



SUMMARY: Stable Families Pilot Program, Columbus, Ohio

Stable Families Pilot Program Goals:

- to help families who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless to remain in their homes or find stable housing (and therefore not enter the family emergency shelter system)
- and to promote school stability for children in enrolled families.

Program Design:

Stable Families was designed to be a relatively short but intensive program, providing families with case management, supportive services, and cash assistance to help them maintain a stable housing situation.

Results:

- 91% of enrolled families did not become homeless during the service period.
- 98% of enrolled families received case management services (e.g., budgeting assistance, landlord/ utilities relationship management and conflict resolution counseling).
- 76% received some financial assistance (i.e., money for rent or utility costs) by the end of the reporting period.¹
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews with heads of household who had recently exited the program identified the financial assistance and case management services as the most helpful aspects of the program, in addition to the empathic character of the Stable Families caseworkers.
- Of the enrolled families that exited the program during the evaluation period, 90% did so successfully (i.e., exited to permanent housing). And among those families that exited the program successfully, 95% did not enter emergency shelter during a one year period following their program participation.
- Most school-age children of enrolled families did not experience a disruptive move before OR after program entry.

Conclusions:

At the *programmatic* level, the Stable Families Pilot Program attained most of its logic model goals, which suggests its implementation was a successful one. And because the Stable Families intervention was more cost-effective on a per-diem basis than the intervention some of these families would have likely received if the program was not present (i.e., entering the emergency shelter system), and considering the fact that Stable Families leveraged over \$10,000 in additional support for its families from other community resources, one could argue that the Stable Families Pilot Program delivered reasonably good outcomes in a cost-effective manner.

¹ This report presents the evaluation data regarding the program for the period from April 7, 2008 to June 30, 2010.

Evaluation Tools:

- The “Barriers to Housing Stability Assessment” gauged the head of household’s rental, credit and criminal history; chemical and mental health; domestic issues; and income, employment, and education. This assessment tool was administered before families entered the program.
- The “Self Sufficiency Matrix Assessment” documented the head of household’s self-rated ability to provide for his or herself in three critical domains: economic, social-emotional and parenting. This tool was provided to the pilot grantees by the Ohio Department of Development and administered at program entry, exit, three months after exit, and six months after exit.
- CIS’ “Stable Families Program Assessment” captured additional information of interest to this pilot, including families’ top housing concerns. This tool was administered before entry into the program.

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for enrollment into Stable Families, a household must:

- contain at least one child under age 18,
- have a family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty level,
- and be at imminent risk of homelessness.
- Priority may be given to families that have a history of high residential moves (and associated student mobility) and families that have a history of involvement with Franklin County Children Services. As part of the pilot program, CSB contracted with The Strategy Team, Ltd. to provide a comprehensive evaluation of Stable Families.

Note: This summary is VCEH's analysis of REPORT TO COMMUNITY SHELTER BOARD:
FINAL ASSESSMENT OF CENTRAL OHIO'S STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM, October 4, 2010.
To view the full report, visit www.vceh.org/ prevention