

Statewide Homeless Council – Maine’s Ideal Rental Subsidy for Homeless Populations

Final 2/14/17

Core Traits:

- ❖ The subsidy would be permanent or long term.
- ❖ The subsidy would be coupled with support in the community.
- ❖ The subsidy would be easy to access and it would be easy to screen people in.
- ❖ The subsidy would be of a decent supply.
- ❖ The subsidy would require no/little criminal background checks; and/or would allow waivers in lieu of criminal background checks.
- ❖ The subsidy would be easier to access for people experiencing homelessness than people with simply low incomes.

Length

- The subsidy would be permanent; the next best is 24 months. Permanent/long term subsidies produce positive outcomes for all populations.
- Fewer but more permanent subsidies would be a better tool for ending homelessness than more subsidies with shorter time frames.

Models

- The ideal subsidy would start with income eligibility, like Housing Choice Vouchers.
- The subsidy would be permanent or long term, like Housing Choice Vouchers.
- The model of Shelter Plus Care (S+C) is good place to start. Advantages are that clients pay 30% of their income to rent; S+C is low barrier, flexible and permanent. S+C is committed to serving person’s needs with less rigidity around the rules. The payment standards are low and vary with interpretation and this could be corrected for an ideal subsidy. S+C does have some barriers, but the model is a favorable one.
- The subsidy would mirror STEP design in terms of support and background check flexibility. Ideal payment standards would be in the STEP range.
- The HUD/VASH model is good.
- The subsidy would work at a recovery residence.
- The subsidy would contemplate security deposit sourcing.

Support Services

- The subsidy would include a continuum of resources to help everyone stay housed, and people would help pay for the subsidy if they have means/income.
- The subsidy would offer a life plan for permanent success.

Targeting, Planning, and Partnership

- Homeless populations need permanent rental subsidies for success.
- Couple the subsidy with the prioritization chart – Have the resources for rental subsidies align with Maine’s strategic prioritization chart.
- Optimize through local/regional control.
- Work with local housing authorities to set aside a portion of available vouchers for homeless populations.
- Identify permanent funding streams.
- Increase project-based and site-based subsidies – a mix of both is ideal.
- An ideal subsidy would positively affect MH, DHHS, DOE, DOC, and every entity affected by people who ricochet through emergency systems.