



Diversion Strategies to Meet the Needs of Homeless Families

Early engagement quickly moves families from the street to housing, avoids costly interventions, and frees our limited shelter resources for those who have no other option.

As a “front door” strategy, diversion:

- Engages families as early as possible;
- Draws on their strengths, resources, and resilience;
- Helps them avoid entering the homeless system;
- Reestablishes recent housing situation, when possible;
- Reduces long waitlists for housing.

As a community best practice, diversion meets HEARTH Act* goals to:

- Reduce the number of people homeless;
- Reduce the length of time spent homeless;
- Reduce returns to homelessness.

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- Reducing the number of families entering homelessness;
- Stabilizing families in permanent housing more quickly;
- Reserving shelter beds and other housing and services to those who have no other option.

Providers play a critical role.

Providers are already skilled at many of the services needed to make diversion successful:

They identify and work with each family’s unique needs.

They provide short-term assistance and partner with families on solutions that can include:

- Mediation and conflict resolution with landlords or family and friends
- Housing alternatives, such as shared housing
- Financial, utility, and/or move-in assistance
- Connections to other mainstream services
- Planning for long-term stability

**For more information, see Summary of the HEARTH Act from the National Alliance to End Homelessness at: <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/summary-of-hearth-act>.*

