

Nashville Homeless System Assessment & Preliminary Recommendations

Presentation to Metropolitan Homelessness Commission

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We believe the HEARTH Act and Opening Doors lead the way to finally ending homelessness.

ABOUT FOCUS STRATEGIES



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Purpose of Our Work in Nashville

- Assess what the existing homeless system and programs are accomplishing;
- Identify what is working and what needs improvement;
- Recommend a new and more comprehensive set of system objectives and strategies to end homelessness in Nashville;
- Recommend changes to governance structure to best advance identified strategies

Project Overview

Activity	Timeline	
	Begin	End
Project Launch	May 2015	
Information Gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review plans and reports• Interview key stakeholders• Collect program data (HMIS, budgets)	May 2015	September 2015
Data Analysis – SWAP Tools	September 2015	October 2015
Draft System Assessment And Recommendations	September 2015	October 2015
In-Person Presentation of Results	November 5	November 6
Final Report	November 2015	December 2015

Ending Homelessness

The HEARTH Act establishes:

“...a Federal goal of ensuring that individuals and families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.”

Opening Doors, As Amended in 2015:

“systematic response ...that ensures homelessness is ...a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.”

Principles of a Housing Crisis Response System

- Housing-focused
- Person-centered
- Data-informed
- Effective use of resources

A System to End Homelessness

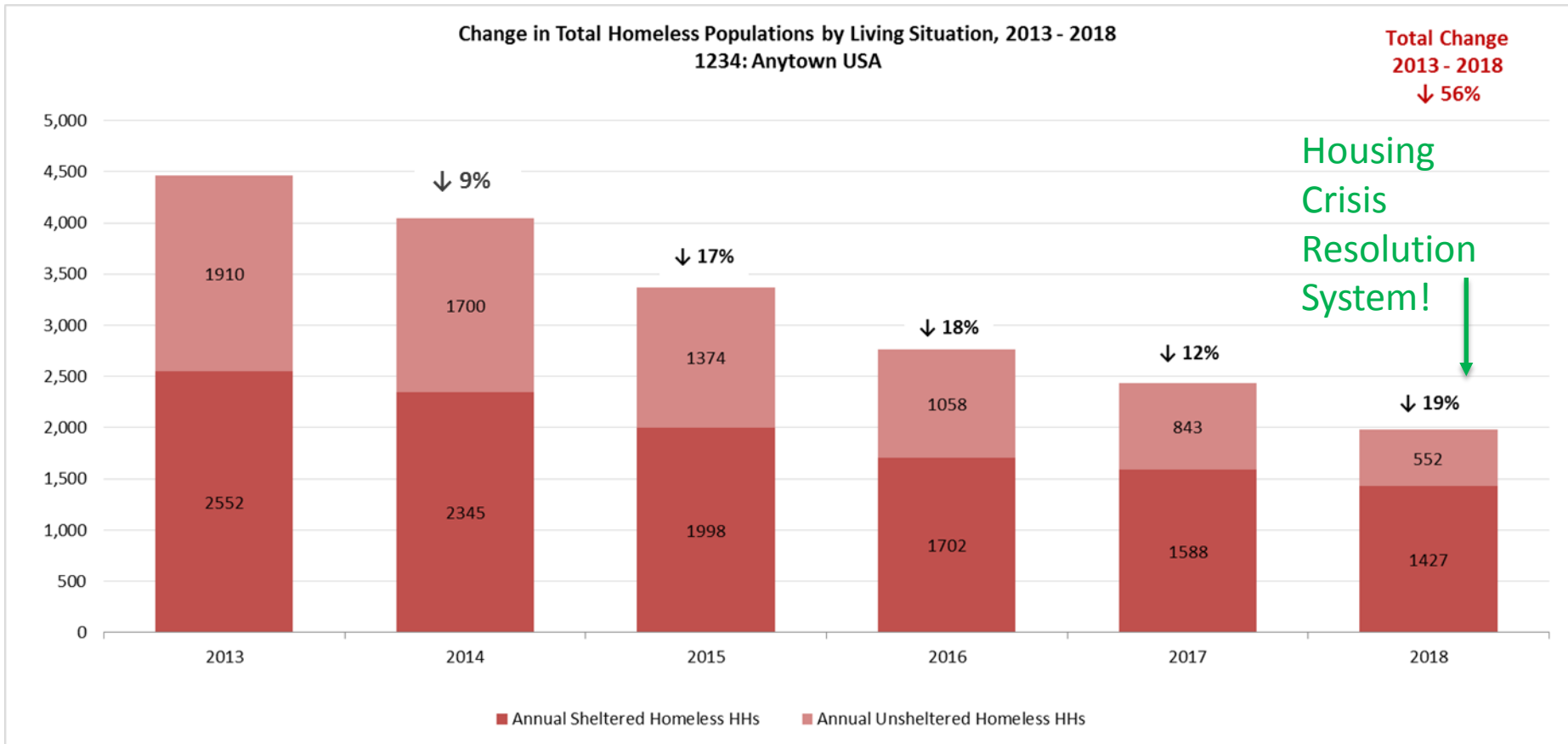
Ending homelessness means building systems that:

- Divert people from entering homelessness
- Quickly engage and provide a suitable intervention for every households' homelessness
- Have short lengths of stay in programs
- Have high rates of permanent housing exits
- Use data to achieve continuous improvement

What is a System?

All the community's programs and resources to address homelessness function together as a system with a common set of goals and performance measures, and the entire system's resources are efficiently deployed to meet its goals.

Ending Homelessness Graph



Nashville's Homeless System

WHAT WE LEARNED

System Strengths

- Engaged and committed leadership
- Strong involvement of both governmental and private sector stakeholders (non-profits, faith community, business leaders, private citizens)
- High-profile success of How's Nashville – has helped community rally around housing as the solution to homelessness

System Strengths

Elements of Housing Crisis Resolution in place or under development:

- Coordinated entry for some populations;
- Diversion/prevention beginning for families;
- Small but growing inventory of rapid re-housing;
- Supply of permanent supportive housing has been expanding; and
- Increased funding for HMIS system.

Key Challenges

- Not yet a system – still a collection of programs
- No overarching set of goals and strategies that guide funder investments, shape policies and help each program or provider understand how they fit into the whole
- Community struggling with rising housing costs

Key Challenges (Cont.)

Governance structure not unified:

- MHC – oversees effort to implement the plan to end chronic homelessness, including How's Nashville, 2016 by 2016
- MDHA – lead agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC), oversees use of federal homeless funds, maintains HMIS, coordinates homelessness related activities

SWAP Performance Measures

1. HMIS Data Quality and Participation Rates
2. Bed/Unit Utilization
3. Entries from Literal Homelessness
4. Length of Stay in Programs
5. Exits to Permanent Housing (PH)
6. Cost per Permanent Housing Exit
7. Returns to Homelessness

HMIS Data Quality

- Accuracy and completeness of HMIS data is essential to understanding system performance
- Particularly important to know where people go when they exit programs
- Also critical to have all programs in the system entering data into HMIS

Nashville HMIS Participation

System Inventory and HMIS Participation Rate

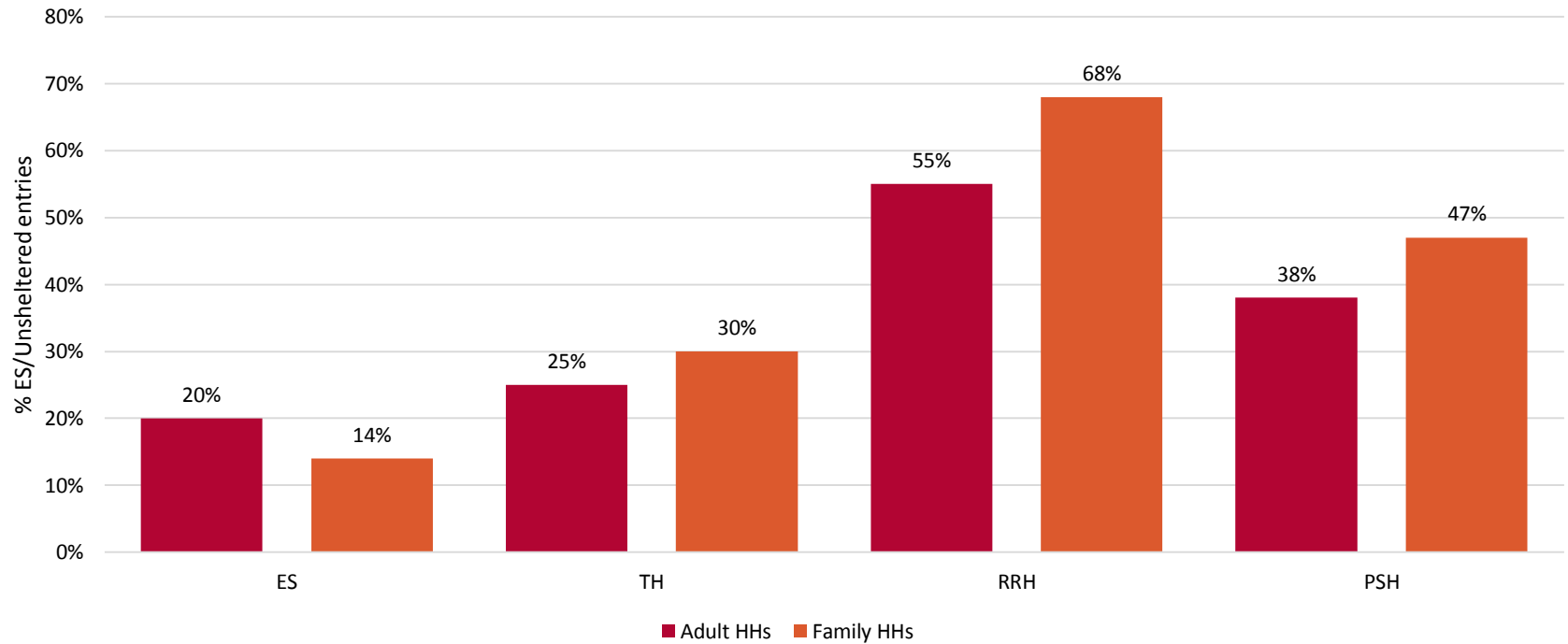
Program Type	Number of Providers	Number of Programs	Number of Beds	Percentage of Beds Participating in HMIS
Emergency Shelter	10	16	1,619	1%
Transitional Housing	14	23	583	59%
Rapid Re-Housing	4	5	108	71%
Permanent Supportive Housing	7	16	1,350	65%
Total	35	60	3,664	36%

Entries from Homelessness

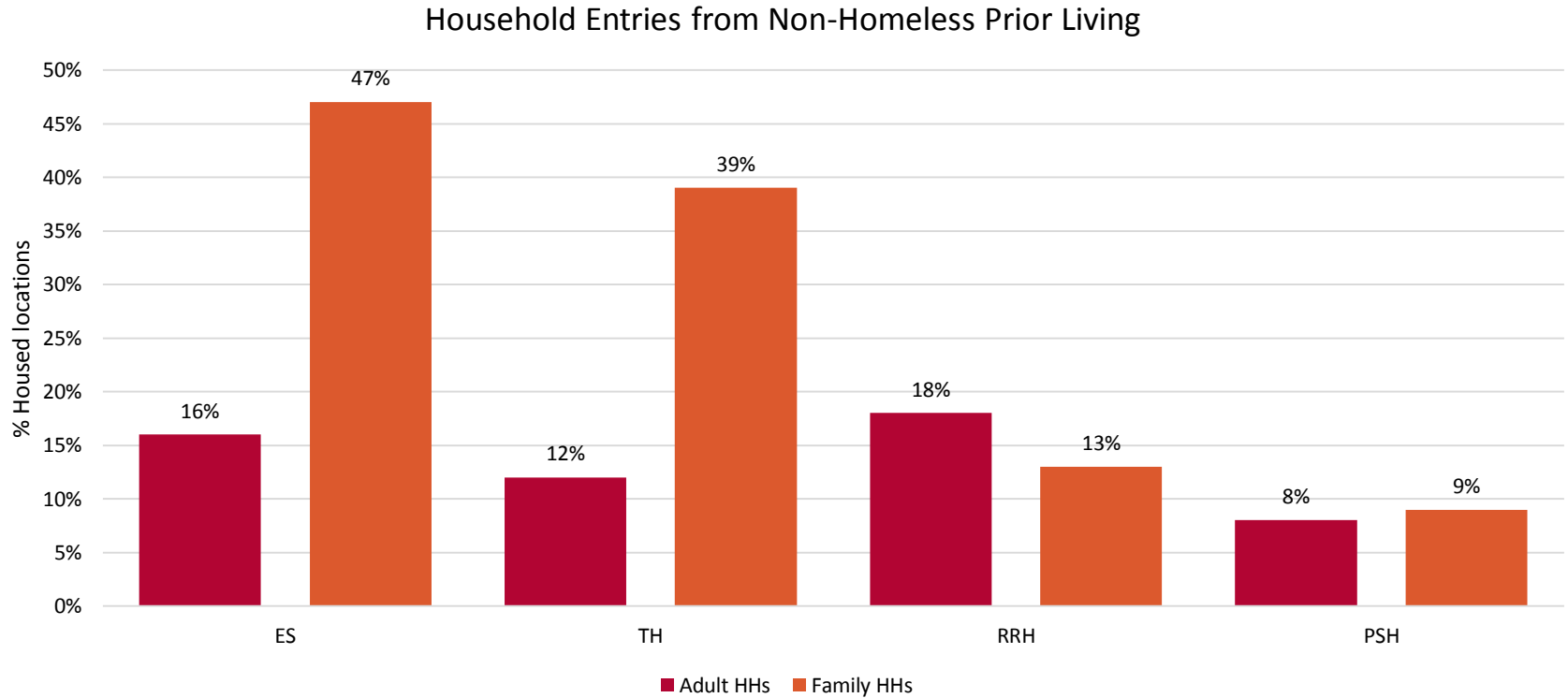
- Measures system targeting – focusing on unsheltered or emergency shelter
- Most effective use of resources is diverting housed people to housing and prioritizing homeless households

Entries from Homelessness

Household Entries from Homeless Prior Living



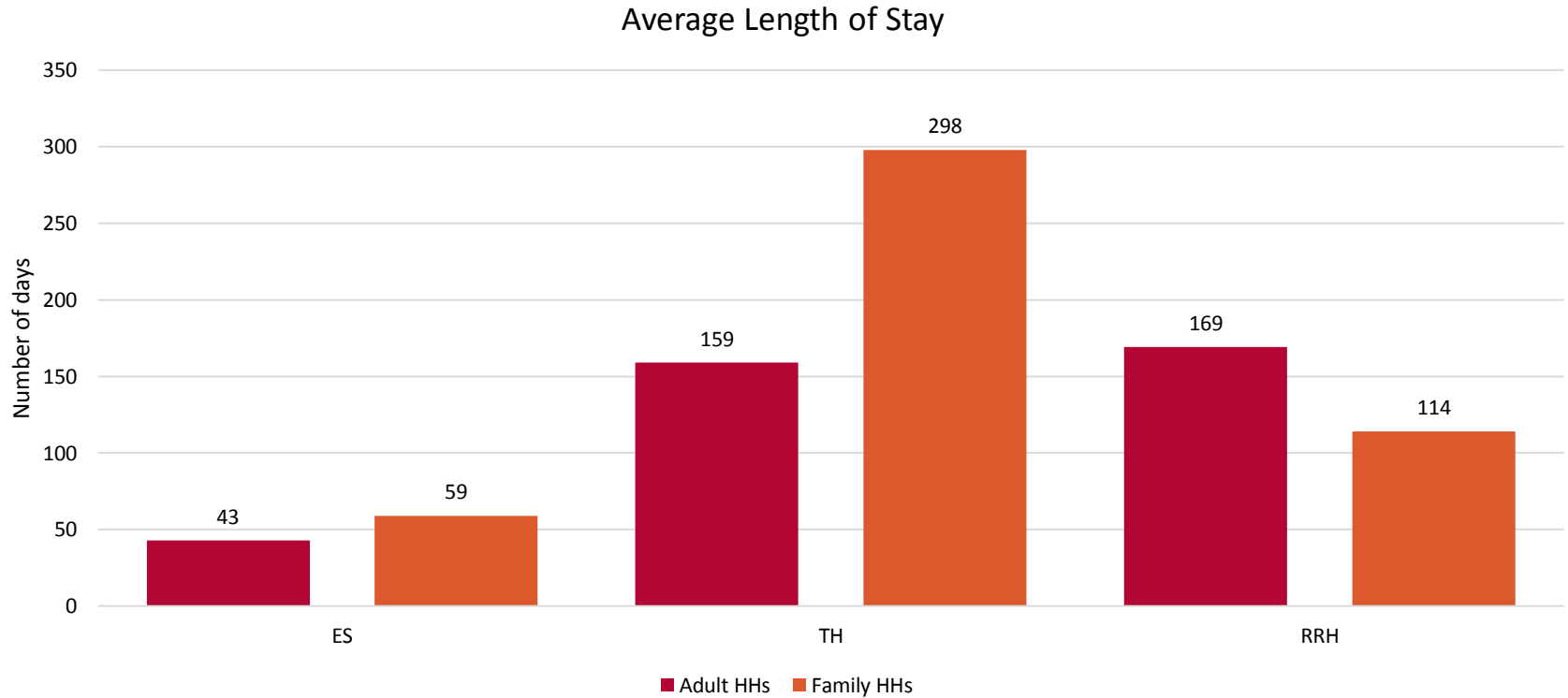
Entries from Non-Homelessness



Length of Stay

- Measures how quickly programs are helping households end their homelessness
- Helps identify program and system design and operation inefficiencies
- Consider in relation to rate of return to homelessness

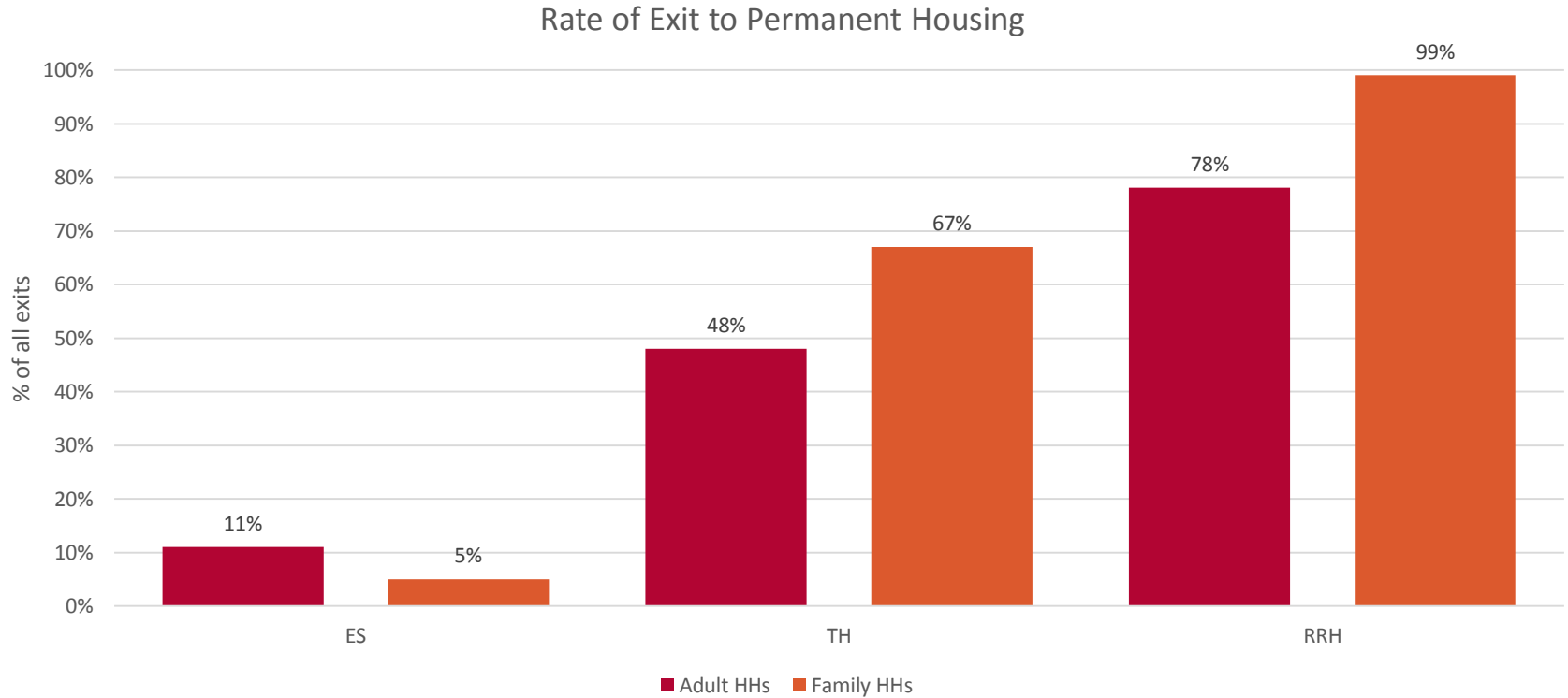
Length of Stay



Exit to Permanent Housing

- Measures rate of exits to permanent housing
- Helps identify program and system design and operation inefficiencies

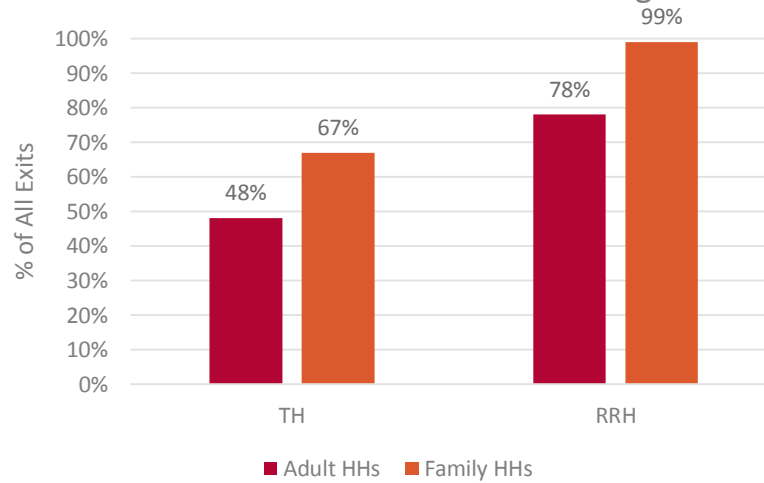
Exit to Permanent Housing



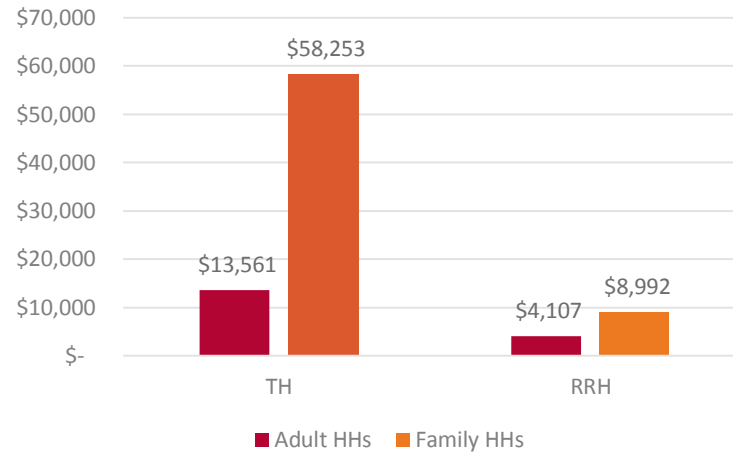
Cost Effectiveness: Cost Per PH Exit

- Typically communities consider cost per unit or cost per household
- To be performance-oriented, need to measure cost per permanent housing exit
- Illustrate whether system resources are being invested in interventions that are effective in ending homelessness
- Helps identify system components or individual programs that are not cost effective

Rate of Exit to Permanent Housing



Cost Per Permanent Housing Exit



Nashville's Homeless System

**WHAT WE RECOMMEND –
PRELIMINARY SUMMARY**

Leadership and Governance

- Most important step = decide to transform what you have into a system
- Identify or create a single entity tasked with transforming current set of initiatives and programs into a Housing Crisis Resolution System

Key Features of Leadership Body

- Involvement of high-level leadership from public and private sectors
- Strong alignment of local public and private funders around a common set of goals and performance measures
- Ability to oversee an effective planning process
- Authority to set policy and implement identified strategies

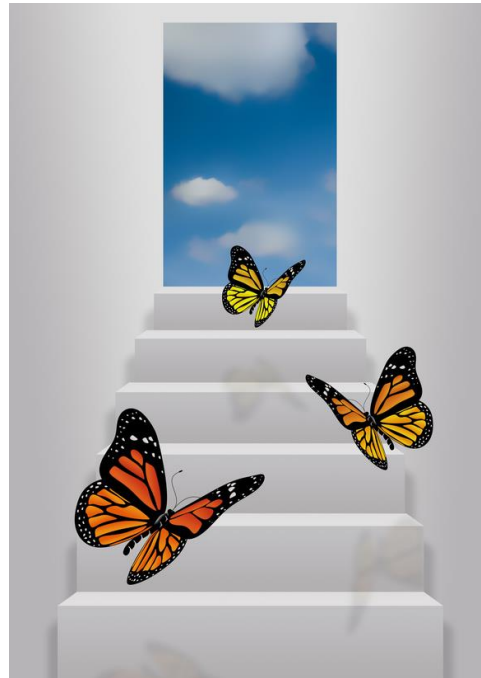
Elements of New System

- Coordinated entry and removal of program barriers so that literally homeless households can be prioritized
- Shelter diversion for those who are still housed
- Shift investments to high performing rapid re-housing

Elements of New System (cont.)

- Increase in system capacity for landlord recruitment and housing navigation
- Engage providers not currently participating and improve rate of participation in HMIS

Q & A



Solving Homelessness in Nashville

We must now pivot to our next chapter, learning from the past and anticipating future needs.

- Ensure more people are prevented/diverted from homelessness.
- Move beyond chronic and Veteran homelessness to include families and youth.
- Realign our housing and services to match the strengths and needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Engage and hold accountable the whole community in the solution.

What Success Looks Like

- Fewer people experiencing homelessness, and more housed.
- Homelessness for fewer days.
- Fewer returns to homelessness.
- Increased support and accountability from all partners.
- A framework to help guide our community's focus and future funding decisions.