

# Regional Task Force on the Homeless

## Understanding Diversion Principles

Tamera Kohler  
Chief Operating Officer



# Defining Diversion

- Diversion by definition is “the act of causing something or someone to turn in a different direction”.
- Diversion is not a “program” but an “approach” to solving a possible homeless episode by finding creative alternatives to traditional shelter intake or waitlist.
- The main difference between diversion services and other housing-focused interventions centers on the point at which intervention occurs.
- Diversion is primarily a problem solving conversation



# Diversion Approach

Diversion services target households or individuals that are requesting entry into the homeless system, most often at shelter or interim housing.

Focusing efforts on those who have not yet accessed emergency housing assistance, especially those experiencing first time homelessness.



# Diversion Approach

The communities that are seeing significant results from diversion strategies are communities that recognize a majority of households presenting for shelter are not literally homeless, but in many cases staying with family or friends.

These communities recognize that such households can be better served by not entering the shelter system.



# Diversion Conversation

- Focused on crisis resolution strategies
- Recognizes the needs for assistance in critical thinking through the urgency and the potentially devastating consequences of the situation.
- Calmly and quickly works through the crisis with a focus on alternative problem solving options outside of the homeless system.



# **Diversion Conversation**

- **Includes exploring any potential resources and natural supports a household may have to stay where they are currently residing or move to another housing opportunity including other family or friends housing.**
- **Act as mediator in the current housing situation to develop a resolution that can allow the household to stay.**



# Diversion Conversation

- **Informs and helps navigate other options of assistance that do not require a shelter stay, allowing for creative and cost-effective solutions to meet the household's needs.**
- **Offers minimal financial assistance**



# Diversion Outcomes

**Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness**

**Reduce demand on emergency shelter beds and other homeless services**

**Reserving these resources for households who have no other options**





## More Information

- USICH and NAEH encourage communities to include shelter diversion as an important part of Coordinated Access efforts.
- According to Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness: approximately 30% of those seeking shelter can be diverted with minimal mediation
- Those who are diverted do not become homeless again. And some 80 percent or more do not return to the shelter system.
- <http://cceh.org/diversion-report/>



## Contact Info:

**Tamera Kohler**

Chief Operating Officer

[Tamera.Kohler@rtfhsd.org](mailto:Tamera.Kohler@rtfhsd.org)

(858) 292-7627 x 40