

# *Ryan White Conference*

DC | HEALTH

***“Housing Independence  
Through Employment (HITE)”***

August 14, 2020 – 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Setting the Stage
  - Problem
- Housing Independence Through Employment (HITE)
  - Collaborative Partner
  - Program Outline
  - Program Goals
  - Program Cohorts
  - Program Assessment, Enrollment and Interventions
  - 2019 Outcomes
  - Current Status
  - Challenges, Successes, and Considerations

# PROBLEM

- HIGH COSTS HOUSING AREA
  - DC Ranked 6<sup>th</sup> In the Nation in Recent Senate Committee Study
  - Top 15 Metropolitan Area
    - Census HUD Study-Median Housing Costs
      - San Francisco (1)           \$2,095.00
      - D.C. (2)                     \$1,844.00
      - Detroit (15)                \$937.00
    - Census HUD Study-Median Rents
      - San Francisco (1)         \$1,815.00
      - D.C. (2)                    \$1,475.00
      - Detroit (15)                \$720.00

# PROBLEM (CONT..)

- Modernization Act
- Higher Rate Rent Increases
- Lower Rate Income Increases
- Fewer Available Vouchers

# COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

- Housing Counseling Services
  - DC non-profit, housing, training, advocacy and referral center
  - FREE services to the community since 1972
  - Help clients resolve and prevent housing obstacles so they can become well-informed housing consumers!
  - Specialized programming for PLWHA

# HOUSING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT (HITE) PROGRAM OUTLINE

- 24 month employment and housing program for highly motivated individuals
- Financial support for housing and employment enhancements
- Subsidized rent and escrow account
- Target population
  - Single Adults
  - DC residents
  - Living with HIV/AIDS
  - Income at or below 500% of the federal poverty line
- Employment as the pathway to housing stability

# HOUSING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT (HITE) PROGRAM GOALS

- Highest level of economic and housing independence
- Economic independence
  - Employment enhancements through certifications, degrees, tools/skills to progress in careers
  - Careers vs Jobs

# HOUSING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT (HITE) PROGRAM GOALS (CONT.)

- Housing Independence
  - Maintain housing independently
    - Identifying realistic/ affordable housing
    - Workforce housing
      - Inclusionary zoning
      - Affordable dwelling units
    - Progress toward home ownership
- Not intended for those in need of permanent supportive housing



# HITE PROGRAM FIRST COHORT

- January 2018: 11 participants with 12 months remaining
  - Employment maintenance vs mobility
    - Lack of cohesive employment plans
  - Lack of financial literacy
- Restructuring
  - Accountability
  - Financial literacy
  - Realistic employment plans
  - Motivational Interviewing and stages of change
  - Employment focus vs housing focus

# HITE PROGRAM SECOND COHORT

- **An employment program-** criteria geared toward finding individuals prepared to make career enhancements
- Basic eligibility:
  - Single Adults
  - HIV+
  - DC Resident
  - At or below 500% of the federal poverty line
  - GED or High School Diploma
  - 24 month employment plan
  - Prior employment history: 24 months of employment/educational activities over the past 5 years
- Higher functioning baseline
- The program is not appropriate for everyone!
- May 2018 : started new enrollments with a total of 19 participants to date

# HITE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- Assessing motivation- States of change
  - Pre-contemplative, contemplative, preparation, action or maintenance
  - Graduates should be at or nearing maintenance stages, and have the skill/tools to continually rebuild to maintenance
- Psychosocial assessment- employment and housing history
- 24- month employment plan
  - Idea vs in-motion or close: contemplative vs action or preparation
  - Timeline, action steps, and barriers
  - What can realistically be achieved in 24 months?

# HITE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

- Initial Housing Stability Planning ( ISP or treatment plan)
  - Goals, objective and action steps towards creating or progressing toward employment plan
  - Strict timelines
  - Failure to follow-through prevented enrollment from the program
- Assessment timelines varied for applicants

# HITE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

- Review board
- Funder approval for enrollment
- Up to 60 days to full enrollment (Wrap-around supportive services)
  - Find housing
  - Seek assistance for rental balances
  - Take steps on HSP
  - Not every person approved was enrolled in the program
- Variety of housing situations
  - Rent burdened
  - Homeless/ unstably couch surfing/ living with family or friends
  - At-risk for eviction
  - Transitional/ temporary housing

# HITE PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

- Housing:
  - Leases are in participants name
  - Landlord acknowledgement form, but not a party to the lease
  - 100% of rent paid to landlord
- Escrow account:
  - 30% of income paid to an escrow account
  - All funds returned upon program completion
  - Opportunity to build personal capital
  - Prevention intervention
- Employment Support
  - Small contributions for employment endeavors (transportation)
  - Supportive services around developing plans and addressing barriers
- Supportive services:
  - Case management and accountability

# HITE PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS (CONT.)

- Intensive Case Management
  - Weekly check-ins (email or phone)
    - Prompt mindfulness around progress, strengths, and barriers
  - Face to Face interactions determined on an individual basis
  - Initially more frequent and decreases as people progress
- Comprehensive Program Agreement
  - Extensive and at times “invasive” requirements
  - Transparency with every process and procedure
  - Self-determination
- Housing stability Plan updated at minimum every 6 months
  - Goal: Achieve employment and housing stability
  - Areas of focus: Vocational/Educational, Housing, Physical Health, Mental Health, Financial Planning, and other areas identified by the participant

# HITE PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS (CONT...)

- HUD Certified Housing Counseling Workshops
  - Credit, money management, pre-purchase, affordable housing, tenant rights and responsibilities
  - Student Loan Rehabilitation
- Credit Counseling/ Financial Literacy Counseling
- Voluntary Group Meetings
- Coordination with Community Resources and Partners:
  - Support network/ treatment team
  - Employment agencies, mental health providers, medical providers, small business trainings... etc.
- Proactive vs Reactive behaviors
  - Identifying patterns of reactive behaviors, hierarchy of needs, cycle of crisis
  - Stress impact on executive functioning
  - Mindfulness tools



# HITE PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS (CONT..)

- Housing stability of the program creating space for this shift
- Escrow account planning
- Accountability
- Failure to progress = program noncompliance and at risk for termination
  - Transparency of program requirements
  - Barriers do not equal failure
  - Disengagement
  - One of three stages of program termination
- Individual corrective plans
  - Supportive regrouping with transparency about what is required from the program
  - Quickly implemented to avoid larger issues from arising
- 24 months
- Many participants have been noncompliant but no participants have been terminated before their 24 month completion date.

# 2019 HITE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- 11 participants with one year in HITE
- First cohort completed the program in early 2019
- Not selected using HITE criteria
- Positive outcomes in regards to income increases, personal capital development, health maintenance and life skill development
- Escrow accounts totals \$3,353- \$21,807
- 3 individuals progressed toward associates or bachelors degrees
- Client feedback reported expanded life skills (credit, budgeting, self-advocacy, resource navigation..etc.)
- Majority were still severely rent burdened
- Updates with client has shown that the majority are still stably housed.
  - At least 2 individuals have sought rental assistance due to temporary lapses in employment

# HITE CURRENT STATUS

- 7 participants
- Completing 2020/ early 2021
- All participants are engaged in vocational and/or educational activities
- 4 participants have been working and attending school while in the program
  - One graduated with bachelors in December 2019 and one graduated with MSW in May 2020
    - Both have increased their incomes since graduating
- Consistent progress throughout the program
- Multiple participants have had periods of unemployment
  - Support and accountability to keep moving forward
- Life skill development
  - Budgeting, crediting, home ownership, small business development

# HITE PROGRAM CHALLENGES

- Observation and direct client feedback
- Barriers to implementation
  - Finding appropriate candidates
    - GED/ High School Diploma & Employment History Requirement
    - Taking the time to look at and talk to every applicant to assess the whole person beyond basic eligibility
  - Program stringency
    - Contradiction in wanting participants to gain independence but requiring high levels of engagement
    - Tapering engagement requirements as individuals progress in the program
  - Timeline
    - Employment plans prior to enrollment
      - Specific and verified to reduce barriers to progress (financial aid, enrollment dates... etc.).

# HITE PROGRAM SUCCESSES

- Successes:
  - Positive outcomes in regards to income increases, personal capital development, health maintenance and life skill development for first cohort
  - Current cohort on a positive trajectory- increasing income, enhancing employment, taking steps toward home ownership
  - Financial Literacy development
    - HUD counseling agency and financial social work
    - Time to develop knowledge and skills around money management
      - Balanced budgeting, credit, student loans
    - Preparing people to make informed decisions with their escrow accounts
  - Prevention Intervention

# HITE PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Your populations employment rates, capacity, and accessibility
  - DC has a lot of economic opportunity and accessible resources
  - Training programs and job opportunities
- Employment vs housing program
- Program is not appropriate for everyone
  - May not be appropriate for the majority of the homeless population
    - Participants fell into the temporarily stable or at-risk categories with majority living or having lived independently at some point prior
- Housing considerations
  - DC workforce housing programs- tax credit buildings, inclusionary zoning, affordable dwelling.... Etc.