



**Seattle/King County
Continuum of Care
Diversion Guidelines
Updated March 2020**

Table of Contents

Overview of Diversion	3
Role of Diversion within the Seattle/King County Crisis Response System	4
Core Principles of Diversion	5
Who is Eligible for Diversion?	5
Defining “Successful Diversion”	6
When Should Diversion be Attempted?	7
Diversion Exits from Emergency Shelter and RAPs	7
Seattle/King County Diversion System Targets and Standards	7
Flexible Financial Assistance	8
HMIS and Data Collection Requirements	9
Ongoing Training and Learning Opportunities	10
Frequently Asked Questions	12
Diversion Case Examples	14
Glossary of Terms	15

Overview of Diversion

Diversion is a housing first, person-centered, and strengths-based approach to help households identify the choices and solutions to end their homeless experience with limited interaction with the crisis response system. Diversion is explored with households accessing the Seattle/King County crisis response system who are experiencing literal homelessness or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence without a safe housing option (see page 5 for definition). It assists households to quickly secure permanent or temporary housing by encouraging creative solutions that meet their unique needs. It is a short-term intervention focused on identifying immediate, safe housing arrangements, often utilizing conflict resolution and mediation skills to reconnect people to their support systems. Diversion offers flexible services that may be coupled with minimal financial assistance when needed.

Homelessness disproportionately impacts communities of color, and the Seattle/King County Continuum of Care (CoC) has made a commitment to advancing racial equity in its shelter and housing outcomes. Diversion has been proven to be an effective and efficient approach nationally for resolving homelessness and may also help to advance racial equity. King County data suggests that Black/African American households utilize diversion at a higher rate than their overall representation in the homeless population in King County.¹ This data indicates that efforts to expand diversion may impact disproportionality by connecting Black/African American households to permanent housing without a prolonged experience of homelessness and involvement in the homeless system.

This unique approach engages households early in their housing crisis. A staff member trained in the techniques of diversion initiates an exploratory conversation to brainstorm practical solutions for households to resolve their homelessness quickly and safely. Staff help households see beyond their current crisis by encouraging them to generate creative ideas and identify realistic options for safe housing based on their own available resources rather than those of the crisis response system. The goal is for households to become housed within 45 days.

It is critical to understand the differences between diversion and prevention. Similar service strategies are often utilized within these approaches (examples: conflict resolution, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care), but *the time at which the intervention occurs is different* and important for the purposes of measuring the success of these interventions.

- **Diversion** is targeted to people who are requesting shelter or housing and have not identified a safe place to stay tonight.
- **Prevention** resources are targeted to people who have a safe place to stay tonight and are requesting support to prevent the loss of their housing resource or to identify an alternative to avoid an experience of homelessness.

Diversion is the first service offered to people without a safe place to stay tonight when they enter the homelessness crisis response system. . When diversion is not a viable option for the household, staff may complete an assessment with the household to determine whether they will be prioritized for subsidized homeless housing resources through the region's Coordinated Entry for All system. The majority of households will not receive a subsidized housing resource offer due to the lack of

¹ Based on HMIS data on RAP diversion, available upon request from King County.

such resources. Immediately following the assessment, staff will return to the diversion conversation with all households who are not prioritized for subsidized housing resources.

Role of Diversion within the Seattle/King County Crisis Response System

Diversion plays a critical role in the Seattle/King County crisis response system:

- Diversion is a housing first, person-centered, and strengths-based approach.
- Diversion assists households in identifying safe, alternative options to shelter, reducing the trauma of an experience with homelessness.
- Solutions are often creative and can be implemented quickly. Creative, real-time support can make housing instability brief, and system-wide, can reduce the number of people entering the homeless system over the course of the year (inflow).
- Diversion preserves emergency shelter beds and homeless housing services for households who have no alternative options.
- Diversion supports creative and cost-effective solutions to meet each household's needs by recognizing their unique strengths.
- Using a diversion approach can decrease a household's length of time homeless (and the system's average length of time homeless) and open service capacity for others in need.
- Diversion principles can be utilized by staff at day centers, emergency shelters, permitted villages (also known as sanctioned encampments), outreach programs, Regional Access Points (RAPs), and any other initial points of contact within the crisis response system.
- Diversion supports a household's obtainment of long-term or temporary housing options outside the crisis response system.

Diversion starts with a conversation grounded in a household's current housing situation, available resources, and identification of safe housing options outside of the homeless housing system they are willing to explore. The role of a diversion specialist (anyone trained to have a diversion conversation) is to partner with the household to identify viable alternatives for permanent or temporary housing stability, and support connection to their preferred alternative.

Services and best practices include:

- Hold diversion conversations that foster effective participant "problem solving." These conversations include open-ended questions utilizing motivational interviewing skills.
- Follow the lead of the household and do not inhibit the household from pursuing a viable and safe housing option, even if it's only a short-term solution.
- Partner with households as advocates to work with landlords and debt collectors if advocacy directly links to a housing solution.
- Serve as a mediator to assist households in having difficult conversations with individuals in their support network. This may include friends and family, employers, debt collectors, and landlords. Conversations focus on solutions to securing safe housing options.
- Connect households to short and long-term supports and resources, including mainstream services that can address ongoing needs as well as housing search resources.
- Facilitate financial assistance for solutions that require financial support.

Core Principles of Diversion

Adapted from the National Alliance to End Homelessness

Principle 1: Crisis Resolution

Every situation that could result in homelessness is a crisis for the person experiencing it. Crisis system responses must include: rapid assessment and triaging based upon urgency; focus on personal safety as the first priority; creating the space to listen and acknowledge an emotional reaction; establishing clear action steps the individual can successfully achieve; assistance with actions the individual is temporarily unable or unwilling to attempt; connection to mainstream resources beyond the homeless system; and personal control over one's own problem-solving.

Principle 2: Client Choice, Respect and Empowerment

People in crisis may feel paralyzed by the urgency and the potentially devastating consequences of their situation. Diversion must help people in crisis regain a sense of control and feeling of empowerment to actively overcome obstacles. Emphasis on the person's goals, choices, and preferences; an unwavering respect for their strengths; and reinforcement of progress are essential for empowerment.

Principle 3: Progressive Engagement

Provide the minimum assistance necessary for the shortest time possible. This includes "letting go" as soon as the person has the resources and tools to continue their lives--however they choose to live them. Providing just enough assistance to avoid homelessness enables a community to help far more people in crisis. Assistance is focused on connection to permanent or temporary housing or other resources that help alleviate the situation that causes homelessness (ex: connection to employment support). Providing non-essential assistance redirects resources that would otherwise assist another household in avoiding entrance to the crisis response system.

Who is Eligible for Diversion?

Homeless status is the only eligibility criteria for diversion services. Households who are requesting assistance from the homeless crisis response system and have not identified a safe place to stay tonight are eligible for diversion. When considering eligibility for diversion we look at where the household anticipates staying tonight, not where they stayed last night. Households may either qualify as literally homeless for the coming night, or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence.

Youth and Young Adults ages 18-24 are eligible if they are doubling up and anticipate losing their temporary housing within 14 days.

Literally Homeless Definition for Diversion Eligibility

- An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which includes a primary nighttime residence of:
 - Place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (including car, park, abandoned building, bus/train station, airport, or camping ground);
 - Publicly or privately-operated shelter, including a hotel or motel paid for by government or charitable organizations;

- In addition, a person is considered homeless if he or she is being discharged from an institution where he or she has been a resident for 90 days or less, and the person resided in a shelter (but not transitional housing) or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.

Definition of Fleeing or Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence for Diversion Eligibility

- Any individual or family who:
 - Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence;²
 - Has no other residence; and
 - Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Diversion is available at any entry point of the crisis response system, including day centers, emergency shelters, permitted villages, outreach programs, and RAPs. Even if a household has accessed diversion services previously, they are eligible to re-engage and receive assistance if they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this section.

Defining “Successful Diversion”

A successful diversion occurs when a household moves into stable housing outside of the homelessness response system. . It may be permanent or temporary housing; the household may be in their own home, living with family or friends, relocating to safe housing, or living in shared housing.³ Diversion might support a household returning to their recent home (i.e. mediation, food assistance); moving to a safe housing option (i.e. move-in costs, bus fare to a safe housing option); or moving into a new housing situation (i.e. landlord advocacy, deposit assistance, first month of rent).

It can be difficult to estimate how long a temporary housing solution will be available, and the household’s options should not be limited due to the fear of not meeting outcomes. **This CoC considers all self-reported housing options outside of the homeless system a positive diversion outcome, regardless of the length of time an option is projected to last.** It is the role of the diversion specialist to not only support a safe temporary option, but to work with the household to identify a permanent housing plan as well. For the purposes of tracking quality data in HMIS, a “temporary” diversion solution includes living with family or friends on a time-limited basis, and a “permanent” solution is an option a household reports that does not have a time limit.

² For the purposes of diversion, fleeing may include individuals or families who need assistance to remain in their residence after a batterer who is a bread-winner leaves the household.

³**Diversion eligible exit destinations:** 1) Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy; 2) Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy; 3) Staying or living with family, permanent tenure; 4) Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure; 5) Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy; 6) Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy; 7) Moved from one HOPWA funded project to HOPWA PH; 8) Long-term care facility or nursing home; 9) Staying or living with family, temporary tenure; and 10) Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure.

When Should Diversion be Attempted?

Diversion should be attempted and tracked in HMIS for 100% of households entering the crisis response system via day centers, hygiene centers, emergency shelters, permitted villages, outreach programs, and Regional Access Points. Diversion is ideally attempted during the first conversation with every household entering the crisis response system, and it should be completed as rapidly as possible to minimize the household's experience of homelessness. Having a diversion conversation with every household entering crisis response system will help to reduce the overall number of households experiencing homelessness in our community and ensure the crisis response system is available to meet the needs of households for whom diversion is not an option.

Diversion Exits from Emergency Shelter and RAPs

Households should be supported to exit to permanent housing whenever safe and possible. The diversion approach can be used at any time in a person's experience of unsheltered or sheltered homelessness.

Agencies that are funded to provide diversion services are expected to follow timeframe and exit guidance outlined in their specific contracts.

Some programs have additional services and flexible funds to support permanent housing placements, and our CoC is designing the future system with the goal of ensuring resources are available equally throughout all emergency shelter programs. Regardless of where a person is at within their experience of homelessness, the system must provide support that focuses on permanent housing connections and rapidly exiting the homeless system whenever it is safe and possible.

Permanent housing placements are always considered successful program exists, even when they are not counted as diversions. Connecting people with safe, stable housing options is the ultimate goal of the crisis response system. Examples of successful housing placements that are not diversions include rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing, as well as self-resolutions from shelter (when a household identifies a safe housing option on their own).

Seattle/King County Diversion System Targets and Standards

- Diversion outcome targets by population and program type:⁴
 - 50% of all enrolled family households are successfully diverted from emergency shelters and RAPs
 - 20% of all enrolled single adult and young adult households are successfully diverted from emergency shelters and RAPs
 - 20% of all enrolled households are successfully diverted from day centers and outreach programs (all populations)
- All diversion attempts must be tracked in HMIS, so we fully understand the impact of the diversion approach within the crisis response system.

⁴ May need to update Diversion outcomes for permitted villages will be developed in 2019 for implementation in 2020.

- Diversion must be attempted during the first interaction with RAP staff and must be attempted within 72 hours of initial enrollment at emergency shelter programs accessing diversion funds.
- The window for completing diversions for people using emergency shelters and RAPs is 45 days from the program enrollment date. However, a diversion plan must be in place and funds cannot be expended 30 days after the program enrollment date.
- There is no time limit for completing diversions with unsheltered households at day centers, permitted villages, and outreach programs.
- Successful diversion outcomes include exits to permanent housing outside of the homeless services system, as well as staying with family or friends on a temporary basis.

Diversion Performance Standards*				
	Diversion Attempted the 1st Day a Household Accesses Services	Diversion Attempted within 72 Hours of Program Enrollment	Diversions within 45 Days of Program Enrollment**	Percent of Enrolled Clients Diverted Each Quarter
Emergency Shelter	n/a	100%	20% Singles and Young Adults, 50% Families	n/a
Day and Hygiene Centers	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%
Regional Access Points	100%	n/a	20% Singles and Young Adults, 50% Families	n/a
Outreach Programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%

*Data will be analyzed every quarter on a cumulative basis throughout the calendar year.

**Must also have utilized a diversion service in HMIS within 30 days of program enrollment.

In 2019, the diversion outcome targets were included in all contracts with diversion funds granted by the funders endorsing this document.

Flexible Financial Assistance

Flexible financial assistance is available for households who identify it as a need for resolving their housing crisis through diversion conversations. According to Building Changes’ 2018 publication [Homeless To Housed In A Hurry](#), people are able to find viable diversion solutions with relatively small amounts of financial assistance, averaging \$1,031 per household. In a [diversion pilot program in Pierce County](#), nearly 33% of families able to obtain safe housing through a diversion pilot program did so without receiving any financial assistance.

When financial assistance is necessary to obtain safe housing, diversion funds can be used in a variety of ways provided they directly result in a housing solution, whether permanent or temporary. The Pierce County Diversion Pilot found the most common types of financial assistance for families were security deposit (used by 76% of families), one-time rent payment (70%), and rental application fee (15%).

Common uses of diversion financial assistance funds may include, but are not limited to:

- Move-in costs, including deposit and first month's rent, moving supplies, the cost of a moving truck and storage;
- Rental applications fees, and payments for background and credit checks;
- Fees for securing identification documents, birth certificates and social security cards;
- Transportation, including bus tickets for both local transport and to facilitate relocation to verifiable, safe housing out-of-the-area;
- Previous housing debt/rental arrears if resolving will facilitate an immediate housing placement;
- Utility deposits and arrears needed to secure housing; and
- Certifications or license fees related to school or employment.

Households have unique needs and each situation will require different strategies. A progressive engagement framework should be used to determine the amount of resources needed to end the housing crisis of each impacted household. **To promote the expertise of local diversion specialists as well as flexibility and efficiency in diversion service delivery, our CoC does not have a maximum or cap on the amount of financial assistance one household can receive.** However, individual funders may have maximum amounts per diversion, more specific lists of eligible costs, unique documentation requirements, and financial assistance time limits in their contracts. Documenting circumstances and uses of funds helps inform what households truly need to connect to housing solutions without long-term support from the crisis response system.

Africatown International operates the Centralized Diversion Fund (CDF), available to diversion-trained day centers, emergency shelters, permitted villages, outreach programs, and RAPs located in King County. Agencies with direct diversion awards must spend down their awards in full before accessing the Centralized Flexible Financial Assistance Fund or other community diversion resources. Agencies with diversion awards designated for a specific population may access the Centralized Flexible Fund for populations excluded from their award (for example, an agency with a diversion award specifically for families could access the fund to serve single adults). Agencies with diversion awards may also access the Centralized Flexible Fund if they are working with a household whose need exceeds the financial assistance cap for their fund source. To learn more about the CDF, contact Yalonda Sinde, request@africatowninternational.org.

HMIS and Data Collection Requirements

Entering data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) helps our system and community evaluate the impact of homeless services, resources and interventions, including diversion. All diversion services must be documented in HMIS, including date, expense amount (if applicable), and result. In general, diversion services are tagged with [DIV] in their service name and are set up under all front door programs in HMIS: Regional Access Points, Emergency Shelters,

Day Centers, Street Outreach, and Coordinated Entry System. [DIV] Services are categorized as a “Coordinated Entry Event” in HMIS, no matter where the household receives the diversion services.

Diversion services include Attempt (ie, conversation); Case Management; Mediation/Dispute Resolution; Referrals (several types); and Financial (several types).

Providers are required to enter diversion outcomes in HMIS in real time. Entering outcomes includes:

1. Marking “Yes/No” to the “client housed/re-housed in a safe alternative” question that shows up for [DIV] Services (a new part of the HUD HMIS Data Standards⁵); and
2. Selecting the most accurate Exit Destination when exiting/ending HMIS enrollment.

Providers who have not traditionally had a “front door” program set up in HMIS, may now be entering enrollments and services in the system-wide Coordinated Entry System Project in HMIS; diversion services can be entered under this program if the provider has been given access. If unsure of where to enter the [DIV] diversion services or which staff have HMIS access, please reach out to your agency’s HMIS Agency Lead

Visit the [King County HMIS website](#), which includes a Quick Guide for Entering Diversion Services into HMIS) or contact the [HMIS Help Desk](#) for more assistance on how/when to enter diversion-related services.

Note: Other funding sources, such as the United Way Streets to Home initiative, may also be tracked in HMIS in their own way, with their own services that may or may not fit the definition of diversion as outlined in this manual. Grantees should adhere to guidance from the specific funder re: HMIS data entry requirements for tracking use of those funds.

Comprehensive quarterly diversion dashboards will be made available starting in 2019, so that the community can collectively understand the successes and challenges of diversion efforts countywide. The dashboards will reflect diversion outcomes for day centers, emergency shelters, permitted villages, outreach programs, RAPs, and any other initial points of contact within the crisis response system. Outcome data will be disaggregated by race to help assess how well diversion meets the needs of communities of color.

A complete list of diversion eligible exit destinations is footnoted on page 6. Diversion exits to permanent housing destinations are seen as successful outcomes for both diversions and shelter for program evaluation purposes.

Ongoing Training and Learning Opportunities

All Home has made a commitment to diversion training in our community by cultivating a network of specially trained Diversion Coaches. Diversion training opportunities, provided by Diversion Coaches, [are listed here \(http://allhomekc.org/training-and-technical-assistance/\)](http://allhomekc.org/training-and-technical-assistance/).

Individual and organizational access to The Centralized Fund operated by Africatown International requires completion of this training.

Diversion Learning Circles will be facilitated countywide by Diversion Coaches. They are an opportunity for provider staff trained in diversion approaches to problem-solve, share best practices,

⁵ This will be made available in HMIS on April 1, 2020.

and connect with other providers. Learning Circles will be offered throughout the county at varying times and locations.

Additional resources on how other communities are using diversion services can be found here:

- [National Alliance to End Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Tools](#)
- [Building Changes' 2018 *Homeless to Housed in a Hurry*](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between homelessness prevention and diversion?

Homelessness prevention targets households who are still housed but at imminent risk of homelessness; typically within 14 days. Households who are at risk of homelessness may include people who are facing eviction from their own or rented home, couch-surfing, doubled up with friends or family, or paying for a motel with their own resources. Diversion targets households who do not have a place to stay the night they request assistance; they are past the imminent risk of homelessness and anticipate needing emergency shelter that night. They may or may not have been experiencing literal homelessness the previous night, but we look at where they anticipate sleeping tonight to determine whether diversion resources are appropriate.

How is Diversion supportive of the Continuum of Care's Racial Equity goals?

The 2018 Point in Time Count showed a 4% increase in homelessness in our region. It also illustrates stark disparities for people of color—Black/African Americans are up to five times more likely to experience homelessness, and American Indian/Alaska Natives are up to as seven times more likely to experience homelessness.⁶ Our CoC has committed to pursuing solutions that eliminate these disparities. We are committed to centering racial equity in all diversion trainings, measuring diversion outcomes by race, and incorporating feedback from people with lived experiences to continue to refine the diversion program model.

How are diversion case management services different from traditional case management services?

The focus of diversion services is to quickly support a household to find a safe housing solution. Diversion services are flexible short-term interventions with limited follow-up. If the household needs more intensive support, they may be referred to appropriate case management or other longer-term supportive services embedded within provider agencies.

Can someone explore diversion services AND complete a CEA housing assessment?

Occasionally, yes. It is important to know that completing a housing assessment rarely results in a subsidized housing offer through the homeless system. Due to the stark difference between the number of people requesting housing assistance and the number of housing resources available through the homeless system, very few people receive a subsidized housing offer.

Therefore, the CoC encourages exploring all safe housing options through diversion services and supports households to pursue options they are comfortable with. Households can pursue diversion and complete a housing assessment, and they will be informed quickly following the assessment whether they can anticipate a housing resource within the next 60 days. When it is likely they will not receive a housing offer within 60 days, they will be provided the opportunity to return to the diversion conversation and capitalize on diversion resources.

Can I use diversion financial assistance for households to access a homeless housing programs (ex: deposit for transitional housing)?

⁶ <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017-King-PIT-Count-Comprehensive-Report-FINAL-DRAFT-5.31.17.pdf>

No. Diversion financial assistance is meant to divert individuals and families away from the homeless housing system, which includes emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. If a barrier to accessing homeless housing resources exists, such as a deposit for transitional housing, please contact the funder of the homeless housing resource to assist in removing the barrier.

Do we need to document homeless status before working with a household?

Proof of homelessness is not required, to promote flexibility and urgency in resolving the homeless situation. However, if a diversion specialist discovers that a household is not literally homeless, or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, they should stop diversion services and refer the household to resources that better fit the household's needs to maintain and strengthen their housing situation. Often times that means accessing prevention resources because the household is at imminent risk of homelessness.

What if a household in emergency shelter isn't able to complete diversion in 45 days?

To qualify as diversion from emergency shelter under these guidelines, a diversion plan must be in place and any funds needed to resolve the housing crisis must be administered within 30 days of program enrollment and households must exit from emergency shelter to a diversion eligible exit destination within 45 days. Households that are no longer eligible for diversion may continue to access other supportive services and flexible funds that support a rapid exit from their homeless situation if available.

What if a household has previously accessed diversion and requests diversion assistance again?

If a household has accessed diversion services previously, they are eligible to re-engage and receive assistance if they meet the eligibility requirement outlined on page 5 of this document.

Diversion Case Examples

Example #1

A couple and their two children came to a RAP for help. Through the assessment process, RAP staff learned they were evicted from their apartment a week earlier because they used their rent money to pay a child's medical bills. Embarrassed by their situation, the family decided to stay in their car and put their belongings in storage. Their former apartment was conveniently located near the father's job and the children's school, but the family feared their relationship with their former landlord was damaged beyond repair and they couldn't return.

The mother said she might have a co-worker who would be willing to put them up for a week or so but felt too ashamed to ask and didn't want people at work to think she was a bad mother. The RAP staff helped the family strategize about how to ask the co-worker for assistance and provided a referral to a low-cost health care clinic nearby where the family can take their sick child for continuing care. Staff also provided information about affordable health insurance options.

Once the family confirmed they could stay with the mother's co-worker, the RAP staff focused on the family's longer-term housing plan. Together, they called the former landlord to discuss the family's situation. During the call they found out that the family had a positive rental history and was previously well-regarded by the landlord, but when the rent didn't come and they lost contact, the landlord didn't know what else to do and moved forward in the eviction process. With diversion financial assistance, the RAP staff was able to pay the rental arrears in return for the landlord working with the family to return to the unit. After a few days of staying with their co-worker, the family moved back into their previous unit.

Example #2

A single adult visited a RAP and requested emergency shelter. RAP staff learned that she was previously on a lease with a partner in a small town in Eastern Washington. When their relationship ended, she felt she had to get out of the area and heard Seattle had a thriving job market. While job hunting and staying in a motel, her savings ran low she began sleeping outside, where she got connected to a permitted village by an outreach worker. She was working part-time and wasn't able to save enough for a deposit and first month's rent.

RAP staff asked her what kind of housing situations are safe and viable for her. After confirming that she didn't have any connections in the area but had lived with roommates in the past, she decided that a shared living situation would be her best option. Knowing that diversion financial assistance could be used for moving costs, she was able to connect with diversion assistance after identifying a room for rent in a local home.

Glossary of Terms

Continuum of Care (CoC) – A HUD designated geographic area designed to promote a coordinated community effort to end homelessness.

Crisis Resolution – Assisting individuals and families without housing to have a place to live, while connecting them to systems that can help to address the issues that may have contributed to their housing crisis.

Diversion – A housing first, person-centered, and strengths-based approach to help households identify the choices and solutions to end their homeless experience with limited interaction with the crisis response system.

Diversion Specialist – Anyone trained in and attempting diversion.

Eligible Household – Homeless status is the only eligibility criteria for diversion services. Households who are requesting crisis housing response system assistance and have not identified a safe place to stay tonight are eligible for diversion.

Emergency Shelter – Temporary shelter from the elements and unsafe streets for homeless individuals and families. Emergency shelters typically address the basic health, food, clothing, and personal hygiene needs of the households they serve and provide information and referrals about supportive services and housing. Emergency Shelters may range from mats on the floor in a common space to beds in individual units. Some shelters are overnight only, while others operate 24/7.

Family – A household with at least one child under 18.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – A web-based software application designed to record and store person-level information regarding the service needs and history of households experiencing homelessness throughout a Continuum of Care jurisdiction, as mandated by HUD.

Household – An individual, couple, or family seeking to be housed together.

Housing First – Housing first is a low-barrier homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing housing to people experiencing homelessness with preconditions. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues.

Permanent Housing – A housing solution without a time limit.

Progressive Engagement – An approach to support households to resolve their housing crisis by tailoring services to their unique needs, and reserving more intensive services for those that need additional assistance.

Regional Access Point (RAP) – Regional Access Points provide housing assessments and referrals to community resources. They are located in five sites across King County. Housing assessors and navigators are based at these sites.

Temporary Housing – A housing solution with a time limit.

Young Adult – An individual who is 18-24 years old.