

# Using Evidence to Expand Housing Options for Vulnerable, Justice- Involved Populations

Housing First Partners Conference

Denver, Co

April 11, 2018

# Who we are:



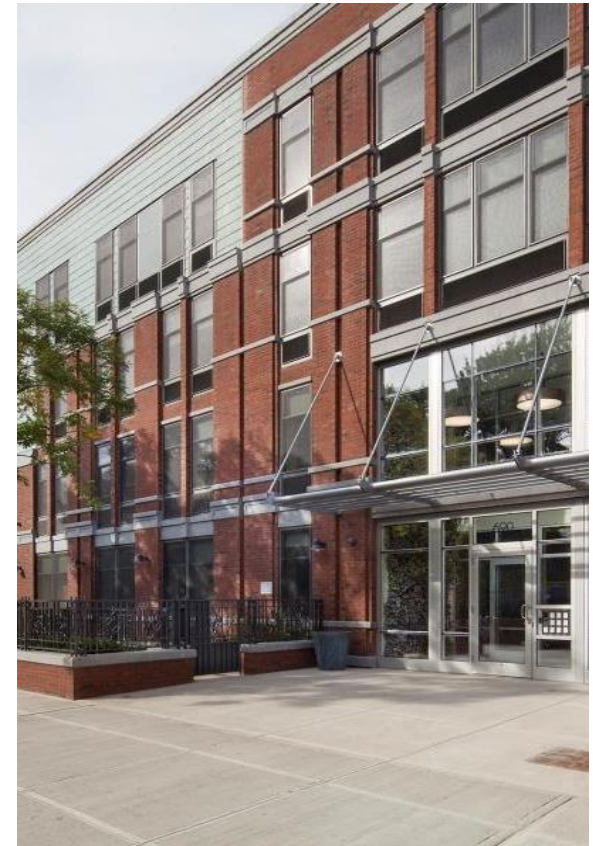
# CSH: Advancing Housing Solutions That...



Improve lives of  
vulnerable people



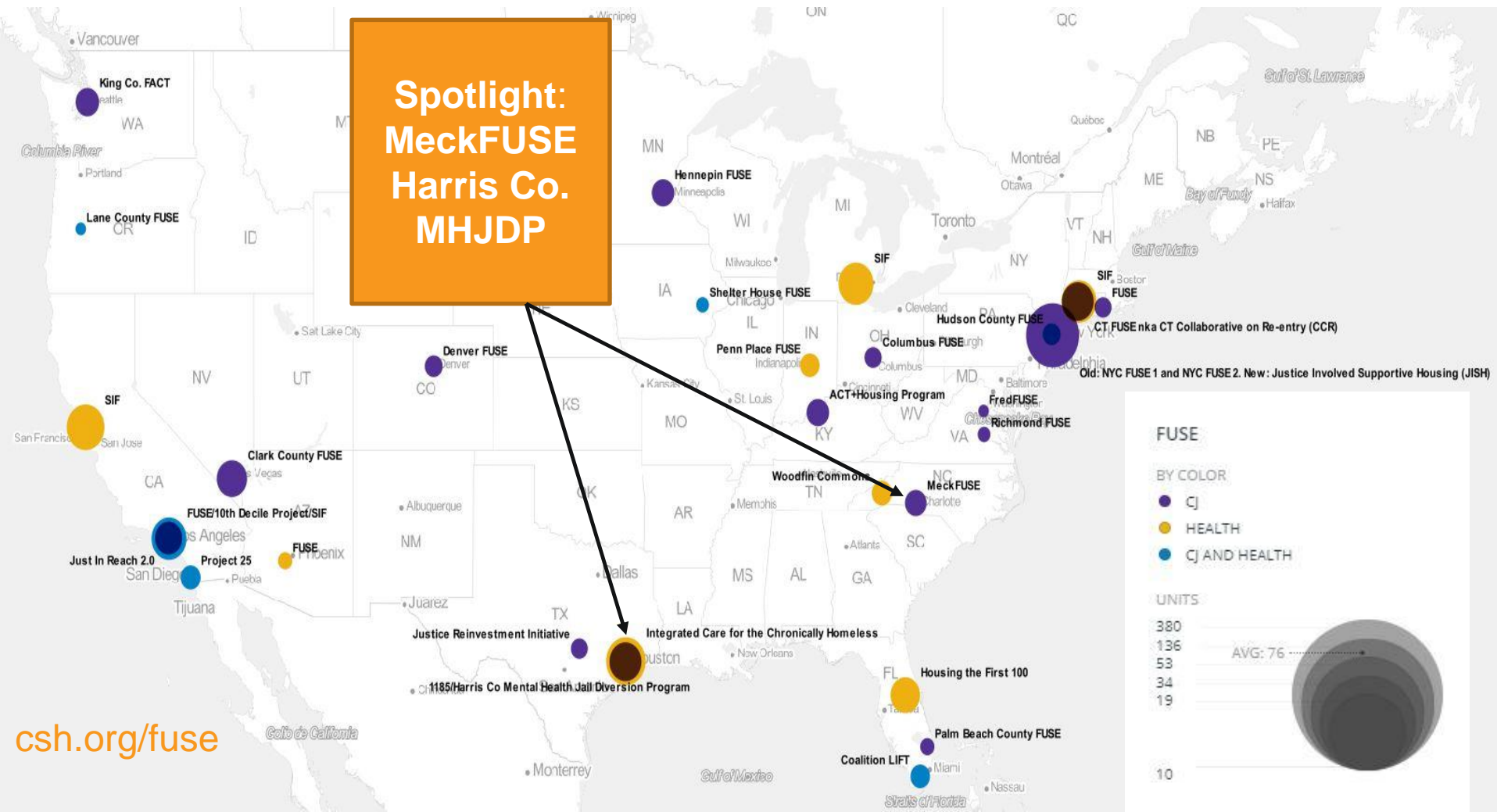
Maximize  
public resources



Build strong,  
healthy communities

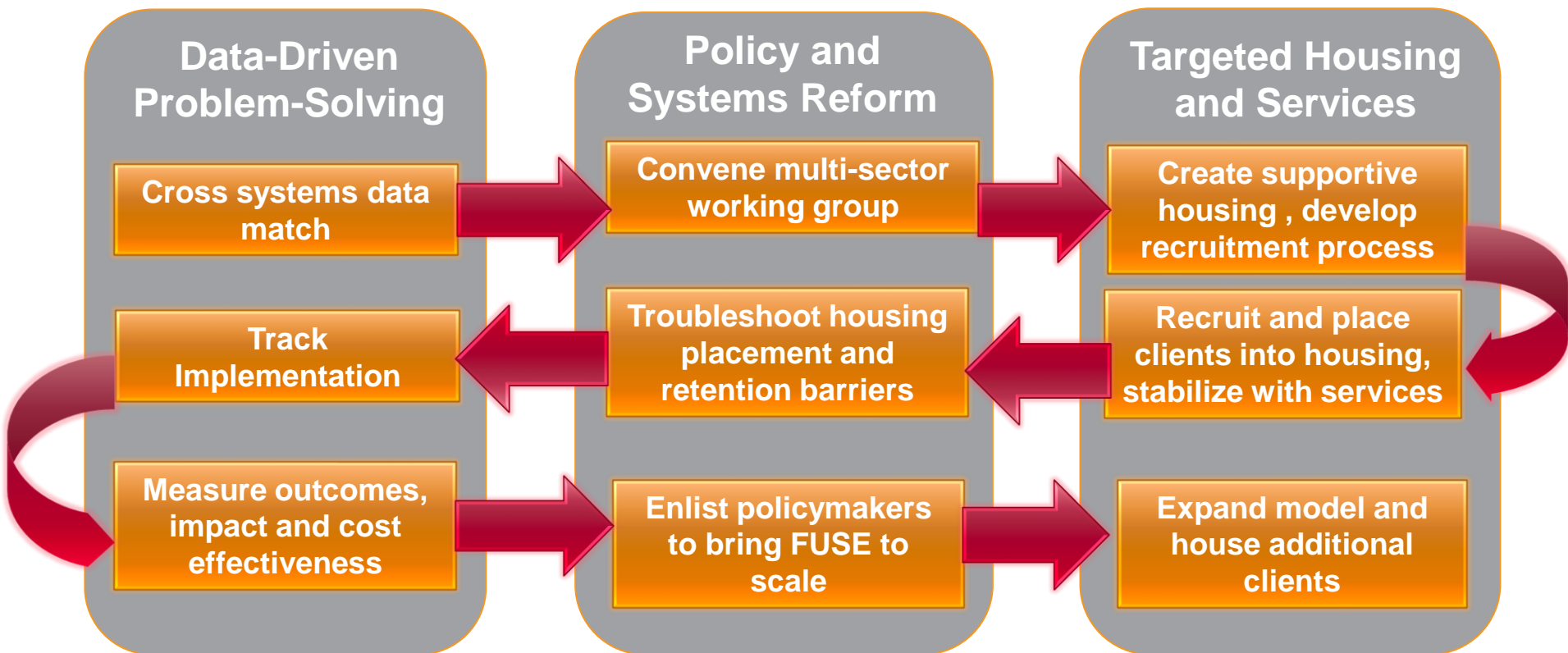
# Frequent Users Systems Engagement (FUSE):

More than 30 communities have implemented supportive housing for frequent users using the **FUSE** planning approach, combining *data driven targeting*, *multi-stakeholder engagement*, and *targeted supportive housing*



# FUSE Blueprint

Communities spend billions of dollars on services that bounce vulnerable people between crisis services. CSH's *FUSE model* helps break that cycle while increasing housing stability and reducing multiple crisis service use.





A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, likely Atlanta, with various skyscrapers illuminated. The word "MeckFUSE" is overlaid in large white letters. A thick white horizontal line is positioned above the "FUSE" part of the text.

# MeckFUSE

Stacy M. Lowry, MSW, LCSW  
Mecklenburg County Community Support Services

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Mecklenburg County Community Support Services

April 2018



# Intersecting Systems



**COUNTY JAIL**



**HOMELESS SHELTERS  
& STREETS**



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
SYSTEM**

# ABOUT MECKFUSE

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*Affordable, service-supported housing*

**for 50 individuals who are frequent  
users of the criminal justice and  
homeless shelter systems and have  
behavioral health needs**







Photo Credit: Andy MacMillan

# GOAL OF MECKFUSE

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*Improve overall quality of life*  
for people who cycle in and out of  
jail, shelters and other high-cost  
public services

# DATA DRIVEN APPROACH

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#1

**JAIL & SHELTER  
FROM  
LAST 5 YEARS**

#2

**APPLIED CRITERIA  
FOR  
PARTICIPATION**

#3

**REVIEWED BY  
PROVIDED  
SERVICES  
ORGANIZATION**

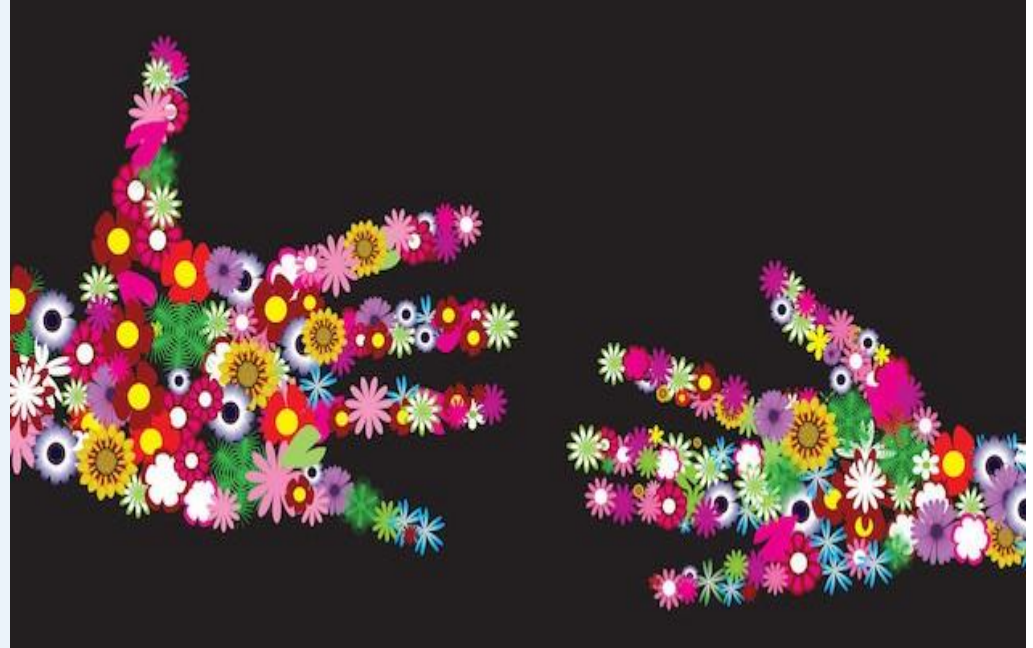
#4

**VERIFY STREET  
HOMELESSNESS**

# IMPLEMENTATION

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- Data-Driven
- In-Reach Frequent Users
- Master Lease
- Housing First



**Flexible, voluntary, service-focused services with 1:15  
ratio for case management**



# PROCESS & OUTCOME EVALUATION

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**COMPARISON GROUP DESIGN**



**FOLLOWED PARTICIPANTS 2 YRS**



**CLIENT STABILITY EXAMINED**



**SYSTEM UTILIZATION EXAMINED**



**PLANNING BEGAN JUNE 2012**



## BY THE NUMBERS

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**Individuals in Permanent  
Housing through Master  
Leased Housing Units**

50

98%

**Have more than 12  
months of homelessness  
in shelter or outside**

**Have an adult conviction  
record with average of 13  
convictions**

90%

11

**Average number of years  
individuals experienced  
homelessness**

90%

**2-year Housing  
Retention Rate**

87%

**Reduction in  
Shelter Utilization**

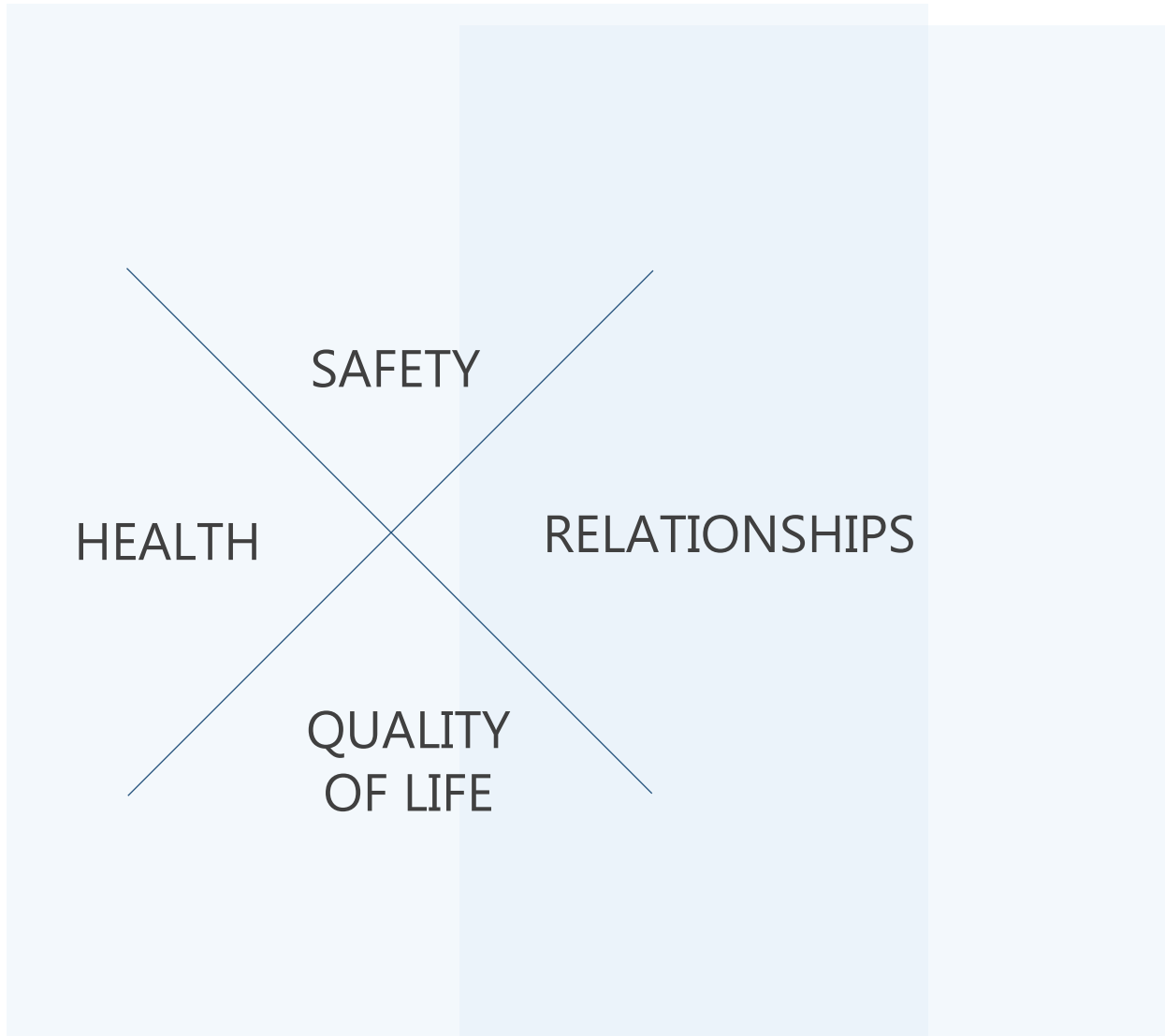
43%

**Reduction in  
Ambulance  
Service Charges**

24%

**Reduction in Hospital  
Charges**

## EVALUATION



BENEFITS

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# LESSONS LEARNED

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## BENEFITS

**Master Leasing**  
**Collaboration**  
**Breaks the Cycle**  
**Improved Safety &**  
**Security**

## CHALLENGES

**In-Reach**  
**Felony-friendly Landlords**  
**Affordable Housing**



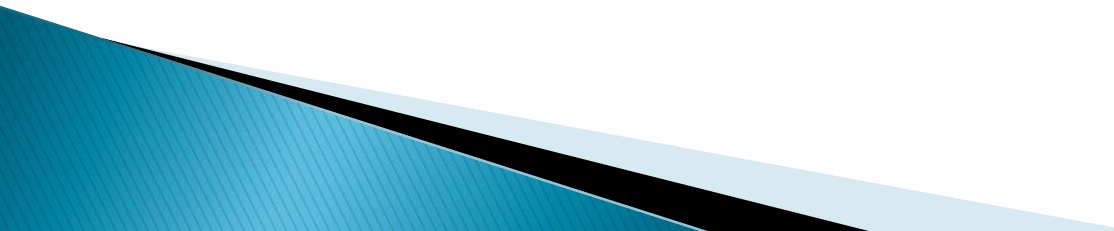
# **Using Evidence to Expand Housing Options for Vulnerable, Justice-Involved Populations**

Regenia Hicks, Ph.D., Director  
Harris County Mental Health Jail Diversion Program  
Office of County Judge Ed Emmett

# Mental Health and Incarceration in Harris County

- ▶ **Harris County Jail (HCJ) is 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in the U.S. with an average daily population of 8,922**
  - 1,514 individuals have a mental health history with 775 having a history of both mental health issues and homelessness
  - In 2013, it was estimated that 2,000 detainees were in need of psychotropic medication
- ▶ **Cost of incarceration (average length of stay before trial = 21 days)**
  - General population: \$45/day
  - General population receiving psychotropic medications: \$67/day
  - Specialized mental health unit: \$232/day
- ▶ **On average, more than 2,000 individuals meet the eligibility criteria for the Harris County Mental Health Jail Diversion Program**

# Primary Goals

- ▶ Reduce the frequency of arrests and incarcerations
  - ▶ Reduce the number of days spent in jail
  - ▶ Increase access to housing, behavioral health and social services
  - ▶ Reduce criminogenic risk
  - ▶ Improve quality of life
- 

# Eligibility Criteria

## ▶ **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- ▶ 3 or more bookings within the past 2 years
- ▶ Mental illness with or without substance use
  - Major depression
  - Schizophrenia
  - Bipolar disorder
  - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## ▶ **EXCLUSIONS**

- ▶ Cognitive impairment, i.e. incapacity
- Specific offenses
  - History of homicides
  - History of arson
  - History of manufacturing/delivery of methamphetamine
  - Current felony DWI
  - Current sex offense
  - Registered sex offender



# Housing and Residential Treatment

## ▶ Housing Options

- Temporary
  - Case managers work with clients to identify long term housing options and identifying benefits.
- Emergency
  - Case managers/housing navigators assist clients in obtaining required identification, documentation and confirming benefits.
  - Client remains in Emergency Housing until apartment is available.

## ▶ Residential Treatment

# Program Components

## ▶ The HARRIS CENTER

- Jail-based team
- Community-based team
- Critical Time Intervention (CTI)

## ▶ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- Healthcare for the Homeless
  - Behavioral Health
  - Community Services
  - Pharmacy
  - Dental
  - Vision
  - Nursing
  - Jail in-reach
  - Community Health Workers

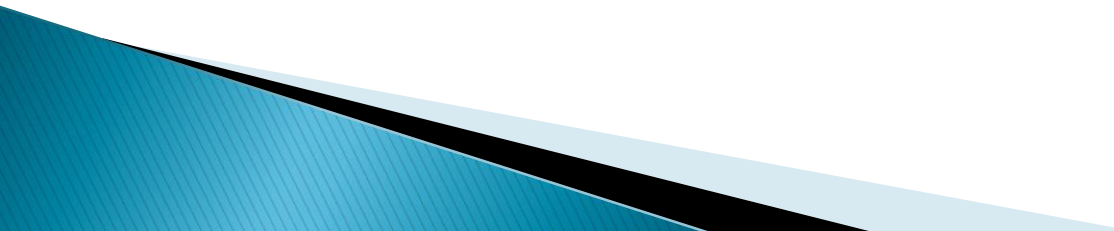
## ▶ PSH

- SEARCH Homeless Services
  - Coordinated Access
  - Navigation
  - Coordination with Housing Authority and Property Management
  - On-site Intensive Case Management
  - Peer Recovery Support
- Evidence-based practices
  - Trans theoretical Model
  - Motivational Interviewing

# Analysis of the Mental Health Jail Diversion Program Homeless Population

- ▶ A study was conducted to evaluate the following:
  - Are there significant differences in criminal justice recidivism for **chronically homeless** and **literally homeless** participants who received or did not receive **housing assistance**?
  - What are the **housing costs** associated with each type of participant? How do these costs compare with incarceration?

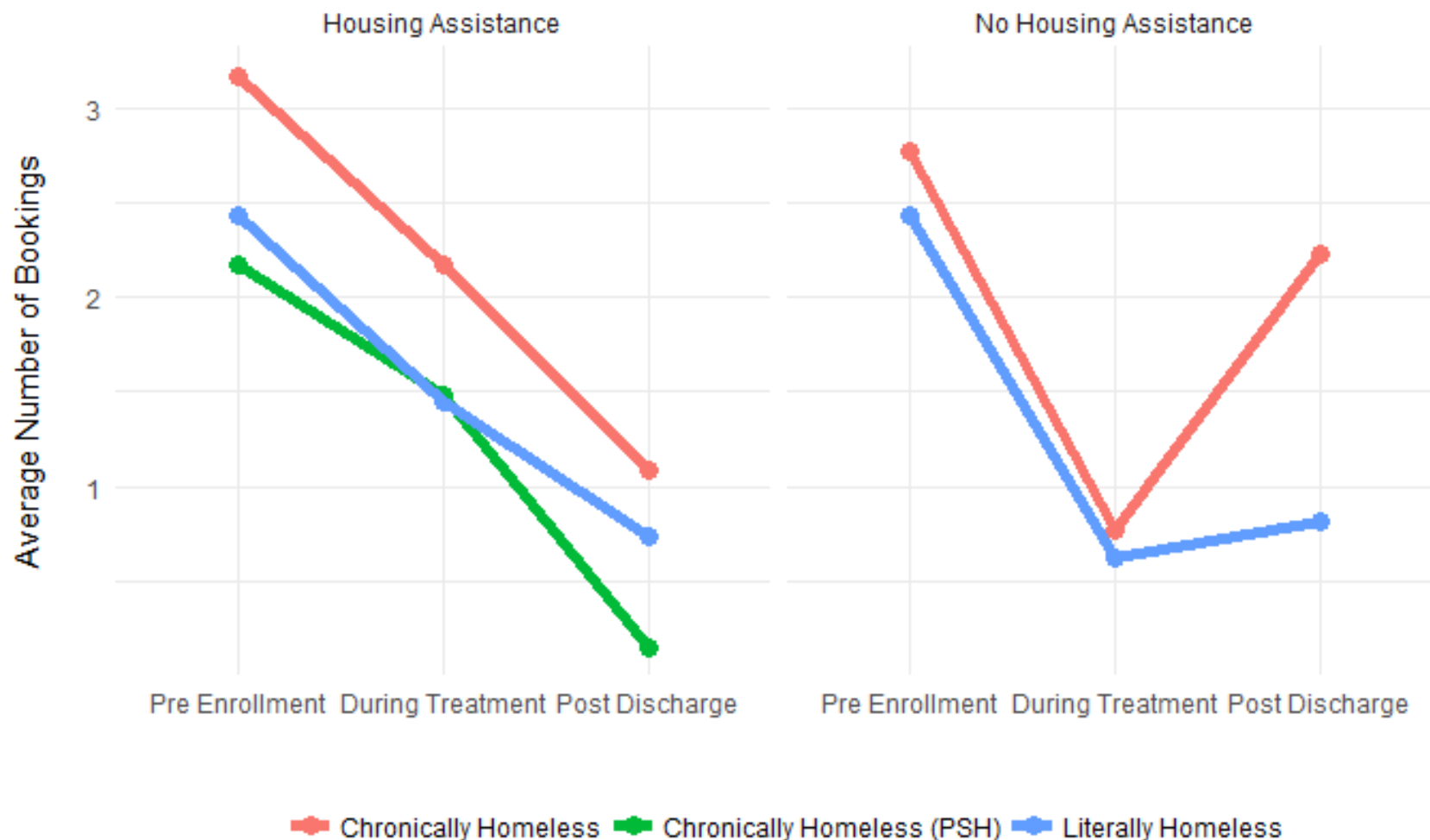
# Analysis of the Mental Health Jail Diversion Program Homeless Population

- ▶ The study analyzed:
    - the average number of **jail bookings** 1 year prior to enrollment, during enrollment (treatment), and 1 year after treatment
    - the average number of **misdemeanors and felonies** 1 year prior to enrollment, during enrollment, and 1 year after treatment
    - **types of offenses** 1 year prior to enrollment, during enrollment, and 1 year after treatment.
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# Participant Characteristics

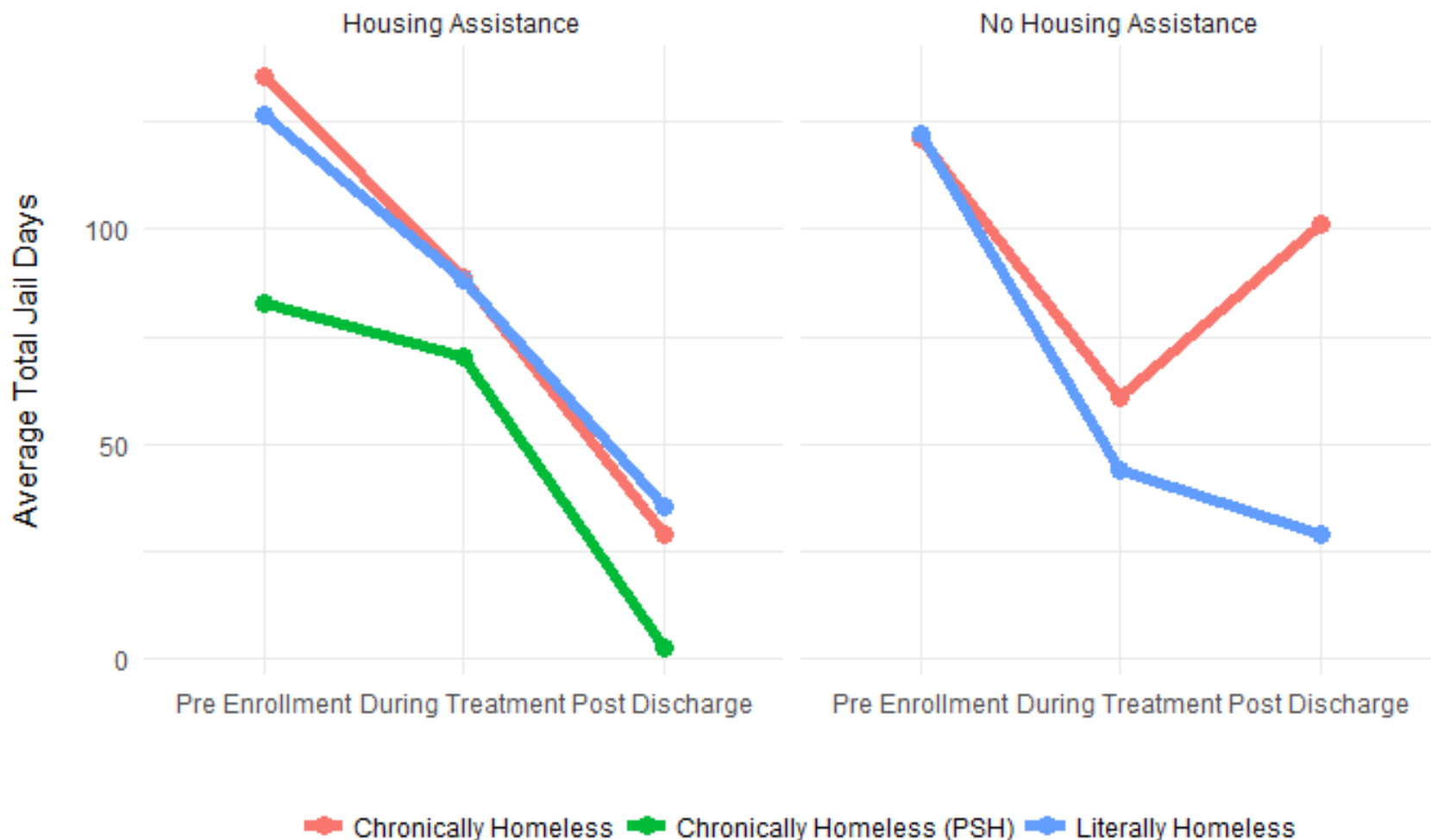
- ▶ 319 participants
  - 202 from the Harris Center
  - 117 from HHH/SEARCH PSH Team
- ▶ 92 (29%) were chronically homeless with PSH services
- ▶ 25 (8%) were chronically homeless without PSH services
- ▶ 202 (63%) were literally homeless
- ▶ The majority (66%) received some level of housing support.
- ▶ All groups had high criminogenic risk (TRAS)
  - Chronically homeless with PSH: 27
  - Chronically homeless without PSH: 30
  - Literally homeless: 29

# Result: Significant Reductions in Bookings for All Groups Receiving Housing Assistance

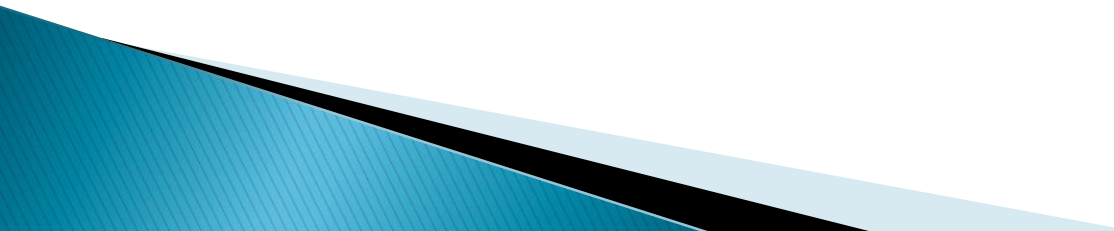




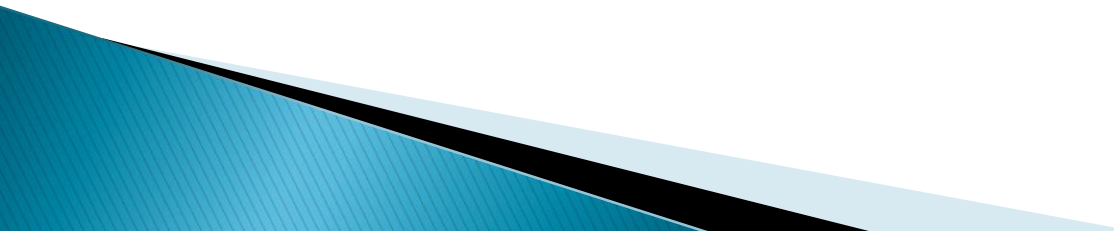
# Result: Significant Reductions in Jail Days for All Groups Receiving Housing Assistance



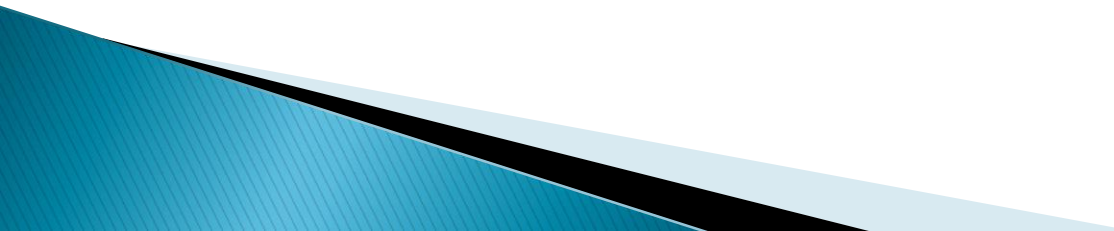
# **Result: Reductions in Top Offense Types for All Groups**

- ▶ The top five offenses were Trespassing, Theft, Drug Possession, Assault, and Prostitution.
  - ▶ Bookings for these five offenses for all three populations were reduced during the treatment and post-treatment periods.
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## **Result: Housing costs for all groups were substantially less than jail costs.**

- ▶ The average cost per day for chronically homeless clients with PSH was **\$42/day** for emergency housing and **\$30/day** for temporary housing.
  - ▶ Chronically homeless clients without PSH **\$46/day** for emergency housing and **\$36/day** for temporary housing.
  - ▶ Literally homeless cost **\$44/day** for emergency housing and **\$35/day** for temporary housing.
  - ▶ **Comparison: The average jail cost is \$149/day.**
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# Summary of Results

- ▶ Overall, our analysis found reductions in criminal involvement for all types of homeless participants.
    - All groups who received housing assistance experienced continued decreases in the average number of bookings and jail days up to the post-treatment period.
    - For participants who did not receive housing assistance, bookings and jail days generally increased again after treatment.
  - ▶ Not only was housing assistance associated with less criminal involvement, it was also more cost-effective than incarceration.
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# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Strict adherence to eligibility criteria (i.e., three incarcerations and high criminogenic risk) resulted in a population that was difficult to engage and retain in service.
  - ▶ Improvements in the Houston housing market allowed property management companies to become more selective toward candidates for PSH apartments.
  - ▶ There was a lack of long-term housing options for individuals who did not meet the HUD criteria for PSH.
  - ▶ There were limited treatment options for co-occurring mental health and substance use, short-term residential care, and transportation.
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# THANK YOU!

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stay connected



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