

Lessons Learned from Detroit Diversion Pilot

October 10, 2017



Agenda

1. **Panelists**
2. **What is Diversion and Why is it important?**
3. **Bringing Diversion to Detroit**
4. **Learning from Detroit Diversion Implementation**
5. **Bringing Diversion to Scale**
6. **Selling Diversion locally**
7. **Question and Answers**





Panel Member Introductions

NAME, ORGANIZATION, AND ROLE



Diversion 101



What is Diversion?

A strategy that prevents homelessness by helping people experiencing a housing crisis and seeking shelter to preserve current housing situation or make immediate alternative arrangements without having to enter shelter



Differentiating Diversion from other Interventions

How does Diversion differ from other housing/homeless interventions?

- The main difference between diversion and other permanent housing-focused interventions centers on the point at which intervention occurs.
- Prevention targets people at imminent risk of homelessness - Farther upstream
- Diversion – at the front door requesting shelter/seeking a place to stay tonight
- Rapid Re-housing – in shelter or any other literal homeless



Why Diversion?

- **Reasons Diversion Should Be Strategy in Your Community**
 - Improves system outcomes by reducing entries into homelessness
 - Improves quality of life by avoiding the stress of shelter stay
 - Conserves and targets resources - shelter beds used only when needed
 - Cuts down on shelter waitlists



Diversion Strategies

- **Creating Diversion Strategies at:**
 - System Level
 - Program Level



Communities doing it well....

- **Cleveland, OH**
 - **Seattle, WA**
 - **North Carolina**
 - **State of Utah**
 - **Boston, MA**
 - **Montgomery County, PA**
- AND**
Detroit, MI



Bringing Diversion to Detroit

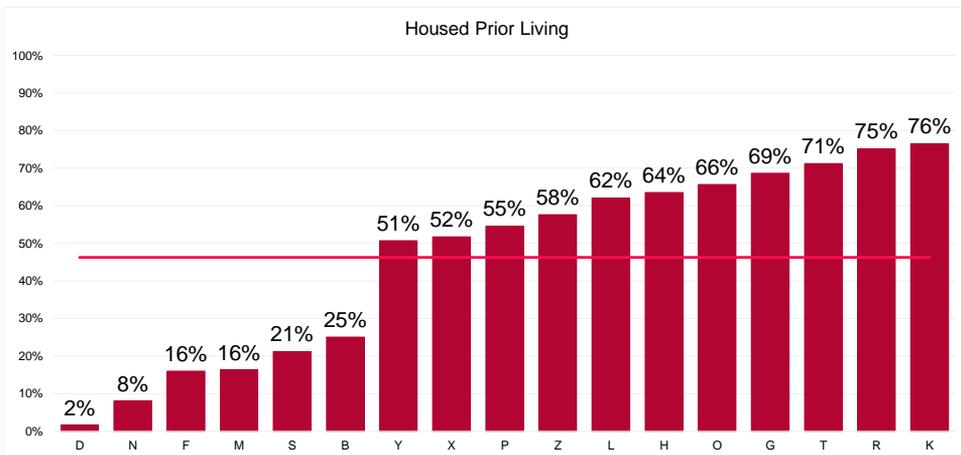


Why Diversion in Detroit?

- **Low cost, high impact program**
- **Significant shelter closures, particularly for women and families**
- **High number of shelter turnaways**
- **Demonstrated best practice in other communities**



Housed Prior Living



Easy Wins

- **Belief that addressing inflow could reduce the demand for homeless services**
- **Detroit culture has not been to question the need for shelter, but offer respite “no questions asked”**
- **Creating more shelter is a challenging process, since the funding streams for the bricks and mortar are extremely limited**
- **Program implementation was relatively low risk**



Putting the Pieces in Place

- **Commitment from MDHHS to support pilot**
- **Carve out of City ESG funds—need to ensure allowable use**
- **Locating an implementation partner**
- **Ensuring the program works for the Detroit service system**
- **Locate resources to train the community**



Cass Community Social Services, Inc.

- **Detroit Diversion Pilot Program**
 - Cass Community implemented the Detroit Diversion Pilot on 10/01/2017
 - Target population-families trying to enter the shelter system
 - Time frame for all data 10/1/17-09/22/17



Funding

- **The Pilot has two sources of funding:**
 - City of Detroit Rapid Rehousing ESG- \$100,000
These funds are used for staffing and program operations
 - MDHHS TANF Funds- \$75,000
MDHHS agreed to secure two years of funding for this project. These funds are strictly used for client assistance





*Learning for Detroit Diversion Pilot
Implementation*



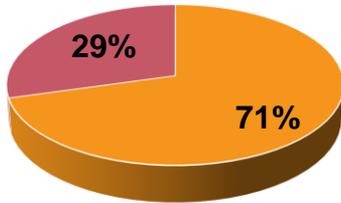
Stats of All Families Assessed

60 Families Assessed
24 Successfully Diverted
36 Not Diverted
Average family size 4.26 people
1 family had a disabled child over 18
Largest family had 8 children

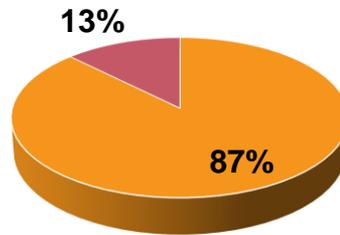


First Time Homeless?

Unable to be Diverted



Successfully Diverted



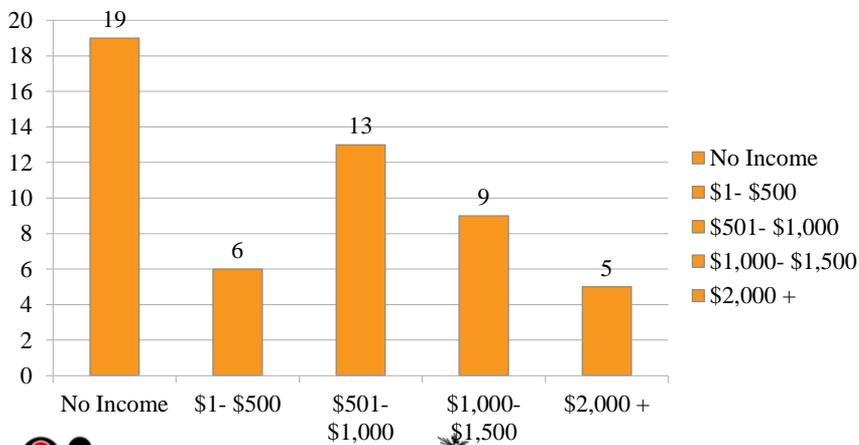
■ Yes ■ No

■ Yes ■ No



Monthly Income

All Families Assessed for Diversion



Diversion Assessment

The practice of diverting people from services is a helpful and necessary part of delivering shelter services. As an individual or family presents for shelter, considerable effort must be made to ensure that all other possible natural supports have been exhausted prior to undertaking a shelter admission.

There are 9 steps to an effective diversion practice:

STEP 1:

Explanation of the diversion conversation.

“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:

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



Diversion Assessment

STEP 3:

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 a couple and/or household with children under 18) Would your whole household be able to return and stay there safely 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.

This tool is the intellectual property of OrgCode Consulting Inc. and is being used with their permission



Diversion Assessment

STEP 4:

- **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:

Do you think that you/you and your family could stay there again temporarily if we provide you with some help or referrals to find permanent housing or connect with other services? Yes or No

- **If no, why not? What would it take to be able to stay there temporarily?**

This tool is the intellectual property of OrgCode Consulting Inc. and is being used with their permission



Diversion Assessment

STEP 6:

If no, is there somewhere else where you/you and your family 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:

What is making it hard for you to find permanent housing for you/you and your family - or connect to other resources that could help you do that?

- For example, do you or does anyone in your family have special needs or a medical condition? How does this affect your housing situation?
- Do you owe money for rent or utilities? If yes, how much?
- Are you new to the area?

This tool is the intellectual property of OrgCode Consulting Inc. and is being used with their permission



Diversion Assessment

STEP 8:

What resources do you have right now that could help you and your family 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?

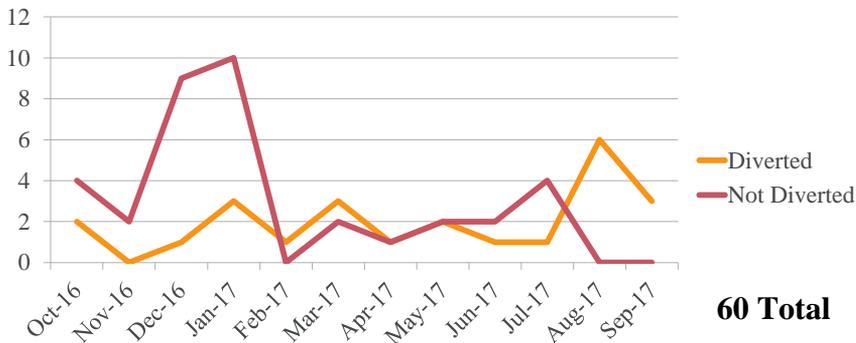
STEP 9:

- 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?

This tool is the intellectual property of OrgCode Consulting Inc. and is being used with their permission



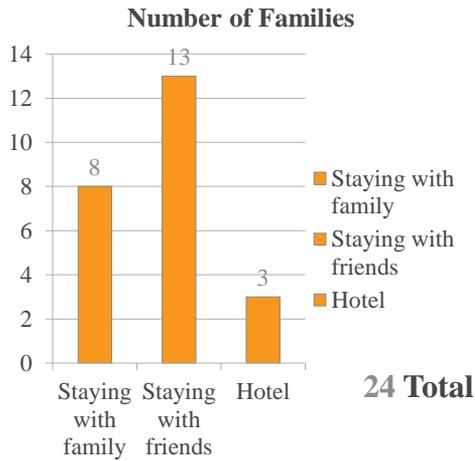
Diverted vs. Not Diverted



- 60 Total Families
- 40% Successfully Diverted
 - 24 Diverted
 - 36 Not Diverted



Destination of Diverted Families

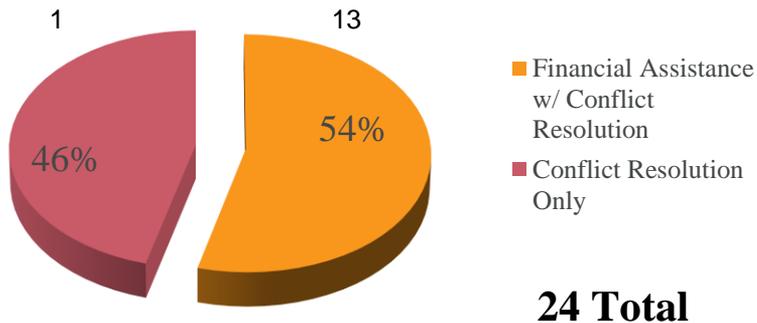


- 8 families received security deposit to move into rental property assistance after original diversion
- None of the families diverted have reentered the Detroit HMIS database



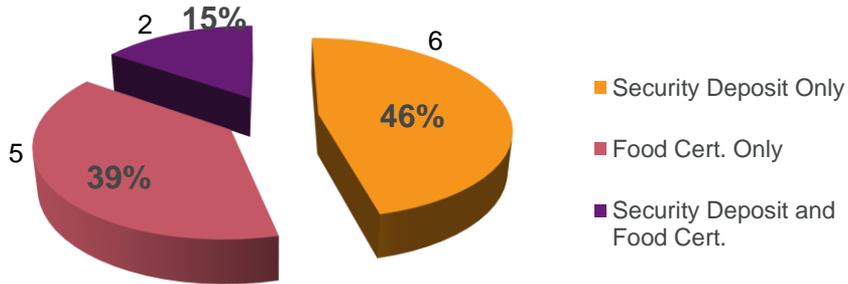
How Families Are Diverted

Number of Families



Allocation of Money Spent

Number of Families

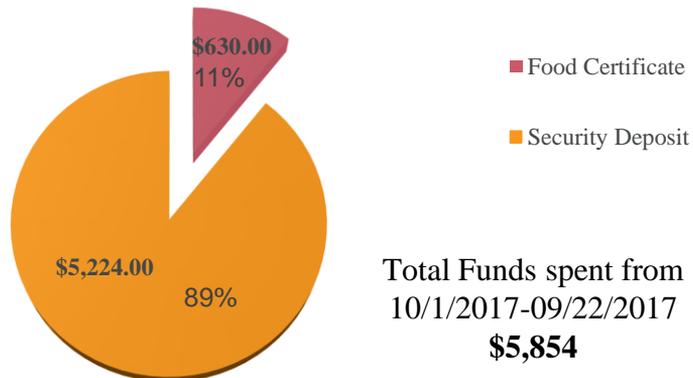


- Food assistance ranged from \$50-\$100
- Security Deposit- \$200-\$1,000



Allocation of Money Spent

Amount Spent



Case Study #1

Sheila was referred to the Diversion program by Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM) because she was seeking shelter. She is a single mother with one child. She reported that she does not receive any income and was homeless due to an eviction and loss of income. Sheila stated that she has been staying with various family members for the past 2 years and recently had been staying with her mother for the past week. Her mother was demanding she leave her house. Staff spoke to Ms. Brown's mother via telephone and after an hour long conversation she has agreed to let Sheila stay with her. Sheila was successfully diverted to her mother's home and exited out of the Diversion program without any financial assistance.



Case Study #2

Kim was referred to the Diversion program by Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM) because she was seeking shelter. She is a single mother with one child and receives \$1,500 monthly in Social Security benefits. She was homeless due to a eviction. She stated once her partner passed away she was unable to keep up with the rent and the utilities. Kim had been staying with a friend but she was no longer able to stay there because her friend wanted her to move out. Staff spoke with her friend via telephone and after some negotiation and conflict resolution she agreed to allow Kim to stay there for the next 30 days if the Diversion program would help her. Kim was also provided with food certificates during her intake appointment. After a week, she identified a rental unit and the Diversion Program was able to pay the security deposit. Within 3 weeks Kim was able to move into her own housing.



Case Study #3

Sarah was referred to Cass Family Shelter. When arriving at Cass she was first seen by the Diversion program. Sarah is a 20 year old, single mother with two small children. She reported that she does not receive any income and that she is homeless due to a verbal altercation with her mother who then asked her to leave her mother's home. While talking to Sarah she mentioned an older sister but didn't want to be a burden to her. Staff encouraged Sarah to call her but she stated she needed time to think about it. After being the shelter for 2 days, Sarah called her sister with Diversion staff. Her sister had no idea that she was in a shelter and stated that she could stay with her until she got back on her feet. Sarah was diverted to her sister's home and was provided a food certificate of \$50.



Considerations and Lessons Learned

- **Small sample size**
- **Need to broaden the program across the Continuum**
- **Due to referrals through the CAM call line, many families were screened over the phone which is not conducive to diversion compared to face-to-face**
- **Families can be diverted with conflict resolution only**
- **Financial assistance does not need to be extensive**



Bringing Diversion System Wide in Detroit



System-wide Diversion

- **Re-vamping local coordinated entry system**
- **Making diversion the front door of the family shelter system**
- **Considerations for diversion within single shelter system**
 - Financial resources currently only for families



Measuring Success

- **How will we know if it's successful?**
 - Total # of households seen by diversion staff
 - Diverted vs. not diverted
 - Destination for diverted households
 - Amount of financial assistance required per household
 - Recidivism of households diverted



How You Can Sell Diversion Locally



Things to Consider

- **Focus on System, linkage to Coordinated Entry**
- **Doesn't require large amounts of money**
- **Flexible funding sources is important**
- **May need to blend multiple sources**
- **Potential sources – Community/Private foundations, banks, faith based partners**

