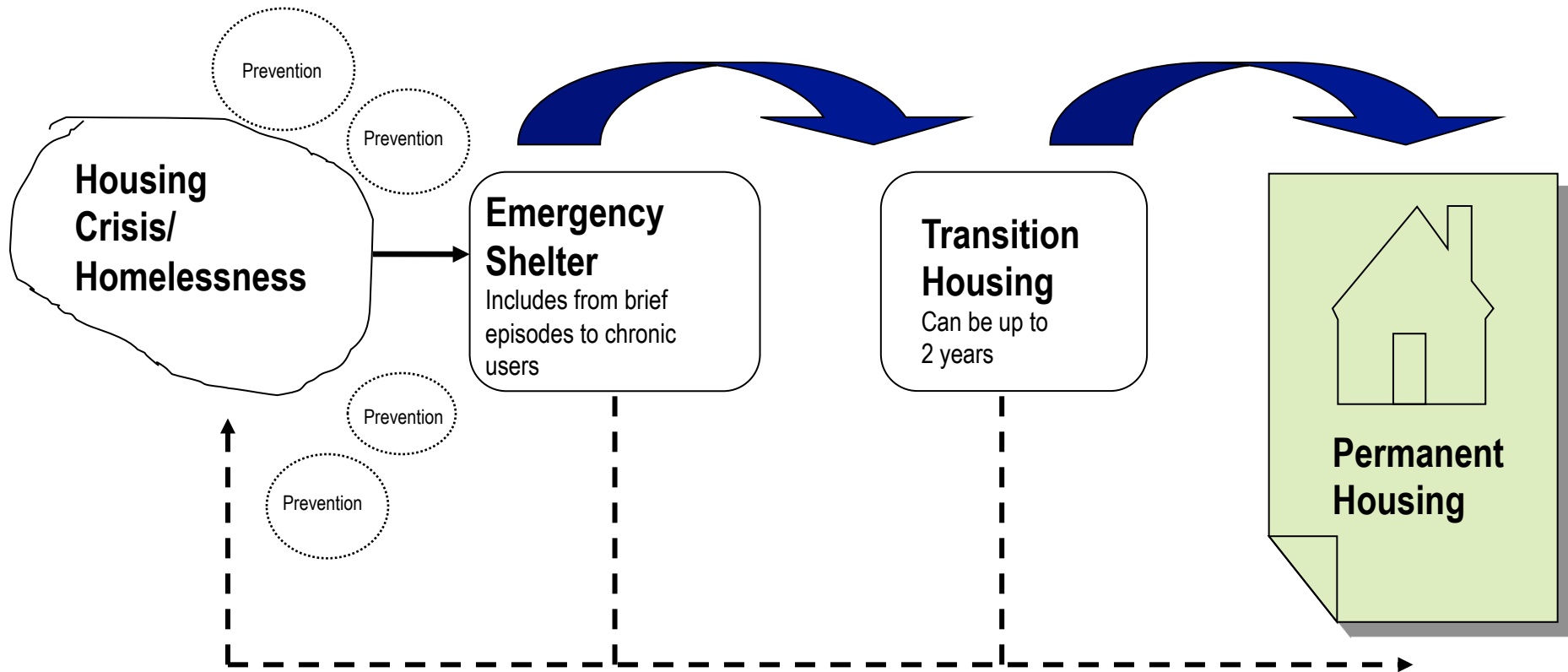


# Implementing Meaningful System Change

# Old System: Manages Homeless in Shelters



## PROBLEMS WITH CURRENT SYSTEM:

- Assessment of need not made uniformly
- Prevention services are not targeted; unclear whether assistance prevents homelessness or not.
- Homeless people move through multiple sites before reaching housing stability
- Services are inconsistent - determined by agency model as opposed to needs of those served..

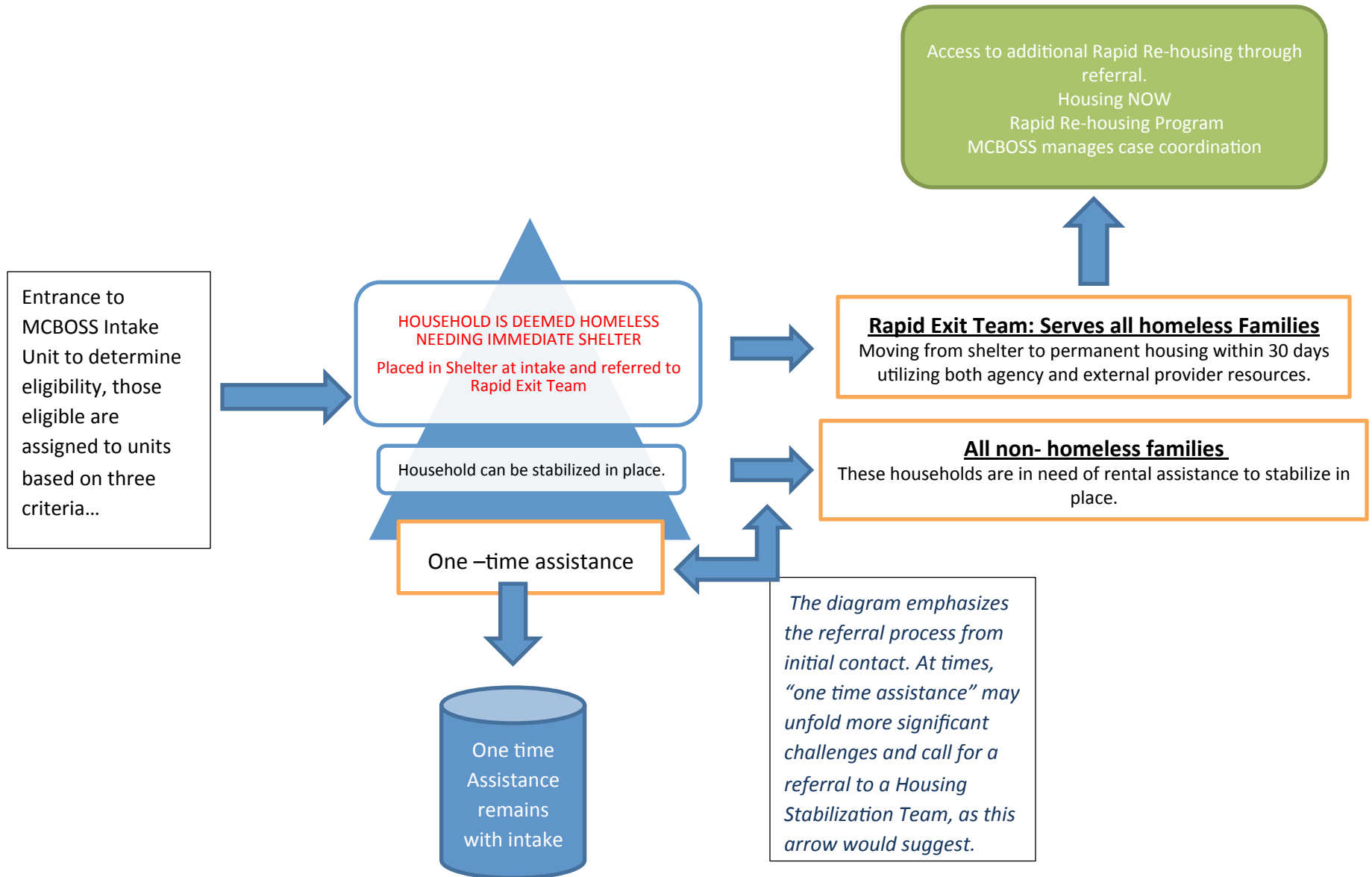
# New Direction/ New Unit at MCBOSS

MCBOSS has restructured one family unit to address the needs of homeless families. The **Rapid Exit** unit, completely reshaping how MCBOSS provides assistance to homeless families receiving TANF.

## **Rapid Exit...**

1. Rapidly rehouses homeless families and helps them exit from TANF, through employment.
2. Diverts families at imminent risk of homelessness by the use of the TRA and more intensive case management services.
3. Drives down rehousing costs by using existing MCBOSS staff to provide the services, while permanently housing families –  
**No new \$.**

# MCBOSS Internal Flow of TANF Referrals: Rapid Exit as Primary Goal



## Our Agreed-Upon Direction

- Reallocate public funds to pay for housing & services
- Match intensity & cost of services to intensity of need
- **House Individuals and Families as rapidly as possible**
- Wrap services around them in their homes

## October 2010 – Implementation of a pilot program

### The Family Housing Initiative

- In October 2010 the Mercer County Board of Social Services after 10 months as an active partner in the Housing NOW demonstration project, implemented the “Family Housing Initiative”, adopting many of the principles of Rapid Re-housing.
- The Board was inspired by what they saw as a more responsive and less expensive way to rapidly house families and have them exit off of TANF, through employment.
- This initiative was unique from Housing NOW, because the Board was able to not only serve homeless TANF families, but they were also able to divert families at imminent risk of homelessness by the use of the TRA and more intensive case management services.



## Advantages to Family Housing Initiative (FHI)

- By creating an internal program that included rapidly re-housing homeless families, the costs were driven down further by using existing MCBOSS staff to provide the services.
- The pilot program allowed MCBOSS staff to adopt the principles and experience the success for the families they served, by reshaping the way they provided assistance to TANF families.



# Family Housing Initiative has Served an 253 Families since April 2012

- 133 families are still using a TRA, while receiving case management services to increase income through employment.
- 120 families went off of TANF due to employment since the start of the Family Housing Initiative.
- Additional families have left TANF due to increase in income through other sources, e.g. child support, unemployment, acceptance into subsidized housing.
- Although difficult to track, initial analysis of \*outcomes for those homeless families served through the Family Housing Initiative looked similar to the results of the Housing NOW.

\*results not tracked in HMIS



## Challenges / Lessons Learned throughout First Year of the FHI Pilot

- While four Case Managers were initially selected to provide the more intense services of families needing to be re-housed (smaller caseloads, more intense services with Employment as the goal), the remainder of the staff continued to carry a caseload of over 100 that included a variety of household needs including those needing one time assistance, those in shelter and transitional, families and individuals on SSI, and many cases that were inactive.
- There was no FHI participation of data collection through HMIS, therefore making it difficult to track the outcomes of the Family Housing Initiative, in the same way outcomes were tracked for the other Housing NOW Rapid Re-housing Program.
- The Family Housing Initiative was serving families that were housed, as well as homeless families, therefore not experiencing the full potential benefit for homeless families.
- The staff, and MCBOSS management were clearly seeing benefits of the Family Housing Initiative, but looking to answer the question –

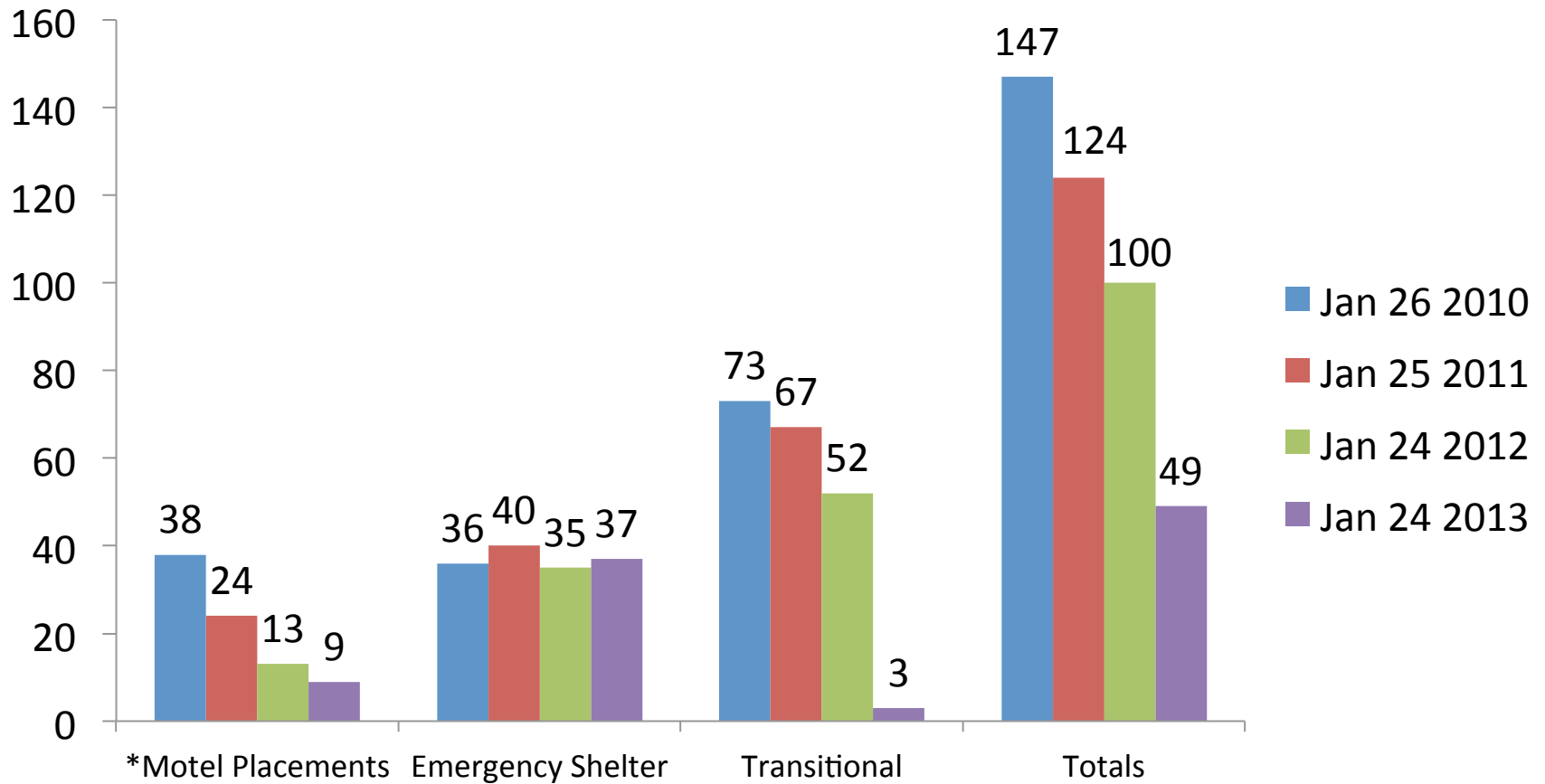
HOW DO WE EXPAND THIS INITIATIVE, USING ONLY EXISTING RESOURCES



## Increased Understanding of Social Work Caseloads & Prioritization of Homeless Families

- Increased understanding of intake and referral to Family Service units.
- Increased understanding of characteristics of active cases within service units.
- Closed 600 inactive cases
- Determined actual number of homeless families (about 23% of total caseloads)
- An approximate total of 1,000 cases on caseloads in the Family Unit (including a large number of *individuals* on SSI)

**In Program Census Data (as indicated by the HMIS) on Designated PIT Dates for 2010 – 2013**  
**Families placed in Shelter and Transitional**



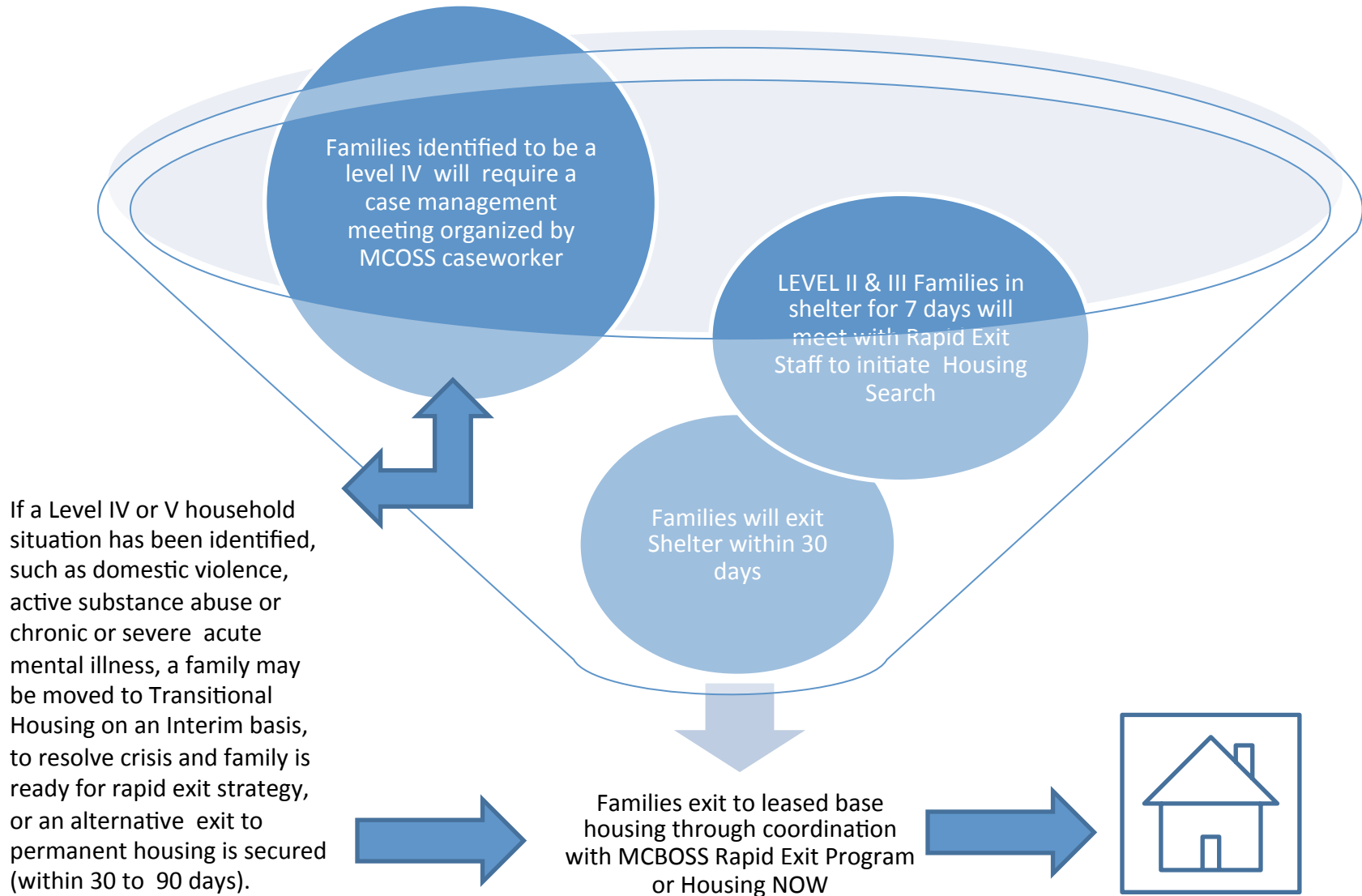
\*The motel stay count is provided by Mercer County Board of Social Services as payee for such stays. The numbers reflects **the month of January** for each year respectively.

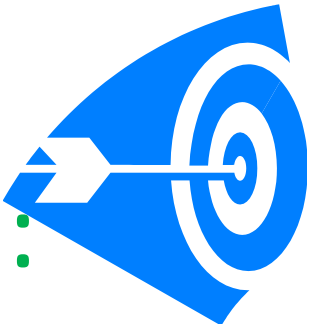
# “Going to Scale” With the Creation of the “Rapid Exit Team” Through MCBOSS Family Unit Reorganization

- The Rapid Exit Team, comprised of 11 staff people works with *all* homeless TANF families and provides intensive case management services.
- Working with *only* TANF Homeless Families.
- Smaller Caseloads
- All non-homeless households are with remaining MCBOSS Social Workers.
- *All* Caseloads are Smaller



# Referrals made to Shelter: The initial 30 days





## **With the Creation of the Rapid Exit Team:**

✓ Lengths of time in shelter have been dramatically lower (currently 54 days -- goal of 30 days or less).