

Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region



CANADIAN ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS

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NOVEMBER 3, 2015

Waterloo Region



- Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and 4 townships
- 10th largest urban area in Canada and 4th largest in Ontario
- \$12M annual funding to end homelessness



Population 560,000

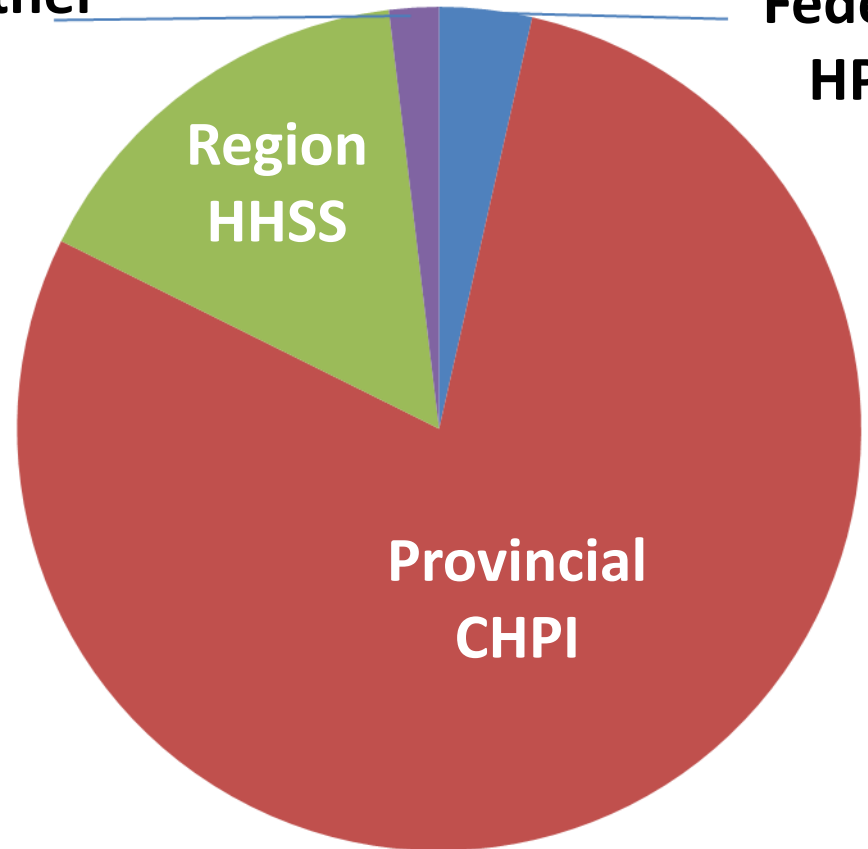
Role of Regional Government



- Federal:
 - Community Entity
- Provincial:
 - Service Manager
- Community role:
 - Facilitator, research and information, participant and funder

Other

Federal
HPS



Overview of Presentation



- Background to local approach
- Moving from "generalist" to "population-specific" trends
- Time of transformational change
- Investing in "pathways", not "programs"
- Focus on families:
 - Ending Family Homelessness report
 - Family Shelter Diversion pilot results
- "Functionally ending" family homelessness
- Questions



BACKGROUND TO LOCAL APPROACH



The Strategy

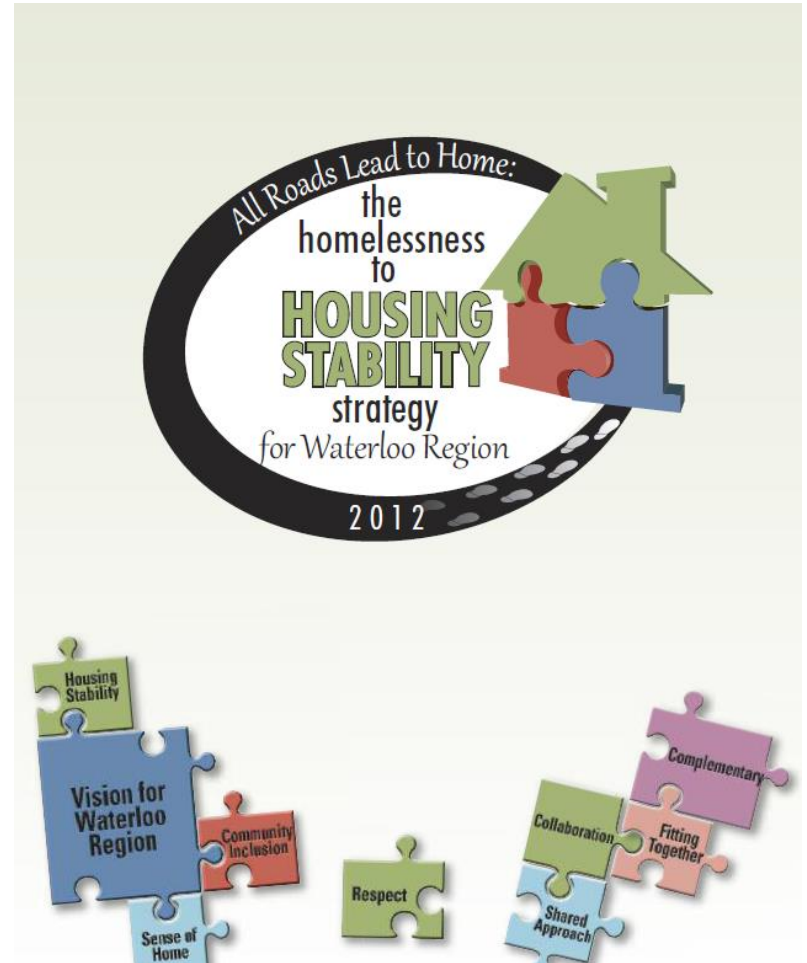


1) Policy Framework:

Common point of reference for *thinking* about how to end homelessness.

2) Action Framework:

Supports the community to take *action* to end homelessness.



Program Areas & Data Summaries



Emergency Shelter



Street Outreach



Housing Help



Time Limited Residence



Affordable Housing and
Supportive Housing

Data Summaries 2006-2014

- ❖ 4 system-wide Inventories
- ❖ 4 "Report Cards"
- ❖ 2 annual profiles



**Reports Released
2004-2007**

Economic-Based Homelessness	Qualitative Research	Social/Economic Analysis
Older Adults (50+)	Roles	Urban Adults
Persistent Homelessness	Rural Issues	Youth (12-24)
Inventory of Housing Stability Programs (2006)		

**Reports Released
2008-2011**

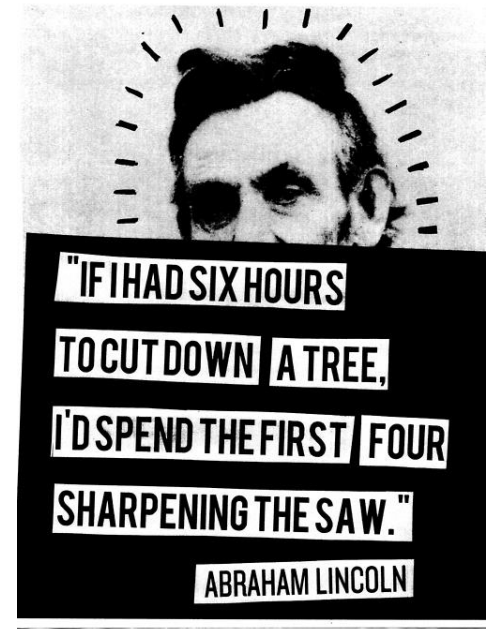
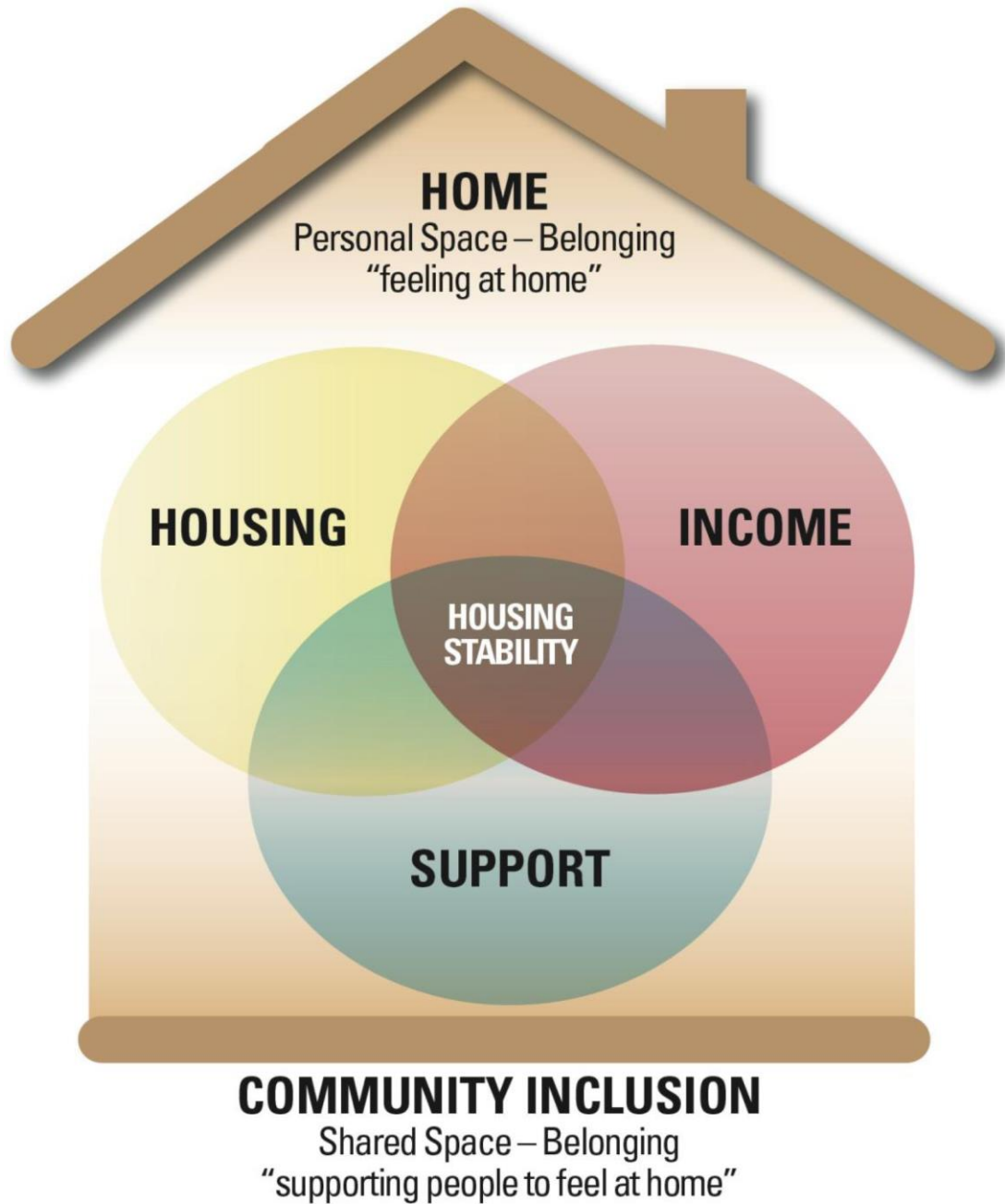
Housing Options for Youth	Persistent Homelessness and Substance Use: Program Resource Guide	STEP Home Flex Fund
LGBTQ and Emergency Shelter	Persistent Homelessness and Substance Use: Housing Options	STEP Home Housing
Out of the Cold (OOTC)	Inventory of Housing Stability Programs (2011)	STEP Home Services
		Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW)

Reports Released 2012-2014:

Social Return on Investment for STEP Home

Shelter Diversion

Ending Family Homelessness



Housing First Approach



- **Philosophy** – believe everyone deserves a home and is "housing ready"
- **Systems Approach** – invest in housing stability solutions
- **Program** – support people experiencing persistent homelessness to find, establish, and retain housing

HF
Housing First

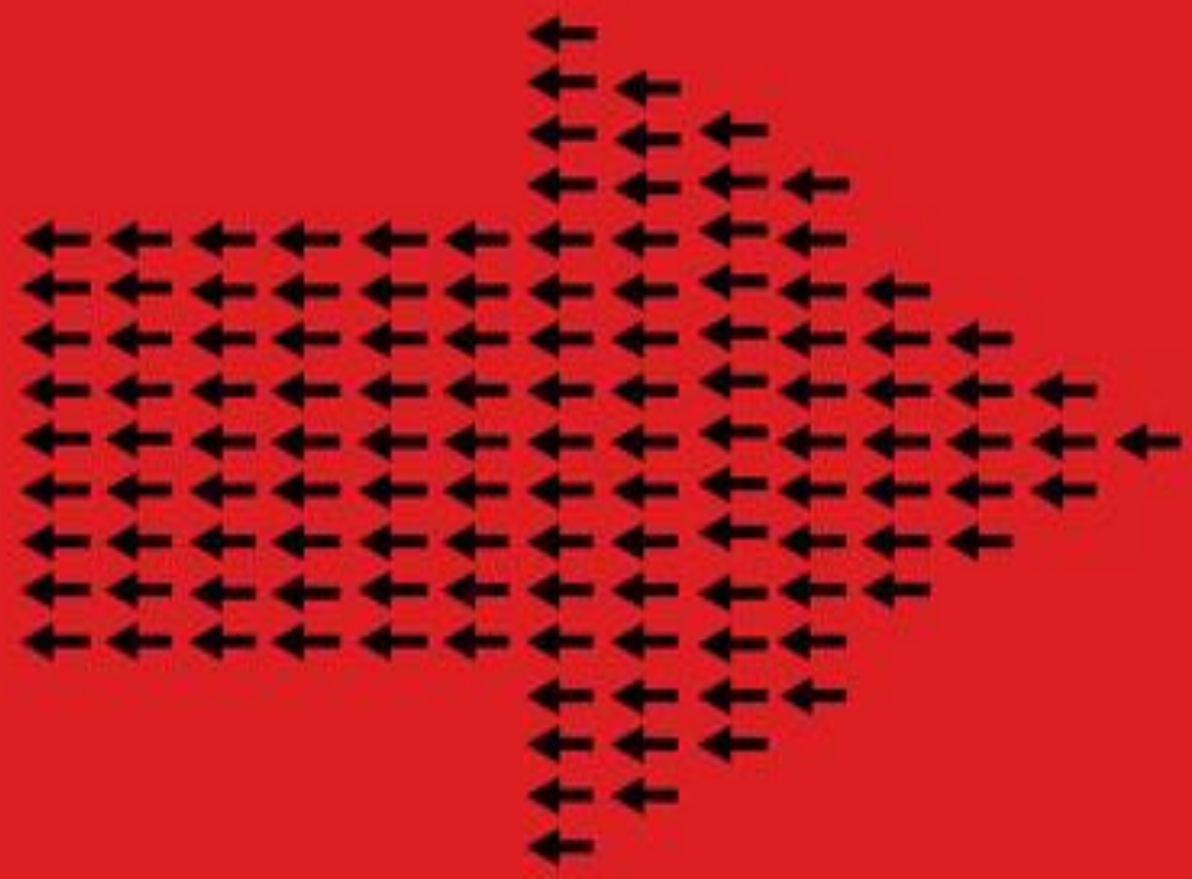
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Culture eats strategy for breakfast



The Power of a "Learning Culture"



Why should systems embrace a learning culture?

- Invest in people – you matter.
- Nurtures relationships – from me to we.
- Continuous improvement – bend, don't break.
- Strengthens knowledge base – better outcomes.

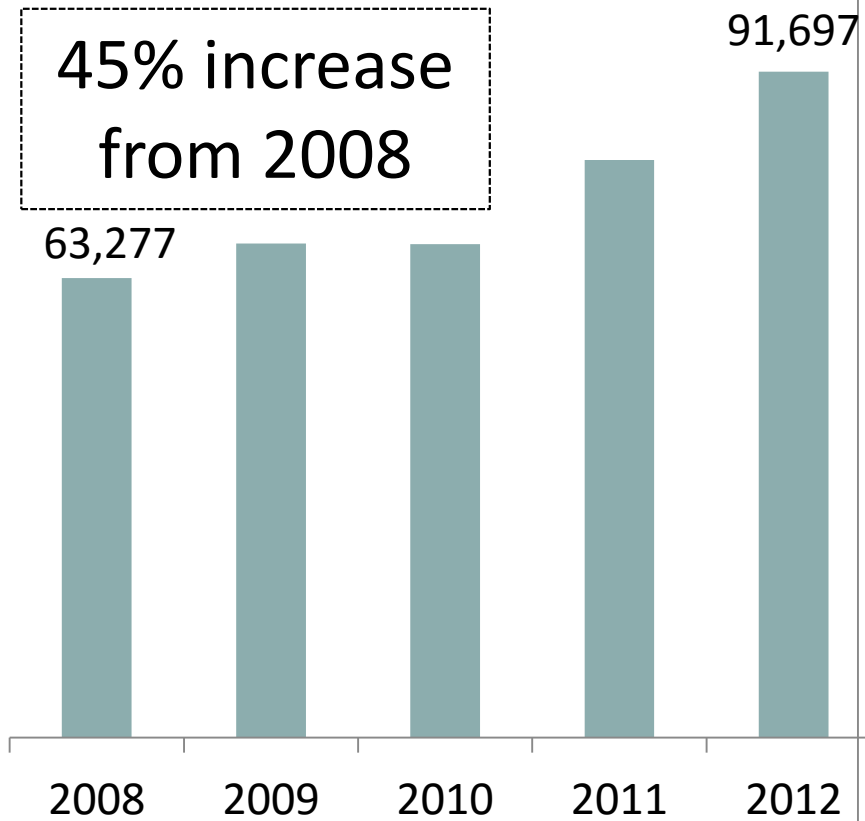
the **ultimate purpose** is to do the best
we can for the people we serve

MOVING FROM "GENERALIST" TO "POPULATION-SPECIFIC" TRENDS

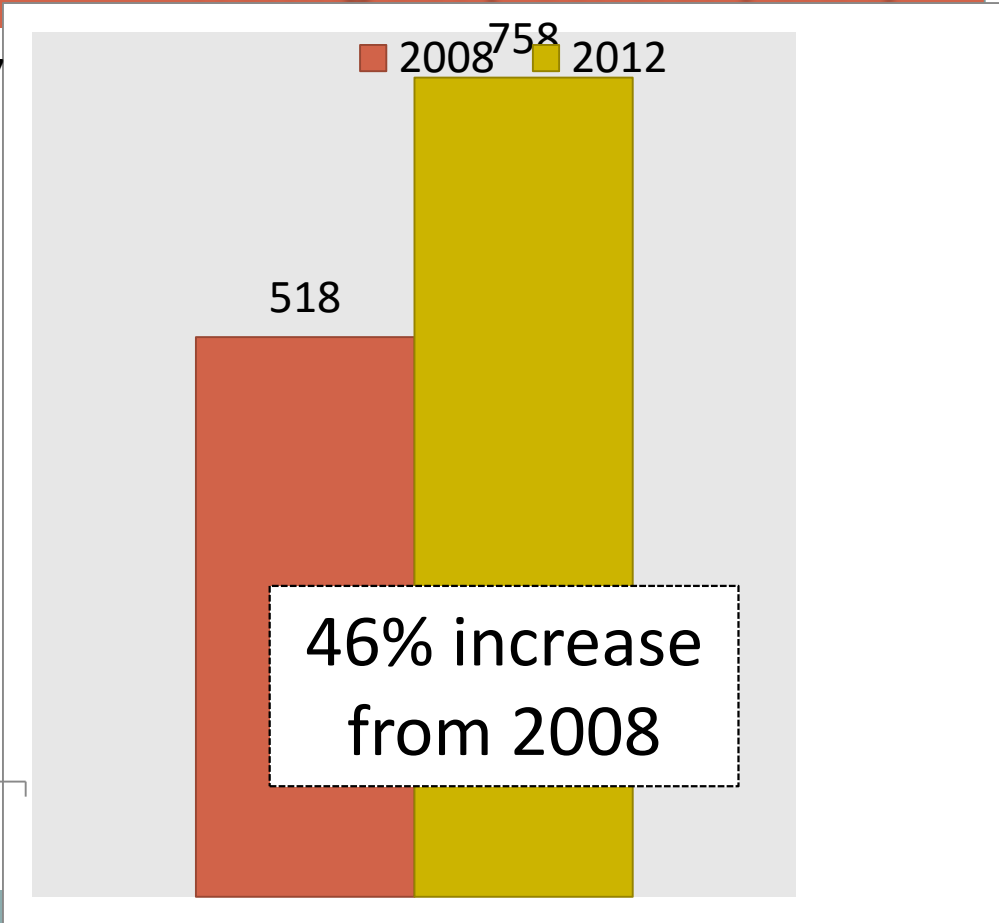


"Generalist" Data Trends

Emergency Shelter Bed Nights

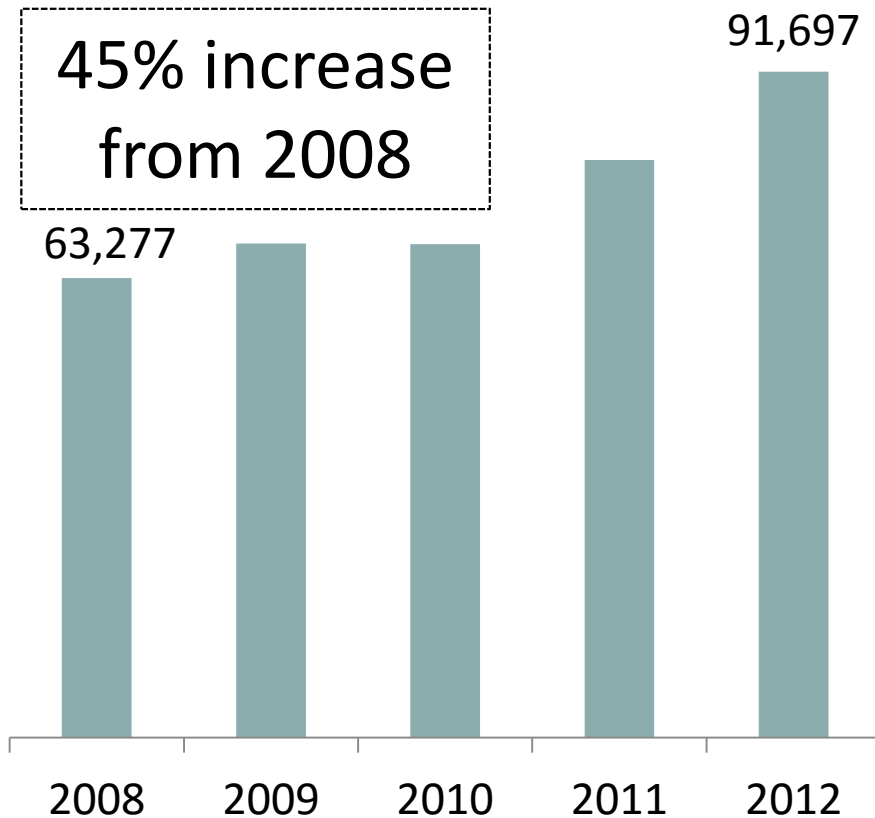


Supportive Housing Waiting List ("General"/CHPI)

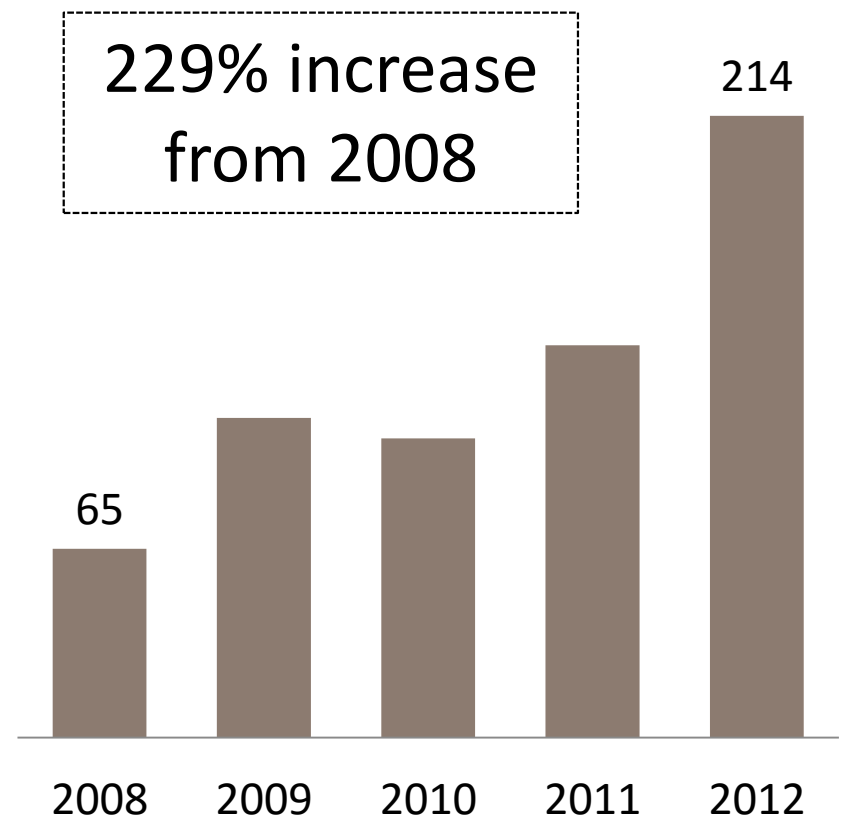


"Population Specific" Trends

Emergency Shelter Bed Nights



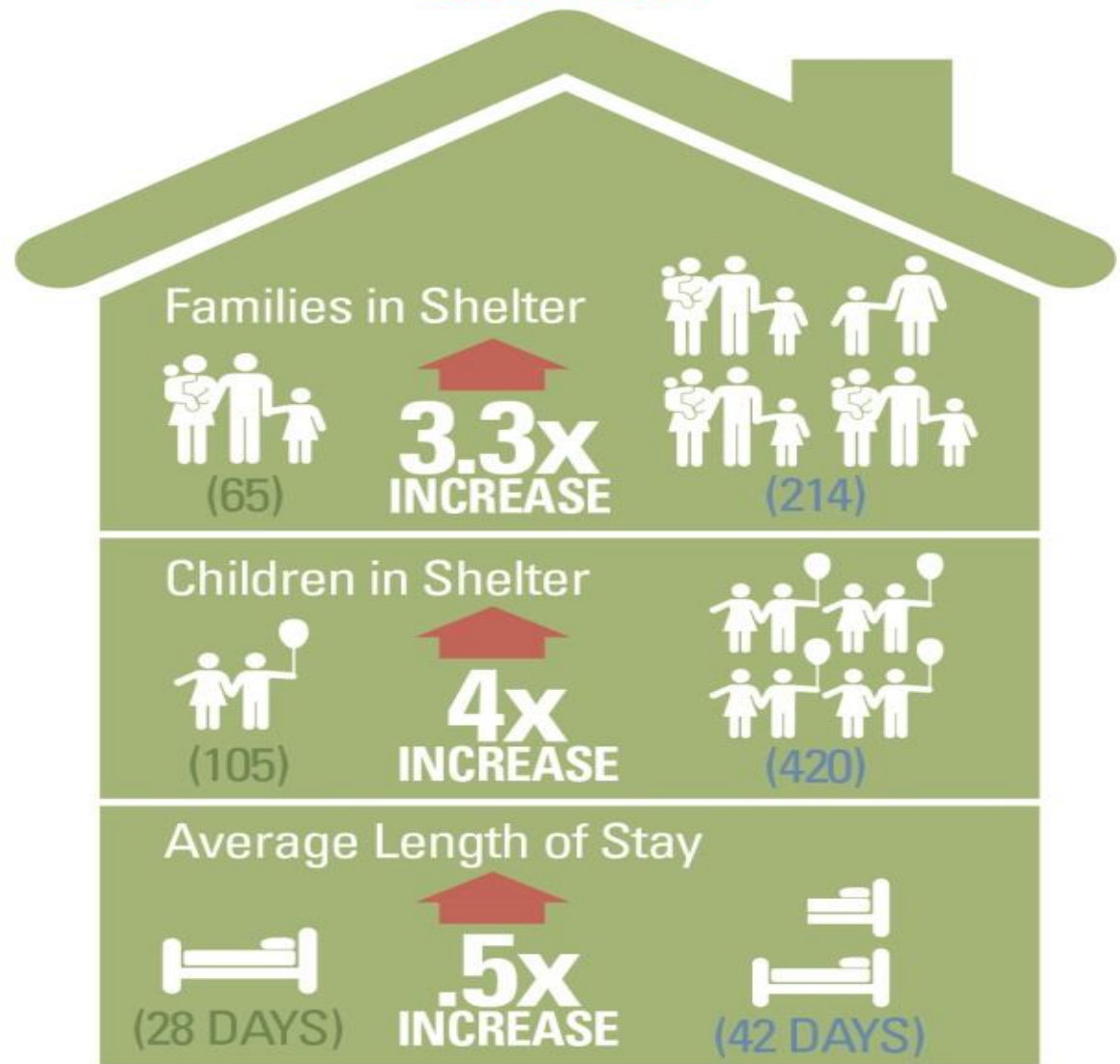
Families Accessing Shelter





- Impact of local "recession lag"
- Pressures on local shelter programs
- Considerable motel overflow and increased system costs

Families in Emergency Shelter 2008 - 2012



A TIME OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

"You never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before."
—Rahm Emanuel



The Nature of Change

1. Cyclical



2. Structural



3. Transformational



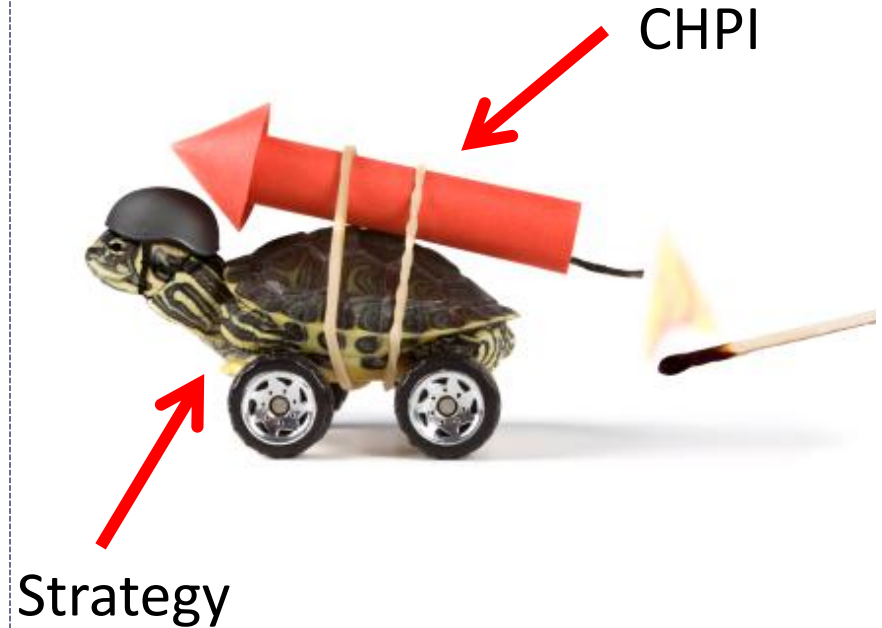
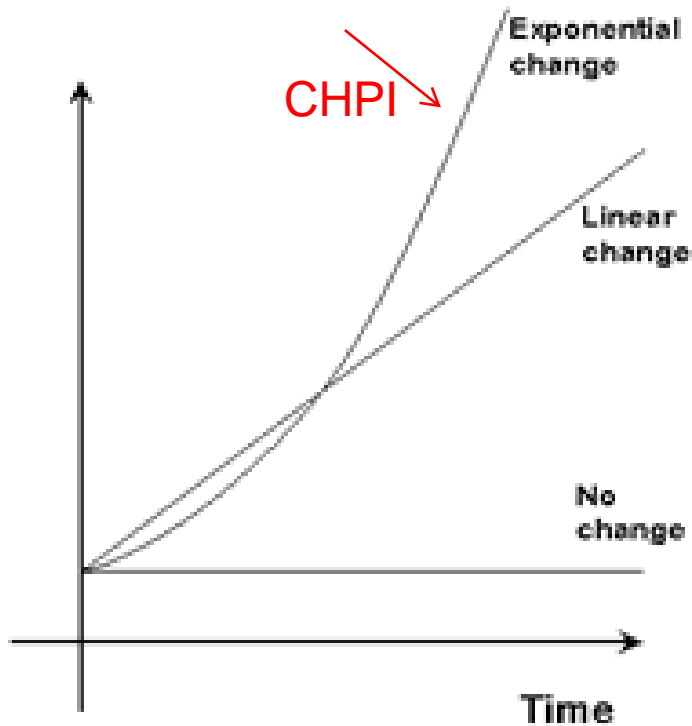
Call for System Improvements



- enhance access
 - to information
 - to service
- improve coordination, develop new partnerships
- get better long term housing stability outcomes
 - embrace a shared measurement framework
- implement quality assurance and consistent administrative practices



Funding Policy Influence on System Redesign



For illustrative purposes only.

System Change Elements



- Engaged in a number of initiatives:
 - re-designing Region-funded Supportive Housing (2012-2016+)
 - shelter diversion pilot with families (2013-2015+)
 - re-designing Housing Help programs (2013-2016+)
 - implementing SPDAT (2014+)
 - 20K Homes Campaign (2014-2018)
 - Mental Health Commission of Canada's Housing First Technical & Training Assistance with additional research project (2014-2016)
 - new Emergency Shelter Framework with new funding model (2015+)
 - review of Housing First programs (2016+)
 - transitioning to a shared, web-based data management system and expanding use to all Region-funded housing stability programs (2016+)



INVESTING IN PATHWAYS, NOT PROGRAMS



The "Before": Connected but Uncoordinated



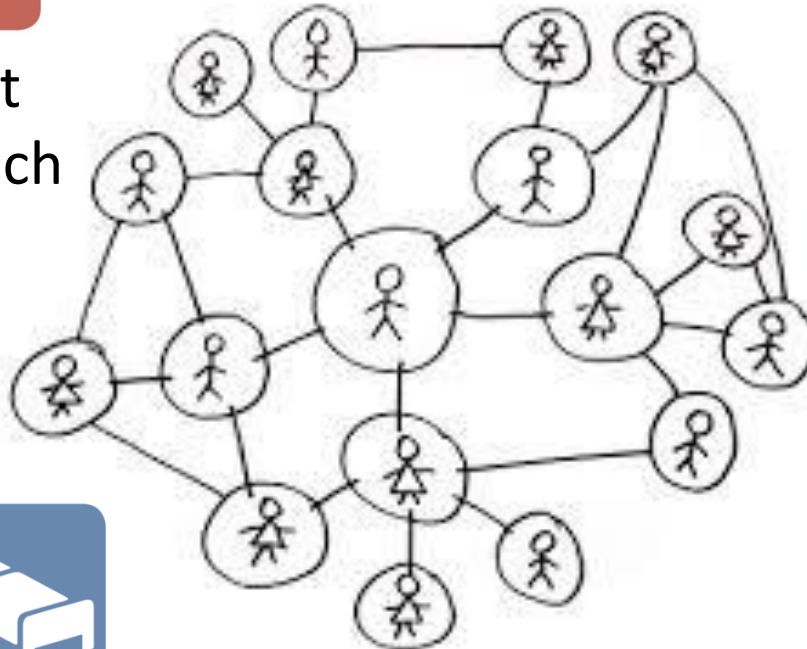
Street
Outreach



Affordable
Housing &
Supportive
Housing



Time Limited
Residence



Emergency
Shelter



Housing
Help

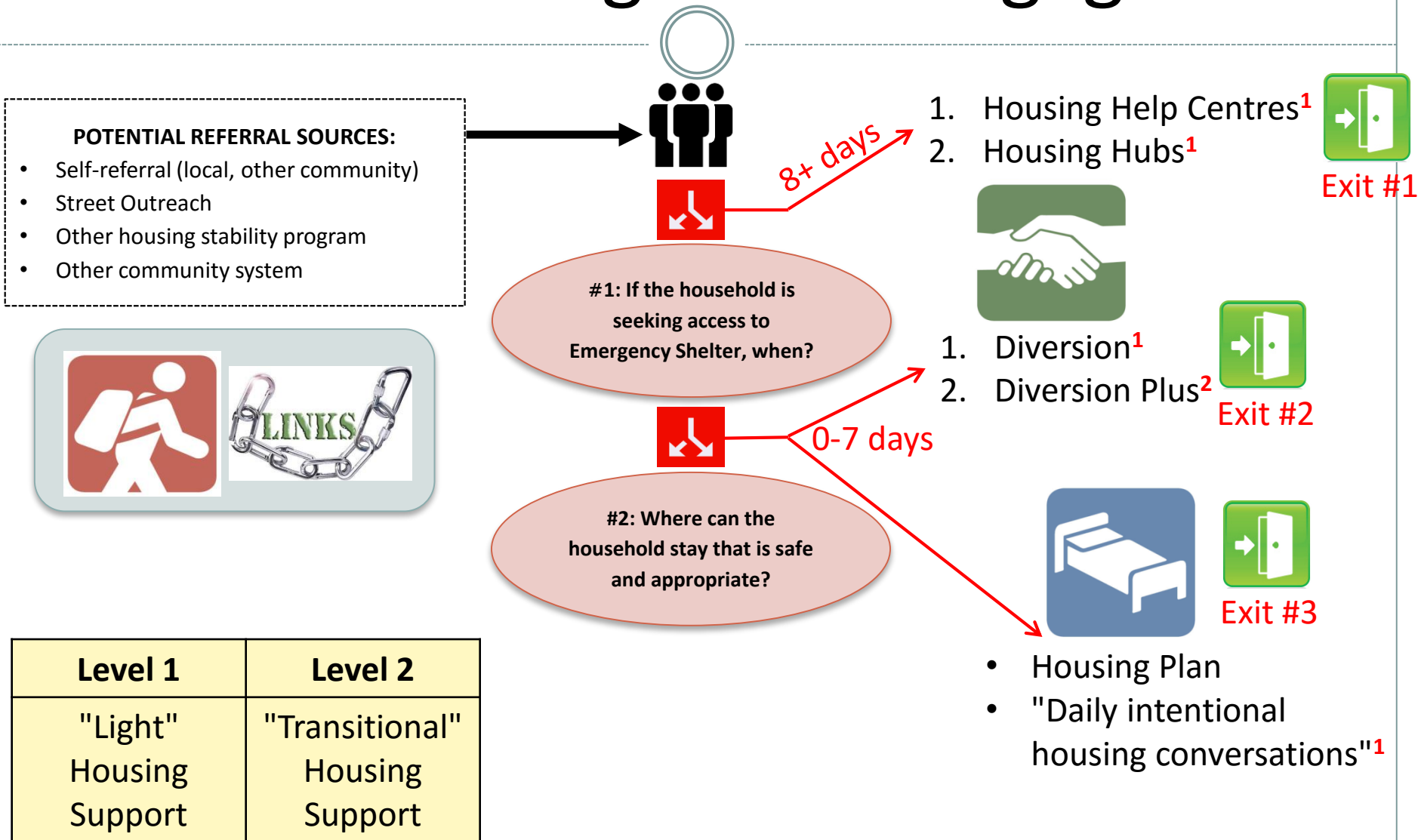
The "Ideal": Progressive Engagement



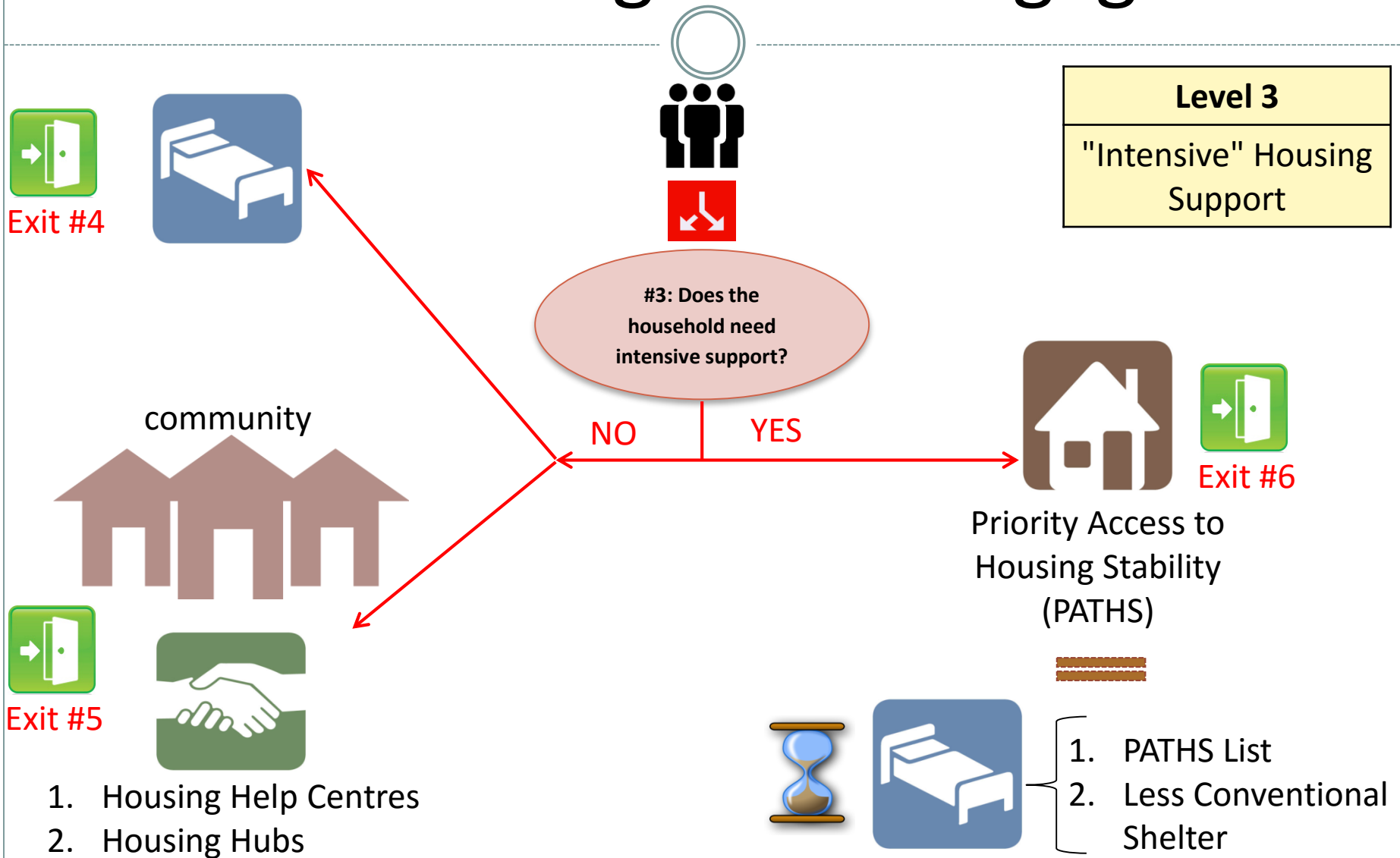
- Coordinated access:
 - Common understanding of roles/functions
 - Right resources, right time, based on depth of need
 - ✦ Level 1: "Light" housing support
 - ✦ Level 2: "Transitional" housing support
 - ✦ Level 3: "Intensive" housing support
 - Priority lists, not waiting lists



The "Ideal": Progressive Engagement

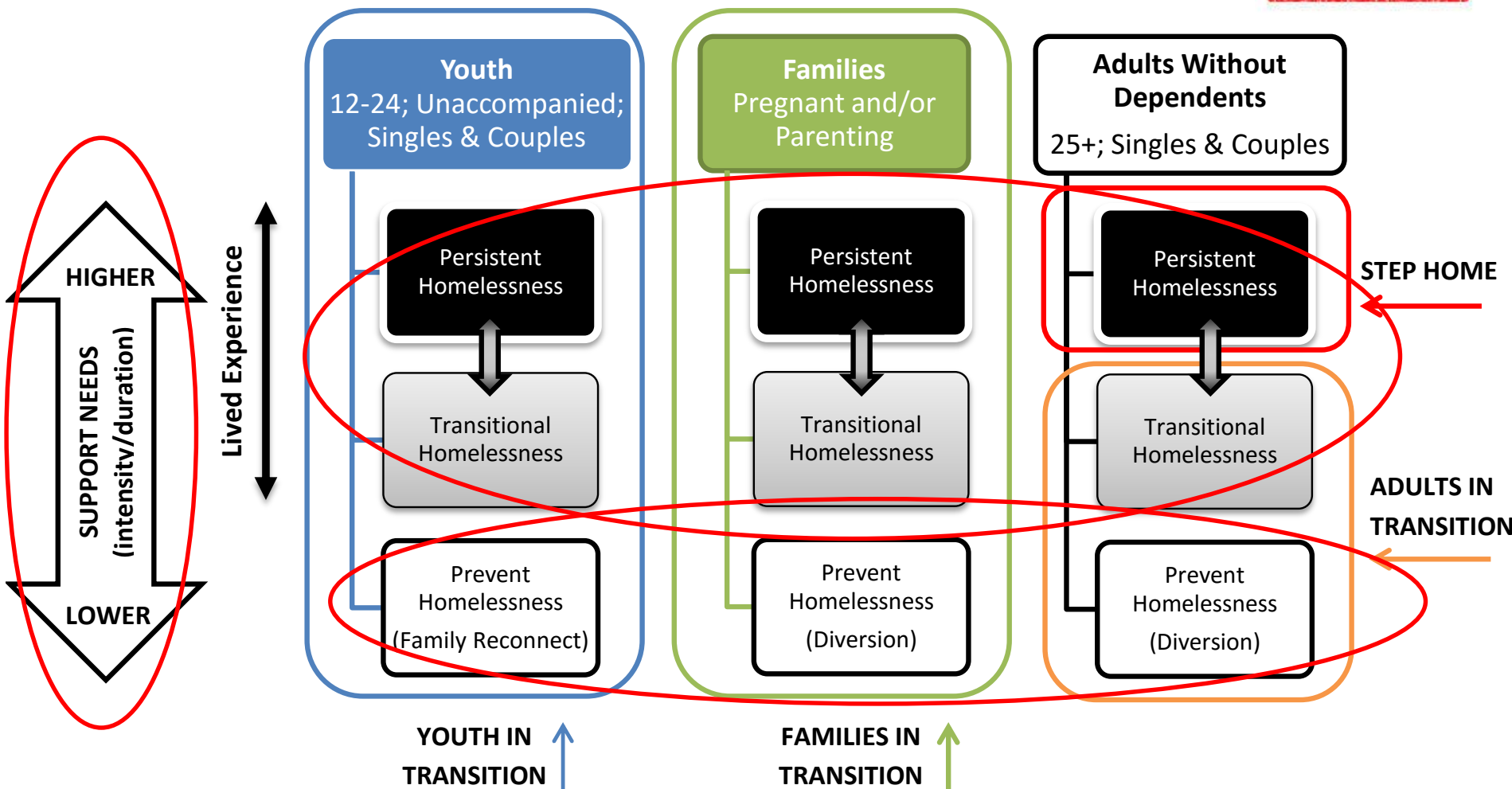


The "Ideal": Progressive Engagement



Four “coordinated approaches” required to functionally end homelessness in Waterloo Region.

DRAFT



10 ESSENTIALS FOR THE SYSTEM

Collective Impact: Common Agenda, Collaboration, Learning Culture, Continuous Communication, Backbone Support

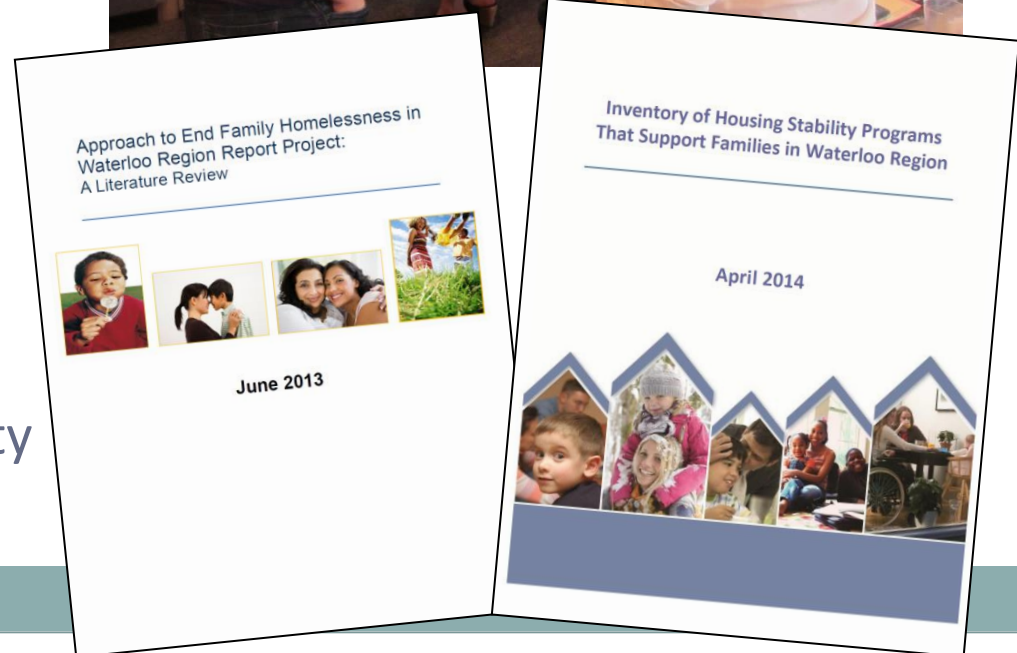
Ending Homelessness: Housing Stability & Belonging, Housing First, Accessibility, Housing Retention/ Prevention, Rapid Re-Housing

FOCUS ON FAMILIES



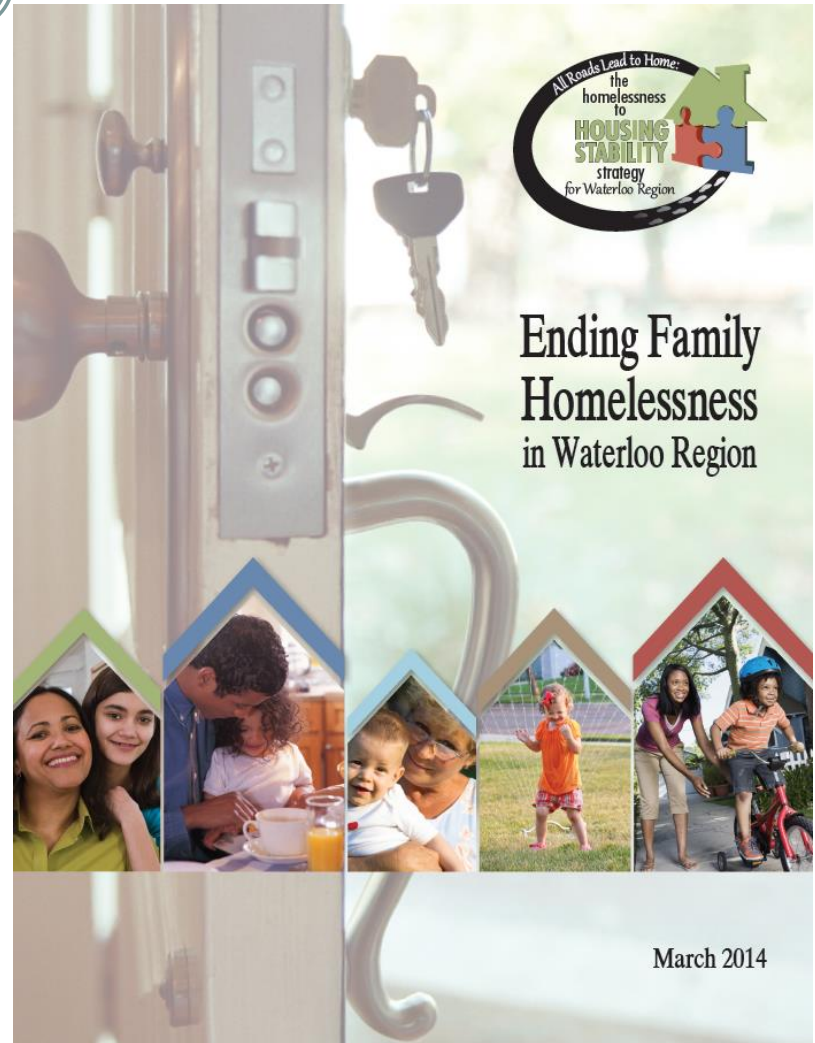
Ending Family Homelessness Report

- Funding from federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- Input from over 200 community service providers and over 40 families
- Supporting documents:
 - Literature Review
 - Inventory of Housing Stability Programs for Families



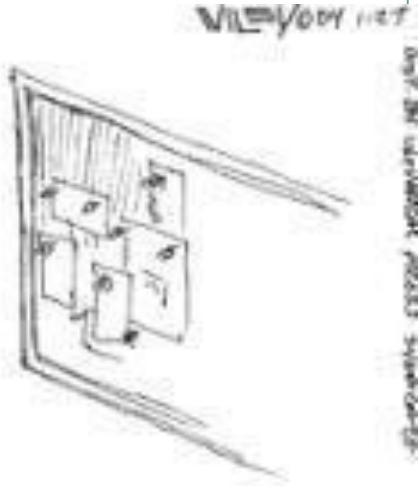
Ending Family Homelessness Report

1. Housing loss is traumatic
2. Focus on ending – not managing – family homelessness
3. Adopt a comprehensive approach:
 - ✦ Primary Prevention
 - ✦ Systems-Based
 - ✦ Early Intervention





The leadership EPIPHANY



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Family Shelter Diversion Pilot



- Pilot began October 2013
 - Started in Cambridge with one shelter that served families
 - Expanded April 2014 to include both shelters in the region
- Definition of "family" intentionally very broad:
 - parent(s) or guardian(s) with one or more dependent
- Features:
 - Coordinated access (not 24/7 centralized access)
 - Centralized applications for Urgent status to Community Housing (FIT)
 - ✦ streamlined income assessment policies, added residency requirement and housing search expectations, stopped incentivizing access to shelter
 - Flex fund to support diversion and rapid re-housing

What is shelter diversion?



- Changed the culture of access to the system
- Definition:
 - Support to stay in current housing or find somewhere else safe and appropriate – even temporarily – until permanent housing secured
 - Policy: when and how families may access shelter
 - Assessment and safety screening + specialized problem-solving skills
 - Can be more or less intensive process, depending on the family
- Not just saying "no"
 - Prevents stress and trauma of shelter where other options exist
 - Reduces demand for expensive crisis care responses
 - Ends homelessness by prioritizing housing-based interventions

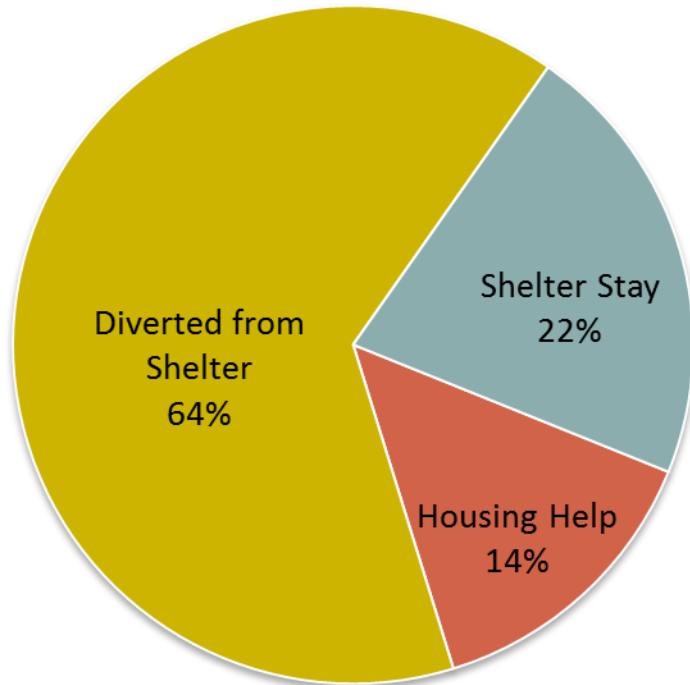
Pathway	Description	Level	Results
Housing Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8+ days from shelter Problem solving (phone, on-site) 	1	14%
Family Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-7 days from shelter Specialized problem solving Phone or on-site support Flex fund 	1	28%
Family Diversion Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverted families Short term, community-based Flex fund 	2	36%
Emergency Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter Stay 	1	22%
Intensive Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered above, need more support 	3	1% of all

64% diverted

524 families (with 841 children) were served

Pilot Results

Results by Service Pathway

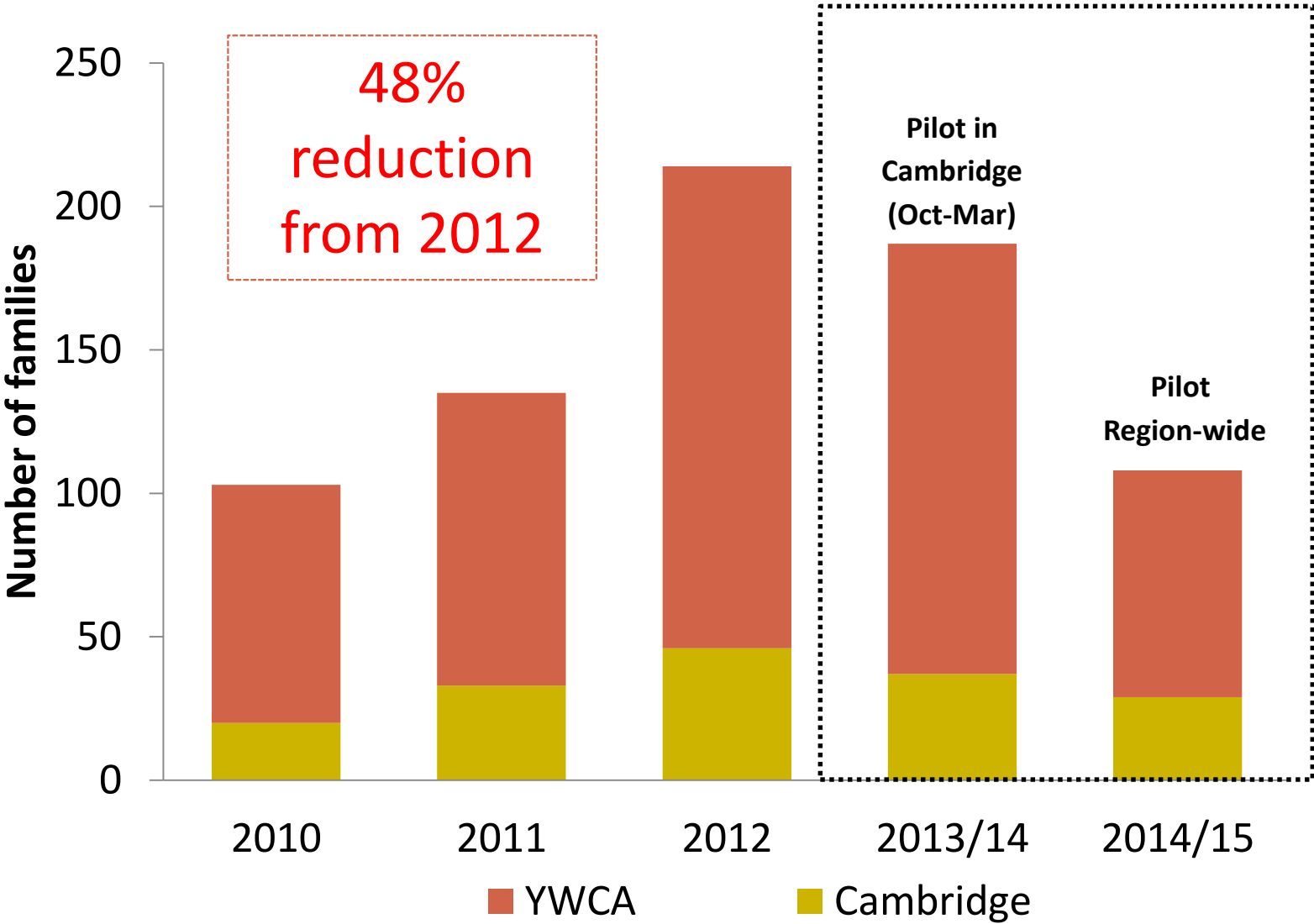


Where did they go?

- Appropriate referral
- Self-directed resources
- Market rent
- Retained housing
- 1/29 Urgent Status
- Less than 5% returned
- Still being supported

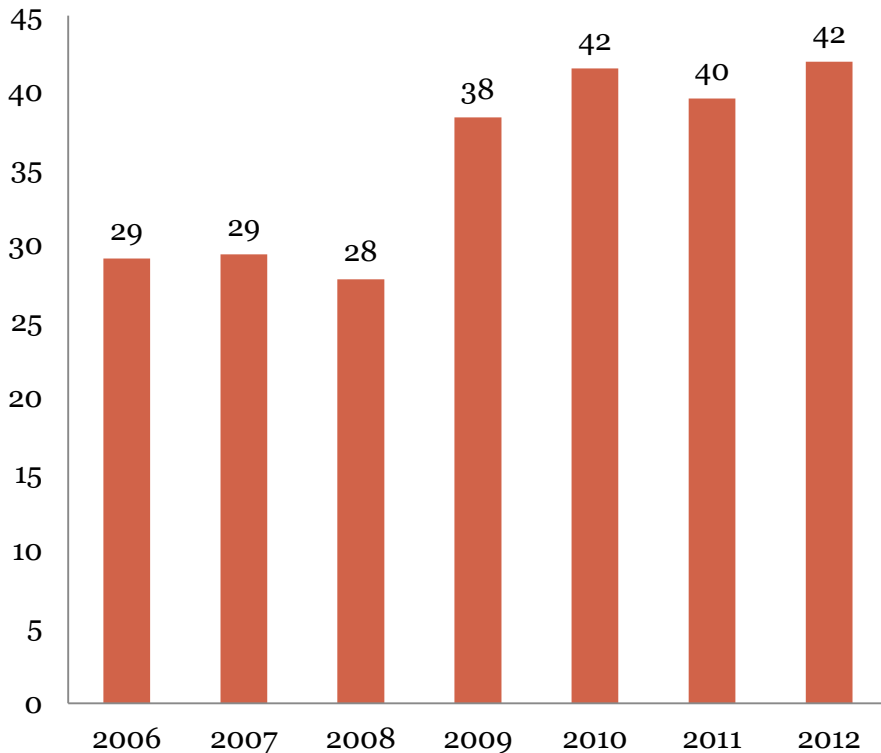
68% less expensive: \$2,042 in 2014/15 vs. \$6,280 in 2012

Families Accessing Shelter

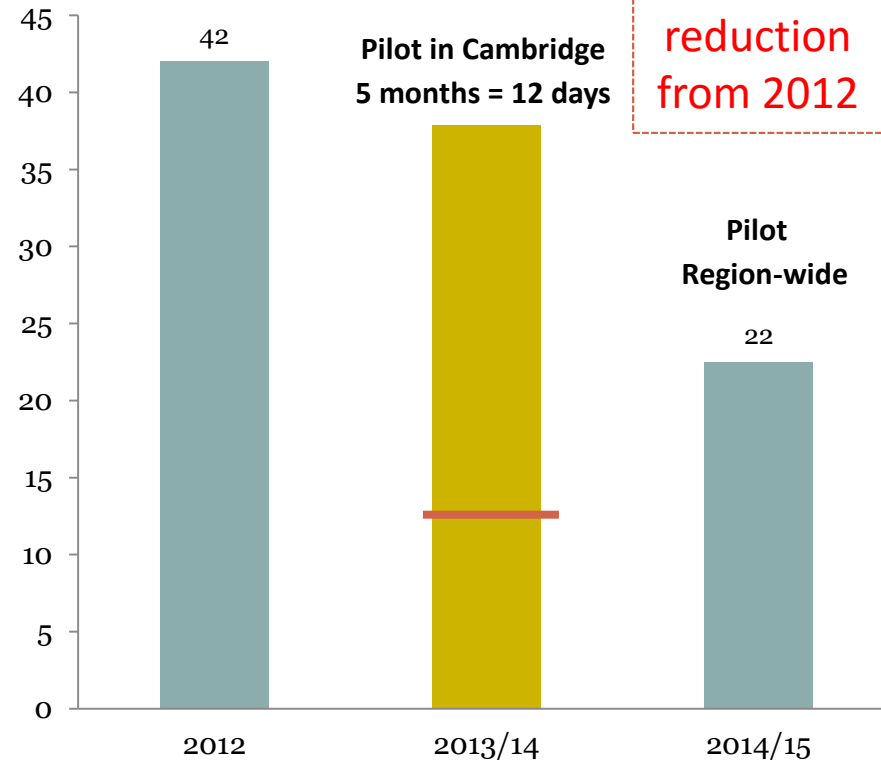


Pilot Results

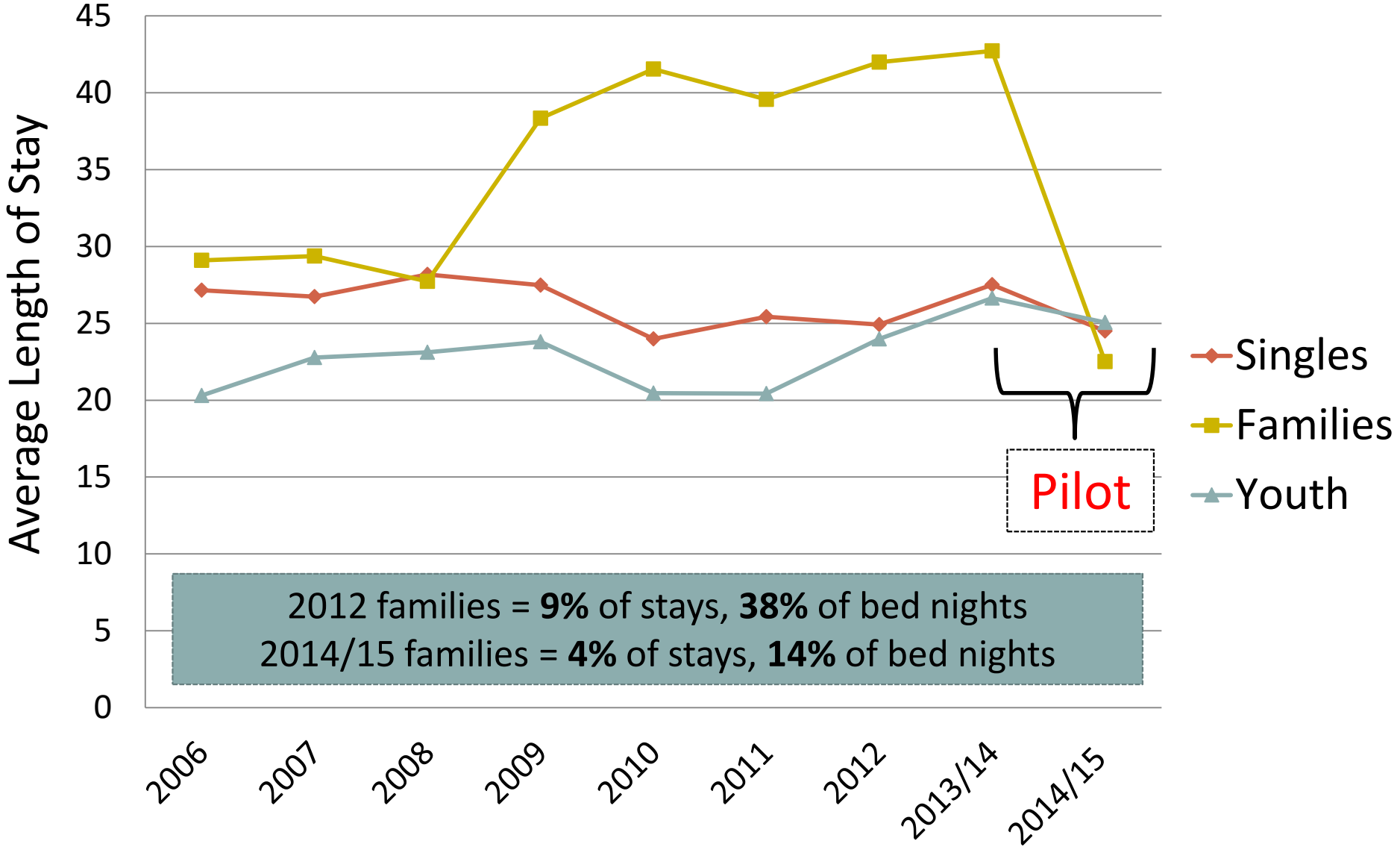
Average Length of Stay for Families 2006-2012



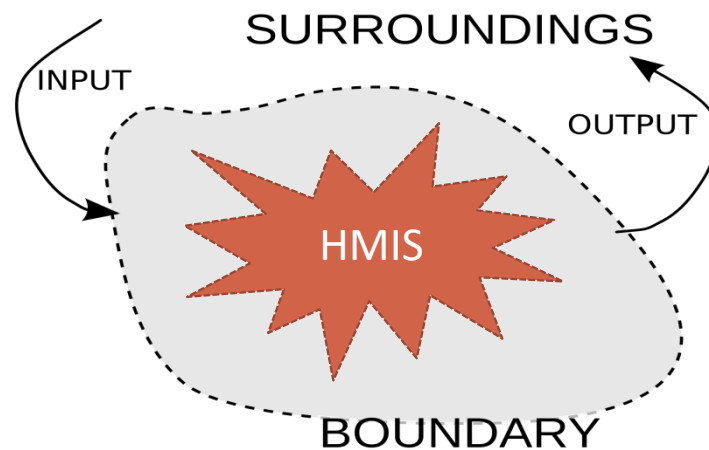
Average Length of Stay for Families 2012-2014/15



Length of Stay by Household Type (2006 to 2014/15)



"FUNCTIONALLY ENDING" FAMILY HOMELESSNESS



Some Considerations...



- No "one size fits all" approach
- About "light" housing support services:
 - Diversion is "early engagement"; problem-solving *alone* has impact
 - Decentralize "light" housing support
- About "transitional" housing support services:
 - If you add *enhanced prevention support*, results will improve significantly
- About "intensive" housing support services:
 - Move toward shared Priority Lists across systems
- Align policies to amplify your investment
- Not a "panacea" – helps to rationalize use of limited resources and clarifies **where** to invest and **why**
- Ending homelessness is possible – requires shared database

On being data-informed...



Things we need our shared database to manage:

- Information
- Communication
- Referrals (within/beyond system)
- Support coordination at each level of engagement
 - **Levels 1 and 2:** Common Housing Plan
 - **Level 3:** Common framework and tools for Housing-Based Support
 - Policy of "one person/family – one file" along service pathways
- PATHS "priority lists"
 - Coordinated access to Housing First and Supportive Housing programs
- Data and reporting

A "functional end" ...



- Key data:
 - Social demographics and pathways into homelessness
 - Real-time demand for service
 - Level of vulnerability (acuity/depth of need)
- "Functional end" to homelessness might look like this:
 - i. Service pathways that align with patterns of homelessness that relate to household type (the "problem" and "solution" will vary)
 - ii. For early engagement strategies: target is **no** unmet need
 - iii. For more intensive engagement strategies: expect to prioritize limited resources – develop "**Priority Lists**" that incorporate a measure of acuity
 - iv. Continue to both monitor unmet need by level of engagement and allocate/advocate for resources accordingly
 - v. Amplify a shared approach to ending homelessness

TOP 10 TRENDS – "DATA DASHBOARD"

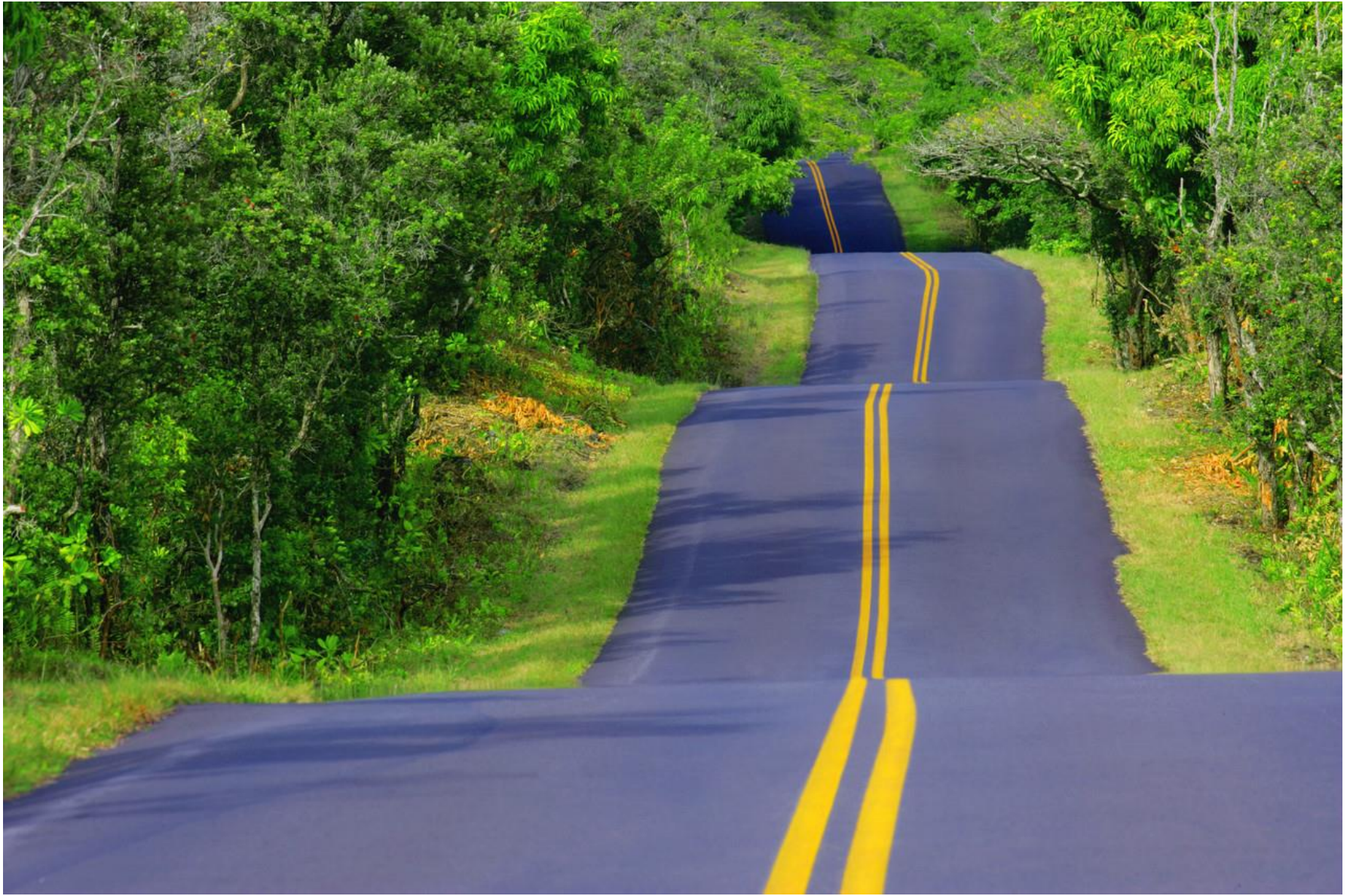
A) Capacity and service use/occupancy

1. Capacity for all programs
 - Compare to service use/unmet need
2. Families served
3. Occupancy
4. Length of service/stay
5. Unmet need – PATHS List (medium to high acuity):
 - Number of families who need each type of housing
 - Monthly "move-ins" and additions (averages)

B) Housing outcomes

6. Emergency shelter diversion
7. Re-housing
8. Housing retention
9. Housing types
 - Moves from temporary residential options to permanent housing
10. Returns for service within 12 and 24 months
 - Number
 - Length of time since discharge

INDICATORS	TARGETS
<p>1. System “flow through” in Housing Help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of families seeking access to housing stability resources are offered Housing Help within 2 business days
<p>2. System “flow through” in Diversion and Diversion Plus</p> <p>3. Families are diverted and stay housed</p>	<p><u>Family Diversion/Family Diversion Plus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of families seeking access to emergency shelter within 7 days are offered Diversion or Diversion Plus when they phone for service <p><u>Family Diversion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% of families seeking access to emergency shelter within 7 days are diverted Less than 15% of families return within 12 months <p><u>Family Diversion Plus</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% of families seeking access to emergency shelter within 7 days are diverted Less than 5% of families return within 12 months
<p>4. System “flow through” in Emergency Shelter</p> <p>5. Families are rapidly re-housed and stay housed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of families admitted to emergency shelter are offered a space in the region Less than 25 days average length of stay Less than 10% of families return within 12 months
<p>6. Families with medium to high acuity are re-housed, stay housed, and are supported to reduce their acuity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEP Home: 50% of families move-in to new housing within 1 month, 75% within 2 months, 90% 3 months 85% of families retain permanent housing at 1 year F-SDPAT and Housing-Based Support targets for reduced acuity over time - TBD





Contact



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