



HOMECOMING

Child Welfare Housing Reunification Pilot Program Overview

In response to the passage of SB 5718 two years ago (<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5718-S2.SL.pdf?q=20210416115637>), DCYF is contracting with Reliable Enterprises in Lewis County, and is working with Reliable Enterprises to spread this program throughout Region 6, which includes Clallam, Jefferson, Mason, Grays Harbor, Thurston, Pacific, Lewis, Skamania, Cowlitz, Clark, & Wahkiakum Counties.

HOMECOMING is designed to provide housing supports and case management services to families in the child welfare system whose last barrier to reunification is a lack of affordable, appropriate housing.

- Reliable Enterprises has been providing housing and housing services since 2008 focusing on vulnerable and at risk individuals and families.
- Our services include management of Section 8 Vouchers, TBRA Vouchers (short term, program specific), and VASH Vouchers (Veteran Vouchers), Navigation services that connect clients with housing resources, rent and utility support, Employment Services, and Rent Well Tenant Education
- Through the ***HOMECOMING*** program, Reliable Enterprises will further develop and expand our collaborative housing strategies with community partners and existing child welfare services to promote family reunification and stability.
- Once housing is obtained, Reliable Enterprises ***HOMECOMING*** Case Manager will assist families with the understanding that “a place to live is just the starting point.”

HOMECOMING (Between now and the end of the grant period in June, 2022) Case Management will focus on long-term stability through identification and provision of:

- Financial assistance; Non-Refundable Pre-Housing fees such as credit checks and/or application fees, move-in costs, capped rental and/or utilities for three (3) months at a time, deposits, transportation assistance with fuel or transportation vouchers, and health and safety supplies/equipment such as cleaning and laundry, first aid
- Critical Success Factors;
- Family Goals and Progress;
- Reflecting on what success means to them and connecting stability through sustainability; and
- Focusing on prevention of housing-related obstacles.

HOMECOMING Residential Services will reflect the needs of the client to provide long-term stability through:

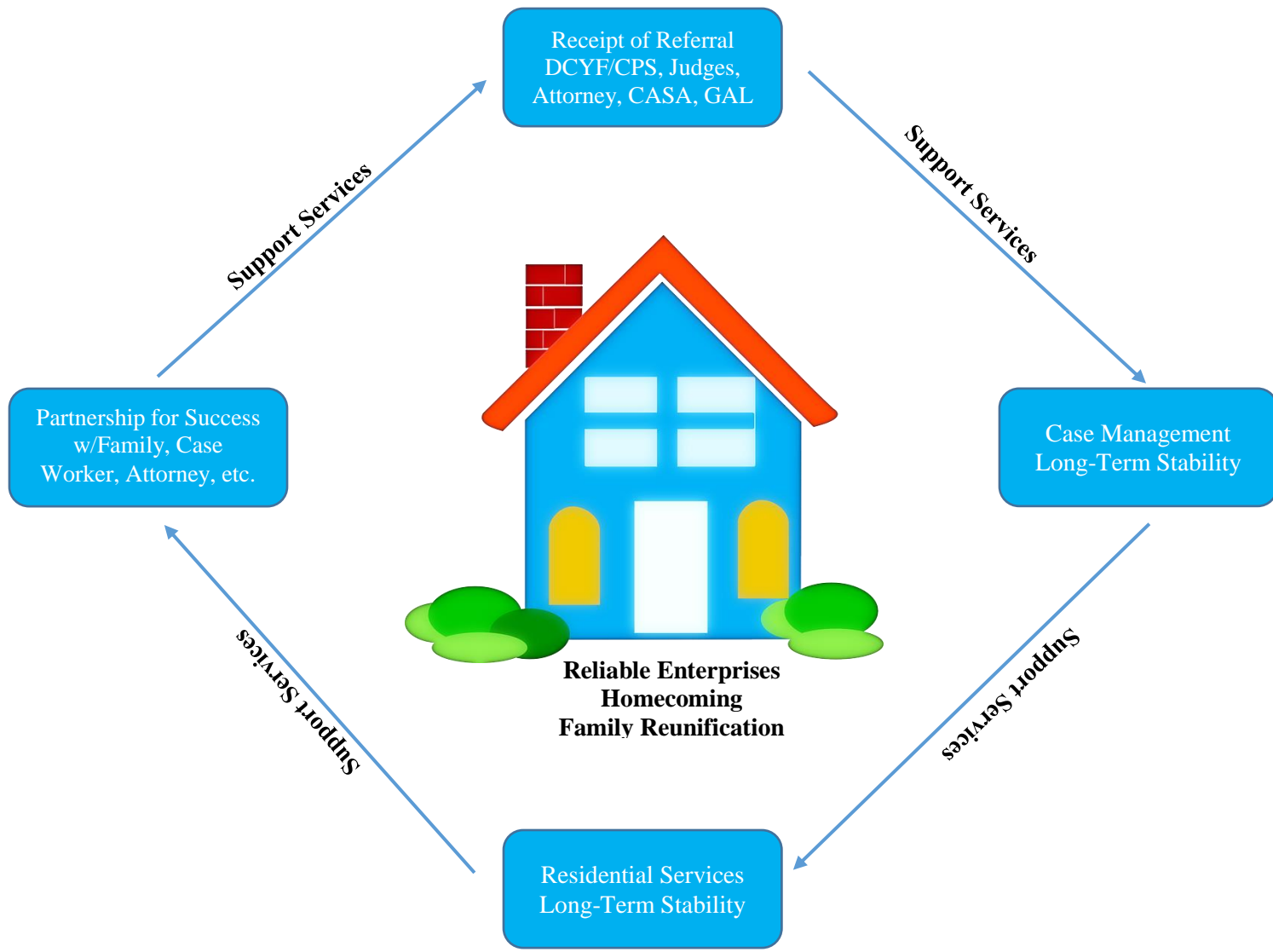
- Regular participation in Tenant Education through the Rent Well program, developed by the City of Portland, Oregon and now run by Transition Project. Through Rent Well families learn and reinforce the skills necessary to be good renters and partners with the property owner.
- Employment Services to support parents finding and/or maintaining employment.
- Referral to high quality Early Learning Services and Supports. Reliable Enterprises is the Local Lead Agency for Early Support for Infants & Toddlers (ESIT) and the grantee agency for Lewis County Head Start. Both internal programs have strong family/parent supports that reinforce stability for children and families.
- Life skills education to support household routines for cleaning, laundry, cooking and meal prep on a budget, first aid/CPR.

HOMECOMING Program Coordinator and Case Manager will partner with Region 6 Child Welfare Caseworkers, Judges, Attorney, CASA, GAL, and Parent To Parent representatives to receive referrals for families who have an open child welfare case.

- Reliable Enterprises ***HOMECOMING*** seeks referrals for families who meet these criteria.
- Program Coordinator and Case Manager will regularly “staff” families with the families “team” – Caseworker, Attorney, etc. - reflecting on success, growth and progress.

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

- ***Cyd Huston***; Program Coordinator Cydn.huston@reliableenterprises.org 360-736-9558 ext. 113
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Homecoming Family Reunification Program

(SB 5718 Child Welfare Housing Assistance Pilot Program)

Frequently Asked Questions

<i>Who is eligible for the program?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families with a child in dependency as defined by RCW13.34.030, where housing is the last barrier to family reunification.• There must be a minimum of 1 child in Foster Care, awaiting return home, at the time of the referral.• The parent(s) must have some source of income. This could be a job, SSI, inheritance, etc. There is no specific minimum income amount required, however the parents must show that they can contribute to rent and other expenses related to running a household.• The parent must agree to attend and complete the Rent Well Tenant Education Course. This course is free to the parent but graduation is required.• The parent must agree to participate in ongoing case management which includes regular check-ins from the Homecoming Case Manager assigned to the parent as well as ongoing Goal Setting.
<i>How is Eligibility determined?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once a referral is received the Program Coordinator will call the Office Supervisor to confirm minimum requirements are met.• The Program Coordinator will get clarification where needed and the referral will be scored based on level of need.• Families will go onto the waitlist in order of Score (length of time on waitlist will be taken into account)• The waitlist will be updated every 3 months.
<i>It's a pilot program; does that mean it's only available in one area?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Pilot Program will start in Lewis County and slowly expand to serve Region 6.• After Region 6 is stable, there is a possibility of expansion into other regions depending on funding and availability of staffing resources.

<p><i>Who can submit referrals for the program?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare Workers • Lawyers • Guardians Ad Litem/ CASAs • The Courts • There must be a consensus that the family is ready for reunification.
<p><i>What is the Referral Process?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a filled out Referral form to familyreunificationpilot@reliableenterprises.org If you are a Social worker, please note you will need your supervisors signature as well as approval from your Area Administrator. • The Program Coordinator will then follow up with the supervisor/area manager for the correct county to confirm eligibility. • Once Eligibility is confirmed, you will receive an email confirming the family has been accepted into the program. • Then the Program will reach out to the family to begin the intake process.
<p><i>What housing support services are offered to the families?</i></p>	<p>Services provided by the Case Manager and/or The Homecoming program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meal planning • Budgeting • Rent Well Tenant Education • Time Management/scheduling assistance • Fostering of Landlord/Tenant communication • Advocacy • Financial Assistance – to obtain vital documents like Driver’s license, birth certificate etc. as well as other emergent financial services. <p>Services available to participants of the Homecoming Program on a referral basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education including Head Start and In-Tot • Behavioral Health Services • Drug & Alcohol treatment/counseling • Life Coaching • Education – GED and continuing Education • Employment Services • Financial Education/planning • Housing Vouchers (based on eligibility) • Household Goods vouchers good at the Reliable Enterprises Thrift Store for clothing, home supplies and other necessities.

<i>How long are the housing support services offered?</i>	<p>Once the referral has been accepted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 24 months or to the end of the Pilot • The housing support case management is available to families even after the dependency is closed.
<i>What happens after a family is done with this program?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the family is stable and financially self-sufficient, they will be exited from the program. • Families can always reach out back out to the program if they require further assistance.
<i>What are the Goals of the program?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are equipped with the tools to be successful and stable in parenting. • Cultivate successful Renters who are able to grow in independence. • Parents are meeting and exceeding their personal development goals. • Parents feel supported in their transition out of the child welfare system • Parents have someone to go to if they have questions about navigating the future without Child Welfare involvement.
<i>How will you know when the goals are reached?</i>	<p>Families will show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Stability • Child is returned home and stable for minimum of 6 months
<i>What happens if the housing voucher requires ongoing support?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the voucher the family is using is in one of the Reliable Enterprises properties and the Program Pilot is not extended, the family will be switched as soon as possible to a different voucher. • There is a possibility of finding alternative case management if needed.
<i>When does the Pilot End?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June of 2022
<i>What would it take for the pilot to become an ongoing program?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative funding for housing supports & intensive case management. • State-wide adoption of the program

<p><i>What are Reliable Enterprises' hopes for this program?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help create stability for the families we serve. • To create community connection • To see the children in our community flourish. • To reduce the recidivism rate for children returning to care by supporting parents as their children transition back to their full time care. • To see families decrease their dependence on government funded programs and subsidies.
<p><i>How does it fit with other programs for families experiencing homelessness, or child welfare?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program meets a specific need that the voucher programs from HUD have not yet been able to address. The Vouchers from HUD only take into account the number of current household members. If the children are not returned to the home, they cannot be counted on the voucher. This means that the family cannot qualify for a unit with enough space to satisfy the state for a trial return home. This cycle keeps families from becoming whole for far too long and runs counter to the State's goals for families.
<p><i>What happens if someone is in child welfare in one county but housing is only available in another county?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be addressed on a case by case basis. Moving from one county to another would mean that the county the family moves to would have to add them to their caseload. We want to avoid this wherever possible. However, if this must happen, it will be done only with the approval of the Area Administrator for the county the family intends to move to.
<p><i>What if different referral sources have different opinions about family readiness?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this occurs, an FTDM will be requested to address concerns and come up with a plan to move the family forward.
<p><i>Is this available for EFC kids?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this time, this program is not available for Extended Foster Care.

<p><i>What are the case management responsibilities?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Homecoming Case Manager will work with the family to come up with individualized goals which will lead the family toward independence. • Some examples of the types of goals the Case Manager will help with are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Obtaining GED ◆ Obtaining financial assistance through voucher programs, tax assistance etc. ◆ Assisting the parent in engaging childcare and school arrangements. ◆ Connection to community programs and classes. ◆ Assistance with setting up and maintaining household routines including cleaning and dividing up the chores based on age appropriate tasks.
<p>What incentives are available to Landlords through the Rent Well program?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a student graduates from Rent Well, depending on location, the landlord can apply for certain incentives that can guarantee rent and/ or damages within the first year of the rental agreement with a Rent Well Graduate. • The current financial incentive for landlords in the state of Washington is extremely limited. Currently Lewis County does not have an incentive fund tied to its classes, however, the benefits from the classes include many not monetary incentives. • The Rent Well Class will train students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify potential screening barriers. ◆ Understand how and why a landlord will screen them. ◆ Review important personal records; such as credit, civil, and criminal reports ◆ Create an individualized plan for stable housing ◆ Build a household budget that makes paying rent a priority ◆ Review rental agreements to understand common terms and expectations, including the importance of communicating with landlords about home repairs and how to effectively communicate those issues to ensure further damage does not occur. ◆ Understand the landlord's perspective ◆ Communicate effectively with neighbors and landlords ◆ Move-in and move-out of rental units in a professional manner ◆ Understand the eviction process and how to avoid it ◆ Maintain a clean, safe, and healthy home

Washington State Regions & Counties



Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
Adams	Benton	Island	King	Kitsap	Clallam
Asotin	Columbia	San Juan		Pierce	Clark
Chelan	Franklin	Skagit			Cowlitz
Douglas	Kittitas	Snohomish			Grays Harbor
Ferry	Klickitat	Whatcom			Jefferson
Garfield	Walla				Lewis
Grant	Walla				Mason
Lincoln	Yakima				Pacific
Okanagan					Skamania
Pend Oreille					Thurston
Spokane					Wahkiakum
Stevens					
Whitman					