

**ST. CLAIR COUNTY INTERGOVERNMENTAL GRANTS DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

SHELTER DIVERSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Shelter Diversion Standards

The purpose of Shelter Diversion (SD) projects is to (a) prevent individuals and families who are at greatest risk of homelessness from becoming literally homeless, (b) limit individuals and families stays in emergency shelter to less than fourteen (14) days. Shelter Diversion (SD) is a strategy to assist households in resolving their housing crisis without entering the homeless services system by identifying safe, appropriate housing alternatives and connecting them to services or financial assistance to remain housed or quickly regain housing.

Shelter Diversion Eligibility

In accordance with [24 CFR 578.3](#), the target population is unsheltered, at-risk homeless households, including adults and youth. Specifically, this program serves households that are newly presenting to a shelter, police station, hospital, or other place of refuge. Youth ages 12 to 24, living on the street, precariously housed, or “couch surfing” (meaning they are securing housing on a night-by-night basis, with no secure place to stay on a regular basis) is another priority target population. Shelter Diversion assistance is offered without preconditions — like employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety — the resources and services provided are tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Assessing for Diversion

Families presenting for service should be assessed to determine the stability of their housing and if additional resources are needed to avert a loss of housing. Coordinated Entry staff will ask predefined screening questions to determine when families are candidates for diversion, such as:

- Where did you sleep last night? If they slept somewhere where they could potentially safely stay again, this might mean they are good candidates for diversion.
- What other housing options do you have for the next few days or weeks? Even if there is an option outside of shelter that is only available for a very short time, it’s worth exploring if this housing resource can be used.
- What issues are making it difficult for you to remain in your current housing situation? Can those issues be resolved with financial assistance, case management, etc.? If the issues can be solved with case management, mediation, or financial assistance (or all of the above), diversion is a good option.
- (If coming from their own unit) Is it possible/safe to stay in your current housing unit? What resources would you need to do that (financial assistance, case management, mediation, transportation, etc.)? If the family could stay in their current housing with some assistance, systems should focus on a quick prevention-oriented solution that will keep the family in their unit.

Documentation and Record-keeping Requirements

All SCC COC SD projects must ensure they abide by all the documentation (of homeless or at-risk of homelessness status and project eligibility) and record-keeping requirements set forth in [24 CFR 578.103](#).

Low Barrier - Shelter Diversion

It is the goal of the SCC COC to implement inclusive, low barrier policies governing the delivery of shelter diversion assistance in compliance with [Notice CPD-17-01](#), [24 CFR 578.7](#) and Illinois state regulations including [Executive Order 2021-21](#), [Public Act 102-0698](#), and [Public Act 103-0006](#). For SD projects, the following practices and policies must be adopted and implemented at minimum:

- SD projects must minimize any barriers to entry into their project. Projects cannot require things of potential clients to enter their project over and beyond demonstrating meeting basic eligibility requirements and population prioritizations.
- Coordinated Entry will screen people applying for diversion assistance to identify people with greater vulnerabilities and/or urgency, i.e., closer to becoming literally homeless, to prioritize applicants for assistance when demand exceeds resources
- Persons in doubled up situations and persons in their own rental unit will be prioritized for assistance based on their risk for literal homelessness using the Matching for Appropriate Placement (MAP) tool.
- Persons in emergency shelter for less than 14 days will be prioritized to minimize the length of their homeless episode
- SD projects must offer services on a voluntary basis. Projects may require program participants to meet with case managers on a regular basis for purposes of working through plans/steps related to overcoming immediate and direct housing barriers and securing/maintaining housing.

Housing Focused Assistance

- SD projects' primary goal is to prevent literal homelessness as quickly as possible, regardless of other personal issues or concerns.
- SD financial assistance (i.e., rental assistance) is individualized and flexible. This means, for example, that SD projects do not have a policy of providing only one month of financial assistance.
- All SD projects should assess program participants' need to determine their individualized amount of financial assistance and the duration of that assistance.

Integration with Coordinated Entry

All Shelter Diversion (SD) activities must operate in full alignment with the St. Clair County Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures. This includes compliance with assessment, referral, prioritization, and documentation standards as outlined in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) manual that can be located at [St. Clair County Illinois > Departments > Intergovernmental Grants > Community Development \(RC Version: 9.13.3.0\)](#)

Revision History

Event	Date
Adopted	2024
Revised/ revised	9/2/2025