

“Housing First”
for Homeless Families

Rapid Re-Housing

**National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Conference on Ending Family Homelessness
February 7 , 2008**

Beyond Shelter
1200 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90017



THE "Housing First" APPROACH

Moves homeless families into permanent rental housing *as quickly as possible*, with the services traditionally provided in *transitional* housing provided after relocation into permanent rental housing. The basic goal of “housing first” is to “*break the cycle*” of homelessness and prevent a recurrence.



What differentiates a "housing first" approach from other housing models is that there is an immediate and primary focus on helping families access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible.



- 
- **The housing is not time-limited;**



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- **Social services are delivered primarily following a housing placement to improve housing stability and family well-being; AND**



▪Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.



The "housing first" approach provides a critical link between the emergency & transitional housing systems and the community-based social service, educational, employment and health care systems that bring about stability, neighborhood integration and improved health and well-being of families.



COMPONENTS OF "Housing First"

- **Crisis Intervention and Stabilization**
- **Intake and Assessment**
- **Assistance Moving into Permanent Housing**
- **Home-Based Case Management
(time limited & transitional or long term)**



**Components
of the
“Housing First”
Methodology**



STEP 1: CRISIS INTERVENTION & SHORT-TERM STABILIZATION

Among families, this phase usually includes emergency shelter services and short-term transitional housing geared to special needs, i.e. domestic violence, substance abuse treatment, stabilization.



Some models, however, place families with special needs immediately into permanent housing, sometimes master-leasing the unit for a period of time while the adult head-of-household engages in treatment or recovery.



STEP 2: SCREENING, INTAKE & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The “needs assessment” results in an Action Plan, including short and long-term goals and objectives with concrete action steps.

Can occur immediately or after stabilized in emergency services.



STEP 3: ASSISTANCE MOVING INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

- **Overcoming barriers to accessing affordable housing.**
- **Assistance applying for housing subsidies, move-in funds, etc.**
- **Tenant education.**
- **Assistance conducting housing search, presentation to owners, negotiating.**



STEP 4: PROVISION OF HOME-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT

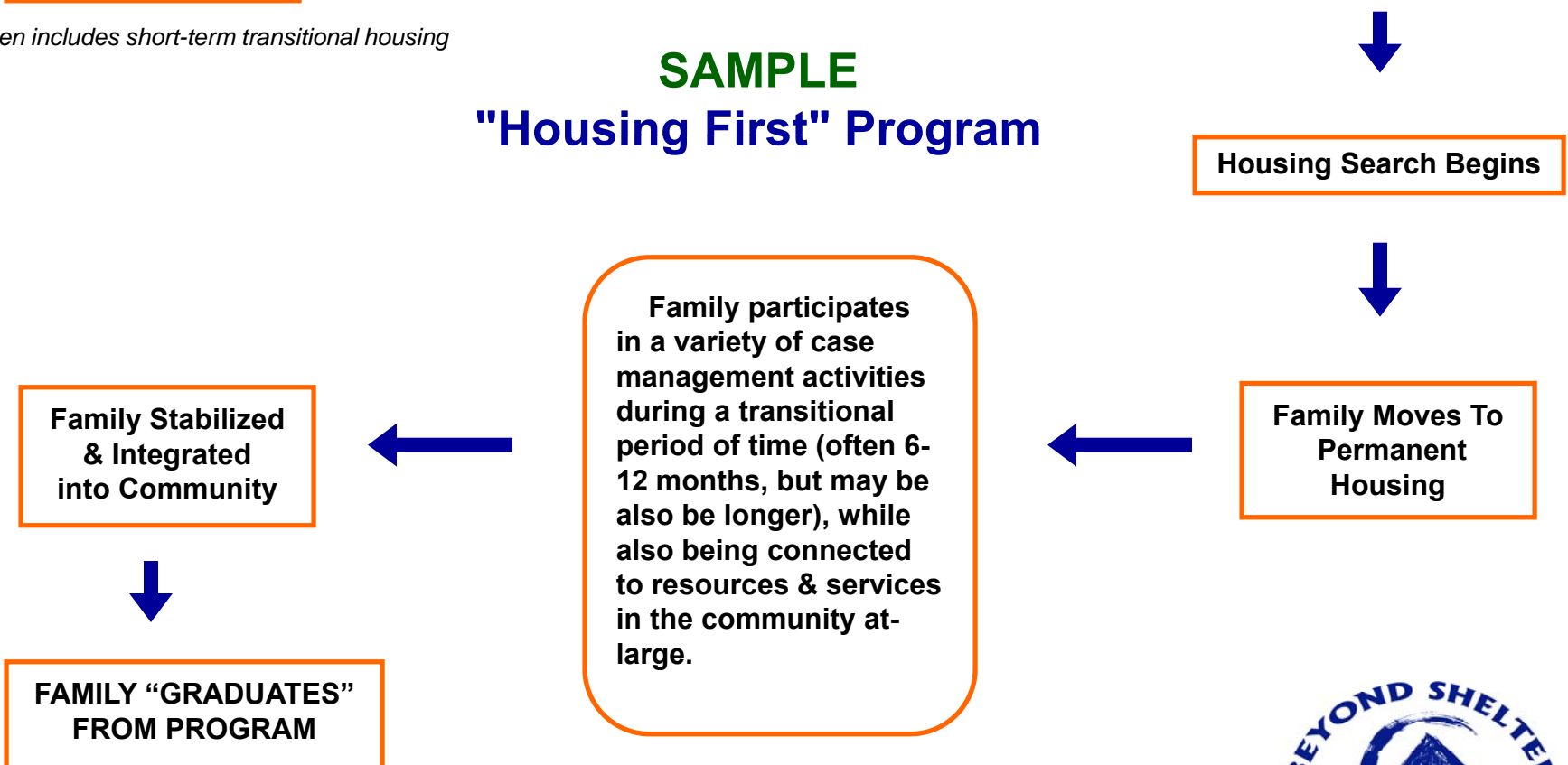
- **Intensive during the first 90 days.**
- **Intensifies during crises.**
- **Includes connecting people to community resources and services to meet their particular needs.**
- **May include longer-term case management for vulnerable and at-risk families and individuals.**





*Often includes short-term transitional housing

SAMPLE "Housing First" Program



ADAPTATIONS

There is no single model for "housing first" programs. The basic methodology has been successfully adapted to a variety of target populations.

A "housing first" approach can be implemented by one agency or it can be accomplished through the collaboration of agencies, each providing specialized services.



Adapting "Housing First" to Transitional Housing Programs

Transitional housing programs can incorporate the "Housing First" approach into their operations by limiting the amount of time families spend in the program and by making permanent housing assistance a central, front end feature of the program – thereby promoting a “rapid exit”.



"Housing First": Recognizes that Distinct Functions Serve Different Participant Needs

Case Management

- Accessing Needed Resources & Services
- Problem Solving
- Life Skills
- Parenting Support
- Money Management
- Household Management
- Crisis Intervention
- Other Supports

ASSESSING
PLANNING
LISTENING
E DUCATING
A DVOCATING

Housing Resources & Relocation

FOR PARTICIPANTS

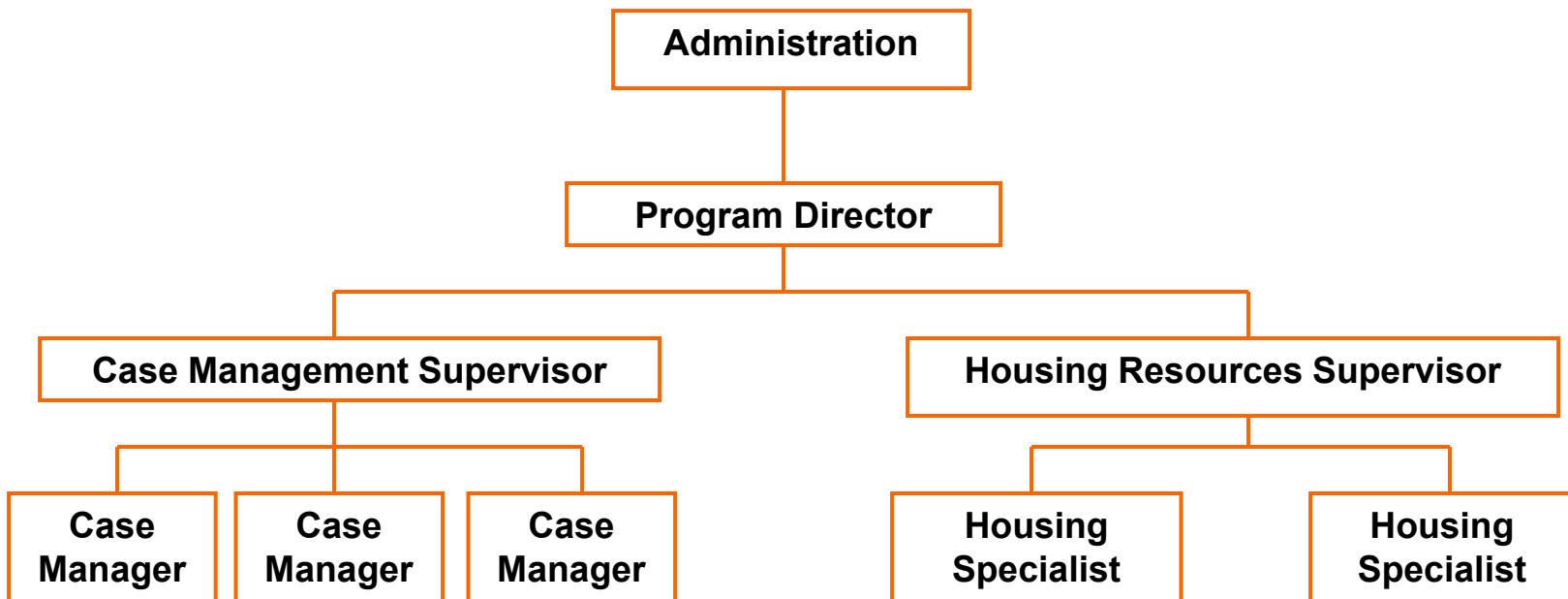
- Housing Assistance
- Tenant Education
- Rental Assistance Programs

FOR OWNERS/MANAGERS

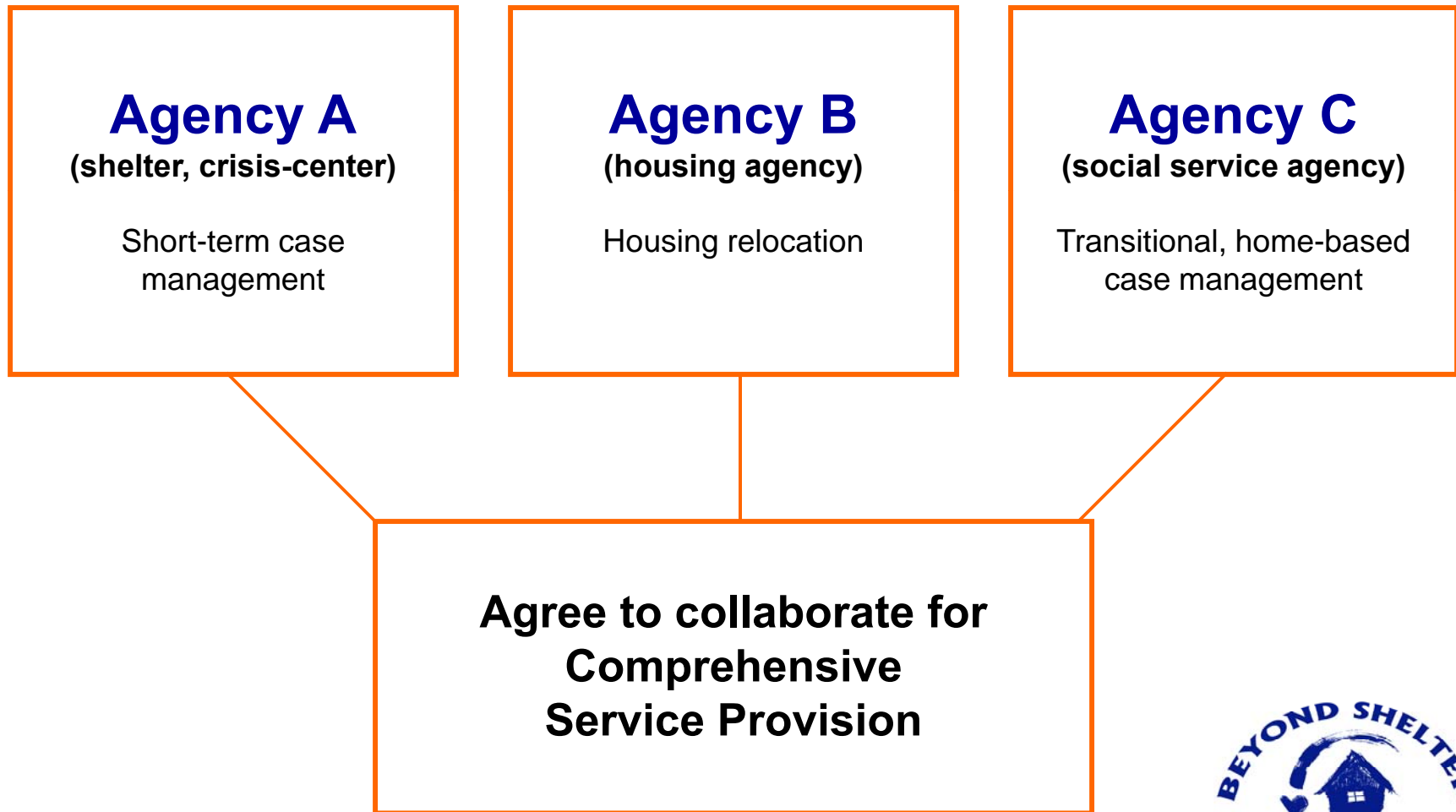
- Available to assist with tenant/landlord issues



A Sample Basic Model



A Sample Collaborative Model



Assistance Accessing & Moving Into Permanent Housing



THE HOUSING SPECIALIST

If available, a Housing Specialist helps the family to identify and off-set (as much as possible) barriers to securing housing.


The Housing Specialist also works with the family to identify appropriate, and reasonable, housing search goals.



ACCESSING SECTION 8


Recognizing the high cost of rental housing in most rental markets, it often becomes essential to develop working collaborations with local housing authorities. It is vital to explore possibilities with housing authority administration and not to assume that it cannot be done.






Sometimes there are special “set asides” or preferences that can be developed (particularly for families and/or people with special needs).






Due to the complete dearth or generally limited number of Section 8 vouchers available in communities, it has become increasingly essential to identify or develop alternative sources of funding for rent subsidies.





Some states and cities are using TANF-related subsidies. Others are using HOME dollars or local trust fund dollars to provide rental assistance. These funds may serve as “bridge” or stand-alone subsidies.





Other communities are experimenting with short-term and/or shallow rent subsidies, using public and private dollars, often combined with workforce development strategies.



Permanent Housing Options

- **Scattered-site or clustered**
- **Private non-profit or for-profit**
- **Public housing**
- **Service-enriched housing**
- **Supportive housing**
- **Special needs housing**
- **Conventional housing**





Leaseholder Considerations

- **Master-lease**
- **Co-lease**
- **Conventional lease**





Financial Assistance

- **Government or private housing subsidies**
- **Application fees, security deposits, etc.**
- **Additional deposits, reserve funds**
- **Eviction guarantees**
- **Rent-to-prevent eviction**



TRANSITIONAL


Home-Based Case Management



PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF CASE MANAGEMENT


- **Assessment**
- **Planning**
- **Linking**
- **Monitoring**
- **Advocacy**






The primary functions of home-based case management are to provide assistance to clients in life skills development and to link clients to other community organizations that provide services which they need. In "Housing First", these services are most often "time-limited" and "transitional."





They are often focused on helping the family overcome the trauma experienced during an episode of homelessness, to enable the family to regain stable living patterns or to develop stable living patterns for the first time.





The case manager provides the core level of services and refers specialized services to “mainstream” programs in the community (i.e., substance abuse services, child care).

When specialized services are not available in the community, the "Housing First" provider may deliver the service themselves or advocate for another way of meeting the client's needs.

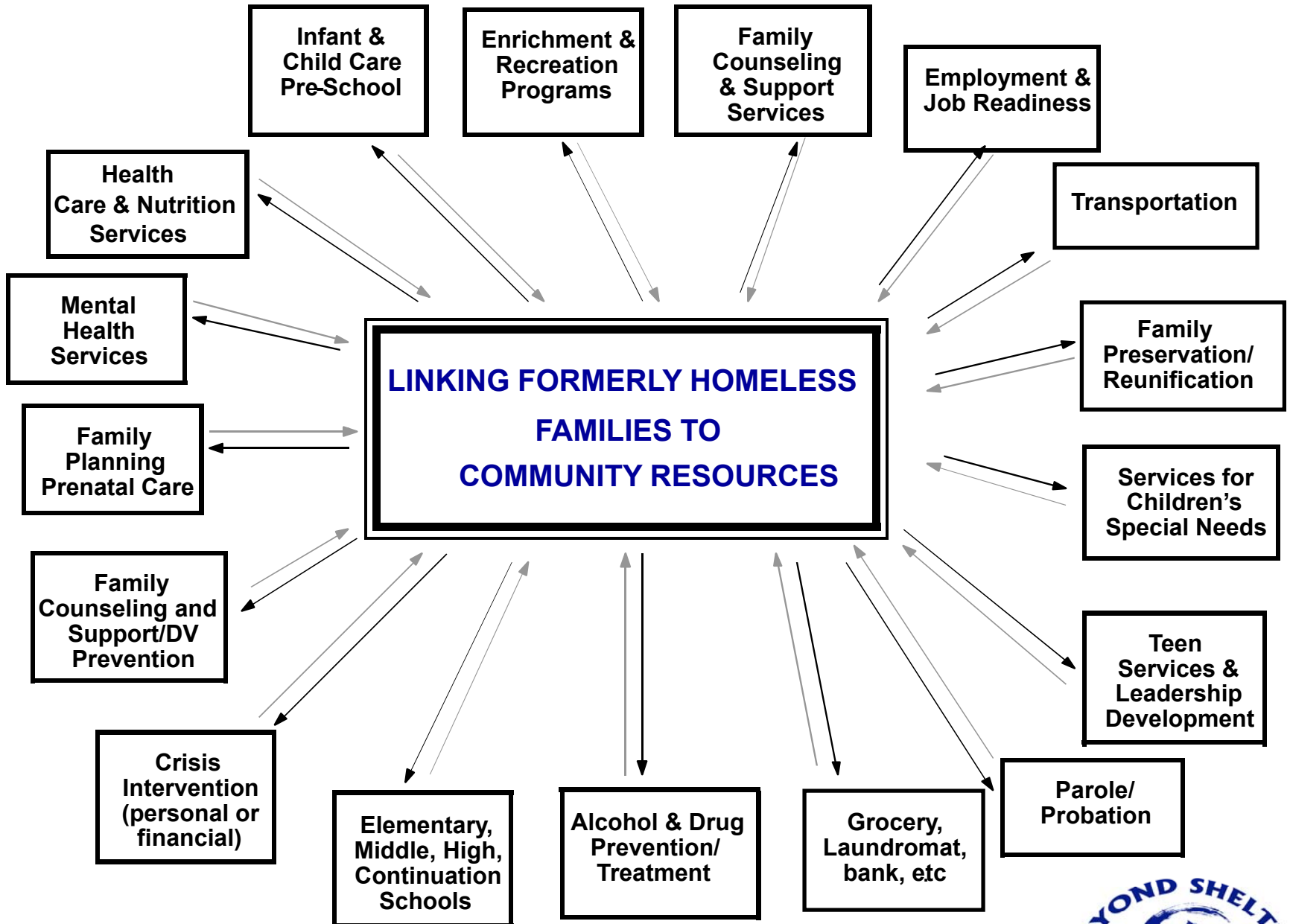




Some clients require more intensive home visits that include demonstrations of house-keeping skills, money-management and budgeting, development of grocery lists, parenting support.

Others need only assistance in identifying resources in the community and monitoring/support to insure that they do not lose their housing if a crisis occurs.





EXAMPLES OF SERVICES BY CASE MANAGERS

- **Household management**
- **Money management**
- **Problem solving/survival skills**
- **Advocacy with welfare, CPS, legal, etc.**
- **Family and individual counseling**
- **Parenting education and support**
- **Relapse prevention**
- **Crisis intervention**



THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

Experience has shown that formerly homeless families are most at risk for another episode of homelessness during the first 90 days in permanent housing.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES



**Families Integrated
into the Community,
Attaining Improved
Social and Economic Well-Being**



The Seaver Study



In August 2003, with generous funding from the Seaver Institute, the *Institute for Research, Training & Technical Assistance* at Beyond Shelter launched the Seaver Study to:

- **Evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the “*Housing First*” Program for Homeless Families; and,**
- **Generate and disseminate empirically valid, scientific research supporting the efficacy of the “Housing First” methodology.**



Study Design

<u>Population Size:</u>	1,600 previously homeless families
<u>Sample Selection:</u>	Convenience sample
<u>Sample Size:</u>	200 previously homeless families
<u>Sample Description:</u>	Completed <i>"Housing First" Program for Homeless Families 1997-2001</i>



Study Design Cont'd

<u>Data Collection:</u>	Semi-structured survey instrument (a questionnaire) pilot-tested for reliability & validity
<u>Data Source:</u>	Parent
<u>Interviews:</u>	Commenced August 2003, concluded November 2005
<u>Sample Selection:</u>	Letters, phone calls soliciting participation Simultaneous study enrollment once contact established



Demographic Characteristics

Race/Ethnicity: African-American	64.5 percent
Caucasian	8.0 percent
Hispanic/Latino	21.5 percent
Other	2.5 percent
Family Type: Single-parent	92.5 percent
Family Type: Single-parent, female-headed	97.0 percent
Age, Head of Household (2003 or 2004)	38.5 years (sd=8.5)



Demographic Characteristics Cont'd

Number of children \leq 18 years old	2.1 (sd=1.3)
Parental Substance Abuse History	27.0 percent
Domestic Violence History (disclosed/known)	40.5 percent
Disability and/or Chronic Illness (At least 1 family member)	48.5 percent
Estimated Annual Median Family Income	\$12,000 (sd=\$9,900)

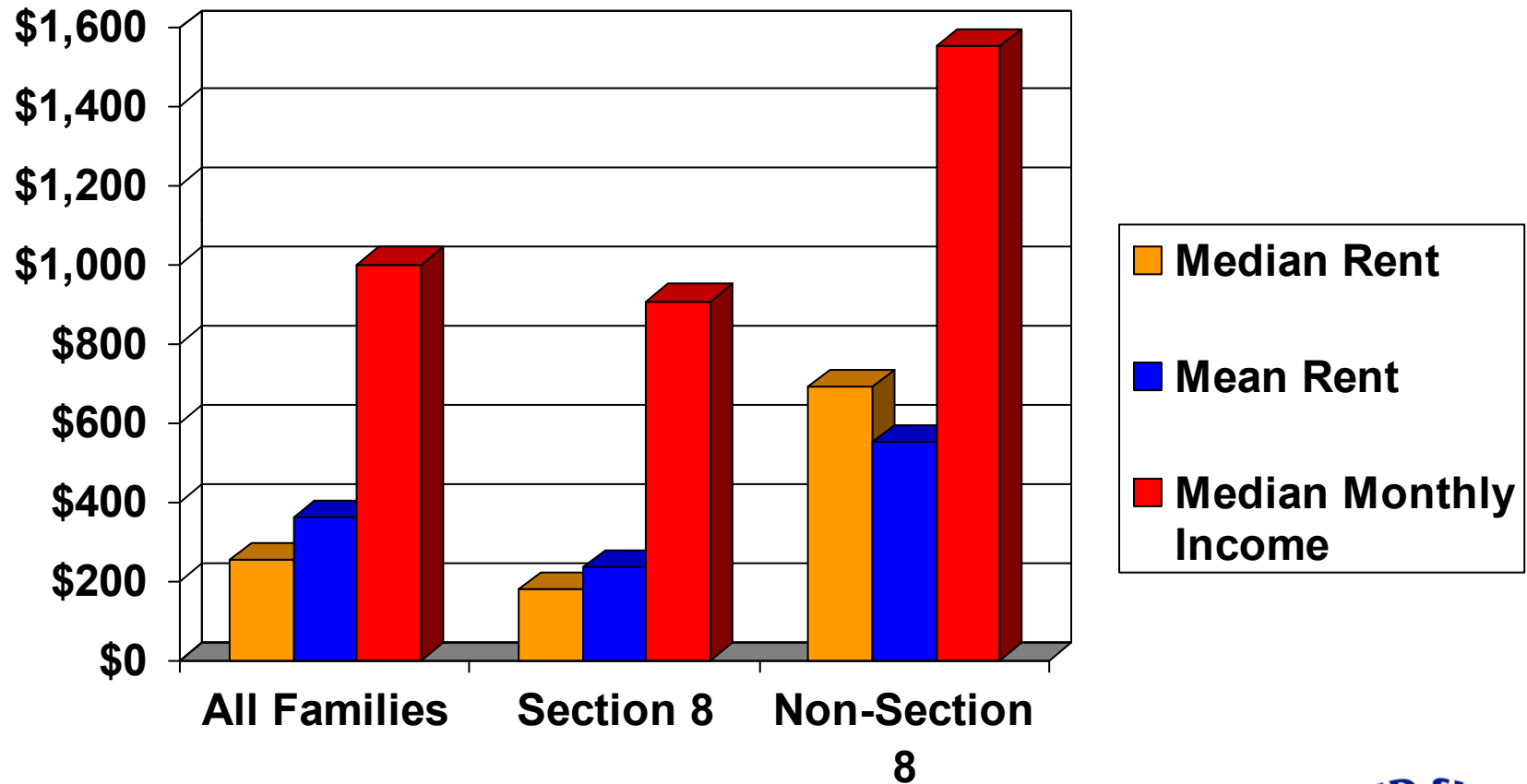


Study Findings: Residential Stability

- Nearly three quarters - 72% - of families received Section 8 subsidies.
- 89.5% residential stability
- 55% living in original unit
- Movers relocated an average of 1.37 times
- Subsidized tenants more likely to remain housed than unsubsidized tenants, regardless of time elapsed since program graduation
- Subsidized tenants less likely to report trouble paying rent on time



Study Findings: Rent Burden



Study Findings: Children's School Enrollment/Attendance

Among families with at least one school-aged child:

- **97.8 percent were enrolled in school**
- **97.1 of these children regularly attended school during the preceding academic year**

Of the 2.9 percent of children without regular attendance:

- **one was home-schooled**
- **another had a chronic illness that precluded attendance**
- **one was transferring schools**
- **two siblings had reduced attendance due to repeat homelessness**



Study Findings: School-Aged Children's Activities

- **Nearly half (47.7 percent) of these families reported that their school-aged children were regularly and actively involved in one or more after-school activities or youth programs.**
- **Among the remaining 53.3 percent of families, 42.1 percent said that their children had been involved in the past.**



Study Findings: Young Children/Child Care Utilization

- Child care was used by 48.4 percent of families.
- Most -- 90.5 percent-- of these families reported that their arrangements met their needs.
- Relatively high child care costs were most commonly identified as a problem for those unsatisfied with their current arrangements.
- Finally, 99.4 percent of families reported that all children under the age of 12 were supervised by a responsible adult at all times.



Study Findings: Parental Job or School Involvement

At the time of the interview...

- **58.6% of parents working**
- **60.3% full-time**
- **24.5% attending school**
- **71.4% enrolled full-time**
- **Reasons for not working include: too ill or disabled, actively looking but no success, lack of affordable child care**



Study Findings: Sobriety/Abstinence & Domestic Violence

Slightly more than a quarter - 27% - had substance abuse history.

**Case file reviews: many with chronic poly-substance use hx; 56% multiply homeless
92.6% remained sober/abstinent**

**Over four in ten - 41% - had DV history.
87.7% no reoccurrence of violence
12.3% reoccurrence (none at interview)**



Study Findings: Medical Coverage, Use, & Hardships

Covered		
	At least one family member	93.5%
	Child has insurance	96.4%
	All family members	82.1%
Type of Coverage		
	Public	78.8%
	Medi-Cal (Medicaid)	77.6%
	Healthy Families	1.2%
	Private	21.1%
	Had a PCP or Medical Office	91.4%
	Obtained Regular Check-up or Treatment	70.4%
	Disabled or Chronically Ill	48.5%
	At least one family member	78.6%
	Two family members	17.3%
	Three family members	4.1%

