



HOME FOR GOOD NEW ORLEANS:

Family Homelessness Sustainability Plan

2026 - CREATED BY CLUTCH CONSULTING GROUP



Executive Summary

New Orleans has made significant progress toward ending unsheltered family homelessness. Family unsheltered homelessness is now extremely rare, with fewer than five unsheltered families identified in the 2025 Point-in-Time count.

This achievement reflects strong outreach, coordination, and commitment across public and nonprofit partners. This Home For Good – Family Homelessness Sustainability Plan outlines how New Orleans will sustain no unsheltered homelessness by building a durable, accountable system that resolves family housing crises within 30 days, prevents unnecessary shelter entry, and ensures families remain stably housed after exit.

System Design Priorities to Sustain Low to No Unsheltered Homelessness for Families

- **Expand and simplify access to assistance by formalizing family access points, standardizing triage and prescreening, and strengthening referrals from schools, healthcare providers, and community partners so families can quickly reach the right intervention.**
- **Improved diversion and rapid resolution by standardizing shelter diversion and rapid resolution practices across all access points and aligning flexible funding to remove immediate financial barriers that keep families from safe housing solutions.**
- **Optimize shelter flow through a scaled and coordinated progressive engagement rehousing approach, activation of the rental market for family-sized units, and standardized aftercare to prevent returns to homelessness.**

Each year, approximately 225 families enter the homeless response system, with a much smaller group experiencing prolonged homelessness. While the overall number of families is relatively low compared to single adults, returns to homelessness are significantly higher when families exit shelter without housing assistance. These dynamics create a clear opportunity: with targeted investments and standardized practices, New Orleans can reduce inflow, shorten shelter stays, and improve long-term outcomes.

Implementation of this plan will be co-led by the City of New Orleans Office of Homeless Services and Strategy and UNITY of Greater New Orleans, with strong alignment across providers, funders, and system partners. Progress will be monitored through shared performance measures, including inflow, length of shelter stay, housing outcomes, returns to homelessness, and cost effectiveness. Together, these actions position New Orleans to not only respond to family homelessness, but to end it sustainably — ensuring that when families face housing crises, the system responds quickly, consistently, and with lasting results.

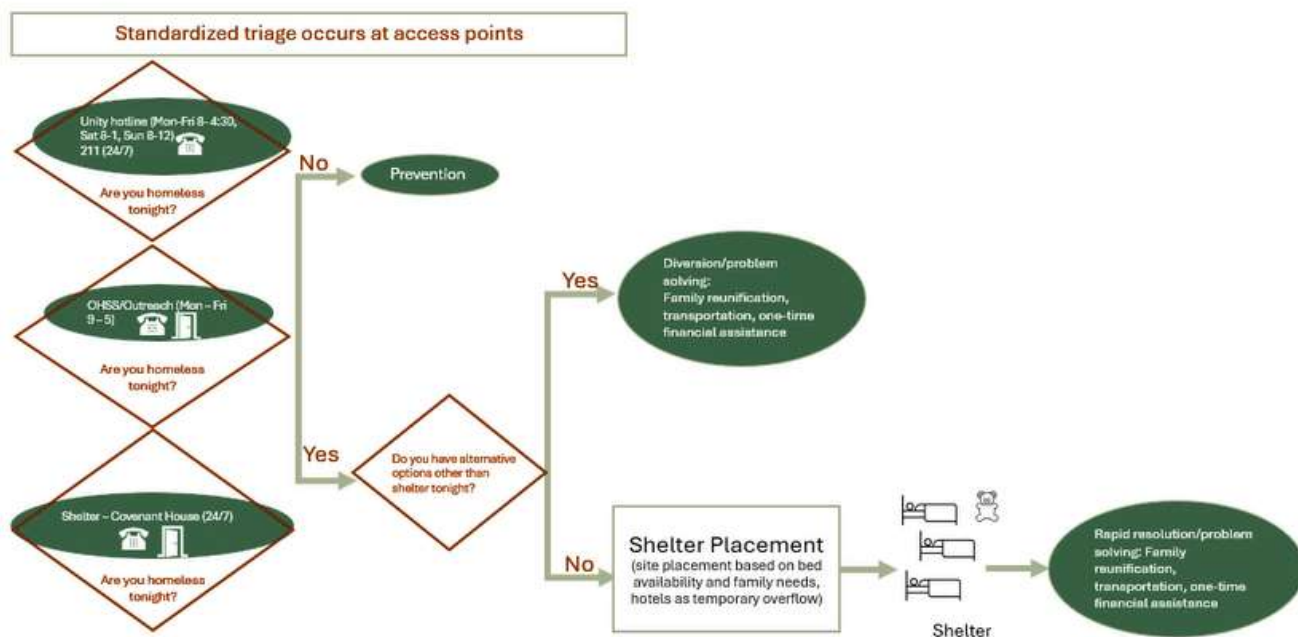
Sustaining Low to No Unsheltered Homelessness for Families

Building on the achievement of making family unsheltered homelessness rare, this plan focuses on sustaining no unsheltered homelessness by ensuring every family housing crisis is prevented when possible and resolved quickly, consistently, and permanently when it occurs.

The first phase of this plan focuses on three immediate priorities: **expanded and simplified access to assistance**, **improved diversion and rapid resolution** to reduce inflow, and **optimizing shelter flow** to rehouse families within 30 days of entering shelter, intervenes early, minimizes shelter use, and delivers swift exits to stable housing. Together, these system shifts reduce inflow, shorten lengths of stay, improve housing stability after exit, and create a durable, accountable framework that allows New Orleans to end family homelessness sustainably and at scale.

Priority 1: Expanded and simplified access to assistance

TRIAGE AND DIVERSION



Priority 1: Expanded and simplified access to assistance

Expand and Formalize Family Access Points

Standardize Family Triage and Prescreening

Strengthen Referrals from Community Connection Points

Expand and Formalize Family Access Points

Families must be able to access help quickly and consistently—regardless of where or when they seek it. The UNITY hotline is a critical entry point, but limited hours and staffing can reduce responsiveness during peak demand.

To ensure families can still be served when the hotline is unavailable or overwhelmed, the system will formalize additional family access points with shared expectations, tools, and outcomes:

- City Office of Homeless Services and Strategy (OHSS): phone and walk-in support for immediate, in-person needs.
- Covenant House: a formal access point for young families and youth-/family-serving partners.

Each access point will function as an active front door—providing accurate information, standardized triage and prescreening, diversion/problem-solving when appropriate, and timely connection to shelter or housing assistance.

All access points will follow shared protocols including consistent messaging, safety and housing-need assessment, and coordinated handoffs, so families receive the same high-quality, housing-focused response and are not redirected repeatedly.

Why this works:

- Expands access, reduces bottlenecks, and relieves pressure on the hotline
- Creates a coordinated front door for timely, targeted interventions
- Enables earlier triage and problem-solving, preventing avoidable shelter entry and reducing inflow

Priority 1: Expanded and simplified access to assistance

**Expand and Formalize
Family Access Points**

**Standardize Family
Triage and
Prescreening**

**Strengthen Referrals
from Community
Connection Points**

Standardize Family Triage and Prescreening

All family access points will use a shared triage and prescreening process to ensure families are quickly and accurately routed to the intervention that best resolves their housing crisis. This standardized approach creates a common foundation for decision-making across the system, enabling timely response, equity, and consistency regardless of where a family enters.

Triage and prescreening will begin with screening for immediate safety risks, including domestic violence, child safety concerns, and other urgent factors that may require specialized or expedited responses. Family composition will also be verified to ensure appropriate placement and service matching.

The first part of the screening process will then differentiate between families who can remain housed with prevention or short-term problem-solving assistance and those who are literally homeless and require a homelessness response. Clear and consistent criteria will guide these determinations so that prevention resources are used effectively and shelter is reserved for families who truly need it.

Before shelter placement, all families will receive problem-solving and diversion support, when safe and appropriate. Staff will work with families to explore alternative housing solutions, identify temporary or permanent options within their support networks, and remove immediate barriers through flexible assistance or mediation. Diversion efforts will be applied consistently across access points to ensure equitable opportunities to resolve crises without entering shelter.

Why This Works:

- Ensures a consistent, housing-focused response regardless of entry point
- Connects families more quickly to the right intervention
- Strengthens accountability and reinforces that homelessness is rare, brief, and quickly resolved

Priority 1: Expanded and simplified access to assistance

**Expand and Formalize
Family Access Points**

**Standardize Family
Triage and
Prescreening**

**Strengthen Referrals
from Community
Connection Points**

Strengthen Referrals from Community Connection Points

Schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations are often the first-place families seek help when they experience a housing crisis. Because these partners are trusted entry points, their ability to connect families quickly and accurately to resources is critical to prevent escalation and unnecessary shelter entry.

The first priority for agencies in this role should be focused on stabilizing existing housing whenever possible through community-based referrals to eviction prevention assistance, utility restoration, and to income support and mainstream benefits, such as employment assistance, public benefits, and other stabilization resources. Integrating these supports at the earliest point of contact strengthens household stability and reduces the likelihood that families will require shelter or rehousing assistance later.

These community partners should also prioritize families fleeing domestic violence or unsafe housing situations, recognizing the heightened urgency, safety considerations, and risk of homelessness faced by these households. Close coordination with domestic violence service providers will ensure families receive trauma-informed assistance and are connected to safe housing options without unnecessary system barriers.

In situations where families may be at imminent risk of literal homelessness, partners will be supported in making warm handoffs, such as contacting an access point directly while the family is present, scheduling same- or next-day connections, or sharing key contextual information to support timely triage. Tools, points of contact, and training will be provided to help partners successfully navigate the system and stay engaged until the family is connected to assistance.

Why this works:

- Clarifies when and how partners should connect families to formal access points
- Ensures the right information is gathered upfront for faster triage
- Sets clear expectations for families about next steps
- Reduces confusion and improves the speed and appropriateness of referrals

Priority 2: Improved Diversion and Rapid Resolution

Standardize and Scale Shelter Diversion and Rapid Resolution Practices

Align Flexible Funding for Diversion and Rapid Resolution

Standardize and Scale Shelter Diversion and Rapid Resolution Practices

To reduce shelter inflow and shorten stays, New Orleans will standardize and scale diversion and rapid resolution across all family access points—adding 55 diversion/rapid resolution slots annually will close the capacity gap identified through system modeling.

Both interventions are grounded in problem-solving, natural supports, and flexible assistance to remove short-term barriers so families can avoid shelter when safe—or exit quickly when shelter is necessary. A shared program model will align practice across providers so assistance is consistent and not dependent on entry point or staff.

Under this model, access points will use common tools and decision criteria, apply flexible resources equitably, and document outcomes in HMIS. Rapid resolution will be embedded in all family shelters and concentrated in the first seven days; if diversion is not possible before entry, problem-solving continues immediately after placement to drive rapid exits.

Why This Works:

- Keeps speed, consistency, and housing outcomes prioritized
- Shortens shelter stays and reinforces shelter as a brief, housing-focused intervention

Priority 2: Improved Diversion and Rapid Resolution

**Standardize and Scale Shelter
Diversion and Rapid Resolution
Practices**

**Align Flexible Funding for Diversion
and Rapid Resolution**

Align Flexible Funding for Diversion and Rapid Resolution

Flexible funding removes immediate financial barriers that keep families from safe housing solutions (e.g., arrears, move-in costs, emergency relocation, stabilizing informal arrangements).

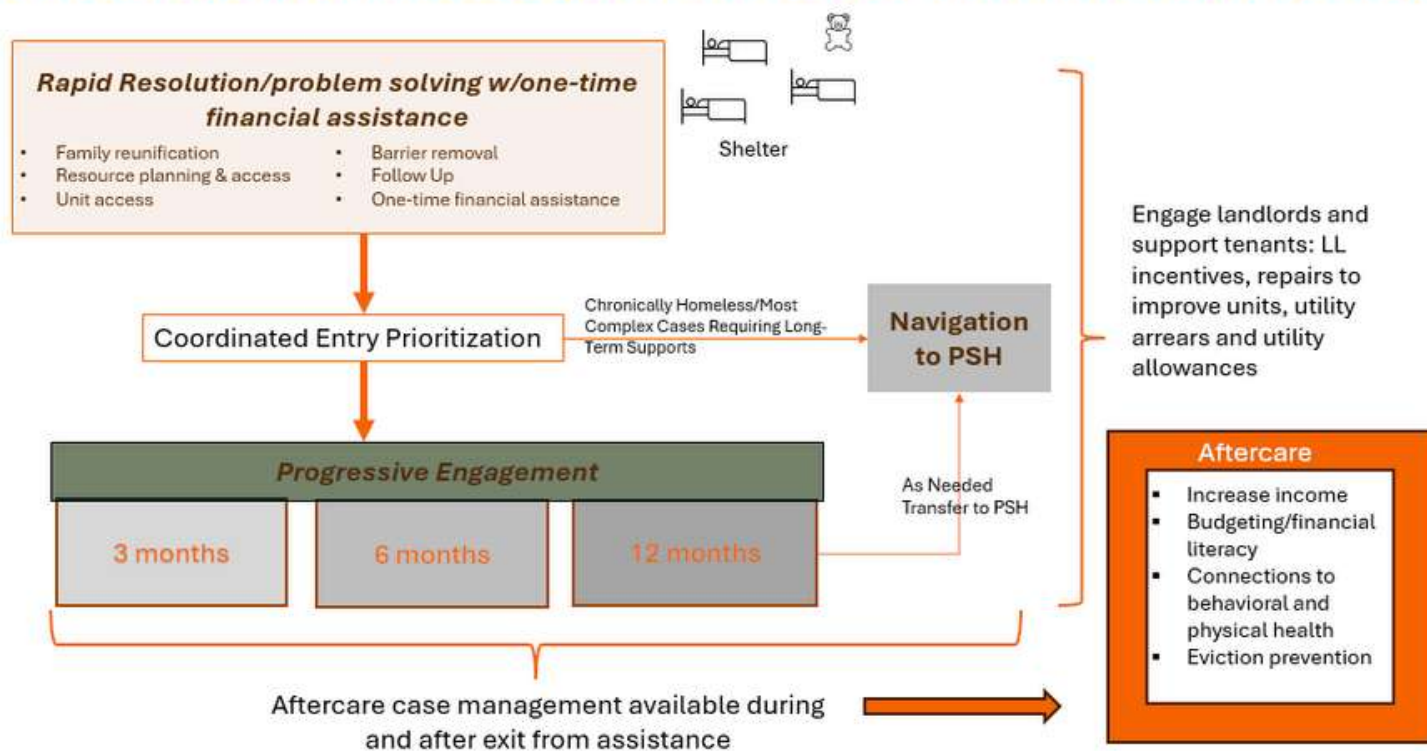
To ensure equitable, timely use, the system will adopt a single flexible-funding policy (eligible uses, approval authority, documentation) and streamlined workflows for rapid deployment. Funds will be centrally managed and tracked.

Why this works:

- Aligns flexible funding with clear, standardized practices for faster, more effective use
- Focuses resources where they have the greatest impact on rapid housing outcomes
- Reinforces flexible funding as a cost-effective tool for resolving crises quickly and sustainably

Priority 3: Optimized shelter flow

REHOUSE HOMELESS FAMILIES WITHIN 30 DAYS



Priority 3: Optimized shelter flow

Scale Rehousing assistance and Implement Progressive Engagement Approach

Activate the Rental Market for Families

Establish Aftercare Infrastructure to Ensure Exited Families Remain Stable

Scale Rehousing assistance and Implement Progressive Engagement Approach

Rehousing assistance will use a progressive engagement approach, beginning with a short-term rental assistance and case management services commitment, typically structured as a three-month intervention with monthly reassessment. Assistance will be provided based on demonstrated need and focused on resolving the specific barriers preventing a family from stabilizing in housing, rather than guaranteeing longer-term support upfront. This approach allows the system to respond nimbly to each family's circumstances while maintaining clear expectations about the purpose and duration of assistance.

Additional rental assistance may be provided when necessary, with extensions designed to bridge families to increased income, mainstream benefits, or longer-term housing subsidies when appropriate. While service engagement and aftercare may continue beyond the end of financial assistance, rental support itself will be time-limited and will generally not exceed twelve months, except in rare circumstances. This structure reinforces the expectation that rehousing assistance is a stabilization tool—used for the shortest duration necessary to achieve lasting housing stability.

The progressive engagement model centers family accountability and active participation in resolving housing challenges. Families are expected to take a central role in identifying goals, pursuing income, and addressing barriers, with providers serving as partners and coaches rather than long-term caretakers. Providers will use approaches such as motivational interviewing, housing-focused case management, and benefits navigation to support families in increasing income, accessing employment or public benefits, and strengthening their ability to maintain housing independently.

This approach ensures efficient use of limited resources by matching assistance intensity to need and avoiding over-subsidization, while still allowing flexibility to respond when additional support is warranted. The progressive engagement model is currently being implemented by New Orleans Women and Children's Shelter, providing a strong foundation of local experience. A formal program model will be finalized based on lessons learned from this practice and scaled across all family rapid rehousing programs, ensuring consistency, equity, and accountability throughout the system.

Why this works:

- Couples progressive engagement with a clear 30-day rehousing expectation, keeping the system focused on speed and results
- Uses short-term, reassessed assistance to prevent unnecessary shelter stays
- Right-sizes support by resolving barriers quickly and scaling assistance only when needed
- Reduces shelter bottlenecks, shortens lengths of stay, and lowers returns to homelessness
- Builds system capacity to respond quickly to new family housing crises

Priority 3: Optimized shelter flow

Scale Rehousing assistance and Implement Progressive Engagement Approach

Activate the Rental Market for Families

Establish Aftercare Infrastructure to Ensure Exited Families Remain Stable

Activate the Rental Market for Families

In New Orleans, access to housing for families will be scaled through expanded capacity of the dedicated unit acquisition team housed within the City's Office of Homeless Services and Strategy (OHSS). Building on existing landlord relationships, market expertise, and system-wide coordination, this team will proactively engage landlords—particularly those offering family-sized units—to identify available housing and match families to units as quickly as possible.

The OHSS unit acquisition team will serve as a centralized hub for landlord engagement, reducing fragmentation and ensuring consistent outreach, communication, and follow-through across the system. The OHSS team will work with existing UNITY landlord engagement efforts to coordinate and standardize strategies and engagement. By maintaining one active inventory of available units and cultivating new landlord partnerships, the team will expand access to housing options that might otherwise be unavailable to families exiting shelter, diversion, or rapid resolution.

In addition to identifying units, the team will function as a liaison between landlords and the homelessness response system, helping to streamline leasing processes and negotiate solutions to common barriers such as credit issues, prior evictions, income documentation challenges, or unit condition concerns. This problem-solving role increases landlord confidence in working with the system while decreasing delays that can prolong shelter stays.

Expanding centralized unit acquisition reduces the burden on individual providers, allowing case managers and shelter staff to focus on family engagement, stabilization, and income growth rather than duplicative housing searches. It also promotes consistency and equity by ensuring that access to units does not depend on a family's shelter location or provider capacity.

Why this works:

- Aligns unit availability with diversion, rapid resolution, and 30-day rehousing practices
- Ensures a steady pipeline of viable units to support fast exits from shelter
- Moves families quickly from crisis to stable housing

Priority 3: Optimized shelter flow

Scale Rehousing assistance and Implement Progressive Engagement Approach

Activate the Rental Market for Families

Establish Aftercare Infrastructure to Ensure Exited Families Remain Stable

Establish Aftercare Infrastructure to Ensure Exited Families Remain Stable

Achieving the system-wide goal of rehousing families within 30 days requires not only rapid exits from shelter, but also the infrastructure to ensure those exits are stable. Aftercare is a critical complement to the 30-day rehousing strategy, ensuring that the speed necessary to move families quickly from crisis to housing does not come at the expense of long-term stability or result in higher returns to homelessness.

The infrastructure needed to support this work includes establishing a shared pool of funding with clear and consistent policies for flexible assistance, developing streamlined workflows to ensure timely access to resources, and implementing shared expectations for engagement and progress once families are housed. Together, these components allow providers to act quickly—both to support rapid exits within 30 days and to sustain momentum after housing placement.

The system will track and evaluate outcomes related to aftercare, including housing stability following 30-day exits, returns to homelessness, time to stabilization, and cost effectiveness. By linking aftercare outcomes directly to rapid rehousing performance, the system can ensure that shorter shelter stays translate into durable housing outcomes rather than repeat episodes of homelessness. These results will be shared with funders, providers, and the broader community to demonstrate impact and reinforce accountability for both speed and stability.

Aftercare is particularly important for families who exit shelter quickly with little or no ongoing financial assistance, which is a key feature of a high-performing, 30-day rehousing system. Data show that families who exit shelter without housing assistance experience significantly higher rates of return to homelessness (approximately 16 percent) compared to families who exit with rapid rehousing support. Targeted aftercare mitigates this risk by providing continued case management support during the critical post-exit period.

Aftercare services will focus on reinforcing the progress achieved during the rapid-rehousing case management process, including budgeting and rent planning, landlord engagement and mediation, connection to income and mainstream benefits, and early intervention when risks emerge. By maintaining follow-up after rapid exits, providers can address challenges proactively preventing setbacks that could undo gains made through fast rehousing. To ensure consistency and effectiveness, the community will develop a standardized aftercare program model that defines essential program elements, expected timeframes, and shared outcomes, while allowing flexibility to tailor support to individual family needs.

Why this works:

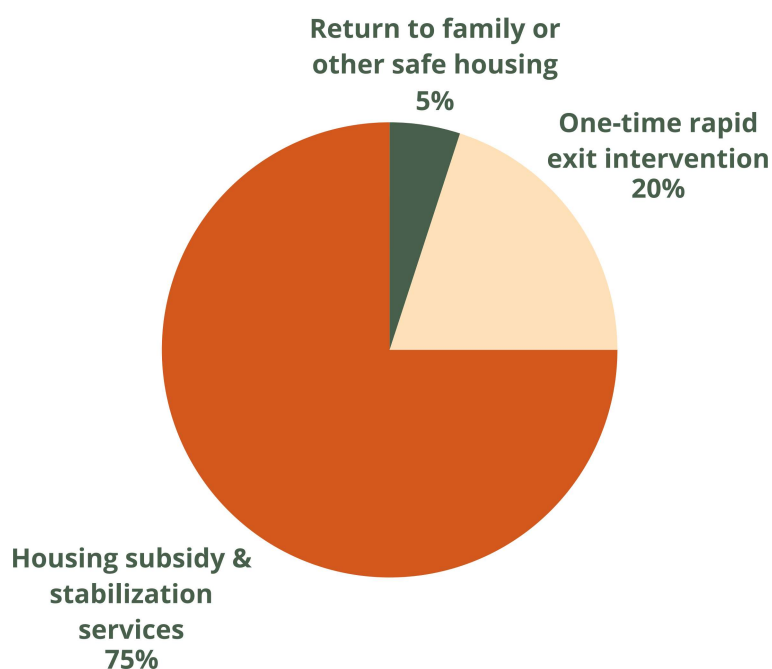
- Aligns aftercare with 30-day rehousing to protect fast exits from shelter
- Supports housing stability after placement, reducing returns to homelessness

A Data-Driven Approach

Clutch Consulting Group conducted a comprehensive analysis of the family homelessness response system using the same system-level modeling and optimization approach previously applied to the single-adult system. This approach is designed to understand how many fall into homelessness each year and what intervention they need to end their homelessness for good.

The resulting analysis revealed a clear formula for an optimized system to address annual inflow:

Annual Inflow: 225 families



In addition, analysis of current inventory, shows that while New Orleans has meaningful capacity in some areas, there are significant shortfalls in the interventions most critical to reducing shelter inflow and achieving rapid, stable exits. Specifically:

1. **Insufficient rapid resolution capacity** to divert families from shelter and exit them quickly.
2. **Underinvestment in housing navigation and aftercare support**, which limits the system's ability to translate rapid exits into lasting housing outcomes.

Addressing these gaps—particularly by scaling rapid resolution, strengthening housing navigation, and expanding wraparound supports—is essential to rebalancing the system toward prevention, speed, and stability and achieving the goal of ending family homelessness in a sustainable way.

Financial, Operational & System Sustainability

Financial stability

Cost Framework and Resource Needs

Intervention	Estimated Cost per Family	Annual Scale Needed	Existing Investments in Exits	Estimated Annual Investment	Why This Matters
Diversion/Rapid Resolution	\$1,900	55 additional families	~\$250,000 (Unity diversion assistance)	\$100,000	Prevents shelter entry or resolves homelessness in days, not months
Rapid Rehousing (Progressive Engagement)	\$14,000	155 families total, gap of ~38 families	\$2M	\$550,000	Clears shelter bottlenecks for families unable to exit through RR alone
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	\$24,000	Retain existing units	\$4M	\$0 new; prevention of loss is priority	Loss of PSH would dramatically increase shelter and RRH costs
Aftercare / Wraparound Supports	\$1,000	100 additional families	1 FTE	\$100,000	Protects fast exits; reduces returns (16% → lower)
Total Annual Investment	—	—	\$6.25M	~\$750,000	Rebalances system toward prevention, speed, and stability

Financial, Operational & System Sustainability

Operational Leadership and Governance

Implementation of this framework will be co-led by UNITY of Greater New Orleans and the City's Office of Homeless Services and Strategy (OHSS), ensuring strong alignment between system coordination, operational leadership, and public accountability. This shared leadership structure leverages Unity's role as the Continuum of Care lead and OHSS's role as the City's policy and implementation authority, creating a unified approach to decision-making, performance management, and resource alignment.

The work will build on the existing **Ending Family Homelessness Task Force**, which will serve as the primary forum for maintaining momentum, monitoring progress, and reinforcing shared accountability across providers, funders, and system partners. The Task Force will provide regular oversight of implementation status, review performance data tied to key outcomes such as inflow, length of stay, and returns to homelessness, and elevate system-level challenges that require coordinated solutions.

To move quickly from strategy to practice, the Task Force will convene time-limited workgroups to complete immediate next steps:

Deliverable	Workgroup Output
Standard program model(s)	Final definitions for diversion/rapid resolution and progressive engagement rehousing.
Eligibility & prioritization	Eligibility criteria, prioritization rules, and decision points.
Operating standards	Service expectations, workflows, roles, and handoffs.
Performance	Measures, targets (as applicable), and monitoring approach.
Implementation package	Guidance, templates, documentation standards, and training/TA plan.

Financial, Operational & System Sustainability

Data, Performance, and Accountability

New Orleans has established a milestone framework to track progress toward ending and sustaining an end to family unsheltered homelessness. The first milestone in this effort – ensuring that no or very few families are unsheltered – has effectively been achieved. In the 2025 Point-in-Time count, fewer than five families were identified as unsheltered, reflecting the strength of the community's outreach and identification efforts for families.

Building on this progress, the additional milestones in the framework highlight how an optimized system responds to annual inflow into homelessness using the Sustainability Plan's enhanced exit pathways:

Milestone	Measurement	Target Result
No (or few) unsheltered families	Identified in the annual PIT	Unsheltered families at PIT = <5
Effective diversions to limit inflow into shelter	Immediate returns to safe housing	Diversion (5%) & rapid exits from shelter (20%) = 25%
Optimized shelter	Length of stay in shelter/rate of returns to homelessness	Returns to homelessness = < 10%
Safe, permanent housing available for all within 30 days of housing instability	Time to exit = < 30 days of identification	Time to exit = 30 day average

Appendices



Appendix A: Definitions

Prevention: Intervention before a family becomes homeless to prevent loss of housing. Examples include eviction prevention, restoring utilities, or relocation due to domestic violence.

Diversión: Divert homeless families from shelter by identifying and supporting an alternative solution to the crisis. Examples include family reunification, transportation assistance, or other options to stay within each family's own support network.

Rapid Resolution: Help families quickly exit shelter, focused on finding solutions within the first 7 days in shelter. Examples include assistance with upfront costs for a new rental unit, mediating home sharing arrangements, or problem-solving barriers to returning to a previous housing situation.

Progressive Engagement: Approach used in rapid rehousing and stabilization designed to help families stabilize in housing with the right level of support, so families are relying on their own resources as quickly as possible. This practice requires identifying specific needs and strengths of each family with regular re-evaluation over time.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

This plan was developed using the same system-level modeling and collaborative planning framework used to design and refine New Orleans' single-adult homelessness response, ensuring alignment across populations and consistency in how system performance is understood and optimized. The methodology intentionally pairs quantitative system modeling with qualitative input from providers and system leaders, recognizing that data and practice must inform one another.

Clutch Consulting Group conducted a comprehensive analysis of the family homelessness response system using data from the UNITY of Greater New Orleans

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). System modeling examines how households flow through the homelessness response system over time—including inflow, intervention pathways, length of stay, exits, and returns to homelessness—to understand where bottlenecks occur and how existing resources can be better aligned. Rather than focusing on individual programs in isolation, the model considers the system as an interconnected whole, allowing planners to assess how prevention, diversion, shelter, rehousing, and permanent housing work together and how changes in one area affect overall performance.

Consistent with the single-adult analysis, the modeling was guided by three core goals: maximizing the use of existing resources, minimizing reliance on temporary solutions, and improving system flow so that housing and shelter resources serve as many households as possible over the course of a year. The model was used not to prescribe services for individual families, but to identify the scale and balance of interventions required to achieve system-wide outcomes—such as reducing shelter inflow, shortening lengths of stay, and sustaining exits from homelessness.

Clutch worked closely with UNITY of Greater New Orleans, which manages HMIS and serves as the lead agency for the New Orleans Continuum of Care, to ensure accurate interpretation of data, appropriate assumptions, and alignment with local system operations. The data along with a series of workshop sessions with family providers ensured that the model reflected how families actually interact with the system and that projections were grounded in operational reality.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Provider and stakeholder input was a critical component of the modeling process, not an add-on. Throughout the analysis, assumptions about family needs, intervention effectiveness, and system constraints were tested and refined through direct engagement with practitioners and system partners. This input helped validate data findings, explain variation in outcomes, and identify where model results aligned—or conflicted—with on-the-ground experience.

Stakeholder engagement occurred through three in-person working sessions held in October 2025, January 2026, and March 2026, as well as a virtual session on March 31, 2026. Participants were asked to:

- Describe current system gaps and operational challenges
- Articulate a shared vision for a stronger, more effective family homelessness response
- Review and react to preliminary system modeling results
- Refine proposed strategies based on feasibility and implementation considerations

Feedback from these sessions directly informed how modeling outputs were interpreted and applied, shaping priorities related to diversion, rapid resolution, rehousing scale, aftercare, and housing access. In this way, system modeling served as a decision-support tool, while provider expertise ensured that resulting strategies were realistic, implementable, and responsive to local conditions.

This integrated approach—combining data-driven system modeling with sustained stakeholder engagement—ensured that the plan reflects both analytical rigor and practical insight, resulting in a roadmap that is aligned with proven system design principles, grounded in local experience, and focused on achieving lasting reductions in family homelessness. Stakeholders involved in developing this plan included the City of New Orleans Office of Homeless Services and Strategy (OHSS), UNITY of Greater New Orleans, New Orleans Women and Children’s Shelter, Hotel Hope, Covenant House, Salvation Army, United Way of Southeast Louisiana, and START Corporation.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

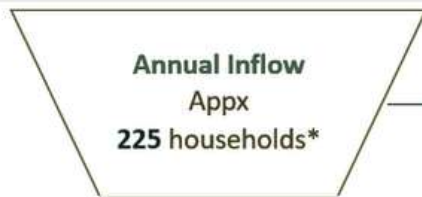
Annual Inflow

Analysis from the system modeling exercises show that far fewer families experience homelessness each year than single adults. Approximately 225 families enter the homeless system annually, and only a very small group – about 25 families – are stuck in homelessness for a year or longer. Among those who exit homelessness, 11% currently return to homelessness. The return rate is double (22%) for families who only use shelter and don't exit through a housing intervention.



THE DEMAND: How Many People Do We Need to Exit?

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ANNUAL NEED (FAMILIES – NON-VSP)



Annual inflow is defined as families entering or returning to the homelessness response system each year.

- 22% only use Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing and stay average of 2 months



Long-stayers are defined as homeless more than a year.

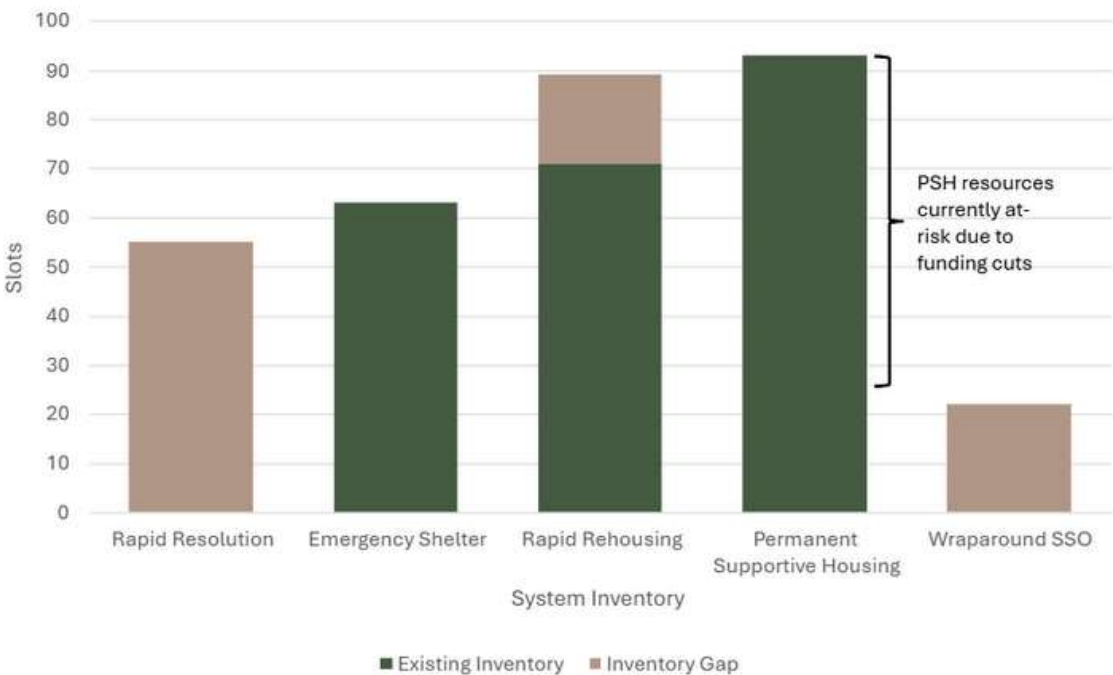
- Long-term homelessness is not a significant concern for families, but access to PSH for those who need it takes a long time and families take 6+ months to lease after enrollment

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling



System Resource NEEDS

Rehouse ALL long-term homeless in 2026 and annual inflow of 225 Family HOUSEHOLDS



The system modeling chart illustrates the resources required to rehouse all long-term homeless families in 2026 and to respond to an annual inflow of approximately 225 family households, comparing existing system inventory to identified gaps across interventions.

Significant gaps appear in Rapid Resolution and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Rapid Resolution shows a substantial inventory gap of 55 slots needed for the system to have capacity to quickly resolve housing crises for all families entering shelter. This gap directly affects the system’s ability to keep shelter stays brief and undermines the goal of rehousing families within 30 days. Rapid Rehousing also shows a meaningful gap between current capacity and modeled need. Expanded RRH is essential to moving families from shelter to permanent housing, shorten lengths of stay, and prevent returns to homelessness through progressive engagement and stabilization support. While PSH inventory appears substantial, the chart highlights that existing PSH resources are currently at risk due to funding cuts, creating vulnerability for families with the highest needs and increasing pressure on other parts of the system.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Emergency Shelter capacity appears relatively strong, with existing inventory meeting or exceeding modeled need. However, this imbalance underscores a system challenge: shelter capacity is more robust than the housing-focused interventions needed to shorten stays and reduce returns to homelessness. Without sufficient rapid exits, shelter risks becoming a bottleneck rather than a short-term crisis response. Approximately 5 additional slots of diversion/rapid resolution are needed each month to meet inflow demand on the system.

Wraparound supportive services (SSO) show a shortfall, signaling limited capacity to provide the ongoing support needed to sustain exits—particularly for families rehoused quickly with little or no ongoing financial assistance. This gap is especially concerning given higher return rates among families exiting shelter without ongoing support.

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Diversion/Rapid Resolution Program Model (Initial Framework)

Rapid resolution is an intervention designed to help families experiencing homelessness resolve their housing crisis as quickly as possible by leveraging natural support networks, addressing barriers, and providing one-time financial assistance if needed.

Program description	Families at the front door of shelter (before or after placement) are immediately engaged to rapidly resolve their crisis and return to housing. The focus is on identifying immediate, practical solutions that allow the household to exit homelessness quickly and safely. This approach begins with intensive, solution-oriented conversations to understand the family's unique situation, strengths, and potential housing options. Staff work collaboratively with the family to explore existing relationships, resources, and opportunities that could help them secure housing right away. Intervention may involve one-time financial assistance. The goal is to remove the immediate barriers preventing the family from stable housing.
Essential program elements	Problem Solving • Solution-orientated conversations upon shelter entry • Families and staff collaborate to explore and remove barriers to exiting homelessness • Mediation with landlords, family or friends • Help reconnecting with support networks • Connection to income, employment, and mainstream benefits • Access to available, family-sized units • Short-term logistical support to make a housing option possible One Time Financial Assistance • If needed, utilize one-time flexible financial assistance (e.g. transportation, application fees, deposits, groceries, etc.) • Connections to available units • Support from centralized team that partners with landlords and has a list of available family-sized units Connections to available units • Support from centralized team that partners with landlords and has a list of available family-sized units Aftercare when needed • Aftercare available during and after exit from financial assistance (regardless of duration of assistance) • Focus on stability through increasing income, housing stability, eviction prevention, and connections to behavioral health/medical health for all family members

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Diversion/Rapid Resolution Program Model Continued Rapid resolution is an intervention designed to help families experiencing homelessness resolve their housing crisis as quickly as possible by leveraging natural support networks, addressing barriers, and providing one-time financial assistance if needed.	
Time frame	• At front door of shelter (before placement or within first 3 days of shelter) • Rapid exit within 30 days
Population	Literally homeless families
Desired/expected outcomes	• Families in shelter exit within 30 days • 20% of all families in shelter exit with rapid resolution • Return rate among families assisted with rapid resolution is <10%

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Progressive Engagement Program Model (Initial Framework)

The Progressive Engagement approach helps families exit homelessness by starting with the least intensive support necessary and increasing assistance and service intensity only as needed, ensuring interventions that are responsive, flexible, and right-sized to achieve lasting housing stability.

Program description	The Progressive Engagement approach is designed to help families exit homelessness quickly and sustainably with “just enough” intervention. If a family is unable to exit shelter with the rapid resolution intervention, assistance may expand to include time-limited rental assistance, more robust case management, integration of behavioral health services, and/or transition to permanent supportive housing for families with the highest need.
Essential program elements	Real-time and Standardized Assessment of Stability • Assessment of barriers to lease-up or housing retention • Structured decision points to determine whether increased financial and/or service support is necessary • Ongoing review of progress Flexible Pathways • Ability to move between levels of support • No requirement to return to homelessness to access increased services or financial support • Seamless transfers from RRH to PSH when needed Financial Assistance • 3 months with progressive extensions (3,6, or 12) • Security deposit Service Integration • Case management focuses on housing retention and connection to mainstream services • Behavioral health, childcare, and other crucial services are leveraged through integrated partnerships. Aftercare • Aftercare available after exit from financial assistance (regardless of duration of assistance) • Focus on stability through increasing income, eviction prevention, and connections to behavioral health/medical health for all family members

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement & System Modeling

Progressive Engagement Program Model Continued The Progressive Engagement approach helps families exit homelessness by starting with the least intensive support necessary and increasing assistance and service intensity only as needed, ensuring interventions that are responsive, flexible, and right-sized to achieve lasting housing stability.	
Time frame	• Begins after rapid resolution has been explored and determined won't be sufficient to support family to exit homelessness to stability • Rental assistance tiers may extend 3, 6, or 12 months as needed • Aftercare is available to families even after they exit rental assistance
Population	Families in emergency shelter and families who have exited emergency shelter
Desired/expected outcomes	• Families exit shelter as quickly as possible with the minimum level of assistance needed • Resources are targeted efficiently • Reduced returns to shelter <%5 • Seamless transitions between housing interventions without additional episodes of homelessness

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 1 Key Implementation Tasks

Priority	Objective	Tasks	Subtasks
Expand and Formalize Family Access Points	Formalize multiple family access points	Establish in-person family access through the City's Office of Homeless Services and Strategy (OHSS)	• Define walk-in hours, staffing, and intake procedures • Train staff on family-specific triage and diversion protocols • Set up project and process to track services through HMIS
		Designate Covenant House as a formal access point for young families	• Establish referral and intake protocols aligned with coordinated entry • Train Covenant House staff on standardized family triage requirements • Set up project and process to track services through HMIS
	Align practices across access points	Implement shared expectations for information, triage, diversion, and referrals across all access points	• Develop shared access point protocols, scripts, and data collection • Establish ongoing coordination and quality assurance process

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 1 Key Implementation Tasks Continued

Priority	Objective	Tasks	Subtasks
Standardize Family Triage and Prescreening	Implement shared triage process	Deploy standardized family triage and prescreening tool at all access points	• Finalize triage tool and decision criteria • Train access point staff and monitor consistent use
	Screen for safety and household context	Ensure screening includes safety risks, domestic violence, and family composition	• Embed safety and DV screening into intake workflow • Establish referral pathways for immediate safety needs
	Differentiate housing status	Consistently distinguish between prevention-eligible families and those who are literally homeless	• Define clear criteria for prevention vs. homelessness response • Provide guidance to ensure consistent routing decisions
	Require diversion before shelter	Ensure problem-solving and diversion attempts occur prior to shelter placement when safe	• Standardize diversion steps and documentation • Monitor compliance with diversion expectation

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 1 Key Implementation Tasks Continued

Priority	Objective	Tasks	Subtasks
Strengthen Referrals from Community Connection Points	Clarify referral pathways	Develop and disseminate referral guidance for schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations	• Create simple referral guidance and contact lists • Disseminate materials and provide partner orientation
	Support warm handoffs	Provide partners with points of contact and tools to support warm referrals	• Establish direct access point contacts for partners • Develop templates and scripts for warm handoffs
	Prevent system bounce	Coordinate referral expectations to reduce families being redirected or turned away	• Clarify expectations across access points and partners • Address referral breakdowns through case review

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 2 Key Implementation Tasks

Priority	Objective	Task	Subtasks
Standardize and scale shelter diversion and rapid resolution practices	Reduce unnecessary family shelter entry by ensuring all families have an equitable opportunity to resolve their housing crisis without entering shelter	Implement a shared diversion and rapid resolution program model across all family access points	• Finalize shared diversion/rapid resolution program model • Standardize tools and decision criteria across access points • Train staff on consistent problem-solving and diversion approaches
		Apply diversion consistently prior to shelter placement, when safe	• Require documented diversion attempts before shelter entry • Provide guidance on safe alternatives to shelter • Monitor diversion utilization and outcomes in HMIS
	Resolve family homelessness quickly when shelter is necessary by ensuring shelter stays are brief and housing-focused	Standardize rapid resolution across all family shelters	• Embed rapid resolution practice in all family shelters • Designate staff responsible for rapid resolution • Align expectations that shelter is a short-term crisis intervention
		Concentrate rapid resolution efforts in the first seven days of shelter stay	• Front-load housing search and problem-solving activities • Create workflows that identify processes and staff roles • Track exits achieved within first 7 days

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 2 Key Implementation Tasks Continued

Priority	Objective	Task	Subtasks
Align flexible funding for diversion and rapid resolution	Remove immediate financial barriers so families can secure safe housing alternatives quickly and avoid prolonged shelter stays	Establish system-wide flexible funding policy	• Define eligible uses and spending limits • Clarify decision-making authority across providers • Set expectations for timely deployment of funds
		Streamline access to flexible funds across providers	• Develop rapid approval workflows • Ensure consistent access regardless of entry point • Train providers on fund use and documentation
	Maximize the effectiveness, equity, and accountability of flexible funding investments	Centrally manage and track flexible fund utilization and outcomes	• Centralize fund management and reporting • Track utilization, average cost, and housing outcomes • Assess impact on inflow, length of stay, and returns to homelessness

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 3 Key Implementation Tasks

Priority	Objective	Task	Subtasks
Activate the Rental Market for Families	Increase access to family-sized housing units to support diversion, rapid resolution, and 30-day rehousing	Expand capacity of the dedicated unit acquisition team within OHSS	• Leverage existing landlord relationships and market data • Prioritize outreach to landlords with family-sized units
		Proactively identify and match families to available units	• Maintain active, centralized inventory of available units • Coordinate unit matching with shelters and access points • Prioritize placements that support rapid exits from shelter
		Centralize landlord engagement and problem-solving	• Serve as single point of contact for landlords • Streamline leasing processes and documentation • Negotiate solutions related to credit, evictions, income, or unit conditions
		Reduce provider burden and promote equitable access to units	• Centralize housing search and landlord outreach • Ensure access to units is not dependent on shelter or provider • Allow providers to focus on family stabilization and income growth

Appendix D: Implementation

Strategy 3 Key Implementation Tasks Continued

Priority	Objective	Task	Subtasks
Aftercare Infrastructure	Ensure rapid exits within 30 days result in stable housing outcomes	Establish shared infrastructure to support aftercare	• Create shared pool of flexible funding for aftercare support • Define clear policies for use of aftercare assistance • Develop streamlined workflows for timely resource access
		Provide aftercare support following shelter or short-term assistance exits	• Deliver continued case management post-exit • Prioritize families exiting shelter with little or no financial assistance • Monitor early warning signs of housing instability
		Reinforce housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness	• Support budgeting, rent planning, and landlord mediation • Connect families to income supports and mainstream benefits • Address emerging challenges before crisis escalation
		Standardize aftercare approach and track outcomes	• Finalize standardized aftercare program model • Define duration, core elements, and expected outcomes • Track housing stability, returns, cost effectiveness, and time to stabilization in HMIS