



Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program (FRSP) Task Force
Meeting #1 – Annotated Notes
September 11, 2019
DHS Headquarters
64 New York Ave, NE, Sixth Floor

Orientation for Customers 9:00-9:45AM

Barbara Poppe and Darrel Cason met with four Family Advocates/Customer Representatives who will be on the FRSP Task Force. The Family Advocates were given an overview of the charge for the Task Force, meeting dates, logistics, voting process and the customer panel.

Pre-Meeting Gathering: 9:40-10:00am

- Registration
- Meet and greet other Task Force members
- Meeting materials at each seat:
 - Agenda
 - One-page on Task Force members
 - One-page on FRSP
 - FRSP presentation

Task Force Meeting: 10AM-1PM

Meeting attendees:

Blaine Strum	Chairman Mendelson's Office
Imani Stutley	CFSA
Kathy Zeisel	Childrens Law Center
Kelly Sweeney McShane	Community of Hope
Sue Marshall	Community Partnership
Kevin Craver	Community Partnership
Wendy Glenn	Councilman Trayon White's Office
Michelle Loggins	Councilwoman Nadeau's Office
Anthony Hall	DBH
Kate Coventry	DC Fiscal Policy Institute

Ebony Thomas	DC Housing Authority
Jannie Lebby	DC Housing Authority
Laura Zeilinger	DHS
Tamitha Rama Davis	DHS
Noah Abraham	DHS
Darrell Cason	DHS
Lorraine Nwaoko	DHS
Hersh Gupta	DHS
David Ross	DHS
Brian Campbell	DHS
Christy Evans	DHS
Nancy Blackwell	DHS
Dana Looper	DHS
Larry Handerhan	DHS
Tai Meah	DHS
Monique Harvey	DHS
Jessica Smith	DMHHS
Melissa Steele	E & G Group
Jenny Shin	Echelon Community Services
Monique Banks	Echelon Community Services
Karen Cunningham	Everyone Home DC
Ashley Rhodes	Family Advocate
Jewel Stroman	Family Advocate
Samirra Robinson	Family Advocate
Shonta Jones	Family Advocate
Shauna Gray	Family Advocate
Sheena Parker	Family Advocate
Travonna Brooks	Family Advocate
Uchenna Egenti	Family Advocate
Bonita Ward	House of Ruth
Roslyn Roberts	Housing Up
Courtney Hall	Housing Up
Kimberly Waller	ICH
Damon King	Legal Aid DC
Rachel Rittlemann	Legal Aid DC
Lisa Simmons	Maximus
Tirhas Webneh	Maxiumus
Sharon McDonald	National Alliance to End Homelessness
Erika Duthely	OPLA
Carolyn Perez	Washington Legal Clinic
Amber Harding	Washington Legal Clinic
Patty Fugere	Washington Legal Clinic

Welcome

Laura Zeilinger welcomed everyone to the FRSP Task Force and discussed the charge for the Task Force.

DHS is launching the FRSP Task Force to collaboratively work with stakeholders to assess what is working and not working in the program and develop recommendations to improve the experiences and outcomes of families related to housing sustainability. Essential to our approach is recognizing the strengths of each family and facilitating meaningful connections to resources that support participants to grow their incomes and address their needs while reinforcing what is working well in their lives.

Agenda Review and Introductions

Barbara Poppe, Consultant and Facilitator, reviewed the agenda and the expectations for the flow of the meeting.

- Develop recommendations to DHS Director Laura Zeilinger for FRSP by December 2019
- Review the process and time line
 - Listening sessions
 - Task Force meeting dates
 - Meeting #1 9/11/2019
 - Meeting #2 10/8/2019
 - Meeting #3 10/30/2019
 - Meeting #4 12/4/2019
- The purpose is to gain consensus at the end for program recommendations using a voting process.

Activity: Meeting attendees engaged in a short exercise to meet new people to discuss “why did I decide to participate on the Task Force and what do I hope to contribute”.

FRSP Overview Presentation:

- Tamitha Rama- Davis
- Noah Abraham
- Kevin Craver
- Darrell Cason

Tamitha Rama-Davis, Family Services Administrator, DHS, discussed the Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program (FRSP) and the purpose of the FRSP Task Force. The FRSP supports DC residents who are homeless or at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness to achieve stability in permanent housing through individualized and time limited assistance. The services of the program include housing identification, case management services, rental subsidies for 12 to 18 months, and connections to resources. The purpose of the Task Force is to recommend improvements in key areas: customer experience and outcomes, efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery, and oversight and accountability of the program.

Noah Abraham, Deputy Administrator, DHS, presented an overview of FRSP:

- The roles of organizations that partner with DHS to implement rapid rehousing in the District, case management requirements, provider capacity, fiscal year budgetary investments
- Client level data: entries, exits, annual income, length of stay, and evictions.

Kevin Craver, Chief of Family Services, TCP, presented information on the FRSP customers:

- Demographic data, program exit destinations, annual income at entry and exit, source of income, and rental payments.

Darrell Cason, Program Manager, DHS, presented program improvements that have occurred over the past 4 years:

- Pilot intensive case management model
- FRSP Provider Manual
- Client Handbook
- Landlord Portal

Follow up questions included the following discussions:

- Returns to Virginia Williams after families exit FRSP. Families may return for other services that do not lead to a shelter placement.
- Clarification on eviction data
- The role of the DC Housing Authority with timely inspections
- Income data is self-reported
- The HUD definition of return to homeless looks at families that returned to homeless two years after exits.

Attendees received an electronic version of the presentation along with an invite to Task Force #2.

Small group dialogue session #1

Each small group meeting attendees were given the following questions to discuss and write their answers on the one pager to be collected and all information collated.

- What did I learn from the presentation that is important to remember as we begin our work to improve the FRSP?
 - DHS is aware of challenges that participants in program face and looking at ways to improve via data
 - Improved data collection is a necessity and now there is a program manual
 - Sources of income for participants, especially how a lot of families rely on TANF
 - Didn't learn new information
 - Question about the rate of return to Virginia Williams and Shelter and how it is calculate. DHS needs to look into that
 - Delta between the data DHS collects and committees perspective/concerns, particularly around returns
 - High number of families are not paying their portion of the rent
 - We need a common definition of RRH and what success looks like
 - Didn't know the program was for 12-18 months

- How young families are
- Challenging to increase income
- What types of improvements would help support faster exits from shelter to FRSP with services in place?
 - Quicker assessment at VWFRC beyond eligibility to begin case planning across programs (TANF, DBH, CFSA, etc.) rather than only being referred to agencies but have someone to assist
 - Landlords to collaborate and offer affordable housing
 - Need more providers and increase amount of clients each FRSP provider can serve
 - Providers need more resources
 - Have more adequate housing stock for participants
 - Improving tenant protection
 - Better front end screening and assessment upon shelter entry
 - Better relationship with landlords
 - DHS should invest in credit repair strategies including case managers who have expertise (credit repair specialist)
 - Ensuring case management is in place
 - Specialized services for households under 25 years old – first time lease holders
 - Minimum income requirement
 - Assumption that we are doing the right thing
 - Not one size fit all model
 - Families should not go through RRH if they need PSH/TAH
 - Need a handbook on how to navigate homeless services
 - Reducing discrimination with housing applications
 - Consistency with case work
 - Transparency for clients
 - Consistent information from provider to provider
- What types of improvements would help support faster transitions from FRSP to PSH and TAH as appropriate?
 - Better assessments to understand which clients need to transition to PSH and TAH
 - Clear eligibility requirements
 - Earlier match to TAH/PSH while in FRSP
 - More TAH/PSH subsidies and units
 - Faster review by DCHA
 - 12-18 months is unrealistic for families without stable employment (This was one reason why the elimination of TANF time limit is working in DC)
 - Intensifying housing search resources
 - DHS could do the housing inspections
 - Data analysis to better understand rental costs and income
 - Push harder on a lease in place model to allow time to look for an apartment voucher
 - Better systems communications
 - Create and implement housing affordability assessment
 - Individual case management
- What types of improvements would help support more efficient exits from FRSP with viable housing sustainability plans?

- More affordable housing stock, especially for low income families
 - Participants pay lower percentage of income toward FRSP
 - Inform families who have been in a unit one year of the option to then enter into a month to month lease to reduce eviction
 - Inform families early about exit dates for time limits or other termination reasons
 - Time frames should be individualized
 - Ensure connection
 - Training and education
 - Planning for financial hardship
 - Shared housing options for families
 - Multi generation approach
 - OAH administrative review handbook/common set of values with clear timeframes
 - Study the families better who have not returned. What made them successful
 - Improve housing conditions
 - Landlords are not responsive
- What would improve customer experience and outcomes?
 - Limiting rent to 30% of income or below
 - Better inspections and conditions in housing units
 - Smaller case loads
 - Sensitivity training for case workers
 - Ensuring case managers have access AND refer to resources
 - Goal setting with clients
- What would improve efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery?
 - Needs to be a safety net in case people have to access services when coming off FRSP
 - Match to case managers as soon they moved in
 - Curriculum on how to maintain the apartment/home
- What would improve oversight and accountability?
 - A clear set of expectations around case planning and participation with set of consequences/incentives that all parties are aware of.
 - Outside oversight of DHS
 - Review of case managers
 - Better oversight of DCHA
 - Criteria for entering the program
 - Criteria for exiting the program

Customer Panel: Barbara Poppe and Noah Abraham facilitated a discussion with FRSP client customers, Shauna Gray and Shonta Jones

- How has FRSP helped your family?
 - Meeting the housing needs of a family with a child with special needs.
- Any suggestions on improving the services?
 - Families would like support with unpacking all the acronyms
- What would you like to see improved about the FRSP program?

- Referrals to permanent housing
- Any suggestions on improving the housing supported by FRSP rental subsidy?
 - The gradual increases in rent went from 40% of monthly income to 50% of monthly income. This should be fixed to no more than 30% of household income.
 - The amount of rental amount changes depending on where you live. A rent amount in Ward 1 is worth \$4,000 and in Ward 8 is could be \$1,800. Affordable units are scarce and families are moving into units they cannot afford
- What is missing?
 - Resources for families with complex needs
- When should a family be exited from the FRSP program?
 - During intake, exit strategies must be communicated for family to go through the process in 12 months. Families already have barriers that exist (financial, cultural, domestic violence, low education, low employment)

Small group dialogue session #2

- What did I learn from the panel that is critical to our work to improve the FRSP?
 - Need for support for families with disabilities
 - Realistic time lines
- What types of improvements would help support customer experience and outcomes?
 - Customer handbook
 - Better communication and coordination across all programs
 - Individualized services tailored to each family's needs for children and adults

Next steps:

The Task Force Meetings will meet later in the morning to accommodate the schedule of our family customer representatives. The next Task Force meeting will be 10/8/2019 from 10:30 am – 1:30 pm. Calendar invites will be sent out to all Task Force members.

Attendees asked for an opportunity to make additional comments. DHS will create a Google document to collect comments. A link to the spreadsheet that will summarize the feedbacks received will be sent out to the group.