

# Best of HFAs – Special Needs Housing





# Tenant Selection Plan Guidelines

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September 29, 2021

# Our Mission: The Core Purpose

Housing is the foundation for success, so we collaborate with individuals, communities and partners to create, preserve and finance housing that is affordable.

# The Road to the Tenant Selection Guidelines

- All properties are required to have a Tenant Selection Plan (TSP)
- TSP Policy Work Group
- HUD Guidance in 2016
- Minnesota Housing publishes first TSP Guidance 2016
- Housing Study of Criminal History Impact on Tenant Stability – final report 2019
- Minnesota Housing publishes second TSP Guidance 2019
- Develops TSP Review Checklist and Help Text

# The Journey Continues

- Pervasive Community Concern about Screening Barriers
- Public Engagement with Qualified Allocation Plan 2019-2020
- Revise TSP Guidance to include specific screening criteria
- Two Public Comment Periods -Extensive Public Comments
- Final TSP Guidelines approved by Board end of 2020
- Applies to all Properties Funded beginning in 2021

# The Tenant Selection Plan Guidelines

# Applicability

- All projects with a few exceptions:
  - Funding directly to jurisdictions
- For those programs, General Considerations section is a requirement and Screening Criteria is a best practice



# General Considerations

- Written tenant selection plan, which must include:
  - Clear information on eligibility criteria, including criteria that will be used to evaluate applications
  - Evaluation criteria must take into consideration barriers faced by the population development is funded to serve
  - Description of waiting list process
- Must provide notice of denial
- Must offer an appeals process



# General Considerations, cont'd

- Must have a written reasonable accommodations policy
- Cannot discriminate against voucher holders
- Highlight requirements under VAWA
- Highlight points from HUD's guidance on criminal history screening
- Must state the population it is intended to serve
- Best Practices – records retention

# Tenant Screening Criteria – All Housing Units

- Must allow tenants to provide “supplemental evidence”
  - Must be reviewed **before** a final determination of acceptance or denial
- Cannot reject for:
  - Credit score, by itself or Insufficient credit history
- Rental History
  - An eviction action that was dismissed or was in favor of the applicant or was 3 or more years prior to the application
  - Insufficient rental history
- Income to rent ratio – cannot exceed 2 ½ times the rent



# Tenant Screening Criteria – Supportive Housing

- Cannot be screened out based on housing history
  - References from previous landlords
  - Money owed to previous landlords
  - Recent egregious criteria *may* be considered
    - Extremely disruptive behavior
    - Abusive treatment
- Cannot be screened out based on credit history
  - No income to rent ratio allowed

# Tenant Screening Criteria – Supportive Housing

- Criminal History – no rejection for:
  - Any arrest in an inactive case that did not result in conviction;
  - Participation in or completion of a diversion or a deferral of judgment program;
  - Any conviction that has been vacated or expunged, or for which the applicant received a stay of imposition of sentencing and complied with the terms of the stay;
  - Any conviction for a crime that is no longer illegal in the state of Minnesota;
  - Any conviction or any other determination or adjudication in the juvenile justice system;
  - Any convictions for petty misdemeanors, prostitution, alcohol related crimes, or low-level property crimes (theft);
  - Any conviction for misdemeanor offenses older than two (2) years;
  - Any criminal conviction for felony offenses older than seven (7) years.

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*Creating Housing Opportunities in Communities  
for Everyone*

Ben Mokry

Mississippi Home Corporation





- CHOICE: A bridge rental subsidy for persons diagnosed with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)
- 12 months of assistance – can be extended 3 months
- Funded by appropriation from State of Mississippi

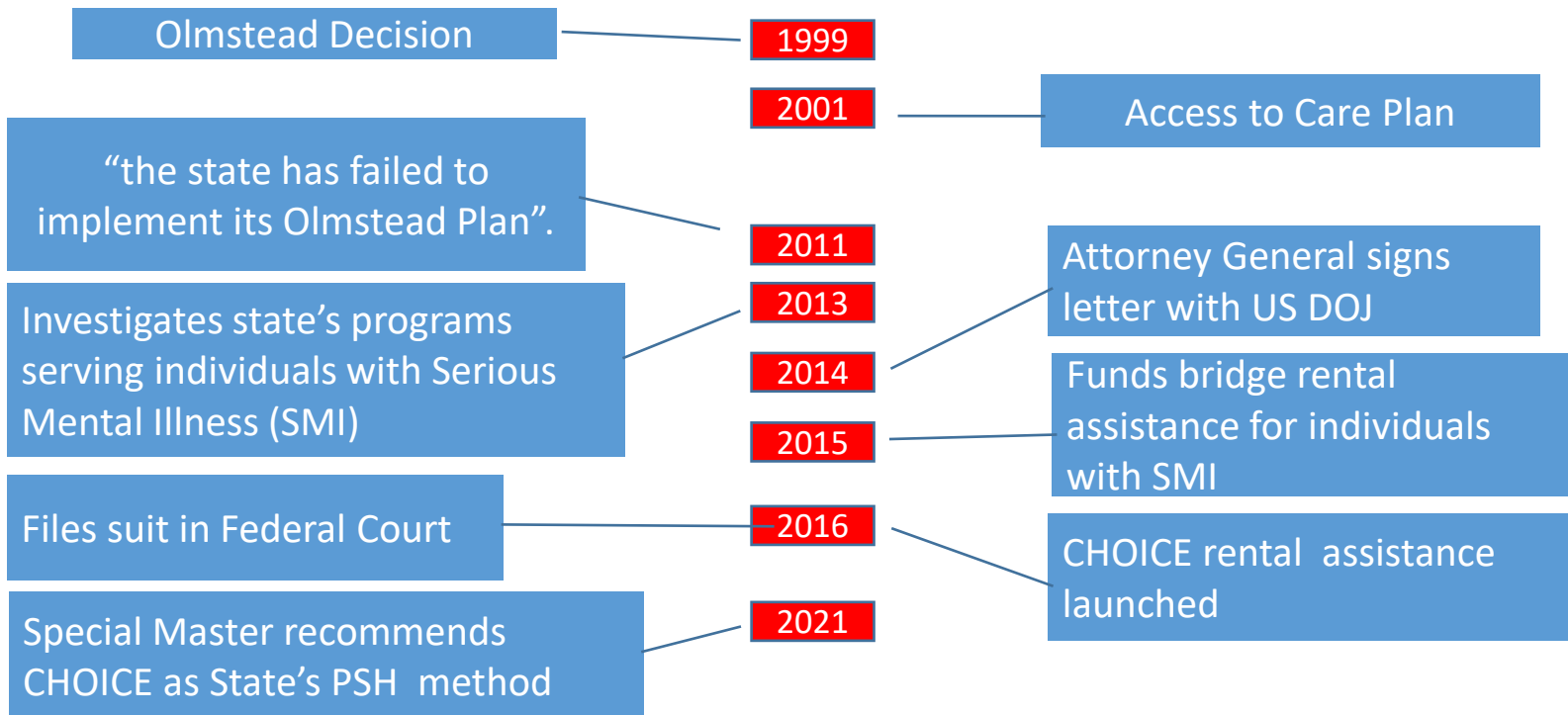




# Timeline

## U.S. Department of Justice

## Mississippi





# CHOICE Priority Population

## Persons with Serious Mental Illness Who

1. Are in a hospital or long-term care facility over 90 days;
2. Have been discharged from state hospital who have had multiple hospital visits or been arrested or incarcerated for conduct stemming from mental illness;
3. Experienced long-term homelessness or multiple bouts of homelessness



# CHOICE Funding

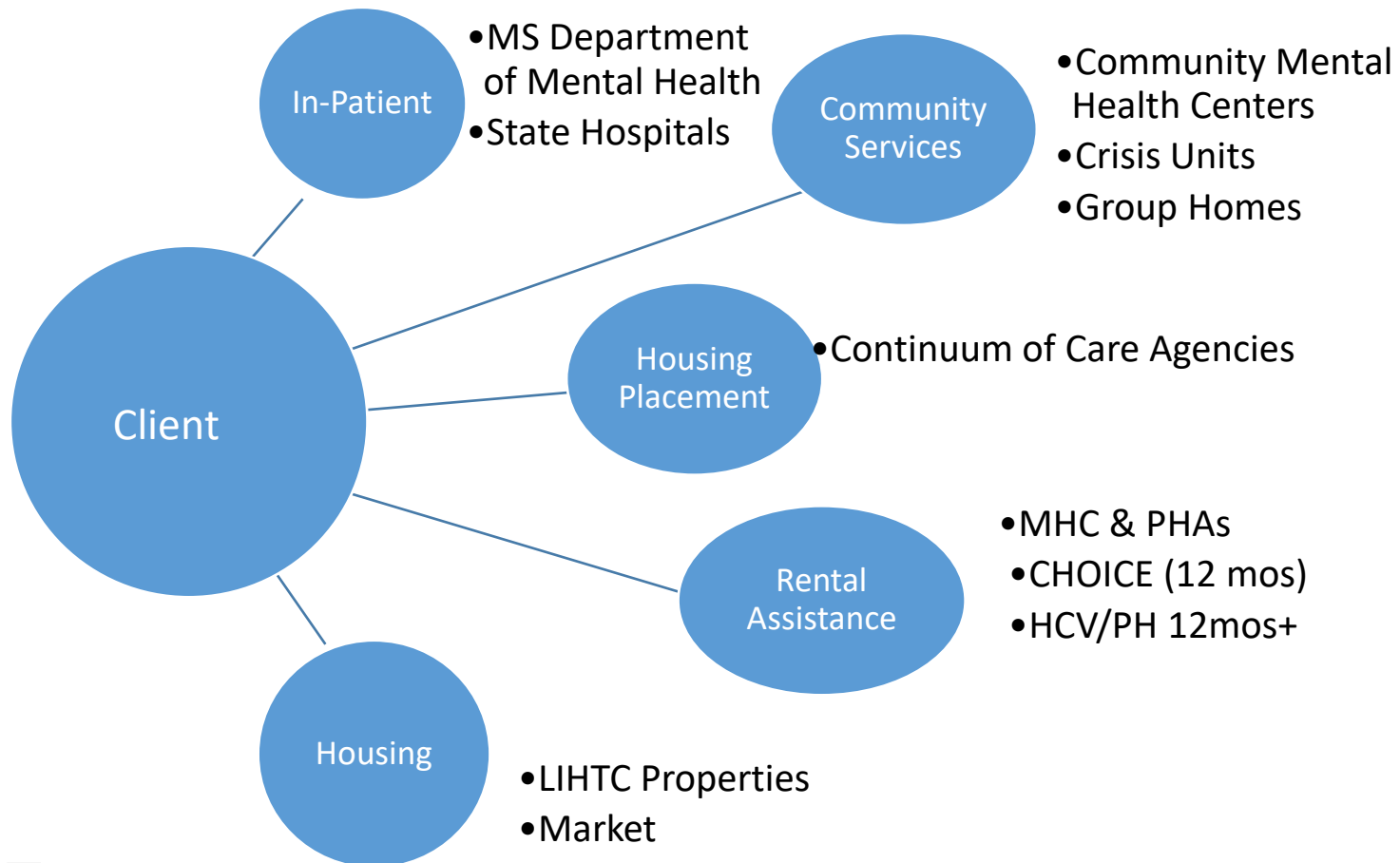
\$9,636,955  
2015-2021 FY

90% for Rent  
and Transition  
Costs

1,009 Assisted  
through  
FY 2021

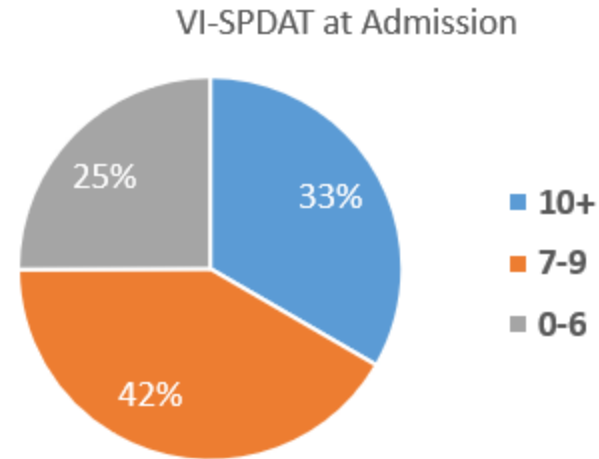
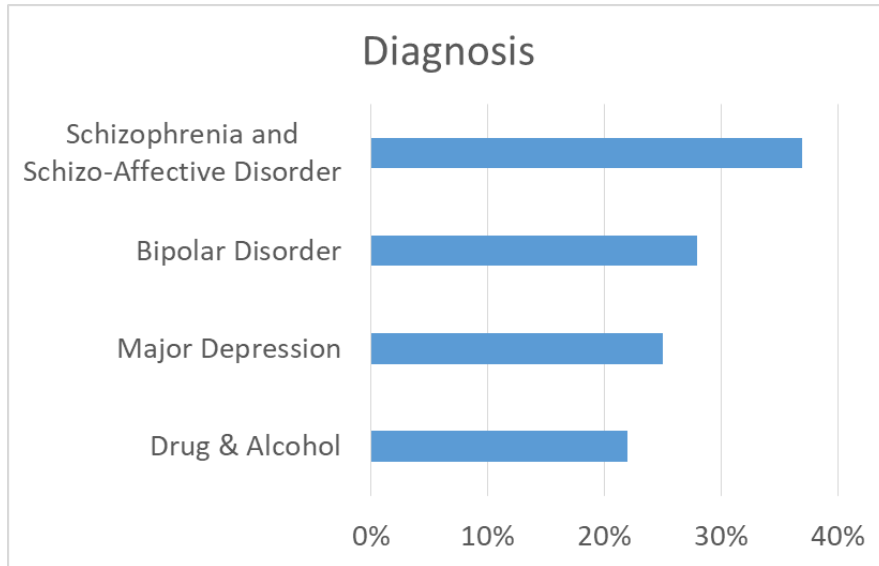


# Components





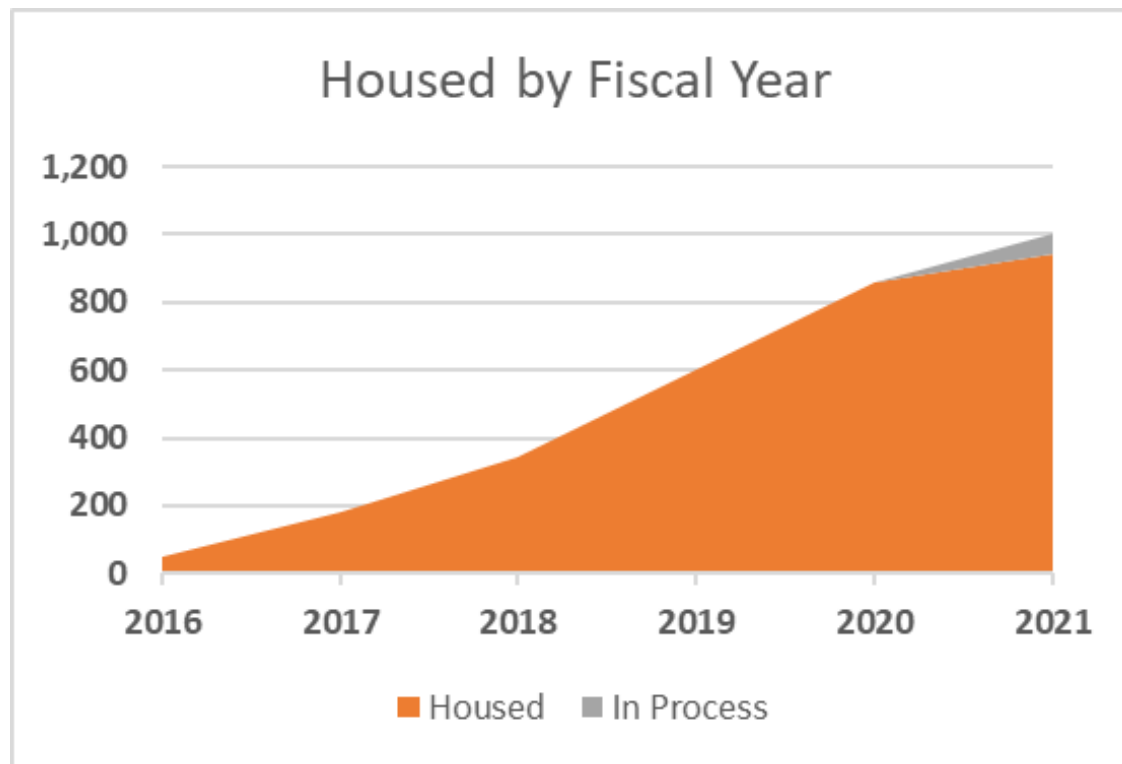
# Targeted to the Need





# Production

1,002 Participants

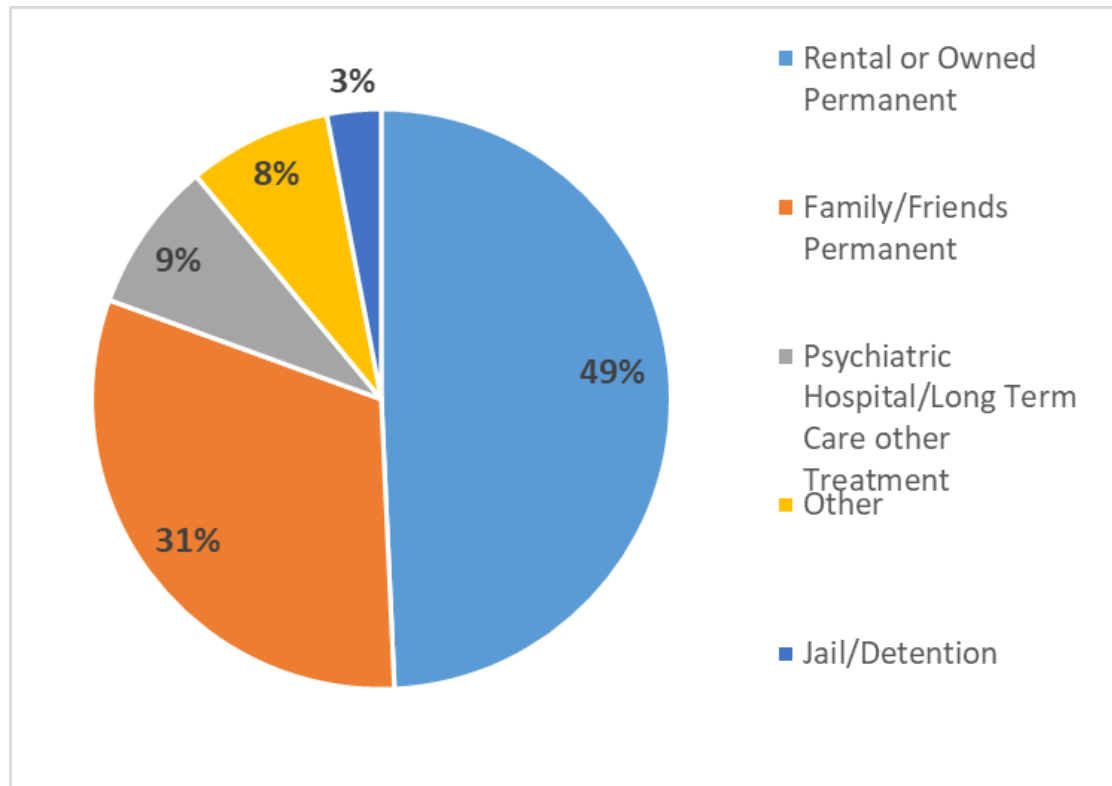




# Outcome

761 Exits

80% to Permanent Housing



# Outcome

- With Income at Intake 47%
- With Income at Discharge 68%
- Maintained or Increased Income 54%
- Average Monthly Income \$820



# Performance In CHOICE

92% had no hospitalization while in CHOICE

95% spent no time in jail while in CHOICE

\$475  
Avg Rent Paid by CHOICE Monthly

40% Tenants Pay toward Rent

\$162 Avg Paid by Tenants toward Rent

45% Housed in under 30 Days







# Delivery Cost

Cost to Develop  
\$85,000

Housing Placement  
Cost/Client \$1,400

State Administration  
Cost/Placement  
\$300

Total Cost Per  
Placement, Rent,  
State Administration  
\$7,900





# Federal Court

- July 2021 Special Master recommended to the Court that CHOICE receive funding for 500 additional tenants over two fiscal years
- Would bring the total assisted annually to 750
- Funding to be maintained as permanent component of Mississippi's Olmstead compliance plan
- Federal Court has not yet issued final ruling





*Creating Housing Opportunities in Communities  
for Everyone*

Lisa Coleman

VP of Federal Grants

Mississippi Home Corporation

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# MaineHousing



MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY



## ONE WEEKEND IN MAINE

Maine's cooperative approach to ensure a healthy season for migrant workers during the COVID pandemic.



# FROM THE GROUND UP

Each year, an influx of over 500 migrant workers arrive to work with the Maine agriculture harvest.



**Seasonality**

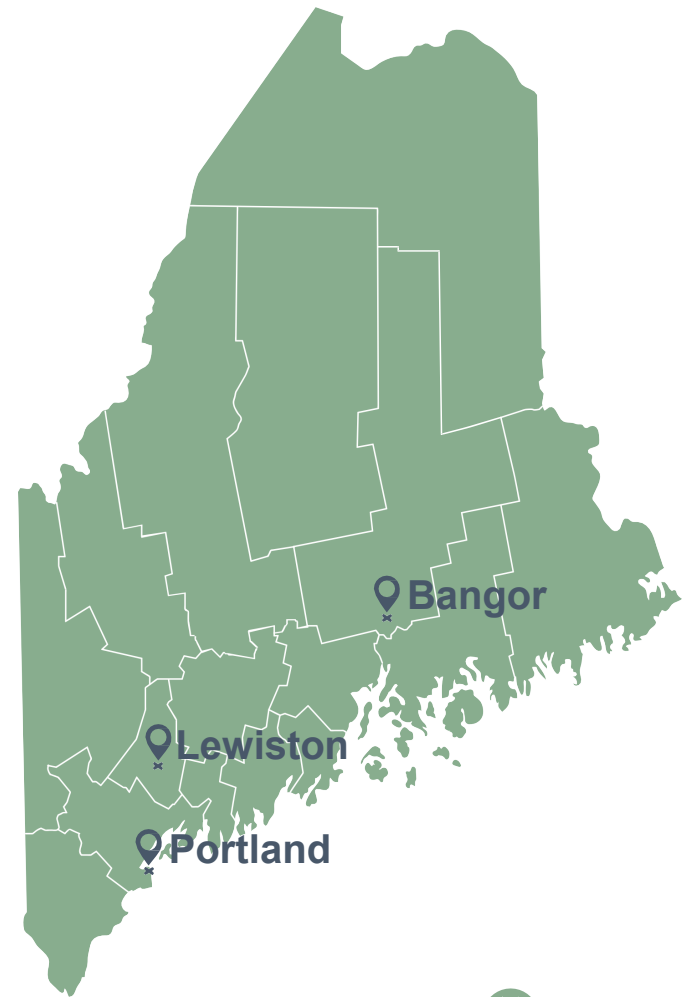


**Program Design**



**Partnerships**

MAINE STATE  
HOUSING  
AUTHORITY



# A HEALTHY TRANSITION

## 01

- Hotels
- Staffing
- Contracts

## 02

- Translators
- Food
- Testing

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HOUSING  
AUTHORITY

## 03

- On-site Testing
- Partnerships

  
Blueberry

  
Lobster

  
Potato

  
Apple

  
Fir  
Bough



# CONCLUSIONS



The migrant farm worker experience could have been very different if not for the quick response and agility of MaineHousing and our partners’.



**Communication**



**Cultural Awareness**



**Planning & Design**



# PARTNERS

Partnerships with local agencies helped to provide translators, culturally appropriate food, mobile testing locations and staffing for quarantine locations.





# CONTACT



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# Pandemic to Permanent Housing

Bradley Sweazy, Interim Executive Director  
Louisiana Housing Corporation



# Seizing an Opportunity

In early 2020, in response to what many staff foresaw as a serious and protracted public health emergency, the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) launched an innovative initiative on an unprecedented scale to protect its statewide homeless population from the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Preventing A Crisis

- ▶ In February 2020, an estimated 1.4 million visitors converged on New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras as COVID-19 cases began to spike globally. By March, Louisiana had the fastest rate of growth in the world for confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- ▶ As Louisiana worked to reduce COVID-19 rates during the summer, hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta struck southwest Louisiana and New Orleans, in some areas damaging or destroying more than 70% of the affordable housing stock and eliminating 100% of ES beds.

## Responding to Need

- ▶ Louisiana's homeless population is located primarily in a handful of urban and semi-urban areas, where emergency shelter (ES) is not sufficient to meet the need. On a given night, nearly all of Louisiana's ES beds are full, and 33% of Louisiana's homeless population experiences unsheltered homelessness.
- ▶ State health experts warned that Louisiana's homeless population would be at increased risk for COVID-19 morbidity and mortality due to lack of access to hand-washing facilities, lack of space to socially isolate, and pre-existing comorbidities.
- ▶ LHC identified the solution as widespread Non-Congregate Shelters (NCS) focused on Louisiana's urban areas with rapid bridges to Public Housing (PH). After assessing the available infrastructure to create sufficient NCS beds, LHC identified the potential for a unique public-private partnership.

# Strategic Use of Resources (NCS)

- ▶ LHC and its partners initiated NCS in the City of New Orleans in response to an immediate public health emergency caused by restaurant closures, then the City of Baton Rouge, followed by the rest of Louisiana.
- ▶ NCS required a new statewide partnership between LHC and Louisiana's hotel industry as well as tremendous work, from street outreach to case management, by the CoCs and local service providers.
- ▶ NCS was originally funded entirely by Emergency Solutions Grant funding through the CARES Act (ESC-CV); in time, many of its core activities would be funded in part, then in whole, by FEMA due to an executive order from President Biden making that cost-share available, with ESG-CV closing the gap in areas like case management.
- ▶ At the beginning of March 2020, there were no NCS rooms in Louisiana; by the end of April, there were 742; by the end of May, there were 1,198.

# Strategic Use of Resources (PH)

- ▶ Approximately 90 days after NCS' initial stand-up, CoCs statewide worked to move people from NCS to PH.
- ▶ The majority of households exited and continue to exit either to living with friends or family or into housing funded by ongoing resources, including:
  - State and municipal Section 8 housing choice and project-based voucher units for the general population, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)-funded RRH for veterans, and CoC Program-funded Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people experiencing chronic homelessness and living with severe and persistent disabilities, leaving ESG-CV funds free to fill acute needs.
- ▶ To date, 98% of all people who entered NCS in 2020 have exited, the majority to publicly funded PH with wraparound services tailored to each person to help them overcome their barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

## Measurable Impact and Continued Success

Between March 2020 and the present, LHC:

- ▶ Created more NCS beds, primarily in hotels statewide, than the total unsheltered population counted during the January 2020 PIT Count.
- ▶ Depopulated 98% of NCS beds.
- ▶ Relocated 54% to permanent housing destinations.
- ▶ Created and significantly expanded a statewide eviction prevention program
- ▶ Prevented Louisiana's unsheltered homeless population from being more severely impacted by COVID-19 than the general population.



## Strategic Objectives

LHC's COVID-19 response plan is replicable by any state in the country. It was developed to be funding agnostic, and each of its pieces could be funded by many different local and federal funding streams. Moreover, each piece could be implemented independently of each other and at different funding levels, either in response to disasters or to the ongoing need for shelter and housing.

## Strategic Objectives

However, as it was eventually implemented, LHC's plan relied significantly on federal resources that should be equitably available nationwide. The primary barriers to implementation are likely to be the barriers that have always existed: forging effective partnerships, especially non-traditional partnerships, and identifying sufficient affordable housing.

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