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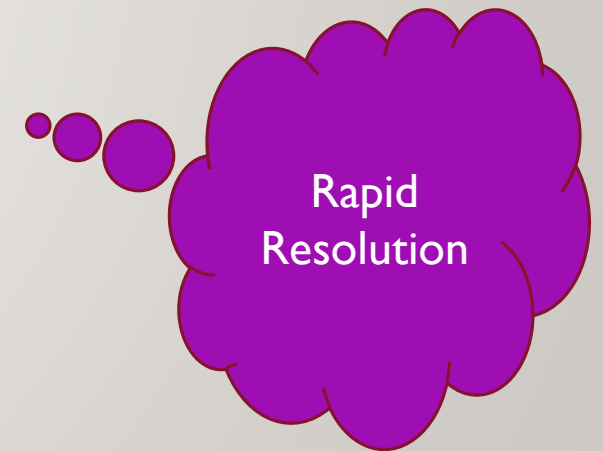
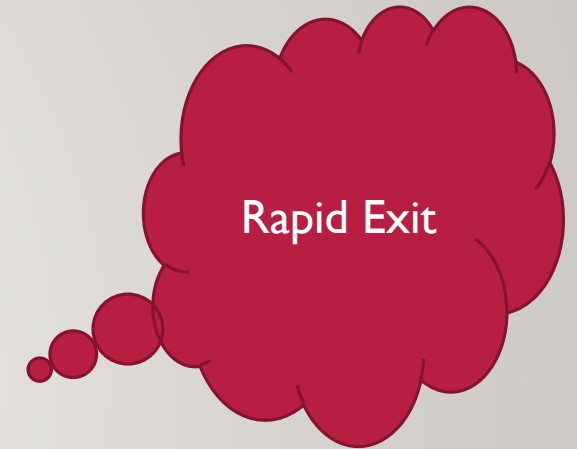
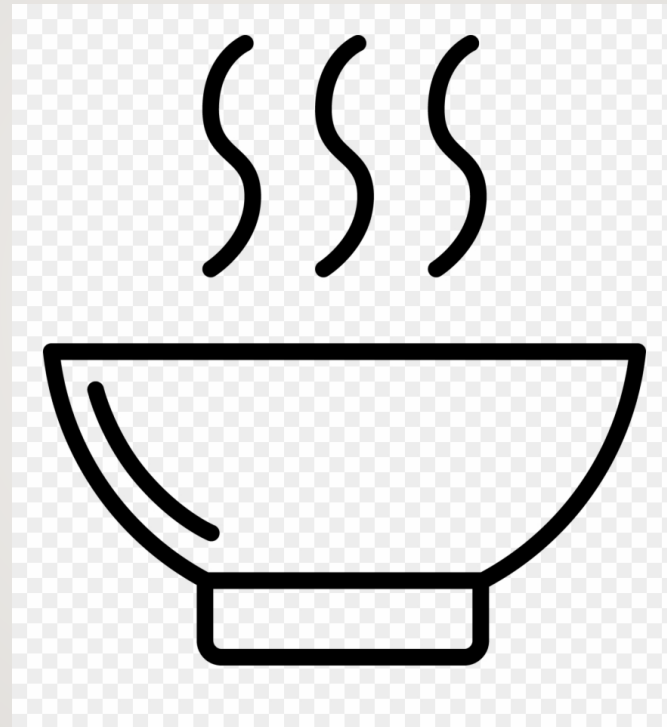
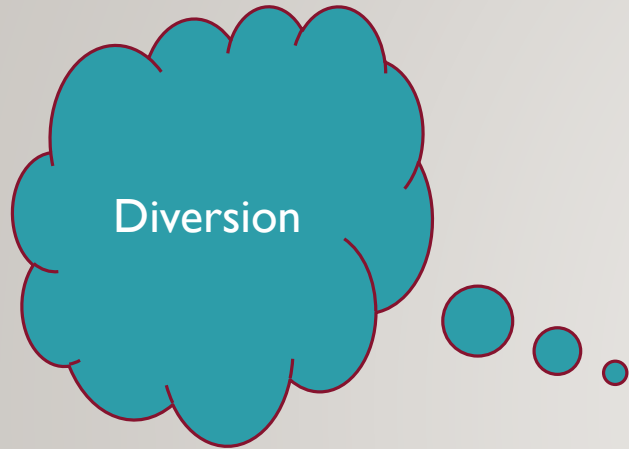
# Innovative Practices in Housing Problem-Solving

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# SESSION OVERVIEW

- Basics of Housing Problem-Solving
  - Alphabet Soup
  - Key Elements and Components
  - Using HUD Funding
- Innovative Approaches
  - Seattle, WA
  - Montgomery County, PA
  - Washington, DC
  - Columbus, OH
  - San Francisco, CA

# ALPHABET SOUP OF HOUSING PROBLEM-SOLVING



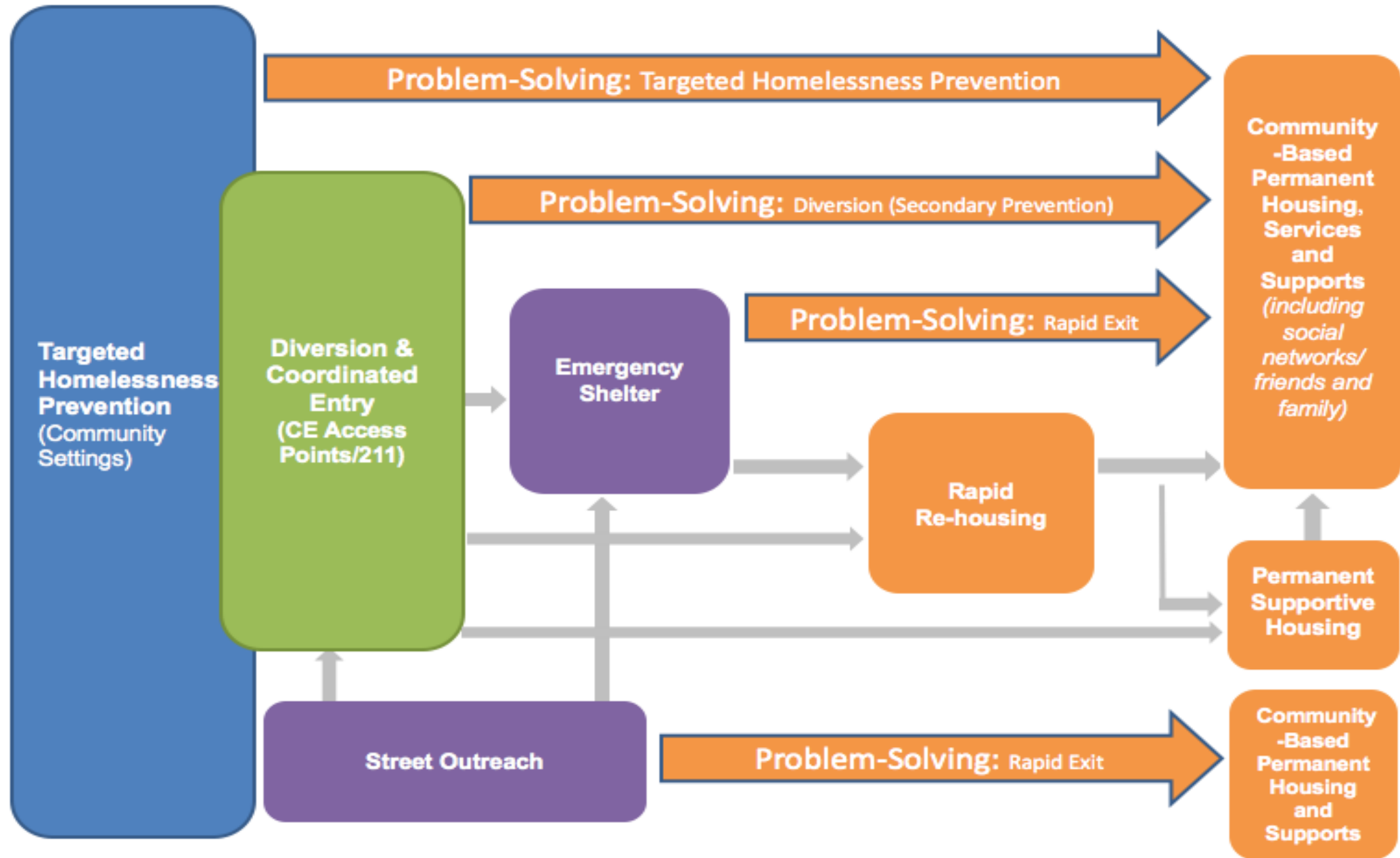
# HOUSING PROBLEM- SOLVING IS....

A **practice** that involves strengths-based conversations to empower households and help them to remain in current housing or to identify alternative housing options either to avoid homelessness or to exit homelessness as quickly as possible. An approach to client-engagement.

# A SYSTEM WIDE APPROACH

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# Homeless Crisis Response System



# FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#1: Homelessness is a crisis

#2: Choice. Respect.  
Empowerment.

The Solution is  
Housing

#3: Progressive Engagement

#4: Maximizing Resources

- Housing problem-solving can be integrated into any community
- Can be tailored in each community based on local coordinated entry setup and available resources
- Housing problem-solving can be utilized for diversion and rapid exit interventions for most households not prioritized for more intensive housing and service options
- Ideally, housing problem-solving is integrated as part of a progressive engagement response

NO ONE-  
SIZE-FITS-ALL



# CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT

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- Problem-solving strategies may need to happen **more than** once, twice, etc.
  - **NOT** an event or one-time service
- Use a **progressive engagement** approach and consider:
  - Increased engagement of problem-solving and connection to supports
- Determine how to access deeper housing resources and assist with access



# KEY COMPONENTS AND COSTS

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# SERVICES

- Case management
- Crisis resolution
- Family reunification
- Housing search and navigation
- Connection to mainstream resources
- Mediation
- Transportation
- Certifications/license for employment

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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Rental Arrears	Utility Arrears	Short-Term Rental Assistance	Application Fees	Background/Credit Checks
Moving Truck	Storage	First/Last months rent	Security Deposit	Supplies (i.e., furniture, kitchen utensils)
Food/groceries	Cash assistance	Utilities	Relocation Assistance	Obtaining birth certificate and other ID

## CoC Program Funding and Housing Problem-Solving

## ESG and ESG-CV Program Funding and Housing Problem-Solving

Eligible Activity	SSO-CES	SSO-Other	RRH	Street Outreach	Emergency Shelter	Hmless Prevention	Rapid Re-Housing
<b>Diversion</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Rapid Exit</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
Case Management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transportation		X	X	X	X		
Vocational Certifications & Licenses		X	X		X		
Food		X	X		X		
Legal Services		X	X		X	X	X
Rent & Utility Arrears			X			X	X
Security Deposit			X			X	X
Short-Term Rental Assistance			X			X	X
Application Fees			X			X	X
Background/Credit Check			X		X	X	X
Moving Expenses			X			X	X
Storage			X			X	X
First/Last Month's Rent			X			X	X
Utilities			X			X	X
Obtaining ID's and Birth Certificate			X		X	X	X
Mediation						X	

# STAFFING

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**Various ways that communities can increase staff capacity to implement problem-solving**



**There may be new, dedicated staff or existing staff adopt housing problem-solving approach**



**Staff implementing problem-solving may include:**

- ✓ Case managers
- ✓ Outreach Workers
- ✓ Call Center Staff
- ✓ Diversion Specialist
- ✓ Coordinated Entry Staff

# SHIFT IN APPROACH

## FROM

## TO

Assessment of need and vulnerability

Problem-solving conversations focused on strengths and resources

Intake & put on waitlist

Crisis resolution to avoid/reduce homelessness

“Are you willing to enter shelter?”

“What can we do to keep you from needing to enter shelter?”

Focus on determining what programs client is eligible for

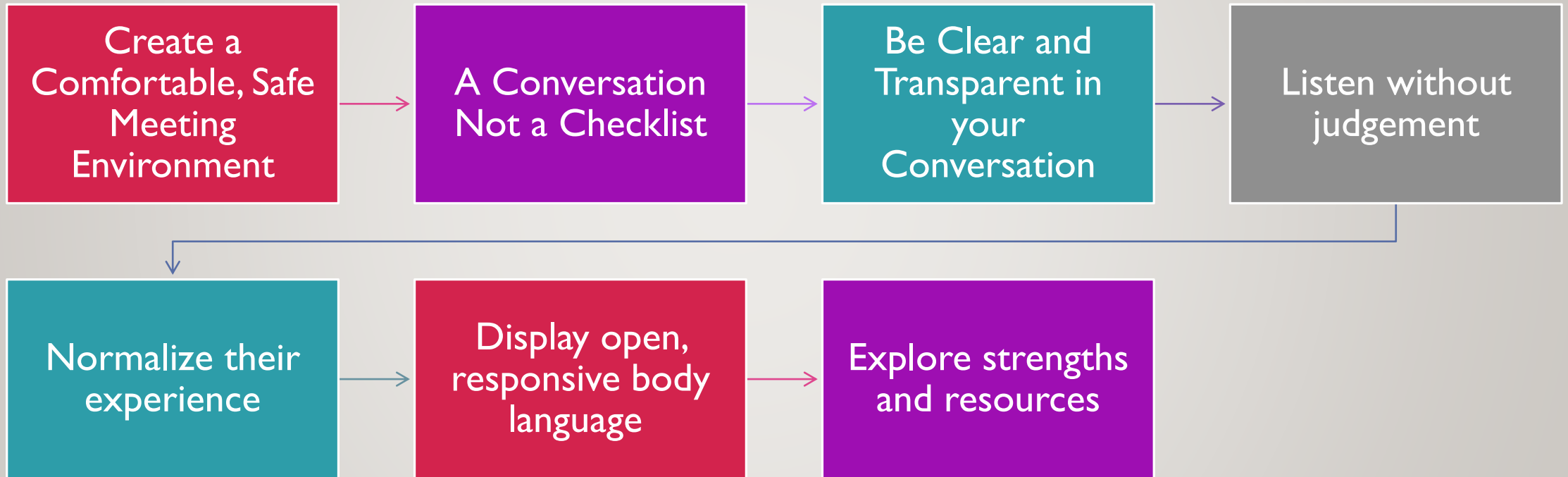
Focus on determining what will resolve crisis

One-time conversation at intake

Ongoing conversations until housed

# BEST PRACTICES IN PROBLEM-SOLVING CONVERSATIONS

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# COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

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# SEATTLE/KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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<b>Component</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Private, city, and county funding
<b>Community Partners</b>	Africatown International is contracted to provide the fiscal administration of the Centralized Diversion Fund
<b>Activities Funded</b>	Mediation, family reunification, housing location, crisis resolution, flexible financial assistance, diversion staffing
<b>Community Linkages</b>	Mainstream benefits and broad community supports
<b>Conversation Approaches</b>	Occurs at any entry point of the crisis response system
<b>Participating</b>	Staff are trained to have diversion conversations by diversion coaches who include individuals with lived experience of homelessness.
<b>Key Takeaways</b>	Central Diversion Fund helped to scale up diversion and promote equity in access to resources. The expertise of diversion coaches (including people with lived experience) needs to be adequately compensated.

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

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<b>Component</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Continuums of Care (CoCs), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), state and local grants, private funds
<b>Community Partners</b>	Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement fund
<b>Activities Funded</b>	Call center staff, shelter case management, outreach, direct client assistance, rapid rehousing lite
<b>Community Linkages</b>	Linkages to tenants' rights advocacy, mediation services, and legal aid
<b>Conversation Approaches</b>	Homeless hotline, street outreach, shelter
<b>Participating</b>	Five trained call center staff, five outreach workers, case managers at emergency shelter
<b>Key Takeaways</b>	Leadership identified staffing as a primary operational expense. It is critical to fund time and intensity of services, not just financial assistance. Even so, this approach can be difficult as few funders want to pay for staff time

# WASHINGTON, DC

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<b>Component</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Local public funding
<b>Community Partners</b>	Four community-based HPP providers offer prevention services while the central intake for families at risk of homelessness is provided by the Department of Human Services at the Virginia Williams Family Resource Center (VWFRC)
<b>Activities Funded</b>	Case management, mediation, family reunification, housing location, direct client assistance, central intake/assessment staff, prevention program staff
<b>Community Linkages</b>	Public benefits/child and family services, employment/education, upstream emergency rental assistance, legal aid, food banks, budgeting/credit repair/financial wellness workshops, connection to mental health services, parenting workshops
<b>Conversation Approaches</b>	Initial conversations take place at the central point of intake for families to determine initial eligibility for homeless services
<b>Participating</b>	Families engage with community HPP partners to receive a range of services
<b>Key Takeaways</b>	The HPP was introduced to provide alternatives to shelter placement to ultimately slow the rate of shelter placement through redesign of the intake process. Measuring the success of the HPP process has been focused on reduced rates of shelter entry and returns to the system. DC has intentionally not set targets for diversion at intake to ensure families are not disincentivized to ask for, and ultimately get connected to, services they need

# COLUMBUS, OH

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<b>Component</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	ESG, Local Grants
<b>Community Partners</b>	Prevent Family Homelessness Collaborative, DCFS
<b>Activities Funded</b>	Call center staff, diversion specialists, direct client assistance, case management, housing search, mediation
<b>Community Linkages</b>	Linkages to employment & benefits referral & support, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance abuse services, pregnancy and parenting services, DV services
<b>Conversation Approaches</b>	Homeless hotline, in-person (families only)
<b>Participating</b>	Staff Trained at hotline center do first attempt Secondary diversion assistance operated by a community partner (families only)
<b>Key Takeaways</b>	Developed a typology of risk that has provided common language for community partners to discuss housing insecurity. Typology provides an understanding of the current urgency of crises, distinguishes who is responsible for people at various stages of housing instability and catalogs the different resources available to the household based on their situation

# SAN FRANCISCO, CA

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<b>Component</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>	State and local funding
<b>Community Partners</b>	Homeward Bound, CalWorks, Homeless Prevention and Eviction Programs, Season of Sharing
<b>Activities Funded</b>	Fiscal administration, training, staffing, mediation, family reunification, crisis resolution, limited financial assistance
<b>Community Linkages</b>	Linkages to public benefits, legal aid, Season of Sharing
<b>Conversation Approaches</b>	Coordinated Entry access points, outreach (mobile access points), temporary shelter
<b>Participating</b>	Staff Trained at hotline center do first attempt Secondary diversion assistance operated by a community partner (families only)
<b>Key Takeaways</b>	Problem Solving is defined by even one day outside of the homeless system is a success. Problem-solving is not a one-time intervention and instead, can be available on multiple occasions and there are no limits to the number of times a person or household may access a problem-solving conversation or related service

