

Dane County, WI Rapid Re-Housing Demonstration Summary

Community Pilot Serves: **Dane County, WI**

Organizational Lead: **The Road Home of Dane County**

Partner Organizations: YWCA Madison

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Community: 7,530 in 2008

Number of Families Homeless in Community: 636 in 2008

Pilot Program Design

Annual Number of Families Targeted for Rapid Re-Housing Pilot: 6*

Referral Process:

The program accepts referrals directly from area family shelters: the Salvation Army, The Road Home, the YWCA, and Domestic Abuse Intervention Services. Once the client has spent at least 7 nights in shelter and registers for the Second Chance Workshop, a required tenant education program, (s)he is assessed by shelter staff using the Second Chance Apartment Project assessment tool. The tool screens families based on a well researched set of barriers to obtaining affordable housing. Through the point-based assessment tool, it is established that families referred have at least one moderate barrier including inadequate employment to afford permanent housing, poor rental history including a history of evictions, and/or poor credit history including a history of significant debt in collections and/or bankruptcy. Shelter staff also complete an additional brief assessment checklist to ascertain a client's appropriateness for the program. This tool has been fine-tuned over the past several years, as it has been used for the Second Chance Apartment Project to ensure participants selected face moderate barriers to obtaining and maintaining affordable housing but do not face such significant barriers that they cannot successfully obtain or maintain housing upon program completion.

Services Planned:

Housing Location Strategies:

The Second Chance Apartment Project utilizes scattered site apartments in the community. Outreach to landlords is done largely through direct contact, but also through inclusion of program information in the local apartment association newsletters. The Program Coordinator frequently meets with landlords to recruit them to the program.

The YWCA and The Road Home both have longstanding histories of partnering with landlords and property managers in the community. Both agencies maintain written lists

of landlords to whom to refer tenants including specific information about screening criteria, flexibility, and affordability.

When assisting program participants in the housing search, the families' preferences regarding location are prioritized in order to keep them close to work, school, and other community connections.

Rental Assistance:

The Second Chance Apartment Project Leasing program uses SHP leasing funds to pay rent for each family for 12 months. Each family placed in an apartment through the program pays 30% of their income as a program fee. 20% of this fee is placed into the program's Emergency Fund while 80% of the fee is placed in an Individual Development Account (IDA) for the family. IDA funds may be used by the family while in the program to assist with credit repair or large, goal-related expenses. Upon leaving the program, families may use their IDAs for building savings, move-in costs, prepayment of rent, or other goal-oriented expenses. The IDA has been a critical component in helping families obtain permanent housing at program exit and is a key design piece for the structure of this demonstration project.

Post-Housing Placement:

While in the program, each family will receive intensive case management services to help them identify and reach goals that will lead to stable permanent housing. Individual case plans may emphasize budgeting and credit repair, increased income, life skills, education, parenting skills and resources, health care, AODA and mental health treatment, transportation, and employment and training. Case Managers make weekly home visits to each family in the program to work on goal related activities. Participants also take a tenant and financial education workshop to learn behavioral and financial responsibilities as a renter.

Additional Information:

*The Second Chance Apartment Project Leasing program is an expansion of the existing Second Chance Apartment Project, a partnership of YWCA Madison and The Road Home Dane County which currently houses 12 families. The Leasing program will expand this project to serve an additional 6 families per year for three years through an abbreviated 12-month model that will more quickly move families from shelter to permanent housing.

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