

HOME IS WHERE THE START IS

HOUSING FIRST

A Proven Approach to Ending Homelessness

6 PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING FIRST¹

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

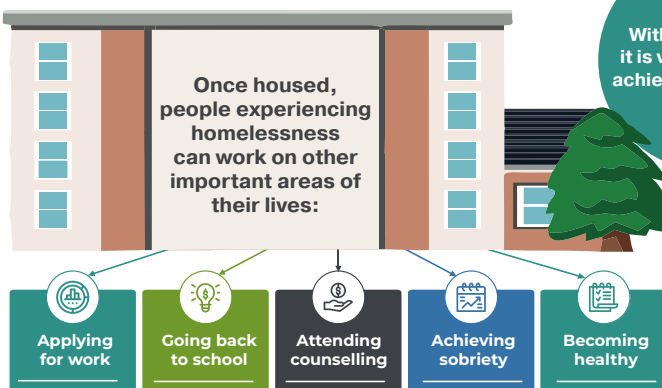
Housing is or should be scattered within the community, not isolated, to minimize stigma and maximize social integration.

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



Without housing, it is very difficult to achieve these goals.

Clients are given the freedom to choose which goals they intend to pursue after being housed. Autonomy is fundamental to the program and helps ensure long-term success.

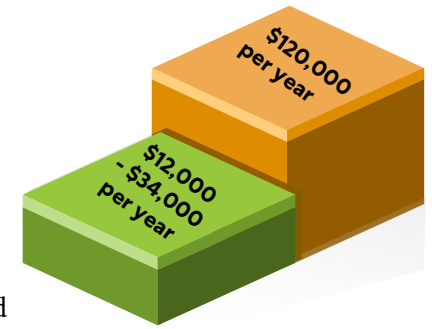
THE COSTS²

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 2021.³



Reduced Substance Use

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



Reduced Healthcare Costs

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



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.⁵

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