



NAEH RAPID RE-HOUSING FOR YOUTH LEARNING COMMUNITY

Shared Housing

What is rapid re-housing?

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help people quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety), and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household. The core components of a rapid re-housing program are below. While a rapid re-housing program must have all three core components available, it is not required that a single entity provide all three services nor that a household utilize them all. For more information about rapid re-housing, take a look at the Alliance's [Rapid Re-Housing Works campaign](#) and our [Rapid Re-Housing Know-How series](#)!

On May 25, 2017, the Alliance's [Rapid Re-Housing for Youth Learning Community](#) held an [online meeting](#) focusing on shared housing and roommates. Below are lessons learned and resources that may help programs who have questions about how to most effectively facilitate shared housing arrangements for youth in rapid re-housing.

What is shared housing?

Shared housing is defined as an arrangement in which two or more unrelated people share a house or an apartment. Shared housing is a common living arrangement for young adults, regardless of socioeconomic status. It's also important for making rapid re-housing work in high-cost, low-vacancy housing markets. Some advantages of shared housing arrangements include:

- Increases affordability
- Easier application process, faster lease-ups and move-ins
- Built-in support from peers; forms "families of choice"
- Financially appealing to landlords
- Solves housing issues for a few people at a time

In general, roommate situations are allowed under US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)- and Continuum of Care (CoC)-funded rapid re-housing (see Appendix 1).

Should program participants choose shared housing arrangements, they both must have separate leases, and there are ways that the rent must be calculated.

And there are many different ways to facilitate shared housing arrangements for young adults. Table 1 outlines just a few described by [Valley Youth House](#) in the May 25th webinar.

Table 1. Shared Housing Models for Young Adults (Source: Valley Youth House)

Homeowner/Tenant	Collective Tenant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeowner seeking tenant for help, income, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-6 tenants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenant pays some rent, below market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No live-in staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rents a room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency assists residents with learning to manage and live in home together and with case management. Negotiates conflicts if necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency can be involved to help match and provide follow up case management and conflict mediation if necessary. 	

Shared Housing for Young Adults: Getting Started

Just as they have with other populations, rapid re-housing programs around the country are finding that shared housing arrangements are an important tool to quickly re-house young adults in affordable living situations.

Many experienced youth rapid re-housing providers have found that with wages not keeping pace with high rents, shared housing arrangements are a critical tool in ending homelessness for young adults. Shared housing can lower overall cost per individual in apartments, broaden apartment options, and provide additional peer support for independent living.

Key steps to implementing effective shared housing arrangements in youth rapid re-housing include:

- Determining how to target the program.** Not everyone is a good fit for a shared housing arrangement. Shared housing arrangements will work best if the person indicates that they are interested in a roommate and understand clearly how the housing arrangement will work.
- Determining how to match people.** Programs that take the time to develop a matching process that takes into account the needs and interests of the program participant will be more likely to be successful. This can include hosting “matching sessions” where participants can meet and developing a tool to match people by interests, location preference, and other factors. This can also include talking to young people about potential shared housing partners in their existing social networks, including extended relatives or families of choice.
- Finding housing by engaging landlords.** Developing strong partnerships with landlords is critical. Successful programs have worked hard to engage landlords, perhaps through community landlord groups and neighborhood liaison meetings, engage congregations, use web resources, and streamline processes for landlords when possible. They have also developed agreements with landlord and housemates on recruitment of housemates to clarify expectations of all parties. Programs should have

flexible funding sources to incentivize landlord participation and should be responsive to landlords should issues arise.

- **Clarifying how the shared housing arrangement will work.** Once roommates are matched, defining roles and responsibilities is critical. Successful programs have developed roommate contracts and agreements that layout each person’s expectations before living together. These agreements can include things like house rules, utility assignments, bill payment schedules, chore schedules, and visitor expectations. Programs can also expect to spend more time supporting the relationship with and needs of the landlord during the initial months after placement.

Challenges with Shared Housing

As with any roommate situation, shared housing is not without its challenges. For example, there may be roommate discord or a sudden employment change may impact the financial stability of a household. The key to addressing these challenges it to be flexible, develop and keep strong landlord relationships, and maintain a person-centered approach that builds on the strengths of program participants. Clear lines of communication with the program, the participants, and the landlord are needed, as well as the flexibility to make changes if issues arise. Additional concerns may arise when roommates are also intimate partners, and clarity about shared housing roles and expectations can be even more important in those situations.

Where can I find resources related to shared housing?

Here are just a few, and there will be lots more to come as the Learning Community continues!

- [Shared Housing as a Solution for Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Rapid Re-Housing Shared Housing Agreement Form](#)
- [CoC Program Leasing and Rental Assistance Projects: Examples of Lease Agreements](#)
- [Rapid Re-Housing: ESG vs. CoC Guide](#)
- [Creating a Shared Home: Promising Approaches for Using Shared Housing to Prevent & End Homelessness in Massachusetts](#)

What is the Rapid Re-Housing for Youth Learning Community?

The National Alliance to End Homelessness’ [Rapid Re-Housing for Youth Learning Community](#) is designed to help providers and systems administrators better understand best practices in implementing [rapid re-housing \(RRH\) for youth](#).

The Learning Community provides an opportunity for peer learning and serves as a way for the Alliance to gather more knowledge about best practices from experienced youth RRH providers and to understand challenges that communities face when implementing youth RRH. All of the Learning Community’s online meetings are [available for viewing](#).

The 2017 Learning Community is happening now! Contact Mindy Mitchell (mmitchell@naeh.org) or Jen Saunders (jsaunders@naeh.org) to join!

Appendix 1. Shared Housing: HUD Guidelines for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC)-Funded Rapid Re-Housing. See also [Rapid Re-Housing: ESG vs. CoC Guide](#).

In general, roommate situations are allowed under ESG and CoC-funded rapid re-housing. Should program participants choose shared housing arrangements, they both must have separate leases, and there are ways that the rent must be calculated.

ESG Requirements	CoC Requirements
<p>The ESG Program interim rule does not prescribe the type of housing that would qualify as permanent housing and thus allows for shared housing/roommate situations in rapid re-housing. However, if you are going to house people in shared housing/roommate situations, there are certain requirements that must be met, and other considerations to keep in mind (see below):</p>	<p>The CoC Program interim rule does not prescribe the type of housing that would qualify as permanent housing and thus allows for shared housing/roommate situations in rapid re-housing. However, if you are going to house people in shared housing/roommate situations, there are certain requirements that must be met, and other considerations to keep in mind (see below):</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The household being assisted with ESG rental assistance must have its own separate lease with the property owner to be considered a separate household for the purposes of ESG eligibility (note: subleases are not allowed under ESG). However, providing housing relocation and stabilization services and financial assistance does not require the program participant to have a lease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each household being assisted with CoC Program tenant-based rental assistance must have their own separate lease with the property owner to be considered a separate household for the purposes of CoC Program eligibility.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with all tenant-based rental assistance, it is up to the program participant to select a housing unit in which to live and the people with which they will share that housing (if any). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with all tenant-based rental assistance, it is up to the program participant to select a housing unit in which to live and the people with which they will share that housing (if any).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A habitability inspection is required for the unit into which the program participant will be moving - EVEN IF only services are provided. This will help ensure that the individual or family has adequate space and security for themselves and their surroundings, and that the unit is generally habitable (576.403(c)). Doing this inspection may also help the recipient/sub-recipient assess whether this can be a permanent living situation for the homeless household. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All housing assisted with leasing or rental assistance funds under the CoC Program must meet minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as set forth in section 578.75(b) of the CoC Program interim rule.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All housing for which leasing or rental assistance payments are made must meet FMR and rent reasonableness standards. Rent reasonableness should be determined by considering the reasonableness of the rent in relation to rents being charged for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All housing for which leasing or rental assistance payments are made must meet FMR and rent reasonableness standards. Rent reasonableness should be determined by considering the reasonableness of the rent in relation to rents being charged for

<p>comparable unassisted units, taking into account the location, quality, size, type, and age of unit, as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance, and utilities provided by the owner. (Note: The FMR for shared housing is the lower of the FMR for the family unit size or the pro-rata share of the FMR for the shared housing unit size. The pro-rata share is calculated by dividing the number of bedrooms available for occupancy by the assisted family in the private space by the total number of bedrooms in the unit. For example, in the case of a single person household renting one room in a 4 bedroom house, the FMR used would be the lower of the 1-bedroom FMR or the pro-rata share of the 4-bedroom FMR (1/4 of the 4 bedroom FMR)).</p>	<p>comparable unassisted units, taking into account the location, quality, size, type, and age of unit, as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance, and utilities provided by the owner.</p>
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