

HOME IS WHERE THE START IS

# HOUSING FIRST

A Proven Approach to Ending Homelessness

## 6 PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING FIRST<sup>1</sup>

1.

### RAPID HOUSING

Clients are given access to secure and permanent housing as quickly as possible, which can then be used as a platform for improving their lives.

2.

### CHOICE OF HOUSING

Clients are not forced into any one housing scenario, but one that will work for them. It is crucial that communities have a variety of housing options in order to meet people's needs.

3.

### CHOICE OF SERVICES

Aside from regular visits from support workers, clients can choose to accept any other services, such as treatment or sobriety, on their own free will.

4.

### TENANCY RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Clients are required to contribute a portion of their own income, usually around 30%, towards the rent. The client has the rights of any tenant, and must establish a relationship with the landlord.

5.

### INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY

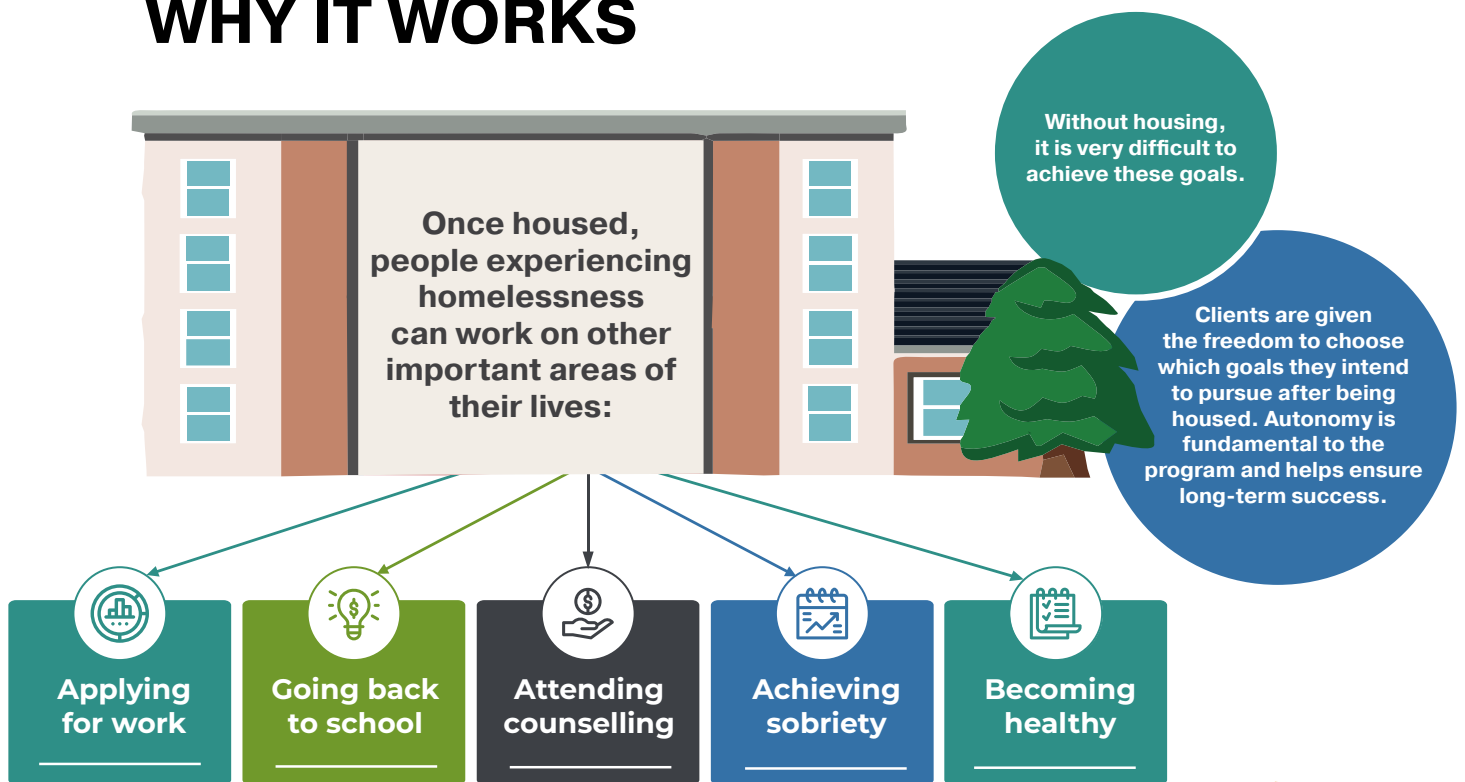
Housing is or should be scattered within the community, not isolated, to minimize stigma and maximize social integration.

6.

### PROMOTION OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

With housing and then with supports for self-determined goals, it is hoped that the client will become self-sufficient and allow a successful exit from the program.

## WHY IT WORKS



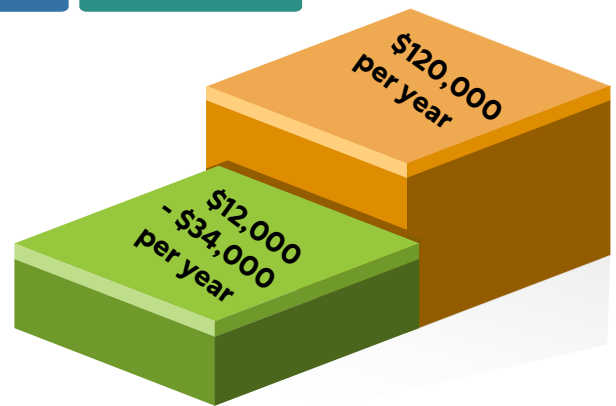
## THE COSTS<sup>2</sup>

In Medicine Hat, AB, where a Housing First strategy has allowed them to functionally end chronic homelessness, the following costs were reported in 2019:

**\$120,000** per year per person to support them on the street

VS

**\$12,000 - \$34,000** per year per person to provide housing and support



## THE RESULTS



### Reduced Homelessness

Utilizing a Housing First model, Finland has been able to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness from around 20,000 in the 1980's to 4,341 in 2021.<sup>3</sup>



### Reduced Substance Use

Recent U.S. studies indicate that Housing First participants are more likely to report decreased substance use.<sup>4</sup>



### Reduced Healthcare Costs

U.S. studies also show that Housing First participants experience reduced hospital visits, admissions, and duration of hospital stays.<sup>4</sup>



### Increased Overall Wellbeing

A study of Australian Housing First programs showed high rates of housing retention, improved wellbeing, high engagement with employment and community, and reductions in health, justice and homelessness service use.<sup>5</sup>

Sources:

1. Infrastructure Canada, "Housing First"
2. Leif Gregersen, Next City, August 11, 2022, "How A Small Canadian City Took On Chronic Homelessness"
3. The Y Foundation, "Housing First in Finland"
4. National Low Income Housing Coalition & National Alliance to End Homelessness, "The Case For Housing First"
5. Social Ventures Australia, "Housing First: the challenges of moving from pilot to policy"

Infographic made by Sticks Marketing