

Ohio BoSCoC Diversion: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following FAQ was developed in response to questions asked during COHHIO’s “Implementing Diversion in the BoSCoC: Introductory Webinar” on January 31, 2018. Below are all of the questions and concerns posed during the webinar and COHHIO’s responses.

QUESTION/ CONCERN:	COHHIO RESPONSE
What is diversion?	Diversion assists households in housing crisis to return to housing or identify alternative housing outside the crisis response system. The process utilizes mainstream resources and mediation techniques to assist the household in identifying alternative housing options, including but not limited to returning to their own housing, staying with family/ friends, or relocation to another area.
Is diversion replacing coordinated entry?	No! Diversion screening happens when the client or household contacts an access point. As outlined in the Coordinated Entry System Standards (CESS), when households experiencing a housing crisis present at access points for possible entry into emergency shelter or crisis response system, access point providers go through diversion screening to determine if the household can return to housing or identify alternative housing outside the crisis response system.
What defines a successful diversion?	Client engages with staff using mediation techniques or mainstream resources to assist the household in identifying alternative housing options, including but not limited to returning to their own housing, staying with family/ friends, or relocation to another area.
Is Diversion Screening the same as conducting the VI-SPDAT?	NO! This is a prescreening PRIOR to entering the homeless system (within 7 days of homelessness). Coordinated Entry System procedures and the VI-SPDAT assessment are

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	conducted only IF the client is literally homeless.
Who is eligible for diversion screening?	Any client who is literally homeless seeking shelter/ services or at risk of homelessness, (the client/ household will become literally homeless within 7 days).
When do we conduct diversion screenings? What do we do outside of office hours and when staff do not have the capacity to implement the diversion approach?	Screenings should be conducted on the initial contact with the client/ household seeking shelter/ services (regular business hours/ based on staff capacity). Diversion screening may be done in the AM for late evening shelter intakes when trained staff have arrived to work with the client. (CESS Standard No. 4C)
What HMIS / ServicePoint “Provider” do we use to enter diversion clients?	HMIS/ ServicePoint configurations are forthcoming. Diversion / HMIS specific training will be provided in April and May. No data entry is expected prior to formal training offerings.
Is there a script available for the diversion process?	Yes! There are 2 important forms for diversion (both are referenced in CESS Standard No. 4B): 1)BoSCoC Diversion Screening Script 2) HMIS Diversion Form
When is a diversion entered into the HMIS?	HMIS Data Entry into Diversion is done only if household is diverted from the homeless system (does not enter shelter (HMIS Shelter Project) or place not meant for human habitation (Unsheltered Project). (CESS Standard No. 4D) Shelter, Unsheltered and Coordinated Entry Data Entry procedures are not affected with the addition of this new workflow (<i>unless the client is diverted!</i>)
How do we handle clients (continuing) to live with friends or family in a diversion situation?	If a client/ household is living with friends and family at the time of the shelter request, they can

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	<p>be considered diversion if they utilize mediation techniques or mainstream resources to return to staying with family and friends.</p> <p>If a client/ household decides to continue living with friends and family <i>until shelter becomes available in the future</i> and no services or assistance are provided to assist in housing stability, it is NOT considered diversion.</p>
<p>Is there a place to add the informed consent on the HMIS Diversion Form? How do we document this?</p>	<p>There are sample consent forms on the COHHIO HMIS website. There is also a verbal consent sample added to the website for your use.</p> <p>The ROI tab in ServicePoint should be completed to document the Release of Information and Type.</p>
<p>Are SSVF Providers required to use this tool as well?</p> <p>How does this affect the SSVF “but for” form?</p>	<p>SSVF is typically a resource provided <i>after</i> client has entered into the homeless system/ Coordinated Entry System. It is likely that they have already been screened for diversion prior to referral to SSVF.</p> <p>However, if SSVF providers are conducting outreach or prescreening literally homeless or at risk clients/ households, the program may consider incorporating diversion into their process.</p>
<p>Should Rental Assistance/ Prevention program use the diversion process as well?</p>	<p>Yes, if the client is in immediate need of assistance and are about to be literally homeless (evicted) within 7 days.</p> <p>No, if housing crisis is outside the 7-day “at-risk” window.</p>
<p>How will we handle “incomplete” diversion attempts (i.e. client hangs up) in HMIS?</p>	<p>At this time, no data entry will be required for incomplete diversion efforts terminated by the client.</p>
<p>How will we enter data for unsuccessful diversion attempts in HMIS?</p>	<p>Follow either sheltered or unsheltered workflow for HMIS based on clients housing outcome.</p>

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What are examples of places to divert clients to?	Their own home/ rental, family / friends, a new rental. Even out of town if resources are available and a safe housing location can be identified (NOT SHELTER).
How can my agency get additional training on the Diversion Screening and HMIS?	Regional trainings will take place in April and May!
Clients/ households attempting to access shelter/ services have already exhausted their resources and have a lack of support systems locally (especially in rural areas). How do they fit into diversion?	Diversion will not work for everyone. The approach is available to help clients navigate those support systems where possible and also ensure that they have indeed exhausted resources. Diversion will not replace emergency shelter missions at their core, but it will supplement the “automated approach” that assumes everyone may need shelter just because they are requesting it.
How does diversion assist clients not eligible for resources? I.e. Sex Offenders, banned clients, etc.	The Ohio BoSCoC practices Housing First which supports minimizing barriers to program entry. All Ohio BoS homeless projects must adopt a Housing First approach that centers on housing households, irrespective of barriers and the same is expected with diversion. Households with potential barriers must also go through diversion screening and be assisted in identifying alternative housing options, and if no alternatives are available, connected to shelter.
How does diversion take into the account client/ family safety, especially for Domestic Violence survivors?	Diversion may not be appropriate for a client or household in immediate danger. The diversion screening is a conversation that should identify this risk for the family. Inquiries and referrals should be handled on a case by case basis.
Our agency is very small and we don't have the staff or operational funds to implement another program, how can we incorporate this process into our organization?	Formal diversion screening is the responsibility of access points only. Each region's access points have already been identified through the regional Coordinated Entry process and were selected with the understanding that each access point has the capacity to participate in diversion.

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What is the anticipated level of effort for incorporating the diversion process into our agency?	Diversion screening should only take 5 minutes; service level efforts for each client should take no longer than 2 hours. Only a portion of clients will need to have staff navigate the full mediation or resource exploration.
Is there a maximum number of HMIS Data Entry licenses for an agency?	No, a participating agency may purchase as many licenses as they wish to use.
Can we get additional HMIS Licenses to incorporate diversion into our organization? At what cost?	Yes. For details on pricing go to hmis.cohhio.org .
<p>Is there financial assistance available to implement diversion?</p> <p>How can we promote and get buy in from our non-HMIS/ CES community partners for the diversion approach?</p>	<p>Currently, there isn't funding available outside of the mainstream resources and prevention funds available in each region. COHHIO is researching funding opportunities and hopes that diversion implementation (BoS wide diversion implementation takes place June 2018) and data collected from the Coordinated Entry evaluation process will provide us with the information and reporting needed to help COHHIO and local providers promote diversion and secure funding.</p>