

Deepening Leadership Skills to Combat Homelessness

*Reflections from Hannah Brady, Housing Programs Manager
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“Before taking on my current role, I was new to the realm of housing—as was my organization, which primarily provides legal aid to seniors. When we made the decision to take on launching the Home Safe program to help meet the urgent needs facing our county, I knew I needed to ramp up my capacity as a leader, and to quickly increase my knowledge of designing and implementing housing programs. It was a steep and daunting learning curve—which is why I’m so grateful for the Change Well Project’s training opportunities, and particularly the **“Understanding and Strengthening the Ecosystem of Housing and Homelessness Services”** learning cohort for program leaders.

Being a part of the Cohort gave me a clear and effective way to organize my thinking around building a new brand-new program designed to address a set of incredibly complex issues and community needs. Change Well synthesized the latest data, research, policies, resources and best practices around addressing housing and homelessness issues, which provided such a strong foundation for me—one that has been truly formative in how I’ve designed our Home Safe program.

Now, whenever I’m talking with someone who is coming to work with people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, I articulate what we know to be true: that the crisis we’re facing boils down to not having enough housing units, and that people can’t afford the units that are available. I want everyone to go into this work with that mindset—to help breakdown the stereotypes that mental illness, or substance abuse disorders, or other individual challenges are the reason someone might be facing homelessness. **The reality is that this is a systemic crisis, and it demands systemic solutions.**

At an organizational level, Change Well’s trainings are helping us create a better ethos and understanding of who we’re serving and how we can strengthen the space we give them to tell their story and to seek services. I’ve made Change Well trainings mandatory for my case workers, because I know the time we take to learn from them will make our work better. On a personal level, Change Well trainings have given me a lot more confidence in my own knowledge and ability as a housing leader: I’ve become an active member of our County’s Continuum of Care, speaking up about seniors and older adults when it comes to the crisis of homelessness. Change Well trainings are powerful for anyone, at any level, who is taking part in the essential work of combatting the crisis of homelessness.”