



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program

Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-housing: Community Perspectives

Homelessness Prevention

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Rapid Re-Housing

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HUD HPRP Technical Assistance Workshop
May 13, 2009, Los Angeles, CA

Homelessness Prevention

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Homeless Prevention: Problem Statement

- Too often, evicted families enter shelter system. More cost effective to maintain these families in their permanent housing than to temporarily house at a cost of \$2,000-\$4,000 a month in emergency shelter.
- Funding and strategies for diverting at-risk families from the shelter system are not prioritized or coordinated within the SF CoC system of care (June 2006)
- Eviction prevention emergency assistance was a one-time only grant. Extremely low-income families living in a very expensive rental market may become at-risk of losing their housing more than once.
- Emergency homeless prevention interventions assist families in avoiding homelessness and the subsequent trauma and disorganization that accompany it.

The Road to 2009

- Since 1997, Hamilton Family Center has been providing homeless families with short-term rental assistance in the form of security deposits & first months rent, household grants, and 12 months of home-based case management.
- This program was generically coined, "Housing and Aftercare"; operating within the confines of Hamilton's continuum of care.
- 2005: Received foundation funding and began a pilot, Rapid Re-housing & Homeless Prevention Program. Foundation wisely granted a six-month "Ramp-Up" period

The Road to 2009

- Took six months to educate organization, program staff & incoming staff; redesign all existing positions; establish terms & processes; build in fiscal capacity; and effectively outreach to community.
- The goal was to Rapidly Re-house families out of the emergency shelter we operated; and conduct outreach and education to families in shelter & in our “aftercare” program about our eviction prevention funds.

First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families

The Road to 2009

- 2005: Received formal support on Housing First Initiatives from the Mayor of San Francisco,
- 2006: Hamilton's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing pilot played a critical role in informing a new "Family Shelter Redesign Initiative" and subsequent similar programs
- 2006: Hamilton re-directed existing City funds away from one of our emergency shelters, toward Short & Medium-term rental subsidies. Prior to this, there was no dedicated funding to Housing First initiatives-but that would soon change.

The Road to 2009

- 2005: Received formal support on Housing First Initiatives from the Mayor of San Francisco,
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- 2006: Hamilton re-directed existing City funds away from one of our emergency shelters, toward Short & Medium-term rental subsidies. Prior to this, there was no dedicated funding to Housing First initiatives-but that would soon change.
- 2006: Launched new program, *First Avenues: Housing Solutions for Families*; which was a re-branding and extension of an existing program.

The Road to 2009

- 2006: First Avenues housed over 80 families into market-rate units, with medium-term subsidies. Preventing over 135 evictions with short-term grants.
- 2006: Board of Supervisors allocates \$3 million toward Rapid Re-housing & Homeless Prevention activities
- 2007: A Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative was formed. Six primary organizations providing Short-term rental assistance and other services
- 2007: The Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative standardized the intake form

Homeless Prevention & SF CoC Plan

SF CoC Plan 2008-2013

Established as one of six “priority sectors of action”, the following:

- Initiatives to Prevent Homelessness through Eviction Prevention and Intervention, including:
 - ✓ Coordinate services and economic assistance to prevent eviction
 - ✓ Outreach and education about eviction prevention resources and tenant rights laws
 - ✓ Provide short-term rental support and wraparound services to address issues underlying housing instability
 - ✓ Provide legal services for individuals and families at risk of eviction
 - ✓ Develop standard eviction policies for city-funded projects

Service Model: Stable of Services

First Avenues Stable of Services

- Housing Search and Placement
- Rapid Re-housing: Medium term rental subsidies for 18-24 months; depth of subsidy limited to \$500 per month
- Security and First Month short-term grants offered
- Home-Based Case Management provided to all households assisted with both short-term and medium-term rental assistance

Service Model: Stable of Services

Services Continued...

- Medium-Term Rental recipients must stay in monthly contact with HBCM
- Short-Term Rental Assistance
- Rep-Payee Services available to medium term rental subsidy families
- Household Goods Move-in Grant
- Pathway's to Technology (Free computer, tech assistance, and one year of free internet service)
- Myhousing.org; a consumer oriented website
- Monthly Emergency Food Box
- Subsidized Furniture Program
- Quarterly Newsletters

Service Model: Budget & Stakeholders

First Avenues Budget

- Family Medium-term Subsidies: \$232,000 Annually
- Family Short-term Subsidies: \$134,200 Annually
- Security Deposits: \$87,500 Annually
- Total Program Budget: **\$868,800**

SF Homeless Prevention Budget

- \$1,506,500 Funding allocated w/in the Eviction Prevention Collaborative; includes short-term subsidies, security deposits, barriers to housing grants (salaries not included)
- Fiscal Year 07-08: Collaboration funded 844 applicants for prevention assistance
- 26% SF Housing Authority residents

Service Model: Budget & Stakeholders

Stakeholders

- SF Board of Supervisors
- Human Services Agency: Housing & Homeless Programs, General Fund Support
- Mayor's Office of Housing
- First 5 San Francisco
- Local Foundations
- Family Eviction Prevention Collaborative
- Local Homeless Coordinating Board
- Eviction Prevention Working Group
- Local homeless advocacy organizations

Service Model: Nuts & Bolts

First Avenues Staffing

- **2.0 FTE Management Staff**

- **4.0 FTE Homeless Prevention CM Staff:**

- ✓ 1.0 Focus is Housing Search, Outreach, Placement & Security Deposits
- ✓ 1.0 Focus is Short-term rent assistance, landlord mediation, six and twelve month follow-up
- ✓ 2.0 Focus is Development of individualized housing & service plan, home-based CM for medium-term rental recipients; housing stabilization, including employment & childcare resources

- **0.1 FTE Support Staff**

- ✓ .05 FTE Focus Fiscal activities
- ✓ .05 FTE Focus is data collection & analysis, report development, website development

Service Model: Nuts & Bolts

2008-2009 Data

- 76 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 47 families received Security Deposits
 - *Program had Funding for only 13 Medium-term rental subsidies this year*
- \$939 Average Short-term rental grant
- \$2,377 Average back rent owed (range \$400-\$8,400)
- \$1,659 Average income for Short-term rental assistance households

2007-2008 Data

- 97 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 59 Families received Security Deposits

2006-2007 Data

- 135 Families received Short-term rental grant
- 101 Families received Security Deposits

Service Model: Current Program Terms & Process

- **Income Limits:** Household must be at 30%, or below local AMI
- Must be a San Francisco resident; unless in medium-term rental assistance program out of county
- Eviction Notice (14, 10, 3-Day Notice) or current ledger from landlord showing how much back rent is owed
- Lease in name of applicant*
- Income verification
- W-9 from landlord
- Grant must be used to prevent an eviction, versus stall one for 30 days
- Maximum grant limited to \$1000 per household
- All funds issued directly to third parties

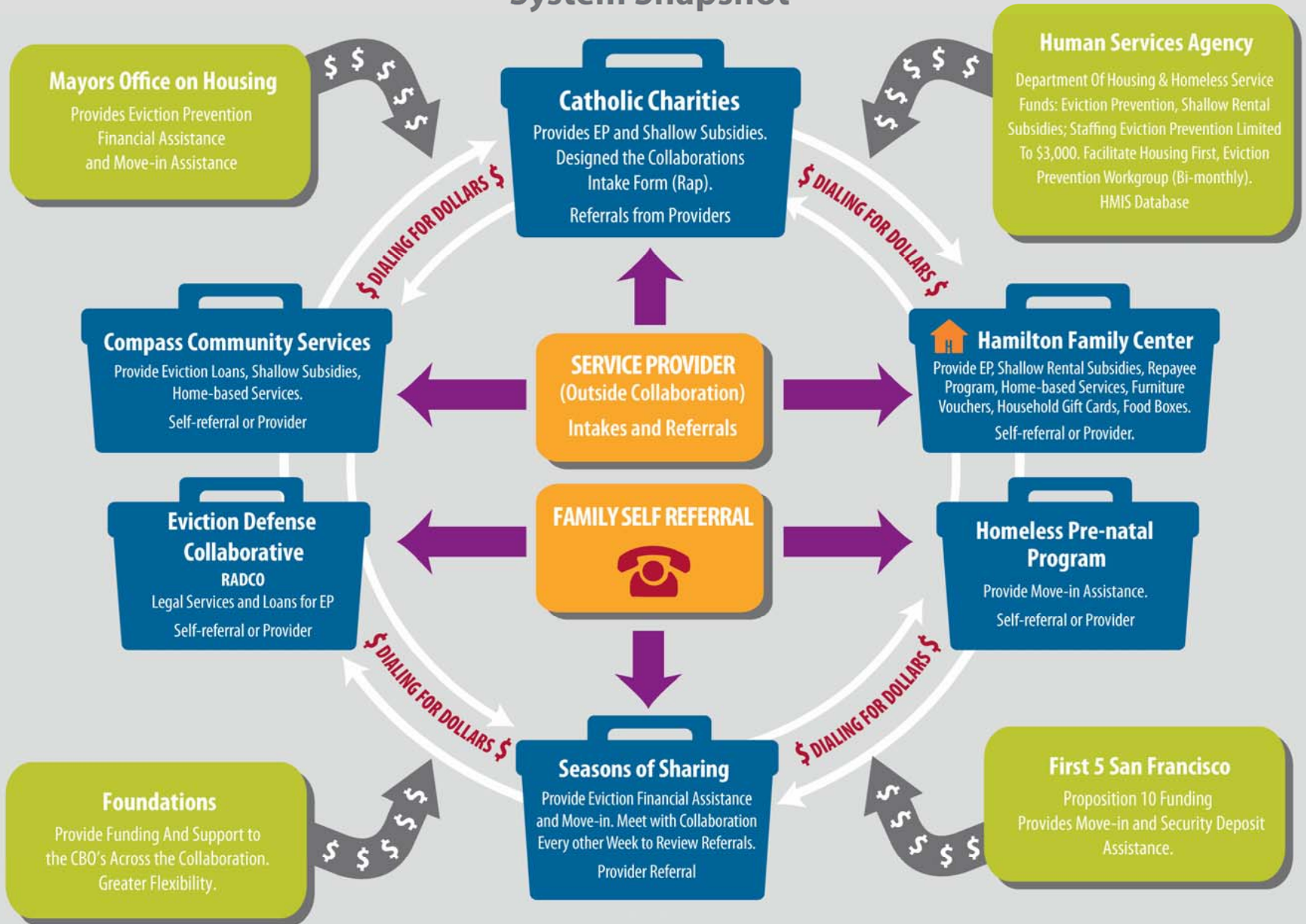
Service Model:

Current Program Terms & Process

- Applicants need to complete the RAP intake form with First Avenues
- Over 20 agencies referring to the Collaborative; pre-screen applicants; email documents
- Consultation with FA Homeless Prevention staff member tasked w/Eviction Prevention applications
- All documents must be submitted and household budget completed prior to checks processed
- Promissory note issued to landlord to stave off eviction while check is being processed
- Household must agree to a six and twelve month phone follow-up by Homeless Prevention EP staff
- If amount owed is over \$1,000 limit, Homeless Prevention staff work with Eviction Prevention Collaborative Network to obtain additional funds

Homeless Prevention: A City Effort

System Snapshot



Current System Limitations

- Maximum dollar limit at \$3,000 over five years
- Most often, families owe such large amounts, they use up all funding eligibility at one time. (Average grant is \$2,377)
- Capacity constraints:
 - 1.) Staffing limits-Impact is lottery systems and limited set appointment slots
 - 2.) Short-term assistance limitations-Impact is allocative inefficiency of scale. Homeless Prevention staff use limited time cobbling together resources within network of providers.
- Very limited utility arrears funding in system*.
- Very limited rental arrears funding available*.
- No funding available for moving costs, or short-term storage fees for families*.
- Data collection within system of providers varies widely. Analysis and reporting of data to network of providers limited.

Lessons Learned

- Systems, Staffing & Stakeholder ramp up important consideration if currently not engaged in similar activities
- Homeless Prevention requires quick check processing; important to have sound fiscal checks & balances between Program and your Fiscal Dept.
- Limited success in tracking long-term impact of emergency assistance grants
Families difficult to reach and survey after check is cut; consider incentives, e.g. gift cards, etc.

Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Build collaborative systems and partnerships that are efficient and will work in your community
- Online applications and submissions save time
- For communities where CBO's are the access points, efficiency improves with consistent eligibility and documentation requirements across collaboration
- Funding commitment to collection and analysis of data to inform and adapt your model, funding, or policies
- Regional Coordination

Influence of HPRP on System of Care

- SF Community will devote lions share of resources toward homeless prevention activities.
- Allocation toward Housing Relocation and Stabilization activities very limited.
- Expect to see increase in grant limit to allow the collaboration to be more efficient
- Expansion of current Homeless Prevention collaborative network of partners (singles, homeless youth, seniors, veterans, etc.)
- Expect expansion of legal services
- Development of new assessment tools in homeless prevention area
- Expansion of outreach to targeted areas in community
First Avenues found families often more then 2 months behind in rent payments.



HUD HPRP Technical Assistance Workshop

May 13, 2009, Los Angeles, CA

Beyond Shelter's "Housing First" Program for Homeless Families

Presented by Tanya Tull
President/CEO

Ryan Macy-Hurley
Director, Institute for Research,
Training & Technical Assistance



Program Background & Model

- Founded Beyond Shelter in 1988 to create a more comprehensive approach to serving homeless families
- Built into the existing Continuum of Care
- Beyond Shelter provides the “next step”
- Goal: to assist homeless families back into permanent housing *as quickly as possible*

Program Model – Cont'd

- More than 70 referring agencies countywide
- Offices located in Long Beach, LA, and Pacoima
- Target population
 - single, female-headed households
 - welfare dependent
 - unstable housing histories
 - significant housing barriers

Program Model – Cont'd

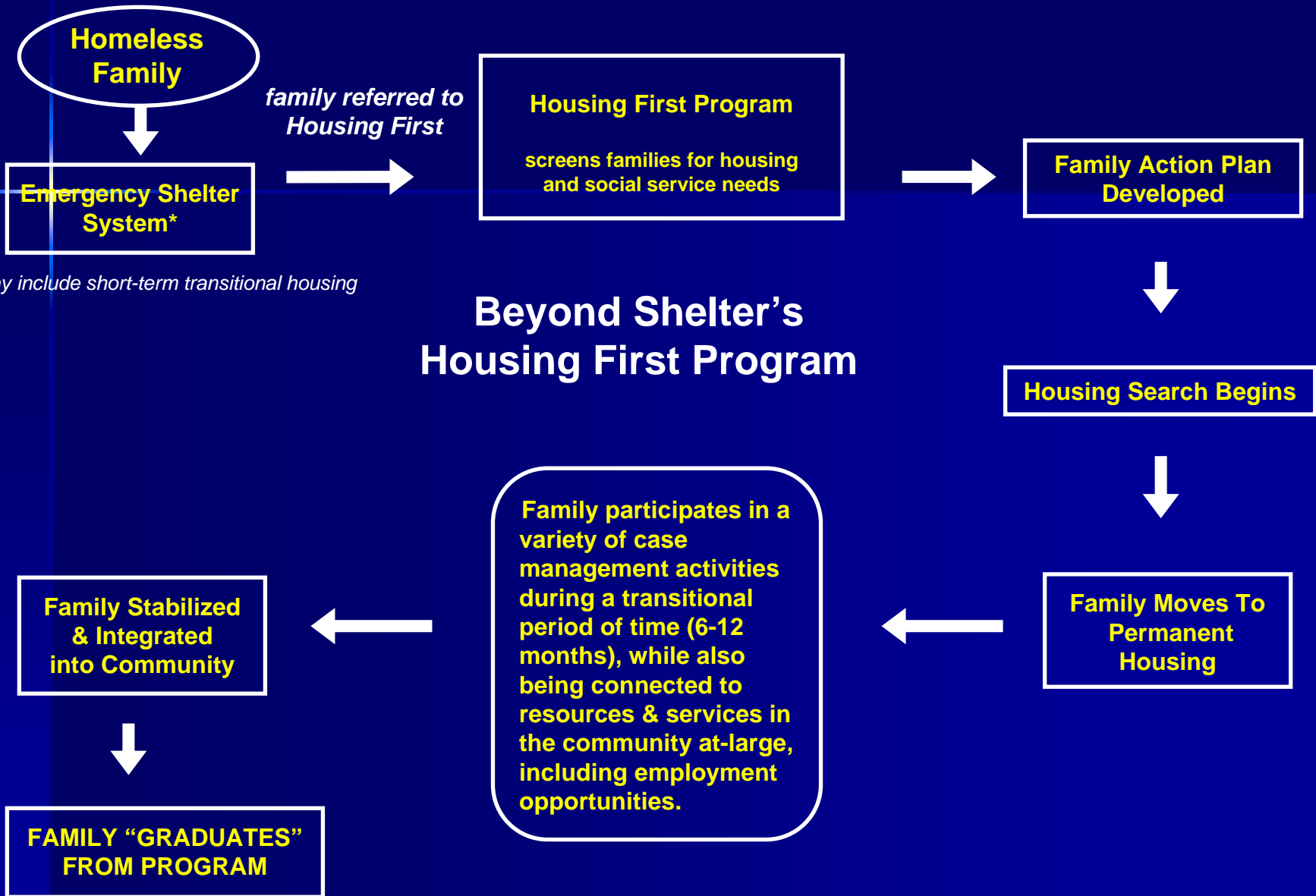
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Homeless family with custody of a minor
 - Must have a stable source of income: a job, CalWORKs/TANF, etc
 - History of substance abuse: in recovery for at least six months
 - Recent DV: at least four months away from batterer and be participating in, or have already completed, counseling
 - Must be receptive to receiving case management support for min. 6 months after moving into housing

Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

- Pre-screen families to be referred
- Handle some of the emergency needs of the family so Beyond Shelter staff can focus on long-term case management
- Complete necessary paperwork, including referral form (help access vital documents!)
- Inform families that the Housing First Program is a Case Management program, not a rental assistance program
- Serve as a reference for the family if any questions arise during intake at Beyond Shelter

Staffing Structure and Program Flow

- Housing Resources Department and Case Management Department
- Staffing Ratios
 - 1 Houser: 50 families
 - 1 Case Manager: 25 families
- Other Staffing
 - Children's Services Specialists
 - Employment Specialists
- Program flow...



Family Assessment & Triage

- Upon referral, families undergo extensive screening, assessment, and planning
- Screening includes detailed histories of health, education, employment, housing, substance abuse, family violence, and other agency contacts
- Family Action Plans developed, and housing-related activities begin immediately
- Housing and service plans are individualized based on family need and available resources

Housing Search, Landlord Outreach & Recruitment

- Program principle: promote housing & neighborhood choice among families as much as possible
- We market program to landlords and management companies: program brochures, informational flyers
- We emphasize and “sell” program benefits
- We use a variety of outreach strategies: Cold calls and community searches, landlord referrals, program orientations/peer testimonials, networking: e.g., Apt Owner’s Association Conferences

Housing Placements

- Many different "housing destinations:"
 - Market-rate with relocation assistance, e.g. move-in funds
 - One year subsidies (e.g., former HAP or DPSS Programs)
 - Affordable housing complexes
 - Tenant-based Section 8 (homeless "set asides")
- Family always is leaseholder
- Currently have over 100 landlords and property management companies in our network
- Assisted over **600 families** in 2008, and over 4,300 since 1989

Housing Stabilization Services

- Voluntary, home-based service model
- Generally 6-12 months
- Intensive (particularly first 3 months), individualized, & family-centered
- Guided by Family Action Plan(s)
- Case management functions: life skills development and services coordination/linkages

Lessons Learned

- Training and regular communication with partners is important and can prevent problems (e.g., “dumping,” slow referrals, referrals without vital documents, etc.)
- Creativity a must (e.g., during Section 8 freeze a few years ago)
- Families are more responsive to services from a stable housing base
- Importance of addressing the trauma of homelessness

Lessons Learned – Cont'd

- First 90 days after re-housing is critical
- Check the property status of prospective rental units/buildings due to the foreclosure crisis
- Teamwork between housing specialists and case managers is key to success
- Case management is a big selling point for landlords
- Proof is in the pudding: landlords call us when they have vacancies

Program Direction Under HPRP

- Expansion of existing program model but with a variety of target populations
- New potential partnerships
- Less intensive home-based service model expected
- Piloting of new tools and procedures to assess needs and target resources, including rent subsidies
- New administrative responsibilities: e.g., directly administering rental assistance
- Projecting increased income – or at least sustainable income – after subsidy ends could be unrealistic, given the current economic recession