CHPSPO

Capitol Hill Group Ministry

dc's CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER

Community OF HOPE

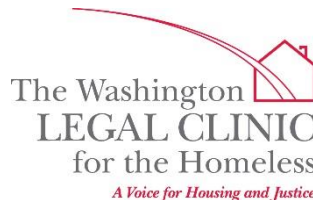CNHED
Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development

DC CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

DASH DISTRICT ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOUSING

DCCoalition
Against Domestic Violence

DC Fiscal Policy Institute

DCAYA

FAIR Girls

FRIEND-SHIP PLACE

fair chance
every child deserves a fair chance to succeed

Helping Families Home:
A Roadmap for the District

Good Faith Communities Coalition

GENERATION HOPE
INVESTING IN A GENERATION OF SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES

The Homeless Children's Playtime Project

JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE

Mary's Center

Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation

miriam's kitchen

OPEN ARMS HOUSING, INC.

WIN
Washington Interfaith Network

Pathways to Housing DC

THC Housing Families, Transforming Lives

The Washington LEGAL CLINIC for the Homeless
A Voice for Housing and Justice

washington regional association of grantmakers
dc md va

April 30, 2014

Helping Families Home: A Roadmap for the District

A high-quality family homelessness system should provide year-round access to decent shelter when it is needed, and sufficient case management and services to help families quickly move from shelter to a safe and stable home. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened for the past several years in DC. Families have been able to enter shelter only when it is cold. Shelter conditions have been deplorable. And many families have been in shelter for too long. The unexpectedly harsh winter DC faced this year brought the crisis of the family homelessness system into sharp focus.

DC started the season with the family shelter system nearly at capacity and then faced an enormous increase in families seeking shelter. This overwhelmed the District's system, and led to the placement of families in motels and then in recreation centers, which were found by the courts to pose the risk of irreparable harm to children. DC also began placing incoming families in shelter only during nights when the temperature was below 32 degrees, even if they had no safe place to go.

Without sufficient planning and funding, the likelihood is high that the crisis will be repeated next year. No one wants that to happen.

This community report serves as roadmap for the District from now until next spring to put DC on a path to a system that serves families appropriately with the goal of quickly connecting families with the right services, including emergency shelter if needed, when they need it, regardless of the time of year. In order to lay that foundation, the report outlines key goals, and the steps needed to achieve those goals, some of which are already in progress.

The roadmap focuses on five key areas for the District to tackle:

- **Safe and adequate emergency shelter for families when they need it.** Families with no safe housing option should be able to access shelter year-round. They should not be forced out when the weather gets above 32 degrees. And they should be sheltered in safe and decent settings. As the District develops a new emergency shelter system, improvements at DC General -- in both the facility and services – are needed to ensure the well-being of vulnerable families with children.

- **A system that quickly connects families with the right services to limit their stay in shelter.** The District should build the capacity needed to assess families, match them with resources, and move families out of shelter within 30 days. This can improve the families' well-being and reduce the risk that shelters will be filled beyond capacity.

- **A robust set of tools to meet the unique needs of each homeless family.** The District needs strong prevention and diversion programs to help families avoid needing emergency shelter. It needs to strengthen Rapid Re-housing — the main tool to move families out of shelter quickly. And it needs to take a closer look on how to better meet the needs of DC's youth-headed households that represent a large share of homeless families.

| Table 2: Funding Necessary to Implement Helping Families Home Roadmap by Program ||
Program	Funding Needed
DHS Permanent Supportive Housing	$598,000: FY 2014 $2,898,000: FY 2015
Rapid Re-housing (also known as Family Re-Housing and Stabilization Program (FRSP)	$5,167,050: FY 2015
Trauma-informed care training for DC General staff.	$5,000: FY 2014 $5,000: FY 2015
10 Family Case Managers for DC General	$500,000: FY 2015
New Prevention Program aimed at families most likely to enter shelter	$300,000: FY 2014 $2,000,000: FY 2015 (1-time funding possible)
New Mediation Center at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center	$16,000: FY 2014 (1-time) $555,000: FY 2015
Local Rent Supplement Program (tenant-based)	$600,000: FY 2014 $4,600,000: FY 2015 (at least)
Shelter families until alternative housing can be identified	$2,106,000: FY 2015
TOTAL	**$1,519,000: FY 2014 $17,831,050: FY 2015**

- **Affordable housing for families.** Efforts to move families out of shelter need to be coupled with investments in affordable housing. The shortage of low-cost housing is a key contributor to homelessness, and families will have an easier time ending their homelessness if they can find housing that is affordable.

- **Improved data on performance, budgeting, and spending.** Today, policymakers and the public have limited information from DC on the performance of the family homelessness system, on how funding is allocated and spent, and on the division of responsibilities between DHS and its main contractor, the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness. This makes it difficult to assess the changes needed to create a well-functioning system.

Importantly, this roadmap identifies the funding needed in the fiscal year (FY) 2014 and FY 2015 budgets to achieve these goals. When all resources available in FY 2014 are considered, the FY 2015 budget for homeless families represents a decrease of $11 million, or 20 percent from the FY 2014 adjusted budget, after adjusting for inflation.

By next spring, the community believes that the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which has just hired its first executive director, will have had time to make necessary internal reforms and begin creating a long term plan for the family homelessness system to pick up where this report leaves off.

Over the next year, DC has the capability to make major improvements to the family homelessness system. This roadmap provides a guide for where the energy and resources should be focused to help DC avoid repeating the crisis of last winter.

Helping Families Home: A Roadmap for the District

A high-quality family homelessness system should provide year-round access to decent shelter when it is needed, and sufficient case management and services to help families quickly move from shelter to a safe and stable home. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened for the past several years in DC. Families have been able to enter shelter only when it is cold. Shelter conditions have been deplorable. And many families have been in shelter for too long. The unexpectedly harsh winter DC faced this year brought the crisis of the family homelessness system into sharp focus.

No one wants to repeat the crisis from last winter that led to families being placed in recreation centers, which the courts found led to irreparable harm to children, and only on nights when it was below 32 degrees. Yet without sufficient planning and funding, the likelihood is high that the crisis will be repeated next year. This community report serves as roadmap for the District from now until next spring to put DC on a path to a system that serves families appropriately with the goal of quickly connecting families with the right services, including emergency shelter if needed, when they need it, regardless of the time of year. In order to lay that foundation, the report outlines 10 key goals, and the steps needed to achieve those goals, some of which are already in progress by the District. (See **Table 1.**)

The goals focus on access to safe and adequate emergency shelter when families need it and quick assessment, connection to services, and moves out of shelter. They also focus on developing and strengthening a robust set of tools to help meet the unique needs of each homeless family and the need for more affordable housing targeted to families. Finally the goals focus on the need for better data on performance, budgeting and spending within the family homelessness system.

Table 1: Goals for DC's Family Homelessness System
Goal 1: All Families Currently in Shelter Should Be Moved Into Safe Housing Before November 1st.
Goal 2: Improved Case Management and Services at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center and DC General.
Goal 3: Develop new and strengthen existing prevention and diversion efforts.
Goal 4: Explore ways to improve assistance for youth-headed households.
Goal 5: Shelter all families safely until alternative housing can be identified.
Goal 6: Ensure DHS has sufficient resources to deploy any of its tools to end a family's homelessness in a timely manner.
Goal 7: Strengthen Rapid Re-housing.
Goal 8: Better data reporting on performance measures, budgeting and planning, and spending.
Goal 9: Create affordable housing that meets families' needs.
Goal 10: Plan for new family homelessness shelters in DC.

Importantly, this roadmap identifies the funding needed in the fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015 budgets to achieve these goals. (See **Table 2**.) Ultimately, when all resources

available in FY 2014 are considered, the FY 2015 budget for homeless families represents a decrease of $11 million, or 20 percent from the FY 2014 adjusted budget, after adjusting for inflation.[1]

By next spring, the community believes that the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which has just hired its first executive director, will have had time to make necessary internal reforms and begin creating a long term plan for the family homelessness system to pick up where this report leaves off.

Table 2: Funding Necessary to Implement Helping Families Home Roadmap by Program	
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TOTAL	**$1,519,000: FY 2014 $17,831,050: FY 2015**

Over the next year, DC has the capability to make major improvements to the family homelessness system. This roadmap provides a guide for where the energy and resources should be focused to help DC avoid repeating the crisis last winter.

[1] In FY 2014 DHS was able to identify $9 million in federal carryover funding to use for FY 2014 homeless family services that is not reflected in the FY 2014 approved budget.
[2] It assumed that the FY 2014 funding will be one-time funding, meaning the FY 2014 amount is added to the FY 2015 amount to ensure the families served in FY 2014 will continue to be served moving forward.

Goal 1: All Families Currently in Shelter Should Be Moved Into Safe Housing Before November 1st.

The main shelter for families, DC General, was nearly full at the start of hypothermia season. This led the city to place families in motels almost immediately after the cold weather hit. Having capacity at DC General both before, and throughout, hypothermia season is critical to ensuring the system does not become overwhelmed. Several steps, some of which are already in progress, are needed to achieve this:

Goal 1a: Put in place an ongoing plan to identify units and increase capacity to achieve 100 exits per month from shelter. DC is now undertaking an effort to identify 500 units for families in 100 days. This effort should be followed by an ongoing plan to be able to move at least 100 families out of shelter every month, rather than a time-limited emergency response. During last winter, as many as 261 families entered shelter in one month.

Key Programs the Department of Human Services Can Utilize to Help Exit Families from Homelessness:

Emergency Rental Assistance: ERAP offers one-time assistance for a security deposit and first month's rent, or can help pay rent in arrears if a family is facing an eviction.

Rapid Re-housing: RRH offers rental assistance and case management services for up to four months. Assistance can be extended by additional four month periods for up to 12 months, or longer in some instances.

Permanent Supportive Housing: PSH offers case management services and rental assistance permanently. PSH is designed for chronically homeless residents or those who face severe barriers to housing stability.

Local Rent Supplement Program: LRSP offers rental assistance for families with very low-incomes.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Not for planning and identifying units. Additional funds are needed to ensure DC has sufficient resources to move families out; see Goal #6.

Timeline and status? This is partially underway. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP) have just begun the 500 families 100 days campaign which should inform their ability to move 100 families out per month.[3] DHS and TCP need to release their ongoing plan to identify units and achieve 100 exits per month by September 1st.

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3 The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (TCP) is responsible for centralizing data on these units, inspections and lease ups.

Goal 1b: Use all resources available this year to move families into permanent supportive housing. Some homeless families face serious enough problems to need permanent supportive housing. The DC Housing Authority made available up to 113 federal housing choice vouchers to DHS to use to help address the crisis. DHS indicates it plans to use them for families that need permanent supportive housing. DHS will need to identify case management funds for these families. Given the number of families requiring PSH and the critical needs these families face, moving them out of shelter and into PSH should be a top priority.

Additional funding in the FY 2014/2015 budget needed? Yes, $598,000 needed in FY 2014 and FY 2015 for supportive services but those costs could rise depending on how many additional families are assessed as needing PSH. It is estimated that DHS currently has services funding for up to 67 families, but will need more service funds to use all 113 Housing Choice Vouchers for PSH to meet this need.[4]

Timeline and status? In progress. DHS has begun meeting one-on-one with families to help the complete their DCHA applications. This will ensure that applications are correctly completed and should speed up the lease up process.

Goal 1c: Hire additional staff to build capacity in the Rapid Re-housing program. RRH is the main program to move families out of shelter. Yet until recently, it had no dedicated staff at either DHS or TCP. A program manager started in mid-April at DHS, yet the agency states it needs three staff to build sufficient capacity as well as staff at TCP to manage certain program aspects such as unit identification and the assignment of families to providers after their assessments.

Additional funding in the FY 2014 & FY 2015 budget needed? Unclear.

Timeline and status? Not started. DHS has not indicated when the other hires might be made. Hires need to be in place by September 1st.

Goal 1d: Ensure appropriate matching of housing and services with the assessed needs of families within 30 days. This is a goal that all jurisdictions will soon be measured on under the federal HEARTH Act. To accomplish this, the District will need to set clear roles of the key partners: DHS, TCP, and contracted service providers.

Additional funding in the FY 2014 budget needed? Not for planning. Funds will be needed in the FY 2015 budget to ensure DC has the appropriate amount of resources to move families out into housing. See Goal #6.

Timeline and status? Not started. DHS should complete planning and ensure resources are in place by October 1st.

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[4] The Interagency Council on Homelessness PSH Production Plan estimates a service cost of $13,000/family.

Goal 2: Improved Case Management and Services at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center and DC General. While no one wants DC General to be the primary family shelter, the reality is that it will need to be used for several years until a replacement shelter system is ready. Given the number of families that stay there, it is important to invest in improved case management and services.

Goal 2a: Monitor and collect information on case management and services. Right now, there is little available information on case management and services for children and adults. Information on the following can help identify possible gaps:
- Services available on-site and frequency for children
- Services available on-site and frequency for adults
- Referrals to outside services for children (by type of service)
- Referrals to outside services for adults (by type of service)
- Staff trainings offered and frequency (by type of training and by type of staff)
- Ratio of case managers to families

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? No. This information should be available to be collected.
Timeline and status? Not started. The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, the organization that manages DC General, should collect and produce this information on a monthly basis starting in June.

Goal 2b: Make improvements to improve the quality of life at DC General before it closes.
- A special trauma-informed care training should be required for all staff in light of Relisha Rudd's abduction. Trauma-informed care training should be required for all incoming staff.
- Unused space on the lobby level should be made available to nonprofits to provide play space and family programming. Providers have secured private funding to make any needed improvements—they just need DC to make the rooms available and ensure the electricity works.
- Hire at least 10 licensed social workers. Eight should be family case managers who create a case plan for each child. One should be an Educational Advocate to address attendance and other educational needs. One should be an Early Intervention Specialist to ensure all young children receive developmental assessments and are enrolled in preschool or child care.
- Allow the construction of an outdoor play space. Private funding has been secured to build a playground at DC General. DC just needs to give its permission.

Goal 2c: Publish a protocol of operations for the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center, including case management ratios, to have a better understanding of what happens at the site. Publishing a protocol would improve the transparency of the intake and screening process for homeless families and this in turn would help identify needed improvements. Additionally, DHS reported that the number of families seeking shelter overwhelmed case managers this winter. The protocol should outline appropriate case management ratios.

Goal 2d: Conduct an audit of operations at Virginia Williams and DC General to inspect if policies and procedures are being followed accordingly. Given the significant number of vulnerable families at these facilities, the DC Council should ask the DC Auditor for program audits of the two facilities to ensure that policies and procedures are being properly followed.

Goal 3: Develop new and strengthen existing prevention and diversion efforts. While shelter is better for families than sleeping in cars or other unsafe locations, research has consistently found that parent and child wellbeing decline while a family is in shelter. The District can help families avoid homelessness through emergency financial assistance and can connect homeless families with friends or family with whom they can share housing. The District needs to strengthen its existing prevention and diversion efforts, and it should adopt effective models from other communities. These programs will require new investments, but given the current cost of shelter, $150 per night, these programs will lead to cost savings over time.

> **Goal 3a: Develop new prevention program for families most likely to become homeless.** Jurisdictions around the country, including New York City and Massachusetts, have identified the characteristics of families most likely to enter shelter and designed prevention programs that provide case management and financial assistance to these families. In New York, those provided with prevention assistance were half as likely to apply for shelter as a control group of families not provided with assistance.

Additional funding in the FY 2014/FY 2015 budget needed? Yes. Two million dollars is needed to launch this effort is as a pilot. Identifying $300,000 in FY 2014 would be ideal as it would allow the program to start in September so that it is fully up and running by November 1st.

Timeline and status? Partially underway. DHS reports that it has set aside Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP) specifically for families seeking assistance at the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center. The Interagency Council on Homelessness Operations and Logistics Subcommittee have met twice to discuss program design. Demographic data on families entering shelter is needed from The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness. Program design should be completed by August 1st so that the program could begin on September 1st.

> **Goal 3b: Review and Strengthen DC's Emergency Rental Assistance program (ERAP).** Emergency Rental Assistance can help prevent homelessness by providing one-time financial assistance for a security deposit and first month's rent, or can help pay rent in arrears if a family is facing an eviction. However, in some instances the length of time between application and receipt of payment check has resulted in a family's eviction. A review of the regulations and how closely they are being followed should be conducted.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? No. Only a program review is needed and can be conducted by DHS and/or TCP staff.

Timeline and status? Not started. A review should be started over the summer and completed by October 1st to ensure any necessary changes can be made before hypothermia season begins.

Goal 3c: Create new mediation center at the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center to help families explore safe alternatives to shelter. Trained mediators can help families explore possibilities to reconnect with relatives and friends while recognizing the need to avoid situations that pose a risk for domestic violence or other health or safety concerns. These alternatives may be temporary or permanent. For temporary situations, families need to be able to access Rapid Re-housing or Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP) within the agreed upon time period.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Yes. Between $375,000 and $555,000 is needed for training from the staff at the Cleveland Mediation Center and four to six mediation staff. Training costs, approximately $16,000, could be funded with one-time funding. Identifying FY 2014 funding to start training mid-summer and to hire mediators by late summer would be ideal.
Timeline and status? Not started. The Cleveland Mediation Center is available to do a training in the summer, which could be combined with Arlington County, which recently expressed a similar interest. DC should complete training and hiring of mediators by October 1st in order to have the program launch by November 1st.

Goal 3d: Expand on the Alternatives to Landlord/Tenant Court program to non-elderly families living in DC Housing Authority housing. DCHA and other subsidized and private housing providers actively refer vulnerable elders to Legal Counsel for the Elderly's Alternatives to Landlord Tenant Court Project, a preventive, holistic eviction prevention model. The Alternatives Project provides social work assessment and advocacy to vulnerable adults and links them ultimately with Office on Aging case management services and legal services to prevent eviction long term. The District should ensure adequate funding for DCHA's preventive outreach and reasonable accommodations, and of community supports for all age groups to mitigate the emotional and fiscal costs of eviction.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Yes. Funding will be needed for case management and supportive services but it is unclear what is needed at this time.
Timeline and status? Not started. DCHA should aim to have this program in place by November 1st.

Goal 4: Explore ways to improve assistance for youth-headed households. Forty-eight percent of families in shelter this past winter were headed by a parent 24 years old or younger. Meeting the needs of youth-headed households will be key in preventing another homelessness crisis and in putting young families on a path to success.

> **Goal 4a: Explore potential program improvements to better meet the needs of youth.** Most of the youth seeking shelter have never had their own home, and many lack a high school diploma or GED and do not have significant work experience. Some may have aged out of foster care, so they lack familial support systems. These youth may need particular supports to maintain their own housing, requiring adjustments to Rapid Re-housing, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing programs. Youth-headed household outcome data for all programs should be reviewed before considering program improvements. Additionally, all other aspects of the system, from the assessment tool to case management at the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center and DC General Shelter should be reviewed for their age appropriateness.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Not at this time. Modifications to Rapid Re-housing services may require additional funding. Current transitional housing resources could possibly be targeted specifically to youth without additional funding.

Timeline and status? Partially underway. A workgroup has been meeting and has requested Rapid Re-housing outcome data for youth-headed households from The Community Partnership. Recommendations for a new youth program should be completed by August 1st with the goal implementing the changes during the fall of 2014.

Goal 5: Shelter all families safely until alternative housing can be identified. Mid-hypothermia season this year, the District placed families in recreation centers, which courts have deemed to pose significant risks of harm to children and a violation of the Homeless Services Reform Act. Additionally, the District started sheltering families for just one night at a time and only on hypothermic nights, ending the long standing practice of sheltering families until they found alternative housing. Families were forced to reapply for shelter each day at Virginia Williams, which interfered with their ability to work, look for work, search for housing, and participate in job training.

> **Goal 5a: Pass legislation clarifying the definition of a private room to exclude partitioned spaces.** The proposed *Dignity for Homeless Families Amendment Act of 2014* defines a private room as consisting of four walls, a ceiling, a door that locks and lighting that can be adjusted by the occupant. It also requires families to have access to hot shower facilities.

> **Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed?** Yes, very likely. See Goal 5b.
> **Timeline and status?** In progress. A hearing is to be scheduled shortly. Legislation needs to be passed before hypothermia season begins.

> **Goal 5b: Pass legislation clarifying that all families placed in shelter on a hypothermic night should be permitted to remain until they find alternate safe shelter or housing.**

> **Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed?** Yes, $2.1 million to provide safe, shelter to Priority 1 families until they identify alternative housing.[5]
> **Timeline and status?** In progress. This provision could be added to the *Dignity for Homeless Families Amendment Act of 2014*. Legislation needs to be passed before hypothermia season begins.

> **Goal 5c: Identify contingency plans for how the District will shelter families safely if need is high next year.** The District did not include contingency plans in the FY 2014 Winter Plan despite concerns expressed by the DHS Director that there might not be a sufficient number of motel rooms to shelter all families in need. This year's Winter Plan needs to include plans to monitor exits from shelter and contingency plans such as repurposing an unused building, leasing a block of apartments through Cherry Blossom season or master leasing apartments to use as shelter (families can transition in place if they would like to) as Los Angeles does.

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[5] Based on available data, we estimate 156 Priority 1 families sought shelter after January 30th and thus were placed for only one night. We assume each of these families will be placed into shelter in FY 2015 at a cost of $150/night and will spend 90 nights in shelter. While DHS's goal is to exit families within 30 to 60 days, we used 90 days to provide an adequate cushion in case they are unable to meet this goal.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Possibly. As noted the proposed FY 2015 budget for family homelessness is $11 million lower than FY 2014 resources.[6]
 Timeline and status? In progress. Winter Planning has started this week and the Plan will be presented for an Interagency Council on Homelessness vote in August.

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[6] This reflects the $9 million in federal carryover funding available for use for FY 2014 homeless family services. As stated earlier, it is unlikely there will be significant carryover dollars available for FY 2015.

Goal 6: Ensure DHS has sufficient resources to deploy any of its tools to end a family's homelessness in a timely manner. Many times in the past, DHS has not had sufficient funding for all homelessness programs at a particular time. This has meant that families were not put into the best program to meet their needs because there were no openings in that program. For next year, the District should allocate enough resources in the FY 2015 budget based on estimated need, and then both DHS and TCP should take the steps needed to ensure that resources can be deployed quickly when needed. If another surge in families occurs next year, there needs to be an immediate review of whether there are sufficient slots in each program and if funding needs to be reprogrammed. There also needs to be greater clarity on the division of responsibilities between DHS and TCP in implementation.

This past year, there were delays in placing families because there were no available Rapid Re-housing slots. Once DHS decides to contract for new slots, it takes several steps and much time before the slots can be utilized. First the money needs to be transferred to TCP and then from TCP to Rapid Re-housing providers. Then, many providers need to hire additional staff to support the new slots.

> **Goal 6a: Develop estimates of how many slots are needed in each program.** Preliminary data from FY 2014 show that approximately 825 families entered shelter or were deemed Priority 1, meaning that they had no safe place to stay. Based on recent assessments of 700 families using the Service Prioritization Decision Analysis Tool (SPDAT),[7] the following are likely to be needed:
> - Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP): 10 to 12 percent of incoming families; between 83 and 99 slots
> - Rapid Re-housing: 80 to 85 percent of incoming families; between 660 and 701 slots
> - Permanent Supportive Housing: 8 to 10 percent of incoming families; between 66 and 83 slots
>
> In addition, DHS has also indicated the need for tenant-based Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP) rental assistance to help families, such as those who are struggling in Rapid Re-housing or no longer need the intensive services of PSH but still need affordable housing. Based on data available from DHS an estimated 115 rental subsidies could be used in FY 2015 and 40 in FY 2014. Also, DHS could use some of the targeted LRSP to help some families exit from transitional housing units that will be converted to either permanent supportive housing or Rapid Re-housing in the near future.

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[7] The Service Prioritization Decision Analysis Tool (SPDAT) is a validated, verified assessment tool used in more than 100 communities to assess the acuity of need and the resulting level of support services that a family needs to be successful in housing. As the SPDAT is focused on measuring the level of services a family needs, the tool does not include affordable housing programs that do not incorporate services as options.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Yes. Based on current data, we estimate the following:

- Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP): None needed, assuming that DHS is able to set aside needed funding for incoming families from the proposed $8.3 million budget.
- Rapid Re-housing (RRH): $5.2 million for 259 new RRH slots.[8]
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): $2.3 million for 77 families.[9]
- Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP): $600,000 in FY 2014 for 40 families, $1.73 million in FY 2015 for 115 families.[10]

Timeline and status? Partially underway. DHS is in the process of developing some of these estimates. If funding were made available, DHS could begin to use the LRSP vouchers this summer.

Goal 6b: Develop estimates of program exits anticipated in each program.
The number of new slots needed for Rapid Re-housing and PSH is dependent on the number of families currently in the program who are anticipated to exit over the next year. For instance, families leasing up through the 500 Families, 100 Days Initiative will be beginning their Rapid Re-housing period from April through the summer. Data provided from DHS indicates that in 2013 families exited Rapid Re-housing on average in 10.5 months.[11]

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? No, this data is already being collected by The Community Partnership and DHS.
Timeline and status? Partially underway. DHS reported at its budget briefing that it is currently completing a matrix tracking RRH exits. A request for PSH exit data has been submitted to DHS.

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[8] DHS reports that there are 600 existing RRH slots and 500 slots to be added during the *500 Families, 100 Days* initiative. We (conservatively) assume that none of the new 500 slots will be available until after the FY15 hypothermia since families will be starting their RRH period in April at the earliest. DHS reports an average of 40 exits per month. Some of these slots may be needed for families currently in shelter as there were 672 families in shelter as of April 1st, the launch of the *500 Families* campaign. Setting those aside, we estimate that 442 slots will be available for incoming families.

[9] PSH turnover data is estimated using DHS PSHP Attrition Report provided to the Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations (COHHO) in December 2013. The average family exit rate from FY 2011 to FY 2013 was 2.3%. From this data, we estimate 6 turnover PSH slots in FY 2015.

[10] The FY 2014 and FY 2015 budgets do not include any additional tenant-based LRSP tenant based funds for DHS. The FY 2014 budget does contain additional tenant based LRSP assistance, just not directed toward DHS.

[11] If this data is representative of the entire system, we can anticipate that most of the Rapid Re-housing slots filled during 500 Families will not be available until after next year's hypothermia.

Goal 7: Strengthen Rapid Re-housing. Rapid Re-housing is DC's main tool to help families end their homelessness. It provides a minimum of four months of rental assistance and supportive services, which can be renewed for up to 12 months, or longer in some instances. However, there is a lack of data about the performance of the program and concern that all providers are not implementing the program in the same way. Several steps, some of which are already in progress, could help strengthen this program:

Goal 7a: Require that providers of Rapid Re-housing receive training. Being a new program, some providers are unclear or unfamiliar with how Rapid Re-housing works.

Additional funding in the FY 2014 budget needed? No. A training outlined for DC by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) is estimated to cost $43,000 in FY 2014 and DHS reports that it has sufficient funding to cover the cost.
Timeline and status? In progress. DHS reports training will begin at the end of May.

Goal 7b: Finalize Rapid Re-housing regulations and include proper protections for families. Rapid Re-housing has operated under emergency regulations since its inception and those are now expired. The regulations address important details such as how much of one's income a family will pay toward rent and the length of the program subsidy. It is important that families are not required to pay more than 40 percent of their income on rent and that the subsidy can be extended beyond 12 months if the family is not ready to exit.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? No. Final draft regulations should be submitted for public comment in May.
Timeline and status? In progress. DHS reports that final draft regulations are underway.

Goal 7c: Explore ways for families to easily reengage if they fall into trouble after leaving Rapid Re-housing. Families may face challenges when Rapid Re-housing ends. DC should explore possibilities which might require new staffing or contract modifications that would allow providers to offer follow up case management and/or rental assistance. For example, in Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Rapid Re-housing program, clients are allowed to return to their provider for additional case management and rental assistance if they fall on hard times. Or perhaps there could be dedicated staff at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center from whom families could easily obtain assistance.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Likely. Unclear what cost would be at this stage, but is likely to have impact on contract costs for current providers.
Timeline and status? Partially underway. DHS has included exploring best practices around reengagement as one of the topics for the NAEH training that begins in May. Based on the outcomes of this exploration, DC should release cost estimates by October 1st and the mayor and Council should work together on a reprogramming to cover costs for FY 2015.

Goal 7d: Have better data collection of program outcomes across providers, which is available in a timely way to help track where improvements might be needed. Currently, DC does not produce consistent, reliable and timely data on Rapid Re-housing program outcomes. This data resides in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) maintained by TCP. TCP may need to build up the capacity for regular reporting or allow access to DHS to ensure that reports can be provided in a timely manner. The data that needs to be collected is contained in Goal #8 which reviews performance measures that should be collected for the entire system.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? No. DC would need to work with TCP to ensure there are appropriate fields within HMIS for collection of data and to ensure the timely and accurate reporting of data.
Timeline and status? In progress. Reports are said to be available in April. Small changes can be made to data collection and reports to reflect requested measures should be completed and published in a timely way by the end of May.

Goal 7e: Invest in a longitudinal study of families in the Rapid Re-housing program to look at long-term outcomes. Currently, there are many questions about the long-term stability of families once they leave the Rapid Re-housing program and providers do not have the resources to track families beyond a four to six-month follow-up period. Investment in a longitudinal study of a representative sample of families can track long-term outcomes for families and those results can be used to help inform ways to strengthen the program.

Additional funding in the FY 2015 budget needed? Yes. DC would need to issue a request for proposals to commission the study.
Timeline and status? Not started. Funding could be included in the FY 2015 budget so that planning and design of the RFP could be completed by December with an award made by early spring.

Goal 8: Better data reporting on performance measures, budgeting and planning, and spending. There is not consistent and reliable information from DC on the performance of the family homelessness system. There is also little information on how funding is spent or allocated within the homeless services system or who is responsible for which part of the family homelessness system, in part because DHS contracts out much of the homeless services to The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness. TCP does not provide public information on how those funds are spent. TCP also controls the performance data in the HMIS system.

Performance measures to track on a monthly basis include:
- Number of exits from shelter into:
    - Rapid Re-housing (RRH)
    - Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
    - Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP)
    - Transitional Housing
    - Shared Housing with Family or Friends
    - Long-term affordable housing program such as LRSP, public housing, or nonprofit program
    - Other/Unknown
- Median length of stay in shelter since entering
- Apartments for families to move into
    - Number of units identified
    - Number of units pre-certified, if any
    - Number of inspections
    - Median length of time from unit identification to inspections
- Assessments of Family Needs
    - Number
    - Median time between entrance into shelter and assessment completion.
- Number of families entering shelter that have been in shelter in the:
    - Past year
    - Two to Three years
    - Four years ago or more
    - What kind of assistance, if any, was provided to exit from the previous shelter stay.
- Number and type of service referrals made for shelter families and the number of referrals leading to the client accessing services.
- How many families staying in emergency shelter are also included on the DCHA waitlist for affordable housing.
- For permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and Rapid Re-housing:
    - total number of families in program,
    - number of families exiting,

- where the families are exiting to (market rate housing, subsidized housing, abandoned unit, evicted, and unknown)
- number of families returning to or reapplying for shelter
- median length of stay in program
- number of families that increased their income at program exit, if applicable[12]
- median and percent increase in income at program exit, if applicable[12]
- number of families able to afford rent independently upon program exit, if applicable[12]

Budget information to be provided annually include:
- Estimate of incoming families used in formulating the budget.
- New slots for Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP), Rapid Re-housing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP).
- Estimates of quarterly turnover in existing RRH & PSH slots.
- Average annual cost per family for ERAP, RRH, and PSH.

Program responsibility within the family homelessness system to be provided includes:
- Functions within the system that TCP has responsibility for and which division within TCP is responsible
- Functions within the system that DHS has responsibility for and which division within DHS is responsible

Additional funding needed in the FY 2015 budget? No, DC would need to work with providers to ensure timely and accurate collection of data.
Timeline and status? Partially underway. DHS is working to gather some of this data. This data should be available by June 1st to ensure it can be used in Winter Planning

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[12] Families can "exit" PSH because they no longer need the intensive support services. But many still need affordable housing so they retain their rental subsidy. Additionally, some PSH households have significant disabilities that prevent them from working. These three measures should only be applied to families with goals of increasing income and paying rent independently.

Goal 9: Create affordable housing that meets families' needs. Efforts to move families out of shelter quickly need to be coupled with investments in long-term affordable housing. The shortage of low-cost housing is a key contributor to homelessness, and families will have an easier time exiting homelessness if they can find housing that is affordable. This should include:

> **Goal 9a: Increased funding for the tenant based rental assistance.** The Local Rent Supplement Program (LRSP) makes homes affordable to residents with very low-incomes. The District can direct a portion of its rental assistance to DHS to assist families with demonstrated need, based on an assessment. (See Goal #6.) The remainder should help families who have identified the need for affordable housing through the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) waitlist, which is current practice.

> **Additional funding needed in the FY 2014 /FY 2015 budget?** Yes, the FY 2015 budget does not include any additional LRSP tenant based funds. DC should invest at least $4 million in tenant-based vouchers in FY 2015 to help meet the high need for affordable housing for very low-income families. This would serve 266 families. **Timeline and status?** If funding were included in the FY 2015 budget, DCHA could begin to house families from the waitlist as soon as October 2014.

> **Goal 9b: Continue to target and increase production of affordable housing units that accommodate families.** The Department of Housing and Community Development awards grants and loans to support the production, preservation and renovation of affordable housing. The most recent request for proposals from DHCD, issued in April 2014, contains preferences for family oriented units (for example, those with three or more bedrooms). Going forward, DC should continue to include a preference for affordable housing developments that are geared towards serving families and include large enough units to accommodate families.

> **Additional funding needed in the FY 2015 budget?** If there is adequate funding for production, no additional funds would be required to provide a preference for families. **Timeline and status?** In process. Conversations with DHCD should happen over the summer in time for the next RFP that will be released, sometime in the fall.

Goal 10: Plan for new family homelessness shelters in DC. DC's main family shelter, DC General, is rundown but the District is not in a position to tear it down before ensuring other emergency shelter is available to serve families year-round. DC should use proposed funding in the FY 2015 budget to investigate opportunities to develop alternative family shelters, such as repurposing units now used as temporary shelter or transitional housing or by developing apartment-style shelter units in small buildings throughout the District.

Additional funding needed in the FY 2015 budget? No. $500,000 is already proposed for this purpose in the mayor's FY 2015 Department of General Services budget.

Timeline and status? Not started. DC should begin planning for the new shelter system on October 1 and have planning completed by early February in order to have a new request placed in the FY 2016 budget

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