



Strategies for Housing High Barrier Clients

Remember Rapid Re-Housing is...

Housing First

People experiencing homelessness deserve housing FIRST, without any precondition (*such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety*).

People are more likely to succeed when no longer in crisis.

Housing Retention Focused

Focused on solving the housing crisis.

Housing Stabilization NOT Poverty Alleviation.

RRH assistance should end and the case should be closed when the participant is able sustain paying rent and managing crisis independently.

Time Limited

Short-term financial and case management services.

Work to become unnecessary.

Client Driven & Strengths Based

Clients lead - we support, guide, and empower. Work alongside the client as a partner. Help them identify their own strengths and successes in their past that can help them with this crisis. Support and trust that people want to succeed. Case management is voluntary.

Shift the conversation from “What can we do to help you?” to “What is your plan to become and remain housed?”

“What was your life like when things were going better?”

Trauma Informed

Emphasize emotional and physical safety. Establish trust. Rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. Minimize the chances of re-traumatizing. Limit exposure to further trauma.

About Making Community Connections

RRH is not intended to be heavy on services, but to provide linkages to community resources that will continue to assist clients after RRH has ended.

Culturally Responsive

Respect the differing world views, perspectives, and experiences of clients and utilize the strengths of their diversity and cultural dynamics.

Successful

Connecticut has an 88% success rate of keeping clients in permanent housing. 12% is not provider failure. The client might just need more intensive services. We tend to remember the most challenging situations. (*Data from 11/1/16-10/31/17*)

Strategies for Housing High Barrier Clients

Housing Identification Strategies:

- Have a separate Housing Coordinator and Case Manager
- Be Creative
- Identify Barriers/Barrier Assessment - Assess client barriers before housing search so you are aware of challenges beforehand.
 - Credit Checks
- Continually maintain and develop a large pool of landlords
 - Bonus if you know details about them (don't do background checks, work with clients with bad credit, etc.)
- Try working with smaller "mom and pop" landlords. They often are far more flexible in screening tenants and negotiating leases than larger property-management companies.
- Highlight benefit that the program provides case management, financial assistance, and connections to community resources.
- Character Letters from trusted or respected third parties.
- Advocacy Letters explaining past rental, credit, or criminal problems.
- [Shared Housing/Roommate](#)
- Landlord Mitigation Funds
- Double Security Deposit
- Trial lease on a Month-Month basis to get in the door.
- Quarterly payments.
- Guarantee a portion of the rent for a certain period of time.
- Master Leasing – Agency signs short-term lease that changes to client after a period of time. (in rare cases)
- Agency Co-Signing – Agency co-signs lease with client short-term that changes to client after a period of time. (in rare cases)
- Protective Payee Programs - hold clients' monthly incomes in escrow accounts managed by third parties, who are responsible for making rent payments directly to landlords on behalf of tenants.
 - "To convince landlords and management companies to relax screening criteria, while at the same enabling program participants to build budgeting and financial management skills."
- Eviction/unlawful detainer guarantees
 - If a landlord has to go through the normally expensive eviction process with a tenant, those programs will cover the landlord's legal costs.
- Housing Search Websites
 - www.cthousingsearch.org
 - www.rent.com
 - www.apartmentlist.com
- [CCEH Landlord Resource Page](#)

Case Management Strategies:

- Build relationship/rapport
- Clarify roles & expectations of RRH program
- Client-Centered approach
- [Motivational Interviewing](#)
- [Trauma Informed Care](#)
- [Cultural Competency & Responsiveness](#)
- Teach Renting, Budgeting, and Life Skills
 - [Teaching Renting – RentWise Curriculum](#)
 - [Financial Literacy Toolkit – "Your Money, Your Goals"](#)

- [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)
- Have an in-depth conversation with clients before they get housed about being a good tenant.
- Community Connections (develop community partner relationships and do warm handoffs)
 - Reconnect with Natural Supports (family, friends, cultural community/community of origin)
 - [STRIVE Program](#) – (Support to Reunite, Involve and Value Each Other)
 - Language/Translation
 - Connect with a translator
 - Connect to cultural community
 - English as a Second Language Classes
 - [Employment/Career Building](#)
 - Secure Jobs
 - American Job Center
 - Temp agencies
 - Apply for Government Benefits
 - SSI/SSDI
 - [SOAR Program](#)
 - Childcare
 - [CT Care 4 Kids](#)
 - [Children in Shelters](#)
 - Head Start
 - Local childcare providers
 - Faith Based Services
 - Political/Community Leaders
 - Transportation
 - [CT Rides Program](#)
 - Bus passes
 - [Connecticut NEMT \(aka Veyo\)](#)
A program to assist HUSKY Health Medicaid members in getting to and from their healthcare appointments
 - Ride share programs
 - Car pooling
 - Health/Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Counseling
 - [Community Health Centers](#)
 - Mental Health Providers
 - Health Insurance (Healthcare.gov, AccessHealthCT.com)
 - Local AA/NA meetings
 - [Substance Use Services](#)
 - [Mental Health Crisis Services](#)
 - Legal Aid
 - [CTLawHelp.org](#)
 - Credit repair
 - Expungement
 - [Immigration Rights and Resources](#)
 - [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#)
 - [Connecticut Fair Housing Center](#) (Housing Discrimination Laws)
 - [Disability Rights Connecticut](#)
 - Court System
 - Partner with probation services
 - Libraries
 - Volunteer programs
 - [Utility Assistance](#)
 - [CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection](#) (DEEP)
 - [CT DEEP Public Utilities Regulatory Authority \(PURA\)](#)

Multiple Evictions Specific Strategies:

- Have patience.
- Speak directly to the landlord.
- Advocate for your client's character and good attributes.
- If questions are raised, be honest about prior evictions.
 - If reason for prior evictions has changed/improved, advocate.
 - "Prior eviction due to loss of income. Client is now in RRH program connected to case management and financial support aimed to help client obtain/maintain housing."
- Target landlords...
 - With compassion and understanding – willing to give someone another chance. Private/Small landlords may be more compassionate.
 - Who don't do background checks and always has availability.

Past Traumas Specific Strategies:

- Speak with client about past trauma and how that can inform the housing search.
- Identify their triggers.
- Identify housing in an area client feels comfortable and safe.
- When appropriate, be transparent with the landlord.

Large Families Specific Strategies:

- Know housing & discrimination laws. Kindly remind landlords if the need arises.
 - It is illegal to discriminate against household composition.
- Explain benefits:
 - Double security deposit before client moves in. Can be used if there are damages to unit.
 - Case manager available for any issues/mediation.
- Try to solicit empathy – "what if this was your family?"
- Highlight positive's characteristics and attributes of client.
- Show [HUD call-to-action letter to landlords](#) in CT about family homelessness.
- Be flexible to house families in smaller settings. (ex: Family of 5 in a 2 bedroom apartment.)
 - Remember that what we prefer and what is reality can differ.
 - Remind client that this is a beginning. It doesn't have to be how you live long-term.

Alcohol or Drug Addiction Specific Strategies:

- Remember housing first. People are more likely to deal with the addiction once they are housed and no longer experiencing the trauma of homelessness.
- Rooming Houses/Room Renting – generally do not conduct invasive background checks.
 - Explain benefits to clients: saving money, building their landlord tenancy rapport by paying rent on time, reminding them this is a stepping stool to their one-bedroom apartment.

Criminal Record/Sex Offender Specific Strategies:

- Target landlord who don't do background checks.
 - Rooming Houses/Room Renting
- Use Sex Offender registries/maps to find where others are able to obtain housing.
- Employment Assistance for people with felony backgrounds:
 - <https://www.jobsforfelonshub.com/jobs-for-felons-by-city-and-state/>
 - <https://www.ranker.com/list/list-of-companies-that-hire-felons/business-and-company-info>
 - <https://secondchancejobsforfelons.com/jobs-for-felons/companies-that-hire-felons>
 - <https://www.careeradict.com/companies-hire-felons>
- Guides for assisting people with felony backgrounds:
 - <https://felonyfriendlyjobs.org/>
 - <https://helpforfelons.org/companies-that-hire-felons/>

Zero-Low Income Specific Strategies:

- Remember Housing First: Clients can work on employment after they are housed. (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)
- Selling Points for Landlords:
 - The point of the RRH program is for the client to obtain and maintain housing. Case manager will be connecting client to employment services while in the beginning RRH program foots the bill.
 - If client needs extended rental assistance beyond program norms, it is possible. We are not in the business to make people homeless. We seek to end it.
 - Assure they are not alone and if client doesn't work out, we can fill unit with another client – preventing loss of income.
- Shared Housing
- Build expectations with clients from beginning.

Undocumented/Immigration Status Specific Strategies:

- Link to community of origin
- Connect to faith-based services or local churches