

WHAT REALLY WORKS IN HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION: LESSONS FROM LITERATURE AND THE FIELD

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2019



MODERATOR




Jill Khadduri

Principal Associate, Abt Associates

Director, Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness

- Marybeth Shinn will provide highlights of the research evidence on what works
 - Based on her synthesis of the literature on homelessness prevention
 - Literature review and this webinar are supported by the Melville Charitable Trust
- Three community practitioners will discuss how that evidence relates to their prevention programs

WEBINAR BASICS

- To minimize background noise, all attendees will be muted for the duration of the webinar.
- Use the chat feature to let us know if you are having technical problems during the webinar. 
- Use the Q&A panel to submit your questions at any time during the presentation.
- This webinar will be recorded and posted online at a later date.

AGENDA

- Presentation of Research on Homelessness Prevention
- Community Practitioner Perspectives
 - Montgomery County, PA
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - Columbus, OH
- Panelist Discussion
- Participant Q&A
- Wrap-up

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH



SPEAKER



Marybeth Shinn

Professor, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

- Targeting prevention to those at highest risk
- Programs with strong evidence of effectiveness
- Additional approaches with some evidence

UNIVERSAL VS. TARGETED PREVENTION

- Universal prevention addresses social conditions that produce homelessness
- Targeted prevention addresses people at special risk. It needs to be:
 - Effective – it should help people to find and maintain stable housing
 - Efficient – it should allocate assistance to people most likely to benefit
 - At a community level, it should reduce homelessness, not just reallocate it to people pushed down on waiting lists

EFFICIENT PREVENTION

- Statistical models, based on data, can help allocate prevention assistance
- Every study that has looked finds that services have the largest impact for those with greatest need rather than those most “worthy” or those deemed most likely to sustain housing
- Low failure rates may mean that services are targeting people who would not have become homeless without them

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES: STRONG EVIDENCE

- Permanent, deep rental subsidies
 - End homelessness for people who experience it
 - Prevent homelessness for people who are at risk
 - Have largest benefits for people at highest risk
 - At a community level, reduce shelter censuses

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES: STRONG EVIDENCE

- Eviction prevention is effective, but targets people at relatively low risk
 - Financial assistance reduces homelessness
 - Legal representation and mediation help preserve tenancy and may reduce homelessness
- Community-based services (e.g. New York's HomeBase)
 - Prevented shelter entry for applicants for prevention services
 - Reduced homelessness in communities served
- Both have prevention efforts have larger effects for people at higher risk

ADDITIONAL APPROACHES

- Critical Time Intervention (CTI) with structured, time-limited services including housing assistance helps people discharged from psychiatric institutions
 - More research on other populations would be useful
- The Veterans' Administration screens all vets who receive health services for housing stability, and refers people to prevention services
 - This probably contributed to the reduction in veteran homelessness
 - Screening other high-risk populations could be useful
- Permanent shallow subsidies may work
 - Communities should experiment with different structures of subsidies

COMMUNITY PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

Montgomery County, PA



Columbus, OH



Los Angeles, CA



SPEAKER



Emma Hertz

Program Office Administrator, Office of Housing and
Community Development, Montgomery County, PA

- Community-level data analysis showed that 60% of evictions were concentrated in 2 of 66 zip codes
- Eviction Prevention and Intervention Coalition (EPIC) now provides free, on-site legal representation to tenants facing eviction, plus social services and financial assistance to pay arrearages. EPIC was rolled out in one courtroom only, corresponding to the zip code with highest rate of evictions.
- 85% of evictions were prevented in first year of pilot project (66 of 78 households)

SPEAKER



Sarah Mahin

Director of Policy & Systems, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Los Angeles, CA

- Solid Ground Initiative pilot program: “upstream” prevention for families in one of the highest-risk zip codes in LA region
- Proactive outreach (including landlords) and screening tool adapted from SSVF (which was adapted from HomeBase)
- City’s mainstream family services program (Family Source Centers) uses screening tool and provides legal services, mediation, and non-financial support
- Will evaluate comparing rates of family homelessness to other high-risk zip codes

SPEAKER



Tom Albanese

Associate Director, Community Shelter Board, Columbus, OH

- **Linked, two-prong approach:**
 - Community-based homelessness prevention system, with defined access points, standardized risk assessment, referral protocols (under dev – piloting in high-risk neighborhood)
 - Targeted homelessness prevention “hub” at front end of homeless crisis response system; focus on particular populations (families, veterans, pregnant women) based on available funding
- **Local standardized risk typology and assessment tool**
 - Similar to shelter diversion screening, seeks to answer: Does household have other safe, appropriate option tonight or after losing current housing? Will household be/become literally homeless “but for” intervention?
 - Focus on current housing situation, alternative housing options, and resources circumstances to discern risk, need, and urgency
- **Targeted Diversion/HP for families July-Sept 2018:**
 - Second stage/intensive diversion (post-Hotline diversion attempt): 33% (203 families) diverted
 - Targeted HP: 53% (159 families) needed financial assistance; (avg \$1,366), 71% exited to permanent housing

PANELIST DISCUSSION



PARTICIPANT Q&A



THANK YOU!



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