

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S PLAN TO DECREASE THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN SHELTER

This winter an extraordinary number of families are seeking homeless services—over 700 families have already been placed in emergency shelter or hotel placements. In response, the Mayor is taking a comprehensive approach that includes partnerships with advocates and providers to help families exit shelter to permanent housing more quickly, steps to ensure that we take advantage of all opportunities to keep families in their communities, emergency legislation to give the District flexibility to prevent shelter placements by supporting more families in community settings, and targeting affordable housing resources to appropriate families.

1. Exit families from shelter to permanent housing more quickly by taking the following steps:

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) is:
 - Hiring 3 additional staff, including a Program Manager, for Rapid Re-Housing, to increase our ability to quickly identify housing units;
 - Expanding Rapid Re-Housing training for housing providers;
 - Expediting unit inspections, to approve units for Rapid Re-Housing and other programs; and
 - Continuing to use our uniform assessment tool to ensure families get the appropriate level of assistance.
- Mayor Gray is calling on landlords, including those that work with the DC Housing Authority (DCHA), who have available units to contact The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP), at 202-543-5298;

2. Ensure that we take advantage of all opportunities to keep families in their communities, by:

- Providing more support to family members and friends who open up their homes to homeless families;
- Increasing the flexibility of unit occupancy rules for public housing during hypothermia season so that tenants in public housing can safely shelter homeless family members without fear of jeopardizing their own housing situation; and
- Co-locating DCHA staff at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center to better leverage appropriate available DCHA resources.

3. Re-introduce Provisional Shelter legislation that improves the family homelessness system, by:

- Giving DHS the authority and flexibility to help families stay in their communities and out of shelter;
- Reconnecting families to alternative housing arrangements quickly, increasing their chances for stability and long-term success; and
- Reducing pressure on the entry point of the family homelessness system.

4. Increase affordable housing resources and target them to the most appropriate families, by:

- Continuing to incentivize and support developers to build affordable units, including those funded by the Mayor's recent \$187M investment in affordable housing; and
- Re-examining how local housing resources are used to most effectively ensure that resources are available for families determined to be most in need, and targeting additional federal rental assistance during 2014 to the chronically homeless.