



Housing First FAQs

What is Housing First?

Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

What are the requirements for an individual to qualify for housing?

People experiencing homelessness are offered permanent housing with no programmatic preconditions such as demonstration of sobriety, completion of alcohol or drug treatment, or agreeing to comply with a treatment regimen upon entry into the program. People are also not required to first enter a transitional housing program in order to enter permanent housing.

Is it mandatory for individuals to accept supportive services?

Supportive services are proactively offered to help tenants achieve and maintain housing stability, but tenants are not required to participate in services as a condition of tenancy. Techniques such as harm reduction and motivational interviewing may be useful. Harm reduction techniques can confront and mitigate the harms of drug and alcohol use through non-judgmental communication while motivational interviewing may be useful in helping households acquire and utilize new skills and information.

What rights, responsibilities and legal protections do tenants have?

The ultimate goal of the Housing First approach is to help people experiencing homelessness achieve long-term housing stability in permanent housing. Permanent housing is defined as housing where tenants have leases that confer the full rights, responsibilities, and legal protections under Federal, state, and local housing laws. Tenants are educated about their lease terms, given access to legal assistance, and encouraged to exercise their full legal rights and responsibilities.

City Officials Welcome New RAW Participants

Riverside at Work (RAW) participants were recently welcomed during a City Council session to update City Council members and City officials on the status of Riverside's new job training program for homeless individuals. The RAW participants attending the meeting were Faith Lyndsey, Andrew Gullett, Alejandro Mendoza, and Christina French. RAW is a job-readiness and training program for Riverside residents who are both homeless and unemployed. Employment is a catalyst to self-sufficiency, therefore the program is designed to empower individuals to reintegrate into the workforce. Each participant receives wrap-around supportive services that are specifically tailored to their needs. Monica Sapien, Homeless Services Coordinator said, "All of these factors will ultimately enhance quality of life, self-esteem, and self-image, as the participants take crucial steps to become self-sufficient."



Pictured left to right: Paul Flores, Health to Hope Outreach Director, Faith Lindsey, Andrew Gullett, Christina French, Alejandro Mendoza, RAW participants, and Mike Whitham, City of Riverside Homeless Outreach Specialist.

The City was awarded \$10,000 through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to launch the employment program. In addition, Altura Credit Union, which was a flagship sponsor of the 2017 Walk to End Homelessness, also committed a three year sponsorship to RAW. The locally-based financial institution is contributing \$25,000 the first year, \$30,000 the second year, and \$35,000 the third year. Along with funding from Altura and the CDBG, and Riverside County Workforce Development are providing training programs and targeted employment services. The agencies are also collecting local data on workforce trends, in-demand occupations, and high-growth industries, which is an innovative approach to ensuring sustainability of the program. Emilio Ramirez, Deputy Director of the City's Community & Economic Development Department, who continues to recruit businesses and agencies to support the program, said, "The social cohesion and willingness of the diverse range of businesses and agencies to partner with RAW serves for the common good of the entire community."

Beautification of the grounds of the Riverside Access Center on Hulen Place was the first project for the RAW participants. But, the project's organizers said they will eventually begin landscaping and beautification projects in the community and around local businesses. "Our goal is for RAW participants to contribute to the community. We believe that as the program and its participants continue to emerge, local businesses will embrace the concept, promote it, and ultimately stimulate the program's growth," said Michelle Davis, City of Riverside Housing Authority Manager.

For more information about how to serve as a sponsor for RAW contact Emilio Ramirez at ERamirez@RiversideCA.gov or (951) 826-5381.

Calendar of Events

Fill the Hangers Clothing & Accessories Drive

Donate your gently or never worn professional apparel to a man or woman exiting the streets and entering the workforce.

Riverside Access Center • 2880 Hulen Pl.

Donations Accepted:

Tues. - Thurs. each week • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Homeless Care Network Meetings

César Chávez Community Center
2060 University Ave.

Third Thursday of each month
9:00 a.m.

BIA Affordable Housing & Homelessness Discussion

A discussion on affordable housing and its impact on homelessness and the development industry.

Hear a variety of perspectives from several different agencies that serve Riverside County.

Bellatrix Classic Club
75200 Classic Club Blvd.,
Palm Desert, CA 92211

Wednesday, September 20, 2017 from
11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Contact:

Erica Harnik at 760-574-0753
or Eharnik@Riversidebia.org

Our Mission

The City of Riverside Housing Authority is dedicated to rebuilding lives through resources promoting self-sufficiency and lifelong connections.



Monthly Housing Definition

“The Continuum of Care (CoC)”

(HUD Definition): HUD's local planning process, which requires that each community use a single comprehensive planning process when applying for HUD funding. The CoC evaluates community needs and makes plans to deliver housing and services to meet those needs.

The Continuum of Care for Riverside County provides homeless assistance by leveraging funding needed through the HUD Consolidated Application. This provides collaboration between providers of housing and homeless assistance programs and other federal programs.

Rita's Success Story

Restoration of Life and Purpose



Rita, a female in her early fifties returned home from work one day, to be greeted by her husband of 25 years. He informed her that their marriage was over and walked out on her and their adopted child. Rita fell into a deep depression, quit her long-time job, and stopped attending social events and visiting with friends. The downward spiral eventually caused Rita's child to leave and go live with extended family.

At the height of the foreclosure crisis, Rita lost her Riverside home and began living in her car. Her depression worsened and she began experiencing delusions and hallucinations. Further, her deteriorating mental health intensified her distrust of strangers.

The City's Homeless Outreach team engaged Rita while she was at a local fast-food restaurant. Initially, she refused to have a conversation with the Team members. A few days later, they saw Rita again. They gave her a gift card to purchase a meal at a fast-food restaurant. This small gesture broke the ice for Rita to begin trusting members of the Outreach Team. After a brief conversation, Rita was offered services and shelter. Although, she refused services that day, Rita committed to meeting with the Outreach Team again.

After several meetings, Rita finally confided in the Outreach Team about the heartbreaking circumstances that led to her dismal circumstances. The Team set and maintained a schedule to meet with Rita three times each week. Through these consistent engagements, the Team was able to connect her with medical care, psychiatric services, and arrange for storage of all of her belongings. After one year of steady contact with the City's Outreach Team, Rita moved into the City's Supportive Housing Program where she received active case management and the support she needed to maintain her mental and physical health and housing.

As Rita began to achieve self-sufficiency again, she gave back to the community that helped her by volunteering with a local health care agency two days each week, and she became certified as an Emergency Response Coordinator. Most importantly, she was able to repair and re-build the relationship with her son and extended family.

Rita eventually decided she was ready and able to transition out of the City's Supportive Housing Program and become fully self-sufficient. She moved out-of-state to be closer to her son and family. Before she left Riverside, Rita thanked the City's Outreach Team, and all who aided her in “getting her life back and giving her a purpose again.”



Agency Spotlight

*Alternatives to Domestic Violence
Dedicated to Hope and Empowerment*



According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, domestic violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for many women. Survivors of domestic violence are often isolated from support networks and financial resources by their abusers, which puts them at risk of becoming homeless. As a result, they may lack steady income, employment history, credit history, and landlord references.

When a woman decides to leave an abusive relationship, she often has nowhere to go. She must choose to stay in her dysfunctional situation or abscond to life on the streets. Fortunately, since 1978, Alternatives to Domestic Violence (ADV) has helped make the choice easier for domestic violence victims. Each year, more than 6,000 battered women find the courage to flee their abusers, and find the obscured shelter, which offers refuge for them and their children.

The mission of ADV is to improve the quality of life, and create optimism by ending the cycle of domestic violence through services and education for residents of Riverside County. Florence White, Chief Executive Officer of ADV said, “Most homeless women have been victims of domestic violence, but ADV fosters the confidence, and offers support, services and shelter domestic violence victims need to regain control of their lives.”

National Network to End Domestic Violence cites that approximately 63% of homeless women have experienced domestic violence in their adult lives which strips them of normalcy. But, White said, “ADV strives to restore families' routines as much as possible.” The agency has structured a home-like environment for the victims and their children, allowing each mother to prepare meals for her family in a communal kitchen, and ensuring that families remain together in the same sleeping quarters.

Unfortunately, shelters are frequently filled to capacity and must turn away battered women and their children leading them to chronic or stints of homelessness. ADV has capacity for 60 beds. Currently, the agency is housing 14 women and 42 children, which leaves very little space for new intakes. “We have a \$1 million annual budget, and we need an additional \$1 million to address the needs of domestic violence victims, but we rarely turn people away. If necessary we will set-up empty spaces such as our library to accommodate families,” said White.

The agency's website sums up how the public can help, “When you get involved, you make a difference in the lives of thousands of survivors affected by domestic violence each day. We want to support more survivors during their healing journey and give more families hope. There are so many ways for you to join us in our mission dedicated to providing hope, empowerment, and critical resources to those in need.”

To learn more about giving or volunteering for Alternatives to Domestic Violence visit the agency's website at Alternativestodv.org or call **(951) 320-1370**.

For homeless supportive services
please contact or visit the

Riverside Access Center

2880 Hulen Place • Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 826-2200

HomelessHelp@RiversideCA.gov
Endhomeless.info