



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog
www.dcfpi.org

April 30, 2014

Helping Families Home: A Roadmap for the District

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Today, 20 organizations, including DCFPI, are releasing [a roadmap](#) to put the District on a path toward a high-quality family homelessness system. That means providing 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.

This, unfortunately, hasn't been the case in DC for the past several years. 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, when some families were placed in recreation centers -- which the courts found could lead 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.

The community's Helping Families Home roadmap lays out key goals and the steps needed to achieve them, some of which are already in progress by the District. The roadmap focuses on five key areas:

- Safe and adequate emergency shelter for families when they need it.
- A system that quickly connects families with the right services to limit their stay in shelter.
- A robust set of tools to meet the unique needs of each homeless family.
- Affordable housing for families.
- Improved data on performance, budgeting, and spending.

Importantly, this roadmap identifies the funding needed 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, 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. That should allow it to begin creating a long-term plan for the family homelessness system, picking up where this roadmap leaves off.

Over the next year, DC has the capability to make major improvements to its family homelessness system. We hope this roadmap contributes to efforts to help all families find a safe and stable home.

To read the complete report, click [here](#).