



Refugee Housing
SOLUTIONS

Housing Innovations : Learnings, Successes, and Replicable Opportunities

Housing Expertise and HUD Housing Counseling Prep-Course

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Jeremy Hayes, *Housing Program Officer*
Refugee Housing Solutions

refugeehousing.org

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Objectives



- Introduce Refugee Housing Solutions and its role in supporting housing strategies for ORR-eligible populations.
- Explain the housing capacity gaps addressed by the Housing Expertise and HUD Housing Counseling Prep-Course.
- Share key learnings and outcomes from early training cohorts.
- Highlight how course adaptations strengthen the RHS network and support long-term housing stability.

Who We Are

Refugee Housing Solutions (RHS) team members leverage their experience and expertise in affordable housing, refugee resettlement, strategy, communications, and program design to offer resources, an interactive and localized Housing Hub and Directory for effective housing systems navigation, and opportunities for innovative cross-sector partnerships.



Refugee Housing
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Increasing access to dignified affordable housing for refugees and other newcomers to the United States.



What We Do

RHS team members facilitate dialogue and collaboration on innovative housing solutions and provide resources to ORR-eligible populations and service providers, refugee resettlement professionals, volunteers, housing providers and stakeholders, and private sector, community, faith, and government partners. Together, we help refugees and other ORR-eligible individuals find safe, dignified, and affordable housing in the United States.

How We Do It



	Facilitate dialogue...	among public, nonprofit, and private sector affordable housing stakeholders.
	Promote collaboration and partnerships...	with all affordable housing stakeholders, both nationwide in the U.S. and globally.
	Lead alignment efforts...	for ORR-funded national resettlement agencies and their local offices and affiliates.
	Catalyze housing innovation...	with private sector stakeholders, including housing providers, and HUD .
	Expand information sharing, resources, and localized service connections...	for all constituents, including individuals, families, communities, resettlement agencies, and housing providers, to expand newcomer housing.

Why This Course

- Support RHS network with knowledge surrounding housing newcomers, including available HUD programming and eligibility.
- Support staff to pass their HUD Exams.
- Support agencies that have suffered from lost of institutional knowledge through loss of funding.
- Apply to become a HUD Housing Counseling Agency (HCA).
- Opportunity of HUD Housing Counseling funding.



Early CWS Cohorts Validated Demand & Informed Course Design



CWS PILOT COHORTS (2024)

- 4 cohorts
- HUD-based curriculum
- 1.5 hours
 - 3 times/ week
 - 8-10 classes
- Multiple daily class times to maximize access



PARTICIPATION SNAPSHOT

- 84 total registrants
- Avg. attendance
 - ~17 per class
- Cohorts ranged from 18-30 students
- RHS staff cohort ensured internal expertise



OUTCOMES & LEARNINGS

- Staff successfully gained housing knowledge and prepared for HUD exam.
- Attendance patterns informed right-sized class capacity.
- Pilot revealed need for simplified RHS network launch.

Measurable Insights & Data-Informed Programming

With each cohort, we refined and revised the course. The first cohorts utilized and leaned heavily on the materials HUD had already created. As we progressed, we saw the need to create our own slide deck and did so during the RHS staff cohort and beyond.

Registration and attendance numbers allowed us to estimate the continued desire for the course and be able to set future class sizes.

90-minute classes allowed us to cover enough material to complete the course in a manageable timeframe.



84 
TOTAL REGISTRANTS
ACROSS 4 COHORTS

102 
TOTAL CLASS HOURS

3 CWS STAFF GAINED
HUD CERTIFICATIONS

Moving from Pilot to RHS Launch

- Open to all organizations serving Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)- eligible clients
- Information session offered
- Revamped course material and slide deck
- New learning platform for students to navigate with pre/post assessment, homework, and survey requirements
- Students receive a certificate at completion of course
- Syllabus for students, including additional links and welcome materials two weeks prior to class
- Class began September 3, 2025



RHS Network Cohort 1

- Class capped at 30 students; 30 students registered
- Waitlist created for additional interest
- 9 pre-tests received prior to start of class

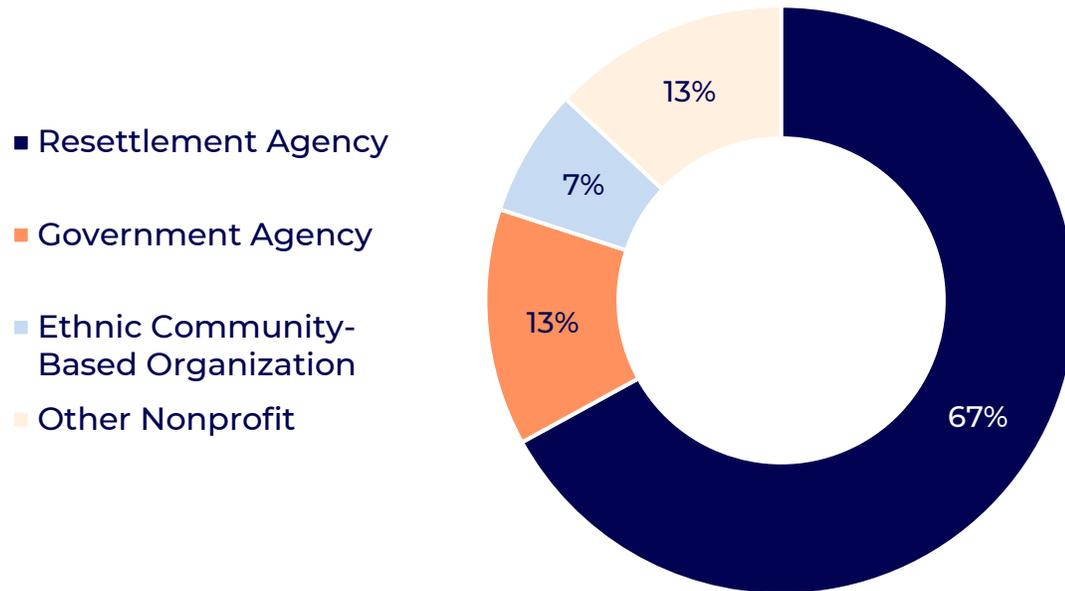
Pre-Course Knowledge Assessment

- Results broken down into 3 categories:
 - Level 1: Understanding of Basic Knowledge and Facts
 - Level 2: Understanding of Concepts
 - Level 3: Ability to Analyze or Synthesize Information to Make a Decision or Recommendation
- Average scores:
 - Level 1: 62%
 - Level 2: 61%
 - Level 3: 50%

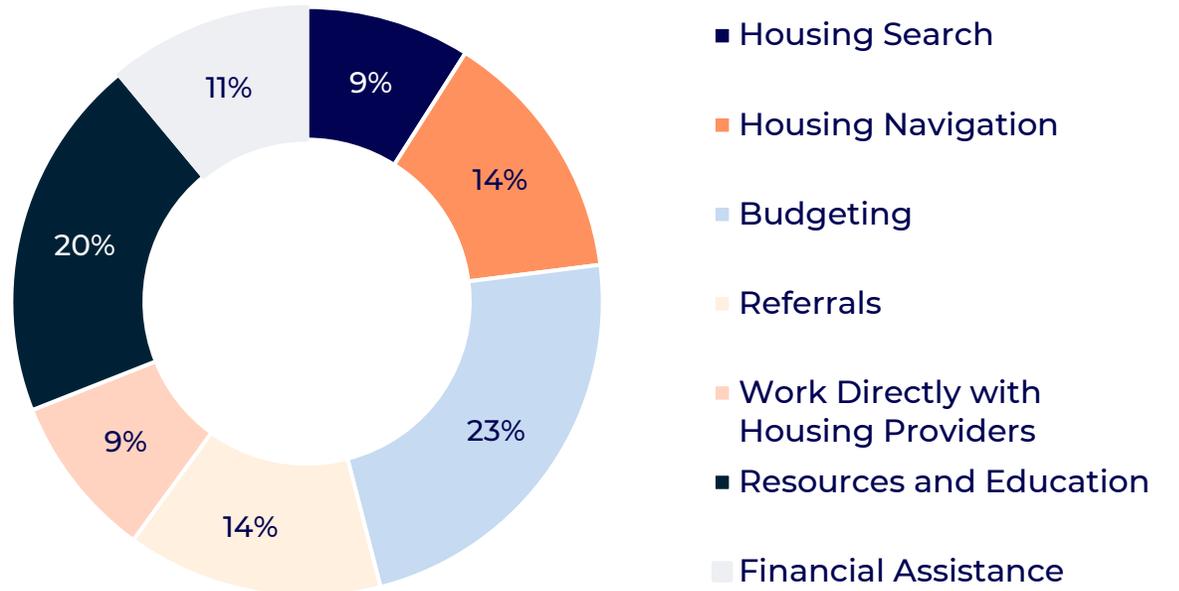
Most participants actively support clients with housing but lack HUD-specific readiness at baseline.



% of participants by organization type

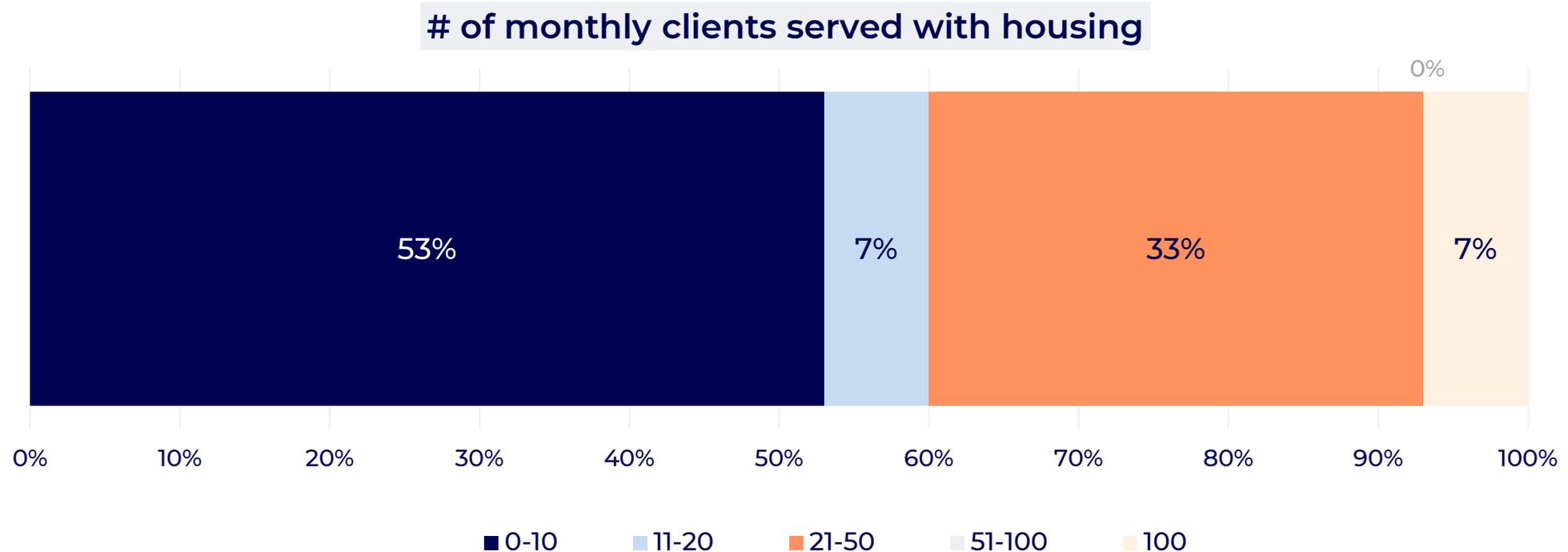


Services provided to clients by course participants



Participants serve myriad housing needs, and their services are enhanced with additional HUD housing counseling expertise.

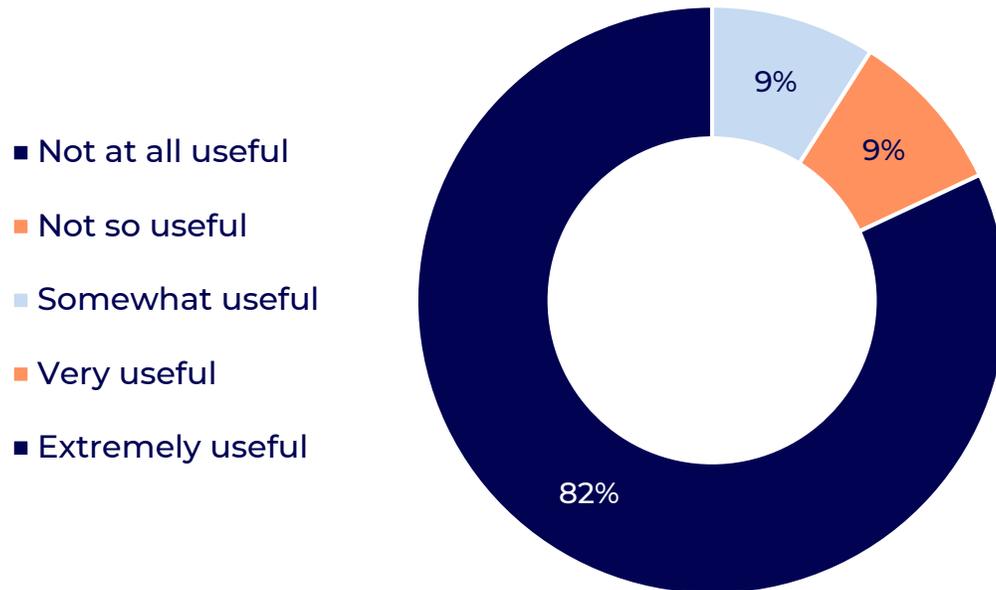
High housing caseload + increasing cost of living highlight opportunities for course impact.



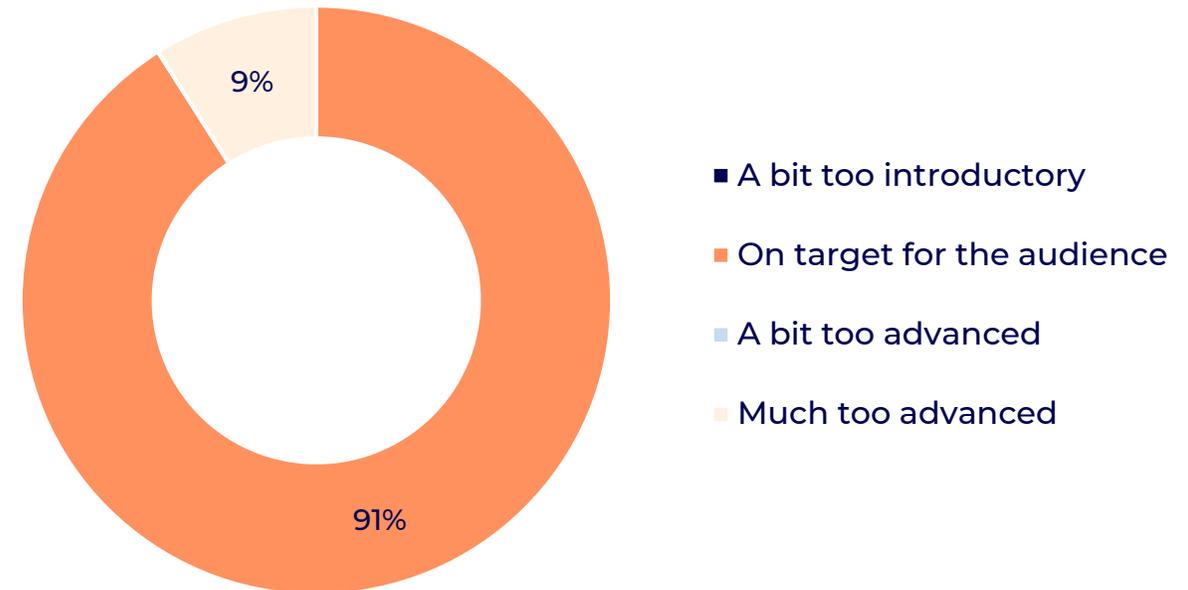
40% of class participants support 21+ clients monthly with housing needs, amplifying opportunities for housing-specific training to directly affect real households.

Course relevance validated early through mid-course survey.

“How useful is the course to your role?”



Level of Material Covered



82% of participants highlighted usefulness of course to their current role.

91% indicated the course content was on target.



Upon commencing the HUD Certified Housing Exam Prep Course, I possessed no prior familiarity with the program. Each session introduced me to various laws, resources, and programs previously unfamiliar to me.

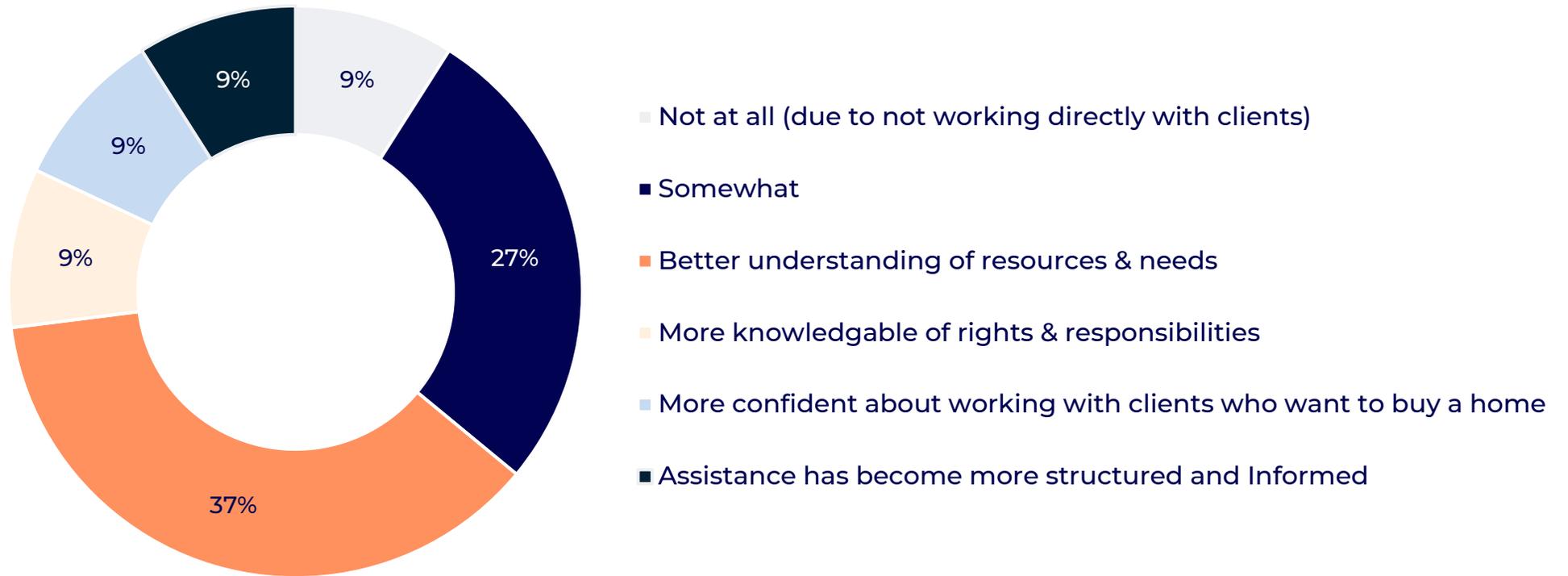
I am now confident in my knowledge to provide my clients with valuable information and resources. The instructor demonstrates exceptional knowledge, patience, and enthusiasm. I personally found this course highly beneficial and wish the instructor continued success. Jeremy is truly outstanding. Thank you!

— LIZANDRA PEREZ, SOCIAL SERVICES CASE AID

Mid-course survey indicated current participant service provision was positively impacted and improved through new learnings.



How the course changed how participants serve clients

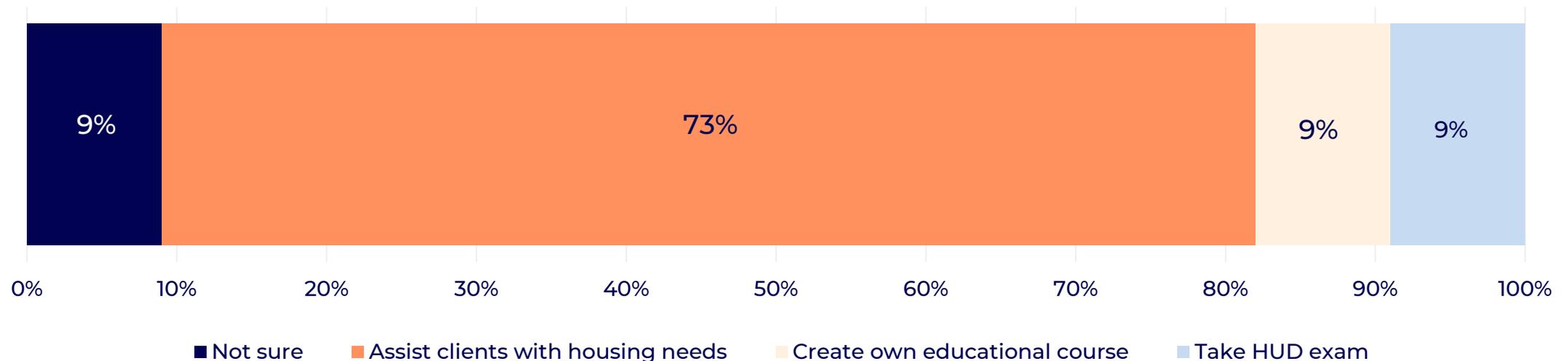


91% of course participants indicated during the mid course survey changing how they deliver housing services.

End-of-course survey confirms active participant engagement, intent to certify as a HUD Housing Counselor, and opportunities to apply gained knowledge.



How course participants plan to use course content & knowledge in the future



- 100% reported course was engaging and intend to apply knowledge gained.
- 73% planned to use knowledge gained with clients.
- 9% interested in taking the HUD exam.



I took my exam this past Friday and passed! As I was trying to study on my own, I was so overwhelmed by all of the material. I really struggled with how to put the information together in a way that I could remember it.

I appreciated your class because **it broke the information down into manageable sections and helped me understand concepts that I had been struggling with.**

— MICHELLE GOODALE, HOUSING COORDINATOR, IRC

Post-Course Knowledge Assessment Results Confirm Effectiveness



LEVEL 1

Understanding of Basic Knowledge & Facts

- Post-Test Average Result: 77%
- Pre-Test Average: 62%
- Increase of 15%

LEVEL 2

Understanding of Concepts

- Post-Test Average Result: 76%
- Pre-Test Average: 61%
- Increase of 15%

LEVEL 3

Ability to Analyze or Synthesize Information to Make a Decision or Recommendation

- Post-Test Average Result: 73%
- Pre-Test Average: 50%
- Increase of 23%



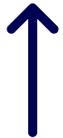
Completing the HUD Certified Housing Counselor Exam Prep Course was a valuable experience. As the Community Integration Facilitator for the City of Grand Forks, I work closely with refugee and ORR-approved clients who often face complex housing challenges. **This course gave me the practical tools, clarity, and confidence to better guide individuals and families through the housing process,** especially in areas like rental readiness, budgeting, credit building, and understanding fair housing rights.

The instruction **was engaging, well-structured, and easy to apply directly to my daily work.** The teacher was fantastic, knowledgeable, patient, and skilled at breaking down complicated material into understandable steps.

I'm grateful for the training, and **I'm already putting what I learned into practice to better support our New American community."**

— HAMZAT KORIKO, PH.D., CIF, CITY OF GRAND FORKS

Key Learnings and Takeaways



Increased the maximum class size from 30 to 100.



Participants will no longer receive their certificates from Thinkific automatically when they complete the course, but instead when they complete the Post-Exam



Ensured welcome material was distributed further in advance prior to the start of the course.



Additional ninth week added to the course for review.



We will offer a remediated class the Monday following the first day of the course for those that missed the first day.



Removed the scheduled optional review session following the first day of class.

How Organizations Can Replicate the HUD Prep Course Model



IDENTIFY AN INSTRUCTOR

- Have a dedicated staff member who will facilitate the course.
- Ensure they are comfortable with the material, preferably a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor.

AUDIENCE

- Who is the class for?
- They can be staff members who provide direct client support or admin/supervisors.
- Is the goal to pass their HUD exams or to gain knowledge?
- Passing the exam is a requirement to for your agency to become an HCA.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

- Decide how long you want each class to be and how many classes per week you want to hold.
- Be aware of busy schedules for staff or make it a mandatory part of their workday to get through the course faster.

DECIDE ON MATERIALS

- HUD has developed training materials on their website.
- A classroom platform will help organize class materials, track student progress, and add additional class work for students to complete.

Course Impact: Now & Future

NOW

- Rebuilt critical HUD knowledge and eligibility expertise.
- Strengthened staff exam readiness and agency capacity.
- Improved housing knowledge expertise.

FUTURE

- Positions agencies for HUD Housing Counseling Agency (HCA) designation.
- Enables access to HUD Housing Counseling funding opportunities.
- Opportunities to improve client outcomes through housing stability
- Additional cohorts



Q&A

*Please write your questions in the chat
or unmute yourself to ask a question.*



Feedback

Please scan the QR code or follow the link in the chat to tell us how we can improve.





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info@refugeehousing.org



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Thank you!

References

- [National Housing Market Indicators \(USHMC\)](#)
- [Office of Refugee Resettlement \(ORR\) | The Administration for Children and Families](#)
- [Rental Vacancy Rate \[2022\]: National Trends & Rates by City \(iproertymanagement.com\)](#)
- [National Apartment Association](#)
- [HUD Housing Counseling](#)

Contact: info@refugeehousing.org

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