

## Process Improvement Case Study

### Permanent Supportive Housing Rapid Process Improvement Project

#### Summary

Sacramento Steps Forward recently held a Rapid Process Improvement (RPI) event to address permanent supportive housing lease up process challenges. The event was designed to specifically address Coordinated Access System client referrals into project-based voucher (PBV) housing communities, a process identified as not moving fast enough and complicated with many stakeholders trying to meet different sets of requirements and timelines. The four-day, in-person RPI event was held in April and gathered input from those involved who collectively identified barriers and solutions, redesigned a streamlined process, and committed to implementation next steps.

#### Background

Project based vouchers are used to secure housing in specific affordable housing communities. Based on input from SSF and its partners prior to the event, the current PVB referral process includes but is not limited to the following challenges:

- Property management agencies and the affordable housing agency have different requirements, standards, and timelines that creates delays.
- Developers have lease up goals and timing requirements driven by funding and if a client isn't ready in time then they can't be placed in the housing.
- Behavioral Health Service providers have a difficult time finding clients that meet requirements and have the documentation.
- Clients are given false hope if they are told about the housing opportunities but don't meet the timelines or later learn they don't match the housing requirements.
- When properties are ready for lease-up, there aren't enough matching clients who have the right documentation.
- There is confusion about SSF's role.

#### Approach

Cultivating and maintaining a continuous process improvement culture throughout the Homeless Response System (HRS) is a relatively new SSF core service. In 2023, SSF began to provide training, technical assistance and tools specific to process management and process improvement. A process improvement training with community partners in October elevated the PBV challenges as a critical issue and it was subsequently determined that a RPI event would be a good match.

The RPI approach aims to improve work processes by reducing defect, rework, and non-value added steps. There is a focus on low cost/no cost solutions to problems. A people driven process, it utilizes a team of subject matter experts who perform the work daily. With the support of a trained facilitator, the team creates a visual description of how the work is performed today using sticky notes. Then they analyze the process and design a new, improved process. The event includes ten brief "just in time trainings" that give the participants the tools they need as they need them. Once the team finalizes the new process, they create a standard work playbook and an implementation plan used to share and follow the new process.

RPI projects have three phases. Phase 1 is a planning phase, making sure that the project is well defined and planned for efficiency. This included partnering with stakeholders to develop a charter identifying key performance measures and the scope of the event, identifying and securing the participation of key stakeholders, and planning the logistics for an in-person event. Phase 2 is the in-person RPI event, typically lasting several days. Phase 3 is the implementation phase, which takes place after the event with participants working on agreed upon next steps.

The PBV RPI project was made possible by funding from Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, Common Spirit Health, and UC Davis Health.

### Outcomes

SSF's Coordinated Access System team planned a RPI event with support from the Performance Excellence team and process expert, Shelley Yaun with Practical Quality Services. The PBV RPI event was held on four full days across three weeks in April at the Sierra 2 Center in Sacramento.

The RPI event included 25 people representing 15 partners including Sacramento County, the City of Sacramento, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, persons with lived expertise, and other service providers, developers, and property managers.

At the event, the participants identified 31 barriers, devised 22 solutions, drafted a revised process, and group members committed to 29 specific next steps. At the end of the event, the team participated remotely in a meeting of the City County Partnership Team to provide an overview of the progress and next steps.

SSF conducted a post-event survey of RPI event participants, and all respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that their work at the event will lead to improvements.

Implementation is underway with in-person meetings in May and June to check progress and address any barriers. As of the June 17 meeting, 9 out of 22 solutions are complete. Key performance measures will be tracked over time to assess impacts on:

- Days from client referral to move-in
- Days from housing project kick-off to clients move-in
- Days from housing project kick-off to full occupancy

### RPI Event Participating Agencies

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| - Sacramento Steps Forward  | - Mercy Housing            |
| - Sacramento Continuum of Care Persons with Lived Expertise Committee | - Mutal Housing            |
| - Sacramento Continuum of Care Youth Action Board                     | - Jamboree                 |
| - Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency                         | - John Stewart             |
| - Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services                        | - Telecare                 |
| - City of Sacramento  | - Lutheran Social Services |
|   | - Hope Cooperative         |
|   | - El Hogar                 |
|   | - EAH Housing              |

