



DC | DEPARTMENT of
HUMAN SERVICES

Diversion: A Key Strategy to End Family Homelessness

DC Department of Human Services

Interim Deputy Administrator

Evolution of the DC's Family Homelessness System

Context:

- Seasonal right to shelter policy in a private room
- Extreme shortage of affordable housing
- Single entry point: Virginia Williams Family Resource Center
- Shelter inventory: apartment-style, large congregate facility, overflow motels

Diversion as a Shift from Seasonal to Year Round Access to Shelter

The pattern influenced by seasonal access to shelter:

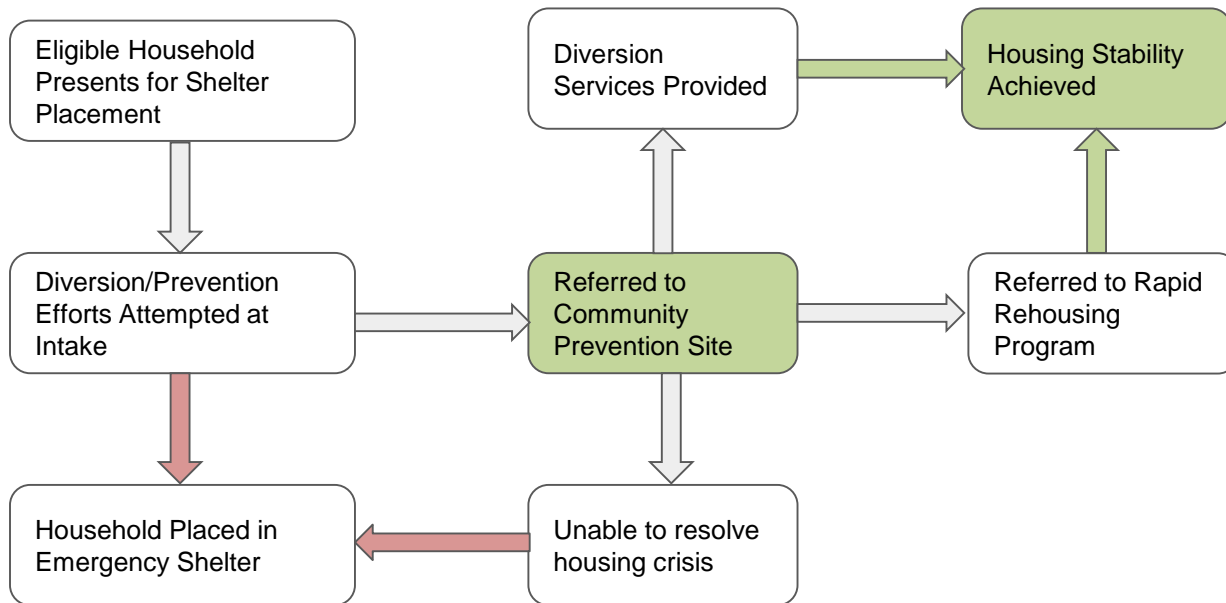
1. Prevented DHS from **offering quality services**
2. Allows family situations to get worse by **not meeting immediate needs**
3. **Incentivizes shelter placements** above diversion or prevention
4. **Deters families from exiting shelter** with anything other than a voucher
5. Undermines good will and **puts children at risk**

Modifications to Family System Components

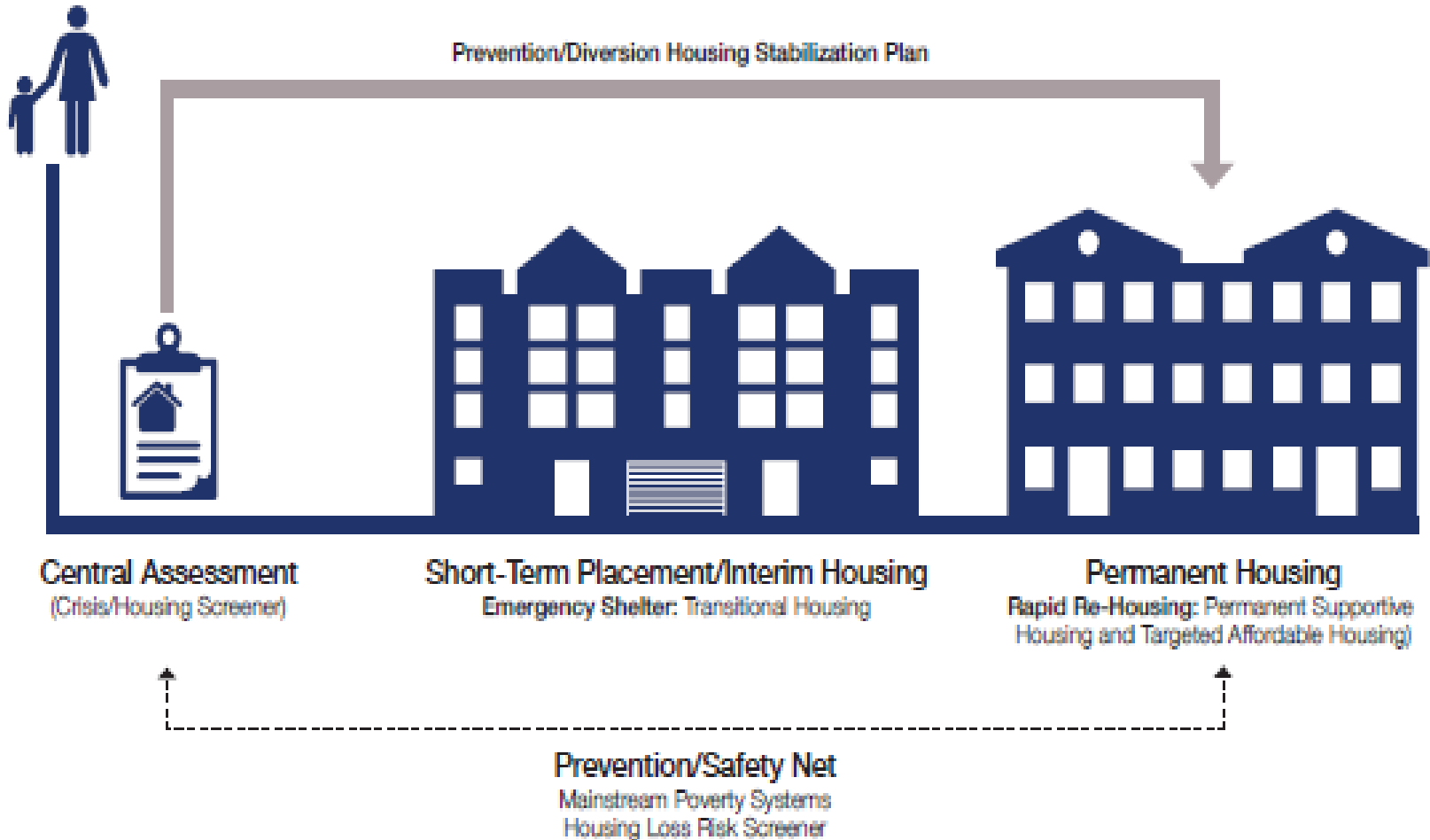
In order to more effectively serve families experiencing homelessness, DHS:

1. Launched **community-based prevention** services
2. Provides **interim shelter**
3. **Improved services** for families seeking housing

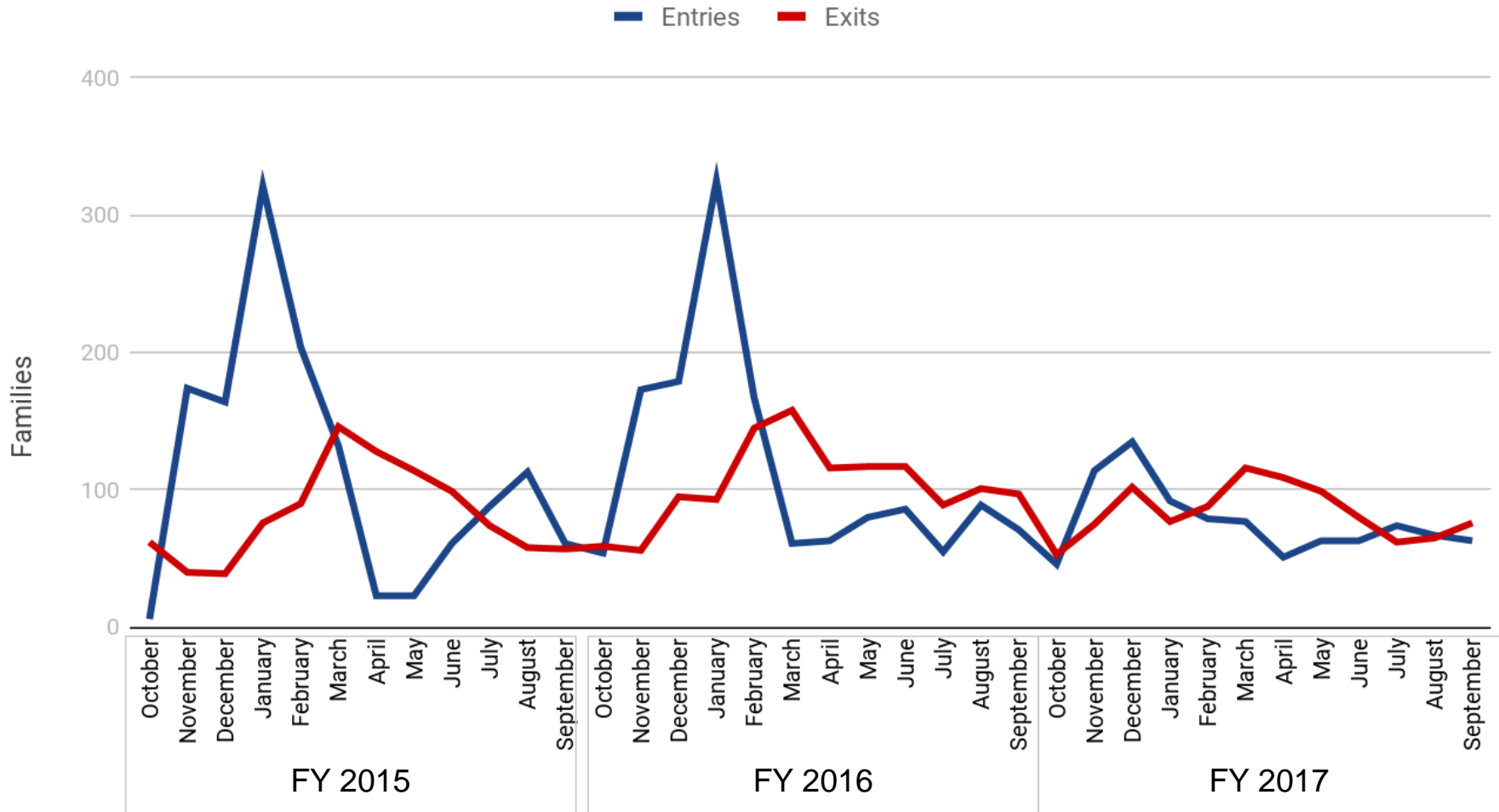
Diversion Process



Housing Continuum of Care



Impact on DC's Family Homeless Continuum



Funding and Collaboration

- The Homelessness Prevention Program is locally funded by the District of Columbia
- Existing Collaborations:
 - TANF Employment Services
 - DC Housing Court
 - Landlords
 - DC Public Schools
 - DC Housing Authority
 - Mental Health Service
 - Legal Service
 - Domestic Violence
 - Child and Family Services
 - Others

Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges:

- Last minutes intervention:
 - 65% of HHs have only 14 or less days stable housing
- Multiple barriers
- Shortage of affordable units

Opportunities:

- Lower motel utilization as emergency shelter extension sites
- Opportunity to launch a pilot Shallow Rental Subsidy Program (DC Flex)

Thank you!