

# HOUSING FIRST

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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

### HOUSING IS THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFE IMPROVEMENT.

When people build houses they start with the foundation. A stable foundation is the first step to a safe home. When people move from homelessness into permanent housing, their housing is that foundation. Once a sturdy foundation is built, walls of support like income stability, family resolutions and connection to health professionals make a house a home.



## CORE COMPONENTS

- **Client Choice** - the person's right to choose their location for housing, their participation level and what they'd like their support to look like
- **Access to Housing with No Existing Requirements** - typical leases do not require sobriety, attendance of mental health sessions, etc. Leases can require proof of income, but with an agency relationship with the landlord and participant involvement with that agency, income can be gained after entry.
- **Individualized, Participant-Driven Support** - every household's needs are different and their long-term housing plan will be just as unique

## NEED TO KNOWS:

**Housing First is not housing only.** Housing First provides housing and then meets households' needs through wrap around services like mental or physical health, employment, connection to services, etc.

Housing First may not always be successful. However, **Housing First has been recognized as a best practice in homeless services.** Losing housing after a Housing First approach should not be seen as a failure, but more as a learning opportunity for all involved. What can we do differently next time that may work better?



# WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN HOUSING FIRST?

## EVERYONE

1. **Understand** the principles behind Housing First:
  - a. What does Housing First mean?
  - b. How does Housing First work?
  - c. Who does Housing First help?
2. **Educate** staff, supervisors and volunteers on Housing First



## NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Facilitate** discussions with clients on obstacles they may have to housing.
2. **Create** person-centered, individual plans with clients to support them in achieving their goals.
3. **Develop** processes and procedures for landlords willing to more easily approve clients as tenants when the traditional rental boxes are not checked.



## LANDLORDS AND COMPLEX MANAGERS

1. **Partner** with agencies and programs that support Housing First.
2. **Agree** to be a community partner that is open to not having all boxes checked before a lease is signed.
3. **Communicate** and problem solve with clients and agencies regarding obstacles you may be uncomfortable with.

### Helpful Follow Up Resources:

<https://endhomelessness.org/what-housing-first-really-means/>

<http://dev2.usich.gov/news/resource-round-up-understanding-and-implementing-housing-first/>