

**Community Care Grant Program:
“housing first” for families**

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Homelessness
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Community Care for Families

- A cost-effective, humane and innovative response to help those at imminent risk of homelessness.
- Putting resources at the front-end of the homeless services continuum to help families rapidly obtain permanent housing without ever entering a homeless shelter.

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Blending Continuum of Care and Mainstream Family Services

- CCG is a collaborative effort between the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness and federally funded Family Support Centers, which are operated in the District under authority of the Child and Family Services Agency.

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- Eight community-based Family Support Centers (FSCs) help families to access housing and offers transitional, intensive case management services to ensure they stabilize in that housing.
- The Community Partnership provides funds to FSCs to support the transitional case management and flexible, time-limited resources, including a bridge subsidy.

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Origins of CCG Program

- 1997: the city had 350 families on its waiting list for emergency shelter.
- Attempts to open new shelters for families had been fiercely resisted by neighborhoods.
- Families leaving shelters were still dependent on welfare and had made too little progress toward independence.

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Origins of CCG Program

- We wanted to prevent families from entering the shelter system altogether and intervene at the earliest moment to help people obtain stable housing and employment.
- We wanted to use existing resources, such as other public and community-based providers, and maximize housing opportunities in the private rental market.

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Origins of CCG Program

- DHS approved a demonstration project was to use TANF resources.
- Vision: *invest limited funds to leverage the resources of communities and families; make certain that everything we do is coordinated with, and contributes to meeting, the self-sufficiency requirements of the new welfare system.*

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Program Context

- The city's central intake for families does not immediately place a family into shelter unless their situation is dire; instead central intake makes sure they have somewhere to stay and requires the family to stay in contact for the first available shelter unit.

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Program Context

- No “wait list” as such anymore, since access to limited shelter units operates on a triage principle per family need and unit sizes.
- Families are offered the opportunity to participate in the Community Care Grant program as an alternative to waiting for a shelter unit that fits their size and need.

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Eligibility

- Like all families provided services, CCG families are at imminent risk of homelessness, often doubled up and with a pending formal or informal eviction.
- Unlike other families, CCG families must be employed or willing to seek employment.

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Eligibility

- FSCs assess families as to whether they are able to become and remain permanently housed and self-sufficient within a 12-month period.
- Eligibility is determined within 30 days. Families may apply to more than one FSC.
- Family receives a specially developed case plan and must agree to work with the Family Support Center on that case plan.

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Observation

CCG is a variation of “housing first” that does require family buy-in to services as a condition for being housed. Not all “housing first” models have this requirement. Some provide housing for families without any condition of signing off on a case plan.

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How the Program Works

- Eight FSCs located throughout the city. It is recommended that the family work with a program near their community of origin.
- FSC receives about \$7,000 per family; \$4,000 to case management and \$3,000 for bridge subsidy and other housing-related costs.
- Last \$1,000 for case management is paid only after the family obtains housing.

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How the Program Works

- FSCs have housing specialists on staff who have established on-going relationships with landlords in their neighborhood.
- FSCs help the family manage lease application process and resolve credit history issues.
- FSCs help family apply for housing vouchers and/or manage to live without a subsidy.

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How the Program Works

- FSCs are collaboratives of many agencies through which family needs are met.
- FSC is a gateway to services that promotes the well-being of all family members.
- Ongoing relationship with the FSC and its organizations serves as a frontline defense should there be a crisis in the family's future.

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Funding/Cost Benefits

- DHS commits \$800,000 annually from state TANF block grant resources that are part of an overall contract for the Community Partnership to manage the city's homeless services. Serves about 110 families.
- The cost for every family housed has averaged about \$7,200, equivalent to the cost of providing about 115 days in an emergency shelter, yet most families stay involved with the FSC for a year or more.

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Outcomes & Observations

- Over 80% of those who enter the program are successfully housed.
- Despite that, it is often a challenging task to encourage families to enter the CCG program. The program requires them to take some difficult steps on their own rather than just waiting to be placed in a shelter.

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Factors for Success

- Neighborhood service delivery system.
- Community relationships with landlords.
- Case management (appreciated by families)
- Flexibility of housing funds.
- The family's motivation to succeed.

Source: An Assessment of the District of Columbia's Community Care Grant Program – Center for the Study of Social Policy

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Resources on Housing First

- An Assessment of the District of Columbia's Community Care Grant Program: Center for the Study of Social Policy
http://www.cssp.org/uploadFiles/Homelessness_An%20AssessmentofDCs_Community_Care_Grant_Program.pdf
- Housing First for Families: Research to Support the Development of a Housing First for Families Training Curriculum – National Alliance to End Homelessness
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pub/HousingFirstResearch.pdf>

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Program Design Choices Identified in Comparative Research

- Separating or integrating the housing and case management functions.
- Voluntary or mandatory case management.
- Providing or not providing housing subsidies.
- Family holds lease or agency holds lease for the transition period.

HOMELESS NO MORE

A Strategy for Ending Homelessness in Washington, DC by 2014

Three Policy Objectives

- **PREVENTION** Increase homeless prevention efforts within local and federal mainstream government agencies.
- **HOUSING** Develop 6,000 new units of affordable, supportive housing to meet the needs of DC's homeless and other low-income persons at risk.
- **SERVICES** Provide wraparound mainstream supportive services fully coordinated with Continuum of Care programs and special needs housing.

**For more information, including the
Ten Year Plan**



www.community-partnership.org