

# CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU'S HOUSING FIRST EVALUATION SNAPSHOT

## HOUSING FIRST IMPACTS

### PROGRAM EVALUATION SUMMARY

MAY 2017



Photo by Housing First Photovoice project participant, 2016

The Housing First evaluation shows that the program has had substantial benefits at multiple levels: improving lives, communities, & institutions.

This evaluation snapshot highlights the overall, multilevel impacts of the City and County of Honolulu's Housing First initiative in its first 2 years. Administered through the Institute for Human Services (IHS), the Housing First (HF) program is a community intervention that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. HF services are unique because they do not require individuals to demonstrate that they are "housing ready" before placement.

The evaluation team, in collaboration with IHS, developed a logic model that details program activities and expected outputs.

Between December 2014 & December 2016, the evaluation team assessed attainment of these outcomes through analysis of survey data from the Housing First Assessment Tool (HFAT) administered to clients quarterly. Additionally, the evaluation team conducted in-depth interviews with HF clients and staff and used Photovoice methodology and GIS mapping to capture multiple levels of program outcomes. Findings are presented below.



## HOUSING & CLIENT RETENTION

- HF has continued to demonstrate high program retention, retaining 94% of clients in 2015 and 87% in 2016, with an overall housing retention rate of 89% since 2014.
- Geographical analysis demonstrated that this high retention might be due to housing specialists working to place clients in appropriate housing that is close to transit and social services and in areas that are highly desirable to clients.

## CLIENT IMPACTS

### Client Empowerment

- HF devoted time and resources to promoting client empowerment & autonomy.
- Clients, particularly members of the HF Community Group (CG), demonstrated continued progress toward self-defined goals that included sobriety, job attainment, reuniting with family, and medical & mental health treatment.
- The CG was an essential program component for many clients, increasing case manager-client interactions and fostering a sense of community among clients.

### Client Well-being

- Clients continued to report improvements in physical, mental & social well-being.
- Clients reported a 38% improvement in hope for the future, a 96% increase in connections to a community group, and 21% improvement in general health.
- Clients reported decreases in alcohol & drug use after one year in housing (80% & 92% reported never or almost never using a alcohol or drugs, respectively).

## SOCIETAL IMPACTS

- HF clients experienced a 55% decrease in number of arrests after one year in HF and a 61% decrease in arrests after two years in HF.
- A comparison group, with similar incarceration & housing histories, experienced little change in average number of arrests. Notably, this group's days incarcerated increased substantially, while HF clients' days incarcerated decreased by 52%.
- Over the course of one year in housing, clients reported a 64% decrease in emergency room utilization and a 74% decrease in hospital admissions.

**SUMMARY:** HF has had substantial impact at multiple levels, benefitting individuals, communities, and institutions. This evaluation suggests that success is likely due to the coordination between housing specialists, case managers, & landlords, the placement of clients in suitable locations, the staff's dedication to helping clients achieve their self-determined goals, & the increase in clients' self-efficacy to meet these goals.