

# Rapid Re-housing and Progressive Engagement: "Making it real, making it good"

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Katharine Gale

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[kgaleconsulting@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kgaleconsulting@sbcglobal.net)

[www.focusstrategies.net](http://www.focusstrategies.net)



# What do we mean by “good”?

- People that have no housing get housed, and do not return to homelessness in a defined time period (typically 1-2 years)
- Not 100%...
- But better than everything else we do, except permanent subsidies (i.e. shelter, transitional housing, services only, even some supportive housing)

# Wait... Apples and Oranges??

**Concern: Rapid re-housing not serving the same kind of households...**

- Not clearly the case – needs to be looked at
- Some places “cream” with rapid rehousing – limit to those employed or with “low” barriers
- But, places that don't do that also have had pretty high success rates (ex. Sacramento, Salt Lake City)
- Many places also “cream” with transitional housing and permanent supportive housing
- Local data can help study this question; Philadelphia study controls for this



# Rapid re-housing's potential is great

Based on typical costs, we can successfully rehouse five times as many families with rapid rehousing as with transitional housing, with equal or better outcomes



# What's essential to rapid re-housing?

- Flexible resources (money and staff)
- Housing search support and relationships with landlords
- Links to other services in the community
- Skill managing a flexible program
- Partnership with clients to make realistic plan



# Design Considerations

Cliffs



or  
Stairs?



Shallow or Deep?



# Design Considerations

## Deep versus shallow/flat

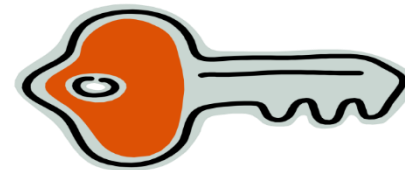
- Deep: households pay 30% of income (like Section 8)
- Shallow: may be based on income (ex: 50% of income) or may be flat (ex. \$ 300 a month)

## Stairs versus cliffs...

- Cliff: cuts off at end of program
- Stairs: steps down in phases ... triggered by time or income changes

# Design Considerations

Rental assistance is basically a time-limited income transfer...



Two key questions:

- 1) How much do I need to provide to meet the goal – housing now and *anticipated* future housing stability?
- 2) Who am I not helping if I provide more support than is needed to meet my goal?



# Design questions: how much is enough?

- Programs of varying length and depth have had similar success rates
- Longer stays look pretty good, especially for income changes, but shorter stays look good too, especially on housing stability
- Shorter stays let us help more households with the same amount of resources

# What about assessment?

- Assessment is critical: need knowledge of client's relevant housing history, current plans and desires
- Understand housing barriers to assist, not to refuse assistance
- Develop realistic approach to finding landlords and housing situations
- Ability to link clients to supports in the community

## But:

- Assessment up front *may not be a good way to **size** the financial assistance or length of time services are offered*



*Example: Let's all go on a job hunt...*



# Progressive Engagement

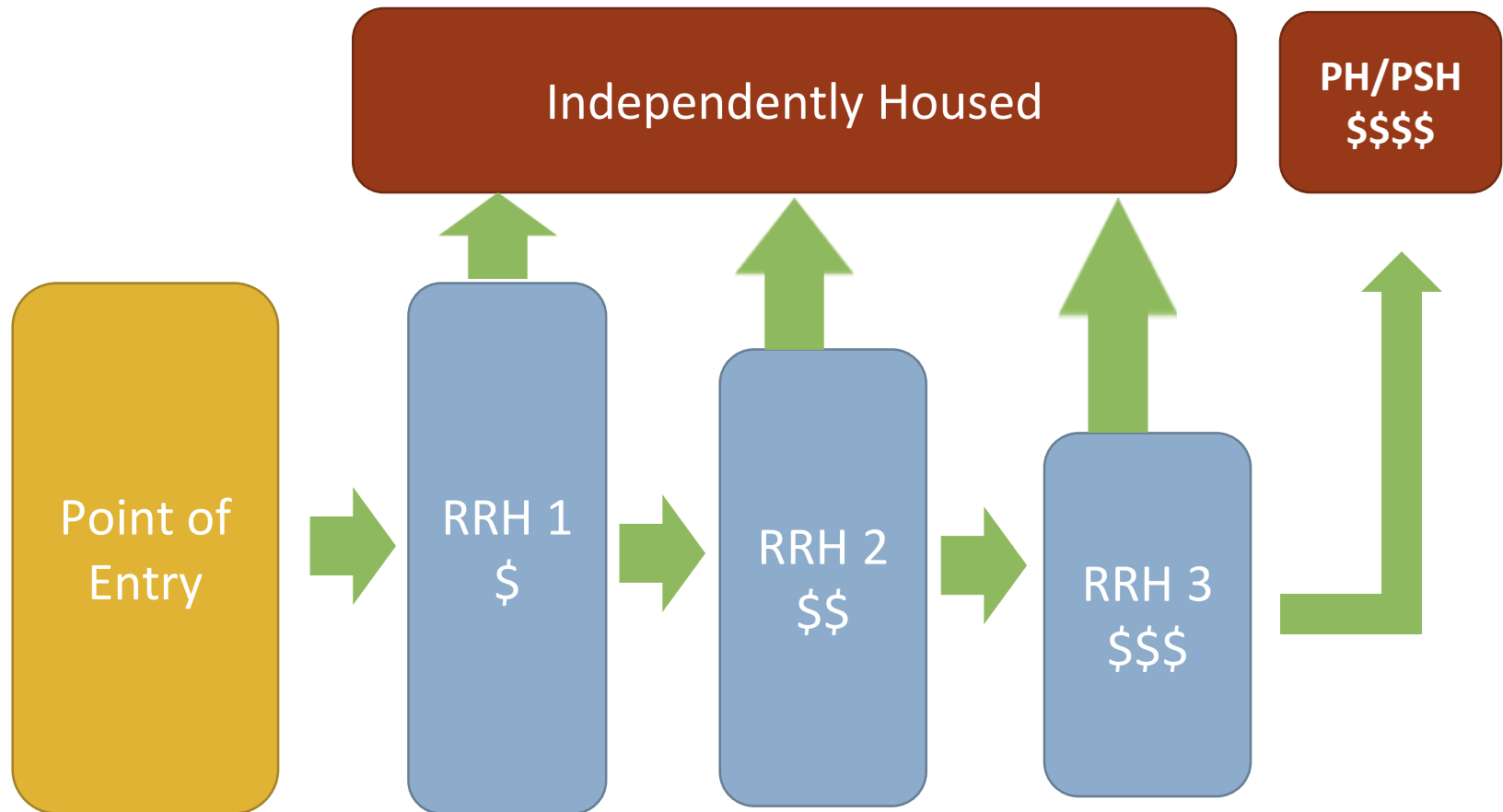
Lightest touch possible *first*, leaving open the potential to do more

- or -



*“you can always add more, but you can’t take it away”*

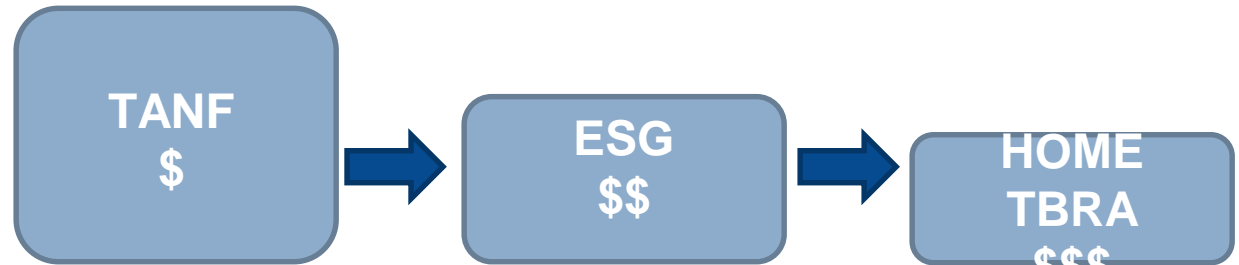
# Progressive Engagement approach



# How do you structure it?

- Use different resources in tandem, based on their requirements and strengths, for different levels or phases of assistance

*Example:*



- Use one resource with regular reassessments and adjustments

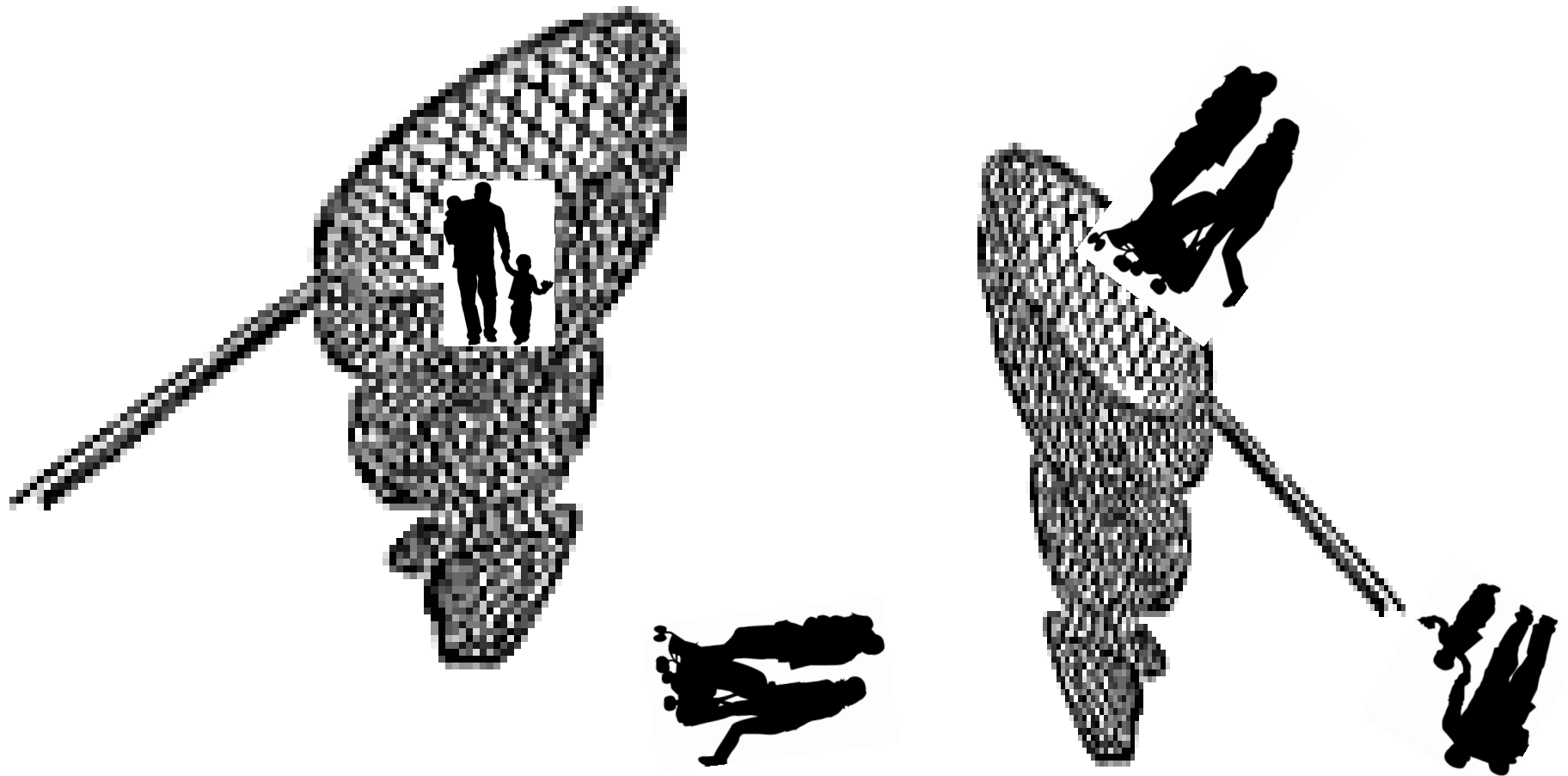
*Example: ESG alone, SSVF, local Child Welfare dollars*

# Using data to adjust

- Unacceptable losses or rates of return?  
*Resize, assist longer, check-in more, develop new partnerships*
- Almost everybody sticks? *Try giving less support*
- Some succeed and some don't?  
*What factors can we look at: e.g. family size, income source, histories of homelessness, the staff person or staffing?*

# System-wide Rapid Re-housing

Each program a net that catches  
some people...





# Stretching the nets together....



# Funding for Rapid Re-Housing

[Slide from National Alliance to End Homelessness]

## **Traditional Homelessness Funds:**

- Emergency Solutions Grants
- New Continuum of Care grants
- Reprogramming CoC funding from service & transitional housing programs

## **Other Government Sources:**

- TANF
- CDBG
- HOME
- EFSP (FEMA)
- SSVF (Veterans and their families)
- Title IV-E Waiver
- Other State/local funding

## **Private/Other**

- Foundations & private donors
- Faith community
- Businesses/BIDs

# For more information

- National Alliance to End Homelessness  
[www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness [www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov)
- Focus Strategies  
[www.focusstrategies.net](http://www.focusstrategies.net)
- Contact us:  
[katharine@focusstrategies.net](mailto:katharine@focusstrategies.net)