

# Welcome! Please Check-In



## Enter in the chat window:

- Your Name
- Your Agency
- What made you smile this week?



*Housing Opportunities Expansion and Homeless Prevention:*  
***Targeting Homelessness Prevention to  
Those At Greatest Risk: Diversion Practice***

August 11, 2021

YOU  
ARE  
ON

LAND



#HonorNativeLand  
USDAC.us/NativeLand

Artwork & Design by  
Warren Montoya - Tamaya & Kha'po Owingsh  
Jaclyn Roessel - Dine



## Land Acknowledgement

*Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted.*



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# Land Acknowledgement

<https://native-land.ca/>

- **This meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the \_\_\_\_\_ People, and I pay my respect to elders both past and present, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.”**
  - Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.
- **Deliver** your statement in the chat including the land/people relevant to the land that you are occupying during this session. **Learn more** by taking time to learn about the Indigenous history of the land you live on. The Partnership team will share the link to the US Department of Arts and Culture in the chat now. Visit <https://usdac.us/nativeland> to get started.



# The Promise Of Community Action

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*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*

# Practice Transformation Team



**Tiffney Marley**

*Senior Vice President, Practice Transformation*



**Tiffany Day**

*Director, Whole Family Approach Innovations*



**Lillie Seels**

*Director, Practice Transformation*



**Laura Griffin**

*Program Associate, Learning Communities Resource Center*



**Gabriel Smith**

*Senior Associate, Learning and Dissemination*



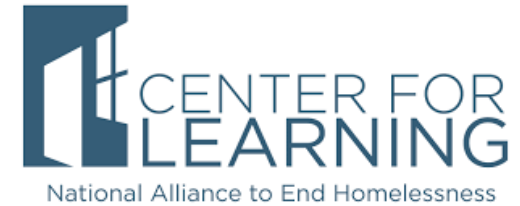
**Aimee Roberge**

*Program Associate, Learning Communities Resource Center*

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Opportunity for Free e-Courses for Community Action Agencies
- Panel Presentations: Practices for Preventing Homelessness Through Diversion
- Panelist Q/A
- Closing

# Online Courses on Homeless Diversion and Racial Equity



**Exclusive Offer** - Community Action Agencies eligible for a free self-paced online courses through National Alliance to End Homelessness Courses:

**100% free w/ promo codes:**

- Introduction to Diversion (\$49.95 value)
- Racial Equity Learning Series (\$39.95 value)

150 free coupon vouchers available. First come, first serve. Stay to the end of the webinar for early access to the promo codes.

Time limited: Code will work through 9/30/2021

[naeh.catalog.instructure.com](http://naeh.catalog.instructure.com)





**Dr. Sharon McDonald, PHD**  
Senior Fellow for Families and Children  
National Alliance to End Homelessness

# Speakers



***Kay Moshier McDivitt***  
Senior Technical Assistance  
Specialist  
National Alliance to End  
Homelessness



***LaTonya Murray, MA***  
Director of Emergency Housing Services  
FrontLine Services



***Patrice Dickson***  
Chief Operations Officer  
Utah Community Action

# Targeting Homelessness Prevention Resources to Those At Greatest Risk of Homelessness: Diversion Practice

Diversion Overview

# What is Diversion?



Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and become homeless that are seeking shelter by assisting the person or household find safe alternative housing immediately, **rather than entering shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness.**

# Why Diversion?

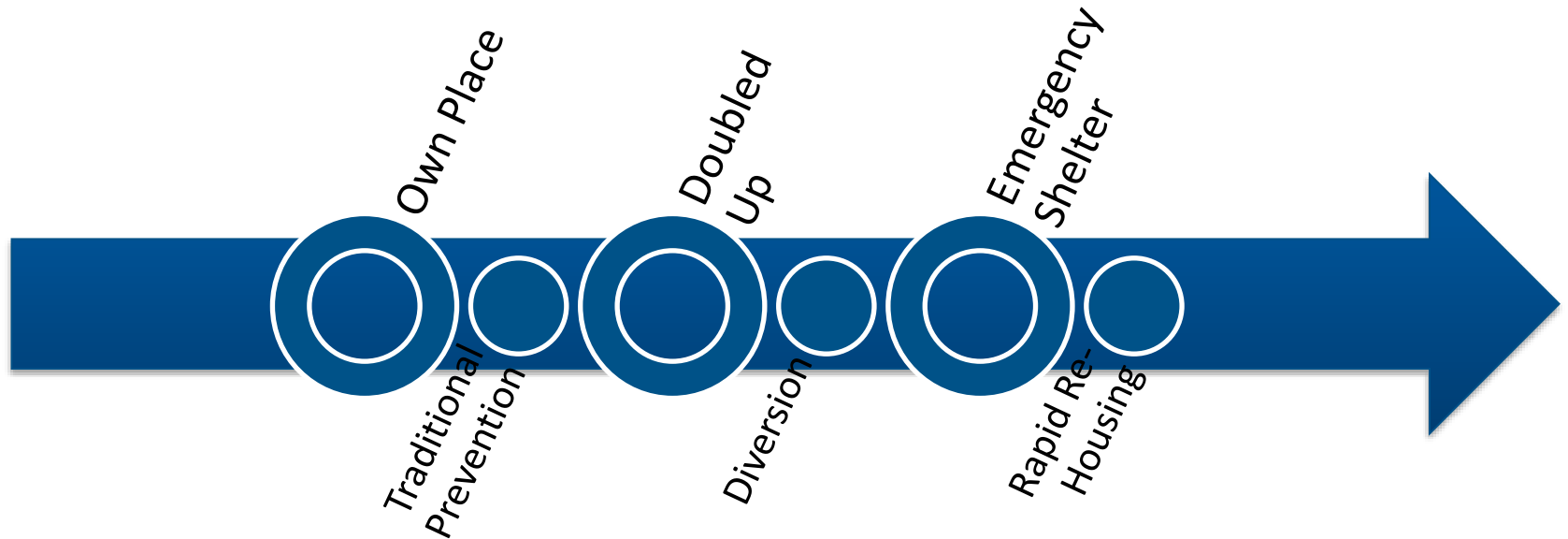
Many people face a housing crisis, but few become homeless, even when it looks like they will...

**So...**

How do we target intensive interventions and prevention resources to those with higher needs to find alternatives to a shelter stay or unsheltered homelessness (i.e., diversion)?



# Prevention vs. Diversion



## **Diversion is targeted prevention at the “Front Door” of Shelter/System**

- Traditional Prevention is general eviction prevention that provides one-time assistance to tenants at risk of losing their units
- Diversion typically occurs once housing is lost, and other resources have been exhausted, and the person is presenting at shelter.

Credit: Katharine Gale Consulting

# When Should Communities Use Diversion Strategies?

Consumer's Housing Situation	Intervention Used	Services Provided in All Interventions
At Risk of Losing Housing with an eviction notice (precariously housed seeking rental assistance)	<b>EVICTION PREVENTION</b>	Services (Strengths-Based Case Management) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Problem-Solving Conversation</li> <li>• Conflict Resolution</li> <li>• Housing Search/Placement</li> <li>• Landlord/Tenant Mediation</li> <li>• Connection to Mainstream Resources</li> <li>• Tenant Legal Services</li> <li>• Credit Repair</li> </ul> Financial Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental Application Fee</li> <li>• Rental Subsidy/Arrears</li> <li>• Security/Utility Deposits</li> <li>• Utility Arrears</li> <li>• Moving Costs</li> <li>• Transportation Costs</li> <li>• Other Financial Assistance</li> </ul>
Losing Housing (Calling to “reserve” shelter bed in future, still in housing)	<b>TARGETED HOMELESS PREVENTION</b>	
Seeking Shelter (at “front door” of system and seeking immediate shelter and place to stay)	<b>DIVERSION</b>	
Literally Homeless (on the street/place not meant for human habitation/ shelter)	<b>HOUSING FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES</b>	

# Implementing Diversion Practice

## Diversion Requires:

- Coordinated entry process and shelter front door
- **Resourceful staff trained** in:
  - Mediation, conflict resolution
  - Strength based assessment
  - Problem solving
  - Respect for client choice and
  - Recognition of safety
- **Linkages** to mainstream services and natural supports
- **Flexible** funds

# Effective Diversion Practice: Four Fundamentals “Cs”

- Community-Wide Buy In
- Problem Solving Conversation
- Creating Connections
- Continuous Practice



# Diversion Practice: Problem Solving Conversation



Problem-solving is a person-centered, short-term housing intervention that seeks to assist households in maintaining their current housing or identifying an immediate and safe housing alternative within their own social network.



Effective problem-solving requires trained staff, effective partnerships, expanded financial assistance, using data to improve performance.



Problem-Solving is a client centered approach which seeks to maximize a person's resiliency.



The problem-solving conversation is a shift from assessment and eligibility to focusing on understanding a person's strengths and needs, exploring solutions, and working to resolve the crisis.

# Six Steps to a Problem-Solving Conversation

1. Introduce Yourself and Your Purpose
2. Active Listening
3. Strength and Support Exploration
4. Moving Forward
5. Creating Connections
6. Summarize and Follow-Up

# Successful Diversion Outcomes

**Permanently Back with  
Friends or Family**

**Return to Own  
Residence**

**Temporarily Diverted  
While Seeking New  
Housing**

**Permanent  
Relocation To Safe  
Place Out of Town**

# DIVERSION PRACTICE

From the Field



**FrontLine**  
Service

Reaching out. Resolving crisis.

# Problem Solving: A Conflict Resolution Approach to Homeless Prevention

**LaTonya Murray**  
FrontLine Service

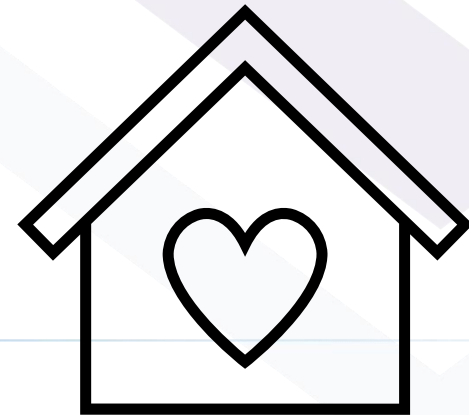
A contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County and a partner agency of United Way Services of Greater Cleveland.

[www.FrontLineService.org](http://www.FrontLineService.org)



# Diversion Is...

- ❖ **Empower** person(s) to identify their own solutions to:
  - ❖ **Avoid shelter and return immediately to permanent housing**
  - ❖ **Identify safe and appropriate housing options**
- ❖ **NOT** a barrier to shelter
- ❖ **Regaining control**
- ❖ **Fluid process**



# Conflict Resolution Approach

- Homelessness is a crisis
- First Listen and Validate
- Client-centered
  - Important to not make assumptions
- Strength-based approach
  - Identify previously used strengths, successes, and resources
- People want to succeed
  - Help them identify their own strengths and successes in their life that can help them with this crisis.

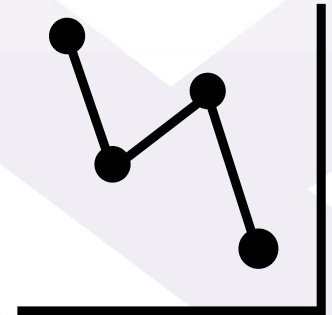
# Homeless Served in Cleveland:

## ❖ 2019

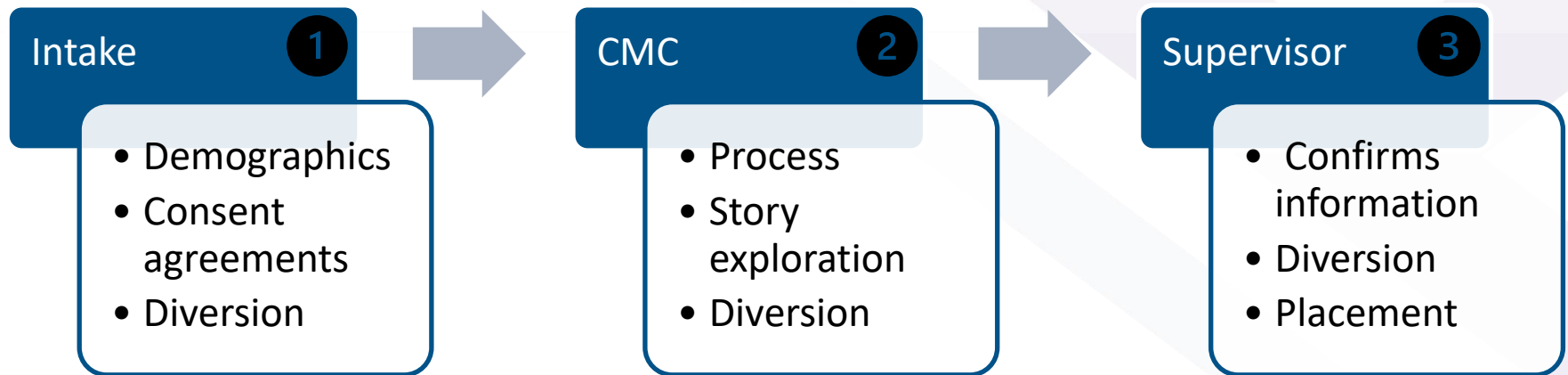
❖ 6,337 Unduplicated Individuals Served

## ❖ 2020

❖ 5,095 Unduplicated Individuals Served (20%<)



# 3-Tier System



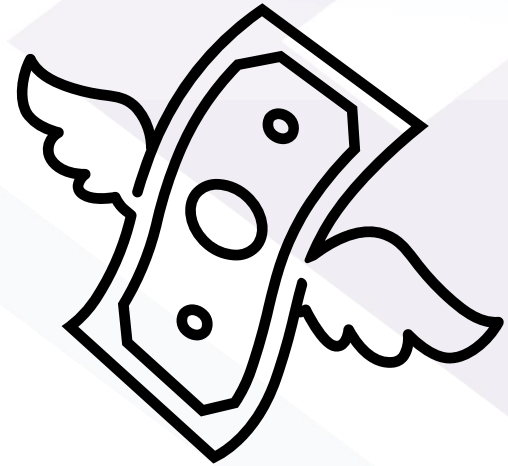
\*The process is **fluid** and may not always go in order

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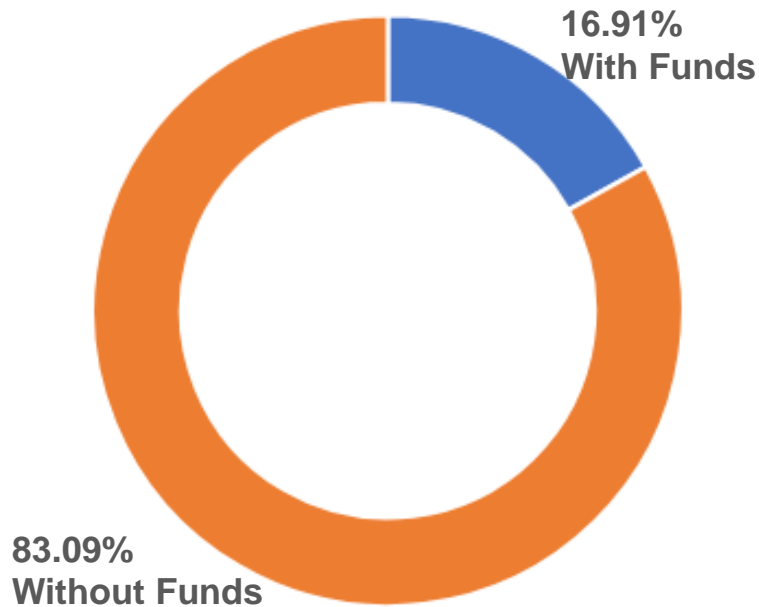
# Lightest Touch

- Limited funds
- Exploring client's needs
- Long term vs short term
- Right resources

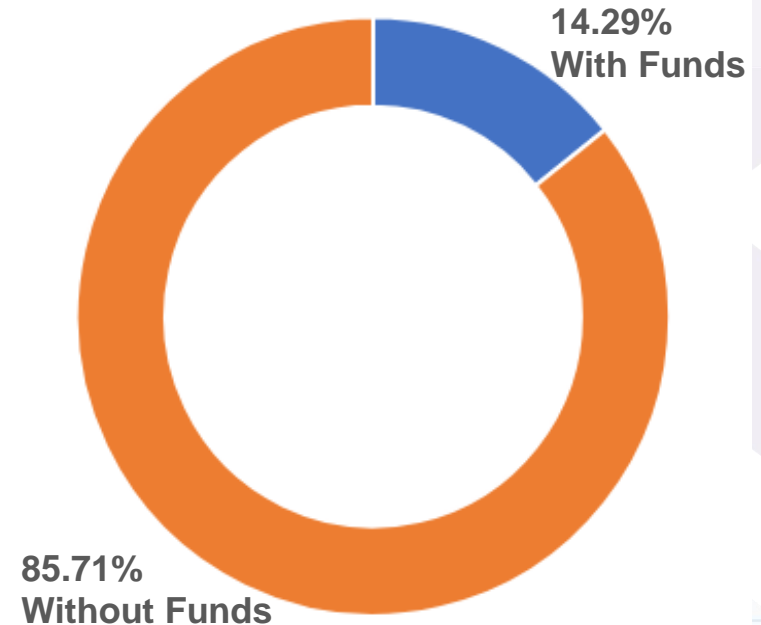


# 2020 vs 2019 Diversion Funds Used

## Diverted Clients 2020



## Diverted Clients 2019

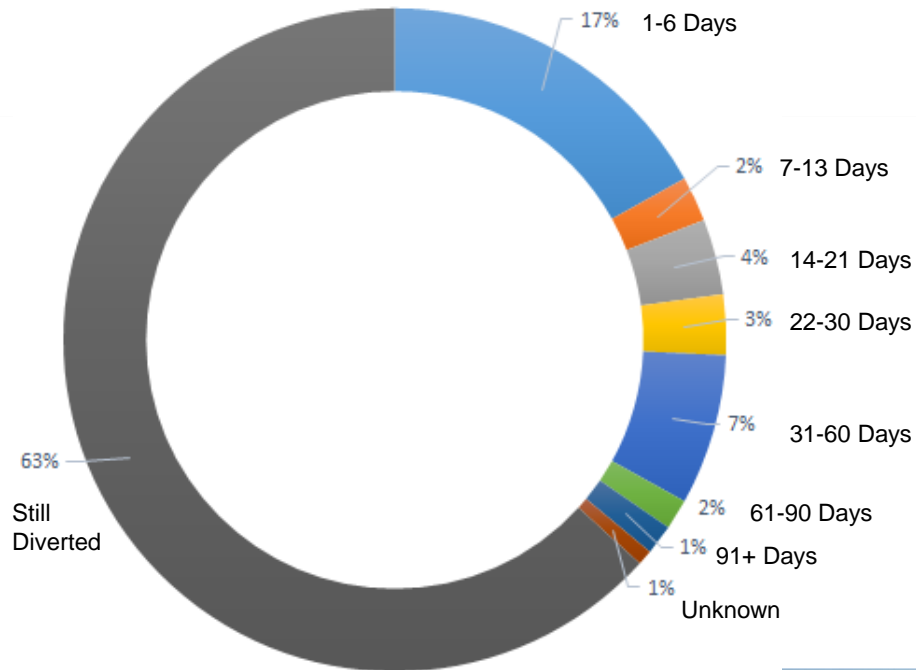


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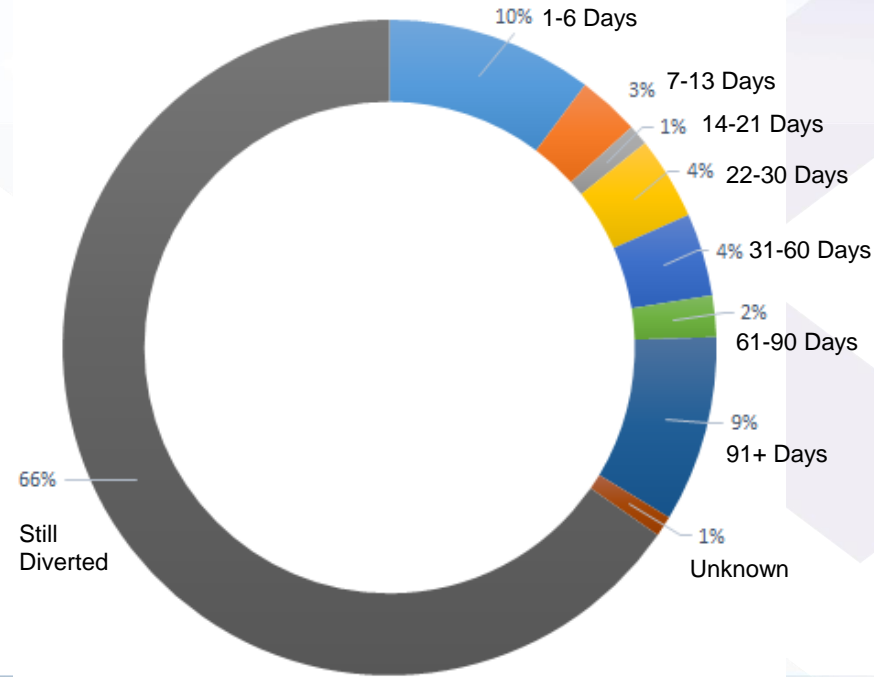
[www.FrontLineService.org](http://www.FrontLineService.org)

# 2020 vs 2019 Returning Clients

## Returning Clients in 2020



## Returning Clients in 2019



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[www.FrontLineService.org](http://www.FrontLineService.org)

# Lessons Learned

- ❖ Differences between families and singles
- ❖ Willingness to adapt to environmental changes
  - ❖ Be creative
- ❖ Ongoing challenges



# Thank You

**LaTonya Murray**

Director of Emergency Housing Services

[Latonya.murray@frontlineservice.org](mailto:Latonya.murray@frontlineservice.org)

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A contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County and a partner agency of United Way Services of Greater Cleveland.

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# Utah Community Action™

Patrice Dickson, Chief Operations Officer  
[www.utahca.org](http://www.utahca.org)

# Community Action Agencies

- The unique perspective of CAA's is our wide range of supportive services. We are able to offer wrap around services to support clients in need.
- Utah Community Action has six programs to help empower clients to self-sufficiency:
  - Case Management and Housing which includes rental and deposit assistance with case management and Homeless Services
  - LIHEAP utility assistance which is our regular utility assistance, crisis assistance and we just added water assistance.
  - Weatherization
  - Head Start
  - Nutrition: our Central Kitchen provided 720,000 meals in 2020 to our Head Start children, Senior Cafes for low-income seniors and summer food. Nutrition also includes our food pantries.
  - Adult Education: CDA certification, ESL, GED, Financial Literacy, Sauté ServSafe certification culinary program

# So why get into Diversion Services?

- It aligns with our missions to help alleviate poverty
- We are able to help individuals who can utilize services to improve their situation.
- We tend to wait for people in need to call us rather than look for them where they are—gaps in services.
- Helps alleviate limited shelter capacity
- Limits exposure to trauma of the shelter, particularly for families
- Can resolve a crisis with mediation, crisis resolution, problem solving in a short time rather than a long shelter stay

# Utah Community Action Model

- At the front door of all access points for adults accessing the system: all 4 Homeless Resource Centers and the Weigand Day Center.
- Anyone coming to the shelter meets with our Diversion staff first. We are the first point of access. They do not enter shelter until they meet with our staff.
- Working with a Coordinated Entry model, Utah Community Action implemented a County-wide Coordinated Intake phone line. Any client, first responder, hospital, or outreach team can call the line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and get information, live bed location to know where there are available beds, and help with transportation (a shuttle is provided between all of the 5 locations as well as the County jail which runs all day until 10 PM to allow individuals to get to the needed location).

# Utah Community Action Model

- One of the keys to our Intake Line was marketing of the line. Produced a business card with the number and information on accessing services.
- Cards were given to police, fire, hospitals, mental health providers, other non-profits, 911 dispatch, and distributed to all locations where those who may need to access services would see the information: Weigand Day Center, on the bus lines, sites for free meals, outreach teams.

# Utah Community Action Model

- It is important to remember that diversion is not a barrier to shelter entry.
- If we cannot divert, we do the intake into the shelter and into our Homeless Information Management System. During the pandemic, our entry into the shelters was higher for several reasons: families or friends of clients were hesitant to have people stay with them with the risk of COVID, transportation options were more limited and we opened two motels for 300 individuals to prevent the spread of COVID. Because of these factors, more individuals checked into shelter this past year.

# Case Management Supports

- After diverted to a safe location, we then connect clients with our case management team to provide all supports and wrap around services for permanent housing solutions including deposit and rental assistance.
- We also provide housing and case management services at the Weigand Day Center. Diversion is also offered first to all clients and then if they can be diverted, they are connected to case managers for ongoing assistance. If they cannot be diverted and don't want to enter shelter, we continue to work with them at the Weigand Center ensuring they get the help they need at that touch point.
- UCA's School Outreach Program working with Salt Lake City School District and Promise Partnerships in Granite School District. These two programs work with families in the school districts who are homeless under McKinney Vento. We connect them with case management, deposit and rental assistance and other wrap around services, including diversion as needed. These programs are important as they reach out to those who are in funding gaps for services.

# Challenges

- One challenge is educating diversion staff to a light touch approach, allowing the client to choose their path rather than staff trying to solve their problems.
- Our social services brains want to solve the problem for them and provide every service possible whether they are ready for them or not.
- If someone does not have shelter for the night, they are not ready to have an employment referral or look at services. They need shelter first.
- We find that hiring is different. We are not looking for case managers as much as someone that can mediate between parties, a family member that is estranged, a grandmother that has housed them and has now had enough due to broken trust or the cost of helping them, etc. They need to be able to resolve conflicts, help guide the client as they look for their own solutions and then help with supports.

# Impact

We can talk of reducing shelter entry, cost savings to the homeless system, reducing trauma for individuals, allowing individuals without any other options to have limited shelter beds while helping those with options to access them,

**BUT** the most important reason to me is that we are making a difference in the life of that one individual. I love to listen to my staff treat clients with dignity and respect and let them know that someone cares about them and their situation. That's why we do the work and I know it is why you all do the work.



# Utah Community Action™

Committed to Ending Poverty

Patrice Dickson, Chief Operations Officer

# We Want to Hear From You!

Please fill out our evaluation survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DiversonAssistance>

# NCAP Annual Convention

## 2021 ANNUAL CONVENTION

September 1-3 | Boston, MA



[Click here](#) to register and learn more.

[Click here](#) to view the preliminary schedule at-a-glance. Detailed schedule forthcoming.

# Registered for Annual Convention?

## Register for a Pre-Convention Virtual Racial Healing Circle

Monday, August 30th

Racial Healing Circles are designed to focus on the sharing of stories that affirm our common humanity.

What will you do?: Facilitators will lead you through a process of sharing and listening to stories (including large group and smaller break-out groups).



# Upcoming Webinars Wednesdays

## Measuring Family Centered Community Change: A Fireside Chat

Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 2:30pm ET/1:30pm  
CT/12:30pm MT/11:30am PT/10:30am AK

# Child Tax Credit Awareness

- \$300 per month per child under age 6 and \$250 per child ages 6-17
- If families filed their taxes in the last 2 years, they will automatically receive monthly payments from the IRS starting on July 15 (through December)
- **Outreach is needed to those who have not filed taxes in recent years.** [Click here](#) to learn more about online and in-person IRS resources for these potentially eligible families.
- [Click here](#) to see slides from an NCAP presentation on spreading CTC awareness



[www.childtaxcredit.gov](http://www.childtaxcredit.gov)

# The Community Action COVID-19 Resource Series

- *Applying the Equity Lens to COVID-19 Response and Recovery*
- *A Trauma Informed Agency Response to COVID-19*
- *Applying Lessons Learned from Past Crisis Responses*
- *Leveraging Partnerships in COVID-19 Response and Recovery*
- *Technology Innovations in Response to COVID-19 Service Delivery and Recovery*

<https://communityactionpartnership.com/covid-19-resource-series/>



# COVID-19 Response



[Community Action Leaders Explain Their Reasons for Getting Vaccinated Video](#)

# Whole Family Approach Institute [Website](#)

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## VIRTUAL WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH INSTITUTE

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[communityactionpartnership.com/whole-family-convening](https://communityactionpartnership.com/whole-family-convening)



# STAY CONNECTED CONTINUE LEARNING

## Join the online Community Action Academy!

Free, online learning hub for the  
Community Action Network



1. Go to <https://moodle.communityactionpartnership.com> & create an account.
2. Once the account confirmation is complete (via email), login
3. In the Course Categories box to the right of the screen, click the Learning Community

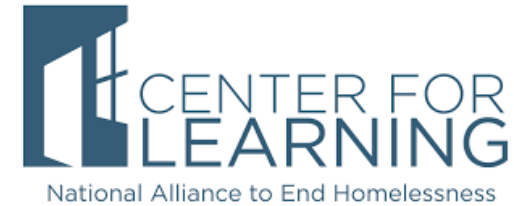
# Contact Information

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*This presentation was created by the National Association of Community Action Agencies – Community Action Partnership, in the performance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services Grant Number, 90ET0481. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families*

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