

DIVERSION



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April 2019**

Objectives

Participants will:

- be able to name three key benefits of diversion
- consider how diversion will work in every community in the Balance of State CoC in GA
- have a clear path towards designing a locally effective system that meets the needs of people experiencing housing stability or homelessness



Overarching Principle

Our goal is to ensure that episodes of homelessness are rare, brief, and occur only one time.

The Definition of “Diversion”

Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connect them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing

GA BoS CoC

definitive

definitive /dɪ'fɪnɪtɪv/ *adj.* 1 (of an answer, verdict, etc.) decisive, unambiguous, final, conclusive, definitive
definitively *adv.* [Latin: related to *definire*]

■ **Usage** See note at *definitive*.

definite article *n.* the word (*the* in English) preceding a noun and implying a specific instance.

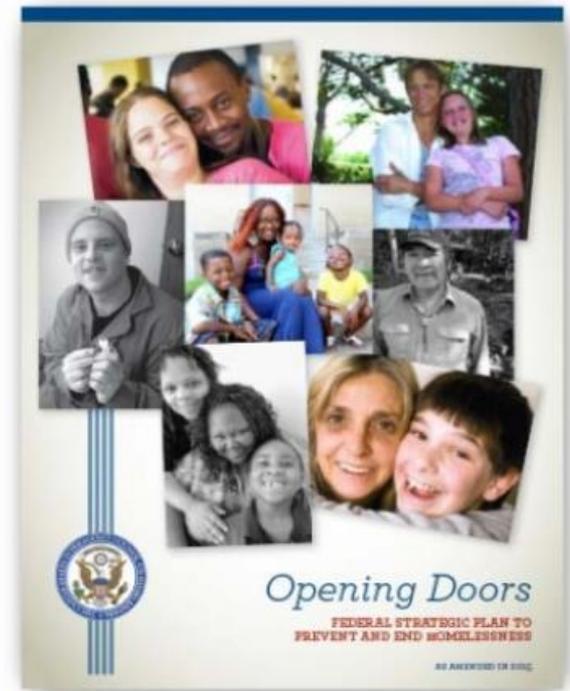
definition /,defɪ'nɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* 1 a definition
b statement of the meaning of a word, etc. 2 distinctness in outline, esp. of a photographic image. [Latin: related to *DEFINIRE*]

definitive /dɪ'fɪnɪtɪv/ *adj.* 1 (of an answer, verdict, etc.) decisive, unambiguous, final, conclusive, definitive
2 (of a book etc.)

Diversion from the National Perspective

One of the ten objectives outlined in the federal government's plan, Prevention and Diversion arose from "Objective 10."

Retool the Homeless Crisis Response System Objective 10: Transform homeless services to crisis response systems that prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness to stable housing.



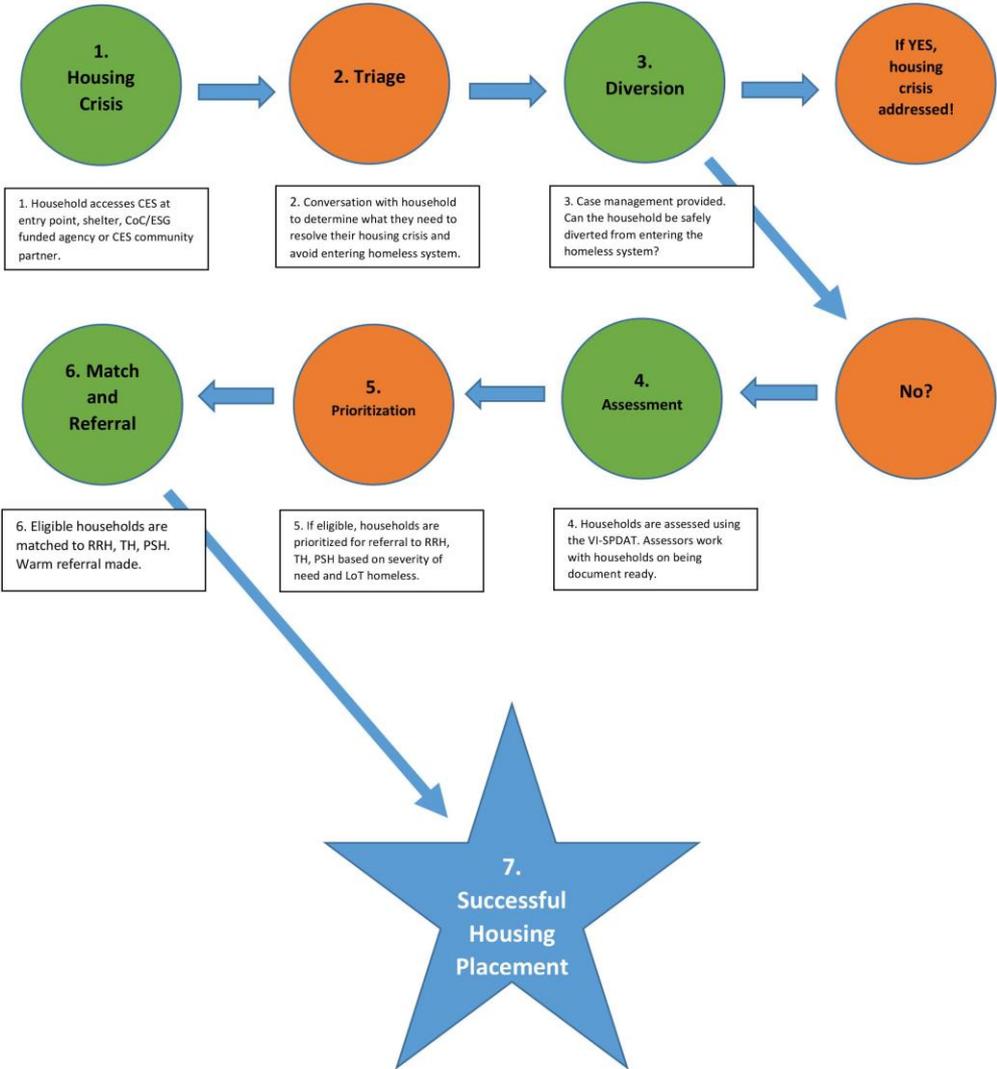
Why do we want to implement a diversion system?

- Experiencing homelessness is traumatic
- We can't end homelessness without a diversion system
- Some people don't need to go through the homeless service system to be successful

Principles of Prevention & Diversion

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Intervene to prevent the loss of housing when possible, and divert people from entering the homeless service system.

**Georgia Balance of State
Continuum of Care
Coordinated Entry System**



Group Exercise



Your Diversion
Experience

Diversion

- targets direct services to those who will benefit from them.
- allows communities and households to devise their own plans to prevent homelessness in their own regions
- takes the burden of “having all the answers” off of providers, allowing consumers to help design their own solutions.
- is good fiscal and social policy as well as good practice.

Diversion is not:

- A way to keep people from entering shelter.
- A method of lowering the 'need' for emergency shelter resources.
- A practice of simply turning people away.
- A strategy that asks households return to unsafe living conditions.

Group Activity

A full moon is the central focus, glowing with a warm, golden light. Two people are captured in mid-air, their bodies silhouetted against the moon. They appear to be jumping or dancing joyfully. The person on the left has their arms raised, and the person on the right has their arms outstretched. The background is a dark, starry night sky. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of grass and a tree branch are visible, adding depth to the scene.

Your role in Diversion and Coordinated Entry

KEY ELEMENTS OF DIVERSION

A Conflict Resolution Approach to Keeping People Housed

ADAPTED FROM:
CLEVELAND MEDIATION CENTER, DIVERSION: A CONFLICT RESOLUTION APPROACH TO KEEPING PEOPLE HOUSED

STRENGTHS-BASED

Help clients identify strengths, successes and resources they've used in the past to help them overcome this episode of homelessness.



CLIENT-CENTERED

Don't assume what people need, help clients articulate their OWN needs.



EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Listen and validate the clients' experience. Be non-judgemental.



SUPPORT & TRUST

Support and trust that people WANT to succeed. Help clients identify their own strengths and successes that can help them overcome this crisis.



TRANSPARENCY

Conduct yourself with the goal of transparency and of building and maintaining trust - make tasks and decision-making processes clear, and maintain appropriate boundaries.



EMPOWERMENT

Assist clients in identifying safe and appropriate housing options and with regaining control over their situation and lives.



The Diversion Conversation

- Context – what has happened to the individual or family?
- Action Plan – what do they see as the solution?
Hear their solutions first...
- Follow Up Steps – What can you provide that will support them in their plan?

How To Have a Diversion Conversation

- Be the listener, the person has information that you need
- If you only use the form, you will miss things!
- Establish safety before anything else
- Ask open ended questions to find out additional information
- Orient client to reality



Prevention and Diversion Screening Tool

This should be administered as soon as a household presents at your agency or at a coordinated entry access point with a housing crisis.

Script: Hi, my name is _____ and I work for _____. The purpose of this conversation is for me to learn more about your current housing crisis so that I can better understand what you may need to find a safe place to stay.

Contact information:

Name _____ Contact # _____

1. Are you currently homeless or do you believe that you will become homeless in the next 72 hours? Yes No

2. Are you currently residing with, leaving, or attempting to leave an intimate partner/someone you're living with that makes you feel unsafe? Yes No

(If yes, and in immediate danger, work with client on a plan to get to a safe place immediately. If yes, offer to refer to victim service provider or to assessment site to complete VI-SPDAT) (If no, continue to next question)

3. Where did you stay last night? (Ask as an open ended question, indicate answer below.)

Outside/Park/Campground	Emergency or DV Shelter
Shed/Garage or Outbuilding	Motel/Hotel paid by agency
Vehicle	Hospital or treatment facility (less than 90 days)
Public Building	Jail, Prison or Detention Center (less than 90 days)
Talk with client about safe options for temporary housing that isn't shelter. If none available, refer to emergency shelter and/or assessment site to complete VI-SPDAT.	

Own apartment/house/trailer
With a family member or friend
Motel/Hotel paid by self, family, friend
Other:
Continue with screening

4. Are you safe in your current situation? Yes No

If no, explore options for immediate safety and emergency shelter. If yes, continue to next question.

5. Are you able to stay in your current situation? Yes No

If no, skip to question number 7. If yes, continue to next question.

Successful diversion

- Aim for housing solutions to last at least 90 days
- Family & Friends: if someone is willing to house your client, discuss what your client can do to give back to the household in a safe and appropriate way
- Return to their own Residence, will a small amount of assistance, either mediation or practical, resolve an issue?

Successful Diversion

- Temporarily Diverted – where can people stay until their other plans are resolved?
- Relocating permanently to a safe place out of town (Reunification)

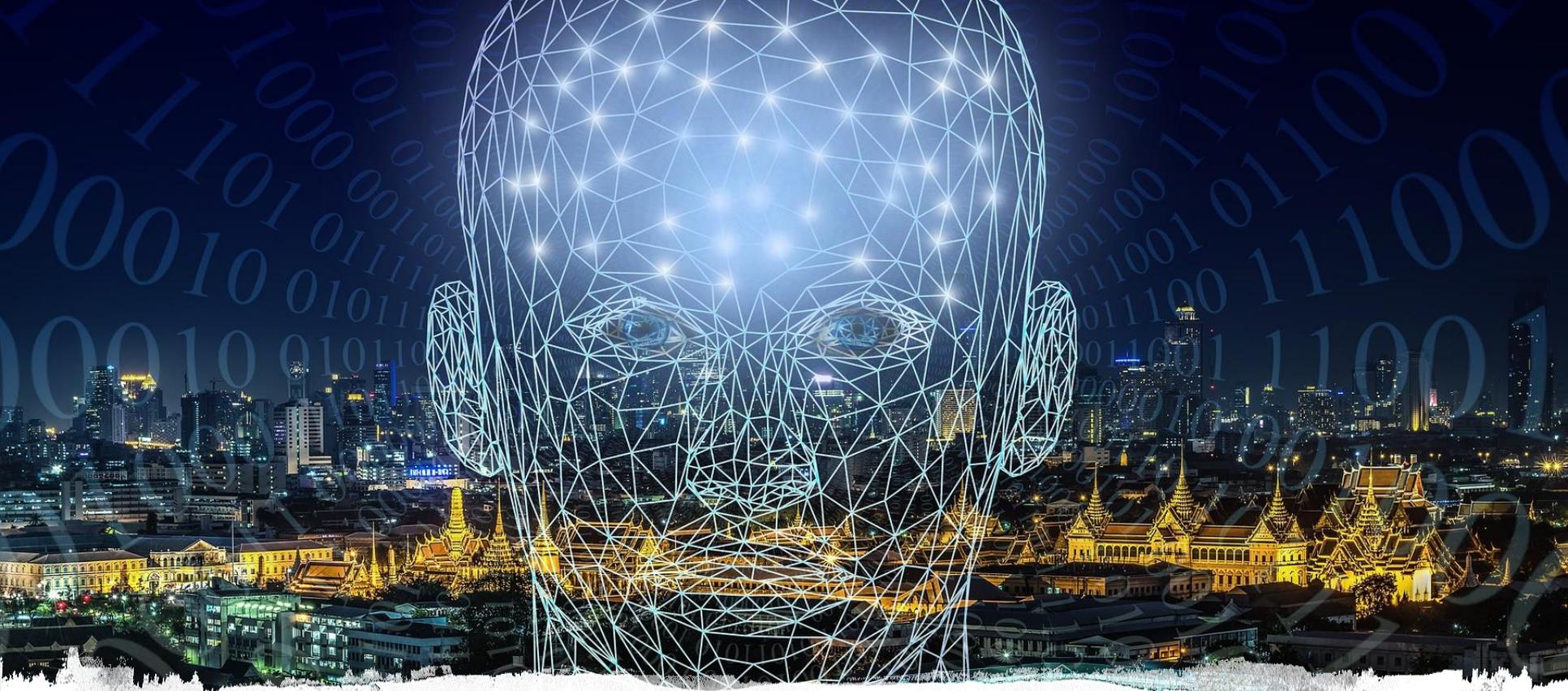




What does successful diversion look like in your community?

BREAK!





HMIS Data and Diversion

- What data elements do you need to make diversion decisions?
- What, if anything, will you need to put into HMIS that you can't get from the form?
- What potential diversion outcomes would you like in your HMIS system?
- Quantify the additional burden that this diversion system will place on you and your colleagues



Community Resource Pack

Scenario Discussion





- Discuss diversion in your community
 - How much of this already gets done?
 - Is it done in a planned way?
 - How will it intersect with coordinated entry?
 - Who will lead diversion?
 - How will you work with your DV partners?
- Complete your community resource manual
 - How will you train folks on your local resources?
 - Who is already good at this?

- For more information, contact.....