



## RTFH Diversion Program January 2023

### **Overview**

Diversion is a best-practice approach intended to empower individuals and families experiencing homelessness to identify safe and appropriate housing solutions outside of the homeless dedicated services system. Effective Diversion strategies can divert someone away from a shelter stay or night in their vehicle into a housed situation, connecting people to resources to help them avoid the trauma of becoming homeless and/or entering shelter. The outcomes include permanent family reunification, permanent housing placement, and diverting temporarily as new housing is sustained, and/or relocating permanently to a safe place out of town.

To meet the challenge of having high demand but limited housing resources, communities have been encouraged to adopt problem-solving approaches to help individuals and families resolve their housing crises as quickly as possible without depending on dedicated permanent housing resources or subsidies. Diversion can look different for every person and is based on exploring immediate solutions and resources already available to a person and to determine a solution to their housing crisis. Diversion is characterized by light touch, client lead, flexible support, and may include financial assistance. To learn more about Diversion, please click [here](#).

Diversion assistance may include, but not limited to:

- Housing location
- Security deposit assistance
- Temporary rental assistance (including rent arrears\_
- Short-term case management
- Application fees
- Utility deposits and payments

### **Background**

In 2018, Diversion was identified as a need by the community when the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) hosted regional community engagement sessions. To address this need, RTFH contracted with Ed Boyte and colleagues from the Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) to provide training on Diversion strategies to San Diego Homeless Service Providers. Ed Boyte is a nationally recognized expert in employing strong mediation and conflict resolution practices.

Diversion training was paused in 2020 due to the public health pandemic, however, providers continued to engage in Diversion strategies and expressed the need for additional training, Diversion strategies specific to San Diego, and flexible funding to support their efforts. In 2021, RTFH contracted with Ed Boyte to provide additional training and support to the communities' train the trainer group and worked with providers to create a San Diego County specific Diversion training. In 2023, he will be working with people with lived experience to ensure training and strategies include people with lived experience.



### ***Training***

Diversion training is meant to provide staff with skills like mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution, active listening and strengths-based approaches to assist people with getting into a safe housing alternative. Training sessions included a train-the-trainer model to ensure we have consistent implementation and training on an ongoing basis across our region. Training is facilitated by RTFH staff and a partner provider and includes a 2-day (6-hour training on each day) interactive training. RTFH has hosted eight training sessions since November 2021. Training began monthly and is now quarterly, with 160 staff being trained, including staff from shelters, outreach teams, day centers, health centers and service providers as well as San Diego Housing Commission and the County of San Diego.

### ***Resolution Strategies***

RTFH piloted a flexible funding program in 2019 with Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) funding and expanded this program with Homeless Housing, Assistance Program (HHAP). Resolution Strategies is a flexible funding source to support Diversion strategies. Resolution Strategies can only be accessed by agencies who are recipients of RTFH Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) program funds for Diversion and/or Outreach activities are eligible to access. Visit [here](#) for more information.

### ***Summary:***

This summary illustrates the diversion programs currently in the CoC San Diego region. This report only captures specific diversion programs in HMIS or programs funded directly from RTFH and does not include diversion activities/services that may occur within the community through other programs.

***Time Period: June 1, 2019 – December 31, 2022***

### **27 Diversion Programs in HMIS:**

- 81% RTFH Funded with Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) and Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP)
- 19% Non-RTFH Funded (San Diego Housing Commission)
- 13 different providers throughout the region

### **Data for all diversion programs in HMIS:**

- 1,927 unduplicated clients served
- 1,462 households served

### **Living Situation Prior to Program Entry**

- 71% clients from homeless situations
- 3% clients from institutional settings
- 26% clients from other living situations (hotel, rental, staying with friends/family)
- 51% exits to Permanent Housing
- 15% return to homelessness



Top 3 services documented in HMIS Diversion programs\*:

1. Employment Services
2. Transportation/Car Repairs
3. Case Management

*\*Services calculated based on specific services that were tracked by certain providers*

### **Resolution Strategies Funds**

**Expenditures June 1, 2021-June 30, 2022: \$290,666.31**

#### **Top Expenses in RS Funds:**

- 1) Rental Assistance/Deposits;
- 2) Interim Hotels;
- 3) Transportation/Car Repairs

Average per client: \$1,488.83 spent per client in rental assistance/deposits\*\*

*\*\*Rough estimate based on invoice notes, was not able to look at each individual line items for every invoice billed.*

\*\*\*It is also important to note that this is an average cost and for some households assistance can be \$5-6k. Resolution Strategies does not have a cap on funding as long as it is justified and tied to a documented housing plan.

### **Funding Information**

#### **RTFH Federal Funds: HUD CoC Youth Diversion Programs**

The CoC Y (Youth Homeless Demonstration Project-YHDP) funds 4 youth providers: North County Lifeline, San Diego Youth Services, The Center, and the YMCA.

#### **RTFH State Funds (3 Different State Funding for Diversion)**

1. **Cal ICH Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP):** The Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) is a one-time funding opportunity intended to provide immediate emergency assistance to people experiencing homelessness or who are at imminent risk of homelessness in San Diego County. HEAP provides for one-time flexible block grant funds of \$18.8 million that was awarded to be distributed by the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) for San Diego county over the course of a 2-year period. This one-time funding is intended to provide immediate emergency assistance to people experiencing homelessness or who are at imminent risk of homelessness in San Diego County.

- o Year 1: June 1, 2019 – May 30, 2020
- o Year 2: June 1, 2020 – May 30, 2021

2. **Cal ICH Homeless Housing, Assistance Program (HHAP):** The HHAP funding is a block grant program designed to provide jurisdictions with one-time grant funds to support regional coordination and expand or develop local capacity to address their immediate homelessness challenges. Spending



must be informed by a best-practices framework focused on moving homeless individuals and families into permanent housing and supporting the efforts of those individuals and families to maintain their permanent housing.

- o Year 1: June 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022
- o Year 2: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

3. **Resolution Strategies Funds (RS):** HHAP Funding: Flexible funding to support problem-solving interventions that result in either temporary or permanent housing solutions (Diversion). Resolution Strategies funding is only available to RTFH HHAP grantees and their subrecipients. Visit [here](#) for more information.

- o Year 1: June 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022
- o Year 2: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

***Recommendations:***

RTFH recommends additional investments in the Diversion Program to expand and enhance Diversion Training and Resolution Strategies throughout the entire San Diego region. RTFH has allocated approximately \$1.8M in HHAP funding for consultant support, Outreach and Diversion Providers throughout the region, and flexible funding. The train-the-trainer model is an unfunded activity and is dependent upon homeless service providers staffing capacity. Therefore, additional investments would be needed to support the ongoing training needs of the community.