

Shelter Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness at the front door of the homelessness response system by helping people identify immediate alternative housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. Every effort should be made to divert clients to other housing solutions at their first contact with the homelessness response system.

Clients eligible for Shelter Diversion Funding include individuals or families seeking shelter who are in one of the following situations:

- **Literally homeless (and not already sheltered).**
- **In possession of an eviction notice with an “Execution Date” ordered by the court provided or confirmed by CT Judicial website.** (Notice to Quit is not sufficient).
- **Has been forced to leave an unsafe or unsustainable doubled-up situation.**
  - If a client presents having left a doubled-up situation that **is safe**, Diversion Specialist should work with that client to facilitate return to that housing.

**If someone is doubled up illegally, Diversion Specialist should work with the landlord, housing subsidy provider if applicable, and family to see if the person can be added to the lease**, determine other natural supports with whom they could reside, or use financial assistance to get their own unit.

Shelter Diversion redirects families and individuals who are seeking immediate emergency shelter by assisting them to make immediate alternative housing arrangements. They are thus able to avoid homelessness, and do not need to enter emergency shelter or be placed on an emergency shelter waitlist. In cases when diversion is not successful at the time of the CAN appointment and no shelter is available, a person may be added to a prioritized list for emergency shelter. In these instances, CAN staff should continue attempts to divert the household while they are waiting for shelter.

As a rule, shelter diversion should eliminate the need for any shelter stay. However, in rare cases a short stay in shelter (less than seven days) as **part of a diversion plan** can still comply with the definition of diversion when all of the following criteria are met:

- A diversion plan is put in place at the time a client is seeking emergency shelter (during their initial CAN appointment).
- This plan requires some additional time to implement (examples: bus ticket but doesn't leave until the next day, or housing identified but cannot move in for three days).
- AND there are no other safe, temporary housing options.

Clients who enter shelter as part of a diversion plan meeting all the criteria above and who exit to housing within 7 days of shelter entry can be counted as diverted.

If a client (family or individual) **does not qualify for diversion funding**, (i.e. they are safely doubled up, not at imminent risk of homelessness, or are not literally homeless) this should not prevent providers from helping guide them to resources or supports that could help them out of their current crisis. CAN staff should make every effort they can to help them resolve their housing crisis, including helping them access other services such as utility assistance, mediation, or mental health services.