

Wake Prevent! Program Redesign

BOC Affordable Housing Committee
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Wake Prevent! Program Goals



Support families through a one-time intervention including comprehensive case management and financial resources to maintain long-term housing stability



Offer early support to families in unstable housing situations by helping them navigate housing systems and connect with available resources to prevent crisis

Current Wake Prevent! Program

- **Services** – Financial assistance (rent and utilities) and case management support to prevent evictions
- **Eligibility** – Eminent risk of homelessness, doubled-up, rehousing, domestic violence survivors, families in hotels, individuals exiting facilities
- **Referrals** – Received through the Coordinated Entry System
- **History** – Launched in 2019 and expanded through COVID-19 to temporarily sustain housing and prevent unsheltered homelessness during the pandemic
- **Outcomes**
 - 9,117 referrals to program
 - 4,564 people served

Programmatic Challenges



**Delaying Inevitable
Evictions**



**Unsustainable
Program Growth**



**Dissatisfaction and
Burden**

Programmatic Challenges

Ineffective Housing Retention

- The **broad eligibility** allows financial assistance to households who are **likely to still face eviction** within a few months after our assistance.
- Of clients served, 22% return for homeless services within a 2-year period.
- **Not a solution for unsustainable housing.**



Programmatic Challenges

Burdensome System

- Accessibility
 - **Difficult** referral and application process
 - Overwhelming coordinated entry system
- Program Approach
 - Short-term, **transactional support** rather than fostering **transformational change**
 - Legal support limited
 - Lack of housing affordability has led to **staff and tenant dissatisfaction**



Programmatic Challenges

Misaligned Solutions

- Analysis from two point in time studies shows **55% of referrals** are **ineligible** for current program.
- Wake Prevent! intended to serve those with a **temporary cost burden**.
- Affordable housing or rental subsidy is the solution for households unsustainably housed.
- Currently the program does not prioritize those who reside in subsidized housing.



Wake Prevent! 2.0

Key Elements of Redesign

Early Intervention

System navigation assistance and connection to existing community resources

Eviction Prevention

Financial assistance and case management for long term housing sustainability

Legal Services

Coordinated provision of legal services to address tenant rights, payment negotiations, landlord mediation, and legal system support

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Key Elements of Redesign

Increased accessibility and removal of burden from coordinated entry

- Public-Facing digital access through Neighborly Platform
- Transparent real-time application process
- Marketing not only to residents in need, but landlords and magistrates
- Staff presence across Wake County (regional centers, Oak City Cares, agency offices, courthouse, etc.)
- Train agency staff to assist clients in applying for services
- Vetted referral to coordinated entry by system navigators only when necessary

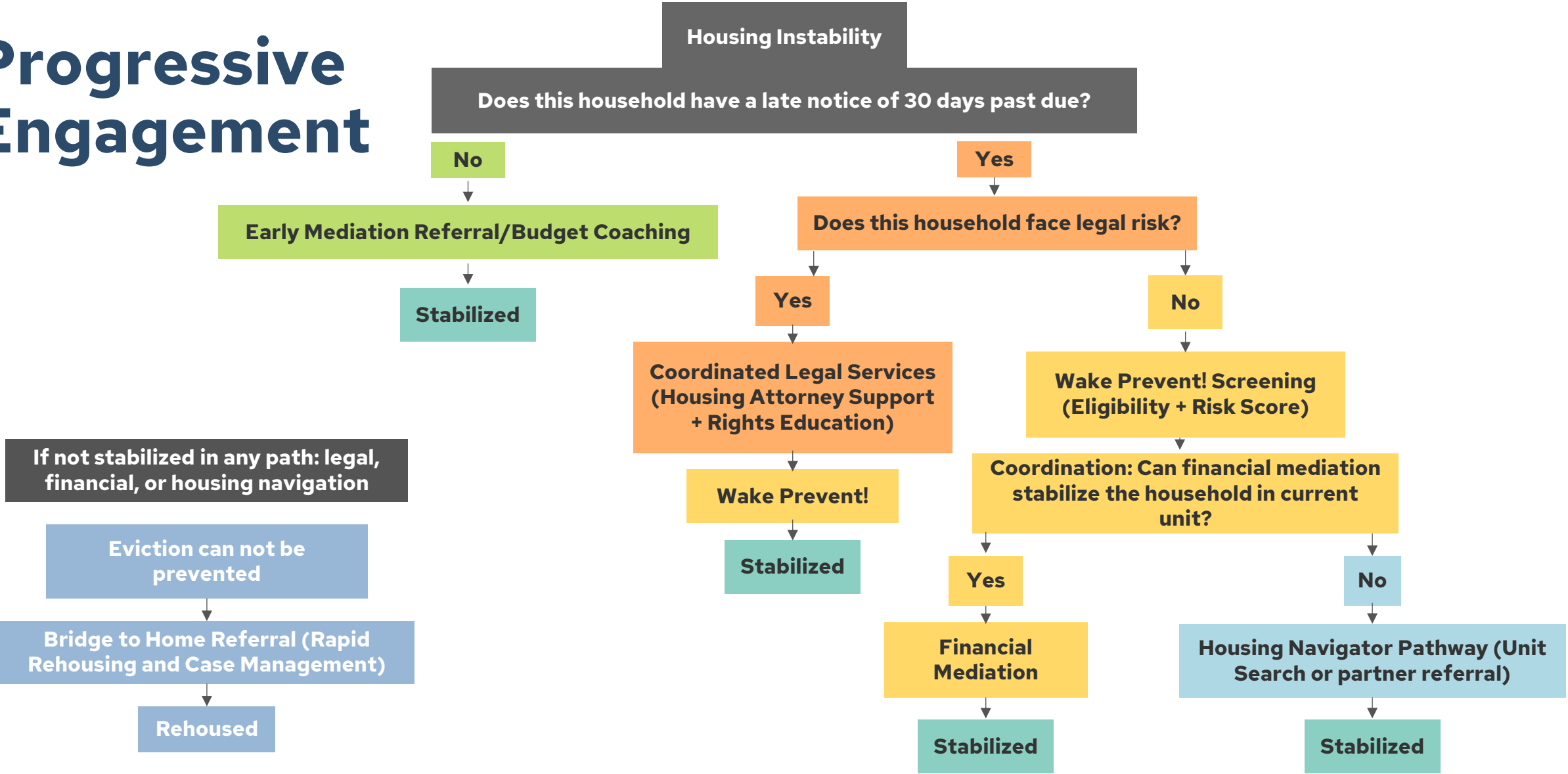
Wake Prevent! 2.0

Key Elements of Redesign

Refined Program Criteria

- At least 30 days past due with a late notice or demand letter
- Lived in current unit for more than 90 days
- Rental arrears no more than 3 months and under \$5,000
- May only receive assistance once every 3 years
- Must score above an 18 on Housing Stability Screening
- Prioritize those in legally-binding affordable housing

Progressive Engagement



Takeaways

Adding Coordinated Legal Supports

- Collaborative partnerships

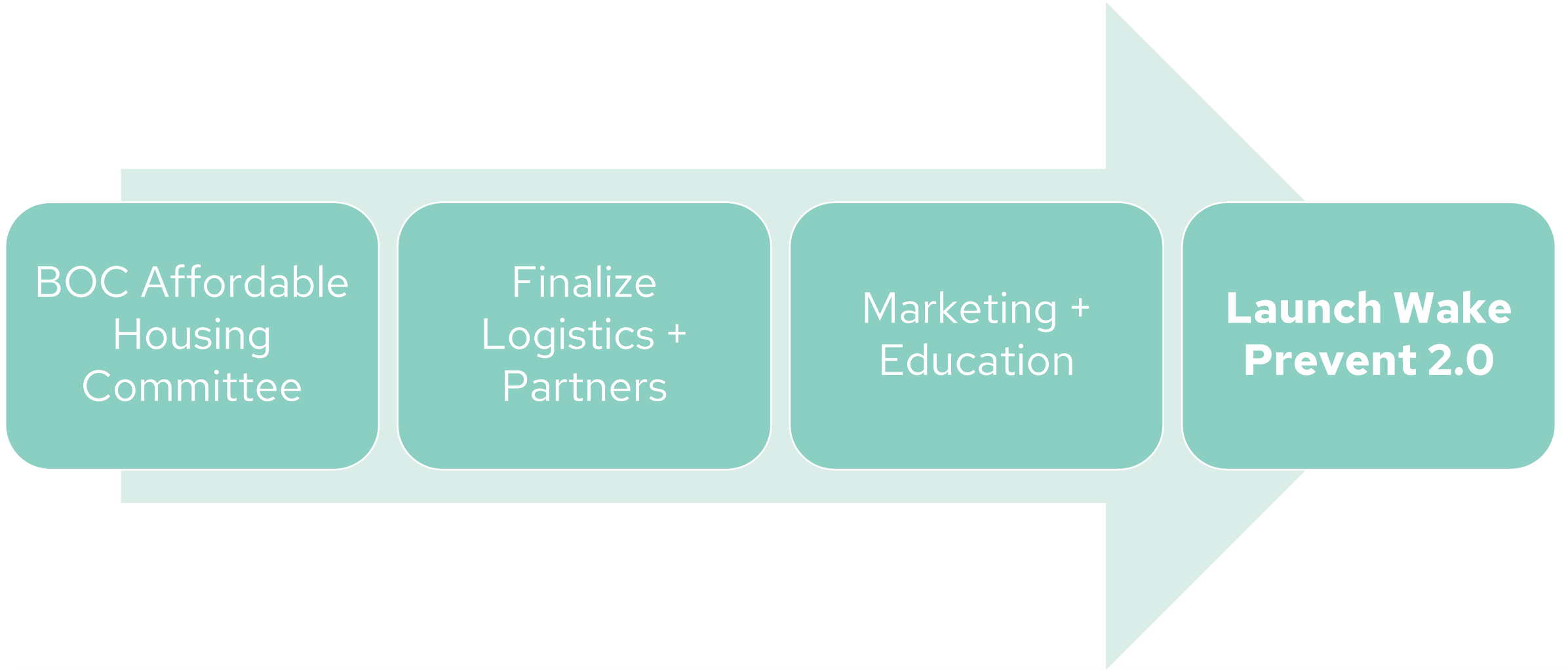
Programmatic Shift

- Narrowing eligibility criteria
- No anticipated budget impact

Broadening Access to Referrals

- Triaging to reduce homeless system burden

Timeline





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