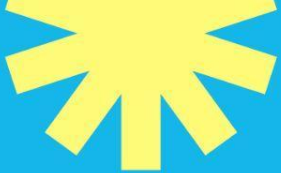
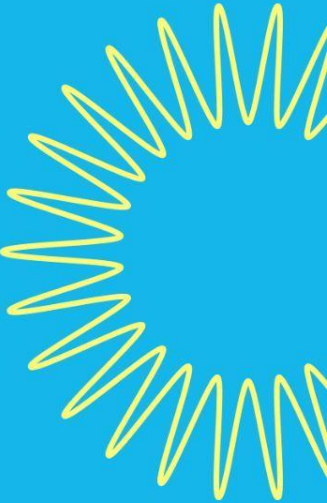




THE BACK OFFICE CLINIC



Administrative Support for People with Lived Experience
Built for Zero Learning Session | Seattle



Built For Zero.



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**

Who We Are



Lori

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WHY THIS CLINIC

It builds on the BFZ Housing Equity Strategists' two-part Administrative Support Learning Circle.



WHERE IT STARTED

Delivered to communities preparing for the Minneapolis Learning Session. The concepts landed.

WHAT COMMUNITIES ASKED FOR

Hands on the tools.

HOW TODAY WORKS

About one third shared language, two thirds applied work.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

Revised policies and a toolkit, not a reading list.



TODAY'S FLOW

2:00–4:30 pm
Monday, October 19



- 2:00 Welcome and brave space
- 2:12 Opening scenario: The Recruit
- 2:30 Five pillars of administrative support
- 3:10 Stretch break
- 3:17 The Clinic: readiness scan and policy rewrite
- 3:48 Metro Denver panel
- 4:18 Commitments and close





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By 4:30, you will be able to

1

Tell the roles apart

Understand the difference between lived experience, lived expertise, and staff.

2

Assess readiness

Score your organization on pay, benefits, technology, onboarding, and authority.

3

Begin revising policies

Identify the policies to revise so people with lived experience are centered without barriers or stigma.



Your organization will leave able to

NAME THE REAL CAUSE

Lived-experience leadership fails because institutional conditions are missing, not because people are unprepared.

IDENTIFY THE CONDITIONS

Handoff protocols, role clarity, and a pathway from advisory to authority.

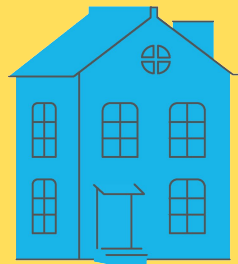
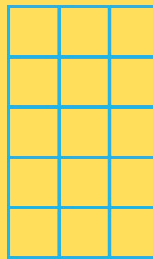
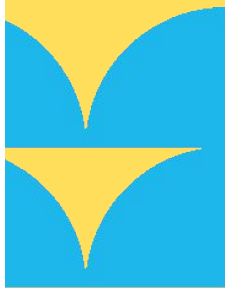
ACT ON THEM

Leave with revised policies and a 13-tool toolkit to carry the work home.

We expect discomfort, not attacks

- Brave, not safe: real learning involves risk
- Honest dialogue about power, race, and who decides
- Discomfort is expected; personal attacks are not
- Go to the edge of your comfort zone to learn

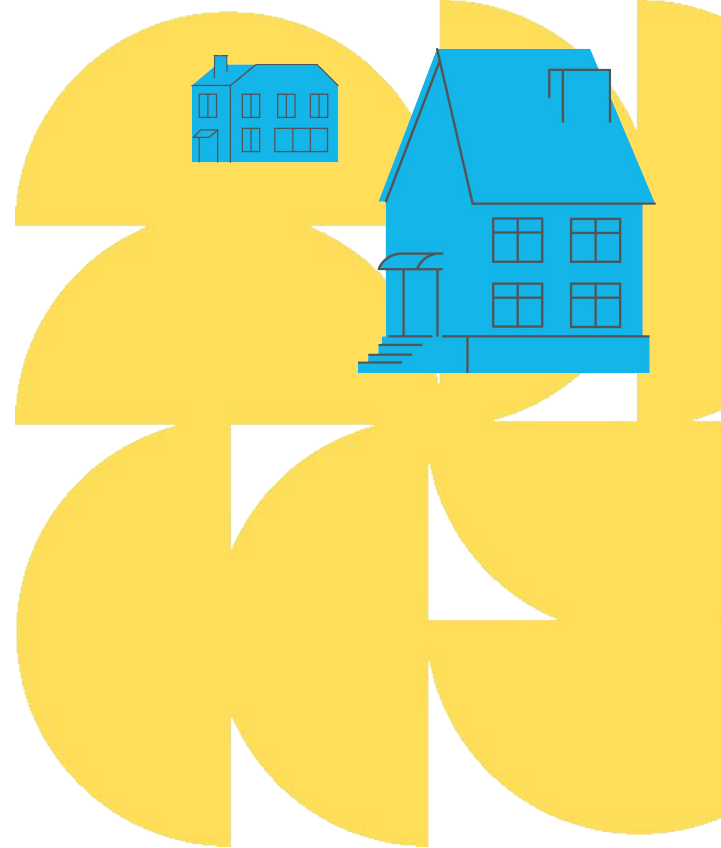
House People Every Day



Five norms for this afternoon

- **Controversy with civility:** disagree with ideas, not people
- **Own your impact:** good intent does not cancel harm
- **Challenge by choice:** engage at the level you choose
- **Expect non-closure:** not everything resolves today

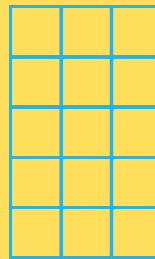
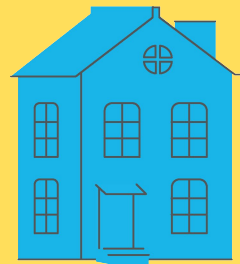
Make space: notice who has not spoken yet



Stand up if you've ever...

- Fronted money for work and waited to be paid back
- Waited more than 30 days for that money
- Sat in a meeting and not known what an acronym meant
- Tried to sign or submit something on your phone and it didn't work
- Had to choose between a meeting and childcare or a ride

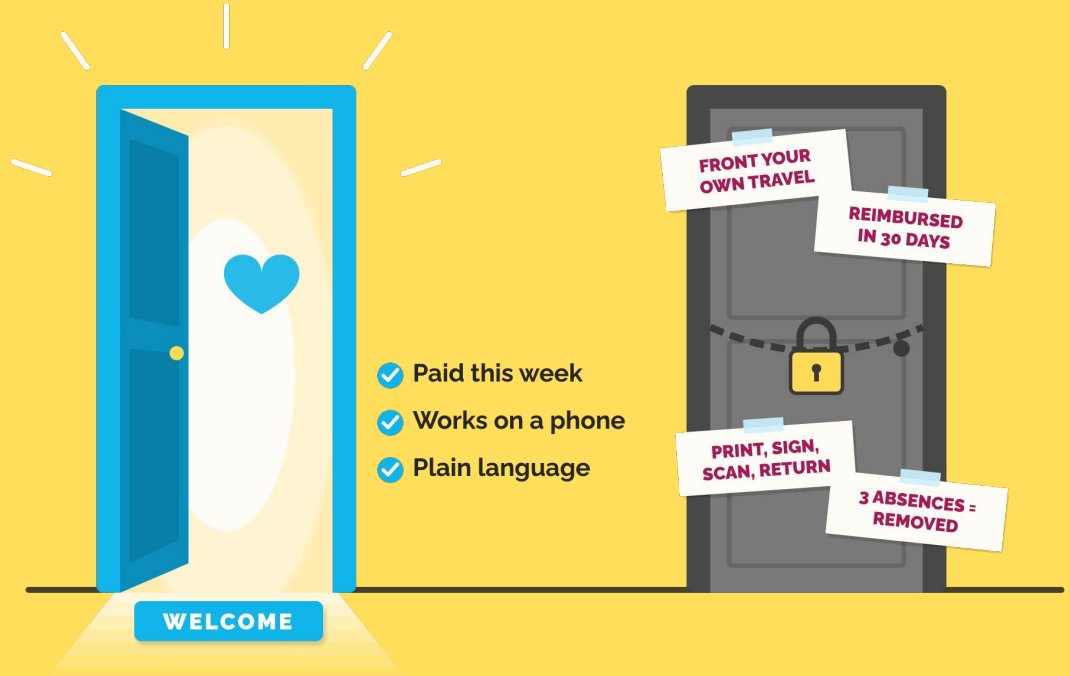
Now imagine your rent depended on it.



House People Every Day



Every back-office
rule tells someone
they are
welcome,
or that they are not.



MEET DENISE

Your CoC just recruited her to its new lived-experience advisory board.



- **Week 1:** a 22-page onboarding packet full of acronyms
- **Contract:** sent by DocuSign, which won't open on her phone
- **Travel:** on her own card, reimbursed in 30 days
- **Stipend:** \$50 by paper check that quietly cuts her housing assistance
- **Month 3:** three absences and a removal letter. No one asked why.



Find every friction point

LIST · 7 MIN

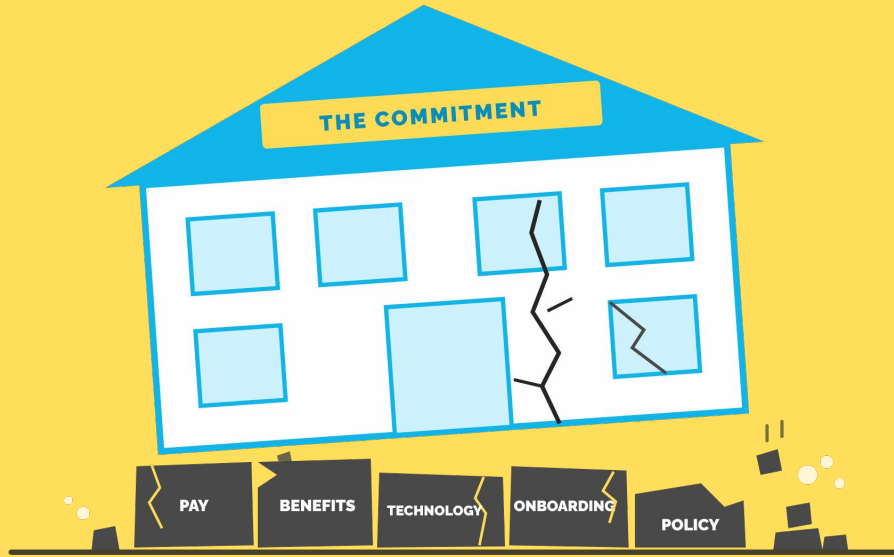
Every point where the organization made participation harder.

SHARE · 6 MIN

One friction point per table. No repeats.

SORT · 3 MIN

Pay, benefits, technology, onboarding, or policy?



**The commitment
was real.**

**The administrative
infrastructure was not
built for it.**



Five pillars anchor this session





PILLAR 1

The expansive scope of administrative support

Infrastructure is more than paperwork.

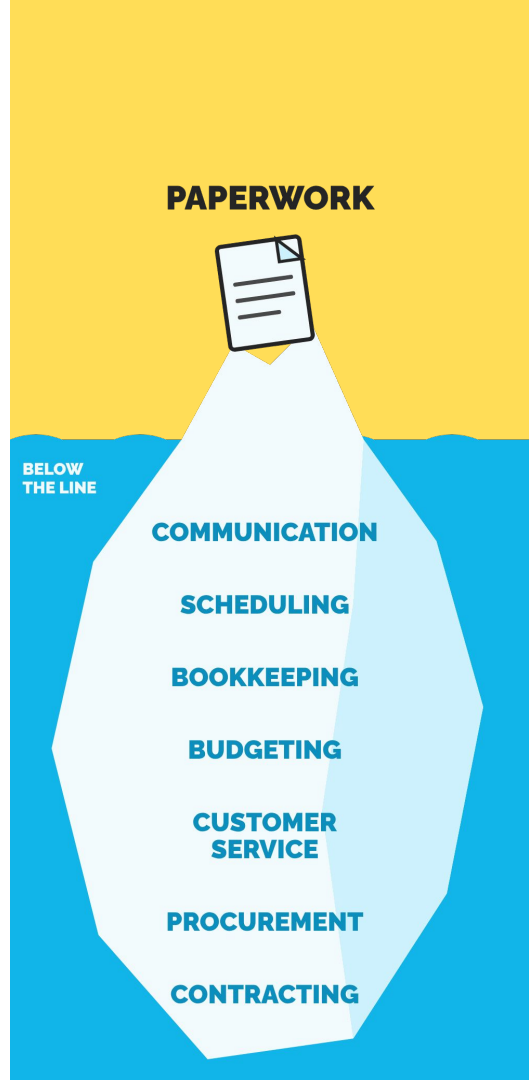


Administrative support is more than paperwork

It is the material and technical help that keeps a team running:

- Communication
- Scheduling and coordination
- Bookkeeping and budgeting
- Customer service
- Procurement and contracting

Underestimate this breadth and engagement quietly falters in every function.





PILLAR 2

Prioritizing readiness over recruitment

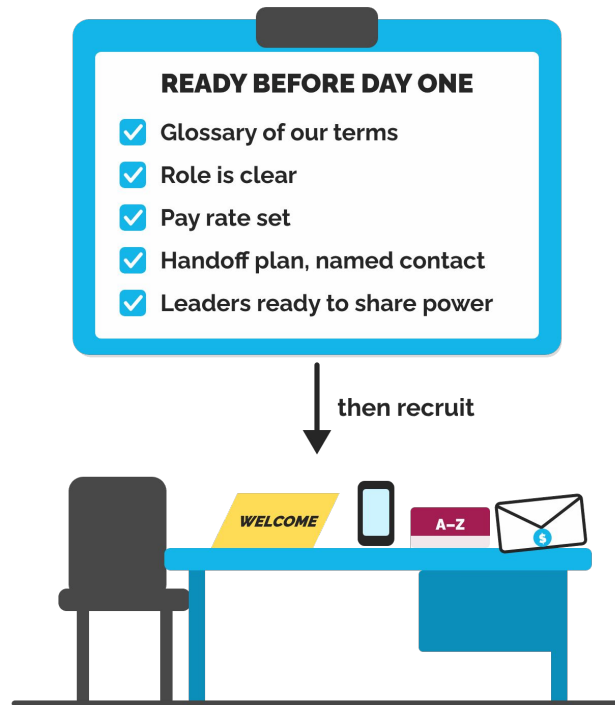
Build the handoff protocols before the first person is hired.



Build readiness before you recruit

- Do we have a glossary of our terms and acronyms?
- Who supports integration once someone joins?
- Is the pay rate equal to similar work?
- Have we asked people what the barriers are?
- Is there role clarity, and a handoff protocol for each new person?
- Are leaders ready to share decisions, not only gather input?

Bringing people into unexamined structures is a recipe for failure.





PILLAR 3

Defining experience vs. expertise

Lived expertise demands a pathway to authority and colleague-level partnership.



Lived experience is not lived expertise

All lived experts have lived experience. Not the reverse.



LIVED EXPERIENCE

Advisory or low-barrier engagement: focus groups, surveys, one-time input.



LIVED EXPERTISE

Colleague-level partnership with a path to paid roles and decision-making authority.

Naming the difference is how we move past tokenization.



Five community models for PWLEH engagement

People with lived experience of homelessness (PWLEH) sit at every design and decision-making table, at minimum.

RECRUIT FOR THE INITIATIVE

The usual starting point: 2 to 3 reps on the core team. Expect turnover.

SEATS ON EVERY COMMITTEE

At least 2 PWLEH seats per committee. A voice at all tables.

PWLEH IN STAFF ROLES

Paid staff positions. Don't make one person represent everyone.

FORMAL ADVISORY BOARD

Designated seats and decision-making power, like Seattle/King County's LEC.

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY ORG

Led by PWLEH with its own revenue. It decides who represents it.

Starting point

Funded, with real decision-making power

Source: Example Community Models for PWLEH Engagement, co-developed with the BFZ Housing Equity Strategists (January 2023).





PILLAR 4

Ethical compensation and benefit protection

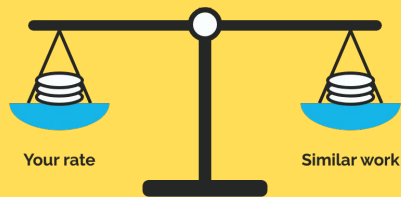
Pay must be equitable, immediate, and safe for the benefits people already have.



Set the rate before you recruit, and pay fast

- Make pay equitable: a rate that reflects cost of living and matches similar work
- Book travel directly or advance costs; don't ask people to front them
- Make pay immediate: within days, not 30 days after receipts
- Verify it against housing and health benefits before the first payment
- Ask each person how they want to be paid

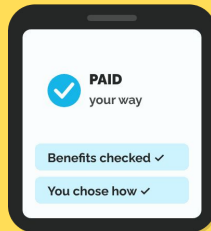
EQUITABLE



IMMEDIATE



SAFE FOR BENEFITS





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PILLAR 4 • BENEFIT PROTECTION

Protect the benefits people have

1

Check benefit impact

Pay can affect housing assistance, SSI, SNAP, or Medicaid. Offer a benefits-counseling referral.



2

Offer payment choices

Prepaid cards and mobile payments are access tools, not workarounds. Let people choose amount and timing.

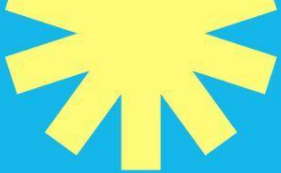
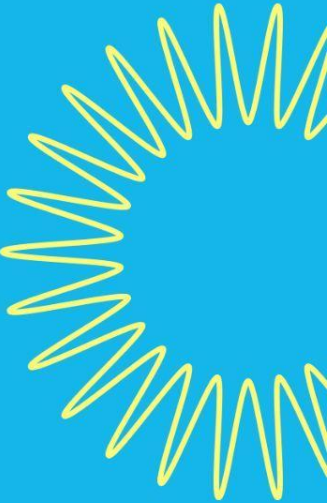


3

Make volunteering a choice

If a role is unpaid, provide tangible value: childcare, transportation, food.





HOW MANY DAYS DOES IT TAKE TO PAY A CONSULTANT WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE?

Table check-in · 3 minutes



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PILLAR 5

Infrastructure as an inclusion tool

When tools don't work on a phone, people are excluded by default, not by design.

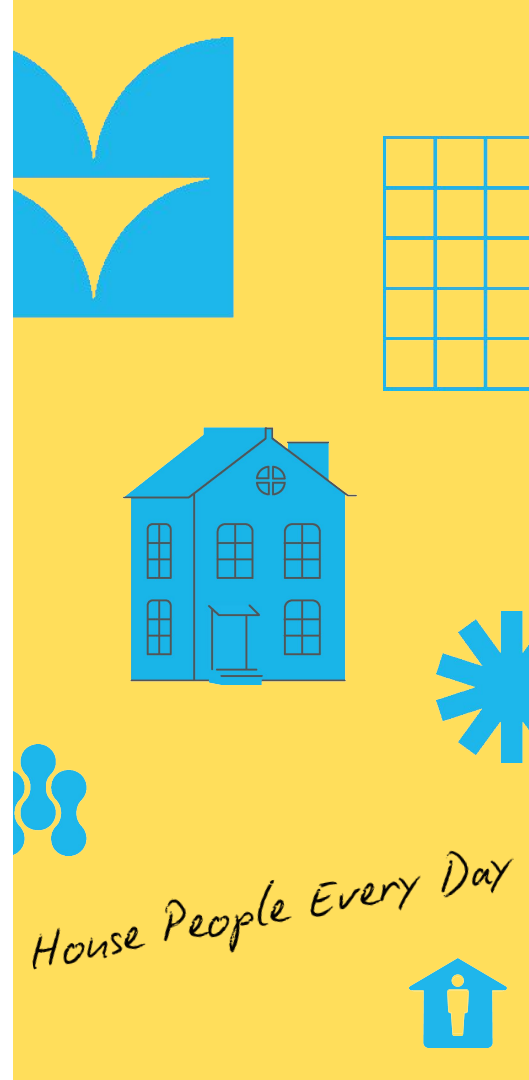


Technology gaps become social exclusion

Check that each of these works on a phone:

- E-signatures and contracts
- Timesheets and payment forms
- Help desk requests
- Training materials, with offline copies
- Video meetings

Otherwise people are excluded by default, not by design.





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PILLAR 5 • ONBOARDING

Onboard in plain language

1

Plain-language packet

Everyday words, no unexplained acronyms, and a named person to call.



2

Help with forms

Offer help completing documents. Give grace and make no assumptions.



3

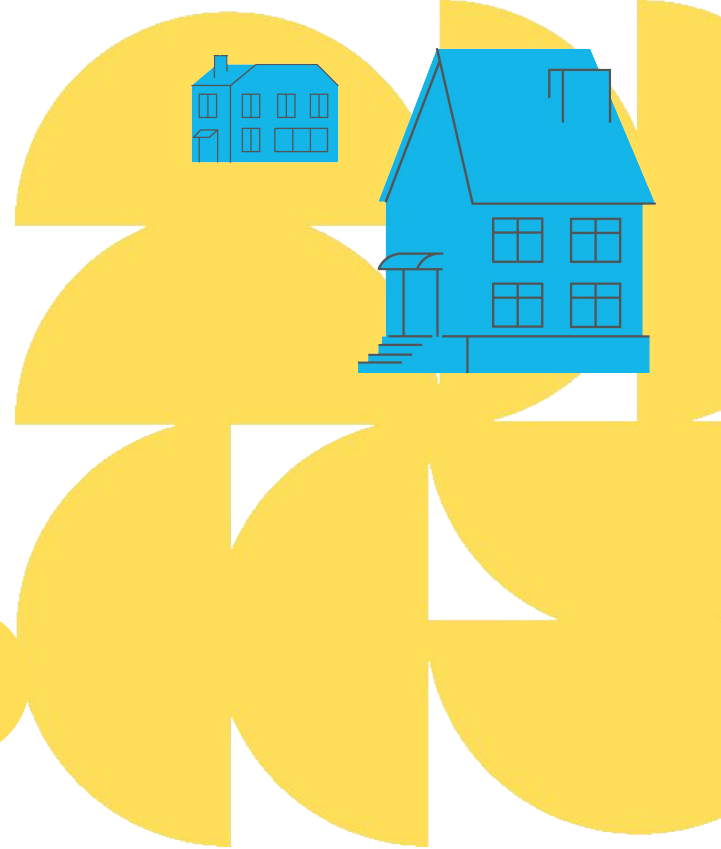
Supports that retain

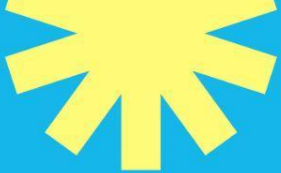
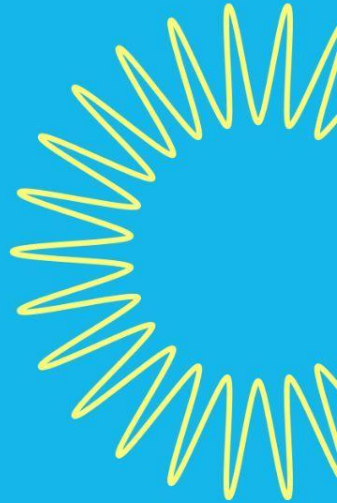
Childcare, flexible schedules, transportation, and behavioral health.



Contracts should not be the barrier

- RFP language and review that lived experts can meet
- Contract execution that works without a printer
- Payment structures and timelines stated up front
- Realistic expectations on both sides





CAN A NEW ADVISOR ONBOARD FROM A PHONE?



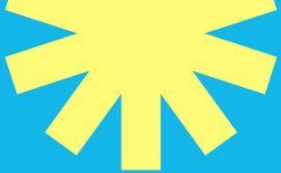
Table check-in · 3 minutes



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STRETCH BREAK



7 minutes. Back at 3:17. Start your readiness scan as you sit down.



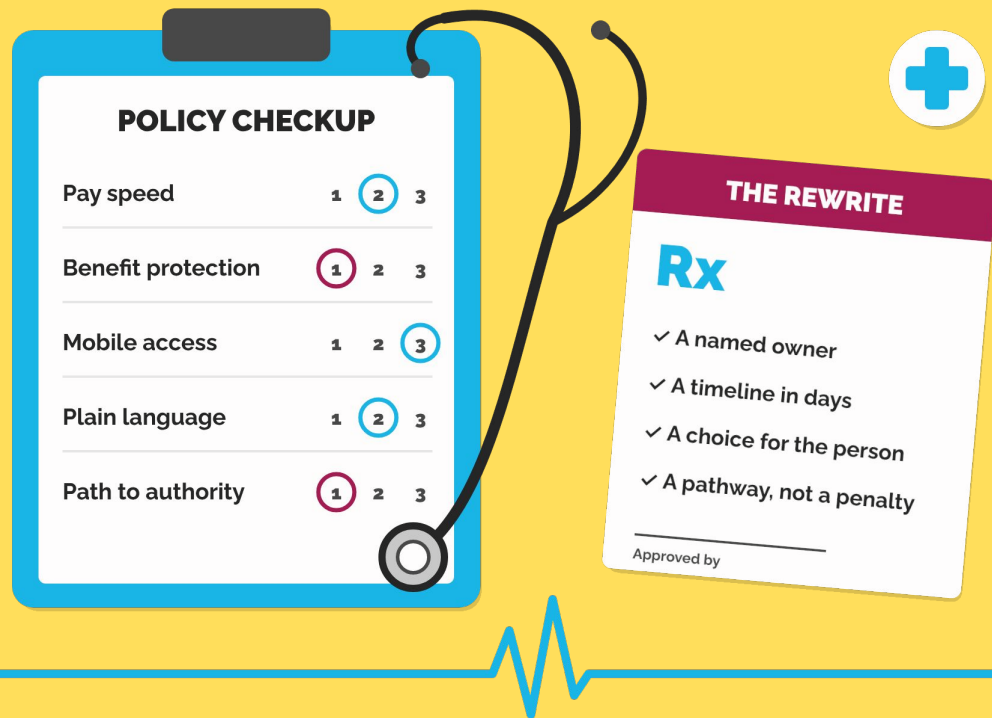
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THE CLINIC

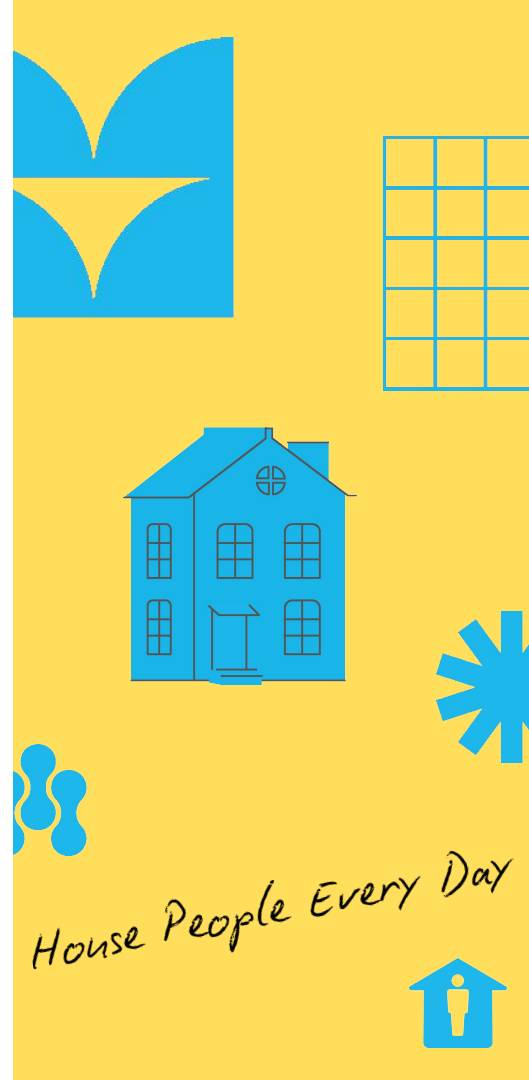
**Check up on a policy.
Write the
prescription.**



Step 1: Score your back office

Score each area 1 to 3 for how it works today:

- Pay speed
- Benefit protection
- Mobile access
- Plain-language onboarding
- Pathway to authority



Step 2: Your lowest score picks your card

Your lowest area

Pay speed

Benefit protection

Mobile access or
onboarding

Pathway to authority

Your policy card

A. Reimbursement

B. Stipend

C. Onboarding

D. Attendance or E.
Punctuality

Or bring a real policy from your own organization.



STEP 3: REWRITE IT

Four moves, 17 minutes at your table



1 READ IT · 3 MIN

As the person affected: who does it stop, and when?

2 NAME THE BARRIER · 3 MIN

Is it a written rule or an unexamined habit?

3 REWRITE IT · 8 MIN

New language, an owner, a timeline in days.

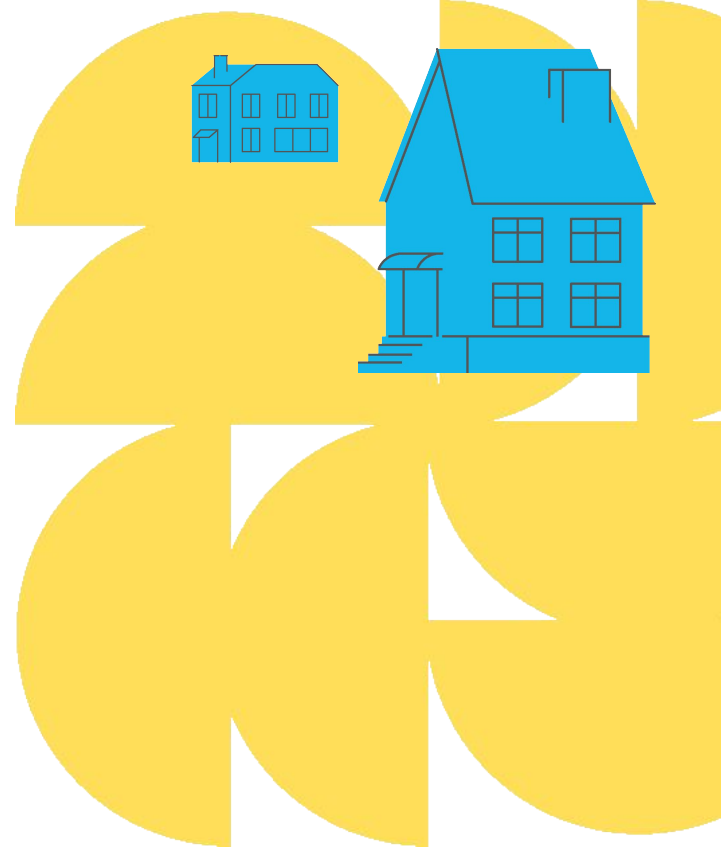
4 PLAN THE NEXT STEP · 3 MIN

Who approves it, and what happens next week?



Strong rewrites share four traits

- A named person responsible
- A timeline in days
- A choice for the person affected
- A pathway instead of a penalty



METRO DENVER PANEL

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI)



Sofia Vigil

Director of Strategy and Impact
MDHI



Sav Jones

Lived Experience Specialist, MDHI
Started as a Lived Experience
Support Consultant



Leadership fails when conditions are missing

HANDOFF PROTOCOLS

A named person and a plan for every new partner, built before the first hire.

ROLE CLARITY

Clear scope, pay, and authority, written down and shared.

ADVISORY TO AUTHORITY

A funded pathway from advisory seats to paid roles and real decisions.

ONE COMMITMENT

Write one change you'll make and a date on your commitment card.



SCAN FOR THE TOOLKIT

Open or download any of the 13 tools



YOUR TOOLKIT: 13 TOOLS

RECRUIT AND HIRE

Recruiting and best practices · Hiring interview guide · Advisory conversation guide · Reducing bias reading

PAY

Compensation guide · Example scope of work

ONBOARD AND DEFINE ROLES

Onboarding guide · Job descriptions and archetype

STRUCTURE AND MEET

Models of engagement · Meeting agenda · Community agreements · Emotional well-being commitment · Mission statement



Survey

Please take a few minutes to take the survey. Your feedback is very important to us.



<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/9042138/2026-BFZ-Learning-Session-Workshop-Session-Feedback>



Thank you!

We thank you for your interest and appreciate your time to participate in today's learning circle workshop.

Please direct any and all questions to:
pwleh@community.solutions

