

DURHAM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Housing Sprints

Time-Bound, Coordinated Pushes to Make Homelessness Brief

Why It Matters

A normal-paced system produces normal-paced results. Making homelessness rare and brief requires periodic, focused efforts that compress the housing process from months or years into weeks. Housing Sprints are how Durham accelerates throughput on a defined population, in a defined place, against a defined target. In February 2026, that looked like ten families displaced by a winter storm into hotel rooms — and, one month later, fifteen families with keys to homes of their own.

The Approach

A sprint is a 4-6 week, all-hands push that brings the system's existing assets into focused coordination around a specific list of households. It is not a new program; it is a synthesis. Sprints rely on, harmonize, and maximize the use of three of the framework's six core functions: the Flexible Housing Assistance Fund (the payments), Landlord Engagement (the units), and Housing Stabilization Case Management (the long-term support) — sequenced tightly around the same group of people at the same time.

Key Elements

- ◆ **A defined cohort and timeline.** A specific population — families, veterans, an encampment — and a specific date by which they will be housed. Durham's February 2026 family sprint targeted 10 households in 25 days and housed 15, plus three more into non-congregate shelter.
- ◆ **Pre-approved fiscal agility.** The Flexible Housing Assistance Fund's allowable-cost menu and one-business-day turnaround mean application fees, arrears, holding fees, and security deposits move when the deal does.
- ◆ **Landlord engagement at velocity.** The Owner Support Team activates in real time during sprints, with housing locators presenting 2–3 unit options per household and W-9s collected up front so payments don't stall.
- ◆ **Housing-focused case management from day one.** Each participant signs a participation agreement and begins a Housing Plan — budget, income strategy, 12-month path to full rent — within the same Housing Stabilization Case Management framework that carries them past sprint close.
- ◆ **Daily coordination.** Sprint leadership meets daily or near-daily to clear barriers, escalate stuck cases, and reassign capacity in real time. Sprints are not weekly meetings; they are concentrated pushes.

- ◆ **A clean handoff at sprint end.** Households housed during the sprint transition to their assigned HSCM provider for the 12-month arc. Those not yet housed continue through Coordinated Entry without losing their place.

Why Sprints Work

Sprints make the system act like a system. They show what the existing components — the Flexible Housing Assistance Fund, Landlord Engagement, HSCM, Street Outreach, and Coordinated Entry — can produce when sequenced around the same households at the same time, with a deadline. Each successful sprint becomes a proof point that the work is solvable, and a learning opportunity that improves the system before the next push.