



Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program (FRSP) Task Force
Customer Planning Meeting
December 06, 2019
DHS Headquarters
64 New York Ave, NE, Sixth Floor

Attendees:

Kimberly Harris	Customer Representative
Shauna Gray	Customer Representative
Travonna Brooks	Customer Representative
Shonta Jones	Customer Representative
Uchenna Egenti	Customer Representative
Yvette Monet	Customer Representative
Samirra Robinson	Customer Representative
Christy Evans	DHS
Nancy Blackwell	DHS
Noah Abraham	DHS
Lorraine Nawoka	DHS
Barbara Poppe	Facilitator

Welcome and introductions

Noah Abraham opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and addressing the purpose of the planning session. The meeting was called to receive additional feedback from customers on items DHS identified during the feasibility study.

Barbara Poppe, Consultant and Facilitator, provided the following list of questions for discussion purposes:

Customer Planning Meeting: 10:00 am-1:00PM

1. FRSP TANF Model : Case Management Assignment

Summary: Families in the FRSP TANF program model will be assigned to a TEP case manager and a housing case manager. The task force recommendation analysis identified the following:

- Current rate of participation with the TEP vendors has been low.
- There are areas of duplication of efforts between TEP and FRSP case managers (addressing the families' barriers and providing 2 Generational case management)

- Once assigned to a TEP vendor, if families are not engaged with a TEP vendor for consecutive four weeks they will be removed from the provider's case management list. Hence, families could remain in FRSP without a TEP case manager.
- An alternative approach could be having one provider that can provide both employment and housing case management services. ESA and FSA will work together to draft performance requirement that can address the above gaps. This will:
 - Help avoid the duplication of efforts
 - Be convenient for families to access services from one site
 - Enhance program participation

Discussion Question: Which case management assignment model would you prefer? Why?

Customers provided the following feedback:

- Challenges with the current model:
 - Case managers are not providing quality of services.
 - No oversight of case management. Case managers are not being supervised.
 - Current model is not preferred based on client engagement or case coordination.
 - Families are not being assigned to a case manager at FRSP lease up. Families are currently waiting at least 90 days before being assigned a case manager.
- Having one provider:
 - Customers overwhelmingly preferred having one provider that provides housing and employment services.
 - It would be more convenient for families to engage and receive services from one provider than two.
 - The model could result in better outcome with client engagement.
 - Having a direct DHS oversight will ensure quality service provision as providers will be held accountable.

2. FRSP TANF Model: Program Length of Stay

Summary: The FRSP TANF model recommended assessing families while in shelter to determine the program length of stay to 12/24/36 months. The task force recommendation analysis identified the following:

- The selection criteria are mostly based on barriers
- It does not take into account the dynamic nature of family circumstances
- It does not include a pathway to achieving milestones to increase income and sustain housing
- An alternative approach could be approving all families to 12 month housing subsidy and:
 - Connect families to employment and educational services within the first 3 months;
 - Work with the family to create a career pathway that would help increase income and sustain the housing;
 - Depending the career pathways families have chosen, provide extension that meets the time requirement to achieve the milestone.

- For example if a family is enrolled in a two years training program and needs one more year to complete the training, they will be approved for an additional year program extension.
- This model is aligned to DHS's strength based service delivery model and will help establish accountability.

Discussion Question: Which program model would you prefer? Why?

- Customers provided the following feedback:
 - FRSP TANF model with a pathway to achieving milestones is preferred based on barrier/goals.
 - Receive an initial 12 month subsidy term.
 - Develop a plan to address barriers and goals of client at entry.
 - At 6 months assess if the family is making progress towards goals.
 - At 9 months make a final extension determination. This will give enough time for the family to identify alternative housing plan or appeal the decision.
 - Must show progress on initial goals to apply for an extension.
 - In order for this approach to work, quality case management support is required.
 - Client goals and family/child needs may change over time. DHS must allow the possibility for families to adjust their goals. However, family must demonstrate interest in the new goal by taking steps towards the new goals at time of recertification.
 - Families can incur health problems during the first 12 months while in the program. Extension requests must take into account family health and other barriers that prevent families from moving forward.
 - Extensions must take into account customers who obtained job stability but not earning enough to pay market rent.

3. FRSP TANF Model: Pilot Combined Benefit Model

Summary: The current public benefit programs have inconsistent eligibility criteria and operate separately and without consideration for household needs and costs of living. The result is that households experience penalties to increasing earned income, which impedes career development and attaining family sustaining employment. An increase in income results in fewer net resources in households. In addition, FRSP only provides short term rental subsidy (12-18 months). As a result, families in FRSP and similar public benefit programs trade off long-term career opportunities with short-term, minimum wage employment opportunities – impeding meaningful pathways to the middle class.

DHS is exploring the possibility of piloting a Combined Benefit Model for families who are engaged in long term career development programs (2-4 years) to increase their income above the minimum wage and sustain their housing.

Discussion Question:

- Do you think this will help families achieve long term plans?

- Customers provided the following feedback:
 - Customers overwhelmingly agree providing such support will allow families the opportunity to achieve meaningful career goals.
- What advantages and disadvantages do you see from your perspective?
 - There could be a possibility for misuse.
 - DHS must have strong accountability of program and client progress needs.
 - DHS must specify training and expertise of case managers and strong standards for services.
 - DHS needs to provide quality training to providers to address range of needs and barriers.
- What do you think should be the eligibility criteria for enrollment and recertification?
 - Eligibility should be based on client's career path and goals at enrollment and recertification.
 - DHS should provide clear eligibility criteria for the program and if more families apply more than available slots, enrollment should be on random lottery.
 - Families must be enrolled in TEP services at intake to FRSP program.

4. Program Improvement: Accountability

Summary: One of the recommendations from the task force is providing quality services and accountability. To achieve these, DHS plans to establish an advisory board composed of DHS FSA & ESA, families, and providers to listen to concerns, assess the quality of services provided, establish accountability and produce yearly reports.

Discussion Question:

- Do you think this will help achieve quality and accountability?
 - Customers agree that this will help with achieving quality and accountability.
- If not, what other recommendations do you have?
 - Customer surveys.
 - Case coordination meetings to include landlords.
 - Onsite reviews of providers/contractors.
 - Roundtable discussions with customers, providers and landlords.
- What are some of standards for quality service provision that you aspire to see?
 - Quality service with housing needs.
 - Quality service in case management.
 - Quality service in case coordination.

5. Program Enhancement – Revise Participant's Rental Share

Summary: Under the current program model families pay 40% - 60% of their income toward their rent. The task force recommendation suggested revising participant's rental share to avoid cliff

upon exit. Below is a proposed rental payment that is adopted by other jurisdictions for consideration:

12-month program:

- 1st 6 months – share is based on income
- 2nd 6 months – share is based on rent (sliding adjustment to full rent after exit)

12-month plus 6 months

- 1st 6 months – share is based on income
- 7-18 months – share is based on rent (sliding adjustment to full rent after exit)

24-months

- 1 - 12 months – share is based on income
- 13-24 months – share is based on rent (sliding adjustment to full rent after exit)

24-months plus 6 months

- 1 - 12 months – share is based on income
- 13-30 months – share is based on rent (sliding adjustment to full rent after exit)

36-months

- 1-24 months – share is based on income
- 25-36 months – share is based on rent (sliding adjustment to full rent after exit)

Discussion Questions:

- Compared to the current rent payment structure, which rent model would you prefer?
 - Customers reported the 12-month program plus 6 months based on income is preferred.
 - This will help families get closer to paying market rent. However, families must first receive quality services in order to increase their income.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each model?
- Do you have any recommendation?

Customers provided the following feedback:

- Participant’s rental share portion based on income.
 - Customers recommended identifying units that include utility to avoid extra costs to families.
 - Connection to utility assistance resources at the beginning of 12 months.
- Families must complete housing affordability assessment at initial program enrollment and quarterly, thereafter.
- Better assessment before initial housing placement with realistic assessment on sustainability.
- Access to better housing navigators to identify units that can meet the family’s budget at the end of FRSP.
- If families have barrier to increase their income, they must receive one-on-one assistance with applying for other housing options.