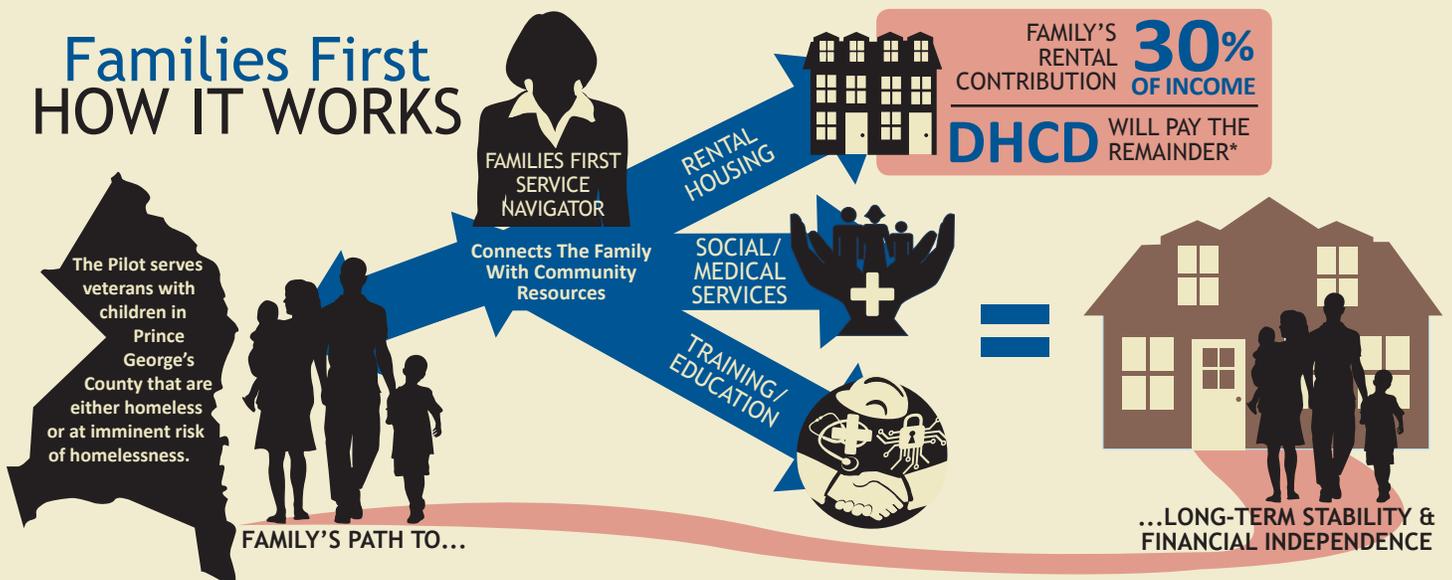


Families First Program

Families First is a new pilot program, in Maryland's Prince George's County, designed to support military veterans with families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The program starts by meeting a family's housing needs first. Upon this foundation of a safe and secure home, Families First works to enhance participants' ability to access the full spectrum of services they need, when they need them, and over time, move to self-sufficiency, stability and dignity. With generous support from the **Freddie Mac Foundation** and with Service Navigation provided by **Friendship Place**, the **Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development** is creating a new framework for the support of military veterans to ensure that those that served are able to receive the support they deserve.

Families First HOW IT WORKS



Families First breaks new ground in people-focused care with an innovative approach that supports participants' move to long-term stability and independence in three ways:

- 1** Temporary rental assistance* from DHCD to ensure that the primary challenge of housing security is resolved.
- 2** A Service Navigator to ensure that veterans are able to access supports and services in a timely and coordinated way.
- 3** A written agreement, signed by participants, that articulates specific outcomes and goals as part of a journey to independence.

**After the family contributes 30% of income towards rent, DHCD will provide rental subsidies to cover the remainder for up to 3 years.*

WHY DO WE NEED THIS PROGRAM?

Too often, Military Veterans with families, who are in need of help, fail to receive the support they need and deserve. Critical gaps in care may occur when programs that are designed to meet the needs of individuals do not take into account the full needs of a family. Other problems arise when services and support programs designed to address a particular problem area are undermined by a lack of housing stability, forcing participants to abandon their progress to address immediate and critical needs, such as shelter and food security, for themselves and their families. And a focus by agencies on effective service delivery may not address the complications of hand-off and transition to related or follow-up services, particularly where special needs of Veterans and families make it difficult to maintain continuity of care.

While the focus of this pilot program is Military Veterans with families, it is evident that this model has potential for broader use in serving the needs of other groups with similar needs.

WHAT MAKES FAMILIES FIRST UNIQUE?

Families First is a pilot program, initially available to eligible Veterans in Prince George's County, Maryland, that focuses on transitioning families to self-sufficiency by providing housing support, helping participants with customized "Service Navigation" and creating a contract agreement between the program and the participants articulating their goals and the program's objectives and obligations. In contrast with other programs that deliver a single type of support, Families First provides a solid housing foundation for the participant families, as well as expert service navigation that ensures continuity of care, effective handoff between programs, timeliness of services and the integration of multiple supports to address the inherent complexities of each family's unique situation. Families First does not add to the spectrum of high-quality services currently available to Military Veterans that address specific needs, but instead creates a lattice of opportunity connecting multiple service areas to help each participating family help themselves towards independence and dignity.

WHO IS SUPPORTING FAMILIES FIRST?

Families First is a program provided to eligible Military Veterans by the State of Maryland, through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), with financial support provided by a generous grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation. Since secure housing is at the core of the sustainability and success of Families First, DHCD will pay short-term rental assistance for a period of up to three years. Friendship Place, a non-profit currently working with veterans in Maryland's Prince George's County, will provide Service Navigation to the Veteran participants, which will connect participants with community resources such as workforce training, career development, childcare, and transportation.

WHO CAN I TALK TO TO GET MORE INFORMATION?

VENDORS AND OTHER PROGRAM PARTNERS:

Contact Friendship Place:

Emily Bell,

Service Navigator

EMAIL: EBell@friendshipplace.org

PHONE: 202-248-2801

FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS:

Contact the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD):

Karen Ashby,

Assistant Director, Office of Community Programs

EMAIL: karen.ashby@maryland.gov

PHONE: 301-429-7521



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor



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