

ACTION AGENDA

DIVERSION

NOW and BEYOND

What is Diversion?

- A strategy that helps people identify and access alternatives to entering shelter to resolve their immediate housing crisis and avoid homelessness.
- Is a service to help people avoid a shelter stay and resolve their immediate housing crisis
- Is not a denial or barrier to shelter entry and instead expands options to identify alternatives to shelter

Within the Diversion Process

- Creative Problem Solving Conversation to Identify Solutions to Immediate Housing Crisis
- Connections to Family and Natural Supports
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation
- Landlord/Tenant Mediation
- Strengths-Based Case Management
- Housing Search/Placement
- Connection to Mainstream Resources

When Should You Use Diversion Strategies?

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)	RAPID RE-HOUSING	

– National Alliance to End Homelessness

Why Diversion?

- Reduces new entries into homelessness
- Cuts down on number of clients waiting to get into shelter
- Stems inflow into the shelter system
- Reduces demand for limited shelter beds
- Improves system performance outcomes by reducing new entries and re-entries into homelessness
- Targets more intensive homelessness interventions and resources to be provided to those with higher needs who have no alternatives to a shelter stay

Diversion Workgroup Purpose

- Working with the Coordinated Entry System (CES), provide a roadmap for effective and appropriate shelter diversion activities which will quickly connect individuals and families with alternate housing arrangements and services.

Current Pilots

- Family Diversion Pilot
- SSVF Rapid Resolution Pilot
- Eviction Diversion Pilot

Family Diversion Pilot

- WHO: The Salvation Army emergency homeless assessment and response center (EHARC) or Shield of Hope provides families in crisis an assessment, compassionate support, and a referral to the program that best meets their immediate needs, including living with family or friends, shelter or other temporary arrangement.
- WHAT: Mini-diversion assessment for families that may be placed directly into shelter from the field and are not stepping into the facility.
- When: Began August 6, 2018
 - As of October 31, 2018 – 14 families have been diverted
 - 8 with Mediation, 6 with financial assistance for rent, travel or furniture

SSVF RAPID RESOLUTION

- WHO: SSVF Providers at the Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC)
- WHAT: The SSVF Rapid Resolution Pilot focuses on a diversion within the veteran population. The goal of the Pilot Project is to gather information about effective rapid resolution (diversion, rapid exit, reunification, creative housing, etc.) practices including the amount and type of financial assistance that contributes to a resolution of the housing crisis. Quantitative data is being gathered from Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS) and other sources to analyze the process and outcomes of Rapid Resolution. This information will inform the anticipated national implementation of Rapid Resolution by SSVF in early 2019.
- When: Since its launch on July 6, 2018, SSVF providers have enrolled 4 veterans into Rapid Resolution and have had a total of 9 conversations. Types of financial assistance include rental assistance, transportation vouchers or utility assistance and groceries.

Eviction Diversion Program

- WHO: The Eviction Diversion Program is a Continuum of Care initiative led by the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing.
- WHAT: The Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) helps tenants facing a short-term crisis avoid a harmful eviction judgment through resolution services, case management, and emergency financial assistance. In addition, the EDP educates stakeholders about the costs of and alternatives to eviction.
- By facilitating mutually beneficial agreements between tenants and landlords, the EDP will unburden the court and shelter system by stabilizing housing for individuals at-risk of homelessness. Both tenants and landlords can be referred to the program through a an eviction court judge or clerk. In order to increase accessibility for potential clients, the court has provided a space in the Richard J. Daley Center.
- When: Began October 1, 2018 – Since its launch approximately 11 referrals have been received and of those eleven, 6 have qualified for the program.

State Homeless Prevention Funds (SHPF)

- State government funds
- Cover security deposits, rent, mortgages, and utilities up to \$2,500 during a two-year period
- Payments are made directly to landlords or vendors
- 8 partner agencies provide eligibility determination and case management services
- Anyone needing financial assistance can dial 3-1-1 and ask for “Short Term Help” to get screened for a referral
- Impact: In FY 18, \$1,535,252.00 was distributed to 982 households.

Youth Diversion

- Currently provided and funded by Catholic Charities – Diversion Specialist
- The Youth line of work within the Action Agenda
- The Youth Diversion Work Group held 3 peer to peer conversation with Austin, Seattle and Minneapolis. Modeling youth diversion in Chicago after Seattle's approach
- Youth and adult supporter define success and goals for permanency
- Diverting youth should positively impact program outcomes
- Evaluation method should be included as part of program design
- Strong, clear evaluation supports advocacy for additional resources
- Communicating outcome promotes support within the system
- Training is key to diversion success

Youth Diversion

- Diversion is a system-wide practice, not a program

Principles

- **Youth Led – Youth Choice – Youth Directed**
- A Housing First approach
- For both unaccompanied youth and youth lead families

Safe place for the night

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graph TD; A[Safe place for the night] --> B[Stable alternative to shelter]; B --> C[Goal for permanency];
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Stable alternative to shelter

Goal for permanency

Follow-up – Aftercare

The Beyond

Creating diversion as a possibility system-wide

- At access points or “front doors” to the homeless system
 - Coordinated entry system access points
 - Shelters
 - Other places people are seeking homeless services assistance
- Training for within the CoC on Diversion
- Financial Resources

