



National Alliance to  
**END HOMELESSNESS**

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RESEARCH AND EDUCATION • INFLUENCING FEDERAL POLICY • BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

# Five Keys to Emergency Shelter

1. Housing First approach
2. Immediate and easy access
3. Housing-focused services
4. Rapid exits to permanent housing
5. Using data to be better



# 1. Housing First Approach

## Philosophy

- Not a “program,” it is a system-wide orientation and response
- Everyone is ready for housing
- Homelessness is a housing problem
- Housing First means housing fast

## Practice

- Few to no prerequisites to permanent housing
- Rapid entry into permanent housing
- Services are voluntary



# 2. Immediate and Easy Access

## Philosophy

- Shelter is life saving
- It should be easy to access
- It should be easiest for the most vulnerable

## Practice

- Few to no prerequisites to shelter
- No waiting list
- Coordinated entry
- Divert when safe and appropriate
- Prioritize households with the most needs
- 24/7 access



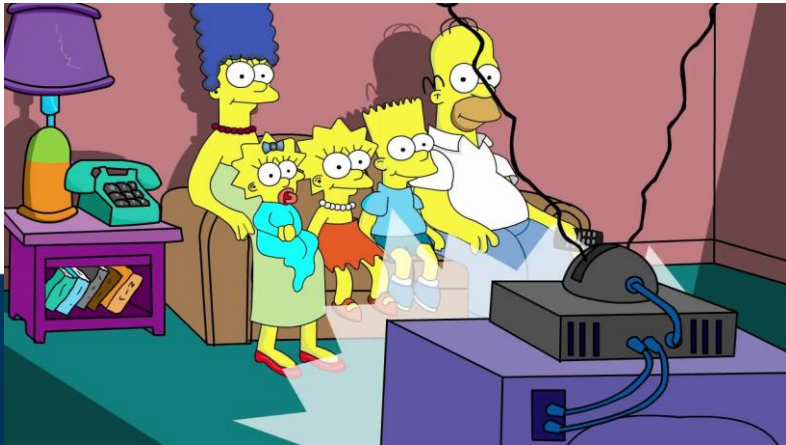
# 3. Housing-Focused Services

## Philosophy

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
- Shelters are not employment, recovery, or mental health programs

## Practice

- Plan for exit at entry
- “If you’re not talking about housing you’re having the wrong conversation”
- All policies, procedures, job descriptions, signage, client handbooks, etc. reflect focus on housing



# 4. Rapid Exits to Housing

## Philosophy

- Moving people out of shelter quickly reduces the trauma of homelessness
- Empower clients to take charge of their housing

## Practice

- Invest in rapid re-housing
- Connection to mainstream resources
- Family reunification
- Roommate matching



# 5. Using Data to be Better

## Philosophy

- There is always room to improve

## Practice

- Decrease length of stay in homelessness
- Increase exits to permanent housing
- Decrease returns to shelter



