

Rental Assistance Briefing

MULTNOMAH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MARCH 12, 2019

Briefing Overview

Rental Assistance Context

- Need
- Federal Need & Investment
- Research & Planning
- Distinguishing Features of Rental Assistance Programs

Long Term Rental Assistance Programs

- Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Local Long-Term Voucher Program

Short Term Rental Assistance Programs

- Short Term Rental Assistance Program
- Multnomah Stability Initiative
- Rapid Rehousing

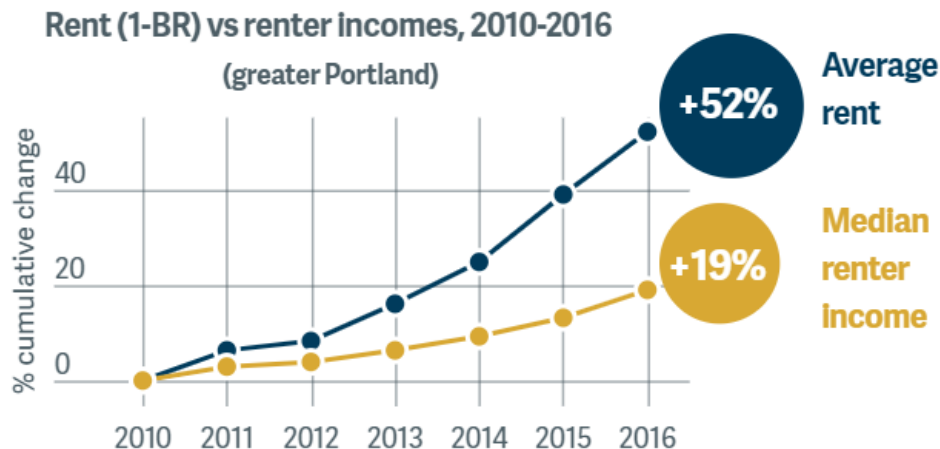
Concluding Policy Considerations

Rental Assistance in Context: Need

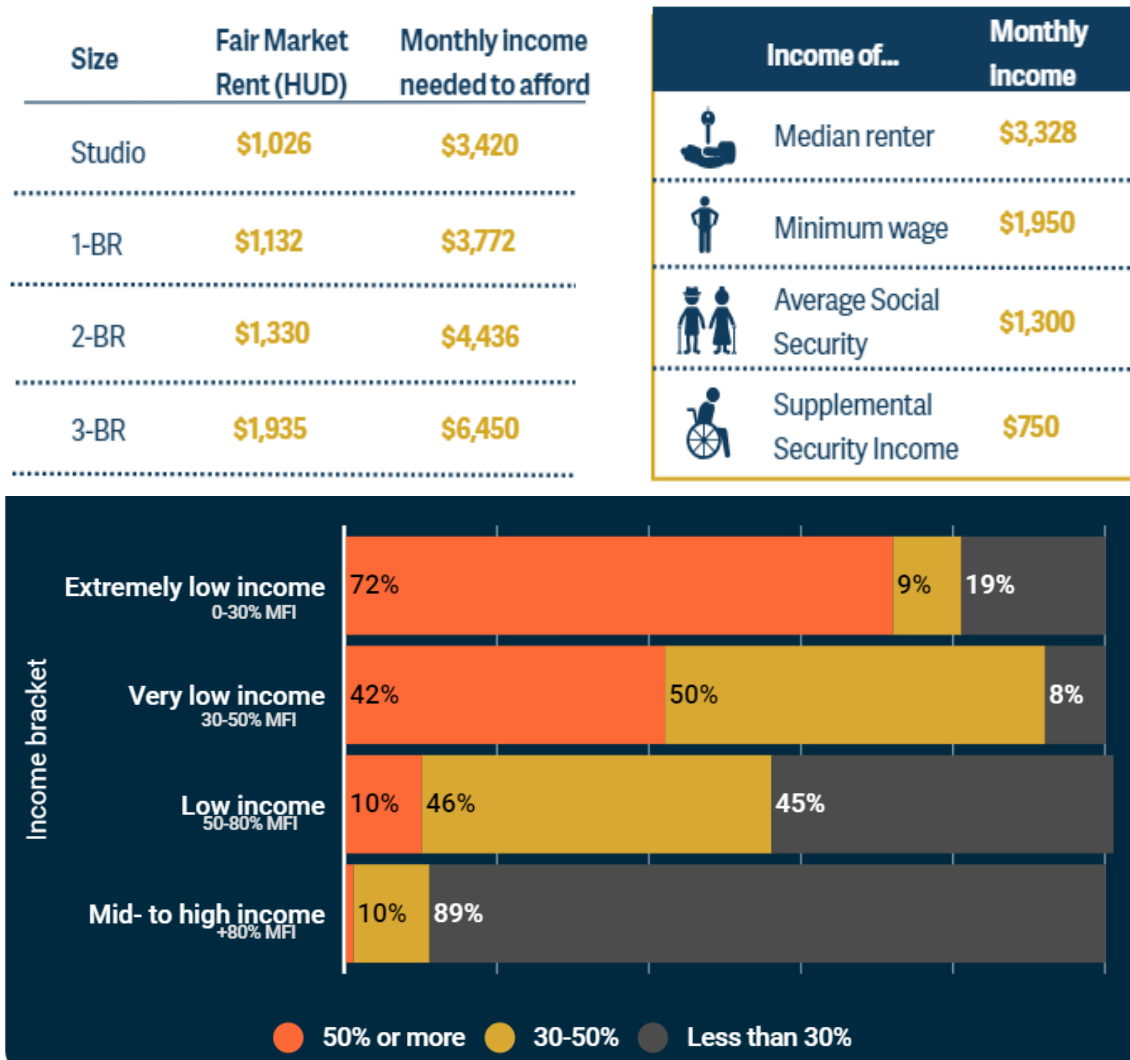
2 out of 5 households in greater Portland rent their homes.



Rents have risen
far faster than
renters' incomes
over the past
several years.

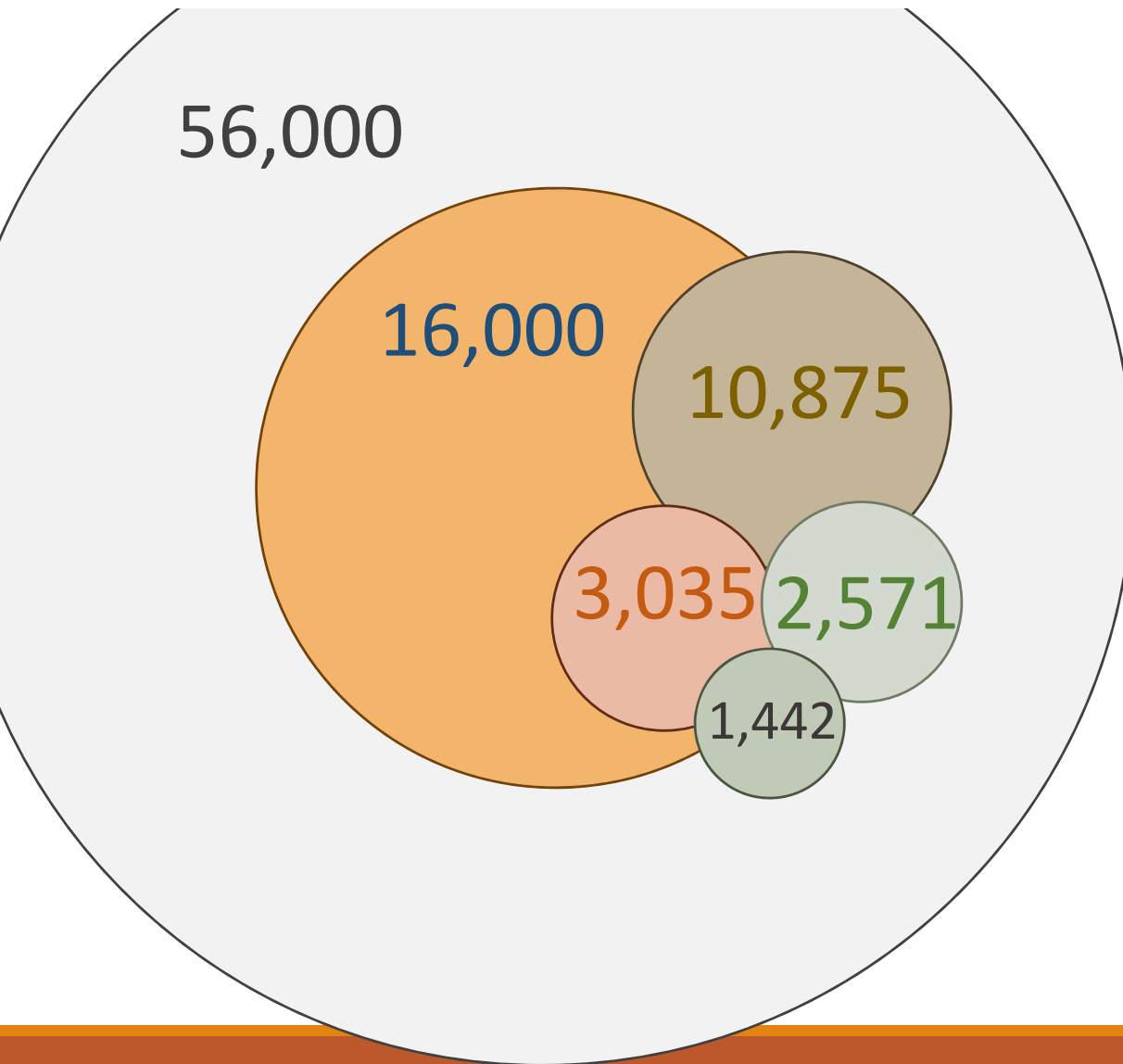


Rental Assistance in Context: Need



Metro. You are here: A snapshot of Portland's need for affordable housing. April 2018.

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/you-are-here-snapshot-greater-portlands-need-affordable-housing>. Accessed March 2019.



56,000 Households Regionally

- Very low income
- >50% to rent
- no assistance

~16,000 HH applied for Home Forward Section 8 waitlist

- 3,000 added to waitlist by lottery

10,875 HH on Home Forward public housing wait list

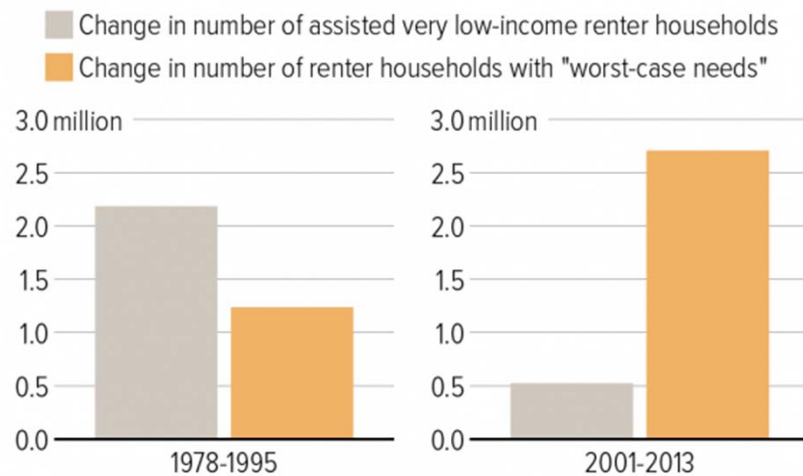
2,571 HH on adult coordinated access list

1,442 HH on family coordinated access list

Rental Assistance in Context: Federal

- Nationally we lack 7.2 million units affordable to extremely low income households (Harvard, 2018)
- “From 1987 to 2015, the number of [very low income] households grew by 6 million, while the number receiving housing assistance increased by only 950,000.” (Harvard, 2018)

Expansion of Rental Assistance Slowed As Need Rose



Note: An assisted very low-income renter household is one whose income does not exceed 50 percent of area median family income, and receives rental assistance. A household has "worst-case needs" if it has very low income, either pays more than half its income for rental housing costs or lives in severely substandard housing, and is unassisted.

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development.

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

Rental Assistance Research: It Works

“Rapid Re-Housing Is The Most Promising Of The Crisis

Interventions: According to the Study, rapid re-housing stands out as the program most capable of helping the greatest number of families exit homelessness in the shortest time possible. It is also the least expensive.” (NAEH, 2015 analysis of Family Options Study).

“Research on rapid re-housing is still emerging. To date, it shows that the model has been successful in helping families and veterans exit homeless shelters to live in housing units in the private rental market faster than they would on their own and for lower cost.

Most families and veterans do not become homeless again; though many struggle with ongoing housing affordability, like other low income renters.” (Urban Institute, 2018)

*“The striking impacts of [a long-term housing voucher] in reducing subsequent stays in shelters or places not meant for human habitation provide support for the view that **homelessness is for many families a housing affordability problem that can be remedied with permanent subsidies without specialized homeless-specific psychosocial services.”***
(Family Options Study, 2015)

Rental Assistance: Part of the Plan(s)



7. Make the rent assistance system more effective.

We will effectively coordinate existing rent assistance programs to sustain homeless people in permanent housing once they are placed there.

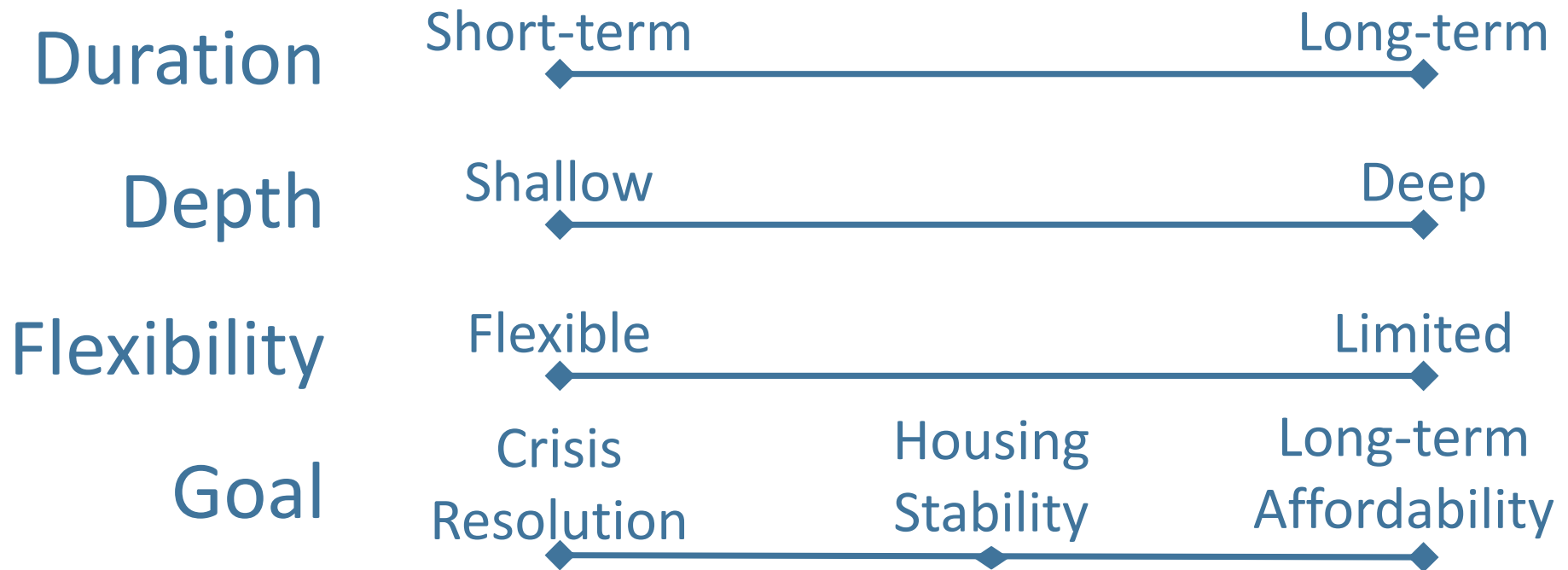
Rather than having multiple service providers and jurisdictions provide rent assistance through different programs, we will offer a streamlined program of rent assistance. Such assistance is particularly critical for families, who fare best when placed in permanent housing as quickly as possible upon facing homelessness or its threat.



A Home for Everyone: A United Community Plan to End Homelessness for Portland/Multnomah County

- Continue to creatively use rent assistance to reach more households, perhaps including medium-term rent assistance or permanent shallow subsidies.
- More efficiently use longer-term housing subsidies by helping transition people from supportive housing who no longer need it.

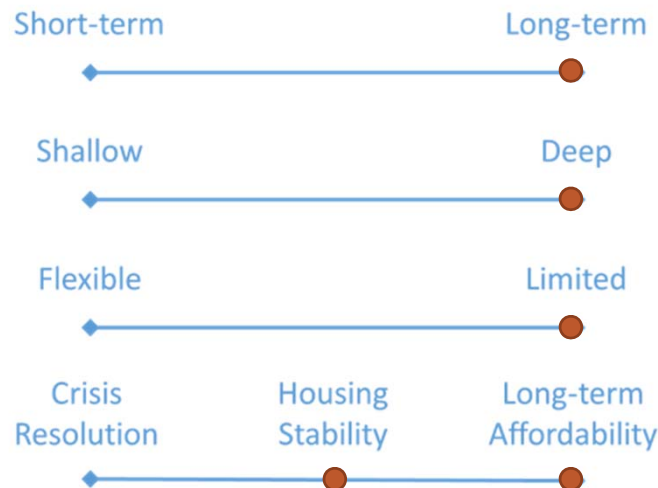
Rental Assistance: Distinguishing Features



Federally-Funded Permanent Rent Assistance Programs



Home Forward Rent Assistance 2018



- 11,834 households served at cost of \$103 million
- Through variety of rent assistance programs, Home Forward contracts with property owners to provide rent assistance making units affordable for very low-income households
- Participants pay portion of income for rent (generally around 30% of monthly income)
- Assistance is NOT time-limited
- Average HH size is 2. 31% of HH are families with children
- Average household annual income is \$12,500

Federally-Funded Permanent Rent Assistance Programs



Demographics

Race/Ethnicity Head of Household		
People of Color	5,419	46%
White Alone, Not Hispanic/Latino	6,415	54%
Race Alone or in Combination		
African American	3,937	33%
Asian	503	4%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	122	1%
Native American/Alaskan Native	521	4%
Hispanic/Latino	976	8%
White	7,234	61%

Project-Based Assistance

- Assistance tied to unit
- Limits choice but provides certainty
- Waitlists maintained by owner/property management

Project-Based Voucher Program: 3,580 HH

Moderate Rehabilitation Section 8: 548 HH

Tenant-Based Assistance

- Families and individuals use vouchers to rent in the market. (Assistance is not tied to a specific unit.)
- Provides choice but susceptible to market challenges
- Requires participants to navigate rent assistance bureaucracy and rental housing market
- Includes some population specific voucher programs

“Standard” Housing Choice Voucher: 6,082 HH in 2018

- Accessed through HCV waitlist
- Waitlist opened in late 2016, roughly 16,000 HH applied
- Selected 3,000 by lottery. Due to funding constraints, haven’t issued any vouchers, yet

Targeted Housing Choice Vouchers

HUD Special Purpose Vouchers: 742 HH in 2018

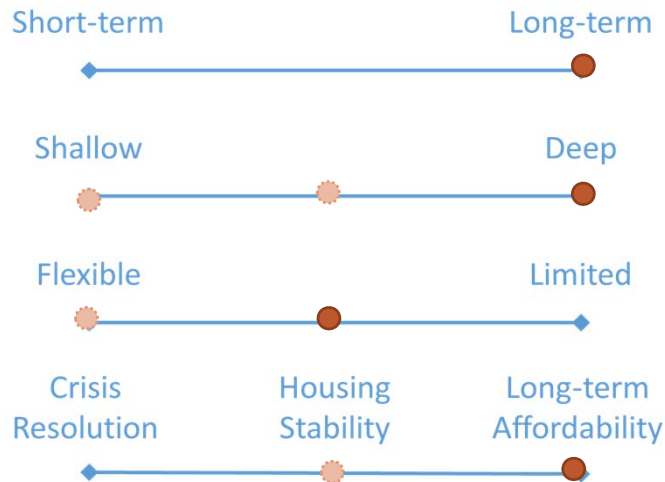
- Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
- Family Unification Program
- Mainstream Vouchers
- Addition of 378 special purpose vouchers in 2019

Local Preference Housing Choice Vouchers: 289 HH in 2018

- Homeless Family System of Care
- Veterans ineligible for VASH
- Anti-displacement vouchers for seniors

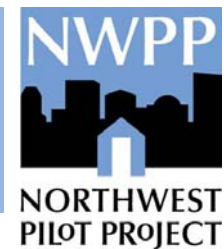
Shelter Plus Care (HUD Continuum of Care): 548 HH

Local Long Term Rent Assistance Program



- Locally-funded permanent rent assistance providing permanent monthly subsidy
- 18-month pilot with evaluation component
- Partnership between Northwest Pilot Project, JOHS, Home Forward, Meyer Memorial Trust, JOIN and CareOregon
- Leaner, more efficient program when not bound by HUD regulations
- Local control and decision making
- Effective for both homeless prevention and anti-displacement

Sharon and Gracie



Sharon Newell was struggling to find a safe and affordable home -- a place that wouldn't make her sick. The 67-year-old Newell has multiple sclerosis, which can limit her mobility. She also has chemical sensitivities and autoimmune issues that can sometimes trigger seizures. She couldn't afford a place that wouldn't set off her symptoms. By last December, her health was so compromised -- including a brush with sepsis -- that Newell's doctor warned that her life was on the line.

Newell was one of the first seniors to receive a, long-term rent voucher providing her the means to afford a clean and healthy home for her and her beloved service dog, Gracie.

Long Term Rent Assistance

Program Data

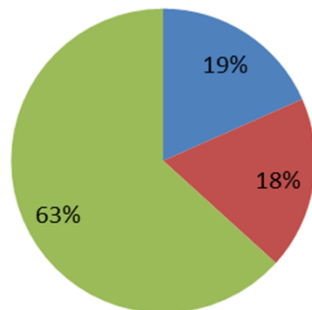


45 Households participating

- 35 single adults
- 10 couples
- 43 Seniors

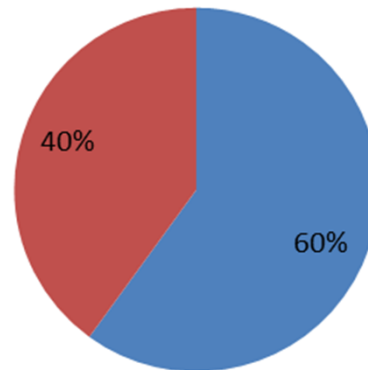
Median Family Income

■ 0-10% MFI ■ 21-30%MFI ■ 11-20% MFI



Race/Ethnicity

■ White ■ People of Color



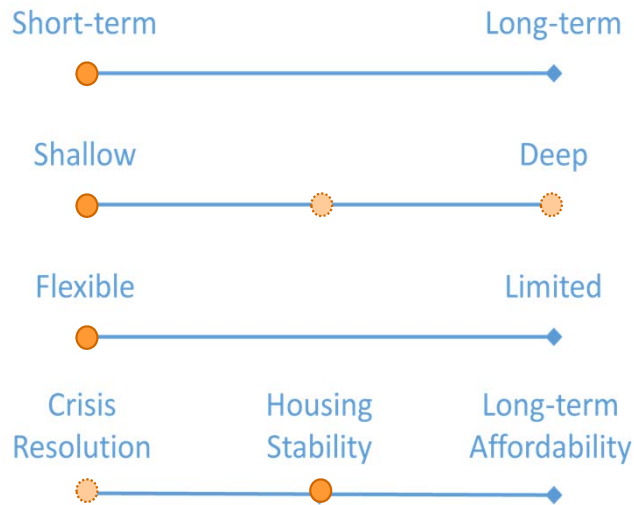
- 11 Clients homeless at admission
- 2 chronically homeless

12 Month Budget: \$442,665
Average Monthly Subsidy: \$750

Limited-Term Rent Assistance



Short Term Rent Assistance (STRA)



- Flexible, short-term housing assistance
- Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing
- Funded by Home Forward, Multnomah County, City of Portland, State of Oregon and Federal government.
- Home Forward administers, but rent assistance delivered by partners that couple housing assistance with other supports
- In 2017-18, assisted more than 3,000 households.
- Average assistance per household is \$2,740
- Average length of assistance for HH receiving rent assistance is 4.2 months.
- 12 month housing retention rate: 76%

Multnomah Stability Initiative



Department of County Human Services, Youth & Family Services

The goal of the MSI AE Case Management Program Model

To get families to a point of self-sufficiency, stably housed, and earning enough to no longer need services.



Multnomah Stability Initiative



Department of County Human Services, Youth & Family Services

Using CSBG Flex Funds

Funds are to assist and support families in reaching their goals in any of the MSI Domains, and clearly documented in the client file with all related documents and with an amount that is in a reasonable range.

EXAMPLES OF USING FLEX FUNDS



Housing

rent assistance; utilities; cleaning supplies; smoke detectors



Income

clothing/shoes for work; tires; bus passes



Social Capital

book club events; social circles; cultural gatherings



Education

books; tuition



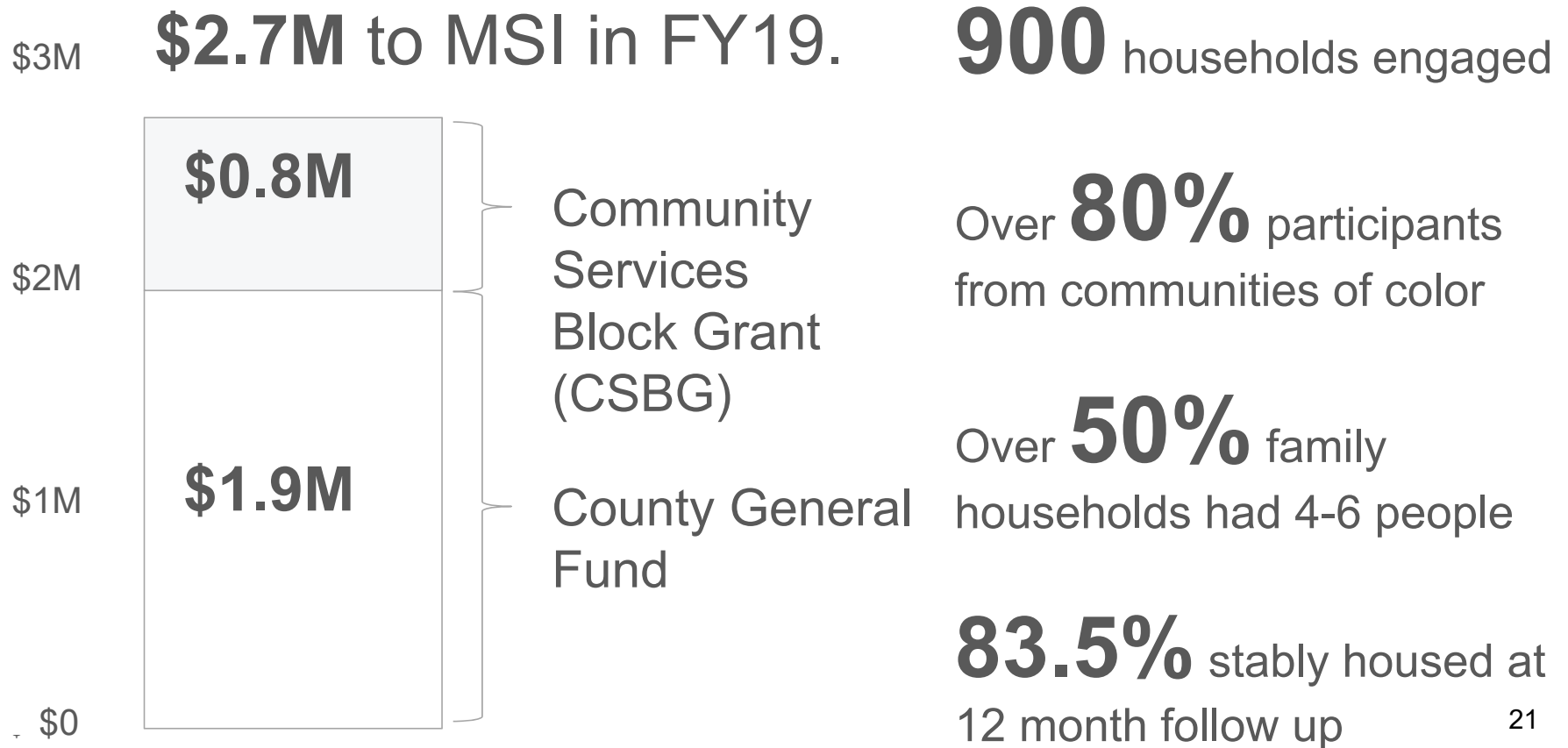
Positive Child Development

family pass to OMSI; music lessons; fees/uniform for sports team

Multnomah Stability Initiative

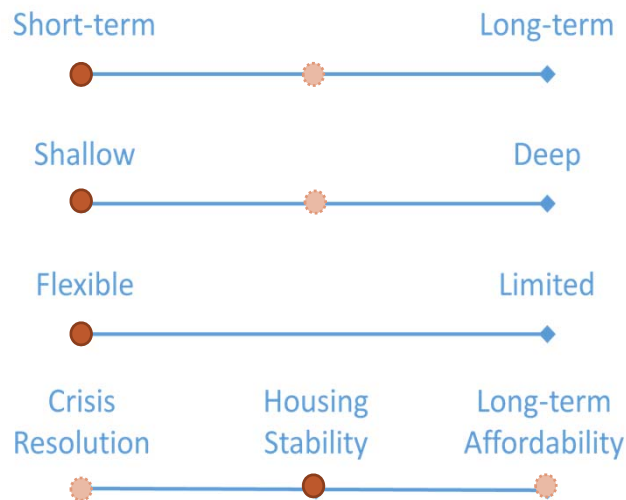


Department of County Human Services, Youth & Family Services



Homeless Family System of Care

Joint Office of Homeless Services



Multi-agency Mobile Housing Team

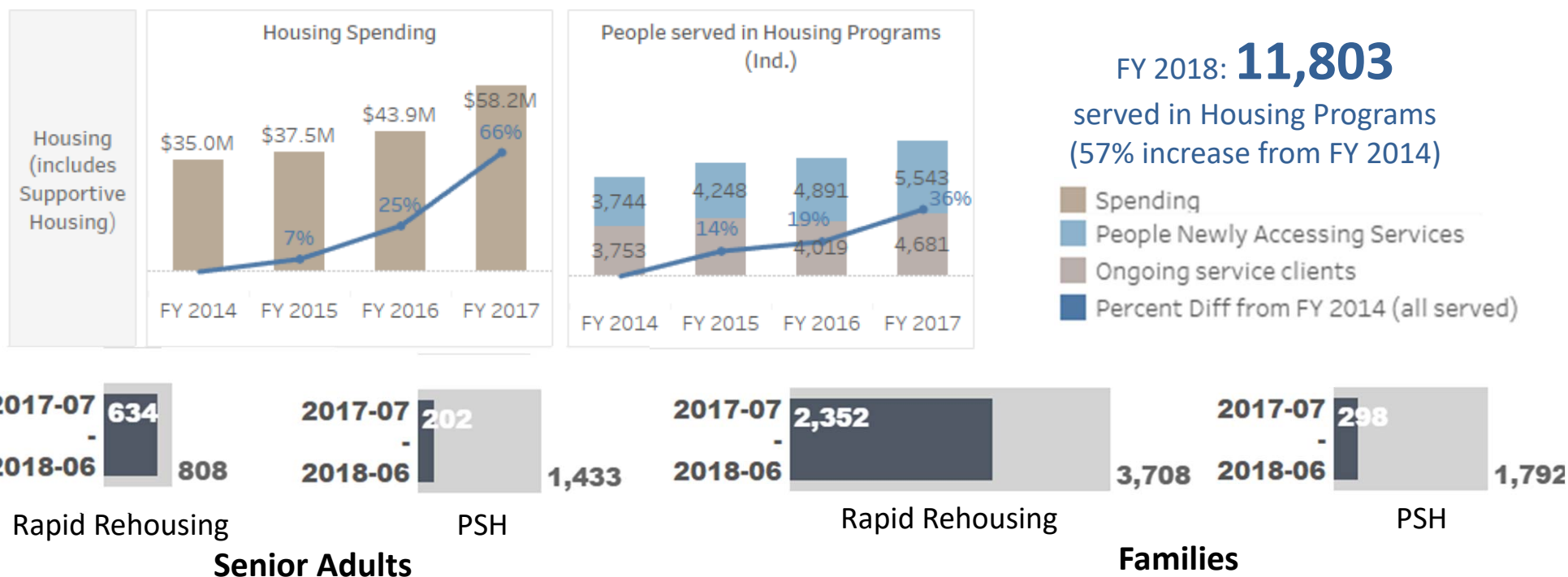
- JOIN, Self Enhancement, Inc., El Programa Hispano, NAYA, NARA, Latino Network, IRCO, PHFS, 211 (Coordinated Access)

722 households newly housed in most recent 12 months:

- **76%** from communities of color
- **80%** housing retention at 12 months

\$4.9M in County and City GF, State and Tax Title funds. **\$7,000** per household

Homeless System Expenditures & Outcomes



Concluding Policy Considerations

- Flexible, local-funding critical to maximizing/leveraging federal resources and facilitating alignment in face of real world constraints
 - *VASH & FUP*
- Supports needed to assist vulnerable populations in deploying rental assistance resources (short and long-term)
 - *LRA & MSI*
- The number of people served, and who is served, by short-term rental assistance vs. long-term rental assistance
 - *Family Options Study*