



# Conducting Housing First Research within Organizational and Systems Contexts

**PRESENTERS:**

***MOLLY BROWN, PHD, CAMILLA CUMMINGS, BA, LAUREN  
FAY, BA, DAO TRAN, MPH, SAM TSEMBERIS, PHD, AND  
RACHEL FYALL, PHD***

# Panel Introductions



***Molly Brown, Ph.D. - Principal Investigator***

Department of Psychology, DePaul University

***Camilla Cummings, BA - Graduate student***

Clinical-Community Psychology, DePaul University

***Dao Tran, MPH – Research Coordinator***

DePaul University

***Lauren Fay, BA - Coordinated Entry & Housing Placement  
Manager***

Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC)

***Sam Tsemberis, Ph.D. - Consultant***

Pathways Housing First

Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University

***Rachel Fyall, Ph.D. - Co-Principal Investigator***

Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington

# DESC Housing First Models



- Single-site – DESC owned and managed; have access to supportive services 24/7 at housing sites:
  - ✦ Onsite health care services
  - ✦ Daily meals and weekly outings to food banks
  - ✦ Case management and payee services
  - ✦ Medication monitoring
  - ✦ Weekly community-building activities
- Scattered-site – Housing subsidies for rental properties throughout King County
  - ✦ Housing specialist
  - ✦ Case management services

# Gaps in Our Knowledge of Housing First Outcomes



- In practice, Housing First implementation varies widely
- The structure of Housing First in single-site or scattered-sites models may have important implications for recovery and wellbeing
- Housing First research trials typically focus on outcomes associated with one particular model
- We lack guidance on which model is most effective for whom

# Examining Person-Environment Fit in Housing First Models

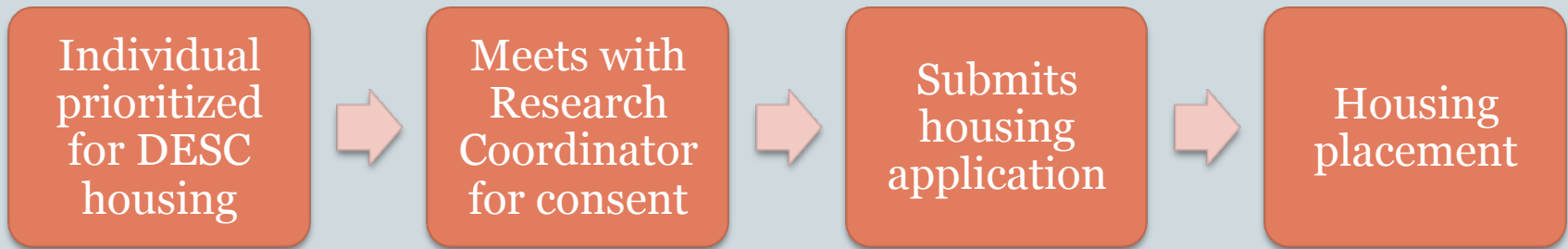


- HUD-funded randomized trial comparing DESC's single-site and scattered-sites Housing First models
- Main outcomes:
  - ✦ Housing stability
  - ✦ Social integration: citizenship, community integration, social networks
  - ✦ Quality of life: housing satisfaction, general quality of life, substance use, mental health symptoms
- Mixed methods:
  - ✦ Qualitative interviews with DESC staff and Housing First tenants to explore program implementation and its association with study outcomes

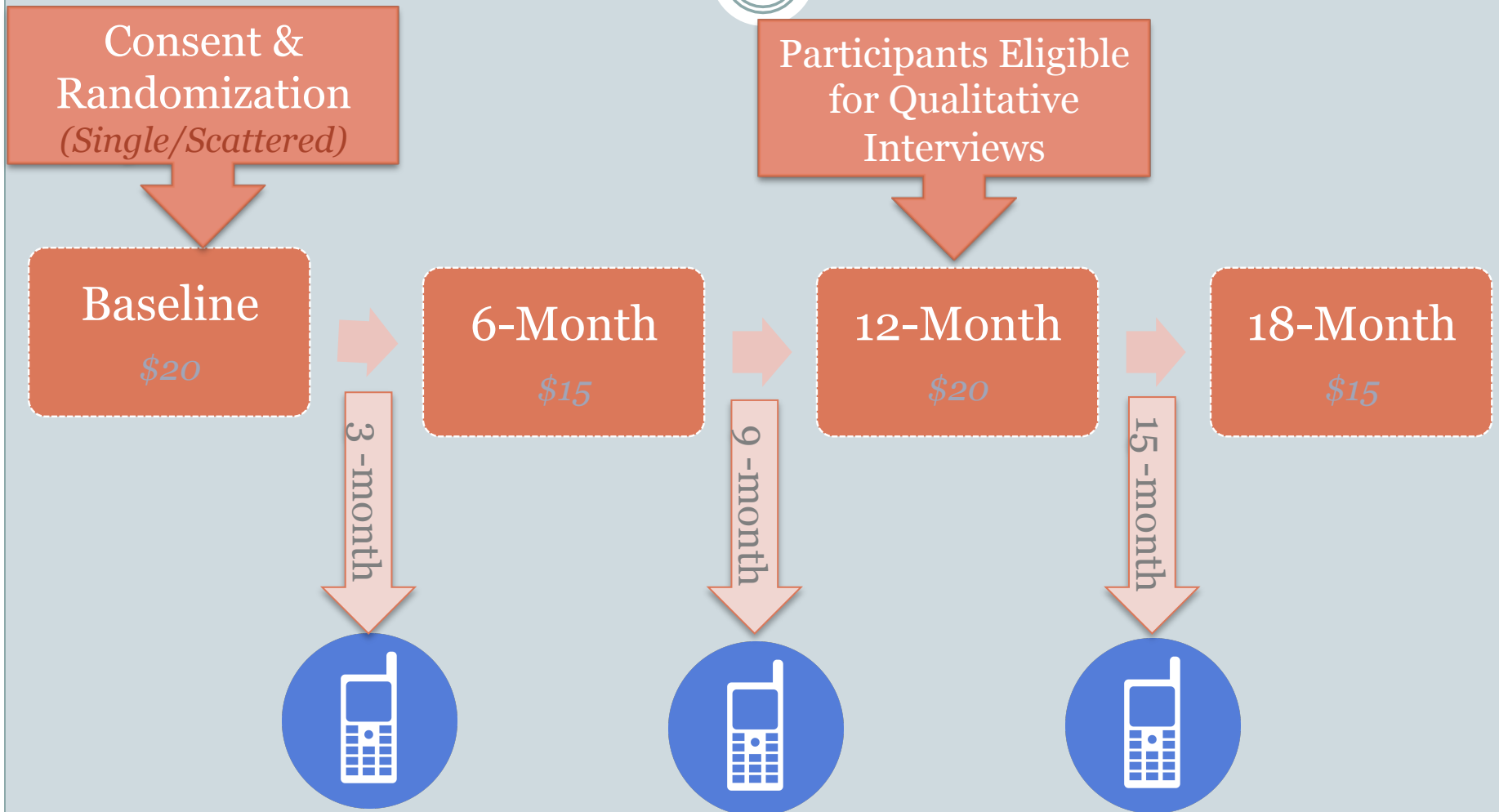
# Recruitment Procedures



Target sample size: 450



# Data Collection Procedures



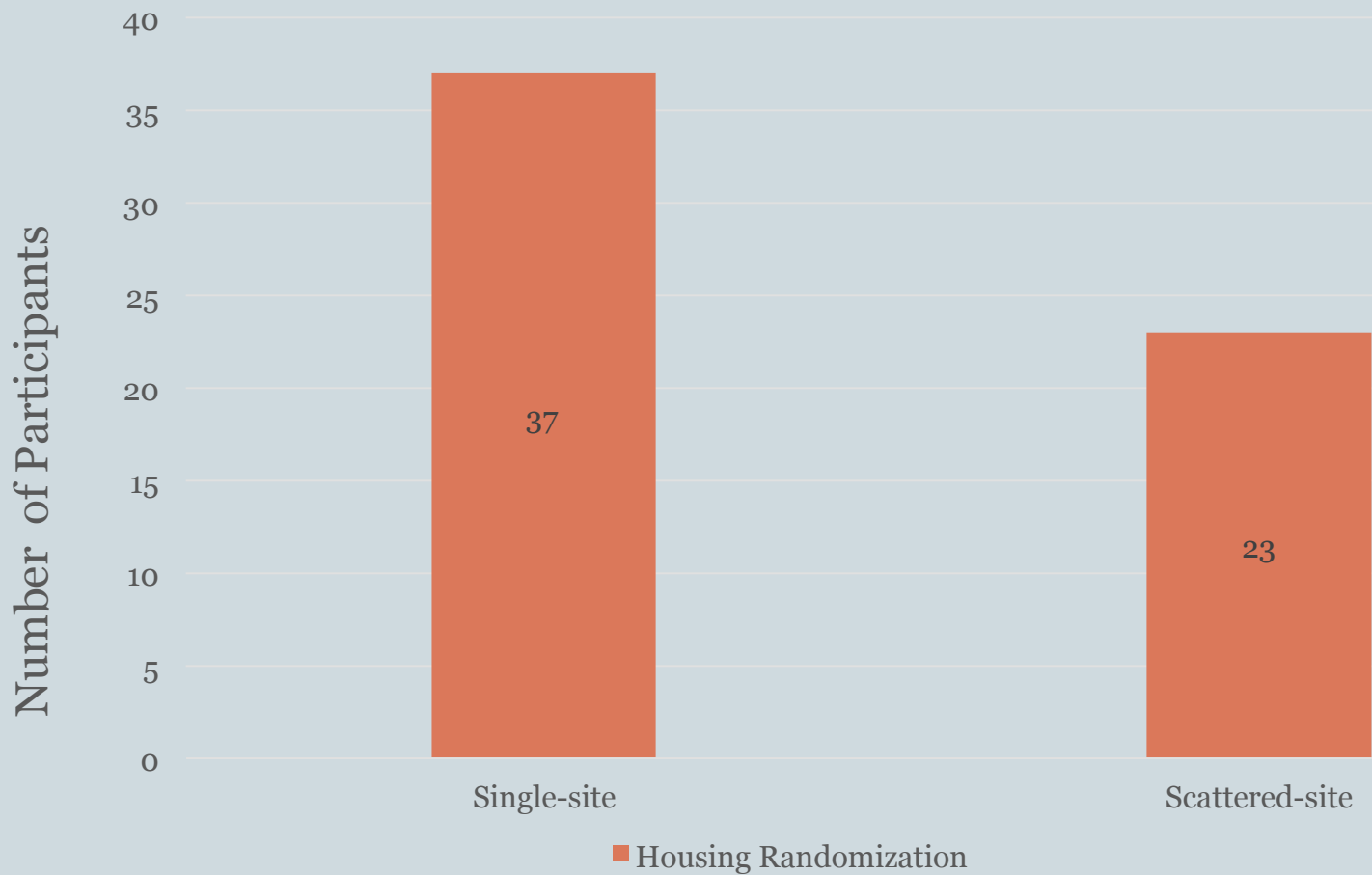
# What We Hope to Discover



- Identify individual-level characteristics that predict outcomes in the two models
- Whether the level of alignment between people's housing preferences and their housing placement influences main study outcomes
- Demonstrate that both models equivalently promote housing stability




# Recruitment Status



# Historical Barriers & Overcoming Challenges





Unpredictable  
and unbalanced  
availability of  
housing  
resources

- Modifications  
to study  
methodology



**How Recruitment can Struggle in a  
Community Context**

- Overcoming provider perspectives about the needs and protections of clients
  - Transparency and communication



**How Recruitment can Struggle in a Community Context**

- Ensuring ethical protections of participants
  - Informed consent, benefit greater than risk, confidentiality, withdrawal from study



**How Recruitment can Struggle in a Community Context**



- Conducting research within Coordinated Entry systems
  - Coordinated assessment
  - Providing feedback to CEA
  - Collaboration with servicing agencies



**How Recruitment can Struggle in a Community Context**

# Where do we go from here?



# Facilitators of Research



- Strengths of the research team
- Partnering within DESC
- Local community and collaborators
- HUD research partnership
- Local student volunteers



# Methodology Modifications



- Cross-sectional analysis of people housed in single-site and scattered-site models
  - 1 time-point (>12 months of residency)
- Propensity score matching (PSM)
  - Using available administrative data for statistical matching
  - Attempting to control for differences between participants in single-sites and scattered-sites to approximate random assignment

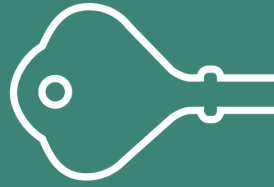
# Discussion



DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY



**W**  
UNIVERSITY of  
WASHINGTON



DESC

**Pathways** to Housing



THANK YOU!