

Housing First Self-Assessment

Assess and Align Your Program and Community
with a Housing First Approach

**100,000
HOMES**



HIGH PERFORMANCE SERIES

The 100,000 Homes Campaign team identified a cohort of factors that are correlated with higher housing placement rates across campaign communities. The purpose of this High Performance Series of tools is to spotlight best practices and expand the movement's peer support network by sharing this knowledge with every community.

This tool addresses Factor #4: *Evidence that the community has embraced a Housing First/Rapid Rehousing approach system-wide.*

The full series is available at: <http://100khomes.org/resources/high-performance-series>

Housing First Self-Assessment

Assess and Align Your Program with a Housing First Approach

A community can only end homelessness by housing every person who is homeless, including those with substance use and mental health issues. Housing First is a proven approach for housing chronic and vulnerable homeless people. Is your program a Housing First program? Does your community embrace a Housing First model system-wide? To find out, use the Housing First self-assessments in this tool. We've included separate assessments for:

- Outreach programs
- Emergency shelter programs
- Permanent housing programs
- System and community level stakeholder groups

What is Housing First?

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing homeless people with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed. Pioneered by **Pathways to Housing** (www.pathwaystohousing.org) and adopted by hundreds of programs throughout the U.S., Housing First practitioners have demonstrated that virtually all homeless people are “housing ready” and that they can be quickly moved into permanent housing before accessing other common services such as substance abuse and mental health counseling.

Why is this Toolkit Needed?

In spite of the fact that this approach is now almost universally touted as a solution to homelessness and Housing First programs exist in dozens of U.S. cities, few communities have adopted a Housing First approach on a systems-level. This toolkit serves as a starting point for communities who want to embrace a Housing First approach and allows individual programs and the community as a whole to identify where its practices are aligned with Housing First and what areas of its work to target for improvement to more fully embrace a Housing First approach. The toolkit consists of four self-assessments each of which can be completed in under 10 minutes:

- **Housing First in Outreach Programs Self-Assessment** (to be completed by outreach programs)
- **Housing First in Emergency Shelters Self-Assessment** (to be completed by emergency shelters)
- **Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing Self-Assessment** (to be completed by supportive housing providers)
- **Housing First System Self-Assessment** (to be completed by community-level stakeholders such as Continuums of Care and/or government agencies charged with ending homelessness)

How Should My Community Use This Tool?

- **Choose the appropriate Housing First assessment(s)** – Individual programs should choose the assessment that most closely matches their program type while community-level stakeholders should complete the systems assessment
- **Complete the assessment and score your results** – Each assessment includes a simple scoring guide that will tell you the extent to which your program or community is implementing Housing First
- **Share your results with others in your program or community** – To build the political will needed to embrace a Housing First approach, share with other stakeholders in your community
- **Build a workgroup charged with making your program or community more aligned with Housing First** - Put together a work plan with concrete tasks, person(s) responsible and due dates for the steps your program and/or community needs to take to align itself with Housing First and then get started!
- **Send your results and progress to the 100,000 Homes Campaign** – We'd love to hear how you score and the steps you are taking to adopt a Housing First approach!

Who Does This Well?

The following programs in 100,000 Campaign communities currently incorporate Housing First principles into their everyday work:

- **Pathways to Housing** – www.pathwaystohousing.org
- **DESC** – www.desc.org
- **Center for Urban Community Services** – www.cucs.org

Many other campaign communities have also begun to prioritize the transition to a Housing First philosophy system-wide. Campaign contact information for each community is available at <http://100khomes.org/see-the-impact>

Related Tools and Resources

This toolkit was inspired the work done by several colleagues, including the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Pathways to Housing and the Department of Veterans Affairs. For more information on the Housing First efforts of these groups, please visit the following websites:

- **National Alliance to End Homelessness** – www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housingfirst
- **Pathways to Housing** – www.pathwaystohousing.org
- **Veterans Affairs (HUD VASH and Housing First, pages 170-182)** - http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/Center/144_HUD-VASH_Book_WEB_High_Res_final.pdf

For more information and support, please contact Erin Healy, Improvement Advisor - 100,000 Homes Campaign, at ehealy@cmtysolutions.org

Housing First Self-Assessment for Outreach Programs

1. Does your program receive real-time information about vacancies in Permanent Supportive Housing?

- **Yes** = 1 point
- **No** = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

2. The entire process from street outreach (with an engaged client) to move-in to permanent housing typically takes:

- More than 180 days = 0 points
- Between 91 and 179 days = 1 point
- Between 61 and 90 days = 2 points
- Between 31 and 60 days = 3 points
- 30 days or less = 4 points
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

3. Approximately what percentage of chronic and vulnerable homeless people served by your outreach program goes straight into permanent housing (without going through emergency shelter and transitional housing)?

- More than 75% = 5 points
- Between 51% and 75% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 11% and 25% = 2 points
- 10% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

4. Indicate whether priority consideration for your program’s services is given to potential program participants with following characteristics. Check all that apply:

- Participants who demonstrate a high level of housing instability/chronic homelessness
- Participants who have criminal justice records, including currently on probation/parole/court mandate
- Participants who are actively using substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs Participants who do not engage in any mental health or substance treatment services
- Participants who demonstrate instability of mental health symptoms (NOT including those who present danger to self or others)

Checked Five = 5 points

Checked Four = 4 points

Checked Three = 3 points

Checked Two = 2 points

Checked One = 1 point

Checked Zero = 0 points

Total Points Scored:

To calculate your Housing First Score, add the total points scored for each question above, then refer to the key below:

Total Housing First Score:

If you scored: 13 points or more

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being implemented ideally

If you scored between: 10 – 12 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being well-implemented

If you scored between: 7 – 9 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being fairly well-implemented

If you scored between: 4 - 6 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being poorly implemented

If you scored between: 0 – 3 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely not being implemented

Housing First Self-Assessment For Emergency Shelter Programs

1. Does your program receive real-time information about vacancies in Permanent Supportive Housing?

- **Yes** = 1 point
- **No** = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

2. Approximately what percentage of chronic and vulnerable homeless people staying in your emergency shelter go straight into permanent housing without first going through transitional housing?

- More than 75% = 5 points
- Between 51% and 75% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 11% and 25% = 2 points
- 10% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

3. Indicate whether priority consideration for shelter at your program is given to potential program participants with following characteristics. Check all that apply:

- Participants who demonstrate a high level of housing instability/chronic homelessness
- Participants who have criminal justice records, including currently on probation/parole/court mandate
- Participants who are actively using substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs Participants who do not engage in any mental health or substance treatment services
- Participants who demonstrate instability of mental health symptoms (NOT including those who present danger to self or others)

Checked Five = 5 points

Checked Four = 4 points

Checked Three = 3 points

Checked Two = 2 points

Checked One = 1 point

Checked Zero = 0 points

Total Points Scored:

To calculate your Housing First Score, add the total points scored for each question above, then refer to the key below:

Total Housing First Score:

If you scored: 10 points or more

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being implemented ideally

If you scored between: 6 – 9 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being fairly well-implemented

If you scored between: 3 - 5 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being poorly implemented

If you scored between: 0 – 2 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely not being implemented

Housing First Self-Assessment for Permanent Housing Programs

1. Does your program accept applicants with the following characteristics:

a) Active Substance Use

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

b) Chronic Substance Use Issues

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

c) Untreated Mental Illness

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

d) Young Adults (18-24)

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

e) Criminal Background (any)

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

f) Felony Conviction

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

g) Sex Offender or Arson Conviction

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

h) Poor Credit

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

i) No Current Source of Income (pending SSI/DI)

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

<u>Question Section</u>	<u># Points Scored</u>
Active Substance Use	
Chronic Substance Use Issues	
Untreated Mental Illness	
Young Adults (18-24)	
Criminal Background (any)	
Felony Conviction	
Sex Offender or Arson Conviction	
Poor Credit	
No Current Source of Income (pending SSI/DI)	
Total Points Scored in Question #1:	

2. Program participants are required to demonstrate housing readiness to gain access to units?

- No – Program participants have access to housing with no requirements to demonstrate readiness (other than provisions in a standard lease) = **3 points**
- Minimal – Program participants have access to housing with minimal readiness requirements, such as engagement with case management = **2 points**
- Yes – Program participant access to housing is determined by successfully completing a period of time in a program (e.g. transitional housing) = **1 point**
- Yes – To qualify for housing, program participants must meet requirements such as sobriety, medication compliance, or willingness to comply with program rules = **0 points**

Total Points Scored:

3. Indicate whether priority consideration for housing access is given to potential program participants with following characteristics. Check all that apply:

- Participants who demonstrate a high level of housing instability/chronic homelessness
- Participants who have criminal justice records, including currently on probation/parole/court mandate
- Participants who are actively using substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (NOT including dependency or active addiction that compromises safety)
- Participants who do not engage in any mental health or substance treatment services
- Participants who demonstrate instability of mental health symptoms (NOT including those who present danger to self or others)

Checked Five = 5 points

Checked Four = 4 points

Checked Three = 3 points

Checked Two = 2 points

Checked One = 1 point

Checked Zero = 0 points

Total Points Scored:

4. Indicate whether program participants must meet the following requirements to ACCESS permanent housing. Check all that apply:

- Complete a period of time in transitional housing, outpatient, inpatient, or other institutional setting / treatment facility
- Maintain sobriety or abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs
- Comply with medication
- Achieve psychiatric symptom stability
- Show willingness to comply with a treatment plan that addresses sobriety, abstinence, and/or medication compliance
- Agree to face-to-face visits with staff

Checked Six = 6 points

Checked Five = 5 points

Checked Four = 4 points

Checked Three = 3 points

Checked Two = 2 points

Checked One = 1 point

Checked Zero = 0 points

Total Points Scored:

To calculate your Housing First Score, add the total points scored for each question above, then refer to the key below:

Total Housing First Score:

If you scored: 21 points or more

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being implemented ideally

If you scored between: 15-20 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being well-implemented

If you scored between: 10 – 14 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being fairly well-implemented

If you scored between: 5 - 9 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being poorly implemented

If you scored between: 0 – 4 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely not being implemented

Housing First Self-Assessment For Systems & Community-Level Stakeholders

1. Does your community set outcome targets around permanent housing placement for your outreach programs?

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

2. For what percentage of your emergency shelters does your community set specific performance targets related to permanent housing placement?

- 90% or more = 4 points
- Between 51% and 89% = 3 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 2 points
- 25% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

3. Considering all of the funding sources for supportive housing, what percentage of your vacancies in existing permanent supportive housing units are dedicated for people who meet the definition of chronic and/or vulnerable homeless?

- 90% or more = 4 points
- Between 51% and 89% = 3 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 2 points
- 25% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

4. Considering all of the funding sources for supportive housing, what percentage of new supportive housing units are dedicated for people who meet the definition of chronic and/or vulnerable homeless?

- 90% or more = 4 points
- Between 51% and 89% = 3 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 2 points
- Between 1% and 25% = 1 point
- 0% (we do not dedicate any units to this population) = 0 points
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

5. Does your community have a formal commitment from your local Public Housing Authority to provide a preference (total vouchers or turn-over vouchers) for homeless individuals and/or families?

- Yes, a preference equal to 25% or more of total or turn-over vouchers = 4 points
- Yes, a preference equal to 10% - 24% or more of total or turn-over = 3 points
- Yes, a preference equal to 5% - 9% or more of total or turn-over = 2 points
- Yes, a preference equal to less than 5% or more of total or turn-over = 1 point
- No, we do not have an annual set-aside = 0 points
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

6. Has your community mapped out its housing placement process from outreach to move-in (e.g. each step in the process as well as the average time needed for each step has been determined)?

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

7. Does your community have a Coordinated Housing Placement System or Single Point of Access into permanent supportive housing?

- Yes = 1 point
- Partial = ½ point
- No = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

8. Does your community have a Coordinated Housing Placement System or Single Point of Access into permanent subsidized housing (e.g. Section 8 and other voucher programs)?

- Yes = 1 point
- Partial = ½ point
- No = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

9. Does your community have different application/housing placement processes for different populations and/or different funding sources? If so, how many separate processes does your community have?

- 5 or more processes = 0 points
- 3-4 processes = 1 point
- 2 processes = 2 points
- 1 process for all populations = 3 points

Number of Points Scored:

10. The entire process from street outreach (with an engaged client) to move-in to permanent housing typically takes:

- More than 180 days = 0 points
- Between 91 and 179 days = 1 point
- Between 61 and 90 days = 2 points
- Between 31 and 60 days = 3 points
- 30 days or less = 4 points
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

11. Approximately what percentage of homeless people living on the streets go straight into permanent housing (without going through emergency shelter and transitional housing)?

- More than 75% = 5 points
- Between 51% and 75% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 11% and 25% = 2 points
- 10% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

12. Approximately what percentage of homeless people who stay in emergency shelters go straight into permanent housing without first going through transitional housing?

- More than 75% = 5 points
- Between 51% and 75% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 11% and 25% = 2 points
- 10% or less = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

13. Within a given year, approximately what percentage of your community's chronic and/or vulnerable homeless population who exit homelessness, exits into permanent supportive housing?

- More than 85% = 5 points
- Between 51% and 85% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 10% and 24% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

14. In a given year, approximately what percentage of your community's chronic and/or vulnerable homeless population exiting homelessness, exits to Section 8 or other long-term subsidy (with limited or no follow-up services)?

- More than 50% = 4 points
- Between 26% and 50% = 3 points
- Between 10% and 25% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 point
- Unknown = 0 points

Number of Points Scored:

15. Approximately what percentage of your permanent supportive housing providers will accept applicants with the following characteristics:

a) Active Substance Use

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

b) Chronic Substance Use Issues

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

c) Untreated Mental Illness

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

d) Young Adults (18-24)

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

e) Criminal Background (any)

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

f) Felony Conviction

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

g) Sex Offender or Arson Conviction

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

h) Poor Credit

- Over 75% = 5 points
- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

i) No Current Source of Income (pending SSI/DI)

- Over 75% = 5 points

- 75%-51% = 4 points
- 50%-26% = 3 points
- 25%-10% = 2 points
- Less than 10% = 1 points
- Unknown = 0 points

<u>Question Section</u>	<u># Points Scored</u>
Active Substance Use	
Chronic Substance Use Issues	
Untreated Mental Illness	
Young Adults (18-24)	
Criminal Background (any)	
Felony Conviction	
Sex Offender or Arson Conviction	
Poor Credit	
No Current Source of Income (pending SSI/DI)	
Total Points Scored in Question #17:	

To calculate your Housing First Score, add the total points scored for each question above, then refer to the key below:

Total Housing First Score:

If you scored: 77 points or more

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being implemented ideally

If you scored between: 57 – 76 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being well-implemented

If you scored between: 37 – 56 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being fairly well-implemented

If you scored between: 10 – 36 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely being poorly implemented

If you scored under 10 points

- ✓ Housing First principles are likely not being implemented