



DEPARTMENT OF  
HOMELESSNESS AND  
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

# Problem Solving in San Francisco

HSH Providers Conference

December 7, 2018



# What is Problem Solving?

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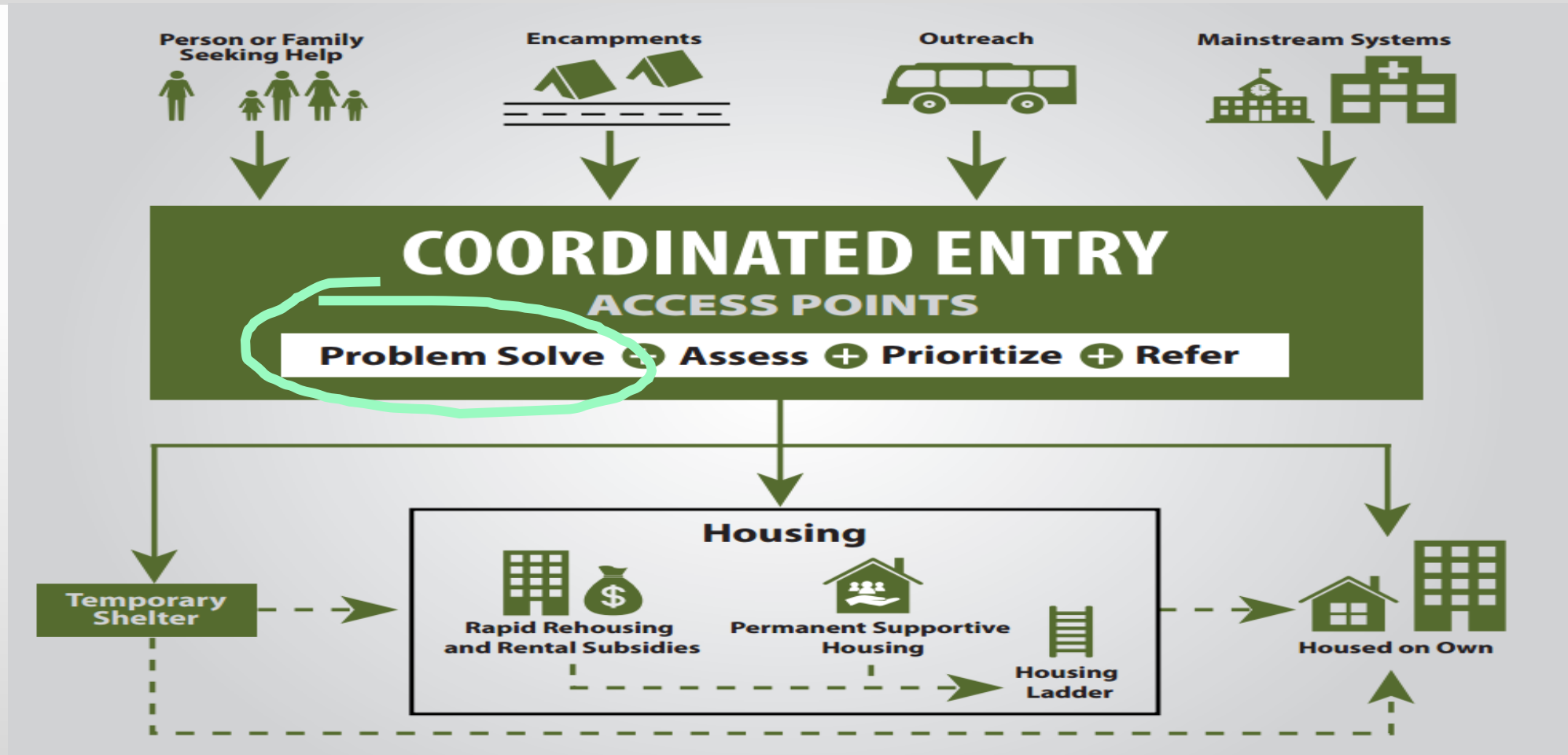
A strategy that addresses and prevents homelessness by helping people to:

- Return immediately to housing;
- Without having to enter temporary shelter or a housing program; and
- Utilizes safe and available permanent and temporary housing options.



# Key Piece of the Homelessness Response System

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# Problem Solving Definition of Success In San Francisco

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A person experiencing homelessness spending one or more nights in a safe location outside of the homeless response system.



# Who Does Problem Solving Nationally?

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Also called “Diversion”  
(or Shelter Diversion,  
Housing Problem  
Solving)

Includes:

- Connecticut
- Pierce County, WA  
(Tacoma)

## 🔑 Results

- Often vary by population (families vs singles, on the streets vs at risk of homelessness)
- **Connecticut: Average 31%** of households find alternative housing (26% adults; 52% families)
- **Pierce County, WA: 52% of families** find alternative housing.. 10% return for additional assistance within 6 months.



# Benefits of Problem Solving

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## For the household

- A strengths-based/empowerment driven approach; provides help right away; they get a “yes, I can help you now” instead of a “no” or a wait list
- Keeps the person or household in charge of driving their solutions
- Keeps them from entering the HRS (Homeless Response System) unnecessarily and from being labeled *homeless*
- Prevents the negative impacts of time in shelter or on the street

## For the community

- Saves shelter and housing programs for those with highest needs who have no other options
- Supports resolution of homelessness at much lower cost than shelter, Navigation Centers or housing programs
- In some cases, preserves housing in San Francisco



# What Problem Solving looks like...

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- Always a conversation; partnering to find solutions
- Explores every available option
- Helps people make and execute a plan immediately
- Can also include offers of assistance such as:
  - Eviction Prevention
  - Homeward Bound
  - Family Reunification or Mediation
  - Onetime: Move-in Assistance/Flexible grants
- If we can't find a solution through problem solving, move on to assessment and possible other assistance



# Problem Solving-Where is it happening?

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## Access Points

### **Family Access Points**

Mission Access Point

3270 18th Street  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Bayview Access Point

1641 LaSalle Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94124

### **As of August 1, 2018:**

Central City Access Point

37 Grove Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

### **ECS Adult Access Points**

2111 Jennings St.  
San Francisco, CA 94124

123 10th St.  
San Francisco, CA 94103

<http://hsh.sfgov.org>





# Problem Solving-Where is it happening?

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## • HOMeward BOUND

- The Homeward Bound program, now housed under the Coordinated Entry/ Problem Solving Team, was designed to help reunite people, experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, with family and friends willing and able to offer ongoing support to end the cycle of homelessness.

## • YOUTH PROBLEM SOLVING

- Larkin Street and Huckleberry were awarded funds to start Problem Solving as of November 1, 2018, as we stand up Coordinated Entry for Youth.



# It's A Big Change In Approach!

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Good problem solving work includes:

- Belief that it can work and people can find their own solutions
- Comfort with people living in safe, doubled-up situations
- Knowing that an unknown outcome is not necessarily a bad outcome
- Being comfortable with trying creative solutions
- Knowing everyone will receive the conversation but it might not be the right fit, and that's ok



# For More Information

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- Housed in a Hurry <https://buildingchanges.org/library-type/best-practice-reports/item/1006-homeless-to-housed-in-a-hurry-extending-the-use-of-diversion-to-help-families-exit-homelessness>
- Characteristics of an Exemplary Diversion Specialist [http://www.orgcode.com/characteristics\\_of\\_an\\_exemplary\\_diversion\\_specialist](http://www.orgcode.com/characteristics_of_an_exemplary_diversion_specialist)
- Housing First: Ending Homelessness and Transforming Lives <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsFHV-McdPo&t=296s>
- Diversion Training Materials from Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness <http://cceh.org/provider-resources/shelter-diversion/>



# Problem Solving

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## CONTACT

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**Thank you!**

<http://hsh.sfgov.org>