



Diversion Webinar Series – Session #2
Programs from Edmonton & Waterloo
May 1, 2018

1. Diversion Introduction and Overview (April 2018)
2. Communities Share Their Diversion Programs –
Edmonton & Waterloo (May 2018)
3. Diversion and Data (June 2018)
4. Maybe Others

Today's Presentation By...

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Diversion Practice in Edmonton



Diversion in Edmonton

- Identified as a necessary approach within the 10 year Plan to End Homelessness
- Is a structured approach to work off the by-names-list, that is complimentary to the work of the existing system of housing programs
 - Community wide learning series- Org Code
 - Goal is to reach a standardized approach city wide
- Typically occurs at the point at which people become homeless, or at imminent risk of homelessness
- Applications of diversion practice vary (ex. discharge planning, from shelters, from the system of housing programs, as well as extending into prevention work)

Why is it important?

- Most individuals who experience homelessness are able to self resolve
- Meeting all housing needs requires a range of options
 - Edmonton's By Names List: Individuals 1,358 Families 118
- Stimulates system collaboration and change

In Practice

- Diversion approach can frame the work that existing service providers currently do (ex housing plan, brokering supports as needed)
- Acknowledge that this work can mean a shift from the service provider leading and completing housing work, to the individual creating housing action plans as independently as possible
- The service provider illustrates the individuals' capabilities, while informing their housing plan

In Practice

Opportunities for implementation:

- Incorporate into existing approach (ex. coordinated access, TRAG)
- In community and event based (ex. homeless connect, housing workshops, drop-in locations)
- Hotspots

Work leads to:

- Transparency
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Eliminates duplication

In Practice: Coordinated Access



Future State

- Tracking of activities need to be configured to evaluate diversion efforts
- Community wide performance benchmarks are needed to determine how often diversion is completed, and its success rate
- Communication across system of care is needed to decrease duplication of efforts and increase information and data patterns



Region of Waterloo

A Systems-Based Approach to Preventing Homelessness

WATERLOO REGION
MAY 1, 2018

ALL ROADS LEAD TO HOME



Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada

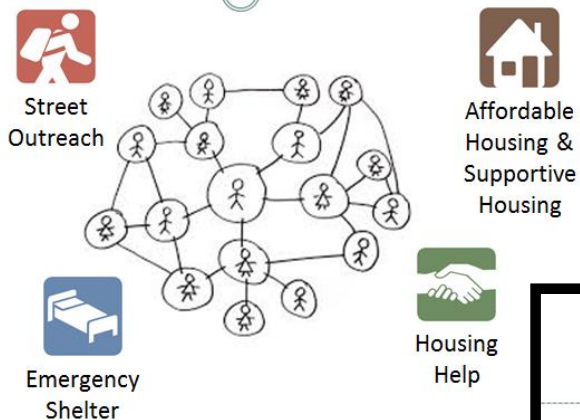


- Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and 4 townships
- 10th largest urban area in Canada and 4th largest in Ontario
- \$14M annual funding to end homelessness



Population 583,500

The "Before": Connected



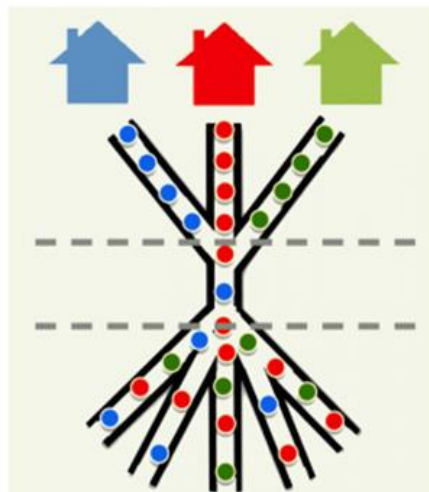
Connected, but
uncoordinated
approach



Fully coordinated, triage
approach to matching
people with programs



The "After": Coordinated



Working Towards Progressive Engagement

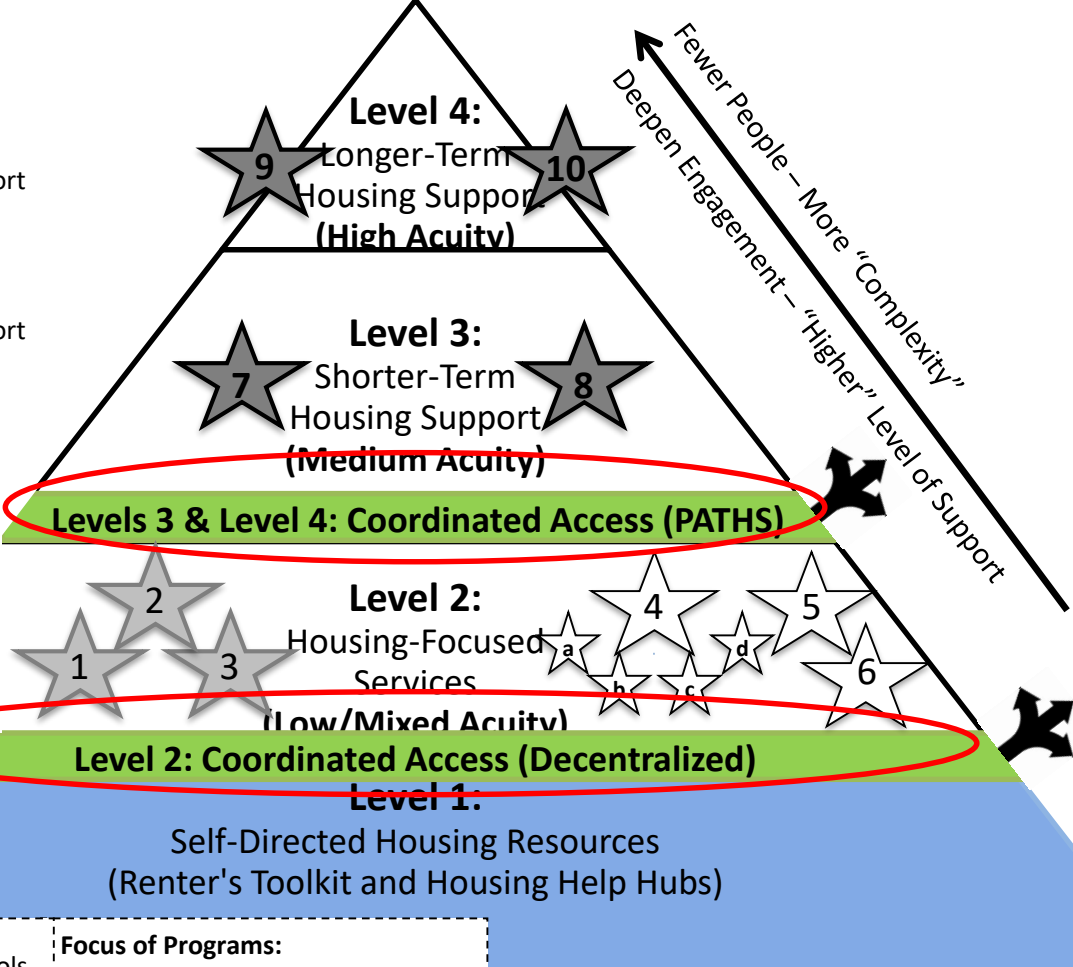
- Common understanding of functions or roles
- Triage approach to accessing programs:
 - **Level 1:** Self-Directed Housing Resources
 - **Level 2:** Housing-Focused Services
 - **Level 3:** Shorter-Term Housing Support
 - **Level 4:** Longer-Term Housing Support
- Prioritized list, not chronological list



10: Supportive Housing
 9: Portable Home-Based Support
 (Longer-Term)

8: Portable Home-Based Support
 (Shorter-Term)
 7: Transitional Housing

6: Ontario Renovates
 5: Affordable Home
 Ownership
 4: Community Housing
 3: Street Outreach
 2: Emergency Shelter
 1: Housing Resource Centres



Access & Referral Protocols
 Coordinated Access
 Universal Access

Focus of Programs:
 Primarily Housing Affordability
 Housing Help Available
 Housing Support Coordination

**Housing Stability System:
 Progressive Engagement Pyramid**

FOCUS ON FAMILIES



Spike in Family Homelessness

Emergency Shelter Bed Nights

45% increase
from 2008

63,277

91,697

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

Families Accessing Shelter

229% increase
from 2008

65

214

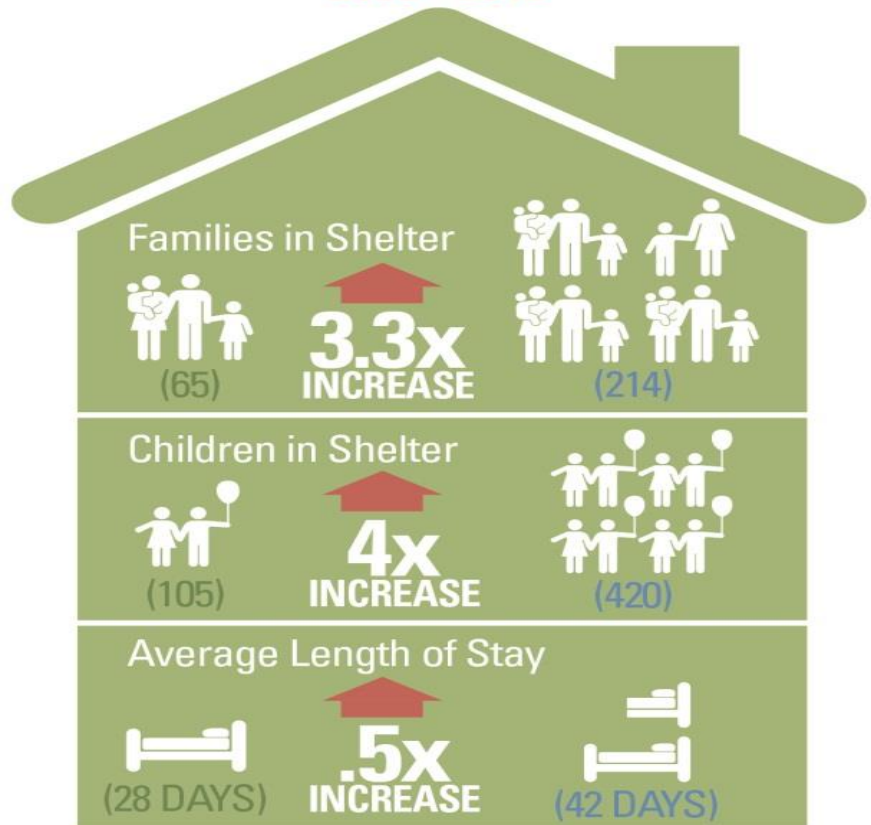
2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

- Impact of local "recession lag"

- Pressures on local shelter programs

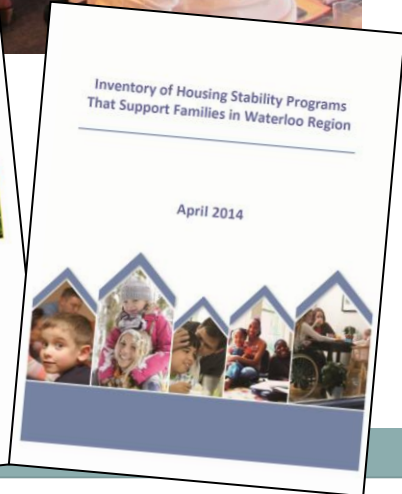
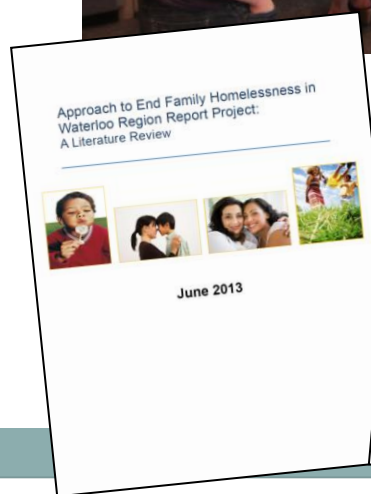
- Considerable motel overflow and increased system costs

Families in Emergency Shelter 2008 - 2012



Ending Family Homelessness Report

- Funding from federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- Input from over 200 community service providers and over 40 families
- Supporting documents:
 - Literature Review
 - Inventory of Housing Stability Programs for Families

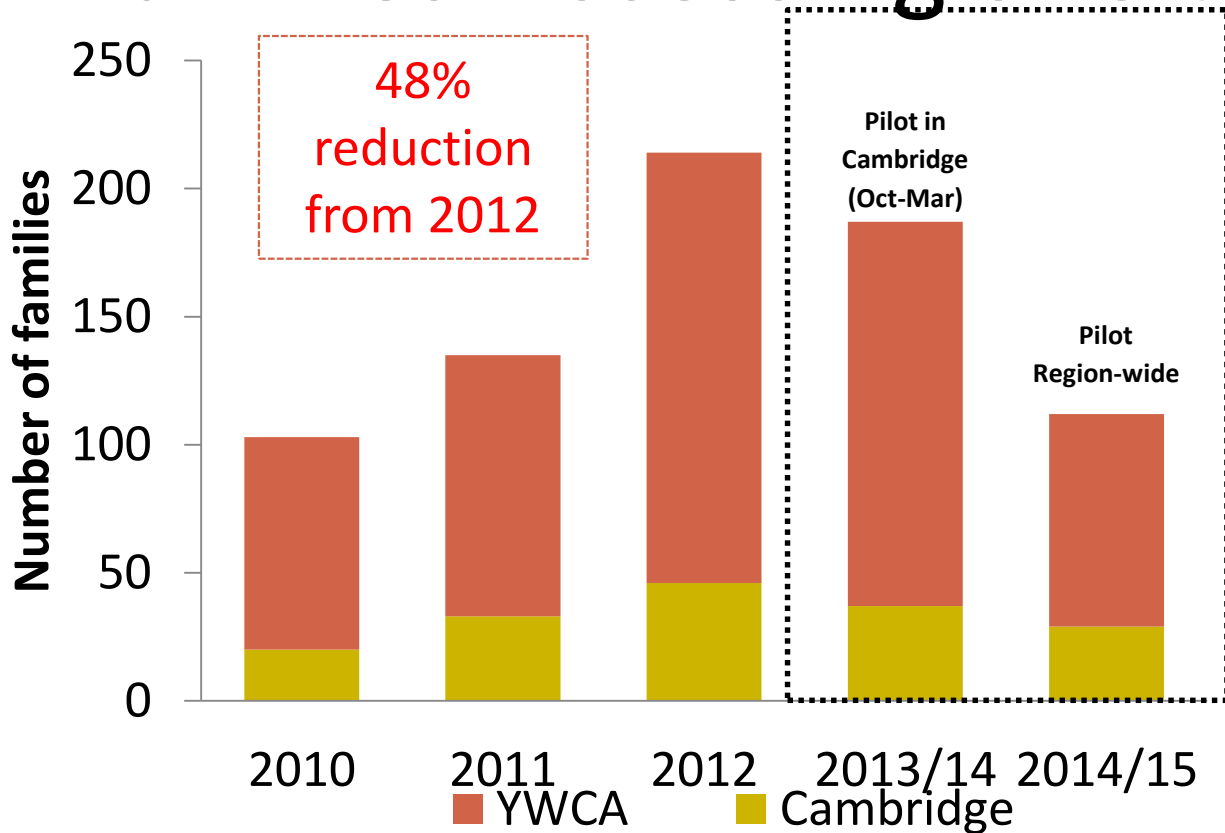


Shelter Diversion Early Learning



- Changed the culture of access to the system
- Definition:
 - Support to stay in current housing or find somewhere else safe and appropriate – even temporarily – until permanent housing secured
 - Policy: when and how families may access shelter
 - Assessment and safety screening + specialized problem-solving skills
 - Can be more or less intensive process, depending on the family
- Not just saying "no"
 - Prevents stress and trauma of shelter where other options exist
 - Reduces demand for expensive crisis care responses
 - Ends homelessness by prioritizing housing-based interventions

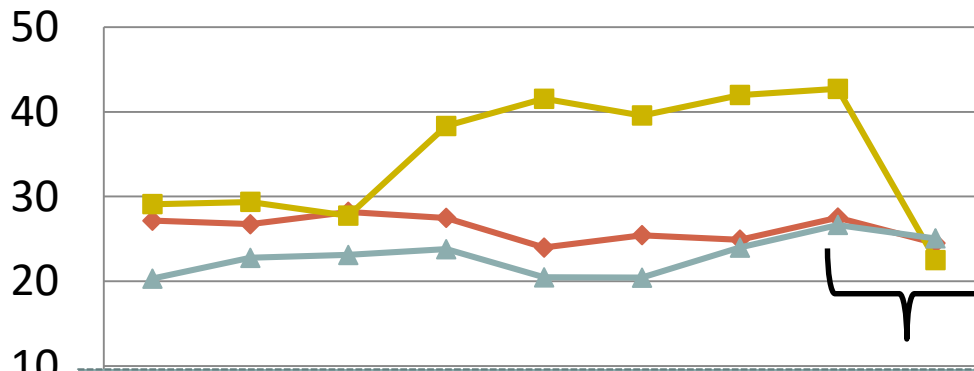
Families Accessing Shelter



Length of Stay by Household Type

Average Length of Stay

—◆— Singles
—■— Families
—▲— Youth



Pilot

2012 families = **9%** of stays, **38%** of bed nights
2014/15 families = **4%** of stays, **14%** of bed nights

Families in Transition (FIT)



**LORI WILLIAMS &
DION MURPHY**

Background to FIT



- Help families experiencing homelessness or families on the verge of becoming homeless
- Redesigned existing program into new pilot approach in 2013, expanded pilot across region in 2014
- Goal of the program:

*“To create community solutions to
end family homelessness”*

Staffing Model – 4 FIT Counsellors



- **1 – Intakes, Admin, Assessment**
 - SPDATs, diversion, coordination with shelters
 - Shorter term and "light" support
- **2 – Level 2 & Level 3 Housing Support**
 - Housing Plans, referrals, assistance with income/budgeting, market rent searches, Community Housing applications, home set-up
 - Support for several rent cycles
- **1 – Level 4 Housing Support**
 - Greater intensity of support for highest acuity/complex needs – Support Plans and assessments, additional community referrals
 - Support to maintain housing up to 18 months

Flow of Families



- Centralized intake for families expressing a need to access shelters
- Assessment and intake
- Business hours and after hours
- On-going housing discussions

Flex Fund



- Arrears
 - Maintain housing
- Home start-up
 - Groceries, furniture, household items
- Transportation
 - Bus tickets, taxis for viewings
 - Diversion

Shelter Diversion



- Part of Region of Waterloo's shelter diversion
- Emergency Shelter eligibility criteria
- Diverting from shelter
 - Questions to ask
 - Where did you become homeless?
 - Supporting a return to home region/area

Shelter Stays



- When all options fail
- Last resort
- Contracted shelter stays
- Weekly shelter counts

Learning



- Family systems
- Diversion works
- Assertiveness, yet compassion when speaking w/ families
- Asking right questions to get families thinking of all their options (*Where did you eat Christmas Dinner?*)
- Results for approximately 200 families:
 - 132 diverted (66%)
 - 67 accessed (33%)

Learning – Recommendations



- Client data – all on same system
- More diversion training in earlier stages
- Have all Family workers in central location, working side-by-side

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION/DIVERSION PILOT

ARGUS RESIDENCE

BACKGROUND

- July 2015 - Argus launched a pilot to improve prevention and diversion practices.
- The pilot did not require additional staff or resources. Staff asked key questions prior to intake, provided information and resources with the goal of increasing attachment to family and natural supports.
- Over an 11 month period, 40 youth were diverted from accessing Argus' emergency shelter.
- The pilot demonstrated the potential for an emergency shelter to prevent youth homelessness and reduce the need for shelter.

BACKGROUND

- June 2016 - In an effort to structure and scale pilot activities, Argus designed the Youth Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Tool and trained staff in both their emergency shelter locations.
- The tool changed the shelter's intake procedure to include "Housing First" and "Family First" as a primary diversion activity *before* emergency shelter is accessed. Its implementation yielded unanticipated results:
 - Over 12 months, shelter bed nights decreased by 64%.
 - Shelter vacancy improved access for youth experiencing chronic homelessness with acute needs.
 - Improved staff/client support ratios.
- Waterloo Region experienced 22% reduction in youth (16-24) accessing shelters during that same period.

MOVING FORWARD....

- 2017 - Argus received funding through the Local Poverty Reduction Fund to Pilot Prevention and Diversion in Cambridge, Ontario and evaluate the effectiveness of the Youth Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Tool.
- OrgCode Consulting was hired as a third party evaluator.
- Four Prevention and Diversion workers and a Team Lead were hired and trained.
- The pilot began on February 04 2018 and operates in collaboration with Cambridge Shelter.
- Prevention and Diversion are offered through a centralized model 16 hours a day, seven days a week, over a 2 year period for anyone looking to access emergency shelter in Cambridge, Ontario between the ages of 16-29.

2018 – 2020 PREVENTION AND DIVERSION PILOT

- The pilot aims to support individuals - using a strength based approach - explore every possible safe and appropriate housing option before deciding if an emergency shelter is the best route.
- The pilot will examine 4 key areas:
 - Is the Youth Diversion Tool valid and reliable?
 - Will use of the Youth Diversion Tool reduce shelter admissions, assist youth to identify safe, stable housing options, thereby reducing trauma of homelessness in their lives?
 - Will the Coordinated Access System improve local efforts to prevent and end homelessness for youth seeking shelter admission?
 - Will educational and employment outcomes for youth improve?

Appreciative Inquiry

Asset Based

Look at what
we've got!!

Look at what
we're missing!!

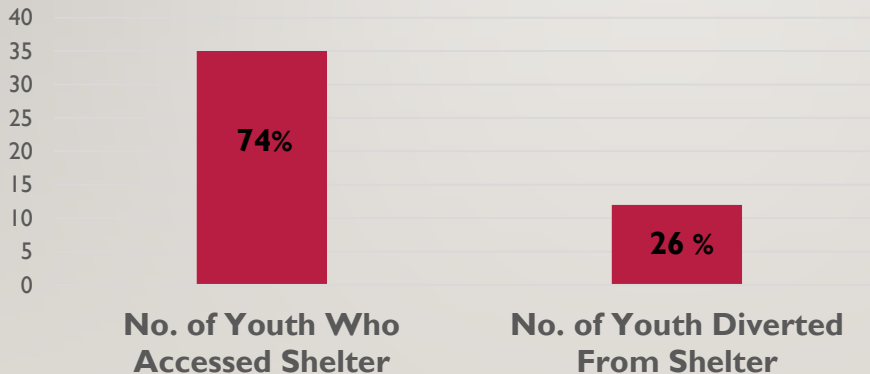
Deficit Focused



© Thomas...

EARLY RESULTS

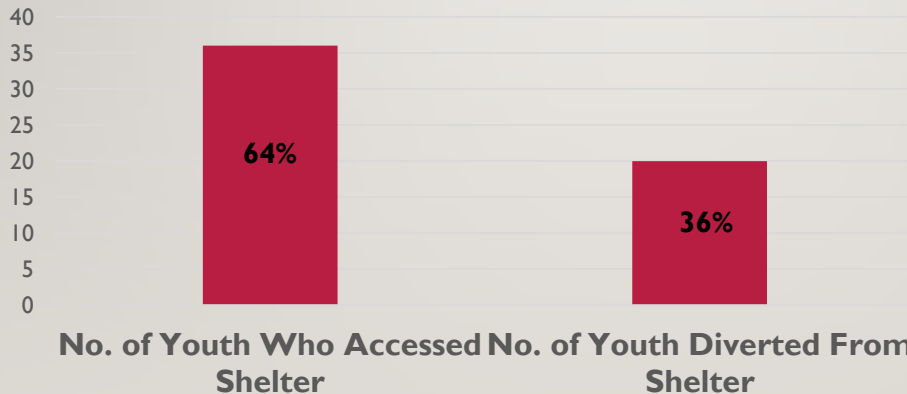
Diversion Results For Month of February 2018



- 12/47 diversions that resulted in youth not entering shelter or leaving the next day.
- Average participant age: 21 yrs old.
- 83% of youth diverted were 16-29 yrs old.
- 5/12 (42%) resulted in youth staying at home (Prevention). 7/12 (58%) resulted in youth staying with family/friend (Diversion).
- 70% M, 26% F, 2% Other, 2% refused
- Diversion rate for Males 27%
- Diversion rate for Females 25%

EARLY RESULTS

Diversion Results For Month of March 2018



- 20/56 diversions that resulted in youth not entering shelter or leaving the next day.
- Average participant age: 22 yrs old.
- 80% of youth diverted were 16-29 yrs old.
- 4/20 (20%) resulted in youth staying at home (Prevention). 16/20 (80%) resulted in youth staying with family/friend (Diversion).
- 71% M, 25% F, 4% Transgendered
- Diversion rate for Males 33%
- Diversion rate for Females 50%

FUTURE

- Continue to build partnerships with community resources to support prevention/diversion efforts.
- Continue engaging and educating youth/families and organizations that refer to homelessness system using a strength based approach to support prevention/diversion efforts.
- Limit assumption about the lack of availability of housing options for youth.