Homeless Diversion Pilot Program

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New Jersey Housing Navigation Project

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Began in Summer 2021 as a pilot program, based on a model used in Connecticut

Expanded Fall of 2022 to include a broader range of agencies, and make it easier for grantees to disburse funds to those in need.

Homelessness Diversion is recognized as a best practice in the prevention of homelessness.

Integrates Homelessness Diversion housing problem-solving techniques into existing homelessness prevention and rapid exit programs to quickly establish stable housing options and to reduce the length of time and trauma associated with housing instability or homelessness.
Benefits of Homelessness Diversion:

- Reduces inflow to and demand on emergency shelter.
- Leverages community-based housing outside of the homelessness response system.
- Prevents the trauma associated with homelessness and stays in emergency shelter.
- Empowers households through unwavering respect for goals, strengths and preferences.
- Offers an equitable approach that is not subject to the marginalizing practices of traditional coordinated entry.
What are Homelessness Diversion Techniques?

- Households engage in Homelessness Diversion services to identify all available supports to prevent or exit homelessness.

- A holistic approach which incorporates the Housing First approach, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed Service Delivery, and Racial Equity practices in the creation and execution of a housing action plan to stabilize housing and, if possible, move the household toward a permanent housing solution.

- Grantees work with a wide variety of existing homelessness prevention, rapid exit programs, and other partnerships to arrive at the intended outcomes (the prevention of, diversion from, and rapid exit from homelessness).
The Homelessness Diversion Approach:

- Moving away from an Assessment of Need approach to: **Problem Solving Conversations**
- Moving away from Intake and Put on Waitlist to **Crisis Resolution to Avoid Homelessness**
- Moving away from Focus on determining what programs client is eligible for to **Focus on determining what will resolve the crisis**
Examples of Allowable Expenses:

- Costs associated with securing sustainable housing such as security deposit, first month’s rent, temporary assistance with rent totaling no more than four months, landlord and or realtor incentive (not to exceed one month’s rent).

- Transportation cost(s) to relocate the constituent

- Moving costs

- Utility, cable, or financial payments to secure or maintain a doubled-up situation (not to exceed 4 months).

- Car repair to obtain / maintain employment resulting in sustainable housing
Examples of Allowable Expenses:

- Work attire that is required to secure and maintain employment (boots, gloves, blazer, collared shirt, etc.) resulting in sustainable housing.
- Storage costs (not to exceed 4 months).
- Hotel/Motel stay while the constituent completes the lease-up / move-in process or awaits pre-arranged relocation.
Outcomes of Diversion Programs May Include:

- Avoiding homelessness including entry into shelters
- Maintaining a temporary, sub-optimal housing arrangement until a more appropriate permanent solution can be found
- Relocating, or arranging to be ‘doubled-up’ while awaiting the more suitable housing setting to become available.
Homelessness Diversion Program

- DCA funded program
- Less restrictive than other DCA programs, designed to be low-barrier for consumers
- Does not require birth certificate, social security card, current/valid ID
- Can assist undocumented households
- Any household currently homeless or at immediate risk and physically in the state of NJ can apply
- Funds can be utilized in multitude of ways to divert consumers from homelessness
  - Rent payments
  - Car repairs
  - Utility assistance
  - Transportation costs
  - Moving costs
  - Work attire
Rapid Resolution Program

• Funded by county
• Purely case management program
• Utilized in addition to other programs to provide case management services to all households we assist, including but not limited to linkages, advocacy, job search assistance, housing search, budgeting, child care resources, and more
Shelter Program

• The FPWC shelter program has been on hiatus since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
• The rotational shelter model was not sustainable due to the high-risk population of most volunteers
• Warren County is still in desperate need of a static, site shelter
• FPWC is working towards making that a reality, but the immense costs of opening a shelter require public support
How can we connect?

The best way to refer households or reach out yourself is to contact the office directly by calling 908-453-2194 or emailing someone in the office. Emails to the office can be sent to:

- rachel@wcihn.org
- bobf@wcihn.org
- isabella@wcihn.org
- dawn@wcihn.org
- chris@wcihn.org
- info@wcihn.org
How do I know if someone will qualify?

• Reach out!
• If you are aware of a household facing a housing crisis, please reach out to the office so that we can determine if they might qualify for one of our programs, or so that we can assist with locating services that will best help
• Please feel free to also reach out regarding any general program or agency questions, we are happy to discuss!
Questions?

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