

Diversion Away from Homelessness



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THE FLORIDA HOUSING COALITION



The Florida Housing Coalition, Inc., is a nonprofit, statewide membership organization whose mission is to **bring together housing advocates and resources so that all Floridians have a quality affordable home** and suitable living environment.



WE'RE PROUD TO OFFER PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTING SERVICES



In the areas of affordable housing, fair housing, ending homelessness, & related issues

COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE HOUSING CRISIS Response System

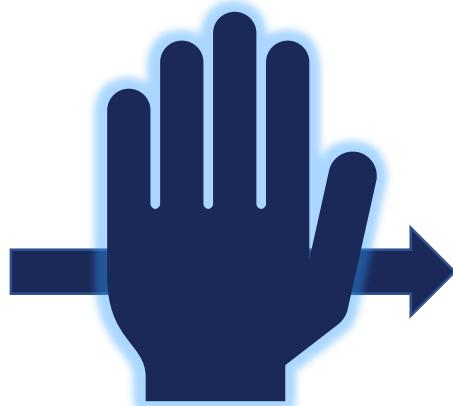
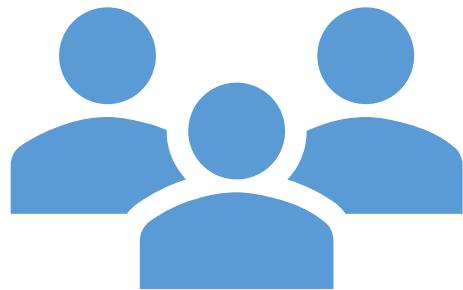


What is Diversion?

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Diversion



Can I help you identify immediate alternate housing arrangements?

OR

Can I connect you to services and financial assistance that will return you to your current housing situation?

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Types of Interventions

Intervention Type	HUD Homeless Definition	Example	Needs
Prevention	Category 2	Still in stable housing (e.g., rented apartment)	Needs payment of past due rent and/or utilities, etc.
Diversion	Category 1 Category 3 Category 4	At the “front door” seeking shelter or similar assistance	Needs help remaining in current living situation or finding alternative situation
Early Intervention	Category 1 Category 4	In shelter	Needs help resolving immediate issues to help them “self-resolve” with minimal assistance

Why is Diversion Important?

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Impact of Diversion

More effective and appropriate use of shelter resources.

Reduces strain on homeless assistance system.

Helps people avoid a stressful homeless episode.

People Don't Know

EXPECTATIONS

VS.

REALITY

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A Realistic Perspective...



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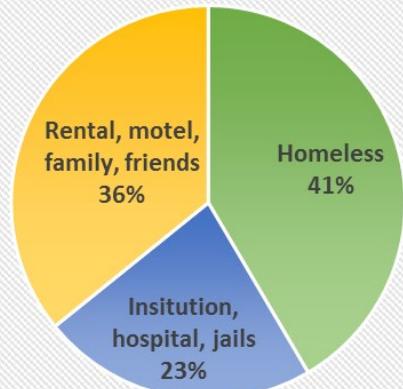
**Time it takes to
navigate from the front
door to accessing a
shelter bed**

**Time from initial
assessment to
permanent housing**

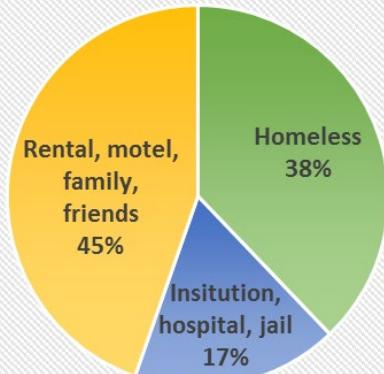
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Residence Prior to Entry



Residence Prior to Entry



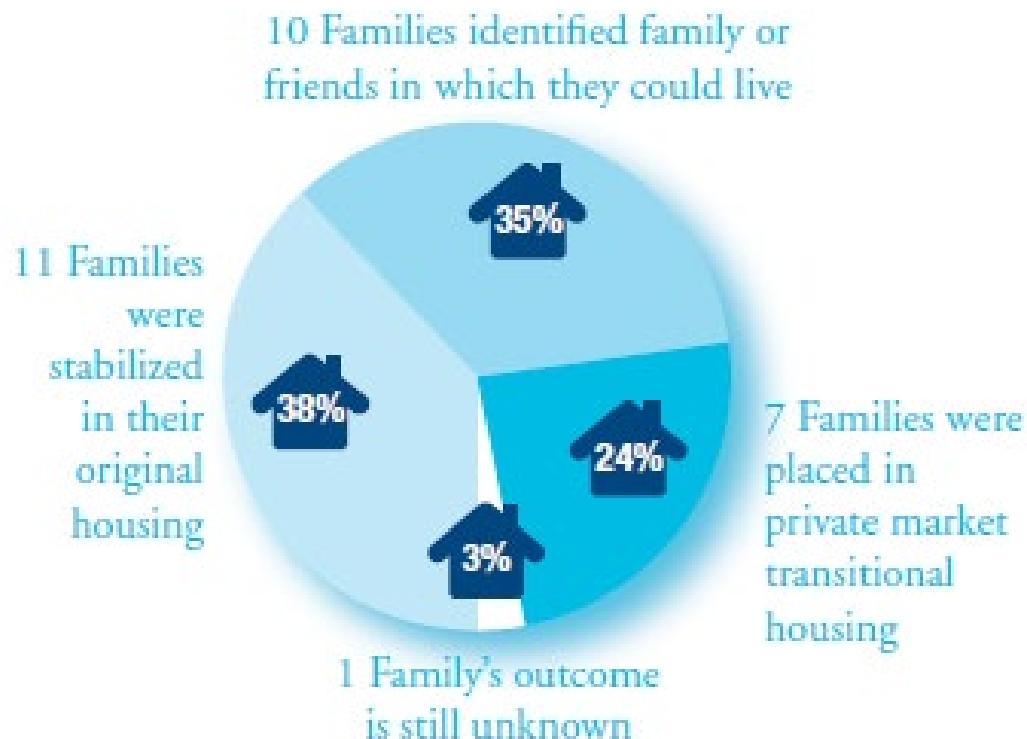
Opportunities for Diversion?

Case Study - Boston

- Goal: Divert families from emergency shelter
- Assessment team
 - Homeless provider staff
 - Former client
- Resource team
 - Mainstream providers
 - Housing experts



OF THE 29 FAMILIES DIVERTED FROM SHELTER

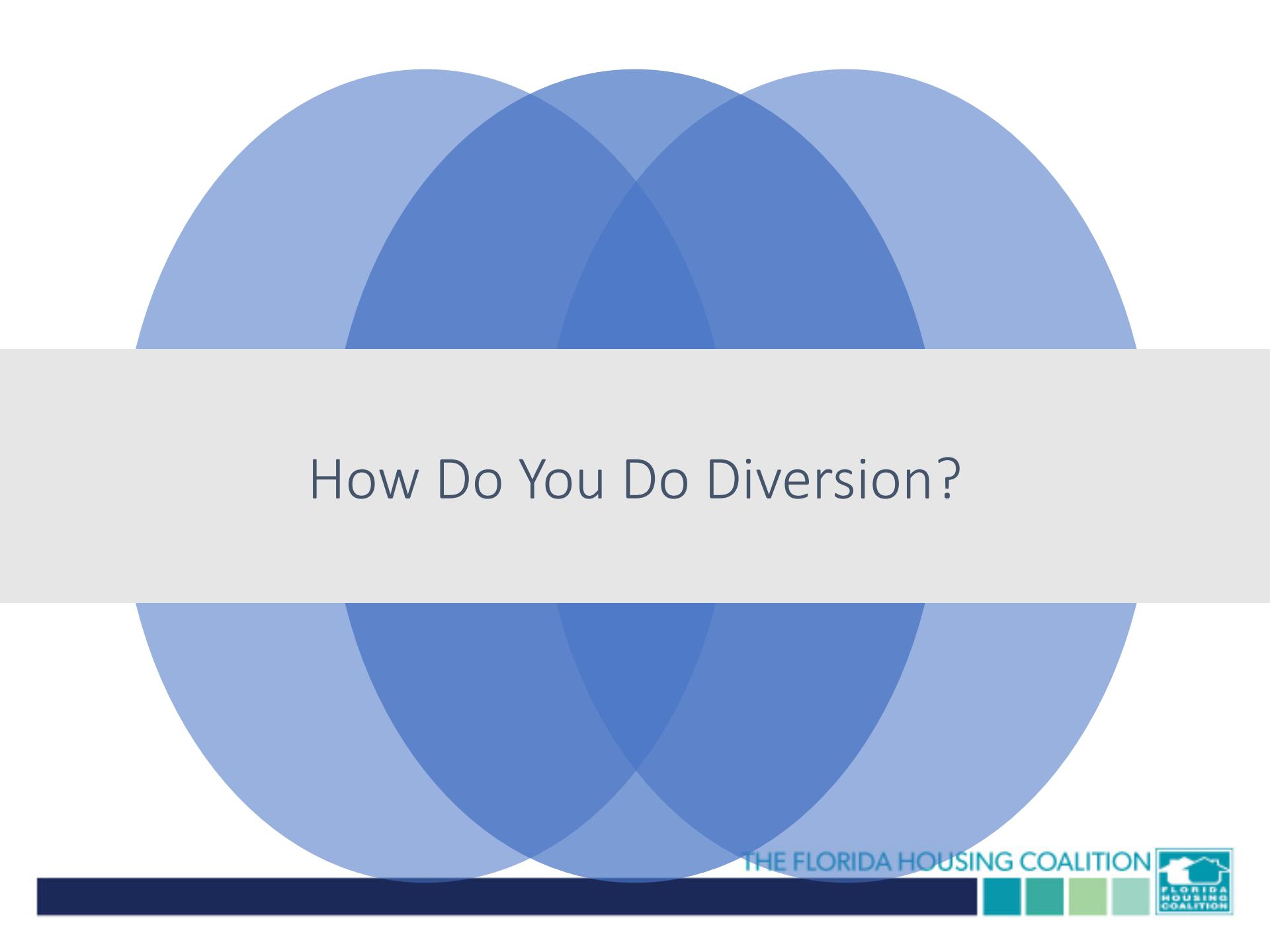


THE VALUE OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING



\$50,000
saved 9 families
from a DTA
shelter stay at a
cost savings of
\$126,400*

Savings were derived from the following calculations: The average cost of a shelter stay for a family for one year is \$33,600. At an average length stay of 7 months, the cost per family would be \$19,600. For the nine families diverted, the savings is \$126,400 (\$176,400 minus the \$50,000 spent in flexible funding).



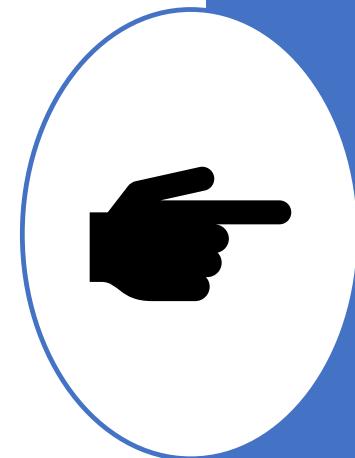
How Do You Do Diversion?

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Diversion Services

- Provision of financial, utility, and/or rental assistance
- Short-term case management
- Conflict mediation
- Connection to mainstream resources
- Housing search



Diversion Must Haves

Screening Tool

Provider Cooperation

Flexible Funding

System Entry Point

Resourceful Staff

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Screening Tool

- Where did you sleep last night?
- What other housing options do you have for the next few days/weeks?
- What issues exist in your current situation? Can we resolve those?
- Is it possible to stay where you're at?



Diversion Checklist

Is there a consistent checklist or screening tool used throughout the CoC to determine diversion eligibility?



APPLICANT NAME	DATE

DIVERSION ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

1. Where did this person sleep last night?
 - A safe place that provides shelter and is not a public or private place not meant for human habitation.
 - YES: Move to Section 1A
 - A place not meant for human habitation.
 - If Yes: STOP HERE, not appropriate for diversion
- 1A. Reason for leaving current housing situation:

2. Can this person return to where he/she stayed last night?
 - Support the applicant in contacting the friend/family member to assist with or negotiate that person's return to that housing option.
 - YES: Move to Question 3
 - NO: Move to Question 5
3. Is it safe to return to where he/she stayed last night?
 - YES: Move to Question 4
 - NO: Move directly to Question 5
4. Can the issues that are preventing the person from returning to their housing situation be resolved with financial assistance, case management, mediation, or other short-term assistance?
 - YES: Identify solution to assist with diversion. Move forward with the applicant returning to housing.
 - NO: Move to Question 5
5. Are there other friends/family members that provide temporary housing options, in addition to the current housing option, over the next few weeks?
 - YES: Move to Section 6
 - NO: STOP HERE. Complete CoC-required screening, data entry into HMIS, initiate referral for Emergency Shelter or Permanent Housing interventions.

FHC
Nov Dec 2018



System Entry Point

- Entry point is the front door of the system
 - Coordinated Entry (Access Points)
 - 211
 - Emergency Shelter



Are all entry points
expertly employing
diversion strategies?

Is the message consistent throughout all access points?

Diversion at Coordinated Entry

FROM	TO
What programs are you eligible to enter? Where is there a vacancy?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?
Assessment/eligibility	Problem solving conversation about household situation and resources
Intake	Crisis resolution to <u>avoid</u> shelter entry

Provider Cooperation

- Front door providers willing to do the assessment
- Housing stabilization providers for those diverted
- Mainstream service providers
 - Clothing
 - Food banks
 - Case management
 - Family services



Flexible Funding

- Pay for motel stays
 - Reunite with family members
 - Housing Relocation/Stabilization
-
- ESG
 - TANF
 - Challenge
 - Private funds
 - City/County funds



Resourceful Staff

- Experience with landlord mediation, conflict resolution
- Knowledgeable about community agencies
 - Financial assistance
 - Case management
 - Food banks, etc.





Diversion Steps - OrgCode

Step 1

STEP ONE: Explanation of the diversion conversation. Use a scripted conversation that outlines how you wish to avoid entry into shelter whenever there is a safe and appropriate alternative.

Our goal is to learn more about your specific housing situation right now and what you need so that together we can identify the best possible way to get you a place to stay tonight and to find safe, permanent housing as quickly as possible. That might mean staying in shelter tonight, but we want to avoid that if at all possible. We will work with you to find a more stable alternative if we can.



Step 2

STEP TWO: You want them to articulate why – exactly – they are seeking shelter today. Also find out what they have already tried or thought about trying but haven't attempted yet.

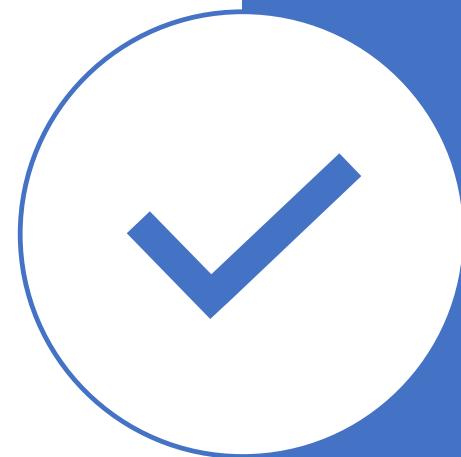
- Why are you seeking emergency shelter today?
- What are all the other things you tried or thought about trying before you sought shelter today?



Step 3

STEP THREE: You want to understand where they stayed last night, how long they have stayed there, and whether they can return there safely for at least another three days while trying to figure out next steps. If where they were staying is unsafe or they cannot return, you can skip to Step Six.

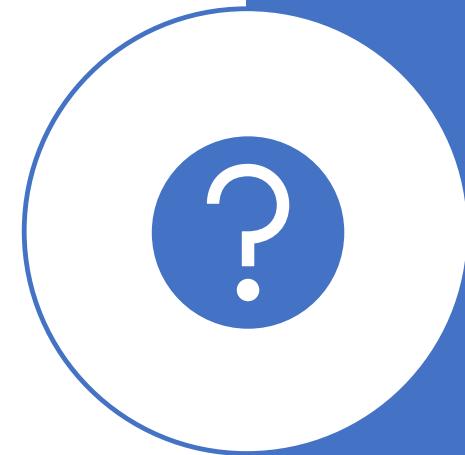
- Where did you stay last night?
- If staying with someone else, what is the relationship between them and you?
- How long have you been staying there?
- Where did you stay before that?
- Would it be safe for you to stay there again for the next 3-7 days?
- If indicate that the place where they stayed is unsafe, ask why it is unsafe.
- If cannot stay there safely, or if were staying in a place unfit for human habitation, move to Step Six.



Step 4

STEP FOUR: Following on the previous step, you want them to name the MAIN reason they had to leave the place they stayed the night before. Then, as a follow up, you want to know if there are any other reasons they cannot stay there. (Sometimes what they saw as the main reason and what the more pressing reason really is from your perspective may be different and illuminating.)

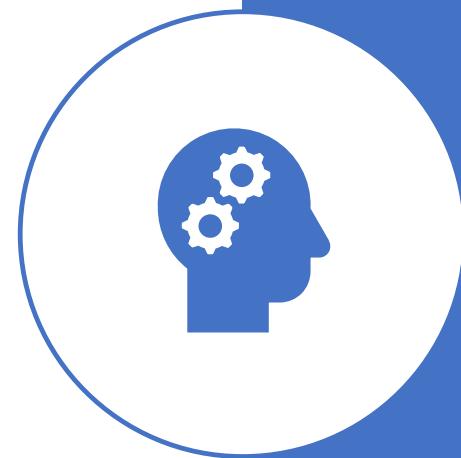
- What is the primary/main reason that you had to leave the place where you stayed last night?
- Are there additional reasons why you can't stay there any longer?



Step 5

STEP FIVE: You then want to find out if their time there could be extended if the person knew that permanent solutions and referrals were being made, connecting them to other community resources. If they still say they have no way to extend, you want to ask what it would take to extend it.

- Do you think that you could stay there again temporarily if we provide you with some help or referrals to find permanent housing or connect with other services?
- If no, why not? What would it take to be able to stay there temporarily?



Step 6

STEP SIX: If they cannot return to where they stayed the night before or it was unsafe, now explore other potential people they could stay with that may be safe and appropriate to connect with.

- If no, is there somewhere else where you could stay temporarily if we provide
- you with some help or referrals to find permanent housing and access other supports? For example, what about other family members? Friends? Co-workers?
- What would it take for you to be able to stay there temporarily?

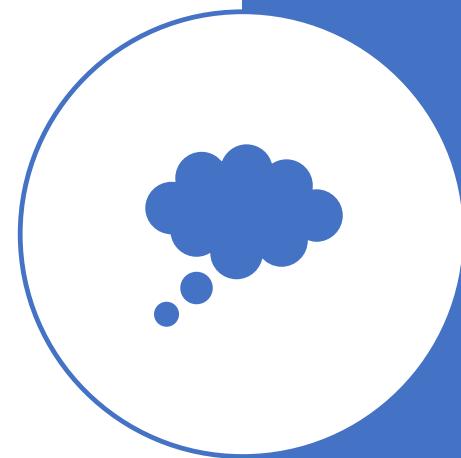


Step 7

STEP SEVEN: After determining there is no alternative for them to put into action, and before admitting to shelter, use some exploratory questions to better understand why they are having difficulties finding permanent housing.

This sometimes reveals nuggets of information that can inform an appropriate referral that can solve their housing instability.

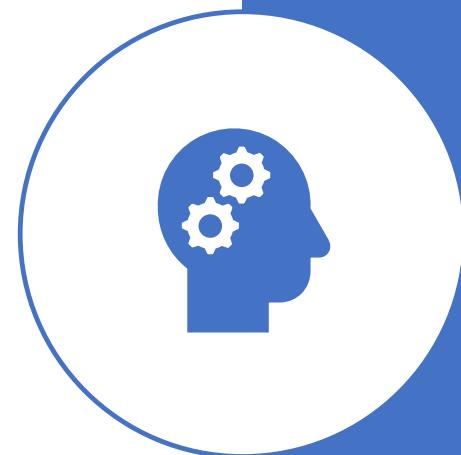
- What is making it hard for you to find permanent housing for you – or connect to other resources that could help you do that?
- For example, do you have special needs or a medical condition? How does this affect your housing situation?
- Do you owe money for rent or utilities?
- Are you new to the area?



Step 8

STEP EIGHT: This step explores what resources they may have at their disposal or through family members that would allow for an alternative to shelter and/or could help inform their pathway to permanent housing.

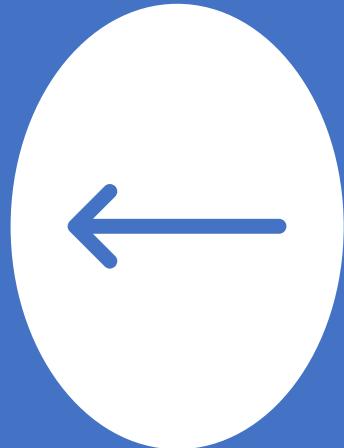
- What resources do you have right now that could help you find a place to stay temporarily or find permanent housing?
- For example, are you getting any help from other family members or friends?
- Do you have income? What are the sources?
- Are you involved with any other services right now?



Step 9

STEP NINE: We want people to know, even upon shelter entry, that shelter is not the answer. Permanent housing is the answer. Even if they do not have a plan, we want them to stay focused on housing and getting out of shelter from the first day they are in shelter.

- If admitted to shelter there is still an expectation that you will be attempting to secure permanent housing for you and your family. What is your plan at this point for securing housing if you are admitted to shelter?”



Diversion Script

Examples

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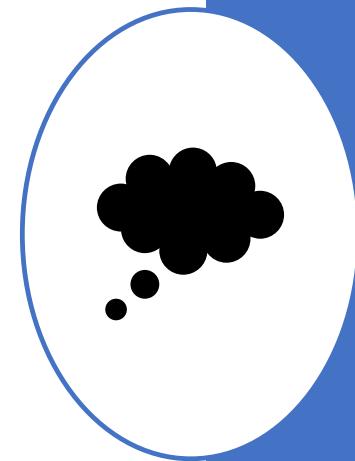
Diversion Example

Couple and two children present at CE

Evicted from apartment several days ago

Child with disability and medical bills piling up –
can't afford rent and medical expenses

Both parents work and have good rental history
– Medical bill costs got in the way of rent



Now You Try!

- Make up any story you want!
- 5-10 minutes and then switch listener/speaker





Debrief

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Measuring Performance

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System Design

Are all homeless households being screened for diversion eligibility?

Where is the front door?
What access points should be used?

Could some of the households waiting for services be diverted?

Outcomes

- Are households served by diversion avoiding homelessness?
 - Remember Boston? 86% did not access shelter in the 7 months that followed
- Are fewer households becoming homeless because of the diversion program?

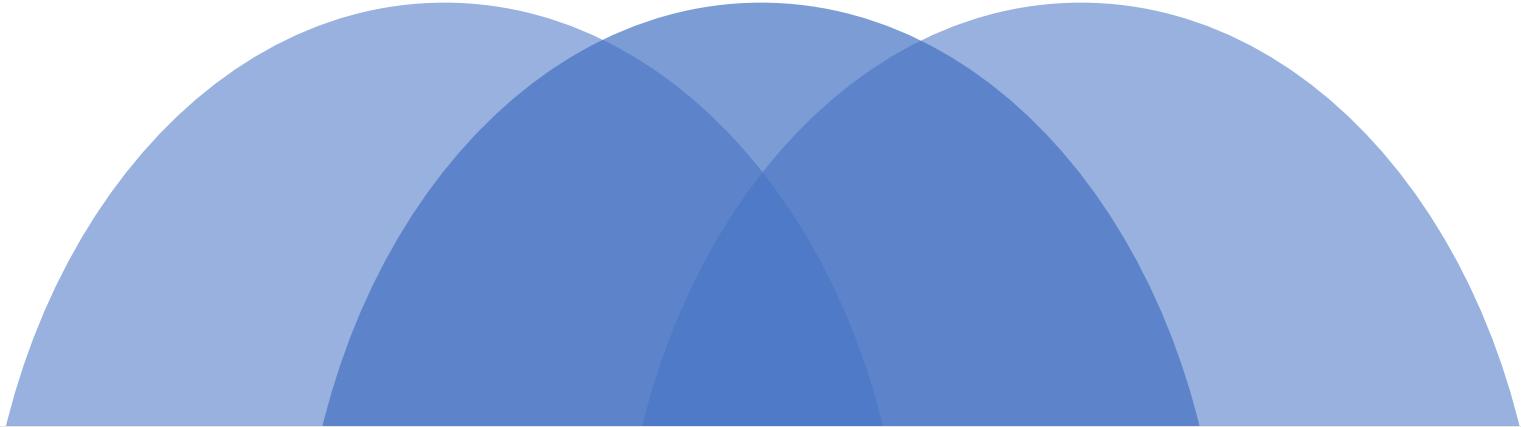
Diversion Outcomes

Go back with friends or family

Return to their own residence

Temporarily diverted while seeking new housing

Relocating out of town



Keep in Mind

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**“Talk of problems
and you create
problems; talk of
possibilities and you
create possibilities.”**

-Kerstin Mahlberg and Maud Sjöblom



Solution-focused

- Not-knowing stance
 - We make no assumptions
- Everyone is doing the best they can
- Actively listening to responses
- Client is the expert



Leveraging Non-CoC Resources to Maximize Diversion Strategies and Prevent Returns to Homelessness



The goal is to not only help people return to housing without entering the homeless system; but also to make sure they have the resources available to create long-term, permanent housing stability that prevents them from returning back to the homeless system.



Develop partnerships with organizations outside of the CoC



Create a coordinated referral process



Have a point of contact



Learn and understand how other systems function



Know the eligibility and the referral process to make appropriate referrals

Mediation

**Describe the Dispute and
How You Wish it to Be
Resolved**

What steps, if any, have you taken to resolve this dispute? _____

How did you hear about this program? _____

There are mediation locations throughout the 12th Judicial Circuit for your convenience.

ARCADIA

DeSoto County Courthouse
201 East Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 33821

BRADENTON

Manatee County Judicial Center
1051 Manatee Avenue West - 8th Floor
Bradenton, FL 34205

SARASOTA

Sarasota County Criminal Justice Center
2071 Ringling Blvd., 6th Floor
Sarasota, FL 34237

VENICE

R.L. Anderson Administration Center
4000 South Tamiami Trail - 2nd Floor
Venice, FL 34293



12th Judicial Circuit

**Twelfth Judicial
Circuit**

**Citizen
Dispute
Settlement
Program**



**Sarasota & DeSoto
Counties**
941-861-7833

Manatee County
941-749-3660

Revised 3/2011

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Sometimes, the person who is being diverted from the homeless system needs more intensive services than what you can provide.

Citizen Dispute Settlement Program

- Available, at no-cost, to residents in Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto Counties.
 - Must reside in the 12th Judicial Court District
- Sarasota & DeSoto Counties
 - 941-861-7833
- Manatee County
 - 941-749-3660
- <https://www.scgov.net/Home>ShowDocument?id=34554>



This mediation program can assist with disputes related to:

- Auto Sales/Repairs
- Condominiums
- Consumers
- Contracts
- Debts
- Employer/Employee
- Family
- Landlord/Tenant
- Neighborhood
- Nuisances
- Property Damage

Citizen Dispute Settlement Program Continued

Mediation's Long-Term Impact



YOU, AS THE SERVICE PROVIDER, MAY ASSIST
IN THE PERSON'S IMMEDIATE RETURN TO
THEIR HOUSING SITUATION.



MEDIATION CAN HELP THE PERSON RESOLVE
THE ISSUE THAT CAUSED THE CRISIS AND
CREATE LONG-TERM HOUSING STABILITY.

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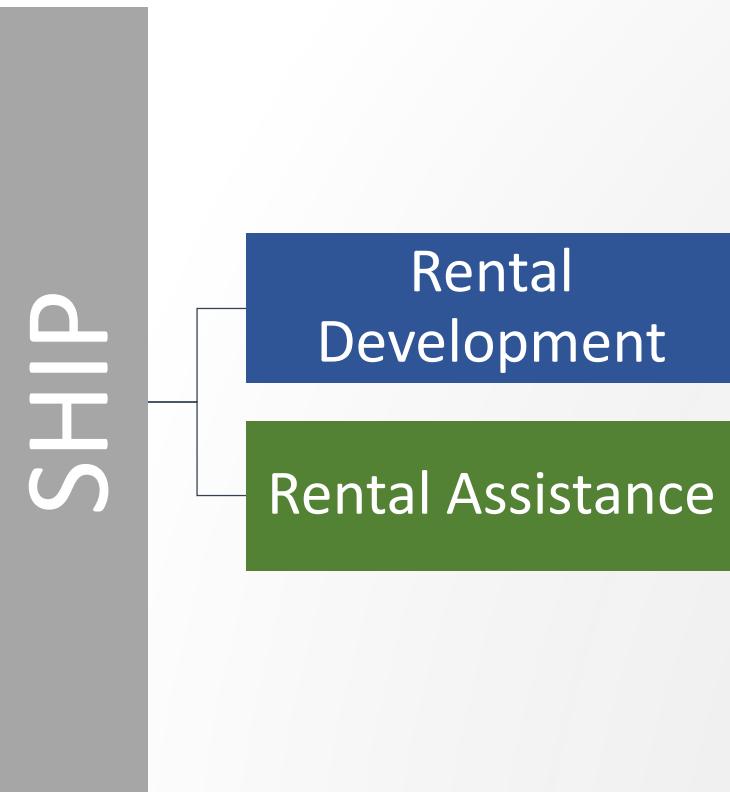
State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP)

The screenshot shows the official website of Sarasota County, Florida. At the top, there's a header with the county logo, weather information (86°F), and links for Live TV, Careers, Connect With Us, Translate, and a search bar. Below the header, a navigation bar includes links for A-Z, RESIDENTS, VISITORS, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT (which is highlighted in yellow), and I WANT TO... The main content area is titled "Office of Housing and Community Development". It features a sidebar with links to various services like Planning and Development Services, PDS Calendar, PDS Contacts, PDS Documents, Building, Code Enforcement, Environmental Protection, Planning and Zoning, Englewood CRA, and Property Management. Below this is a section for the "Office of Housing and Community Development" with links to Local Affordable Housing Initiative Strategy, NSP Program, Consolidated Plans, and Document Library. There's also a photo of a classical building with columns and a street lamp.

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State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP)



SHIP Rental Assistance

- Rent Deposit
 - First & last month's rent
 - Security deposit
 - Utility deposits
- Eviction Prevention
- Rent Subsidies
- Disaster Assistance (Rental Assistance)

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SHIP's Purpose



Purpose is to help low-to-moderate income households by providing housing assistance

- At least 30% of the funds must be reserved for VLI households (up to 50% AMI).
- An additional 30% must be reserved for LI households (up to 80% AMI).
- Remaining funds can be used for households up to 140% AMI.

Set-asides for Special Populations

- ✓ Homeless
- ✓ A survivor of Domestic Violence
- ✓ A person with a disability
- ✓ A youth aging out of foster care

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Defining Populations According to Florida State Statutes

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Homeless: Section 420.621 Florida Statutes

“Homeless,” applied to an individual, or “individual experiencing homelessness” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes an individual who:

- Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Is living in a motel, hotel, travel trailer park, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

Homeless Definition Continued

- Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting; or
- Is a migratory individual who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in circumstances described above

Special Needs: Section 420.0004 Florida Statutes

An adult person requiring independent living services in order to maintain housing or develop independent living skills and who has a disabling condition

- A young adult formerly in foster care who is eligible for services under s. 409.1451(5);
- A survivor of domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28; or
- A person receiving benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program or from veterans' disability benefits

Other Types of Set-Asides

Each set-aside category has specific rules for allowed use and these rules detail the amount/percentage allowed for each category.

- Homeownership
- Construction/Rehabilitation
- Income
- Special Needs

Accessing SHIP Funding

- SHIP Funds are distributed to counties throughout Florida
- Dollars are allocated to local governments on a population-based formula
 - 67 Counties
 - 52 Community Development Block Grant entitlement cities
- Uses detailed in the established Local Housing Assistance Plan (by ordinance)

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Where to find LHAPs

- <http://www.floridahousing.org>
- <https://www.mymanatee.org>

Link Units

Connecting Special Needs Households who receive supportive services with permanent, affordable housing.

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Link Units

- ✓ Connects special needs households to affordable housing
- ✓ Referral for special needs households from designated referral agencies to FHFC-funded developments

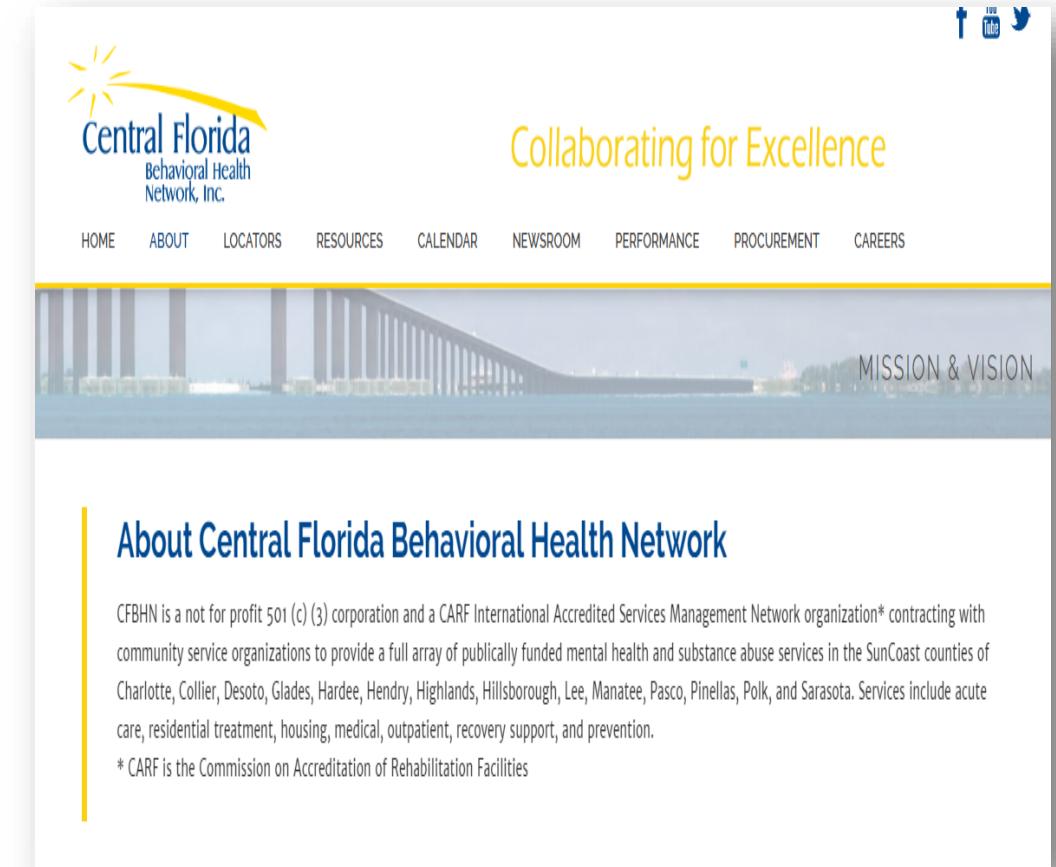
Link Units in Sarasota & Manatee Counties

- Referral Agency
 - Sunshine Health
- Target Population
 - Persons with a disabling condition
 - Persons with disabilities
- Contact Person
 - Patricia Crawford, Housing Coordinator
 - pcrawford@centene.com
 - 877-211-1999 ext. 40683
 - 954-299-0218
- To learn about FHFC's Link Unit Strategy
 - <http://apps.floridahousing.org/Standalone/SpecialNeeds/ContentPage.aspx?PAGE=LinkInitiative%20-%20How%20Link%20Works%20Page>

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Managing Entities



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (CFBHN) website. At the top right are social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. The logo, featuring a yellow sunburst icon above the text "Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc.", is positioned on the left. A navigation bar below the logo includes links for HOME, ABOUT, LOCATORS, RESOURCES, CALENDAR, NEWSROOM, PERFORMANCE, PROCUREMENT, and CAREERS. A yellow horizontal bar separates the navigation from a banner image of a bridge over water. To the right of the banner, the text "Collaborating for Excellence" is displayed in yellow. Below the banner, a link labeled "MISSION & VISION" is visible. A section titled "About Central Florida Behavioral Health Network" contains a paragraph about the organization's services and accreditation, followed by a note about CARF.

Collaborating for Excellence

MISSION & VISION

About Central Florida Behavioral Health Network

CFBHN is a not for profit 501 (c) (3) corporation and a CARF International Accredited Services Management Network organization* contracting with community service organizations to provide a full array of publically funded mental health and substance abuse services in the SunCoast counties of Charlotte, Collier, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lee, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota. Services include acute care, residential treatment, housing, medical, outpatient, recovery support, and prevention.

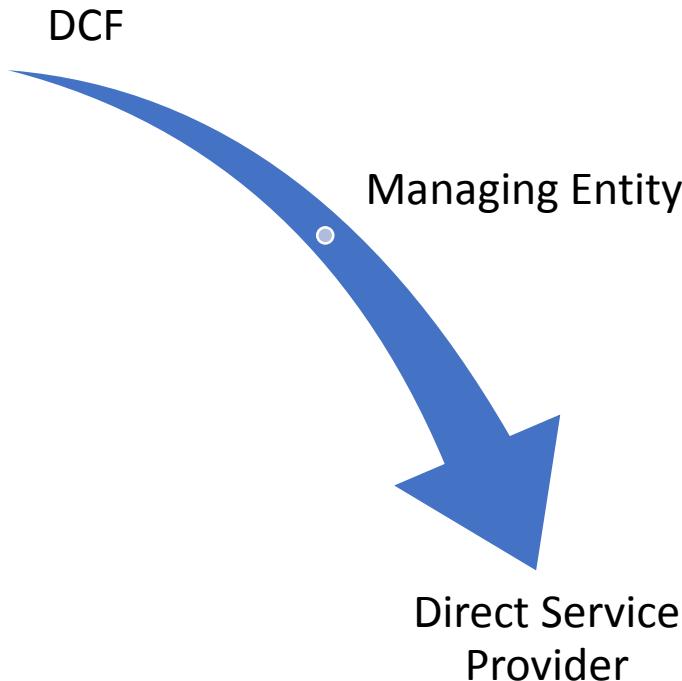
* CARF is the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities

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Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN)

How the Funding Works



- Provider Network includes roughly 66 direct service providing agencies throughout CFBHN's region
- Service Locator
 - Adults or Children
 - Substance Use Services
 - Mental Health Services
 - Housing

Why Develop This Partnership?



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



CARE COORDINATION



POTENTIAL HOUSING
ASSISTANCE

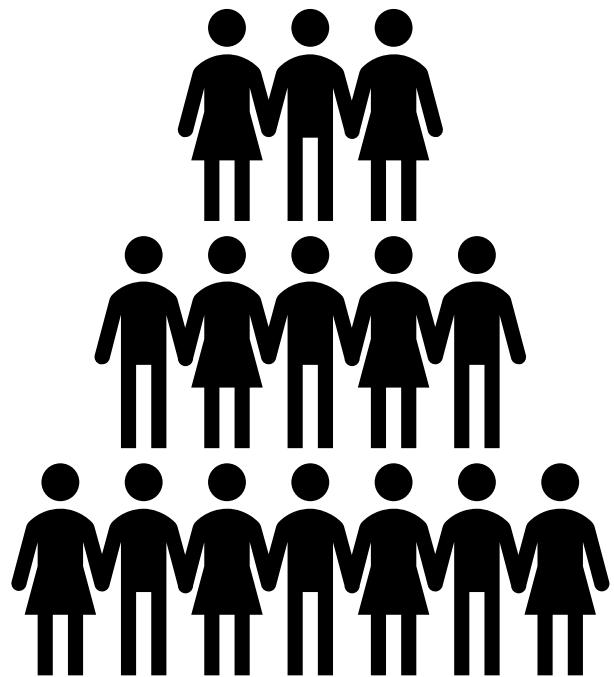


ASSISTANCE WITH
ON-GOING HOUSING
STABILIZATION

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Other Types of Supportive Services



Aging & Elderly Services

Services for people with physical disabilities

Services for people with developmental disabilities

Human Services agencies not funded by the CoC

City or Town-specific dollars for emergency funding

Veteran Services

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Keep In Mind...

- Each service provider has a targeted population that they serve.
- They may have their own funding for rental housing emergencies or deposits.
- They may offer supportive services that can provide on-going assistance to the person you are serving, preventing returns to homelessness.



Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)



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Public Housing Authorities



Housing Subsidies



Special Programs
(FSS, FUP, NED,
HUD-VASH)



HUD Housing
Counseling



Affordable Housing



Public Housing

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Things to Think About

- Is this person currently on one of the PHAs waitlists?
- If the household is already on the waitlist, what is the status? Has their number been called?
- Are there any units set-aside out of the PHA's portfolio for specific categories or programs?
- Is the PHA holding a lottery with a preference for a specific population?
- Are there other PHAs (not in Sarasota or Manatee) whose lottery is open?
 - If selected, the applicant can port directly to their area of choice.



Local PHAs



Manatee County
Housing Authority



Bradenton
Housing Authority



Sarasota Housing
Authority

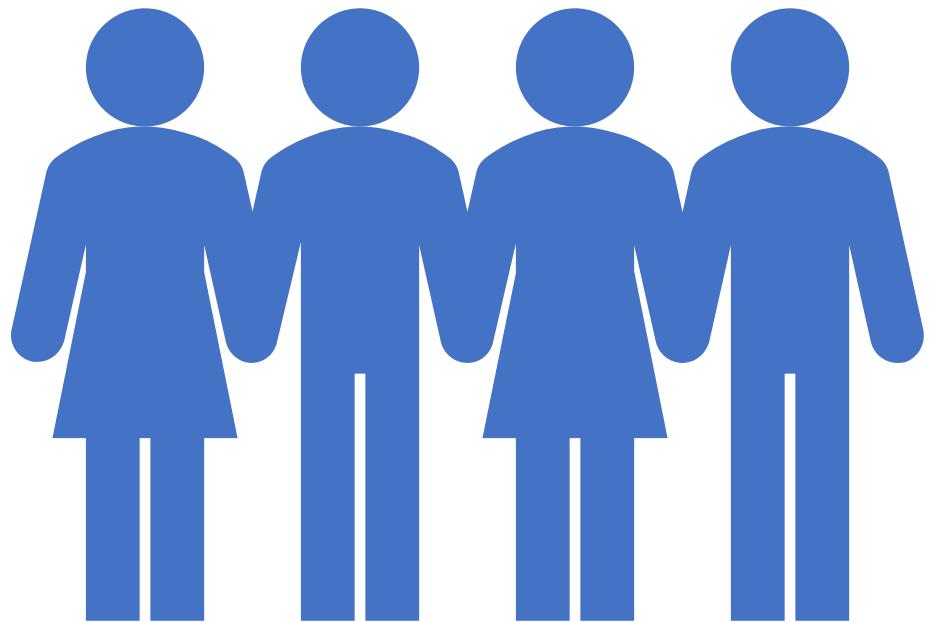


Venice Housing
Authority

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Homeless Education Program (HEP)



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HEP- Eligible Population

McKinney-Vento Act, Subtitle VII-B, Section 725(2)

The term 'homeless children and youths' is defined as: Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who -

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Are migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

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Rights of Children “In Transition”

- Enroll and attend school no matter where they live or how long they have lived there
- Have access to the same public education provided to housed children
- Enroll in school without a permanent address. (Enrollment cannot be delayed due to a lack of residency)
- Request assistance with transportation to school
- Have any enrollment disputes heard and resolved while the student continues to attend class

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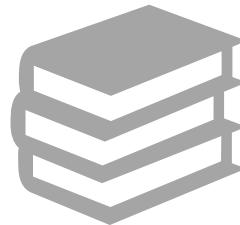
Available Services May Include

- School enrollment & navigation
- School supplies
- Uniforms
- School stability
- Tutoring
- School-related expenses
- Graduation or GED Fees
- Post-High School planning
- Referrals for financial assistance

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Homeless Education Programs in Your CoC Catchment Area



Sarasota County

Schoolhouse Link Program

- YMCA is contracted with Sarasota County School Board and serves as the Homeless Liaison for the district.

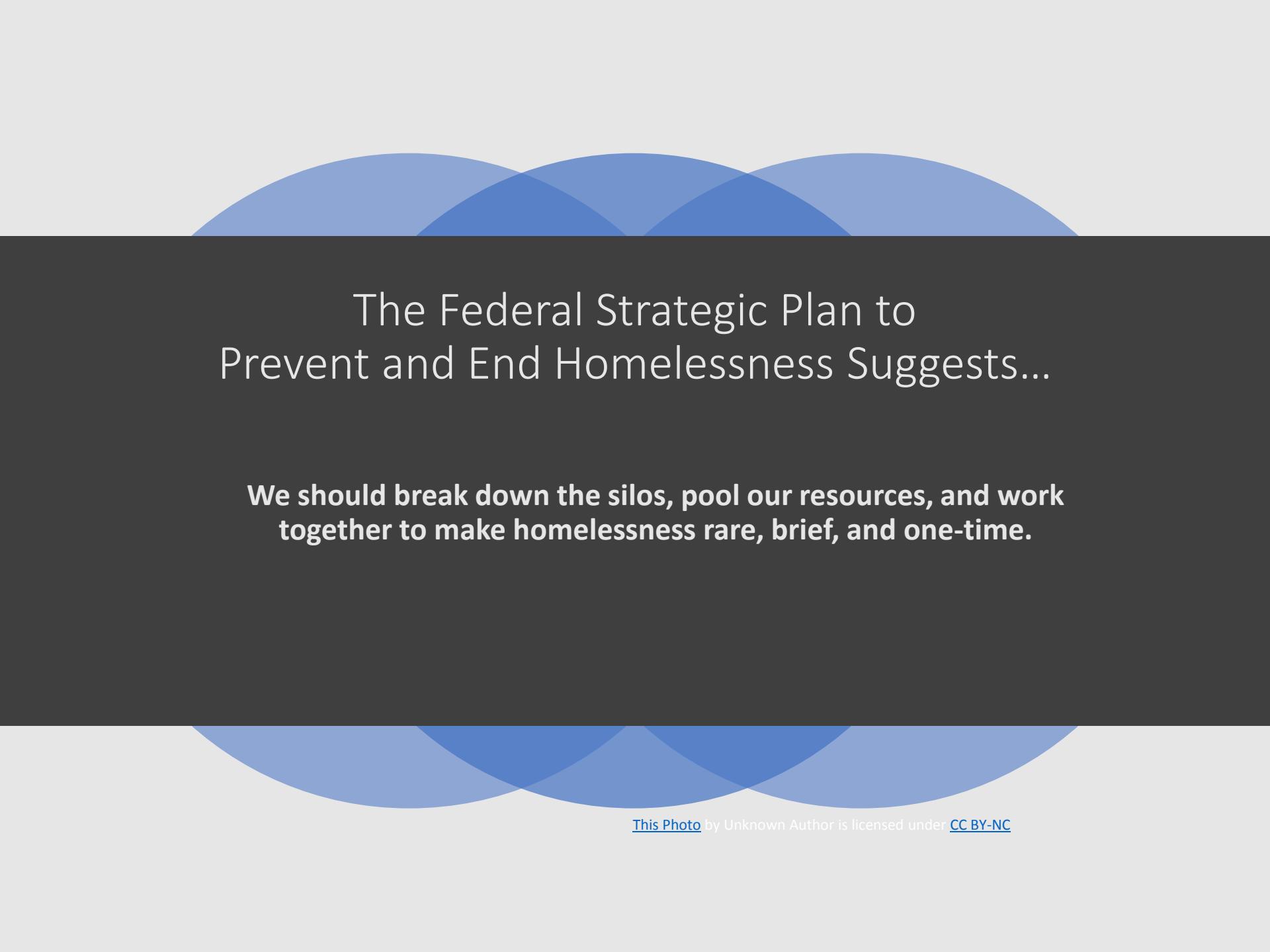
Manatee County

Project Heart

- Program is administered through the School District of Manatee County

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The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Suggests...

We should break down the silos, pool our resources, and work together to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.





Ideas?
Questions?

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