

**TX-601 Continuum of Care**

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# Diversions Policies and Procedures

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**The Homeless Coalition**

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## I. Overview

The TX-601 Continuum of Care (CoC) Diversion Policies and Procedures were created to support diversion practices in the community as a strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness. These standards and practices shall guide access and delivery of diversion assistance within the CoC.

Diversion is a strategy that helps to immediately address the needs of households (individual or family) who have lost their housing and assists to identify alternative housing outside of the system of care. The goal is to help the household find safe, alternative housing immediately, including but not limited to returning to their own housing, staying with family/ friends, or relocation to another area using short-term assistance and flexible financial assistance.

## II. Diversion Delivery

### A. Access Points

Access points are points of entry to the homeless response system, either virtual or physical, where a participant or household in need of assistance accesses the Coordinated Entry System. All homeless service providers are considered access points and are expected to offer diversion assistance or referrals. Households qualify for diversion assistance if they are in Tarrant or Parker counties seeking services and meet the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of literally homeless and/or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence. If a household arrives at an access point after hours, a referral should be made for the household to follow-up with diversion staff the next morning. Primary access points include:

TCHC Helpline	Presbyterian Night Shelter Outreach
Presbyterian Night Shelter	VA Outreach
The Salvation Army Mabee Center	CitySquare Fort Worth TRAC Outreach
True Worth Place	Hearts Full of Love Outreach
Union Gospel Mission	Grand Prairie Homeless Outreach Organization
Arlington Life Shelter	DRC Solutions Mobile Assessors
Center for Transforming Lives	Hands of Hope Outreach
Seasons of Change	MHMR Integrated Outreach Services (IOS)

### B. Diversion Assessment Tool

The diversion assessment tool should be used to determine if a household qualifies for diversion assistance. Ideally the diversion assessment is administered as soon as a household enters the access point but before intake to determine if they will need shelter or if they can be assisted without having to enter the homeless assistance system.

The diversion assessment tool should be used to guide the diversion conversation that helps uncover barriers that could be resolved to aid the household in remaining in their current housing or facilitate other housing options. Diversion should focus on household strengths, including resources currently or potentially available to them. The diversion assessment tool includes household information, explanation of the diversion conversation and housing information.

### III. TX-601 Diversion Process

Below are the steps in the TX-601 Diversion Process:

1. A household (individual or family) presents at an access point or outreach worker encounters client on outreach.
  - a. During business hours – **Move to STEP 2.**
  - b. During off-hours - Refer household to trained staff the following morning to complete diversion screening.
2. Begin the diversion conversation  
Use the diversion assessment tool to help guide the conversation if needed. **Move to STEP 3.**
3. Was the diversion attempt successful?
  - a. Yes - Explain consent, create outreach contact or case manager note, complete HUD Start. **Move to STEP 4.**
  - b. No - **Move to STEP 5.**
4. Was DCSF used?
  - a. Yes - Complete DCSFv3 touchpoint, submit a DCSF reimbursement to Candice Dean with TCHC ([candice@ahomewithhope.org](mailto:candice@ahomewithhope.org)). **Move to STEP 7.**
  - b. No - **Move to STEP 7.**
5. If not today, can the household be diverted in the next 30 days?
  - a. Yes  
In Fort Worth - refer to PNS Rapid Exit Program. **Move to STEP 6.**  
Outside of Fort Worth - use DCSF to assist in exiting homelessness (if needed). **Move to STEP 6.**
  - b. No - **Move to STEP 6.**
6. Begin shelter intake or enter household in outreach program  
Explain consent, create case manager note or outreach contact, complete HUD Start & VI-SPDATv2, begin shelter intake. **Move to STEP 7.**
7. Create diversion touchpoint  
Complete diversion touchpoint in ETO. **Move to STEP 8.**
8. Complete HUD Exit and dismissal  
Complete HUD Exit and program dismissal in ETO once a household is diverted. *\*Wait at least 24hrs after a household is entered into the system for HUD Exit and Dismissal.*
9. **Household Successfully Exits Homelessness!!!**

For additional information on entering the diversion touchpoint or the DCSF touchpoint and reimbursement, please review the following courses in TalentLMS:

- Diversion Basics and ETO
- ETO: DCSF Reimbursement

For access to these courses, please submit a helpdesk ticket at <https://tchcmisupport.hesk.com/> to request access.

## IV. Diversion Resources

### A. Diversion Staff

Access points should have at least 1 staff member dedicated to the Diversion process that has established relationships with community services and supports so a household may quickly connect with the providers that would assist them to remain in housing or secure alternative housing. Staff providing diversion assistance should be specifically trained in the diversion process. An ideal candidate for this position:

- should be an extraordinary problem solver who is remarkably resourceful
- should think before reacting
- must remain objective and fair
- must focus on the problem/issues, not the emotions
- must exercise direct communication and active listening
- must focus on the future, not the past
- must have unwavering integrity of process and remain impartial to all parties that may be trying to influence the situation
- must have impeccable personal boundaries
- must embrace and empower self-determination
- must consistently distinguish between want and need

*Diversion staff should make sure to provide a warm handoff to the service/agency they are referring the household if their agency is unable help.*

### B. Direct Client Service Funds

Direct Client Service Funds (DCSF) are funds available to help households with their unique circumstances resolve issues and overcome barriers to allow them to stay where they are or to make alternative arrangements for permanent/temporary housing. Households can receive up to \$1,500 of DCSF assistance. **Note: No money will ever be paid directly to the client.**

A household is eligible to receive DCSF if they are seeking services in Tarrant or Parker counties and meets the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of literally homeless, which is an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- i. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- ii. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregative shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
- iii. Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Eligible DCSF expenses for Diversion include:

- Bus tickets to reunite with family
- Application fees, apartment administrative fees, security deposits
- Gas voucher

### C. Landlord Mediation Assistance

TCHC offers free mediation services for landlords and clients in a partnership with UNT Dallas and their College of Law. When a landlord signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TCHC, the landlord agrees to participate in mediation services before terminating a lease. For more information about mediation services, contact [kimberly@ahomewithhope.org](mailto:kimberly@ahomewithhope.org).

### III. HMIS Data Capture

Each household's diversion attempt should be recorded in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) using the Diversion Touchpoint. This will help capture households provided diversion assistance and monitor diversion numbers. Diversion attempts or fails should be documented in HMIS within 24 hours of assistance to promote data quality. TCHC will also record the outcome of the assistance, analyze households who received the benefit of diversion, the effectiveness of the diversion effort and resources necessary to support the strategy.

