

HOMELESS RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

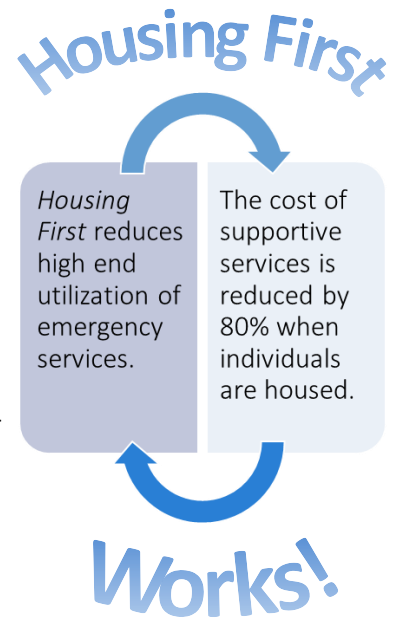
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18



Salem's *Housing First* Program—Stabilizing the Top 100 Hardest to House

Program Overview

- ◆ The Homeless Rental Assistance Program (HRAP) is the City of Salem's Housing First initiative to permanently house the "top 100 hardest to house" chronically homeless individuals in Salem. HRAP is the largest Housing First initiative in the state of Oregon's history.
- ◆ The implementation of a Housing First program is one of the goals in the City of Salem's Strategic Plan to address chronic homelessness. Salem Housing Authority (SHA) received \$1.4 million from the City in the 2017-18 budget year to provide rental assistance, barrier removal funds and administer the program.
- ◆ Housing First is a harm-reduction approach to quickly and successfully connect chronically homeless individuals to permanent housing and intensive case management without preconditions and barriers, such as requiring sobriety or service participation. The intent is to house individuals first and then help clients work to achieve client-driven goals, such as mental health and addiction treatment, improved physical health, and ultimately self-sufficiency.
- ◆ Launched in July 2017, SHA is the lead agency in this collaborative initiative and partners with various social service agencies. SHA provides intensive case management, resource and referrals, housing placements, landlord engagement and administers all rental assistance and barrier removal funds for the program.



Kenneth and Jeff experienced years of unsheltered homelessness, living under these conditions caused each of them extreme anxiety.

These kittens serve as therapeutic assistance in their housing stability.



Program Approach

Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, supportive housing as quickly as possible to those experiencing homelessness and provides the wraparound supportive services needed to achieve long-term housing stability. SHA is committed to achieving the highest degree of fidelity possible to the model of Housing First.

The principles of Housing First include:

- ◆ Move people into housing directly from the streets, without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance; continued tenancy is not dependent upon participation in services;
- ◆ The housing provider is obligated to bring wraparound supportive services to the clients and to integrate such services into housing locations, as appropriate. Services remain voluntary. However, an intensive case management approach will assertively encourage engagement with services which promote health, recovery and housing stability;
- ◆ Housing units are targeted to the most disabled and vulnerable members of the homeless community, this is achieved through the Coordinated Entry Program. Residents must have leases and tenant protections under the law;
- ◆ Embrace harm reduction strategies toward addictions rather than mandating abstinence. However, staff must also be prepared to support resident commitment to recovery.

Coordinated Entry

HRAP utilizes the Coordinated Entry model, which is a process to ensure that all people experiencing homelessness have equitable access to services and housing, as prioritized to meet their specific needs.

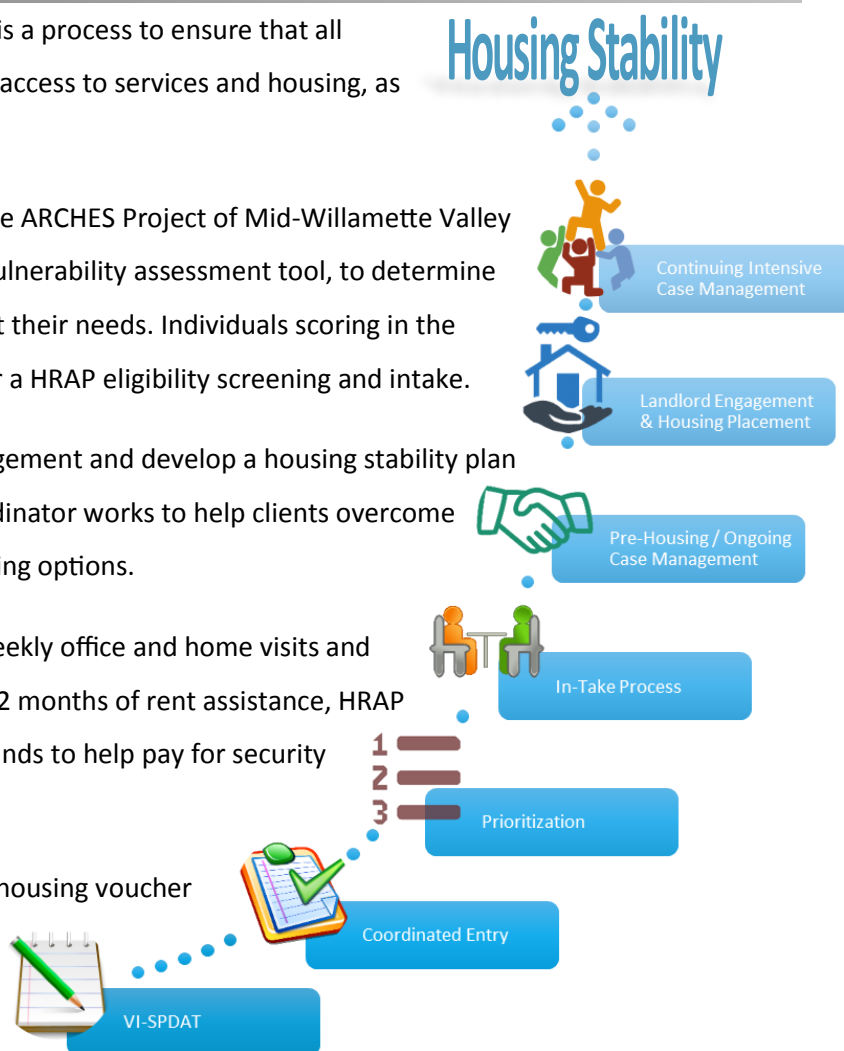
First, all homeless persons are assessed through the ARCHES Project of Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency using the VI-SPDAT, a vulnerability assessment tool, to determine the most appropriate housing intervention to meet their needs. Individuals scoring in the “most vulnerable” category are referred to SHA for a HRAP eligibility screening and intake.

Enrolled HRAP clients receive intensive case management and develop a housing stability plan with their Housing Stability Coordinator. The Coordinator works to help clients overcome housing barriers and find suitable, affordable housing options.

Permanently housed HRAP clients participate in weekly office and home visits and peer supports, if desired. In addition to receiving 12 months of rent assistance, HRAP clients have a limited amount of barrier removal funds to help pay for security deposits, bus passes, utility bills and basic needs.

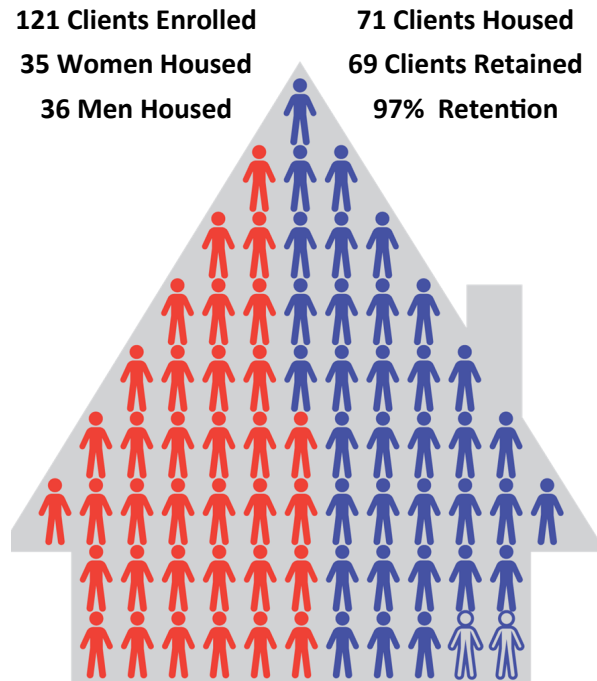
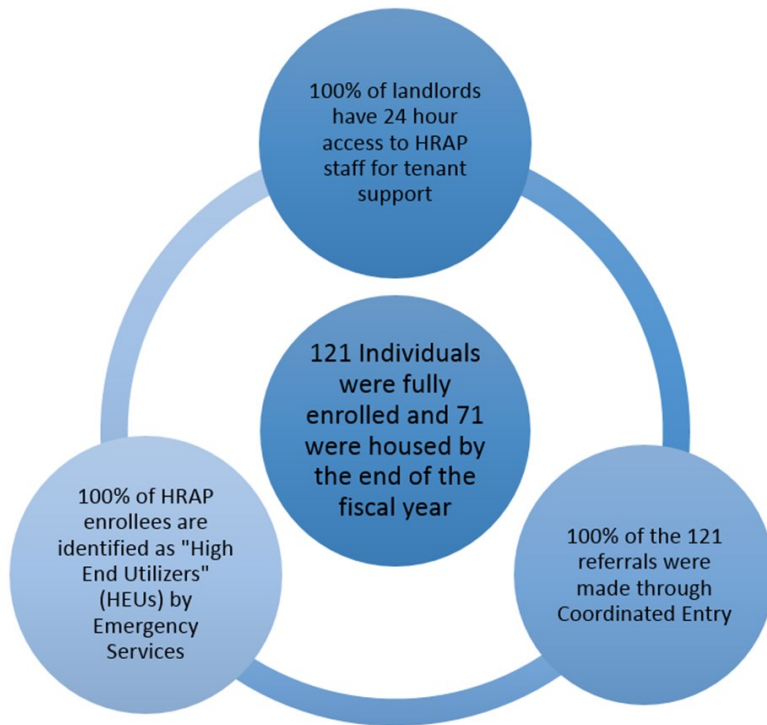
After completion of the program, clients receive a housing voucher from SHA to provide ongoing housing assistance.

The ultimate goal is for clients to achieve long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency.



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Goal: To serve Salem's 100 Hardest to House Chronically Homeless



Program Impact: Matthew and Cassandra

Matt and Cassandra know all too well the struggles of life on the streets in Salem. Addiction and mental health challenges stole away everything of value they ever had, jobs, children and eventually their home.

For three years they survived on the streets, fueled only by their unwavering faith and positivity. Hopeful that circumstances could one day change for the better, they took deliberate steps to improve themselves, even despite their homelessness. They entered treatment and dealt with their addiction issues. After hearing about HRAP, they quickly went to ARCHES to be assessed. Every day afterwards, although they struggled to meet their most basic needs, they patiently waited for the miracle.

Enrolled in April and housed in July 2018, Matt and Cassandra now have a stable grasp on a plan to rebuild their lives and create the future they only dreamt of all those nights they slept on the streets. Cassandra is pursuing state certification as a Medical Assistant, and Matt hopes to pursue a college degree in Farm Management once he completes his GED. "We knew once we got that call from Ms. Sonya Ryland at SHA that our lives would change, and that is exactly what happened."



Challenges and Opportunities

Salem Housing Authority learned many lessons the first year. These will help inform future program planning and decisions. One of our major challenges was Salem's lack of available affordable apartments that fit within affordability guidelines. A second challenge was finding housing for clients with recent criminal backgrounds who did not meet landlord screening criteria. Additionally, a key part of Housing First is having a low client-to-case manager ratio because of the intensive of case management needed to stabilize clients. For a number of months, enrollments and housing placements outpaced SHA's ability to obtain funding for case management staffing. Progress has been made to address all these challenges.

The Salem Housing Authority also found many opportunities over the past year to improve the program and increase its ability to serve Salem's most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals. SHA received a number of grants from private foundations and launched a sponsorship program to provide businesses, civic groups, and individuals with a way to get involved by donating funds, in-kind services, or by providing job/skills training and employment opportunities to HRAP clients. SHA continues to look for long-term sustainable funding sources and partnerships to support the program for years to come. Currently, seventeen private market landlords are supporting the Homeless Rental Assistance Program.

Sponsorship Program

As soon as the HRAP Sponsorship Program was launched, SHA received word they already had a donor! Cheers erupted through the office. When staff found out who the donor was, their hearts melted with gratitude.

Eight year old Abel Najera-Banuelos donated \$100 he earned at a lemonade stand he set up to support the Homeless Rental Assistance Program.

He would like to follow in Mayor Chuck Bennett's footsteps and become Mayor of Salem one day. He has a passion to do all that he can to make the lives of those who live in his community better. He especially wants to see permanent homes for those who have none.

Others have followed Abel's generous donation and HRAP now also has its' first "sustaining" donor. This monthly gift will help make it possible to furnish a new home for an HRAP client, a gift that will change a life.

Are you interested in donating? Please visit www.SalemHousingOR.com/HRAP.



Program Impact: Bill and Krystol



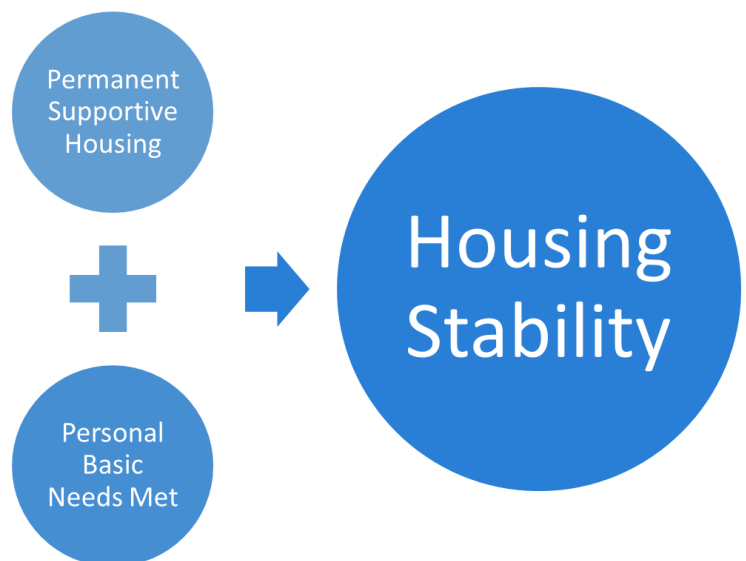
Bill and Krystol enjoying the peace of housing stability.

Bill Whipple and Krystol Beaty were homeless, off and on, for 9 years. As time passed, their mutual barriers to housing only worsened, from lack of rental history, criminal history from years of addiction and no steady income. The cycle of poverty and homelessness made it impossible to pay the application fees required for every rental they found, much less get a landlord to give them a second chance.

Enrolled in June 2017 and housed in September of that year meant their years of homelessness had finally come to an end. Once housed, Bill was almost immediately hired on as a fulltime welder, his original career which was made impossible by homelessness. Krystol established trauma therapy for herself and was able to re-establish visitation with her children. Life was really looking up for Bill and Krystol.

By December 2017, when asked what they wanted most for Christmas, Bill stated “All I have ever wanted is to marry Krystol and give her the wedding she deserves.” With the help of numerous “Santas”, this Christmas wish became a reality on February 13, 2018. With help from the HRAP team and community partners the couple were given a wedding day complete with dress, tuxedo, venue, cake and honeymoon suite.

Less than a year later, the “Whipple’s” are preparing to move into a larger apartment, on the open rental market, paid for entirely by them. Bill’s 17 year old son is joining the household as well. It is both humbling and satisfying to see how a simple “hand up” can transform, rebuild and restore families to housing stability, dignified income, health care and long term housing stability within our community.



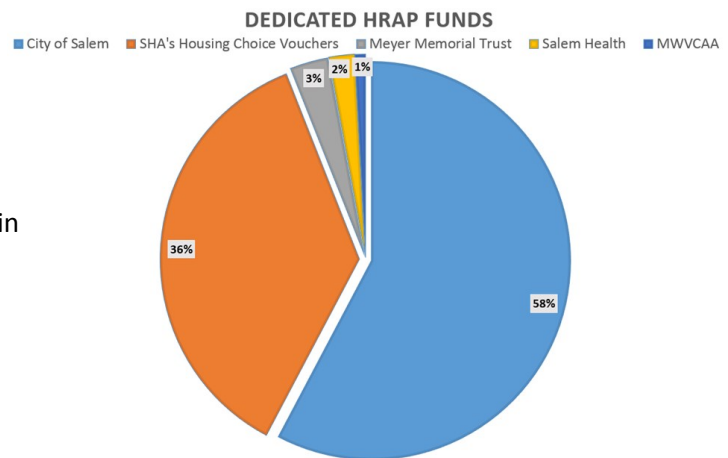
Financials

Dedicated Funding Sources

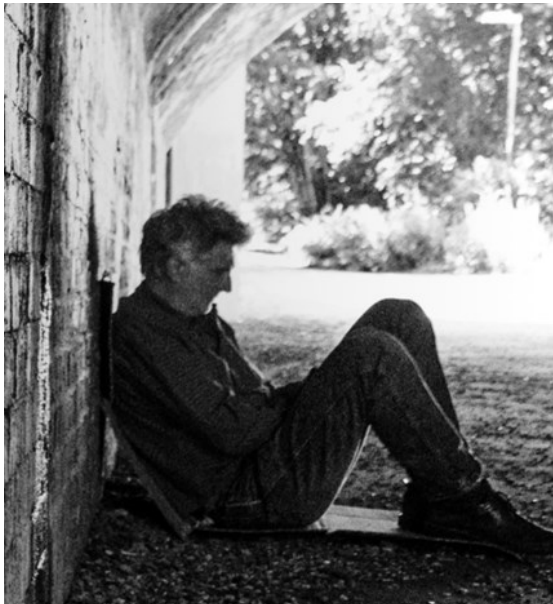
\$1,400,000	City of Salem (rental assistance, barrier funds, staffing and program administration)
\$880,000	SHA Housing Choice Vouchers (upon graduation from program)
\$75,000	Meyer Memorial Trust Foundation (1 full-time staff position)
\$50,000	Salem Health (peer supports)
\$20,000	MWCAA Emergency Housing Assistance Grant (.25 full-time equivalent staff position)

TOTAL = \$2,425,000

- ♦ Actual spend down during program year = \$692,057
- ♦ Encumbered funds (rent, barrier funds and Housing Choice Vouchers for 71 clients housed in program year) = \$1,478,311



Savings to the Community



35% of persons experiencing homelessness in Salem are chronically homeless. A figure 133% higher than the national average.

Chronically homeless individuals cycle in and out of hospital emergency rooms and inpatient beds, detox program, jails, prisons, and psychiatric institutions. Studies show leaving a person to remain chronically homeless costs the community on average \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year. On average, HRAP clients receive \$12,500 of assistance during the 12-month program.

\$30-\$40k yearly per person experiencing chronic homelessness



\$12,500 yearly per HRAP client

Funders and Partnerships

The Homeless Rental Assistance Program of Salem Housing Authority extends a heartfelt thanks to the many supporters, contributors and donors who have helped HRAP to make a profound difference in the lives of Salem's chronically homeless population. Through diversified funding from the City of Salem for rental assistance and barrier removal, Salem Health Foundation for peer supportive services, Meyer Memorial Trust for case management staffing, Union Gospel Mission and King Fisher Furniture for household furnishings, ARCHES Project for the coordinated entry program; Congregations Helping People for personal documents; ProjectABLE for peer supports, Northwest Human Services for technical assistance, Psychiatric Crisis Center for crisis intervention, and numerous other in-kind contributions, that it was made possible to serve and meet the unique needs of HRAP clients.

Most especially, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to every property management firm and private landlord who accepted HRAP clients into their units. The opportunity to create a home again within our community is a gift so great that it cannot be expressed in words. The success of HRAP in 2017-18 is due in large part to the commitment of City of Salem leadership and devoted partners, all of whom share the vision that Housing First can and will reduce homelessness in our community.

A Special Thank You to our Funders.....



And our Landlords



JoAnn Stair
Kevin Winder
Matt Dimske
Laura's Investments, LLC
ABM Properties, LLC
MPL Properties, LLC
Pinnacle Property Management

Charlie's Story: An Unfolding Journey

Charles "Charlie" Brown came to the Salem Housing Authority (SHA) on a bitter cold April morning in 2016 seeking housing and community resources. He was chronically homeless and had been for most of the past 15 years. His days were spent moving from place to place, fearful to remain anywhere for too long. Charlie was known as a nice guy on the streets. Meaning, he was easily taken advantage of, and was victimized "more times than I can count," Charlie said later in his homelessness assessment.

At the time, with no homeless rental assistance program, nor housing selection preference being provided for persons like Charlie, the most that could be done was to provide a sleeping bag, tent and a few basic needs in order to help him survive outdoors. Sadly, resources would only last matter of days. This vicious cycle was destined to be repeatedly endlessly without some sort of an effective intervention on Charlie's behalf.

HRAP was launched at SHA in the Summer of 2017. But for Charlie, protracted homelessness, trauma, drug use and mental health issues, had left him suspicious and deeply distrustful of engaging in yet another "program" promising help. However, by January 2018, the prospect of another winter outdoors motivated Charlie to come forward and be assessed by the Coordinated Entry Program. His referral to HRAP was almost immediate, and within just a matter of weeks, Charlie Brown was offered housing. Panic and anxiety made it very difficult for Charlie to believe that this opportunity was indeed real and that it was something he could be successful at. But with tremendous support from his Housing Case Manager, Charlie was able to sign his lease and accept the keys to his new home.



Charlie, beaming at home!

It has taken time for Charlie to understand that staying housed was dependent upon him making positive choices on his own behalf. HRAP supported Charlie in establishing his SSI benefits which he now budgets two months in advance, so he can assure his housing stability. Also, he has established 90 days of sobriety. As his stability and confidence has grown, Charlie has come forward to share his experiences with incoming, unhoused HRAP clients through the "Ready to Rent" classes provided at SHA.

The path out of chronic homelessness requires achieving numerous monumental tasks such as overcoming addiction and mental health issues, establishing self-sufficiency and maintaining housing stability. But through a network of supportive services wrapped around each client, we are confident they will find their way home, to their home, made possible by HRAP and a vast array of community partners.



Salem Housing Authority's mission is to assist low- and moderate-income families to achieve self-sufficiency through stable housing, economic opportunity, community investment, and coordination with social service providers.