
2. Consumer choice and self-determination
3. Recovery orientation
4. Individualized and client-driven supports
5. Social and community integration

Homes First Approach to Implementing Housing First

1. Housing First Assessment (HFA)
   - HFA explores what clients want in housing and geographical areas they want to live (principle 2)
   - Focus of work is supporting clients to access all resources they need to legally sign a lease (principle 1)
2. Comprehensive Case Management Assessment and Case Plan
   - Focus on client centred supports (principle 4)
   - Focus on recovery orientation (principle 3)
3. Clients referred to follow-up supports once housed
   - Clients are provided client centred supports by follow-up worker program (principle 3)
   - Clients are supported with social community integration (principle 5)



Overview of Data Dashboards

What are Data Dashboards?

- "Data dashboards are visual displays that feature the most important information needed to achieve specific goals captured on a single screen. Effective dashboards should be designed as monitoring tools that are understood at a glance" (Smith, 2013, p.21).

- Data Dashboards have become increasingly popular since the COVID-19 pandemic (Dasgupta & Kapadia, 2022).

- Dasgupta and Kapadia (2022) discuss how the methodology often is not discussed for creating data dashboards.

- This presentation provides an overview of the experiences Homes First had creating and implementing Housing First Data Dashboards.
  - A scoping review of literature reveals there are different approaches to creating data dashboards.

Steps Homes First Took to Create Housing First Data Dashboard

The following steps were taken in the development of Housing First Data dashboards:

1. Identified the goals we wanted the Housing First Data Dashboard to achieve
2. Selected the audiences who would use the Housing First Data Dashboards
3. Identified what we wanted to measure
4. Built infrastructure to accurately measure what we wanted to measure
5. Designed and Piloted the Housing First Data Dashboard

- **Homes First used a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to inform our approach.**
  - **There were contextual factors for not utilizing the full M&E framework.**
  - **Due to limitations, we will focus on steps Homes First took in creating Data Dashboards instead of all the processes involved in an M&E.**

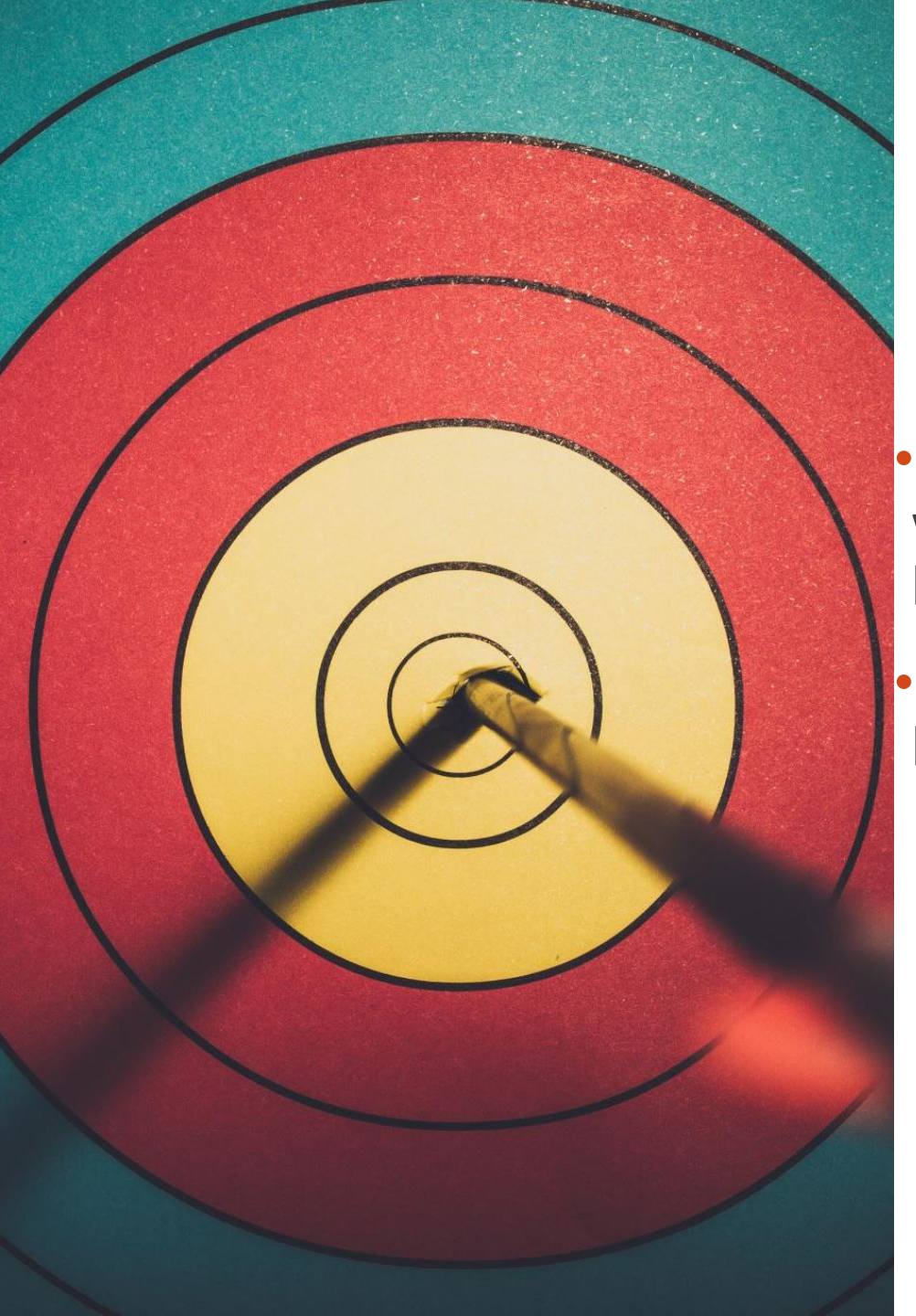
Goals of Housing First Data Dashboards

The following steps were taken to identify the goals we wanted to achieve with Housing First Data Dashboards:

1. Discussions with senior leadership and middle management about what they wanted to achieve from using Housing First Data Dashboards.
2. Discussions with supervisors about what goals would be useful for them to achieve in adopting Housing First Data Dashboards.
3. Reviewed reporting requirements to explore if the Housing First Data Dashboards could support the completion of reports for funders.

Housing First Data Dashboards created by Homes First were created with the following goals in mind:

1. Ensure our mission statement was being achieved to house clients with complex needs
2. Highlight the needs of clients to ensure programs are responsive
3. Ensure case management programs were carrying out the principles of Housing First
4. Provide information to create a cycle of continuous improvement for case management programs
5. Inform senior leadership in decision making



Target Audience

- Discussions were held with stakeholders to identify who would be the target audience. Stakeholders included senior leadership, middle management, and supervisors.
- Key stakeholders identified that the data dashboards would be useful for:
  1. Supervisors who oversee the individual case management programs across the agency
  2. Management
  3. Senior leadership

Identifying What we Wanted to Measure

- Selecting the correct measurements is critical for creating useful Housing First Data Dashboards.
- At Homes First we created a Logic Model as the first step to chose what we wanted to measure. We did this because:
  1. We wanted to see all the important elements of the program to inform our decisions for selecting what to measure.
     - Allowed us to ensure we did not miss any important elements of the model
     - Helped us strategically chose the most important elements of our model
  2. Ensure we were not over measuring the program.
  3. We wanted to only measure the case management program and the logic model helped to define critical elements of the program.
     - Ensure processes we selected to measure were linked to program outcomes
     - Outcomes measured were linked to the intervention we were using

Logic Models

It is important to define the different elements of the logic model you create:

1. **Input-** these are the resources allocated to the program important for carrying out the intervention/program.
2. **Processes-** steps or actions carried out in the intervention/program.
3. **Outputs-** these are the items and/or activities completed due to the direct result of the intervention/program.
4. **Outcomes-** these are changes which occur in people because of the intervention/program.
   - i.e., thoughts, feelings, behaviours, cognition, symptoms, physiology, etc.
5. **Impacts-** broader community and/or societal impacts caused by the intervention/program.
   - i.e., reduction in the number of chronically homeless people in Toronto.
   - Some people use short-term and long-term outcomes instead of Impacts.

Identifying Elements to Measure

- The table highlights some of the elements of the logic model Homes First decided to measure in our Housing First Data Dashboard.
  - **Important-** the table draws on information from the Logic Model but is not a logic model.

We decided to measure these elements for the following reasons:

1. Context of the agency
2. Infrastructure to accurately measure data
3. Resources required to measure data

Inputs	Process	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
N/A-decided not to measure	Chronically homeless clients on case managers caseloads being supported	Clients who received their identification	Clients exiting homelessness	N/A-decided not to measure
		Clients who completed their taxes		
	Conducting Housing First Assessments	Clients who were supported to get a source of income		
	Conducting Comprehensive Case Management Assessments	Clients who received a furniture bank referrals		
	Completing Case Plans	Clients connected to long-term community case management		
	Working with Dedicated Caseloads	Client put on housing waitlist		
		Clients who received a Housing Income Subsidy		

Defining Indicators

- There are different templates for defining indicators.
- Homes First used a matrix to outline the following surrounding indicators:
  1. Name of indicator
  2. Element level of the logic model
  3. Element of the logic model
  4. Targets we set
  5. Source that will supply the data
  6. Who is responsible for supplying the data
  7. Frequency at which the data is supplied
- We also created a separate word document to define each indicator and explain how the indicator is calculated to ensure consistency in analysis.

Matrix to Identify Indicators to Measure

Indicator	Level	Element	Target	Responsibility	Source of Data	Frequency
% of clients who are chronically homeless and on a case manager's caseload	Process	Chronically homeless clients on case managers caseloads being supported	75% of client housed are chronically homeless	Case Manager	Online Survey Platform	Monthly
# of clients who have their identification (ID) required to sign a lease in program	Output	Clients who received their ID	50% of clients in program should have their ID	Case Manager	Online Survey Platform	Monthly
# of clients who have completed a Housing First Assessment (HFA) in program	Process	Conducting Housing First Assessments	70% of clients in program should have completed a HFA	Case Manager	Online Survey Platform	Monthly
% of clients connected to follow-up case management once housed	Output	Clients connected to long-term community case management	100% clients housed connected to follow-up case management	Housing Worker	Online Survey Platform	Monthly
% of housed clients that were chronically homeless	Outcome	Clients exiting homelessness	75% of clients housed are chronically homeless	Housing Worker	Online Survey Platform	Monthly

Homes First Learnings around Indicators

Important tips based on Homes First experience surrounding indicators for Housing First Data Dashboards:

- Understand the levels of measurement (nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio) and their limitation in analysis
- Reflect on numerator and denominator
- Keep a log that defines indicators to ensure consistency
  - Review definitions of indicators and how to calculate indicators with new staff who compile data dashboards

Reflecting on where the data would come from when thinking about indicators

- Do sources of data already exist, or do they need to be created?

Designing and Piloting Housing First Data Dashboards

HOMES FIRST DESIGNED THE HOUSING FIRST DATA DASHBOARDS WITH THE FOLLOWING IN MIND:

1. Information was to be displayed so the target audiences could easily understand and use the data.
   - We attempted to keep the information simple
2. We wanted to ensure the Housing First Data Dashboard was not to long.
3. Graphs displayed did not illustrate to much information.

PILOTING DATA DASHBOARDS WERE COMPLETED USING THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. When we were rolling out Housing First Data Dashboards, we informed stakeholders we would do a pilot first.
2. We reviewed the completed Housing First Data Dashboards with the different stakeholder groups for feedback.
3. We received feedback on the usefulness of the Housing First Data Dashboards for programs.
4. We explored if the information was being used by key stakeholders.
5. Changes were made as needed.
6. The Housing First Data Dashboards are treated as a document that is updated regularly based on stakeholders needs.

Experiences Building Data Infrastructure

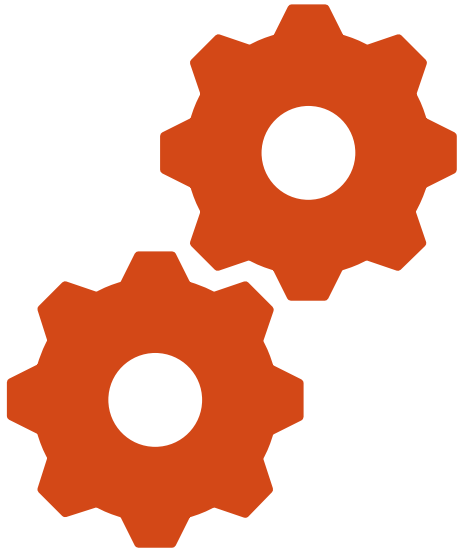
- Homes First looked at different options to collect and store data.
  - Ideally, we would have chosen a Client Management Information System (CMIS) that would be able to collect and generate Housing First Data Dashboards.
- We are currently conducting a review of different CMIS to identify the platform that would best work for our agency.
- Initially, spreadsheets were used to collect data, aggerate information, conduct analyses, and completing data dashboards.
  - However, this was time consuming and required a lot of technical skills surrounding using spreadsheets.
- A survey platform was purchased that was able to collect data, aggerate information, conduct analyses, and completing data dashboards.
  - We did get consultation to ensure our agency was complaint with data privacy.

Establishing Procedures to Systematically Collect Data

- Provided trainings to all staff on how to input data into the survey platform.
- Case managers and Housing Workers were provided with a link to complete the survey. The deadline to enter information into the survey platform was by the 5th of every following month.
  - The **Housing Workers** clicked on the link and filled out information for every client they housed.
  - The **Case Managers** clicked on the link and filled out information for every client on their caseload.

The following procedures have been created to ensure data is accurate:

1. Client file audits
2. Comparison to other data systems/reports
3. An administrator confirms monthly with every supervisor who oversees a team the (1) number of clients housed, (2) number of clients on caseloads, and (3) chronicity of homelessness for recently housed clients
   - Supervisors confirm the information is accurate and has been entered on time
4. Incorrect information entered is corrected
5. When staff identify they accidently made a mistake, they can reach out to have the data corrected
6. Data is cleaned as part of the analysis process



Compiling Data for Housing First Data Dashboards

Homes First pulls data from the survey platform based on questions within the survey that allows us to filter data based on:

1. Program name (there are 12 programs at Homes First)
2. Year data was inputted
3. Month data was inputted
4. Client Shelter Management Information (SMIS) Number-SMIS number acts as a unique identifier as we do not enter clients' names into the platform

These 4 questions allow us to filter the data to answer all the questions on the Housing First Data Dashboard. Filtering data can occur by:

1. Exporting the data into excel and using pivot tables, or
2. Simply filtering the data using the online survey platform features

- It is important to clean the data.
- Compiling the Housing First Data Dashboards through these processes takes us approximately 45 minutes per dashboard once a quarter.
  - The first dashboard I ever completed took an hour and a half to do

Housing First Data Dashboard: [entire shelter site]

Quarterly Housing First Dashboard: Quarter 3, Jul-Sep 2023

This Housing First Data Dashboard describes the work completed on a monthly basis by the case management team at Homes First.

The Housing First Data Dashboard highlights targets based on if they are met or not. The colour coding works in the following way:

Target was met.	Range of 5% of target
Adequate, but some work needed to reach targets.	Range of 6% to 15% away of target
Target was not met, program requires attention.	Anything 16% away from target

➢ Clients Housed

Months	Clients housed	Target for clients housed
Jan	7	5
Feb	3	5
Mar	4	5
Grand Total Q1	14	15
Apr	5	5
May	6	5
Jun	5	5
Grand Total Q2	16	15
Jul	6	5
Aug	4	5
Sep	2	5
Grand Total Q3	12	15
Oct		5
Nov		5
Dec		5
Grand Total Q4		15
Grand Total 2023		60

➢ Clients Housed-Chronicity of Homelessness

The goal is to primarily house clients that are chronically homeless.

Type of homelessness	Number of clients	Percentage of Clients	Target
Chronically Homeless	9	75%	≥75%
Episodically Homeless	2	17%	N/A
Transitionally Homeless	1	8%	
Grand Total	12	100%	N/A

Housing First Data Dashboard

- Please note that data is fake in this Housing First Data Dashboard.
- Due to time constraints not all indicators on Housing First Data Dashboard are shown.
- Tables and graphs are made in excel and copied and pasted into a word document.

Housing First Data Dashboard:
[entire shelter site]

Quarterly Housing First Dashboard: Quarter 3, Jul-Sep 2023

Housed Clients

➢ Clients Housed- Connected to Follow-up Supports

Client connected to follow-up supports	Number	Percentage	Target
Clients connected to Homes First follow-up supports	10	83%	100%
Clients connected to External follow-up supports	2	17%	
Clients connected to NO follow-up supports	0	0%	N/A
Grand Total	12	100%	N/A

➢ Clients Housed-Furniture Supports

Client received help obtaining furniture	Number of clients	Percentage of clients	Target
Yes	8	67%	≥75%
No	4	33%	N/A
Grand Total	12	100%	N/A

➢ Clients Housed-Length of time from Shelter to Housing

Client Retention Rates	Number of clients	Percentage of Clients
Percentage of clients in program 1-6 months	1	8%
Percentage of clients in program 7-12 months	1	8%
Percentage of clients in program 13-18 months	1	8%
Percentage of clients in program 19-25 months	2	17%
Percentage of clients in program 26-31 months	5	42%
Percentage of clients in program ≥32 months	2	17%
Grand Total	12	100%

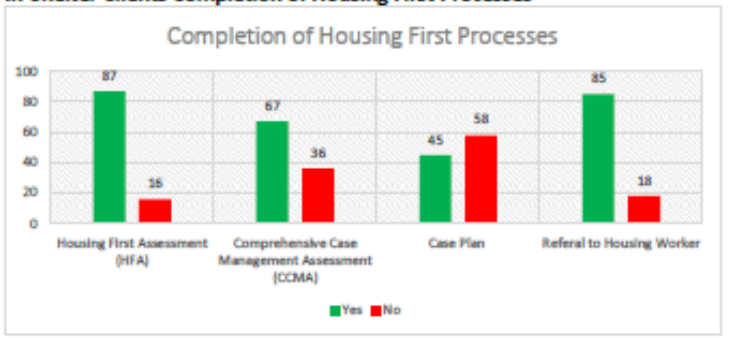
Clients In-Shelter (still homeless on caseloads)

➢ In-Shelter ICM Caseload-Homeless Chronicity

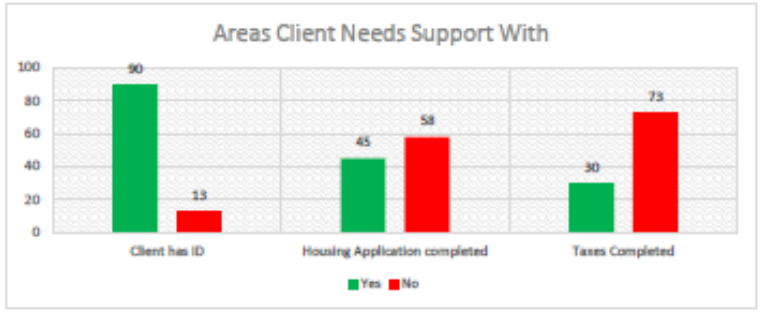
Type of homelessness	Number of clients	Percentage of Clients	Target
Chronically Homeless	65	63%	≥75%
Episodically Homeless	28	27%	N/A
Transitionally Homeless	10	10%	N/A
Grand Total	103	100%	N/A

Housing First Data Dashboard:
[entire shelter site]
Quarterly Housing First Dashboard: Quarter 3, Jul-Sep 2023

➢ In-Shelter Clients Completion of Housing First Processes



➢ In-Shelter ICM Clients Areas of needs



➢ New In-Shelter ICM Clients Source of Income

What Makes Homes First Data Dashboard a Housing First Data Dashboard?

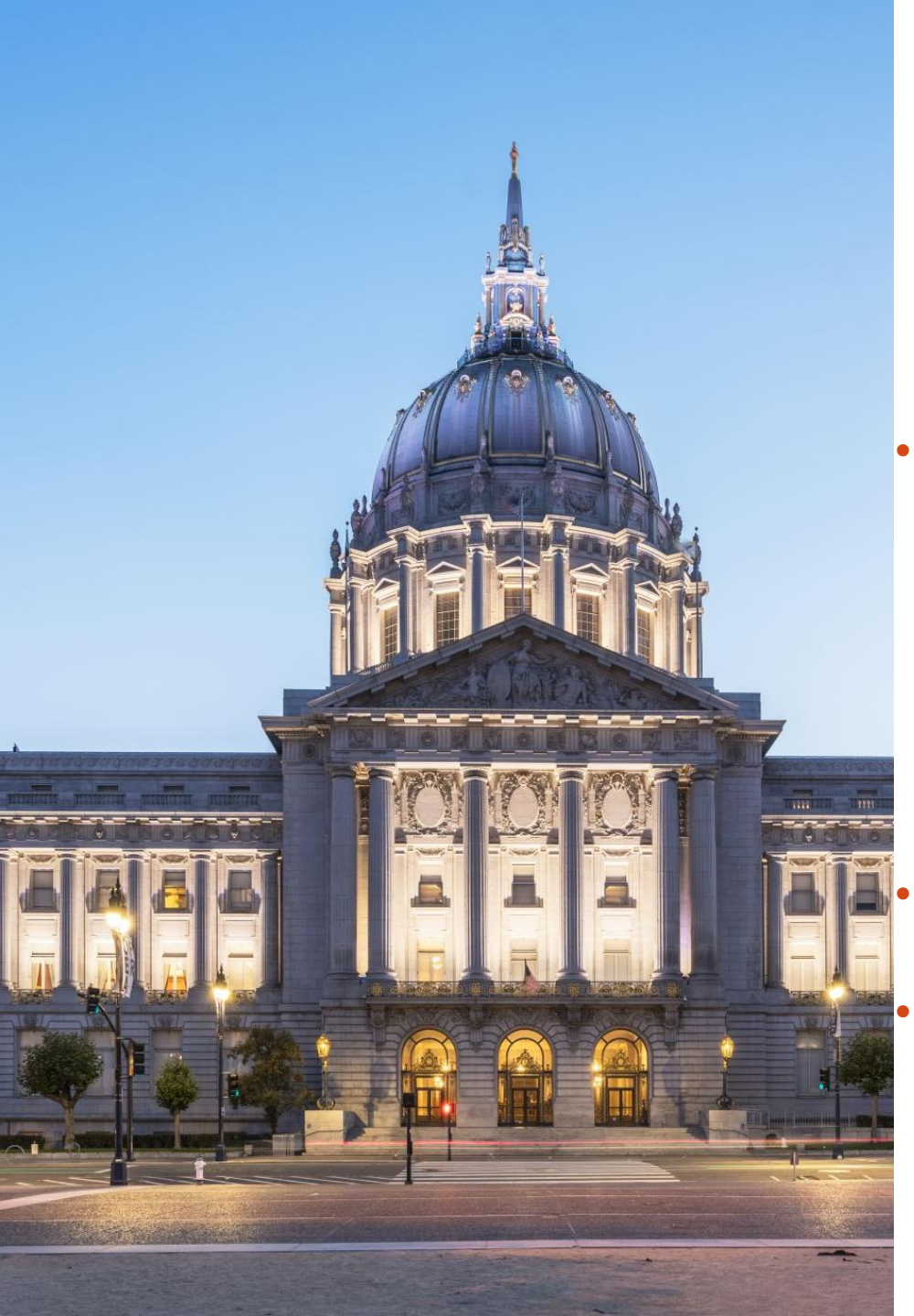
HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLES	DATA DASHBOARD MEASURING HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLES
1. Immediate access to permanent housing with no readiness requirements	1. A focus is placed on measuring logistics (ID, income source, taxes) required to legally sign a lease. • Targets are set to ensure this occurs • We do not measure housing readiness requirements
2. Consumer choice and self-determination	2. Measuring if the Housing First Assessment (HFA) is completed. ◦ Setting targets to ensure HFA is completed ◦ HFA ensures clients have choice in their housing selection
3. Recovery orientation 4. Individualized and client-driven supports 5. Social and community integration	3. Measuring if clients are connected to follow-up supports to ensure they are provided with: ◦ Recovery oriented supports ◦ Client centred supports ◦ Supported with social and community integration

(Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013, p.5-6)

It is possible that case plans do not align with principle 3-4 of Housing First which is why we audit files and use supervision techniques to ensure case plans carry out these principles.

Utilizing Housing First Data Dashboards

- A major learning for Homes First was that blocking time to reflect on the data and discuss what the data may mean is essential to making data informed decisions with Housing First Data Dashboards.
- Housing First Data Dashboards were used to support the following three areas at Homes First:
  1. Informing governance
  2. Supporting supervision
  3. Creating responsive programming
- The frequency of creating the reports was another important area that we reflected upon.
  - Originally Homes First chose to do monthly Housing First Data Dashboards.
    - This was altered to be quarterly.
- When selecting the frequency of collecting and producing data dashboards important items to reflect upon are:
  - How will the frequency of producing data dashboards influence the impact of the information?
  - How burdensome will collecting and analyzing the data be?



Informing Governance

- The Housing First Data Dashboards provide an overview of the program and client needs to inform strategic planning.
  - Example, the data dashboards illustrated that a large portion of clients across the agency were transitionally homeless.
    - This information helped to inform the creation of a triage system to ensure equity of services where clients with complex needs who are episodically and chronically homeless receive intensive supports, while clients who are transitionally homeless with low needs work with frontline staff to exit homeless.
- Data also informed strategically the number of positions ideal for supporting clients, and the creation of new positions based on clients needs.
- The type of partnerships and requesting supports from partnerships has also been informed by this data.
  - Example, a mental health case management program wanted to start providing services at one of Homes First sites. However, based on the data there was a low need at the site. Instead, we decided to have the mental health case management program operate out of a site in Scarborough where clients had much higher needs.

Informing Supervision

- Housing First Data Dashboards can be an effective tool for leadership to use in supervision.
- Leadership can explore the type of work being completed with clients and have discussions with case managers and housing workers using data to discuss the focus of their work:
  - **Example one-** are case managers ensuring clients are getting the logistics (i.e., identification, income, etc.) required to secure a lease?
  - **Example two-** if housing workers are housing a low number of clients monthly, what are the barriers to supporting clients to access housing?
    - What strategies can be used to increase housing numbers? Should the program try to create a roommate pairing system to increase the amount of rent two clients may have?
- Dashboards also signal to staff what is important in their work and ensures they align their work with housing first principles.
- Data Dashboards are useful for celebrating successes with teams.
  - **Example three-** 429 clients moved into housing in the first 8 months of 2023 from Homes First shelters.
  - **Example four-** 98% of the 130 clients have remained housed since entering the Homes First follow-up program.

Responsive Programming

Housing First Data Dashboards can be used to ensure programs are responsive to clients needs

Example one- as a result of monitoring how many people have up to date taxes, Homes First decided to have supervisors trained to complete client taxes.

Example two- tax clinics were set up by partner agencies at Homes First sites who had high levels of clients who needed to have their taxes completed.

Example three- programs seeing an increase in refugee clients (reflected in the data) has resulted in sending case managers to specialized trainings.

Program leadership can also create plans and give direction based on clients needs

Example four- When a program saw a decrease in number of clients accessing the furniture bank, leadership explored why this was occurring.

- Resulted in the program utilizing an alternative furniture bank.

Example five- data indicated for one program that approximately half of clients were being connected to follow-up supports.

- Through exploring why this was occurring we identified that the staff members only knew about Access Point to refer clients to follow-up supports and we provided education on Coordinated Access.
- Clients not referred to a follow-up support post-shelter are now flagged and options are explored about how to get the client follow-up supports.

Learnings from creating and Implementing Housing First Data Dashboards

1. Important to keep it simple
2. Dashboards should be treated as live documents that are updated based on stakeholders needs
    - It is important to update dashboards as programs change
3. Important to get key stakeholders input on developing dashboards
    - This also creates buy-in supporting implementation
4. Important to show changes occurring from using dashboards
    - This also creates buy-in supporting implementation
5. Great attention needs to be placed on what data is collected, who collects data, and mechanisms to ensure data is accurate

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Benefits Experienced

Through the creation and implementation of Housing First Data Dashboards Homes First has had the following benefits:

1. Programs are more responsive to clients needs
2. There is a better understanding of clients needs
3. A greater focus has been placed on housing clients and ensuring Housing First principles are being followed
4. Increased focus on housing clients with more complex needs
5. We have observed a substantial increase in clients housed
6. Effective resource for informing strategic thinking and pulling stored data for applying for funding

While there are more technical, systematic, and sophisticated ways of creating and implementing data dashboards, the current system has resulted in fundamental changes in supporting clients

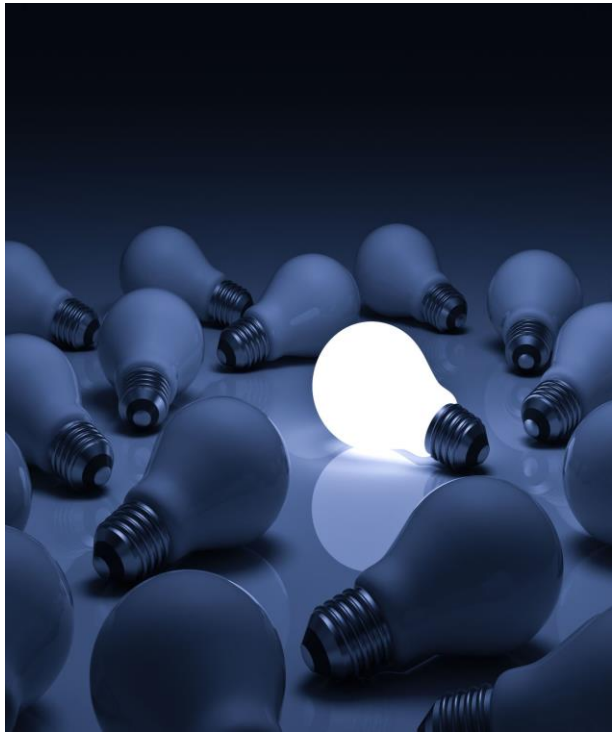
Benefits are perceived as we want to be cautious of making claims of causality

Experienced Limitations of Housing First Data Dashboards

- Data on our data dashboard is quantitative.
  - While quantitative data that we used is great for giving a quick snapshot the incorporation of qualitative data would have provided more context and nuance.

- Data collected is primarily self-reported observations by workers and not collected by standardized tools.
  - Based on what Homes First was using the data for we felt this was appropriate. However, in cases where the data may be used in health settings more rigorous methods may need to be adopted.

- Possible to draw wrong conclusions about data.
  - Important to be a critical consumer of the data and conduct further exploration of data trends.
  - Example, recently Homes First has observed a decrease in the number of chronically and episodically homeless clients. An **incorrect conclusions could be drawn** from this data that could include there are less chronically homeless clients in Toronto.
    - Through discussions and further exploration, we suspect many of the chronically homeless clients we normally work with are living rough in parks and unable to get into the shelter system.
      - Data that supports this line of thought is from the City of Toronto that illustrates an average of 278 clients per night in September 2023, who wanted a shelter bed were unmatched due to the shelter system being at capacity (City of Toronto, 2023).



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QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU!

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