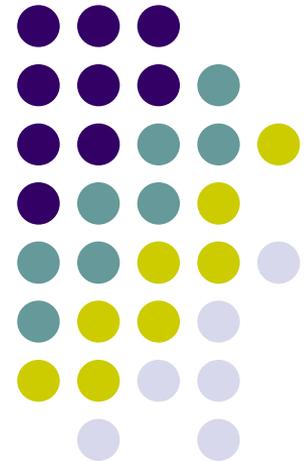# A Strategic Plan for Addressing Shelter Overflow Closure

4/30/15 Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

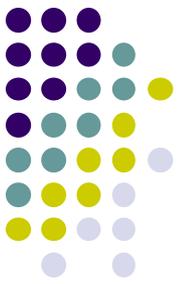Presented by: Cullen Ryan

Executive Director

CHOM

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

The 1 in 7 theory:

- For every 7 people in shelters (adult singles in particular), ignore the 4 that are passing through the shelter very quickly.

- Provide properly titrated rapid re-housing support to the next 2 of 7 over the next year in the community.

- Focus on permanent supportive housing for the remaining 1 in 7; this is our long term homeless population. Prioritize this.

- In Maine the HUD Definition of Chronically Homeless is very constricting, so we have developed a different definition that targets the same people – Long term stayers (180 days in any 365 day period). This is the same group, and this definition works all over the state.

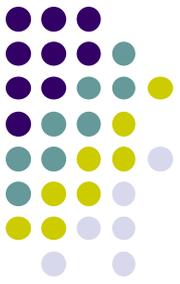# Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

FY 2013			
Length of Stay	Total	%	Cumulative %
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			
Length of Stay	Total	%	Cumulative %
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		

Note that one-third of people pass through the shelter in 1 – 3 days. All of these patterns have been consistent for at least 16 years.

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

Out of 2166 total unduplicated people at Oxford Street Shelter:

- A total of 1,185, or **55% of all individuals served stayed for 1-14 days**. (So, over half pass through with less than two weeks of nights.)

- An additional 865, or 25% of all clients stayed 15-60 days, meaning **80% of people stayed less than two months**.

- A total of 116, or **5%, of clients stayed at the Shelter 180 days or more**. These are the Long term stayers.

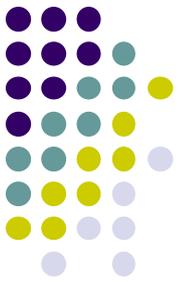# Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:

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This is our 4 in 7. Leave these people alone. Doing anything will probably slow them down. Note this is more than half of the people in the shelter.

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

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

FY 2013			
Length of Stay	**Total**	**%**	**Cumulative %**
1 – 3 Days	679	32%	32%
4 – 14 Days	506	23%	55%
15 – 60 Days	**537**	**25%**	**80%**
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This is our 5 and 6 in 7. Titrate out rapid re-housing to support their success in the community. This will probably be up to a year's worth of support. Shelters are particularly good at helping this group. But it can be easy to blow the resources on the people passing through who don't need help.

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.

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

- In October 2013 at Oxford Street Shelter, on a given night there were about 130 beds available.

- 116 of these beds were taken up by the 5% of people staying there night after night a half a year or longer.

- This left 14 beds for the remaining 2,050 people to pass through over the course of the year. Do you see the problem?

- This is why we had 3 overflows for the Oxford Street Shelter. One of them as of that October had as many as 47 people a night sitting in chairs all night. This was our crisis, and we set about to fix it.

- If we could successfully house the 116 we will be able to end homelessness for the rest.

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

130 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

2,050

116 beds are taken up by the 116 individuals staying there night after night a half a year or longer.

116

14

14 beds are what remains for the 2,050 other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year. They don't fit.

■ Long-Term Stayers ■ All Other Shelter Residents
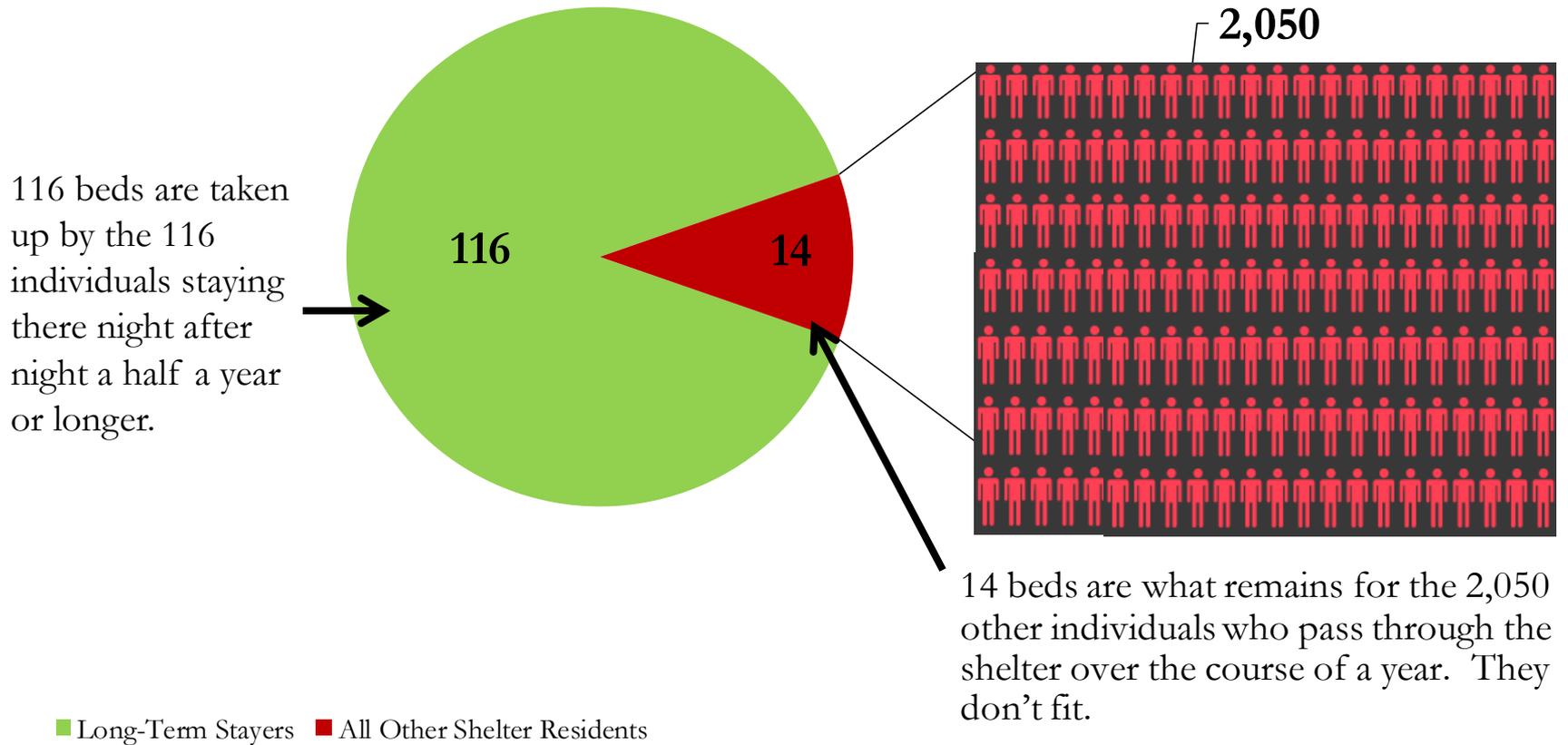
Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:

- The Statewide Homeless Council has developed a plan to target the Long-term stayers, those people staying over 180 days within a 365 day period. From 7/1/12 to 6/30/13 there were 262 people across the state.

- This number will fluctuate a bit, but if we look at dividing it in 4 (solving this over 4 years) we come up with 66 people (per year).

- If we divide that again by 14 service center communities we start to get to single digits in nearly all communities, easier still.

- Plan: Break it down to very feasible individual community efforts over the next 4 years, and get it done. Start now.

Long-term Stayers Report ~ Shelter Clients > 180 days within 365 Days

Long-term Stayers Statewide
In Local Public Housing Jurisdictions

94 – Balance of State	2 – Waterville
73 – Portland	2 – Saco
10 – Bangor	2 – Biddeford
6 – Lewiston	2 – Brunswick
6 – Augusta	2 – Ellsworth
5 – So Portland	1 – Sanford
5 – Westbrook	1 – Brewer

Number of Long-term Stayers in MaineHousing Jurisdiction - 94

Penobscot Community Health Center - 20

Bangor Shelters

Bangor – 10
Brewer - 1

Waterville - 2
Augusta - 6

Ellsworth – 2

Oxford Street - 116
Florence House - 20
Milestone - 30

Lewiston - 6

Portland Shelters

Portland - 73

Brunswick -2

So Portland – 5
Westbrook – 5
Biddeford – 2
Saco – 2
Sanford - 1

Number of Long-term Stayers from Service Center Communities

Alfred Shelter

York County Shelter - 8

Models for housing the 116, or 262:

- Housing First (typically large, single-purpose buildings, using harm-reduction model with available services on site. Example: Logan Place with 30 of 30 units.)

- Scattered Site – Rental subsidy + outreach support + general housing market (Shelter + Care, BRAP, HUD VASH, PATH – CLIP, Public Housing Authority voucher + local services.)

- Small multi-family supportive housing apartment buildings – 4 units are typical. (Most CHOM, York County Shelter Programs, and Shalom House properties.)

- Large multi-family buildings with supportive housing sprinkled within. (McAuley Residence – 15 of 38 units in Elm Terrace, Danforth on High – 10 of 30 units.)

Models for housing the 116, or 304:

- All of these models work well, and we need them all.
- The key parts of all models are rental subsidies, outreach and engagement, and collaboration.
- As to outreach and engagement, it does not work if we allow individuals to push us away. And they won't come to us.
- We have to work as a community to successfully engage, even if someone is having a bad day, and even if we have to assert ourselves to begin and remain in the relationship.

2013 Efforts:

1. In 2013, OSS Staff housed people at a breakneck speed – 60 to 70 people a month were successfully housed. Some 700 people were housed in 2013 alone due to this incredible effort. Result: No change in numbers from beginning of year to end of year. Numbers actually increased.

2. Why? Staff were targeting, as anyone in this position might wisely do, people who presented well and were likely candidates to be quickly housed.

3. The problem: These were the people who would have housed themselves, perhaps even faster, if left alone.

2014 Efforts:

- In January 2014, OSS Staff began targeting Long Term Stayers nearly exclusively.

- They began housing the right people but it was a much slower pace. By June, 2014, they had housed 22 people.

- Early result: The first of three 75 person capacity overflow shelters was closed (5/29/14) and has never reopened as an overflow (the space has been used as a warming center).

2014 Results (continued):

- By November, OSS Staff had housed 66 of the original 116 LTS, leaving 50.

- Result: The second of the original three overflow shelters was closed, and has remained closed most of the time since November.

- Confounds: By November, Portland's vacancy rate had edged closer to 1%, pressure emerged within the City due to GA reimbursement withholdings from the LePage 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

2,000

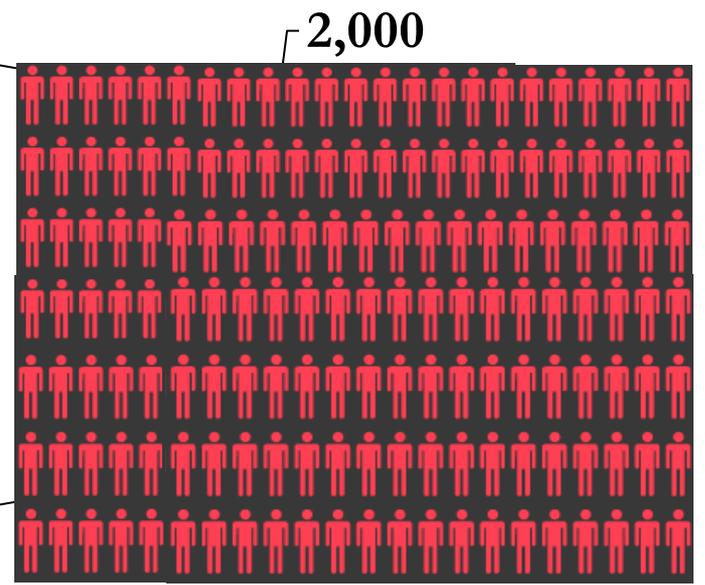55 beds are taken up by the 55 individuals staying there night after night a half a year or longer.
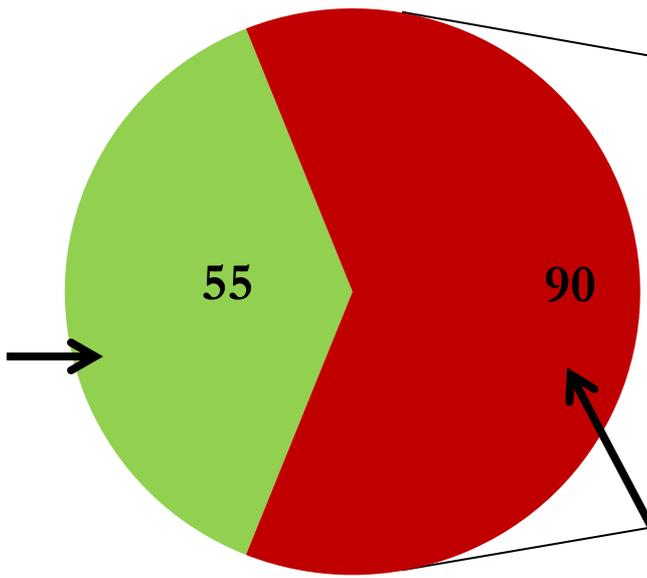
90 beds are what remains for the 2,000 other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year. They don't fit yet causing continued need for overflow.

■ Long-Term Stayers   ■ All Other Shelter Residents

2015:
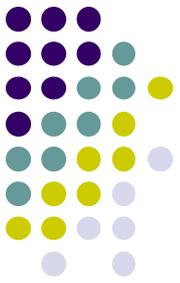
- Pressure has continued on the City due to LePage Administration withholdings of GA reimbursement.

- City Administrators announced June 30th closure of 75 bed shelter overflow.

- Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee called an emergency meeting 4/30/15.

- Shelter staff have rejuvenated their efforts at housing LTS. The week of 4/20, OSS Shelter staff housed 5 of their longest remaining LTS.

A look at what has worked to reduce numbers at OSS:
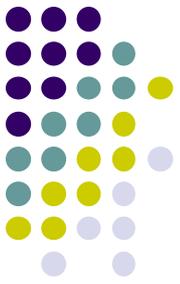
- In 2005 Logan Place opened. In the year prior to its opening, OSS overflowed 75% of the nights. Beginning the day after it leased up, the OSS did not overflow for the following year and a half.
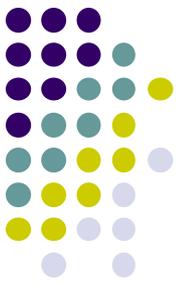
- Why? 30 Long Term Stayers were abruptly housed. Even though close to 2000 people were passing through the shelter that year, housing these 30 key people dramatically changed the shelter's capacity, and the effects were long lasting.

Current problems:

- Some non-LTS clients are applying for S+C and not for BRAP. They are possibly assuming that if they wait long enough, they will become eligible for S+C, which they may perceive as more favorable because they would pay 51% of their income for BRAP vs. S+C.

- S+C is oversubscribed, while BRAP is undersubscribed.

- Vacancy rates remain very low.

- Only 4 OSS Staff are dedicated to housing LTS. Two of these 4 staff are on leave, meaning only two staff are dedicated to housing this population.

Solution considerations:

1. Rental subsidies are the underlying factor for stability.
2. For this population, it is not all about housing. It is all about services; housing allows services to be delivered effectively and efficiently. We need services to begin at the shelter and follow each person into the community seamlessly.
3. No one can do this alone. But, together we can end chronic homelessness in Maine.

Proposed Strategic Solutions:

- 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.

- Combine and repurpose multiple Home To Stay 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.
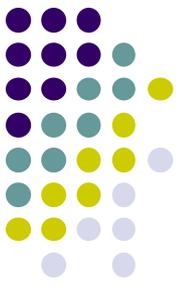
Solutions (continued):

- Set community goal of housing 70 LTS from OSS by 12/31/15 (8 months), targeting 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.

- Show strategic plan with broad community buy in along with progress to the City Council so that they can be swayed to keep the overflow open as needed through 12/31/15.

- Increase functional capacity of OSS to 154 by 7/1/15.

Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time:
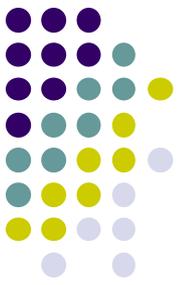
154 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

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.
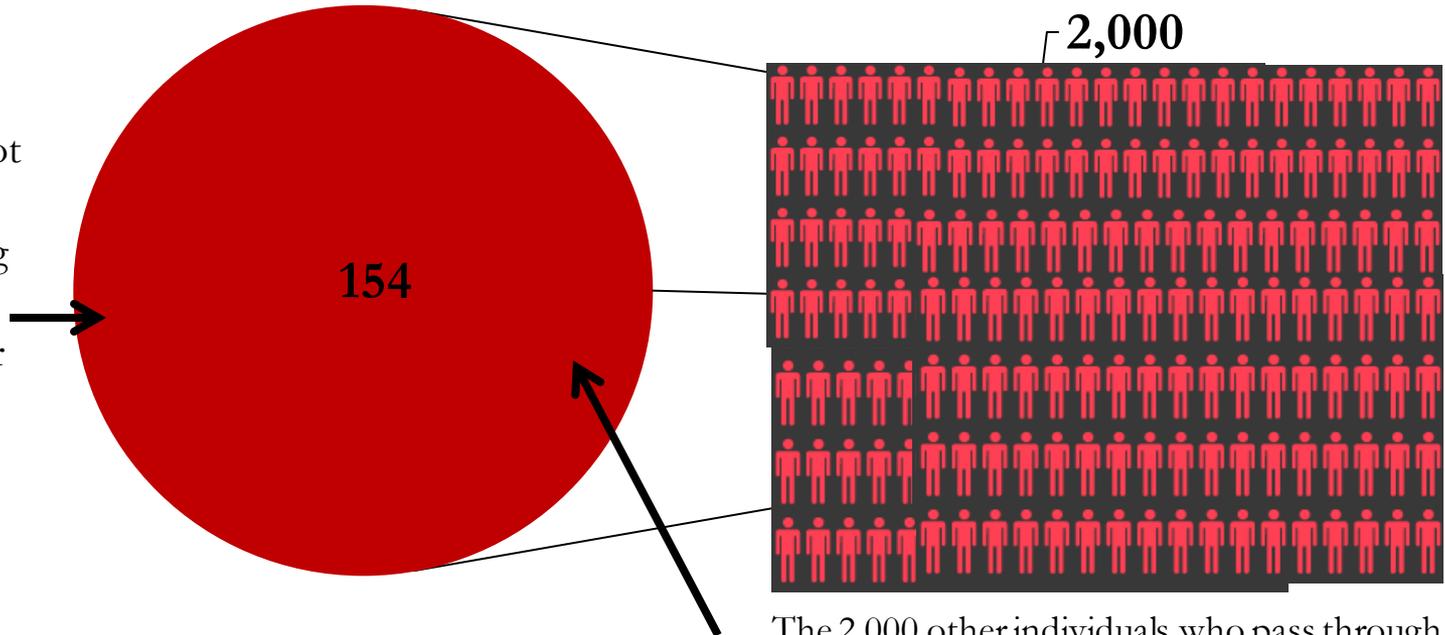
154

2,000

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.

■ Long-Term Stayers   ■ All Other Shelter Residents

Solutions (continued):

- Continue to focus rental subsidies, housing location, and outreach support services in the housing on LTS, working from the LTS staying the longest to the LTS staying the shortest. 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 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.