

DIVERSION

Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and has become homeless. This is a client-driven approach to identify natural and community resources for alternative places to stay, as well as to develop strategies to connect the person or household to these supports.

Diversion is intended to ensure that the homelessness experience is as brief as possible, as well as to prevent unsheltered homelessness and avert stays in shelter and reserves shelter space and shortens wait lists for those without other options. For providers and our system as a whole, effective Diversion strategies allows more room for other, higher-need clients in their shelters and greater resources for those individuals.

Those trained in Diversion tactics include the 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. Because Diversion can mean something different for each person, this approach is meant to be personalized to the strengths, skills, and barriers that are unique to each client and empower them to make safe and appropriate decisions for their housing.

This is a more cost-effective strategy that applies creative problem-solving approaches, utilizing less expensive interventions than are needed for shelter, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing. Through an intensive problem-solving conversation, this practice helps clients understand what caused this housing crisis, explore what immediate solutions could be possible, and help them pursue solutions. Safe alternative options may include a negotiated return to their previous housing, short-term accommodations, shared housing, or returns to family.

Diversion activities may include:

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

Please see below for a document that pertains to Diversion.

[Resolution Strategies Policy Document](#)

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Training

In 2018, the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) contracted with Ed Boyte and colleagues from the Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) to provide direct training on Diversion strategies to San Diego Homeless Service Providers. Diversion is an intervention designed to address a person's immediate housing crisis and help to divert them from a shelter stay, night in their vehicle or other unsheltered living situation to a housed situation instead.

Ed Boyte is a nationally recognized expert in employing strong mediation and conflict resolution practices. The sessions of training include a train-the-trainer model to ensure we have consistent implementation and training on an ongoing basis across our region. 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.

With this in mind, in 2021 Ed Boyte contracted with RTFH to provide additional knowledge and support to the communities' train the trainer group to create a Diversion training specific for San Diego County. Those trained include staff from shelters, outreach teams, day centers, health centers, and service providers as well as the San Diego Housing Commission and the County of San Diego. 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.

If your agency has any questions about Diversion strategies, please email taskforce@rtfhdsd.org or Jan.Walton@rtfhdsd.org.