

Rapid Re-Housing at Scale in Connecticut: New London Homeless Hospitality Center Pilot Program

Rapid Re-Housing is a promising approach to end certain cases of homelessness. Rapid Re-Housing provides targeted financial assistance and short-term services to individuals and families in emergency shelters who need temporary assistance to secure and retain housing. Rapid Re-Housing does not meet the needs of every person who experiences homelessness, but is an important option for many who have relatively low barriers to independent housing.

In this CT Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) Brief, we report on the experience of New London Homeless Hospitality Center's implementation of Rapid Re-Housing at a scale substantial enough to have several important and positive effects on clients and the shelter. Through this pilot, NLHHC:

- Re-housed relatively large numbers of shelter clients over a short period of time;
- Shortened average length of time clients were homeless in this shelter; and
- Reduced shelter census substantially over the period of at-scale implementation.

Rapid Re-Housing freed up shelter beds, reduced shelter overcrowding, freed staff time to provide more intensive service for those with greater needs, and allowed those rehoused to escape homelessness more quickly.

New London Homeless Hospitality

New London Homeless Hospitality Center (NLHHC) is the largest shelter for single adults in New London County, which accounts for approximately 10% of Connecticut's homeless population. In February 2012, NLHCC accessed special funding through the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) and the New London County Fund to End Homelessness that allowed for a pilot Rapid Re-Housing program based on national best practices.

Program Implementation

NLHHC targeted for rapid re-housing all shelter clients with income who did not have long-term disabling conditions and/or the history of chronic homelessness that would indicate a need for more intensive resources, such as permanent supportive housing.

Episodic and one-time homelessness is a significant part of the problem. Many cases of homelessness are the result of limited income, a changing labor market and even bad luck. We need a system that includes short-term interventions to help this group cope and get back on their feet. Rapid rehousing is the number one tool in this effort.

– Rev. Cathy Zall, NLHHC

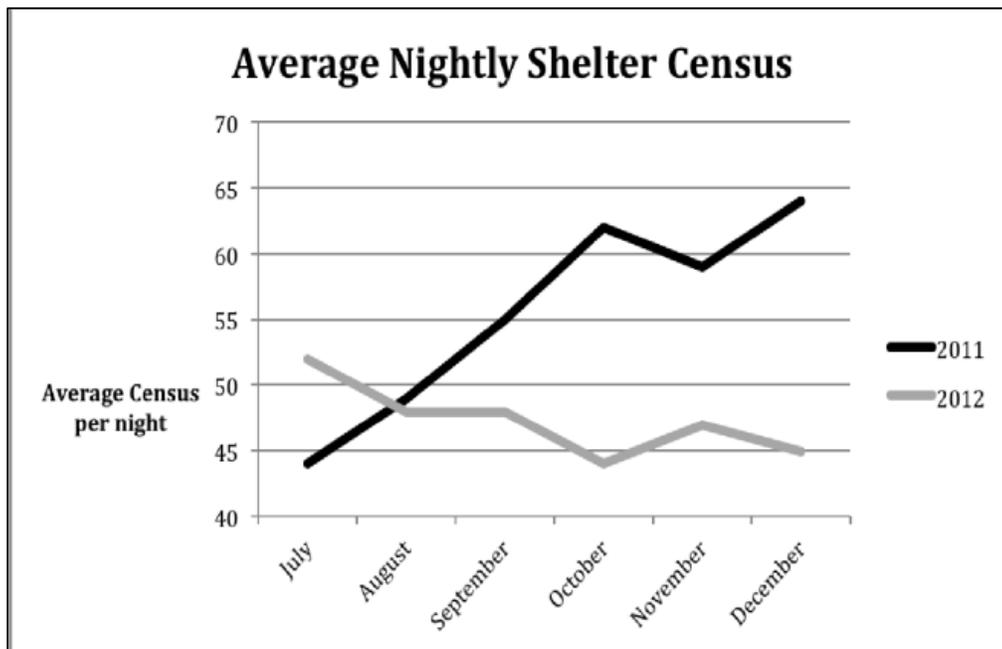
Shelter staff engaged clients in planning for re-housing as soon as possible after entry to shelter. A dedicated housing coordinator identified housing options and advocated for clients with landlords. Financial assistance was provided to alleviate the need for long shelter stays that typically occur while very low-income individuals try to save enough money to cover the security deposit and first month’s rent required by most landlords. Average total financial assistance per client was just under \$1,000. NLHHC made available follow-up case management to those who sought such assistance, but did not require follow-up services.

Program Outputs and Outcomes

Number served: Over a five-month period, New London Homeless Hospitality Center re-housed fifty-three (53) individuals who had been homeless and in shelter.

Shelter Census (Figure 1): Before the Rapid Re-Housing initiative was initiated, the July 2012 nightly shelter census was almost 25% **higher** than the year before. During the period of rapid rehousing program implementation, the nightly shelter census was reduced well **below** the average nightly census for the same period in the previous year without any other changes in shelter admissions policy. With rapid re-housing, the shelter was able to meet the annual increase in winter shelter demand without being forced to open overflow beds.

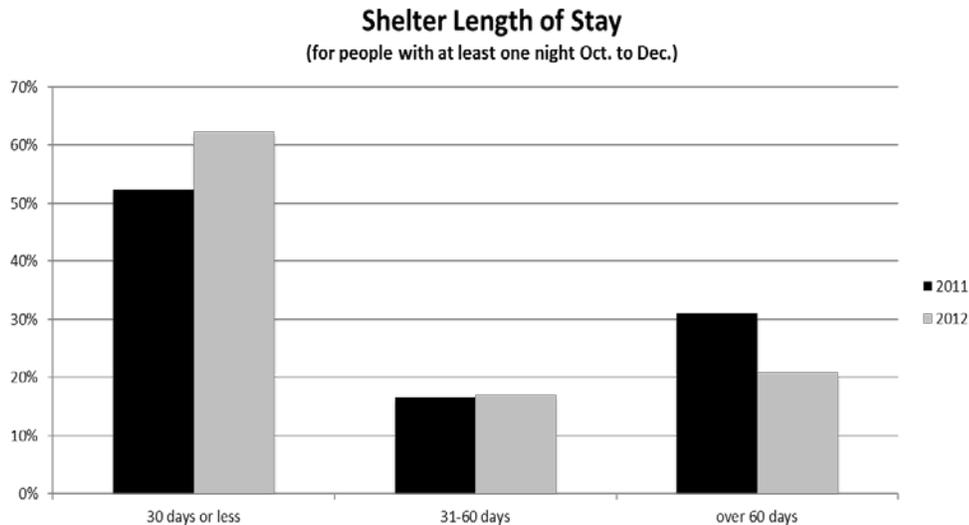
Figure 1: Average Nightly Shelter Census Year over Year comparison



Source: New London Homeless Hospitality Center, 2012

Length of Stay: Length of stay for single adults decreased compared to the previous non-program year. As Figure 2 shows, during implementation of the program, the number of those who remained homeless and in shelter more than 60 days dropped by more than 10 percentage points, while the number of those sheltered less than 30 days increased by more than 10 percentage points.

Figure 2: Length of Stay as Impacted by Rapid Re-Housing



Source: New London Homeless Hospitality Center, 2012

Did those re-housed stay housed?

Consistent with national data and Connecticut’s previous experience with Rapid Re-Housing, ([Where Are They Now? Three Years Later, Did Rapid Re-Housing Work in Connecticut?](#) CCEH Brief, October 2013), the great majority of clients re-housed through the NLHHC intensive RRH pilot (MORETHANover 70%) had not returned to homelessness approximately one year after re-housing.

Conclusion

The Reverend Cathy Zall, Executive Director of NLHHC, said that for participants in the program, “We know that housing is the answer to homelessness. Rapid Re-Housing allows guests with income to get back into housing much more quickly. This in turn means a greater ability to maintain employment, improved health, and a higher quality of life.”

For the shelter, Rapid Re-Housing reduces shelter length of stay, freeing up beds for others in need. An additional benefit of the program: by helping those who could exit homelessness through Rapid Re-Housing to do so as quickly as possible, NLHHC was able to free up case management resources to help those who needed more intensive assistance and support.



Further Reading

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