

Louisville Metro Homelessness Prevention



& Rapid Re-Housing Program *Evolution & Impact* 2009 - 2012

*I will yell it from the rooftops
because HPRP saved me!
They were a blessing.*

- HPRP CLIENT



A REPORT BY

Louisville
Urban League

*Empowering People.
Changing Lives.*



PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

LOUISVILLE METRO DEPARTMENT OF
**COMMUNITY SERVICES
AND REVITALIZATION**

PREPARED BY



INTRODUCTION

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included \$1.5 billion for a Homelessness Prevention Fund. Funding for this program, called the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), was distributed based on the formula used for the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program.¹ The purpose of HPRP, done as part of the stimulus plan, was to minimize the disruption to households who had been self-sufficient prior to the recession so they could recover income more quickly.



HPRP offered its participants two types of rental assistance, “homelessness prevention” and “rapid re-housing.” Homelessness prevention provided rental subsidies to tenants at risk of eviction due to their inability to pay rent in full. This allowed them to remain in their existing homes. The rapid-rehousing program provided rent, and, at local option, moving costs, and/or security deposit subsidies that enabled recipients to locate new rental housing. HPRP housing subsidies were paid directly to clients’ landlords. HPRP also provided clients with case management services designed to help them become self-sufficient. A portion of the case management funds supported legal services and referrals to households facing eviction hearings in court.

The HPRP allocation directly to Louisville Metro government was \$4,870,830; two other cities in Kentucky received direct allocations- Covington and Lexington. The state of Kentucky received an additional \$12,157,352 for distribution and of that, \$120,000 was allocated to YMCA Safe Place Services in Louisville. Of Louisville Metro’s direct allocation: \$3,220,712 provided direct financial assistance for 1,346 client households, which included rental assistance, security and utility deposits, moving cost assistance, and hotel/motel vouchers; \$1,337,559 supported housing relocation and stabilization services to 1,153 households, including case management, outreach, legal services, and housing search assistance; and \$312,559 of the grant funded evaluation, data collection, and administration.²

HPRP marks the first time that such a large amount of federal funds has been available for homelessness prevention at the national level. Since the beginning of the program, communities across the country have worked to prevent and end homelessness for over one million people, including families and individuals. Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing are key strategies of *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* and are components of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. While HPRP in name came to an end in 2012, rapid re-housing activities will be eligible under the new Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. Learning what has been instrumental to foster success in other communities can be key as communities continue to incorporate prevention and rapid re-housing activities into their continuum of care.³

This report summarizes the history of the program, program operations and outcomes. Federal guidelines focused this temporary assistance on households with incomes at or below 50% of area median income (\$31,450 for a family of four in Louisville in 2011) and who were homeless or at risk of losing housing. The program began quickly and modifications, both at the federal and local levels, occurred while the program was in operation to better target the funds for those whose lowered income was likely to be temporary.



The funds were to be spent in three years, as this program was designed to address current economic conditions. Louisville Metro allocated the funds into three annual budgets and operated the program each year only so long as there were funds to distribute.

The HPRP administering agency within Louisville Metro government was the Department of Community Services and Revitalization, which was called the Department of Housing and Family Services when the program was first being implemented. In this report, the current name, the Department of Community Services and Revitalization (CSR), will be used.

HPRP PHASE I: INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

SEPTEMBER 2009 THROUGH AUGUST 2010

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) wanted HPRP launched quickly since it was a stimulus program. The instructions from HUD at this point were brief. A community and government team decided to base eligibility on the then current Louisville Metro Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) program to make it easy to implement and to use Neighborhood Places, where EFA was initiated, as the entry point to the program. Quick implementation was a main goal at the start of the program.

For over a decade, the Neighborhood Places have served as human services centers in which many state and local agencies offer assistance programs. CSR maintains intake staff at Neighborhood Places who conducted interviews with clients and made referrals to appropriate programs. HPRP screening was added and the similar criteria of the HPRP and the EFA programs made implementation swift. The clients were also referred to case managers at partnering agencies; participation in case management



was a requirement of the program if assistance lasted longer than three months.

While easily implemented, the initial program design quickly revealed a lack of predictability in the duration of direct assistance which made budgeting difficult. The first year's allocation was used up and payments were ended sometimes with little notice. This was a problem for clients but also for landlords who had agreed to rent under the program.

HPRP PHASE I SERVICES PROVIDED

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2010

ACTIVITY	HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	PERSONS SERVED
Homelessness Prevention- Rental Assistance	941	1910
Homelessness Prevention- Security/Utility Deposits	67	139
Homelessness Prevention- Utility Payments	18	45
Homelessness Prevention- Moving Cost Assistance	15	26
Homelessness Prevention- Motel/Hotel Vouchers	5	8
Phase I Homelessness Prevention Financial Assistance Totals*	946	1921
Rapid Rehousing- Rental Assistance	193	299
Rapid Rehousing- Security/Utility Deposits	97	149
Rapid Rehousing- Utility Payments	11	21
Rapid Rehousing- Moving Cost Assistance	11	21
Rapid Rehousing- Motel/Hotel Vouchers	8	20
Phase I Rapid Rehousing Financial Assistance Totals*	200	309
Phase I Case Management Services	487	286
Phase I Legal Services	311	351

*Note: participants could receive more than one type of HPRP financial assistance services
Source: Louisville Homeless Management Information System

When they granted me a year, it was like it was heaven-sent, because I was able to save and put towards where I was behind in other places, like medical things...

It didn't cover the whole thing, but because it gave me lump sums, it pushed me ahead, which is awesome.

- HPRP CLIENT

HPRP PHASE II: PROGRAM REFINED

SEPTEMBER 2010 THROUGH JUNE 2012

Louisville implemented HPRP Phase II using a team approach that successfully targeted funds to restore housing stability and provide case management to households who had been self-sufficient prior to the recession so they could again become financially stable. Partner agency case managers, Neighborhood Place personnel and CSR staff responsible for HPRP developed new policies that increased client success and improved program operations. In addition, HUD refined its guidelines using best practices, which Louisville adopted into Phase II. The Phase II policies were implemented in August 2010 and governed the program until its conclusion in June 2012.

Phase II refined eligibility criteria to better target a population who could demonstrate the ability to get self-sustaining employment. The Phase II case management model required increased interactions with case managers and deeper client assessments and action plans. Case management was not only mandatory, but payment of each month's rent was dependent on meeting with the case manager. This model built on clients' strengths to improve their financial sustainability.

In addition, the HPRP enrollment process was centralized to ensure that Phase II eligibility criteria were applied uniformly. Clients still accessed HPRP through the Neighborhood Places, but all applications were reviewed by the CSR Office on Homelessness.

DEMONSTRABLE ABILITY TO HAVE SELF-SUSTAINING EMPLOYMENT

The HPRP Sustainability Assessment was an innovative tool created through the collaborative process. Eligibility criteria were used to assess past employment and education as indicators of future employment. One example is whether the household adult had over \$200 per week in Unemployment Insurance Benefits, which is only possible if a) the former job had a salary that had been sustainable and b) the person had been employed long enough to get benefits and c) the person had not

exhausted benefits, so the time since employment was not too long. All applicants needed to have 25% or greater reduction in income that was recent- within the last six months before applying- but had lasted at least 30 days. It was an objective way of assessing sustainability.

There were also additional criteria that assessed: other current income source(s), job training, educational attainment, access to resources in the community, efforts to increase income, ability to manage income, past housing stability and other indicators that the household could be financially independent.

CHANGES TO ASSISTANCE

Another change of Phase II limited client assistance payments to rental assistance alone. Therefore, the assistance was no longer to be used for deposits, utility assistance (even for deposits) or for hotel/motel vouchers.

Nor would the assistance pay for arrearages- any owner agreeing to participate with a tenant already in place was informed that the assistance would pay for future rents and could not be applied to back rent. As will be shown, the ability to have stable housing, combined with the rental payment formula explained below and financial management instruction actually allowed successful applicants to pay arrearages over time. This was an

unanticipated stabilizing consequence of the combined changes.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE DETERMINATION & LENGTH OF ASSISTANCE

One critical change that increased HPRP's impact was the use of a predictable flat amount of rental assistance based on household size, rather than a changing amount based on income. The rent was set and remained the same amount even as income increased, unless the household went over the HPRP income limits. According to interviews with clients and case managers, this predictability allowed households to better manage their finances and address debts. This was a valuable lesson learned from HPRP.

Unlike HUD's Section 8 rental assistance, the HPRP rent assistance amount was not determined based on the

Because HPRP bought her 18 months of time, that client got very close to getting her Bachelor's completed. And the program, because of what I did as case manager, helped her get to Family Scholar House, so she was able to graduate. So [HPRP] bought time for people to become more marketable.

-HPRP CASE MANAGER

family paying 30% of individual household income, with the remainder, up to an approved monthly rent, paid by the program. Instead, once a household was determined to be eligible, the amount paid on behalf of the household was predetermined from a standardized chart using household size. Therefore every four-person household received the same assistance. The household chose a unit (it could be the unit they were already occupying) and the unit was inspected for safety. The rent was reviewed for reasonableness, but not negotiated by inspectors. The rent was not limited to the HPRP payment standard; instead, the ability to afford the rent was discussed through case management and financial planning and education.

Using data from a client's HPRP Sustainability Assessment, the duration of rent assistance was assigned at program acceptance and told to the participant and to the property owner. The length of assistance ranged from three to eighteen months, with extensions granted under certain protocols. This policy had several ramifications. First was that the money was set aside in the program budget so that the program administrator set aside funds to meet obligations. It also meant that if any participant exited early, the program administrator knew how much assistance was remaining and was able to reassign funds to other clients. All of this enhanced the reputation of the program for reliability as well as gave a clear end date to the participant.

HPRP PHASE II SERVICES PROVIDED
SEPTEMBER 1, 2010 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2012

ACTIVITY	HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	PERSONS SERVED
Homelessness Prevention- Rental Assistance	241	503
Homelessness Prevention- Security/Utility Deposits	4	4
Homelessness Prevention- Utility Payments	4	8
Phase II Homelessness Prevention Financial Assistance Totals*	241	503
Rapid Rehousing-Rental Assistance	43	79
Rapid Rehousing- Security/Utility Deposits	4	7
Rapid Rehousing- Utility Payments	3	3
Phase II Rapid Rehousing Financial Assistance Totals*	43	79
Phase II Case Management Services	204	489
Phase II Legal Services	399	425

*Note: Participants could receive more than one type of HPRP financial assistance services
 Source: Louisville Homeless Management Information System

Basically they give you all the fundamentals that you're going to need to get you where you need to go as well as in between.
- HPRP CLIENT

CASE MANAGEMENT

In HPRP Phase II, three agencies provided case management to rental assistance clients: the Louisville Urban League (LUL), Family and Children's Place (FCP) and Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM). Upon intake, clients were randomly assigned to an agency, except for those participating households that were internationals and had specific needs that KRM would meet. If KRM did not have enough international households to meet its caseload, the agency also served participating households who were not internationals.

In all agencies, the case manager (CM) met with the household before the contracts for housing assistance were signed with the property owners. Rapid re-housing clients were required to locate new housing within sixty days. Their CM assisted them with a housing search strategy. All CMs developed a plan with each client household that not only set goals, but broke down the steps into clear actions that the participating household could accomplish.

Each partner agency used a unique case management model where each provided areas of increased strength, but all models met the standardized reporting requirements. However, all agencies provided financial planning education and services to the participating household, and also referred clients to programs and services provided by other agencies. Some of the referrals for clients were for benefits such as Social Security Administration, Food Stamps, K-TAP, and Community Action Partnership (for LIHEAP and appliances). Referrals were also made to other agencies and programs that helped with specific needs such as the Center for Accessible Living, Catholic Charities, GED and job training, St. Vincent de Paul (furniture), Project Warm, Dress for Success, and medical and dental services.

CASE MANAGEMENT PARTNER AGENCIES

Though each HPRP partner agency offered unique case management programs, CMs from each organization met regularly with each other and CSR staff to discuss program implementation, issues encountered, and ideas for program improvement.



Louisville Urban League

LUL provided one-half of a HPRP CM, who worked with a case load of up to 35 clients to develop a financial stability action plan. LUL has a very strong budgeting and financial and credit education program and all HPRP participating households were required to take LUL's Financially In Tune (FIT) class. The CM worked closely with clients to help them track spending and develop budgets. LUL also operates a strong Workforce Development program to which the HPRP CM referred a majority of her clients. This program provided assistance with resume development and interviewing skills.



Family & Children's Place

FCP had the largest share of CMs for this program with two full-time HPRP CMs and a supervisor who managed a partial HPRP CM caseload. A full case load was 20 to 24 clients per CM. FCP's case management model focuses on building upon clients' strengths and helping them access community resources. CMs also usually try to meet with clients in their homes. Other resources offered by FCP to which HPRP CMs would refer clients include a day care, therapy, and family counseling.



Catholic Charities originally provided HPRP case management services specifically focused on

internationals, although it also served non-internationals up to its maximum case load. Louisville Metro transferred these HPRP case management responsibilities to KRM in October 2011, eight months before the program's end in June 2012. KRM made a fast transition and was able to serve households receiving assistance as of November 2011 with one HPRP CM serving an active case load of 35 clients. About 73% of the 40 households served by KRM during its eight month case management grant period were non-internationals.

KRM provides a unique employment services program with an extensive jobs database. The database is kept up not only by KRM's relationships with employers, but by clients who use the resource. Even as people get placed, they call in if they hear of job openings. The KRM CM linked her clients with KRM Job Development staff. The skills of preparing a resume were taught, not just in classes, but in one-on-one session assisting clients with their resumes.

LEGAL AID SOCIETY

A second approach to the prevention of homelessness was implemented through a program conducted by the Legal Aid Society (LAS) by having paralegal to advise households that came to eviction court and needed help in locating resources to move. The court cooperated by telling those facing eviction in court about the LAS paralegal who had information that could help them avoid becoming homeless. The paralegal provided an information packet containing useful information ranging from a list of movers and storage facilities, to lists of apartments that had lower-cost rent, both federally subsidized and un-subsidized.



The packet also contained contact information on shelters for homeless persons or households as well as a Tenants' Rights manual. In egregious court cases, the paralegal, under court protocol, could refer the household to LAS for legal representation by an attorney. LAS also referred clients to HPRP for rapid re-housing.

Additionally, the case management agencies were also able to refer their HPRP clients for legal representation in any area that LAS covered. These cases ranged from an appeal of a ruling on a disability claim or other benefits, to eviction, expungement of old criminal files, divorce and other types of cases.

CLIENT OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

HPRP helped stabilize housing for thousands of Louisville residents, as demonstrated in the Housing Outcomes chart below. Case management also empowered HPRP clients with financial education, career services, and action plans identifying attainable steps necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Partner agency CMs spoke of the many positive ways in which HPRP impacted their clients' lives. As one CM said, "I've had a lot of clients that are just so thankful because [HPRP] gave them time to catch up on everything that was falling behind and they were facing eviction."

My case manager treated me...like a friend, almost. Just so willing to help out and listen and branch out... to tap the resources that I didn't know about.

-HPRP CLIENT

HPRP CLIENT STORIES

The experiences of three HPRP participants who agreed to in-depth interviews are summarized below. These are just a few examples of how HPRP profoundly helped people in need.

Ms. X is an older worker who learned about HPRP when applying for Food Stamps at a Neighborhood Place after being laid off. After a lifetime of employment, she was discouraged. "Without [my case manager] I would not have had the enthusiasm to go out there and push myself." Able to stay where she was and "...not have to go to a shelter or be on the street", she persuaded her landlord to work with HPRP. Ms. X is employed again and is still in the same home.

Ms. Y was pregnant and had lost her job. She learned about HPRP at a Neighborhood Place. Ms. Y was temporarily staying with her seriously ill parents after giving birth. The rapid re-housing program, which allowed Ms. Y and her newborn to leave, was a relief for the whole family. The program "...gave you the opportunity to go where ever you want" and Ms. Y was able to locate where she could easily help her father following her mother's passing. This was her first apartment and Ms. Y learned budgeting. [My case manager] helped me figure out different ways to make my penny stretch." She built a strong relationship with her CM, who also linked her to child care, Dress for Success, and other programs. "Sometimes we would meet I think like at least 2 to 3 times a month if not really more." Ms. Y had worked menial jobs for years but began para-professional training. She is stable in her housing and on track to graduate.

Ms. Z fell behind in her rent when her work income dropped. She was unable to work for months due to physical trauma from domestic violence. Her income also dropped because her abusive husband was not in the household. Ms. Z benefited from the predictable rent payment for the pre-determined duration. She was able to pay arrearages in utilities, rent, medical bills and her car payments. "Catch up, and I mean catch up... I mean, every payment arrangement you can know to mankind, I had." "But I'm slowly getting on my feet. I'm trying to...purchase a home." Ms. Z has taken home buyer's training. "It was kind of liberating to come and speak with her and know that one day you can own a home." "It's scary to budget-I'll be honest with you-because you think you won't be able to. I have three children...and every day I swore a toe is poking through a shoe, but it's what you need...not what you want." Not only is Ms. Z working toward home ownership, she resumed her Master's level studies.

HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR PERSONS SERVED BY HPRP

DESTINATION	PHASE I 9/1/09 - 8/31/10	PHASE II 9/1/10 - 6/30/12	TOTAL
Rental by Client, No Housing Subsidy	1,696	519	2,215
Rental by Client, with Housing Subsidy (non-VA)	257	2	259
Rental by Client, Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) subsidy	14	2	16
Owned by Client, No Housing Subsidy	10	8	18
Owned by Client, with Housing Subsidy	1	0	1
Living with Family, Permanent Tenure	3	2	5
Living with Family, Temporary Tenure	17	7	24
Transitional Housing for Homeless Persons	1	9	10
Emergency Shelter (including hotel/motel paid with shelter voucher)	5	1	6
Other/Unknown	504	364	868

Source: Louisville Homelessness Management Information System



HPRP

A SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY ACT INTERVENTION WITH LASTING IMPACTS

HPRP helped 2,069 Louisville households⁴ hurt by the recession by providing services to prevent homelessness for people at risk. As seen by analyzing Housing Outcomes data in the chart on page 7, 98.4% of all HPRP-assisted households whose destinations were known have permanent housing, with 87.6% in unsubsidized housing. By combining housing subsidies with intensive case management, HPRP gave clients the opportunity to become self-sufficient again. Providing a set, time-limited rental subsidy empowered clients to restore their financial stability, through improved budgeting skills, debt repayment, job training, and seeking new employment, among other activities. HPRP legal services also helped clients facing eviction in court.

Louisville’s rapid implementation of HPRP served as a model of program management. Ongoing program evaluation and inter-agency collaboration enabled the important Phase II modifications to be put in place after the first program year. The lessons of HPRP have been integrated into new programs operated both through Community Services Block Grant and Emergency Solutions Grant funding. Elements include the Sustainability Assessment, the use of case management, the flat payment amount for rent for a set time period and the team approach to discussing issues within the program.

As a stimulus program, HPRP was a success. Just in program staffing, 14 jobs were created that lasted over the 3-year period. In addition, 7 of the staff were retained after the HPRP money was exhausted. The program was successful in allowing clients to re-enter the workforce. The difficulty of getting and retaining employment while homeless was forestalled by HPRP.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, downloaded from <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewHPRPIssuances>.
- ² Louisville Metro HPRP Quarterly Performance Report, 10/5/12.
- ³ US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, downloaded from <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewHPRPSuccessStories>.
- ⁴ Consisting of 3,585 persons. Source: Louisville Metro HPRP Quarterly Performance Report, 10/5/12.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We tremendously thank the clients who agreed to tell their stories about their HPRP experiences. Their anonymity was guaranteed.

Louisville Urban League also wishes to thank our fellow HPRP partner agencies- Family & Children’s Place, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, and Legal Aid Society- and their case management staff for their time and for all the information they provided about their HPRP services. We also thank them for referring clients to our researchers for interviews.

Thanks also to the Louisville Metro Department of Community Services & Revitalization and the Coalition for the Homeless for providing HPRP data and history.

Report Authors: Cathy Hinko and Curtis Stauffer,
 Metropolitan Housing Coalition

Report Design & Layout: Curtis Stauffer

Publication Date: October 30, 2012

