

FRSP Task Force

DRAFT Report Recommendations

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT: this document is to provide a comprehensive and cohesive narrative for inclusion in the final report. It is based on the content developed by the Task Force process (meetings and listening sessions), including customer planning sessions. The content in this document is intended for deliberation – discussion, modification as needed, and final adoption – at the final Task Force meeting.

The narrative is organized to have sections for:

- Vision and values
- Cross Cutting improvements
 - Accountability, consistency, and transparency
 - Assessment and Eligibility Determination
 - Housing and financial assistance
 - Program services and offerings
 - Data and Evaluation
- 2 Pathway program design
 - FRSP Bridge to TAH/PSH
 - FRSP TANF housing
- Additional ideas that could help improve housing stability and sustainability

Vision and values

By providing safe, stable, and affordable housing with individualized and family-centered services that promote dignity and independence through services, supports and resources, families will increase their family's financial security and income through enhanced education and job skills and not return to homelessness.

The program is based on these key values:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Accountability | 6) Empowerment |
| 2) Client-centered | 7) Integrity |
| 3) Collaboration | 8) Motivation |
| 4) Dignity and respect | 9) Quality |
| 5) Empathy | 10) Trauma-informed |

Cross-cutting improvements

Accountability, consistency, and transparency

The Task Force recommends that DHS ensure improved administrative management of the entire FRSP program. The FRSP program has many organizations and program components – across the board there is a need for greater accountability, consistency, and transparency. The customers should receive quality service in:

- housing

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- case management
- care coordination with other services and programs

The Task Force recommends that DHS convene an FRSP Advisory Board composed of representatives from current FRSP customers, FRSP providers, FRSP landlords, TCP, DCHA, ICH, and advocates to review FRSP program implementation on monthly basis. This should include:

- Customer surveys
- Onsite reviews of providers/contractor
- Roundtable discussions with customers, providers and landlords
- Advisory role in the FRSP contractor selection process
- Other oversight activities that can advance quality program delivery that aligns with FRSP Vision and Values

The FRSP Advisory Board should report progress on implementation of the Task Force recommendations and suggest FRSP program improvements to the FSA Administrator and the DHS Director on at least an annual basis.

In addition, the Task Force recommends the following administrative improvements:

Customer-facing

The Task Force recommends that DHS ensure improved communication and transparency about the FRSP program for all components including prior to enrollment. The commitment to transparency and clear communication should include all organizations that provide services and housing to FRSP participants. FRSP should publish and provide to all FRSP applicants, clear criteria for program entry and exit. An up-to-date client handbook on how to navigate FRSP and DHS services should be provided online and in paper copy. Simplified language should be use in the client handbook and FRSP program rules. Orientation sessions about FRSP should be provided onsite in shelters with time to respond to questions. DHS and its contractors should provide frequent and repeated communication about program expectations, resources, etc.

Families can bring concerns about unresolved housing conditions and gaps in FRSP services to the quarterly reviews.

DHS should employ an Ombudsman for FRSP who has lived expertise of homelessness who can advocate. This position should be able to listen to FRSP customer inquiries, complaints, and issues, then help troubleshoot and explain all program components and aspects to FRSP customers. The Ombudsman should also convene the Advisory Board (see above), conduct customer focus groups and surveys, and provide reports to DHS management and the Advisory Board.

DHS should develop an online client portal for FRSP clients to submit documents and offer a better way to track FRSP client payments to landlords and rent share payments to DHS.

Organizations and staff implementing FRSP

DHS must establish and enforce clear performance expectations for FSA, ESA, TCP, DCHA, and all FRSP contractors. DHS must also develop clear channels of communication and processes to ensure consistency across the program and among the various organizations that provide

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housing and services for FRSP customers. The Task Force recommends that DHS hold FRSP case managers and providers accountable for performance outcomes rather than focusing solely on process measures. The Task Force recommends that DHS develop improved contract monitoring and oversight of DCHA to ensure initial and ongoing housing quality.

DHS should develop and provide required onboarding and periodic training for FRSP providers (supervisors and direct service) as well as enhanced information sharing and networking opportunities.

DHS should recognize providers and landlords who provide exemplary service that advance the Vision and Values of the FRSP program.

Office of Administrative Hearings

The Task Force recommends that OAH be better informed about the FRSP program purpose, intents, regulations, and procedures. Information about OAH should be included in the FRSP client handbook (see above). The Task Force recommends that FRSP provide a representative to accompany the FRSP during the OAH hearing process to help them complete the required documentation and be present during the process.

Assessment and Eligibility Determination

The Task Force recommends redesign of the initial and ongoing assessment and eligibility determination processes for FRSP. These include the following recommendations for initial assessment and eligibility determination. See later in the TANF Housing program description for more about re-determination and ongoing goal planning.

Initial assessment and eligibility determination should be made with homeless families early during their shelter stay and for homeless prevention families at VWFRC. The assessment and eligibility determination process should be re-designed to be family-centered, client-directed, and consistent with FRSP vision and values. The FRSP program should have clear eligibility criteria, well-defined participation expectations and requirements, and describe program and housing offerings so that the client can make an informed decision for their family. The assessment should be conducted by a highly trained case manager and encompass family goals, strengths and current/past barriers (e.g. domestic violence, kids with autism, evictions, low employment, low education). Families should no longer be required to complete the Family VISPDAT at intake or on an ongoing basis. All families should be screened for eligibility for the Bridge to TAH/PSH program.

Families should be assessed for eligibility and/or current participation in other programs and services (TANF, DBH, CFSA, etc.) and whenever possible, joint goal planning should be part of the FRSP goal plan developed with the family. Goal planning should be family centered, two-generation, comprehensive of both family goals and steps to reduce barriers and include current and future housing affordability. The FRSP goal plan should be unified with other organizations/agencies when families have more than one case manager.

Housing and financial assistance

The Task Force recommends redesign of the housing and financial assistance processes for FRSP. These include the following recommendations for initial financial assistance and housing placement and participant education about the housing and financial assistance available through FRSP. See later in the

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Bridge to TAY/PSH program description and the TANF Housing program description for more about tenant share of rent requirements.

Access to financial assistance

Consistent, clear guidelines should be developed by DHS and be provided to FRSP clients about how FRSP can assist with housing application fees and furniture and apartment set up. FRSP clients should be assisted with locating apartments that best meet their needs, rather than expecting them to apply to a set number of apartments weekly which will result in excessive fees and potentially harm their credit ratings. FRSP should explore the development of a universal application and single application fee for landlords who received FRSP landlord incentives.

Access to better apartment options

FRSP should continually improve outreach to landlords to increase the number of apartments that have affordable rents, include utilities in the rent, and don't require payment of amenities or other fees. FRSP clients should receive assistance with understanding the full cost of housing for each apartment before signing the lease.

DHS is encouraged to study the feasibility of making shared housing an option, possibility of including MD and VA landlords. DC government should continue to expand the supply of rental housing affordable to households with extremely low incomes, increase access to long-term rental assistance and vouchers, and geographic options within the District.

Housing supports for participants

DHS should significantly improve housing search and navigation assistance during the initial placement as well as if housing relocation is needed. This support should include information and education about housing affordability.

FRSP clients should receive better education about tenant-landlord rights and responsibilities, specific requirements in the lease and how to remedy concerns about the housing unit or property. DHS should develop a manual and/or training on how to maintain an apartment.

FRSP clients should receive information from the FRSP case managers about how to access financial coaching, budgeting and/or credit repair.

FRSP should assist clients track provision of required documents and payments to landlords.

FRSP case managers and DCHA should assist and advocate with landlords to address unacceptable conditions of the unit and other issues that are landlord responsibilities in a timely manner.

FRSP case managers should assist families apply for utility assistance if utilities are not included in the rent.

FRSP case managers should assist families apply for available long-term housing subsidies and subsidized apartments.

Landlord engagement

DHS should continue to provide landlord incentives to encourage landlords to rent to FRSP participants.

DHS should require faster, timelier DCHA inspections and establish DHS oversight to assure compliance with these requirements.

DHS should establish processes to address initial and ongoing property issues (e.g. carpet cleaning, pest control, mold, etc.) in order that FRSP participants are assured higher quality housing.

FRSP case managers should establish relationships and pro-actively communicate with landlords who are providing housing to their FRSP clients. FRSP case managers should:

- directly work with and be a timely resource to landlords when their FRSP client is not following lease requirements.
- improve communication and planning with landlord for participant exits

FRSP case managers should work with clients and landlords to develop alternatives to landlord evictions at exit from FRSP (e.g. FRSP moves tenant to other housing). DHS should explore the feasibility of offering some additional incentives to landlords when participants don't pay rent after program ends that offer win-win options for landlords in exchange for tenant exits that avoid a lengthy legal eviction and help a tenant avoid an eviction judgment.

Program improvements and offerings

The Task Force recommends redesign of the program and offerings for FRSP to be higher quality, more consistent, and engaging with FRSP clients to meet their individual goals and needs. These include the following recommendations:

Improved case management services

FRSP case management is in place at admission to FRSP and ensure match of case managers before lease-up.

FRSP case management should be high quality - individualized, using a multigenerational approach with client directed goal setting.

FRSP case managers should meet with clients at a time and place convenient to the client with services offered beyond 9 am – 5 pm.

FRSP caseloads should be low enough to ensure case managers can provide quality services.

FRSP case managers should consistently reinforce clear exit criteria and help clients establish goal plans to exit from FRSP.

Better linkage and case coordination to other services

FRSP case managers should be well trained, supervised, supported to ensure that they are able to link and coordinate with a range of available services providers including but not limited to:

- Training and education
- Mental health services
- DOES
- Childcare
- GED
- Job readiness/job training
- Other DC offerings

Expand program offerings

FRSP case managers should be well trained, supervised, supported to ensure that they are able to offer and/or link to credit repair, housing search, education on housing maintenance, and other program offerings that advance family housing and economic stability.

Data and evaluation

The Task Force recommends that DHS conduct more extensive, comprehensive and timely data analyses and evaluations. Quality data collection across all program components including demographic data about enrolled and exited families, tracking and analyzing income from earnings, cash assistance and other benefits over time – both self-report and through matching to other systems. Studying types of exits and eviction filings during and after program participation. Data analysis should include understand rental costs during/after programs and housing affordability at exit. DHS should clearly and routinely report data about program participants, client and program outcomes, etc.

The Task Force recommends that FRSP case managers be provided access and training to use the CATCH system.

2 Pathways

The Task Force recommends that DHS offer two pathways within the FRSP program. Initial assessment and eligibility determination should be made with homeless families early during their shelter stay and for homeless prevention families at VWFRC. The FRSP Bridge to TAH/PSH (Bridge Model) is intended for families who are expected to have a fixed income from receive disability assistance; while the TANF Housing program (TANF Model) is intended for families where the parents are currently earning income from employment or are expected to be employed in the future. By providing 2 pathways at exit from emergency shelter, rather than the current single pathway, DHS can better meet the needs of homeless families. The following sections describe the Task Force’s recommendations for the 2 Pathways model.

FRSP Bridge to TAH/PSH (Bridge Model)

Purpose

The proposed Bridge Model is for families who have a pathway to a TAH or PSH voucher. The Bridge Model will enable them to exit shelter to an apartment with initial determination for a TAH or PSH eligibility. Families that meet eligibility determination and are prioritized will be matched to a long-term subsidy within the first 3-6 months in FRSP program if a voucher is available. This program will enable the highest need families to access a voucher and provide a faster determination than the current program.

Eligibility

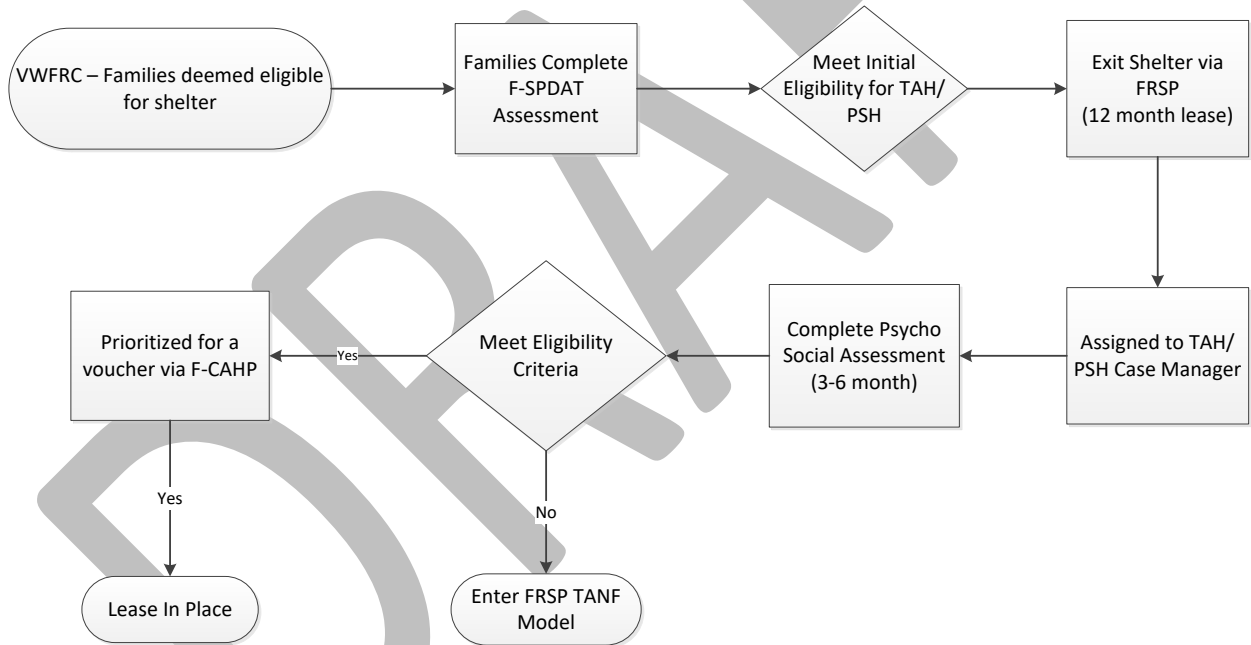
FRSP Bridge Model is designed for families with children who are eligible for homeless services at VWFRC; who are currently in shelter or in the first three months of FRSP (to ensure early determination for long term housing subsidy); and who meet the eligibility criteria listed below. Families enrolled in the TANF Model can also transition to the Bridge Model if their situation changes and they meet the TAH/PSH eligibility criteria. Initial eligibility is determined while families are in shelter via a SPDAT assessment. Families will exit shelter via FRSP Bridge and will be assigned to a TAH and PSH Case manager who will complete a psycho-social assessment to determine final eligibility based on the criteria outlined in the table below and the availability of a voucher. Families in the Bridge Model can expect to complete psycho-social assessment within the first 3-6 months in FRSP Bridge. Families who meet the eligibility criteria will be prioritized for the number of available vouchers for the year via F-CAHP process. The TAH or PSH case manager will assist the family with completing the voucher application if it has not already been completed while in shelter.

TAH Eligibility	PSH Eligibility
A household member has a documented chronic illness that impacts the head of household’s ability to reach full earning potential.	Chronically homeless (documented 1 + years) or experienced homelessness repeatedly
Families must provide information demonstrating that their disability prevents them from working and/or engaging with TEP.	Families must provide information demonstrating that their disability prevents them from working and/or engaging with TEP.
The household must include at least one adult (18+ years old) and one minor or dependent child.	Have a chronic mental and/or physical health diagnosis and unable to appropriately utilize and follow-up on diagnosis (i.e. medical appointments);

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The family must be connected and engaged to community resources.	Inability to follow through with basic program requirements (i.e. service plan); Lack of ability/interest to manage income/funds;																								
Income guidelines: <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Income</th> <th>Household Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$42,250 or below</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$39,350 or below</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$36,400 or below</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$32,800 or below</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$29,150 or below</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Income	Household Size	\$42,250 or below	6	\$39,350 or below	5	\$36,400 or below	4	\$32,800 or below	3	\$29,150 or below	2	This family may receive SSI or SSDI and be limited in their ability to engage in work activities to increase their income. <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Income</th> <th>Household Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$42,250 or below</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$39,350 or below</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$36,400 or below</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$32,800 or below</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$29,150 or below</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Income	Household Size	\$42,250 or below	6	\$39,350 or below	5	\$36,400 or below	4	\$32,800 or below	3	\$29,150 or below	2
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Referral Process



Program length

Families prioritized for a TAH or PSH vouchers will remain in FRSP Bridge Model with the following conditions:

- Families will sign a 12-month FRSP lease for the Bridge Model. If they receive the voucher before the 12-month lease is over, families will lease in place until the end of the FRSP lease term. If they are beyond the initial lease term, the family may elect to find an appropriate alternative unit or stay in the existing unit.
 - Families who exit shelter under the Bridge Model but do not receive a voucher will be assigned to an FRSP TANF provider and continue in the FRSP lease.

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- The transition from the FRSP rental assistance to the TAH/PSH voucher may not exceed 90 days. Due to limited resources, FRSP payments will cease when the new voucher is utilized but not more than 90 days after family is approved for the voucher.
- Landlords will be informed in advance that families may get a TAH/PSH voucher before the 12-month lease is over and will agree to swap FRSP rental assistance for the voucher.

Case Management: Upon acceptance into the Bridge Model, families will be assigned a case manager.

TAH Case Management	PSH Case Management
Case management services will be provided DHS TAH case managers	Case management services will be provided by DHS contracted PSH service providers
Case management and rental assistance	Intensive case management and rental assistance
Monthly contacts	Two face-to-face and two non-face-to-face contacts per month.
The case management ratio for this group would be 1: 50 ¹	The case management ratio for this group would be 1:17

Housing

The Bridge Model is a pathway to a voucher. Each family will sign a one-year lease upon entering into the program and will receive program services administered by TAH or PSH case managers with a FRSP subsidy until final eligibility assessment and prioritization is determined. Upon receiving the voucher, families are required to lease in place for the remainder of the year. When one-year lease ends, the family can make a decision to either move to a new unit using the TAH/PSH voucher or stay in the current unit if the landlord is willing to accept the TAH/PSH voucher.

Services

Housing case management services will be focused towards housing stabilization and connection to health care and other services to support the head of the household and all household members as needed. DHS will work to transition TAH to a Critical Time Intervention design that can provide intensive assistance during the first 6-9 months of the program. Families who exit shelter under the Bridge Model but do not receive a voucher will be assigned to an FRSP TANF provider and continue in the FRSP lease.

Housing Case Management Services

- Assistance and support with lease up including completion of the voucher application
- Tenant-landlord support
- Ensuring timely submission of rental payments
- Ensuring timely remediation of maintenance and unit issues
- Connections to needed community resources and supports

Landlord Management (completed by the TAH/PSH case manager):

- Consistent communication with landlords to establish clear expectation about the option to lease in place when the family receives the voucher.
- Provide landlords updates on the status of the family’s voucher application.

¹ Based on the current DHS capacity, the realistic case management ratio for families receiving TAH is 1:50. DHS is further assessing the possibility of a tiered TAH & PSH case management based on level of service need.

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- Discussion and communication regarding required documents in order to lease in place.

Participant Housing Cost Payments

- Families will pay 30% of their income for rent in the Bridge Model. Families will be required to pay for utilities if they are not included in the rent. Families in Bridge Model will be encouraged to lease a unit with utilities included.
- Both TAH and PSH include utility allowances as housing cost. Families will qualify for the utility allowance once they receive a voucher.

Exits

- FRSP rental subsidy will remain in place for the first 12 months for all families. During this time, families will be assessed, and eligible families will be prioritized for available vouchers within 3-6 months. Due to limited resources, FRSP payments will cease when the new voucher is utilized but not more than 90 days after family is approved for the voucher.
- If the family is deemed ineligible for TAH/PSH, the TAH/PSH case manager completes warm handoff to the FRSP TANF Model within 15 days of notice of ineligibility.
- If the family is deemed eligible for TAH/PSH while in FRSP TANF Model, the FRSP case manager completes warm handoff to PSH/TAH case manager within 15 days of notice of eligibility.
- The TAH/PSH case manager will assist in unit identification and lease up process for the new voucher.

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FRSP TANF Housing Model (TANF Model)

Purpose

The FRSP TANF Housing program (TANF Model) is intended for families where the parents are currently earning income from employment or are expected to be employed in the future. By providing interim rental assistance, access to education and training, and other supports for the entire family, the TANF Model will help families achieve employment goals and address barriers in order to increase their family's financial security and income and not return to homelessness.

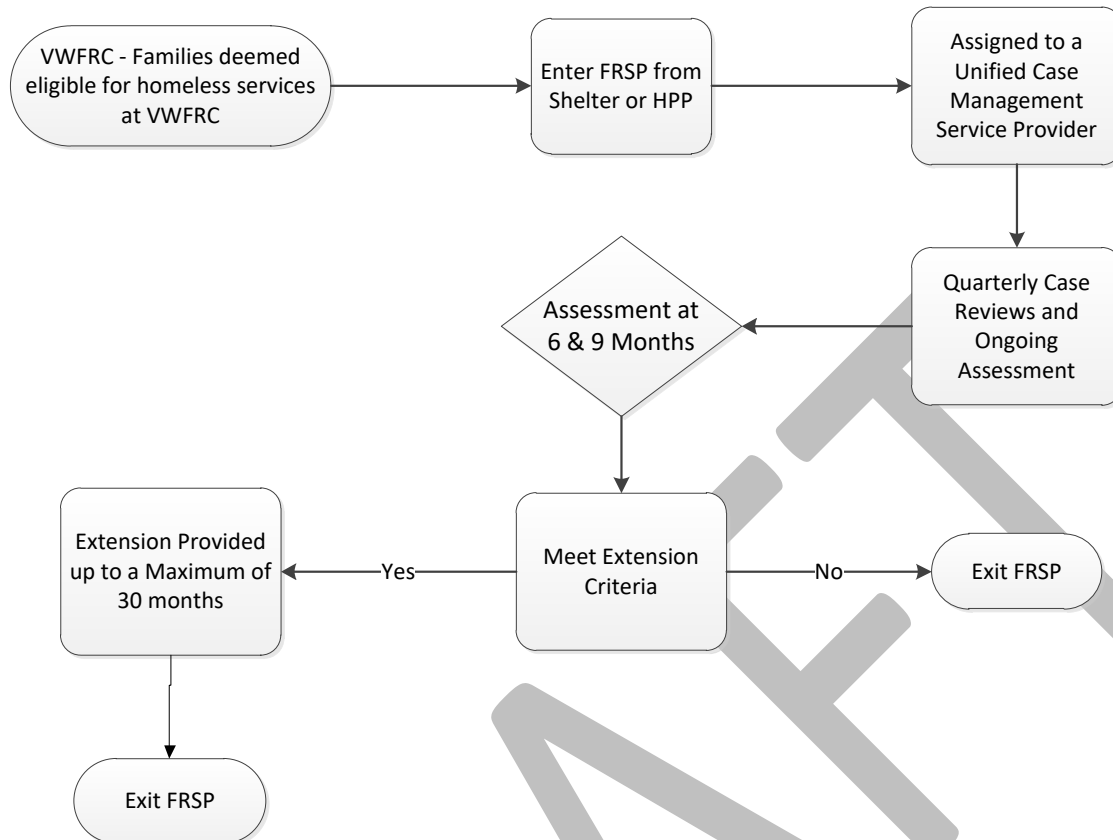
To provide for quality services, effective and efficient services integration, and improved accountability, the Task Force recommends that DHS contract with agencies that can provide a comprehensive, integrated services to families enrolled in the TANF model. These contracts should include performance outcomes for families in the key domains of housing and income.

Eligibility

District residents who have been deemed eligible for homeless services after being assessed at the Virginia Williams Families Resource Center and who are receiving TANF or are working but not earning enough to cover the costs of a rental unit will be eligible for the TANF Model. The TANF Model will serve families who are not eligible for the Bridge Model.

Referral Process

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Program length

The timeframe for the program will vary by family based on goals and barriers to be resolved. **The range will be from 12-30 months (including step-down).** Extension will only be granted for families that are fully making progress on their individualized goal plan. The final six months in the program will be considered the step-down phase as the family transitions from full subsidy to full rent payments (see later).

Each family will be offered an initial program term of 12-months for rental assistance and program services. Families may receive a program extension based on the following factors:

- Additional time needed to complete the family's educational and training milestones
- Additional time needed to address the barriers identified at the beginning of the program (or new ones which have occurred while in the program)
- Progress made towards employment and/or education goals
- Consistently paying FRSP rental payments
- Participation in quarterly case reviews and engagement with TEP or other services
- Families have received the FRSP services that were requested, and housing conditions have not provided impeded family progress.

Program extensions will be determined during the quarterly case reviews. Families will be able to discuss how they have been able/not able to receive the requested services and express any unresolved

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housing conditions. The timeframe for the step-down phase will be set as part of the extension determination process.

Families may opt to decline FRSP case management (no-services model) which provides 12-months of rental assistance only.

Families who enter the TANF model from the Bridge model will be offered an initial term of 12-months in TANF model and be able to choose between services or no services model. Families who choose the services model will be eligible for extensions per the criteria described above. Total time in FRSP (Bridge and TANF) may not exceed 30 months.

Under POWER, families who are experiencing domestic violence, caring for family members, or are facing similar barriers are exempt from work participation and their time stops counting towards the 60-month TANF time limit.

- Families in POWER will be assessed for eligibility for FRSP Bridge Model and if not eligible will be enrolled in the TANF model and may receive an FRSP extension for the period of time they are exempted from work activity.
- The timeframe for FRSP TANF assistance will not exceed 30 months. To receive this FRSP extension, the family must develop and work on a goal plan to exit FRSP housing assistance within this timeframe, participate in quarterly reviews, remain current on client share of rent, and provide required POWER documentation.
- POWER families that do not remain accountable to these requirements will receive a 6-month termination notice; if the family reactivates with FRSP requirements within 90 days of this notice, a longer extension may be granted.

Case management

Case management will be provided under a **single contracted entity** that will be contracted to provide:

- Housing case management (e.g. paying rent, household maintenance, tenant rights and responsibilities, landlord relationship, etc.)
- Connection to supportive services (e.g. credit repair, health, children's education, etc.) to provide a wrap-around support for the family.
- Teaming with other partners if the family is receiving services from more than one agency (DBH, CFSA, etc.) or with landlords, where applicable.
- Linkage to services to attain employment and education goals. The goal is to help families make enough to pay housing costs - e.g. market rent and utilities (up to 50% housing cost burdened).
- Communication, education and support to access TANF incentives
- Coordination with landlord, DCHA, and DHS to address questions and concerns about the apartment, program services, etc.
- Development of a goal plan based on housing affordability needs and desires

A seamless, warm hand-off between shelter/prevention case managers and the FRSP case managers should be required and be a contract performance requirement for all parties.

Education and Employment

- Individualized goal setting and service coordination by the case manager to achieve income goals within the FRSP time frame
- Access to all type of TANF employment/education programs and incentives (see below)
- Quarterly progress and goal review case

TANF Employment/Education Program Provider Types

Services	Customer Needs	Program
Job Placement Services	Employment	Job Placement Service Provider (JP)
Education Services	Education and training	Education and Occupational Training (EOT)
Nursing Services	2- or 4-year degree nursing programs	University of the District of Columbia (UDC)
Behavior Health	Strengths based approach to employment service or behavioral health needs	DHS Office of Work Opportunity (OWO)
Multigenerational Services	Family stabilization	Variety of providers

TANF Incentives

Education Incentives (EOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1-day training completion - \$50 ▪ 30-day training completion - \$200 ▪ 1-3-month training completion - \$400 ▪ 4-6-month training completion - \$600 ▪ 7+ month training completion - \$1,000
Job Placement (JP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job placement - \$150 ▪ Retention month 1 through 11 - \$150 ▪ Retention month 12 - \$500 ▪ Promotion - \$400 ▪ Exit from TANF due to earnings/4 months - \$500
Both EOT and JP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$15 daily stipend for 4 or more hours of approved activity ▪ \$250 per 12 months for discrete work-related expenses

Landlord Management

- Families will receive information and education from the shelter and/or FRSP case manager consistent with the content described above (see housing and financial assistance).
- Families will sign an initial 12-month lease with an FRSP eligible landlord.
- After a year, depending on the individualized case management plan, families may lease in place or find a new unit.
- Consistent communication by family and FRSP case manager with landlord to solve tenant/landlord issues.
- FRSP case manager will work with landlords to inform of program status and to reiterate program goals and expectations of both landlord and family.

Participant Housing Cost Payments

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To avoid a cliff upon exit and provide strong support while the family is engaged in education, training, and job seeking, rental payments will be fully subsidized then shift to being rent-based rather than income-based during the step-down subsidy phase.

- Families who opt for services engagement will pay 30% of their income for rent during the first 12 months of participation plus any additional period of time before the final step-down phase. During the step-down subsidy phase, the tenant portion of the rent will be pro-rated across six months to increase from the subsidized level to full rent payment. The landlord payment will be adjusted accordingly.
- Families who choose the no-services model will pay 30% of their income during the first 6 months then the tenant rent share will be pro-rated to be full rent at exit.
- Families will be required to pay for utilities if they are not included in the rent. Families will be encouraged to lease a unit with utilities included.
- Families that receive a program extension will continue to be subsidized until they begin step-down subsidy phase
- Families will be eligible to receive up to 50% of the rental portion that they paid to FRSP as a bonus upon successful exit from the program. To be eligible for the bonus, families must pay their share of the rent on time and comply with the lease requirements.

Exits

- Exit planning will occur with the case manager on ongoing basis with formal exit planning beginning before the 6-month step-down phase.
- The initial determination will be made at 6 months to provide the family an opportunity to engage in case management activities and possibly change the determination at the final review at 9 months. See above (program length) for criteria for an extension.
- The case manager will work with family to identify whether the family is going to remain in the current unit or looking to identify another unit.

Additional ideas to improve housing stability and sustainability

The Task Force recommends that DHS explore the feasibility of offering a range of housing options that could improve housing stability and sustainability.

Test Shared Housing

Current regulations prohibit FRSP being used to support shared housing. Given the high cost of housing in DC, families at many income levels live in shared housing. Shared housing can also provide mutual supports like sharing meal preparation, childcare, etc. Currently some FRSP families exit to shared housing. Shared housing could be two households that elect to rent an or a house together apartment (roommate matching) or a household that elects to lease a bedroom(s) with shared living space from a homeowner (home sharing). Many cities are finding success with shared housing models and DC could learn from these communities. DHS should test the feasibility of using FRSP rental assistance to support shared housing.

Offer DC Flex as exit strategy

The DC Flex Program is a new type of housing assistance being tested in the District. The program is for low-income households that are working and earning income, but have trouble making ends meet in some months. Right now, the program is a “pilot” program, which means there is a small amount of money to test this idea. Researchers are currently evaluating the pilot program. Approximately 150 households will be selected to participate during the pilot phase. If the program is successful, DHS hopes to expand it. Families that are participating in FRSP TANF model and have been able to obtain employment but have a gap between their housing costs and their income could benefit from this type of assistance.

DC Flex clients must participate in an annual recertification process to confirm continued program eligibility and participation. These requirements are:

- Be at or below 30% of Annual Median Income for the Washington DC Metropolitan Region (
- Retain physical custody one or more dependent children; and
- Remain a leaseholder in good standing.

Pilot Combined Benefit Model

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 often results in fewer net resources in households. In addition, FRSP only provides short term rental subsidy (12-30 months). As a result, families in FRSP and similar public benefit programs must trade off long-term career opportunities for short-term, minimum wage employment opportunities – impeding meaningful pathways to economic self-sufficiency.

DHS is interested in exploring the potential for a Combined Benefit Model (CBM) as a pilot program aimed at removing these structural barriers that prevent families from achieving long-term career opportunities through the provision of combined cash benefit. Families will have the opportunity to budget and utilize the combined cash value of the benefits to address their needs while working on long-term housing and career plans and will be protected from losing assistance at a greater level than their growth in earnings.

PRE-DECISION – DRAFT - For Task Force Deliberations only

The pilot model would provide a pathway for families in FRSP TANF model pursuing a two to four-year college degree or other career pathway training geared towards increasing the household’s income to meet the cost of living. It takes into account the following financial supports currently being provided to families:

DHS Public Benefits	Annual Benefit	Monthly Benefit	Annual Benefit amount based on a household size of 1 adult and 2 children
TANF	\$6,036	\$503	Monthly gap to living cost: \$287 Annual gap to living cost: \$3,441
Housing	\$17,640	\$1470	
Health Care	\$10,740	\$895	
Child Care	\$25,612	\$2,134	
SNAP	\$6,531	\$544	
Total	\$66,559	\$5,546	
Amount needed to afford a unit in DC	\$70,000	\$5,833	

The Combined Benefit Model would essentially supplement a family’s benefits with an additional cash benefit of \$3,441 to bring the family to \$70,000 of annualized public benefits.

Who may be eligible for a CBM pilot?

Families in FRSP TANF model pursuing a two to four-year college degree or other career pathway training geared towards increasing the household’s income to meet the cost of living. Families must be fully engaged in FRSP (e.g. paying share of rent and following through on goal plan and other FRSP requirements) when they apply to participate in the CBM pilot.

Program Length:

Up to 48 months with yearly recertification to maintain eligibility

Case Management:

Case management would consist of monthly check-ins which will take place in the home for the first six months of the program period with quarterly check-ins after the first six months. The case management service will be provided by the FSA – Office of Work Opportunity case management team.

Education and Employment:

Families in the pilot Combined Benefit Model would have a TEP Case Manager specific for the UDC Paths program or similar programs, as they are fully engaged in a two- or four-year program. Towards the end of their programs they will work closely with their TEP case manager to find long term employment options based on their recent educational attainment.

Landlord Management:

- Families will sign initial 12-month lease consistent with FRSP TANF model
- Communication with landlord to solve tenant/landlord issues as needed
- The FSA – Office of Work Opportunity team case manager would be responsible to monitor the landlord management.

Exits:

Families will exit the program upon completion of education programs with gainful employment, not to exceed 6 months post-graduation.

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If the head of household discontinues the program the family will be exited from the pilot and will be assessed for any other eligible services (to include FRSP Bridge or TANF Models).

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