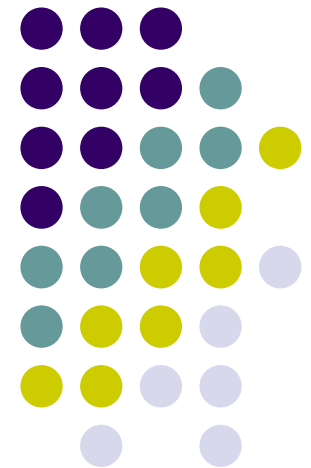


A Strategic Plan for Addressing Adult Single Shelter Capacity NAEH Conference 7/15/15

Presented by: Cullen Ryan
Executive Director
Community Housing of Maine



Oxford Street Shelter, Portland, Maine:

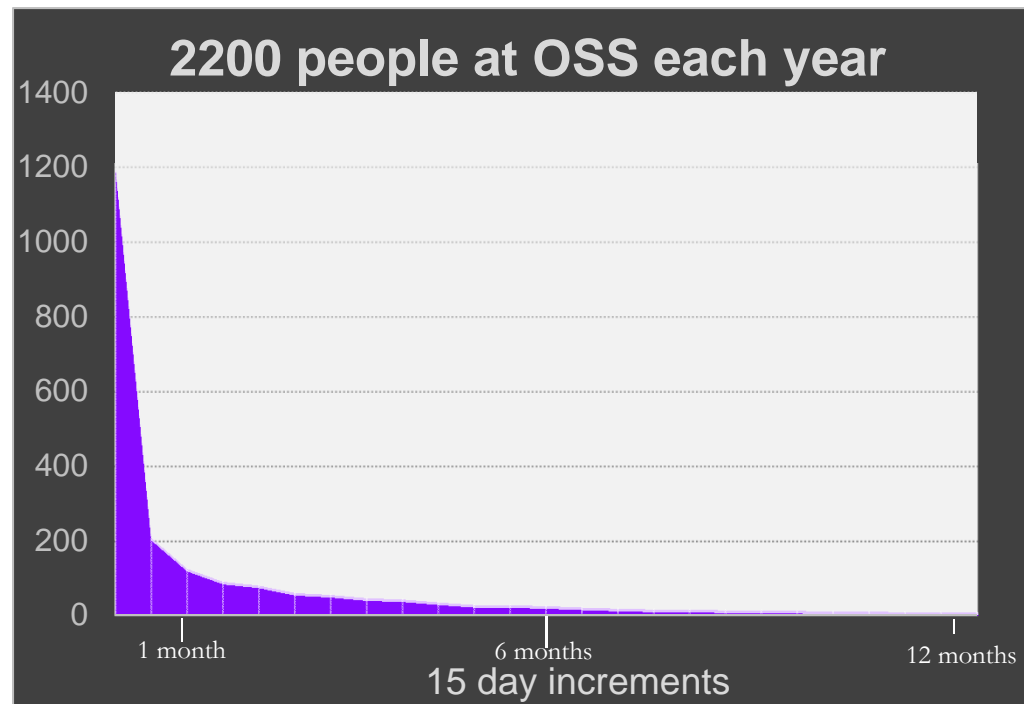


- Serves Adult Singles, male and female.
- Mostly dry, has some wet shelter capacity.
- Largest homeless shelter in Maine – up to 154 (functional capacity is 130).
- Recently had three overflows, each with a 75 bed capacity. This created chaos and significant expense.
- Some 2200 people stay at OSS each year. Most pass through quickly.



Lengths of stay for adult singles:

- 33% pass through in 1-3 days, 55% pass through in 2 weeks or less, and 80% pass through in 2 months or less.
- But 5% or less stay night after night, using the shelter beds and causing the need for overflow. By housing that 5%, we open up capacity at OSS, end the overflowing, and begin to reduce numbers.





Lengths of stay for adult singles::

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

FY 2013			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	679	32%	32%
4 – 14 Days	506	23%	55%
15 – 60 Days	537	25%	80%
61 – 179 Days	328	15%	95%
180 – 273 Days	70	3%	98%
274 – 365 Days	46	2%	100%
Total	2,166		

FY 2012			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	696	33%	33%
4 – 14 Days	494	24%	57%
15 – 60 Days	555	27%	84%
61 – 179 Days	254	12%	96%
180 – 273 Days	42	2%	98%
274 – 365 Days	37	2%	100%
Total	2,078		

Leave these people alone. Doing anything will probably slow them down.
 Note this is more than half of the people in the shelter.



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Shelters are particularly well suited to help this group. But it can be easy to blow the resources on the shortest stayers - those passing through who probably don't need help, yet look like good targets to house quickly. Instead, leave these people alone until the longest term stayers are housed.

Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:



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Get these people housed. People working in shelters around the country have often chosen to work with people who are easier to engage and house rather than people within this group, leaving them languishing for long periods of time. This is what we hope to change, and when we do, the rest will be easy.

A look at what has worked to reduce numbers at OSS:



- In 2005, one 30 unit SRO housing first property opened. In the year prior to its opening, OSS overflowed 75% of the nights. Beginning the day after it leased up, the OSS did not overflow for the following year and a half.
- Why? 30 Long Term Stayers were abruptly housed. Even though close to 2000 people were passing through the shelter that year, housing these 30 key people dramatically changed the shelter's capacity, and the effects were long lasting.



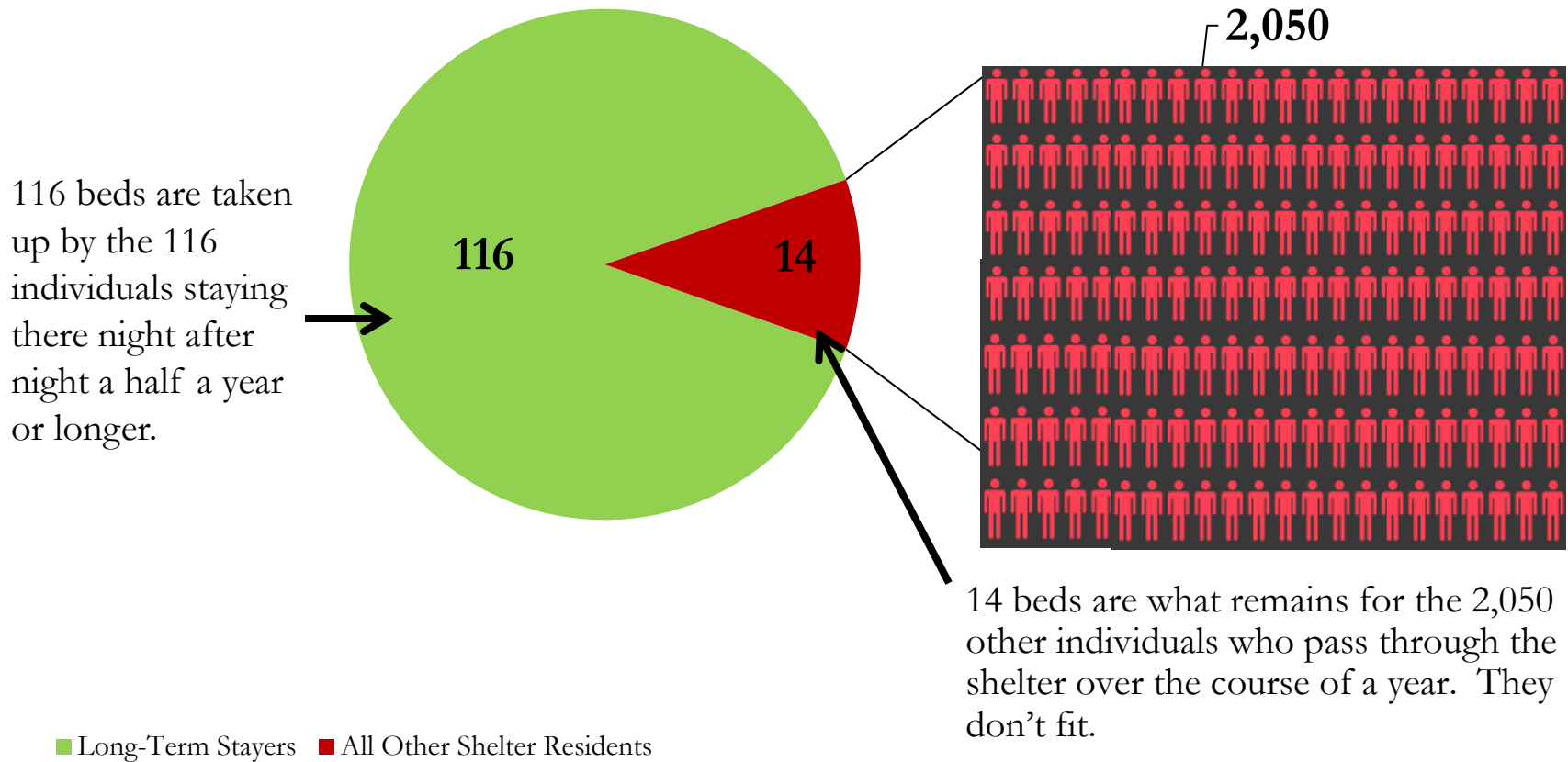
2013 Efforts:

- A Long Term Stayer (LTS) is identified (using HMIS data) as staying 180 cumulative days in any 365 day period. Once housed, it has been found that 100% of LTS have met the HUD Chronic Homelessness definition.
- There were 116 Long Term Stayers (the 5% staying night after night) at Oxford Street Shelter.
- In 2013, the shelter housed a record 700 people, but targeted people with shorter stays.
- This fast-paced effort made no difference in the numbers (numbers actually increased). Three overflow shelters remained.

Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:



130 Oxford Street Shelter Beds





2014 Efforts:

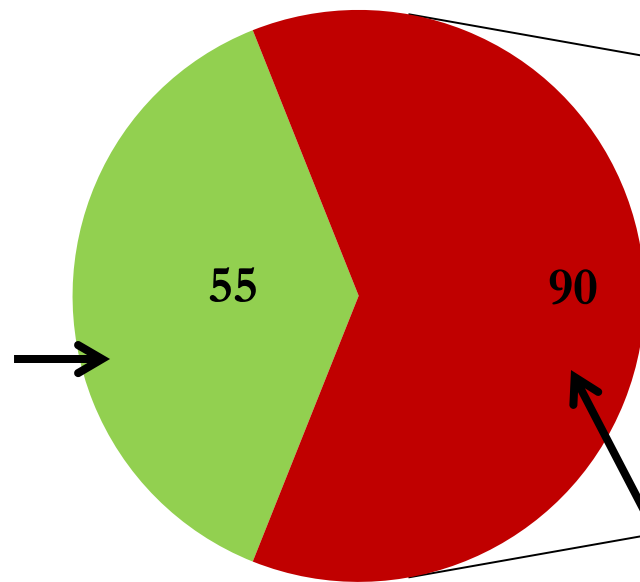
- In 2014 the shelter almost exclusively targeted the 116 LTS. By June, they had housed 22 and closed one of the three (75 bed) overflows. It has never reopened. By November, they had housed 66 LTS and intermittently closed the second overflow shelter. Numbers declined every month for 11 months in a row.
- Those remaining now represented less than 2.5% of the population at OSS. 6 months later, still less than 2.5% LTS.
- Confounds: By November, Portland's vacancy rate had edged closer to 1%, and pressure emerged within the City (due to GA reimbursement withholdings from the State Administration) to examine new approaches. A new shelter was proposed, and some key City Staff left.
- Result: Temporary slowdown in progress on LTS.



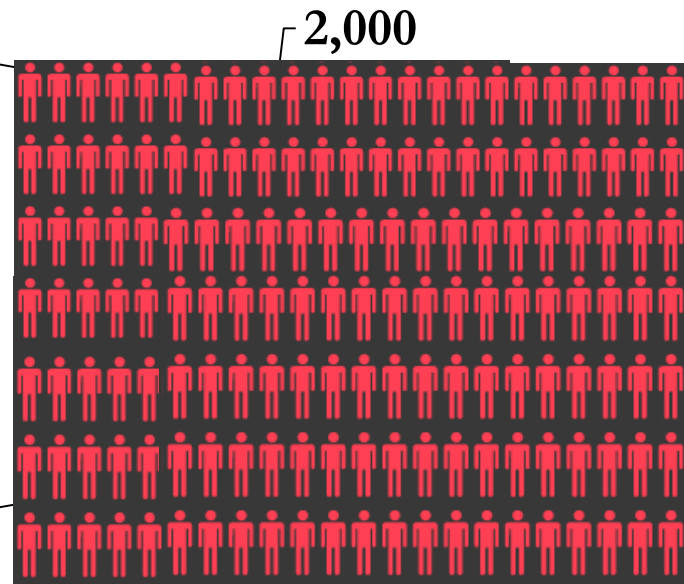
2014 Results (continued):

145 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

55 beds are taken up by the 55 individuals staying there night after night a half a year or longer.



■ Long-Term Stayers ■ All Other Shelter Residents



90 beds are what remains for the 2,000 other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year. They don't fit yet causing continued need for overflow.



2015:

- Pressure continued on the City due to the Governor withholding GA reimbursement.
- City Administrators announced an abrupt June 30th closure of the remaining 75 bed shelter overflow.
- Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) called an emergency meeting 4/30/15.
- Shelter staff rejuvenated their efforts at housing LTS. After a 6 month break in progress, the week of 4/20, OSS Shelter staff housed 5 of their longest remaining LTS.



Proposed Strategic Solutions:

- ESAC voted unanimously in a 4/30/15 emergency meeting around shelter closure, to focus a community wide effort to house the remaining Long Term Stayers. The shelter had been doing this with two staff – the community effort set a goal of **nine** staff targeting this population, housing them, and supporting them in the community so they would stay housed.
- Five organizations immediately committed staffing resources, with multiple funding sources for service delivery. These people would soon be triaged by OSS Staff to work in concert and move as efficiently as possible. This effort was unprecedented.



Proposed Strategic Solutions:

With the success in 2005 of the 30 unit housing first project, and 2014 LTS placements in mind, ESAC endorsed the following strategic solutions to the shelter crisis:

- Prioritize and target our LTS. Work as much as possible with the longest of this LTS group first. Don't stray from this plan with any of our resources.
- Increase the staff dedicated to this end with a target of 9.
- Triage those other staff with OSS directing efforts, and community agencies all playing an active role towards the same end. Ensure case management is seamless and sufficient for stability.



Solutions (continued):

- Combine and repurpose multiple rapid-rehousing staff to target LTS as part of the triage efforts.
- Have rental subsidy meetings be peer presentations where subsidies will go to the longest LTS as the first deciding factor.
- Set community goal of housing 70 LTS from OSS by 12/31/15 (8 months), targeting only those staying the longest and working backwards from there. That is a goal of 9 LTS stably housed on an average basis per month.
- With those 70 housed plus the 5 recently housed, the community should eliminate its need to overflow to the PSRC 75 bed overflow.
- Increase functional capacity of OSS to 154 by 7/1/15.



Solutions (continued):

- Continue to focus rental subsidies, housing location, and outreach support services in the housing on LTS, working from the longest LTS to the shortest LTS. Don't stray from this list!
- Once we eliminate current LTS, reset what constitutes a LTS to below 180 days in a 12 month period, and continue to work back from there.
- Set lower priority goal of using VI-SPDAT assessments for anyone staying more than one month to steer people likely to become LTS toward housing resources for LTS, but keep in mind that LTS are a very rare subset of our homeless population (currently 2.5%).



Solutions (continued):

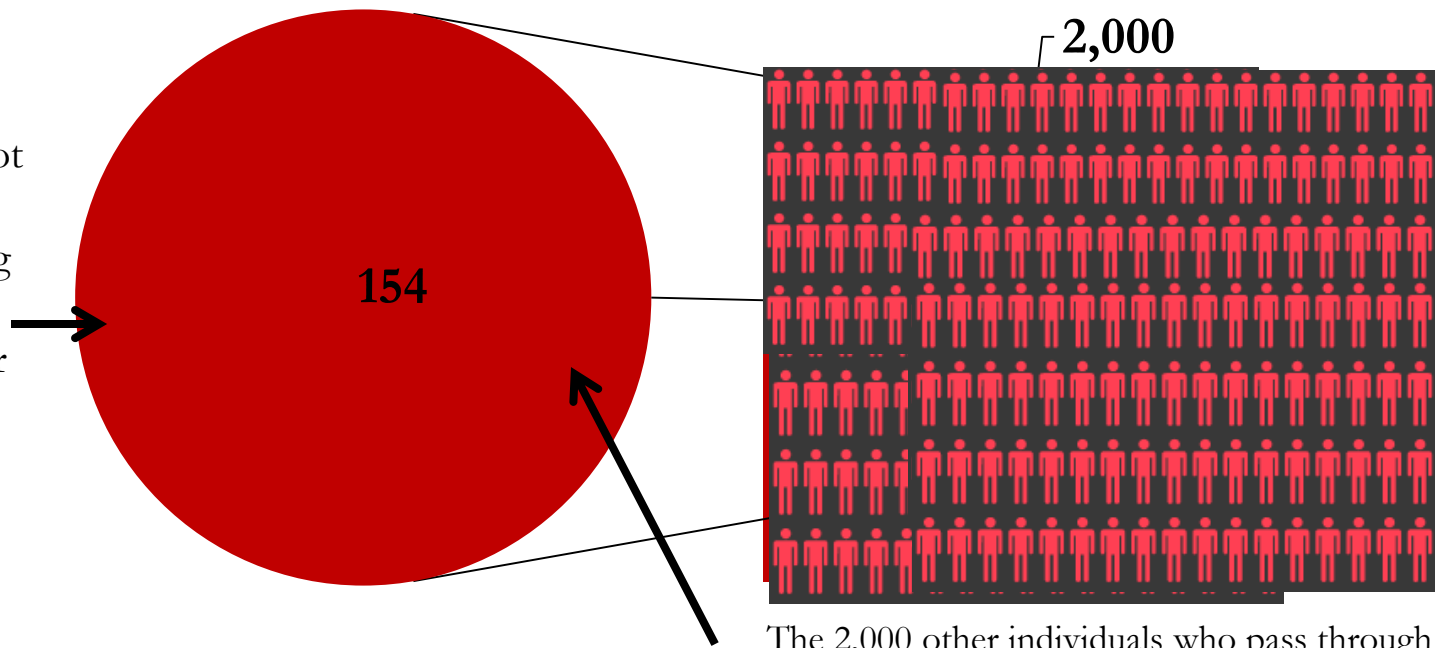
- Continue to triage people from the OSS using an ongoing collective community approach toward engagement, housing support, and outreach case management for permanent stability in the community for LTS population.
- Report progress at monthly ESAC meetings, and fine tune and retool as necessary to keep bed nights and number of occupants of the shelter on a nightly basis declining.
- Use ESAC to monitor the emergency shelter needs of the community.
- Create a renewed effort to reach out to landlords to build relationships and housing opportunities for LTS in and around Portland.



End goal:

154 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

When beds are not taken up by individuals staying there night after night a half a year or longer the shelter has much greater capacity.



■ Long-Term Stayers ■ All Other Shelter Residents

The 2,000 other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year now fit – and the shelter can shift resources to house them, longest to shortest, while keeping the original long term stayers stably housed.



Progress so far:

- 9 agencies and 9.5 FTEs joined the effort.
- Weekly meetings began working with one list of people beginning with 70.
- In the first 7 weeks, 18 LTS were housed – right on track with the goal. The community is engaged and the pace is picking up, and commitment to keep at this is growing.
- The group is exactly on track to house every LTS by the end of the year, and continue from there.



Statewide progress on LTS:

As of July 1, 2013, there were 262 LTS in Maine.

As of June 30, 2015, there were:

- 181 LTS (down from 262 in 7/13 – 31% decrease)
- 122 single adult LTS (down from 262 in 7/13 – 53% decrease)
- 59 family member LTS (up from 0 in 7/13; LTS were almost exclusively single adults prior to sequestration)
 - There is a 20 year pattern of family shelters filling up within 6 months of a Section 8 freeze, and emptying out within 6 months of an availability of Section 8. Freezes have generally been resolved in a year.
 - Let's end sequestration.



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