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Slide 2 – Affordable Housing Models

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for Part 2 of Violence Free Minnesota's Housing 101 for Victim Service Providers on affordable housing models.

My name is Comfort Dondo. I am the founder of Phumulani, and I will be your host for this session.

In this session I will talk about types of affordable housing. This session will be of particular interest to advocates and other direct service providers, although agency administrators will benefit from it also.

This overview will:

- Provide you with information about available housing options for survivors who you are working with,
- Introduce models that you might consider pursuing as an addition to your organization's programming,

- And familiarize you with concepts and terminology that we will use throughout this series.

Slide 3 – Program Model Overview

It's important to say at the outset that there is not nearly enough affordable housing in Minnesota! But there are several programs that provide rental assistance.

We can't cover all these Minnesota programs in this training session. There are some smaller, specialized state-funded or local rental assistance programs, but for today's purposes, we'll focus on the following four general categories of affordable housing models.

There are four general categories of affordable housing models we will describe today.

First is supportive housing, which includes transitional housing, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

Next, the government subsidized models, which include housing choice vouchers, commonly referred to as Section 8; project-based housing; and public housing.

We will also touch on a type of affordable housing that is not well-known, Section 42, or Low-Income Housing Tax Credit housing, commonly referred to as Tax Credit properties.

And finally, we will touch briefly on a couple of other housing models that I will describe later in the session.

Slide 4 – Program Model Overview

Again, the three types of supportive housing models generally available to survivors of violence are transitional housing, which you might see abbreviated as TH; Rapid Rehousing, RRH, or sometimes PH-RRH; and Permanent Supportive Housing, abbreviated PSH.

These programs are funded through various government sources, such as through HUD Continuum of Care funding, which we will describe in a later session; the Office on Violence Against Women, through Violence Against Women Act funding; and the Minnesota Department of Human Services through Minnesota Housing and other programs. Victim Service Providers are sometimes eligible for funding to develop and operate these programs.

Slide 5 – Transitional Housing (TH)

We'll start by talking about transitional housing. Transitional housing is time-limited, usually 6-24 months, in some programs up to 36 months. It is intended to act as a bridge from being unhoused to permanent housing.

Some of its components are:

- Rental subsidy, meaning the rent is paid in-full or in part by a provider versus the tenant. The amount of rent the tenant is required to pay varies according to the terms of the program.
- Supportive services, meaning the housing is paired with services from a provider. Services are also determined by the program requirements and can include services such as support for behavioral health or substance abuse, parenting classes or parent/child counseling, job skills, financial and life skills programming, etc.
- The length of a lease or tenancy must be a minimum of one month, but no more than 24 months. The exception is that programs funded through the Minnesota Transitional Housing Program can house people up to 36 months.

- Transitional housing units can be consolidated in one centralized building or in a scattered site model where housing units are spread across multiple places in a community.

Slide 6 – Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

- Rapid rehousing, abbreviated as RRH, is designed to help people transition as quickly as possible from homelessness into permanent housing. This program offers longer-term housing than transitional housing, but financial support and supportive services are usually offered for a shorter period of time.
- Unlike transitional housing, this program offers longer-term housing. Rapid rehousing programs usually have a short-term financial assistance component and a short-term supportive services component. When those components end the tenant can remain in their housing.
- The core components are:
 - First, rapid rehousing programs are grounded in the housing first approach. This means that programs should be low-barrier and flexible to address the individual needs of program participants. Programs should

not require pre-conditions for people to access housing such as sobriety or employment. The idea is to prioritize helping someone obtain safe and secure housing and address other areas of need once housing stability is secured.

- Next, in rapid rehousing programs providers will generally help a program participant locate permanent housing. This could include outreach to landlords to help build a pool of affordable properties, actively helping a program participant search for properties, assisting with transportation related to a housing search, or helping the participant negotiate a lease.
- A third component is financial assistance. Programs provide either full or partial rental support for a set time period. Rental assistance could be anywhere from 3-24 months depending on the program although 3-6 months is most common, and the amount of direct rental assistance could taper off over the course of the program. Providers often assist with other housing related costs as well such as moving costs, security deposits, or utilities payments.

- Finally, short-term case management and support services are included, usually phased out over the term of the program. Services offered often include creating a survivor-centered housing plan; helping to address barriers to housing such as credit or legal issues; or linking program participants with resources such as public benefits, employment services, or help with budgeting or other financial planning.
- In this program, the participant secures their housing. They do not live in a residence owned or operated by the Rapid Rehousing provider agency.

Slide 7 – Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Permanent Supportive Housing, or PSH, is permanent housing in which long-term leasing or rental housing assistance and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member, adult, or child, with a disability in achieving housing stability.

The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.

- Components generally include:
 - Long-term full or partial rental coverage. Participants can remain in the program as long as they qualify;
 - Ongoing supportive services, depending on the needs of the program participant, which can include, but are not limited to, moving costs, case management, life skills training, mental health services, transportation, etc.,

AND

- The program is intended for individuals who need the most intensive and ongoing assistance to maintain housing.
- Some of the ways in which permanent housing models are structured are:
 - Housing units owned or operated by the provider, whether scattered site or site-based;
 - Housing in private market units subsidized by the program; and

- In either model, supportive services may be provided on-site or off-site.

Slide 8 – Program Model Overview

The 4 most common government-supported affordable housing programs in Minnesota are:

Rental subsidies, including,

- The Housing Choice Voucher, or HCV, commonly known as Section 8,
- Project-based Section 8 housing, and
- Public Housing.

A lesser-known affordable housing program is the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, or Section 42. This is a tax incentive program that allows housing developers to make some units available at a more affordable rate.

Slide 9 – Section 8, or Housing Choice Vouchers

- The section 8 voucher program, also called Housing Choice Vouchers, or HCV, is a HUD rental subsidy program that provides a voucher to program participants. The subsidy moves with the tenant and is not tied to a specific

property, so the tenant is able retain the voucher and move to another property if they choose.

- The core components of vouchers are as follows:
 - Distribution of vouchers and management of the program is done by the local public housing authority.
 - Individuals apply directly to the housing authority. Income and other requirements must be met.
 - After being issued a voucher, the participant has a set period of time to find and secure a rental unit on the private market, usually 60-120 days.
 - Program participants pay a portion of their income towards rent, usually about 30%. The voucher subsidy covers the remainder of the rent and is paid by the public housing authority directly to the landlord.
 - Landlords are not required to accept Section 8 vouchers so it can sometimes be challenging to locate housing.

- Housing authorities usually have limited times when they will accept applications. Section 8 vouchers are in high demand, and waiting lists are long. If you are working with someone who is interested in applying, encourage them to find out when applications are open and apply as soon as possible.
- In some instances, a local housing authority will designate a certain number of housing vouchers directly to a victim service provider who can then distribute them to survivors who they are working with. VSPs can contact their local public housing authority to see if that arrangement is possible and how it could work in practice for their organization.

Access to Section 8 vouchers and corresponding housing units varies around the state. For example, in parts of greater Minnesota, vouchers may be more readily available than in the metro area, but available units might be harder to find.

Slide 10 -Project Based Housing

Project-based Section 8 buildings are privately owned. In this program, unlike the Section 8 voucher program, the rental subsidy is attached to a particular building or a unit within a building, rather than to the tenant.

Sometimes an entire building will carry the project-based Section 8 subsidy and sometimes the subsidy is limited to a portion of the units in a building.

The subsidy is attached to the unit, not the tenant, so if the tenant moves out, they cannot take the subsidy with them.

As with the Housing Choice Voucher program, the tenant must meet income qualifications, and will pay a portion of their income for rent, usually around 30%.

Slide 11 – HUD Public Housing

- Public housing differs from project-based funding in that it is government owned and overseen by HUD. Public housing subsidies are also tied to the unit and do not follow the tenant. Public housing can include apartments, single-family homes, or townhouses.
- The program is operated locally by public housing authorities or equivalent entity.

- The public housing authority will periodically open the project for applicants, and people can submit applications during that window of time. However, senior citizens and people with disabilities can often apply outside of that window.
- Eligible applicants must be low-income and meet other eligibility requirements, such as age, family size, disability, or immigration status.
- As with project-based housing, the subsidy is attached to the building or unit and the tenant cannot take it with them if they move. But they can stay indefinitely if they meet their lease requirements.
- As with the other two projects we've outlined, the tenant pays a capped portion of their income towards the rent, usually around 30%.

Slide 12 – Low Income Housing Tax Credit, or Section 42

There are many government sources for capital funding to develop affordable housing. The most common is through the use of tax credits. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, otherwise known as Section 42 housing, is one of the largest and fastest growing sources of affordable housing in the US.

This is a tax credit for investors to provide capital funding in exchange for a tax break, which allows the developer or owner to make some units available at a more affordable rate for households at certain income levels.

One reason LIHTC, (often pronounced lie-tech) is not well-known is that it is not a HUD program, but rather an IRS tax incentive program. This is a tax credit for investors to provide capital funding for a tax break, which allows the housing developer/owner to make some units available at a more affordable rate for households at certain income levels.

- Some of the core components of lie-tech housing include:
 - The program is administered locally by each state's Housing Finance Agency, which in Minnesota is the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.
 - Housing developers apply to receive low-income housing tax credits to help fund their development. In exchange for the tax credits a housing developer must set aside a certain amount of units in their property for individuals who are below a certain income level and must cap the rent for the units at a certain percentage of the average median income.

- Tenants must locate lie-tech units on their own in the community, and then apply directly to the landlord or housing provider for that unit.
- Tenants must meet the income level requirements that are set for the unit. If accepted as a renter, then the tenant signs a lease directly with the landlord and pays rent directly to the landlord.

The best way to locate properties that participate in this program is through Housing Link. They can provide assistance with your search, though it must be done property-by-property.

There are other reasons for VSPs to become involved in this housing program.

Low Income Tax Credit Housing is often paired with supportive services, providing an opportunity for local programs to develop relationships with landlords for this purpose. Another good reason for VSP involvement in this program is to influence how fund allocation priorities are established through participating in a process to develop what is called a Qualified Allocation Plan. Contact MHFA for more information about how to become involved in this process.

Lie-tech funded properties can be owned by either non-profit or for-profit housing providers. Most victim service providers will not have the capacity to develop properties themselves, but if your agency is considering doing so, you can apply for lie-tech tax credits to financially support your project. More commonly, a victim service provider could partner with a housing developer to provide services at a lie-tech property.

The resource section attached to this session will include contact information for MHFA and links to a 4-part series by the Safe Housing Alliance about lie-tech.

Slide 13 – VAWA Housing Protections

All housing providers that receive HUD or other federal program funding must adhere to protections afforded victims of violence through the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA. Some of these protections are:

- A survivor cannot be denied admission to or assistance from a HUD-related program due to having experienced violence or abuse committed against them;

- Landlords are prohibited from evicting or terminating the lease of a tenant because of violence or abuse;
- The tenant must be allowed to stay in a unit if there has been criminal activity related to the abuse;
- A survivor who holds a Housing Choice Voucher must be allowed to retain it if they need to move because of abuse;
- A survivor can request an emergency transfer if they are unsafe because of abuse, whether in the same building, the same complex, or another complex if applicable;
- Survivors have the right to request a lease bifurcation to remove the abusive person from the lease;
- Survivors have the right to seek law enforcement or other assistance without retaliation, and,
- They cannot be retaliated against for accessing VAWA protections.

These are only some of the housing protections afforded survivors under VAWA.

In the resource section of this segment, we will provide information about how advocates can learn more.

Slide 14 – Program Model Overview

Lastly, we'll touch briefly on 4 other affordable housing program models:

inclusionary housing programs, shared housing, master leasing, and Domestic Violence Housing First.

Slide 15 -Inclusionary Housing Programs

Inclusionary housing programs are local policies that tap the economic gains from rising real estate values to create affordable housing for lower income families.

These programs require developers to sell or rent a certain percentage of new residential units to lower-income residents. For example, a developer who plans to build a property with 100 units might be required to set aside 15 of them at a reduced rate. Prospective tenants must meet income eligibility requirements.

Inclusionary housing policies were first developed to specifically counteract a history of exclusionary zoning policies that reinforced economic and racial

segregation. Obviously, these programs cannot completely solve racial and economic inequities, but can be one tool in the toolbox to share the benefits of economic growth in the community and reduce racial and economic segregation.

Not all communities have developed inclusionary housing policies, but those who have generally administer them through their local housing authority. The best way to find out if your community has this housing available is to contact your local agency.

Slide 16 – Shared Housing

In a shared housing situation, two independent tenants or families share a single housing unit with shared common space, but separate private living spaces for each tenant or family unit.

This model can be used in many different housing program types such as transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, or rapid rehousing, and can be set up in a variety of ways.

- For example, in the case where a provider owns a single-family home that they want to use for permanent supportive housing, they might choose to

use that house to support a single family, or they could use a shared housing model and house more than one family if the space allows for it. Each family would have their own private and secured room within the house, but common spaces would be shared.

- Another example could be where a provider helps match up two program participants who want to live together and share the rent to make the apartment costs lower. The program can help with matching roommates and could also provide some assistance to support the ongoing roommate relationship. This type of shared housing is being used more and more across the country, particularly with rapid rehousing programs. Shared housing can be useful for rapid rehousing program participants since only a portion of their rent will be covered by the program and only for a limited time. Sharing the costs with another person can increase affordability. Also, having a provider help link roommates with shared experiences can provide a support system during the transition to permanent housing.

In master leasing, a provider such as a victim service provider, leases one or more housing units from a property owner, which are then sublet to program participants.

- Since the provider is the lessee, the provider assumes the risk for various costs such as non-payment of rent or damage to property.
- Master leasing is particularly helpful to secure housing for survivors with barriers such as low credit, past evictions, or a criminal record who may not pass a tenant screening if they were to apply directly to the landlord.
- Also, master leasing can be a valuable tool for victim service providers who want to have housing units available to the survivors they work with, but do not want to develop or own properties.
- A provider may master lease several units in one location, such as a single apartment building, or may lease units at a several different locations across the community.

- Master leasing can also be used to support several different housing models, including rapid rehousing, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing.

A variation of this model is third-party contracting, where a program participant has a lease directly with a landlord not the provider, but the provider has a separate contract with the landlord through which they assume some of the risk or responsibilities related to the unit.

Slide 18 – Domestic Violence Housing First

The Domestic Violence Housing First Model was developed and implemented by the Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence. This model builds on the Housing First philosophy used in the greater community serving unhoused people, and also on the community advocacy that many domestic violence programs have been doing for years, designed to help survivors stay safely in their homes. The DV Housing first initiative was shown to be a promising practice to help survivors obtain or retain housing.

The model identifies three core components:

- The first is survivor-centered, and trauma-informed mobile advocacy.

Advocates meet survivors in a location of their choice. This might be the survivor's home, a coffee shop or library, or anywhere the survivor feels safe and comfortable. Particularly if the meeting takes place in a public location, special attention must be given to confidentiality and privacy. Mobile advocacy is not a crisis response; it is a supportive, trauma-informed exploration of the survivor's individual situation and self-identified needs and goals.

- Providers also actively engage in the community through outreach, relationship building, and partnering with other organizations in the community who can help with housing solutions. A housing first model recognizes that the more a survivor is connected to community, the more likely that person is to thrive and achieve safe and stable housing. Advocates must be knowledgeable about and connected to community resources to facilitate meaningful connections to community services.

- Flexible financial assistance is a key component to Housing First. Program participants have access to unrestricted financial assistance that can be used for survivor-designated purposes, such as transportation, childcare, housing, employment, medical bills, home repair, court fines or other needs. To be most helpful for survivors, funding must be low-barrier, that is, its uses should have as few restrictions as possible, be made available quickly, and should not be limited to a one-time event. Communities that have implemented Housing First report expenditures ranging from 50 cents to more than \$6,000, depending on the needs of the individual survivor. The funding generally comes from a public and private partnership.

This model has been replicated in many communities across the country. A link to the toolkit is included in the resource pages on the VFMN website.

Slide 19 – Resources

In addition to the Housing First Toolkit, information about VAWA protections, supportive housing models and more can be found on the resource pages

connected to this segment. Please access those pages to find links to additional information.

Slide 20 - Gratitude

Thank you so much for joining us today. We hope this session helped increase familiarity with affordable housing models, and that it might have generated some ideas you could consider exploring in your agency. Please visit the resource page connected with this session, and we hope you will join us for the remaining sessions of this series.

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