Centralizing Property Engagement

July 9, 2025



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Today's Objective

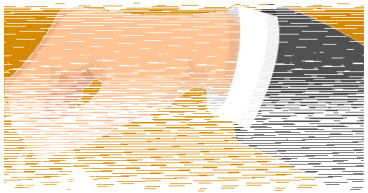
Understand what property engagement practices look like in your community.

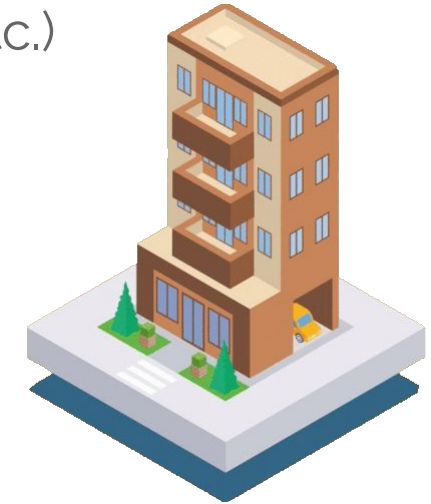
Identify steps you can take to create a more centralized and equitable approach to property engagement

What do we mean when we say “Property Engagement”?

Property Engagement

The practice of connecting a household experiencing homelessness to a **permanent housing placement**. The physical housing unit **exists** (not in development) in the **private rental market**, and is owned and/or managed by a private entity (private owner, LLC, corporation, management company, Realtor, etc.)





Current State of Housing



- We are in the midst of a housing crisis.
- It is difficult and expensive to build new housing which has lead to the supply not meeting the demand.
- Wages are not increasing at the rate rents and home prices are.
- Housing and real estate can be viewed more as investments with the goal of maximizing profits as opposed to a survival necessity.
- States, cities, and even neighborhoods have different housing policies. Land uses, tenant protections, and source of income protections vary widely.
- Disinvestment in public housing - both in supply and maintenance.

Current State of Housing

BUT DESPITE ALL OF THIS…

There are units available in your community, and we have to figure out how to access them. That is **Property Engagement.**

What do we mean when we say "Centralized Housing"?

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Centralized Housing

Let's start with looking at what other pieces of your system might be centralized, and why.

- Case Conferencing
- HMIS
- Coordinated Entry
- Governance



Property engagement? Maybe not...

Centralized Housing

Centralized Housing is:

The process of engaging and creating partnerships with market-rate housing providers (owners, management companies, Realtors, developers, etc.) to access housing units **for the system**, rather than an individual or specific program/agency.

System-wide standards exists for how programs interact with properties, how incentives are utilized, and housing stabilization with the goal of **eliminating competition between programs** and having a collaborative approach to accessing enough housing units to meet the system need.

Why Centralized Housing?

- More **equal access to housing units** across the system, i.e. a client accessing housing is not determined by which program they are enrolled in.
- Case managers are not searching for housing while also completing other case management functions - **searching for housing units is a full time job.**
- **Maintenance of partnerships** between the homelessness response system and private owners/managers/developers
- Staff works to retain landlords and at times advocate on behalf of the property to ensure a healthy relationship and **reliable access to units over time**.
- De-duplicates property engagement efforts amongst programs.
- Uniform experience for property owners/managers.

How centralized is your system's property engagement?

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It is a Spectrum

Decentralized



Fully Centralized

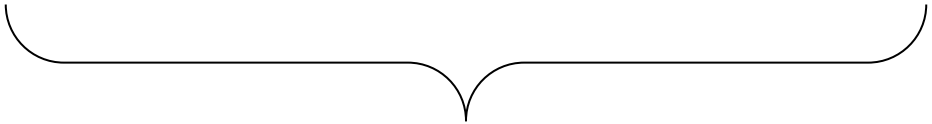


It is a Spectrum

Decentralized

Fully Centralized

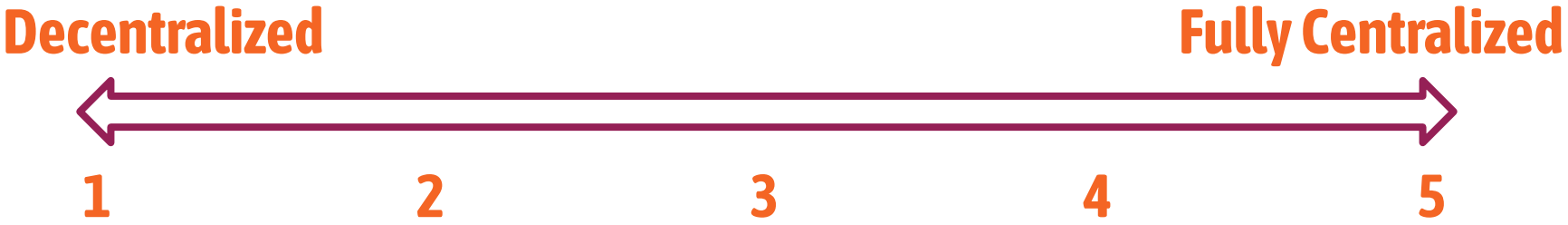




Room for Improvement



5 Levels of Centralized Housing



Decentralized - Level 1

- **Each provider** within a system performs **their own** property outreach and engagement for **each program participant** that they are working to get into permanent housing.
- Programs use **their own resources** to provide incentives to property owners to overcome the barriers their client may have.
  - *Some programs may not have incentives, too bad, work with what you have!*
- There are no written policies or standardized practices for how a case manager engages a property, provides incentives, or provides stabilization support during their client's tenancy

Silos... ->



Decentralized - Level 1



Questions to consider if this is your system:

Do case managers and housing navigators communicate across programs?

Does one program consistently house their clients at a quicker pace?

Is there guidance for how case managers outreach to properties?

Level 2



- There is some collaboration between case managers or anyone working to locate housing options.
- This collaboration could be a **workgroup** where case managers can staff issues they are having, **share engagement strategies**, and discuss best practices that they are learning through performing this work.
- An organization may have a property engagement staff member or team responsible for securing units **for the organization**.
- An organization may **share resources internally** (i.e. across different programs) with the collective goal of housing all of their clients.

Level 2



Questions to consider if this is your system:

Does your community have a space to share housing leads, or do case managers have a culture of sharing leads?

Do programs have equal access to resources? How does this affect the people we serve?

Level 3



- Providers in the system are **actively sharing leads** to access housing units. This could mean that a list exists of owners, apartment complexes, Realtors, or management companies that have historically leased their units to people experiencing homelessness/ individuals with vouchers.
- **Information is collected, archived and shared** for which property will accept individuals with higher barriers (rental debt, evictions, criminal background, etc.)
- When a case manager or program cannot utilize a unit, **providers across the system work together** to identify another client who can use it.
- All of this collaboration and sharing of leads and resources could be happening at a **community working group**, or asynchronously through a shared document, website, or communication channel

Level 3



Questions to consider if this is your system:

What is the process for sharing resources and leads? Is it formalized or informal?

Are property managers and landlords generally willing to work across programs?

Level 4



- The system has a **standard process** for engaging with the private rental market
- When housing units are identified and secured from the private market, they are contributed to a **central list** where **any program/provider** in the COC (or outside of, but this could limit regulation) can access them.
- **Incentives are standardized across programs** to eliminate more resource rich programs from out-bidding the others.
- **Partnerships are formed** between owners/property management companies that outline roles and responsibilities, placing a larger emphasis on **maintaining these relationships** for the sake of the system.
- There is dedicated personnel responsible for securing housing and maintaining relationships with property owners.

Level 4



Questions to consider if this is your system:

Do your programs house clients at the same rate? Do programs have similar resources and capacity to house clients?

Are the formal processes and procedures in place?

Is your system able to supply enough units to meet the system need?

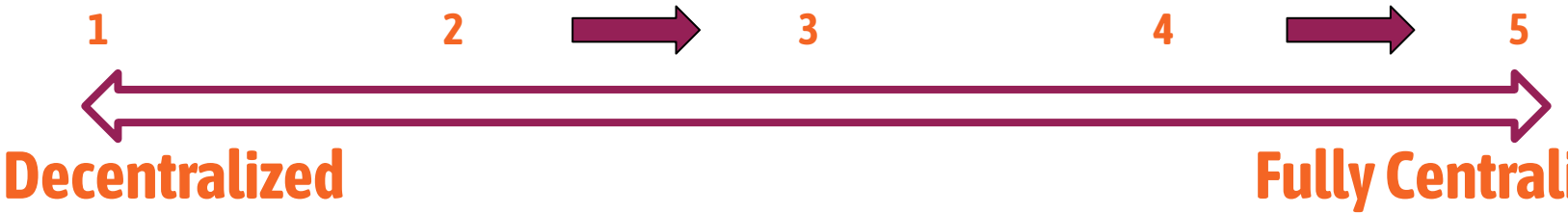
Fully Centralized - Level 5



- The system has an **agency responsible for creating and maintaining partnerships** in the private rental market that will **produce enough housing** units to meet the demand of the system.
- **MOUs are created** between owners/property management companies and **the system** that outline:
  - Tenant screening criteria
  - Number of units to be available to the COC
  - Incentives and risk mitigation
  - Who/where to reach out to when housing instabilities occur
  - Other roles and responsibilities
- MOUs exist between this agency and system providers that **outline roles and responsibilities** in accessing units from the central list and maintaining relationships with owner/management companies
- This agency has **sufficient funding to hire staff and perform** its engagement duties, including gap funding for standard incentives and maintaining a **risk mitigation pot** that can cover outstanding financial commitments.

Where is your community?

Let's Improve!



Level 1 -> Level 2



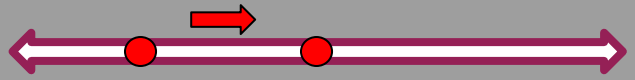
Create a property Engagement Working Group

This is a space where case managers and housing navigators can come together to share best practices, learn from each other and ideally share leads of property managers willing to lease their units.

Open to anyone interested in housing their clients more quickly and efficiently.

Could be 1 hour monthly, with little to no agenda

Level 2 -> Level 3



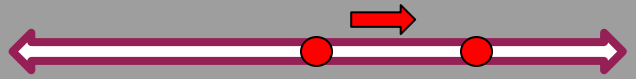
Create a shared list of landlords

Include information about how to best work with each landlord (Screening criteria, deposit amount, etc.)

Start community conversations about best practices for programs to engage and interact with property managers.

Responsiveness, housing stabilization practices, etc.

Level 3 -> Level 4



Agreements are created between a property manager/owner and the homelessness response system.

Partnerships are formalized

Policies and procedures for property engagement practices are adopted into a governance structure.

Level 4 -> Level 5



SYSTEM hires staff dedicated to bringing housing units to the SYSTEM that can equitably be accessed by any participating program.

Questions?

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Thank You
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