

CCEH Lessons Learned

From the 2018 National Conference on Ending Homelessness



Lessons Learned from Multiple Workshops

A summary of CCEH's David Gonzalez Rice's lessons learned from the following workshops:

- **Defining Homelessness Diversion: Fundamentals of System and Practice Strategies**
Kay Moshier McDivitt, Marcy Thompson, Patrice Dickson
- **Ending Homelessness for Single Adults: Exploring What Works**
Nan Roman, Joslyn Carter, Julia Orlando, Krickette Wetherington
- **Coordinated Entry: Methods of Prioritization**
Matt White, Tess Colby, Marcy Thompson, Marina Flores
- **Spotlight Session: The Role of Community Action Agencies in Ending Homelessness**
Tiffney Marley
- **Collaboration Works! Connecting Homeless and Employment Systems**
Eva Thibadeau-Graczyk, Gary Grier, Kisha Bird, Patrick Gihring
- **Preventing and Ending Homelessness Among People with Histories of Incarceration**
Hannah Roberts, Antonia Fasanelli, Elizabeth Buck, Carolyn Johnson

This year's NAEH took seriously the question of how to serve those not served when we prioritize the most vulnerable for the usual roster of HUD-funded interventions (RRH, PSH, TH).

Sessions on Diversion, Single Adults, and Coordinated Entry all suggested that the skills and practices involved in a good diversion effort should apply at all stages of a household's interaction with the homeless response system. Our system might not be in a position to provide financial assistance or extended case management to every household experiencing a housing crisis, but we could be more intentional about fostering creative, problem-solving, housing-focused conversations with clients both up and down-stream from the points in our system where diversion usually happens. Connecticut was repeatedly cited a leader in diversion, but panels also highlighted communities from Bergen County, NJ to Pierce County, WA, where problem-solving conversations are stressed at other points along the continuum of services: at shelter, or upon referral to the By Name List, for example. Successes shared in this area suggest that hiring and training staff with these skills in mind can have a significant impact beyond the availability of rental assistance dollars.

Strategic partnering offers another path to serving persons not prioritized for a formal housing program. Presenters across the sessions I attended stressed that we must identify all opportunities to link lower-barrier households to mainstream resources. Presenters shared successes and challenges of partnering with entities such as Community-Action agencies, Workforce Development Boards, and the Criminal Justice system – which are at the table in some parts of the country, but harder to engage in others. Panelists cautioned homelessness providers about the limits of developing “shadow systems” for services that other systems are better resourced to provide, as well as the risks of not partnering with sectors that may embark on housing-related initiatives that are not informed by our experience and evidentiary base.

Overall, the conference represented a welcome turn to thinking more intentionally about our work outside of the formal models of RRH, PSH, and TH. “You are already doing it” was a common refrain. The challenge may be how to keep doing “it” but more strategically, more consistently, and more effectively.