



Diversion – Moving Towards Creative Problem Solving

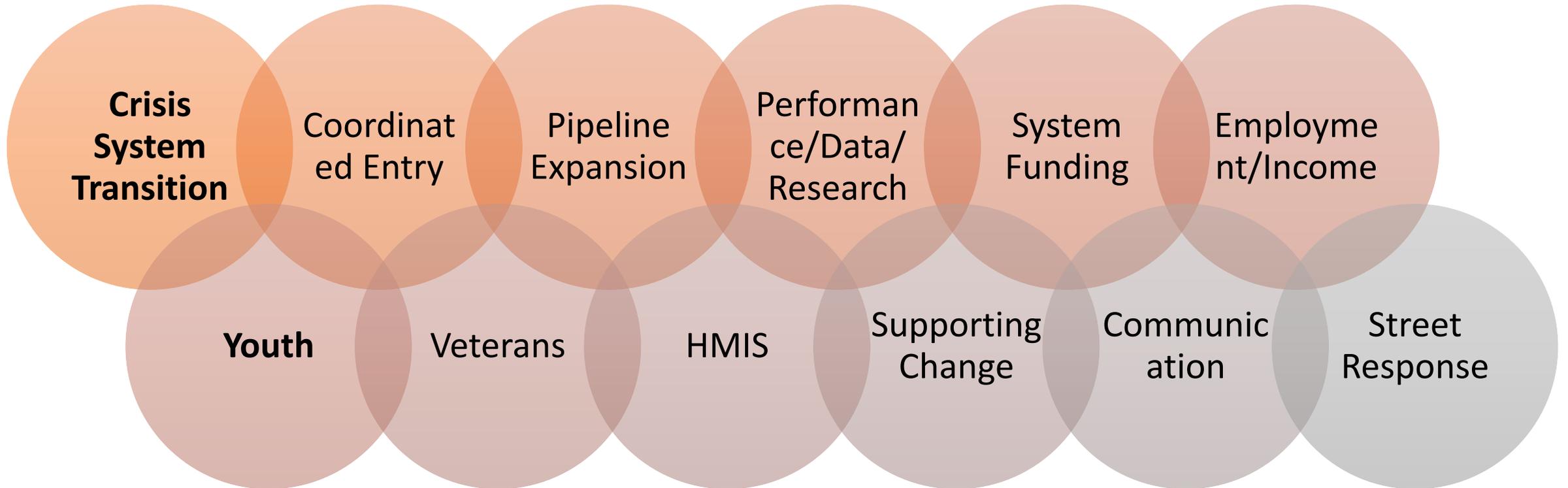
A system-wide approach to Diversion



Overview

1. Intro to a system wide approach
2. What is diversion?
3. The difference between prevention, diversion, and self-resolve
4. Evidence for system change
5. Current diversion practice
6. Cleveland Mediation Center training and trainers
7. System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Workgroup who's who
8. System-Wide Diversion Strategy – the work in progress

System-Wide Approach





What is Diversion?

- Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.
- Effective diversion starts at the point of entry when someone is asking for shelter. It embraces the approach that households can be best served by having a creative conversation to assist them in finding another direction that prevents them from entering shelter
- A successful diversion program will improve the ability of a homeless assistance system to target shelter resources effectively.



What is Diversion?

- After the creative conversation, the services provided with diversion are services that organizations already have experience delivering.
 - connections to family or natural supports;
 - provision of financial, utility, and/or rental assistance;
 - short-term case management;
 - conflict resolution/mediation;
 - landlord/Tenant Mediation;
 - strengths-Based Case Management
 - connection to mainstream services (services that come from agencies outside of the homeless assistance system, such as welfare agencies) and/or benefits; and
 - housing search.

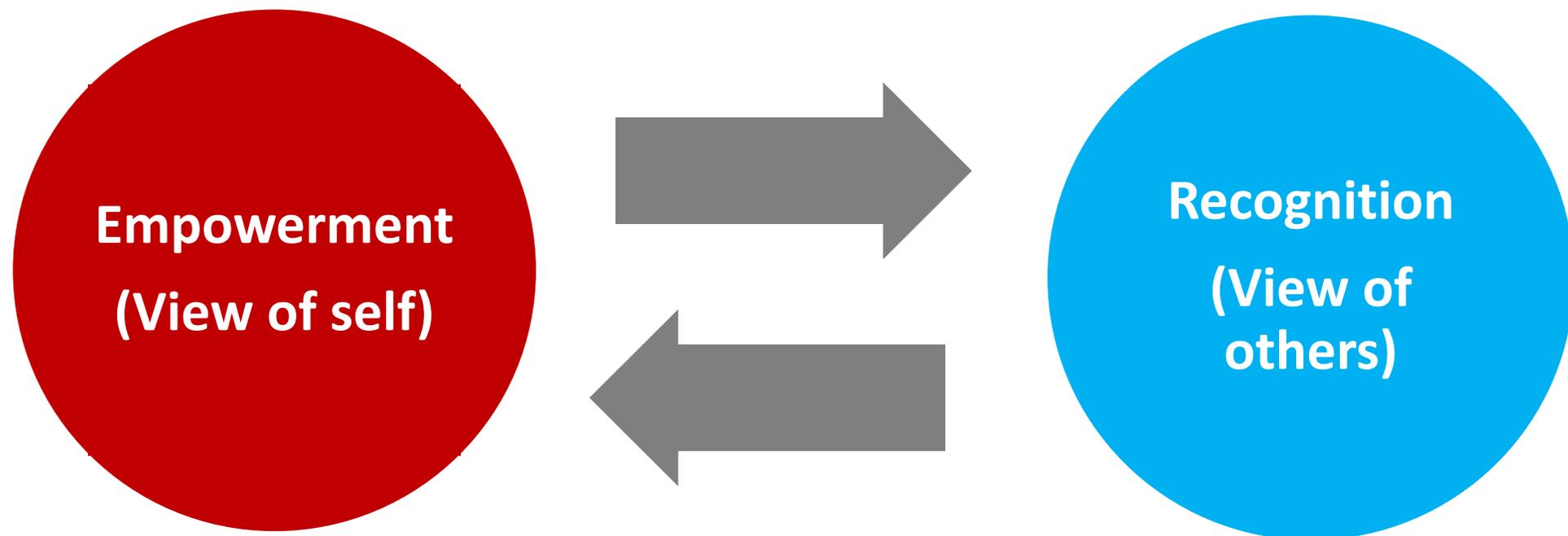


What is Diversion?

- A system strategy
- A conversation that fosters creative solutions for alternative housing options outside of shelters.
- Empowering persons facing imminent homelessness to identify safe and appropriate housing options (other than the street/car/shelter), and assisting them in avoiding shelter and returning immediately to housing
- **NOT** a barrier to shelter
- Focus is on empowering singles and families in crisis to begin regaining control over their situation and lives

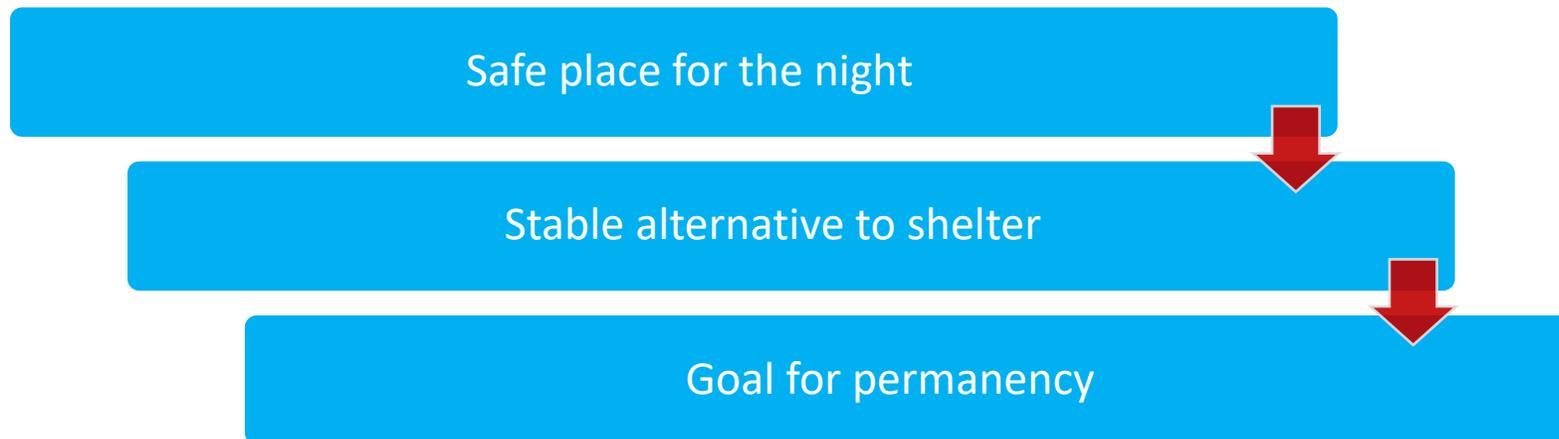
What is Diversion?

- Helping people feel empowered about themselves allows them to open up and engage in a more productive way with others (staff, family, landlords, employers, etc).



What is Diversion?

- A conversation with people to determine if it's possible for them to stay anywhere else that's safe, other than a shelter
- May include financial assistance that is used for food, local and Greyhound bus tickets, grocery and gas station gift cards, or utility assistance that can be used to help people stay with friends or family
- Possible funds for first months rent and deposit



The difference between prevention, diversion, and self-resolve



| Consumer's Housing Situation | Intervention Used | Services Provided (In All Interventions) |
|--|---------------------|--|
| AT IMMINENT RISK OF LOSING HOUSING (precariously housed and not yet homeless) | PREVENTION | Housing Search Rental Subsidy Other Financial Assistance Utility Assistance Case Management Mediation Connection to Mainstream Resources Legal Services |
| REQUESTING SHELTER (at the "front door" or another program/system entry point seeking a place to stay) | DIVERSION | |
| IN SHELTER (homeless/in the homeless assistance system) | SELF-RESOLVE | |

Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness

Evidence for system change – Local Results



- According to Catholic Charities Chicago
 - Youth Diversion there has been a 94% success rate of diverted young adults gaining stability and remain out of the shelter system after the 30 day follow up period
- 2014 Family Pilot conducted by Catholic Charities
 - Of the 255 families that had the diversion conversation, 94 of them were successfully diverted (37%).
- 2018 Family Pilot conducted by Salvation Army
 - Of the 456 families that had the diversion conversation, 20 of them were successfully diverted (about 5%).
 - We are currently waiting on information from HMIS regarding the percentage of families that may have returned to the homeless system.

Evidence for system change – National Findings



- In a June 2018 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness newsletter, Helen Howell, Executive Director of Building Changes: Among the families successfully housed through our diversion pilots, the vast majority (82.6%) did not return to homelessness within a year.
 - <https://www.usich.gov/news/extending-our-successes-with-diversion-to-help-families-quickly-exit-homelessness/>
 - https://buildingchanges.org/images/documents/library/2018_DiversionOverview_FINAL.pdf
- National Alliance to End Homelessness, August 2011 - Community Example: Columbus, Ohio: Columbus was able to divert more than one out of four families seeking shelter in calendar year 2010.
 - http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/training/front_door.
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness is now offering trainings on the topic: Emergency Shelter and the Critical Role in the Crisis Response System. The training focuses on how emergency shelters can align with a Housing First approach, as well as focus on helping clients exit back to housing more quickly.
 - Housing First approach; Diversion; Immediate and low-barrier access to shelter; Housing-focused services, rapid exits services; and Measuring outcomes to improve performance.
 - <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/what-we-do/training/>

Evidence for system change – Some Keys to Success



- Creative conversation that empowers the client
- Hiring the right staff – Emphasize candidates’ beliefs and attitudes, and have them demonstrate their skills during the interview process with staff providing crucial feedback
- Evidence-based tracking via HMIS (Service Point) helps demonstrate effectiveness
- Funding - Flexible dollars for bus tickets, food cards and ESG or other funds for rental assistance
- Chicago’s goal is to divert a percentage of clients entering the shelter system



**What does diversion look like in
Chicago?**



Current Prevention & Diversion Practice

| Eviction Diversion Program | HPCC/State Homeless Prevention Funds (SHPF) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents homelessness• Led by Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing• facilitates mutually beneficial agreements between tenants and landlords | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible State Funds• Used to prevent to resolve homelessness |
| <h2>Prevention</h2> | |

| Family Diversion | SSVF Rapid Resolution | Youth Diversion |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation Army - EHARC• Shelter Diversion• Mini-diversion assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shelter diversion for veterans• SSVF Providers at CRRCs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catholic Charities Funds Youth Diversion Specialist• Youth are referred by providers or identified on the One List. |
| <h2>Diversion</h2> | | |

Cleveland Mediation Center training and trainers



- Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) is a national leader in shelter diversion practice and training. The advocate for a conflict resolution approach to keeping people housed
- CMC came to Chicago on January 29-31, 2019 to provide diversion training and train-the-trainer training
 - 15 people received train-the-trainer training
- The System-Wide Diversion Strategy Workgroup is developing presentation and training plan to share knowledge system wide

System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Workgroup



- Catholic Charities MO
- Catholic Charities Diversion
- Salvation Army
- Center for Conflict Resolution
- Lawyers Committee for Better Housing
- U of C Poverty Labs
- The Night Ministry
- Lived Experience Commission
- Youth Action Board
- CSH
- Broadway Youth Center
- La Casa Norte
- DFSS
- All Chicago
- Northside Housing
- Deborah's Place
- VA/CRRC
- SSVF Providers
- Matthew House

System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Progress Report



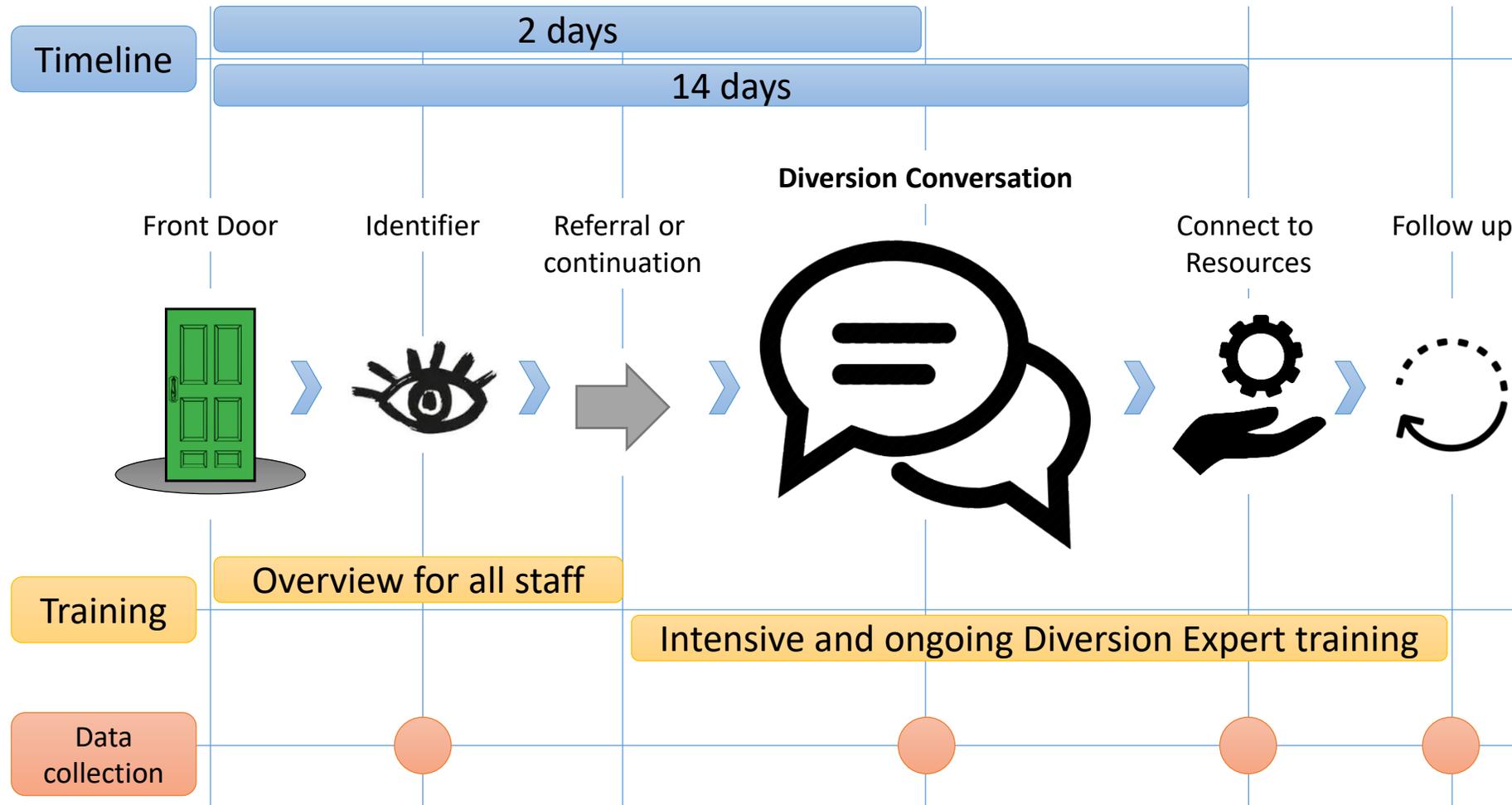
- The group has representation crossing all populations (Veterans, Youth, Families, Singles)
- Representatives from multiple lines of work, services providers, and research and knowledge partners
- Active role for both the Lived Experience Commission and the Youth Action Board
- We analyze, refine, create and formalize the diversion process and solidify methods incorporate diversion into the front end crisis system.
- Created work plan by asking questions
- Community driven approach to positive system change

System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Progress Report

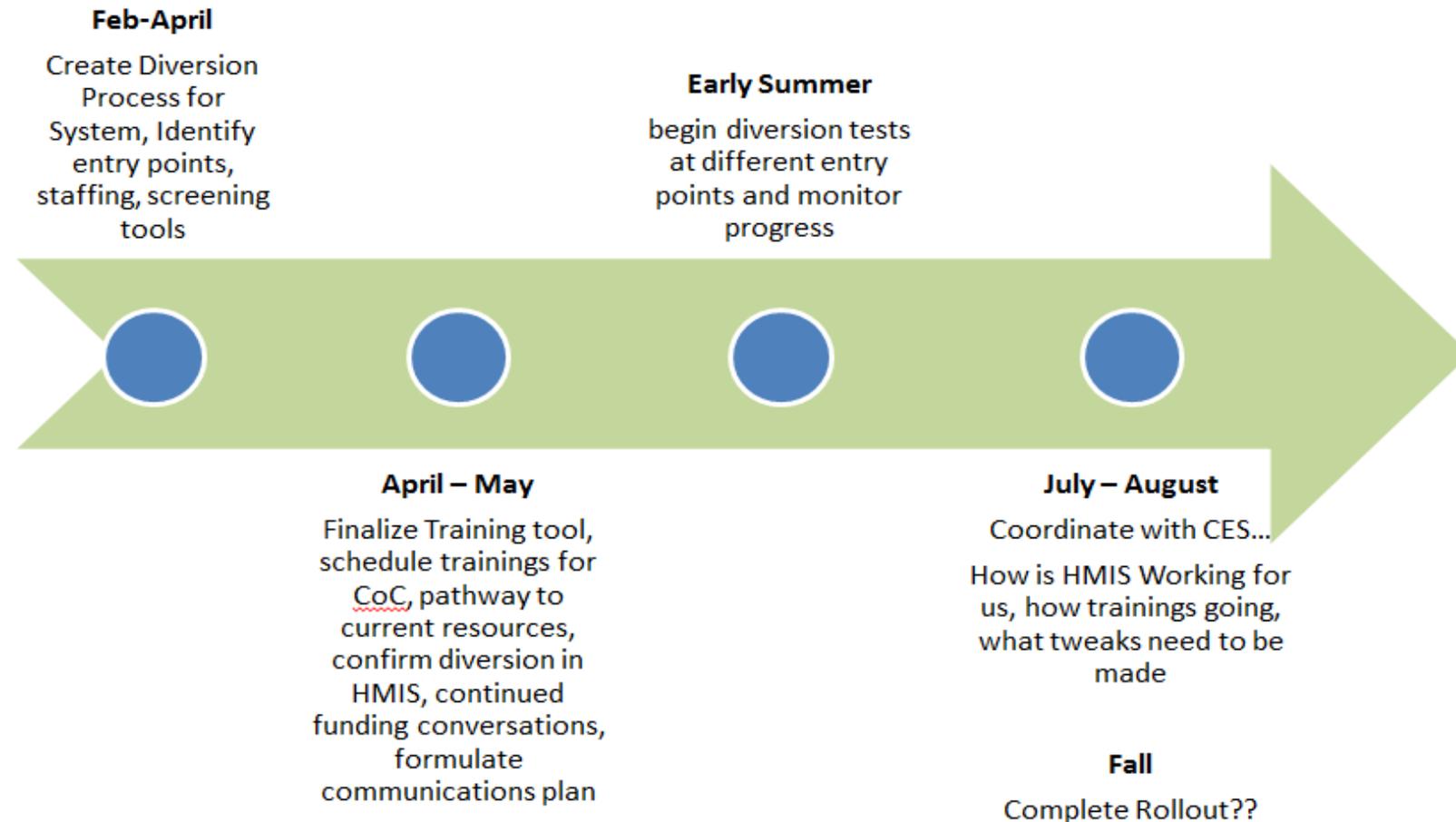


- What are the System Entry Points
- What will Staff Members Roles and Responsibilities be when we role out diversion system-wide
- What Screening Tool and Process are needed
- What Resources for Clients are needed
- How will we track Performance and conduct Evaluation
- What is the Communications Plan
- How do we Fund Diversion
- What tools in HMIS are needed
- How do we coordinated with CES

System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Progress Report



System-Wide Diversion Strategy – Progress Report





Thank You