Coordinated Entry for All Regional Access Points Path to Home Services Manual V.3

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Overview of Path to Home

Path to Home (also known as diversion) assists households in quickly finding and securing temporary or permanent solutions to homelessness outside of the homeless services system. Path to Home services assist households to identify immediate, alternative housing arrangements, and if necessary connect them with services and financial assistance to help them obtain or return to housing. Skilled Path to Home providers partner with households while building on their strengths to find creative solutions to meet their needs and solve their housing crisis within 30-day.

Role of Path to Home services within the Seattle/King County Homeless Services System

Path to Home services play an important role in the homeless services system:

- Path to Home services supports households and staff to look for creative solutions that can be quickly implemented. Creative, time-sensitive services can make housing instability brief for households.
- Path to Home services prevents households that have short or longer-term options for housing stability from entering the homeless system.
- Path to Home services support creative and cost-effective solutions to meet households' needs, by recognizing their unique strengths.

Note: Path to Home works in conjunction with, but separately from King County Continuum of Care Diversion Guidelines (Centralized Funds) that is funded by a community partnership and managed under All Home http://allhomekc.org/diversion/. The guidance under this manual pertains to funding sources and allowable costs associated with the Regional Access Points (RAPs) and the funder allowances under Path to Home. King County Continuum of Care Diversion funds (Centralized Funds) are not available to the RAPs unless Path to Home and all other diversion funding is exhausted within the agency.

Explanation of Path to Home services

Path to Home services are flexible, light-touch services that may be coupled with minimal financial assistance that results in a temporary or permanent housing arrangement. Services include:

- Assisting households to identify creative solutions to address their needs
- Partnering with households to work towards their housing solutions
- Serving as a mediator to assist households in having difficult conversations with individuals in their support network
- Connecting households to mainstream services that can address their needs
- Serving as an advocate or negotiator with landlord or debt collector
- When necessary providing allowable financial assistance under Path to Home financial assistance guidelines.

Eligibility for Path to Home services

Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) will assess all households for eligibility to receive Path to Home services. The following households will be considered eligible for Path to Home services:

- Households that are sleeping outside or in a place not meant for human habitation
- Households that are staying in an emergency shelter
- Households that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence (the individual or family must be
 fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other
 dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family
 member; have no other residence; and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other
 permanent housing)
- If a household returns to homelessness after receiving financial assistance through Path to Home, they may be eligible for Path to Home again if they meet the following criteria:
 - The household is not actively receiving "Shelter to Housing" assistance, Path to Home financial assistance, or any other flexible funding assistance that is similar to Path to Home.
 - A household can only receive financial assistance though Path to Home two times in a twelvemonth period. (See section below Financial Assistance Limits per Household for rules of exception)

Allowable Financial Assistance

Path to Home funds can be used in a variety of ways provided they <u>directly result in a housing solution</u>. Path to Home is NOT a rental assistance program, it is one-time assistance to help secure a housing solution outside of the homeless housing system. Path to Home must always be applied with a progressive engagement approach, exploring solutions that start with techniques such as negotiation before utilizing financial assistance, and then using the least amount of financial resources to resolve the housing crisis.

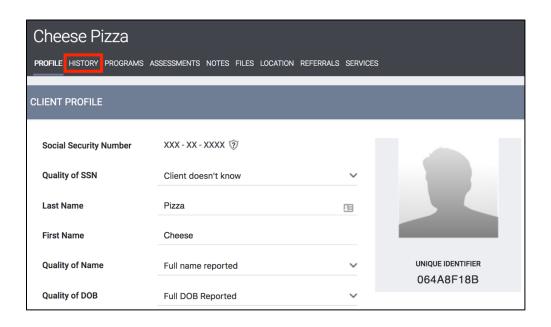
More details can be found in Appendix C. Allowable Move in Costs.

IMPORTANT!

Before any Path to Home assistance is administered, staff providing Path to Home financial services are **required** to check the History tab in HMIS for any current funding sources being accessed. If HMIS documents financial assistance for the same service, for the same amount, for the same period of time, by either HEN, Streets to Home, Path to Home, King County Diversion (Centralized Funds), or other similarly targeted funding, the client is not eligible for any service that may be duplicated. **Exception:** The only exception to this guidance is if the documented total costs exceed the allowable financial assistance limits and there is a cost sharing agreement.

Checking Financial Assistance History in HMIS:

- 1. Log into HIMS
- 2. Search for the Client
- 3. Click on the History tab



4. Check for any financial services for the same type, same time, and same amount as the client is seeking to access.

Eligible financial assistance includes:

- Payment for background and credit checks
- Landlord fees
- Move-in costs (including refundable deposits and first month's rent; cost of moving truck; storages)
- Utility deposits
- Arrears (only if resulting in an immediate housing placement)
- Previous housing debt/rental arrears (only if resulting in an immediate housing placement)
- Transportation (including bus tickets for both local transportation and relocation)
- Gas card (for relocation purposes)
- Fees for assistance securing ID's, birth certificates, social security cards
- Other types of financial costs that will help the family or individual obtain housing

Appendix B for documentation requirements related to Path to Home expenses.

Financial assistance exclusions

Path to Home funds are **not eligible** for use to purchase items such as a car, RV, boat or other items considered an asset under federal guidance, nor for costs not associated with an immediate housing placement.

• RVs, cars and certain other tangible items are considered a capital asset under local CoC, city, and federal guidance.

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-

bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=73066ad3cfc10a88ccfc3a9bae89debe&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML
#se2.1.200 133

https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/24/578.53

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-

<u>bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=73066ad3cfc10a88ccfc3a9bae89debe&mc=true&n=pt2.1.200&r=PART&ty=HTML</u> #se2.1.200 1306

• Cable television, vehicle parking, or other costs not directly resulting in an immediate housing placement.

Financial assistance limit per household

Path to Home must always be applied with a progressive engagement approach, exploring solutions that start with techniques such as negotiation before utilizing financial assistance, and then using the least amount of financial resources to resolve the housing crisis.

Financial assistance is limited to a maximum of \$2,500 for a family, and \$1,500 for an individual. Households are eligible to receive financial assistance through Path to Home up to two times within a twelve-month period if the original Path to Home plan fails. Because move-in and other associated costs can easily exceed the allowable maximum assistance, whenever possible households are expected to share costs. Path to Home staff are also encouraged to engage with other assistance providers and collaborate to cover costs to end the homeless housing crisis. If there is a housing solution available to the household that would exceed

the funding limit or they have already received Path to Home financial assistance two times that year, contact the current RAP Contract Manager at Stan.Brownlow@kingcounty.gov to request an exception. Exceptions are dependent on funding availability and Path to Home guidelines.

Successful outcomes

Successful outcomes come in multiple forms. Examples of Path to Home outcomes may be securing a rental home, living with family or friends, or a shared housing arrangement. A successful solution may be temporary and it's often difficult to project how long a housing solution will last, however, a viable Path to Home plan must last a minimum of 90 days. The best results are when the client has a plan that will result in ongoing stability.

Accessing Path to Home Services

Role of Regional Access Points (RAPS) in providing Path to Home services

Regional Access Point (RAP) staff will facilitate a Path to Home conversation with all homeless individuals and families presenting at a RAP and discuss eligibility for Path to Home services including developing a viable Path to Home plan that will divert the individual or households from the Homeless Housing System. **The CEA Housing Assessment will be reserved for those that have no options through Path to Home, or those that present as highly vulnerable where an assessment should be conducted to determine vulnerability.** If a Housing assessment is completed, and based on the score the household will either not be eligible for CEA, or it's clear that a resource will not likely be offered, then return to a Path to Home discussion and attempt to problem solve with the household. In any case staff should be transparent about the lack of housing resources accessed through CEA.

Path to Home is intended to be a short term and light touch intervention, not lasting beyond 30 days. No conversation about accessing Path to Home services will be exactly the same, however, the questions that are explored with the household should be designed to begin exploring potential resources and solutions to address the immediate need for stability.

Path to Home conversations may include the following questions/topics:

- Where was the last place you slept where you were housed and felt safe?

 If they slept somewhere where they could potentially safely stay again, there might be an opportunity for Path to Home.
- Even if it's temporary or means staying with someone you know, can you think of any housing options that might be available to you in 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.
- (If there is an option to stay in someone else's housing) What needs to change or happen in order for you to stay with your friend/family? Can those issues be resolved with mediation, etc.?
 If the issues can be solved with mediation, there might be an opportunity for Path to Home.
- (If currently unemployed) **Would steady employment help solve your current housing situation?**If employment is an option, providing connections to employment resources and gaining steady employment will assist with long-term housing stability.
- (If moving into their own unit is an option) What resources or steps would you need to obtain housing on your own (landlord advocacy, transportation, etc.)?

 If the household could obtain their housing with some assistance, let the family or individual know what role Path to Home services can play.

Path to Home conversations should be focused on an individuals' housing situation, resources, and ability to

identify and obtain safe housing options outside of the homeless housing system. The role of staff is to partner with the household to identify viable alternatives for temporary or permanent housing stability. Other Path to Home tips include:

- Hold Path to Home conversations that foster effective participant "problem solving". These
 conversations include open ended questions, and motivational interviewing.
- Follow the lead of the household and do not inhibit the household from pursuing a housing situation, even if it's only a short-term solution.
- Be accessible advocates to landlords and debt collectors, if what's required is short-term and directly links to a housing solution.
- Provide mediation, conflict/dispute resolution & advocate on the client's behalf. This sometimes will be with friends/and or family, debt collectors, or landlords if it is short-term and leads to a housing alternative.
- Share ideas or resources for housing search.
- Connect households to longer term supports and resources.
- Facilitate financial assistance for solutions that require a financial component

Path to Home plans must come to fruition within 30-days. A 15-day extension can be applied if there is a delay in finalization such as securing a date of departure on a bus or plane. If there is question about whether the 15-day extension can be applied, contact stan.brownlow@kingcounty.gov for further guidance.

HMIS and Data Collection Requirements

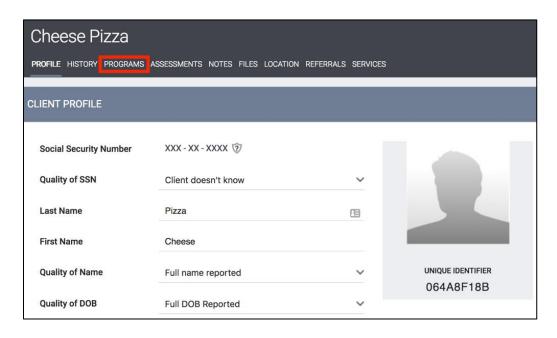
Staff at Regional Access Points will enter data into Clarity, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This assists our community in evaluating the impact of Path to Home services and informs for the potential of future funding. Every household receiving Path to Home services must be enrolled in the Path to Home program ensuring that all HUD required data elements are reported.

RAPs are also required to enter service activities in HMIS for every household. Data entered into HMIS must include:

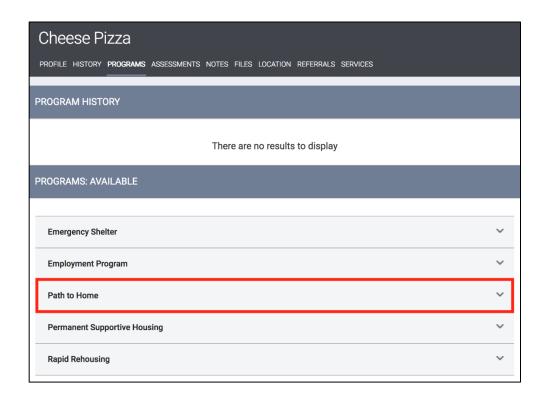
- Date service was provided, and
- The type of service provided, and
- Dollar amount of financial assistance provided
- Dollar amounts for financial assistance in HMIS must match invoices submitted to King County for the same corresponding time period.
- Households receiving Path to Home services must be enrolled in the program regardless of whether or not financial assistance is provided.

To enroll a household into Path to Home you will follow these steps:

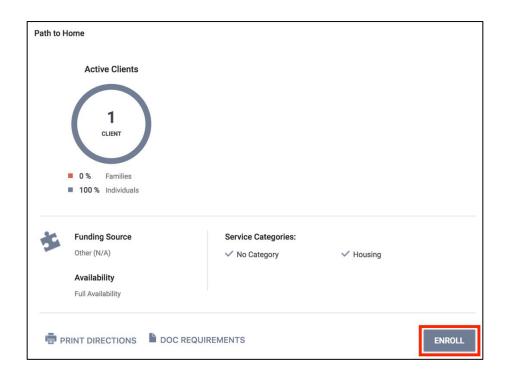
1. Click the program tab



2. Click the drop down for the Path to Home program

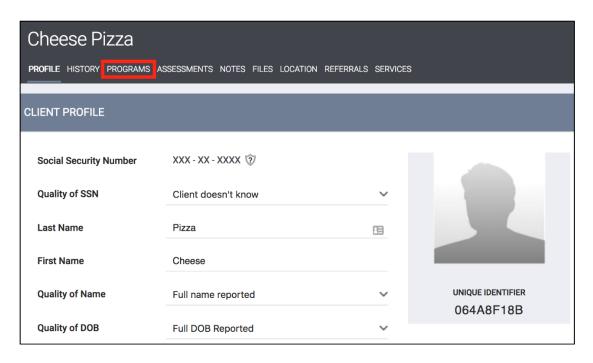


3. Click Enroll and complete all the required fields and click save

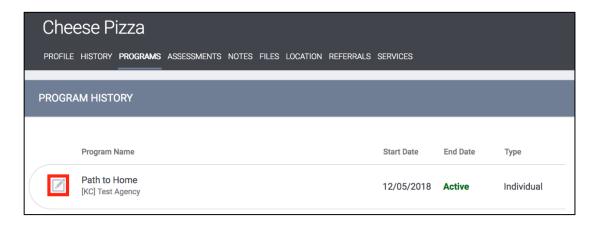


To enter services and the dollar amount spent on each household follow these steps:

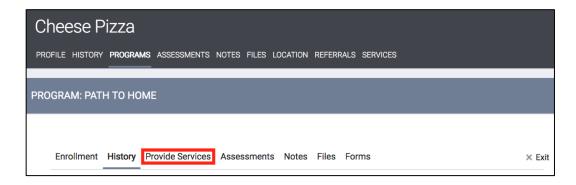
1. Click the programs tab.



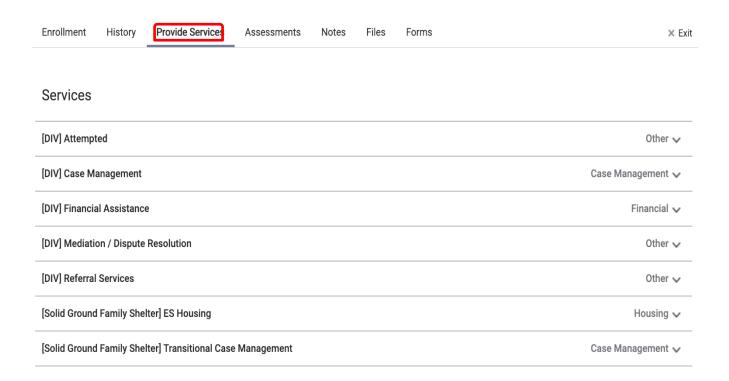
2. At the top of the screen you will see the client is enrolled in Path to Home. Hover over the enrollment and an edit button will appear to the left. Click edit



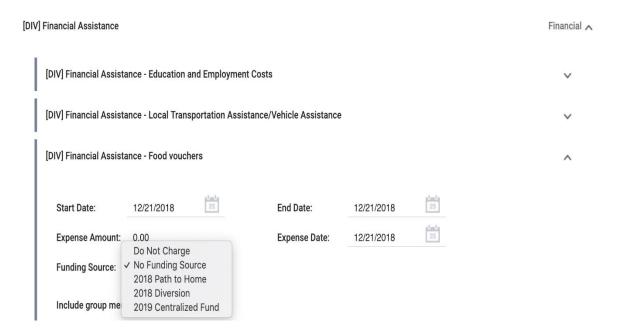
3. Click provide services.



4. Choose the drop down next to the appropriate service.



5. You will be taken to this screen. Fill in the date of service, expense amount, and fund source. Note: Due to multiple programs and funding sources, some options (such as food vouchers) will appear that are not eligible under Path to Home.



6. When selecting a funding source you will need to select one the following:

2018 Diversion (these funds cannot be used for households in shelter)

2019 Diversion (there funds cannot be used for households in shelter)

2019 Path to Home (the funds are allowable for households in shelter)

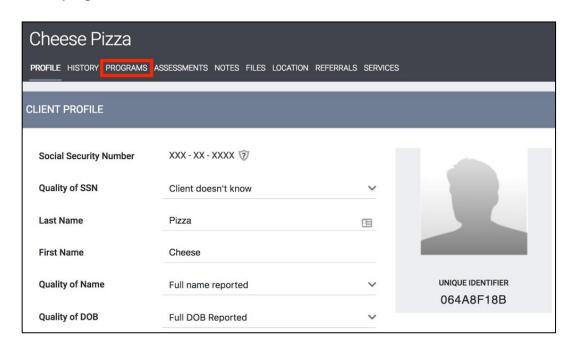
7. When complete you will need to click submit.

A household must be exited if they have been successfully housed or if they were unable to secure a housing solution in 30 days. RAP staff must complete the exit form in HMIS for every household including a designated outcome. Possible outcomes include:

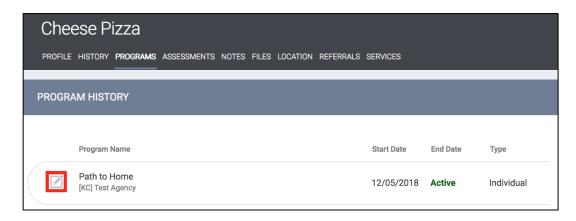
- Housing status at exit
- Destination
- Housing assessment at exit

To exit a household, follow these steps:

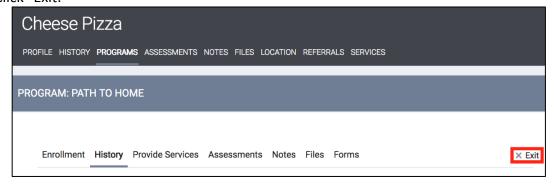
1. Click the program tab.



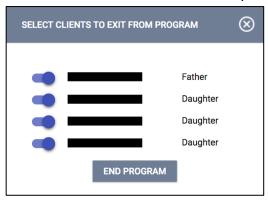
2. Hover over the enrollment and an edit button will appear to the left. Click edit.



3. Click "Exit."



If this is a family, a white box will appear asking you which family members you would like to exit. You will want to select all family members.



4. Complete all required fields and click save.

If a household is currently on the Community Queue and then successfully housed outside of CEA, you must notify Bitfocus so they can remove the household from the queue. You can do this by sending an email to Bitfocus kcsupport@bitfocus.com. You must include the Clarity ID and the reason for removal in your request.

On-going training and learning opportunities

To support on-going learning and best practices, all staff RAP meetings occur monthly that include Path to Home learning. These are an opportunity for staff trained to provide Path to Home services to come together to problem solve, share best practices and connect with funders or evaluators.

Additional resources on how other communities are using Path to Home services can be found here: <u>Cleveland</u> Mediation Center Ed Boyte or National Alliance to End Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Tools

Path to Home questions:

If you have specific questions regarding allowable expenses or procedures under your King County RAP contracts, contact the RAPs Contracts Manager at Stan.Brownlow@kingcounty.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

How are Path to Home services different from standard case management?

The goal of Path to Home services is to be focused on responding quickly to finding housing solutions. Path to Home services are meant to be a light-touch intervention, with limited follow-up. If the individual or family needs more intensive support, you can refer them to appropriate case management or other supportive services.

Can someone explore Path to Home services AND complete a CEA housing assessment?

Yes. While Path to Home is always the first step in progressive engagement when assisting an individual or family, situations are dynamic and sometimes Path to Home services do not work out the way the household thought, or a viable Path to Home plan may arise after an individual or family has completed an assessment.

Can I use Path to Home financial assistance for households to access a homeless housing programs?

No. Path to Home financial assistance is meant to divert individuals and families from the homeless housing system, which includes transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Do we need to document homelessness status before working with a household?

Proof of homelessness is not generally required in order to allow for flexibility and speed in resolving the homeless situation. However, there are some funding sources such as CDBG that will require third party verification. If unsure, consult your program manager. If the RAP staff working with the household discovers they no longer meet the homelessness definition to be eligible for CEA and Path to Home services, they should stop services and refer the household to resources that might better fit the household's needs to maintain and strengthen their housing situation.

What if the household isn't able to secure a housing placement in 30 days?

If a household cannot secure a housing placement within 30 days, exit them from Path to Home. A household can reconnect with RAP staff to access Path to Home services when they are ready and have identified a housing solution. Households in CEA continue to be in the community queue for housing resources until they are housed.

Appendix A Examples of Path to Home services

Example #1

A couple and their two children came to a Regional Access Point (RAP) for help. From the assessment process, the RAP staff learned they were evicted from their apartment a week earlier because they used their rent money to pay one of the children's medical bills. Embarrassed by their situation, the family decided to stay in their car and put their belongings in storage. They wanted go back to their old building because it is conveniently located near the father's job and the children's school, but feared their relationship with their former landlord was damaged beyond repair.

The mother said she might have a co-worker who would be willing to put them up for a week or so but felt too ashamed to ask and didn't want people at work to think she was a bad mother. The RAP staff helped the family strategize about how to ask the co-worker for assistance and provided a referral to a low-cost health care clinic nearby where the family can take their sick child for continuing care and gave them information about affordable health insurance options.

Once the family confirmed they could stay with the mother's co-worker, the RAP staff focuses on the family's longer-term housing plan. They made a call to the old landlord to discuss the family's situation. During the call they find out that the family had a positive rental history and was previously well-regarded by the landlord, but when the rent didn't come and they lost contact, the landlord didn't know what else to do, but move forward in the eviction. With Path to Home financial assistance, the RAP staff was able to pay the rental arrears if the landlord worked with the family in returning to the unit. After a few days of staying with their co-worker the family was able to move back into their previous unit.

Example #2

A single adult comes into a RAP for a housing assessment requesting shelter. The RAP staff askes about her situation and finds out that she was previously on a lease with a partner in a small town in Eastern Washington. When their relationship ended, she felt she had to get out of the area and heard Seattle had a thriving job market. As she searched for a job she spent her savings on motels, but as her savings ran low she started staying outside where she got connected to an encampment. She is working part-time and hasn't been able to save enough for first and last month's rent.

The RAP provider asks her what kind of housing situations she feels would be safe and viable for her. After confirming that she didn't have any connections in the area, but had lived with roommates in the past, she decided that figuring out a shared living situation would be her best option. Knowing that Path to Home financial assistance could be used for moving costs, she was able to reconnect with Path to Home assistance after identifying a woman who was willing to renting a room in her home.

Appendix B Financial Documentation requirements

Support Service Type	Documentation Collected	Process Notes
Move-in Cost	 W-9 from Landlord King County Parcel Information Break down of Cost from Landlord Copy of check, unit inspection (HUD standard) or a copy of (Section 8 unit inspection if applicable), and lease (once signed by both parties) *RAP staff will complete inspections unless the unit is outside of King County then a landlord self-certification is permitted 	Parcel information should match the W-9 (property name or owner). If the name does not match, then you should get documentation of the relationship between the W-9 Name/Business name, and property owner. http://gismaps.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer2/ HUD habitability standard checklist: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=dhapsandyhabitchklist.pdf
Arrears	 W-9 from Collection Agency or Property where debt is owed. Original debt invoice. Negotiate debt down, ask for deletion of debt from credit report. Housing Option (where is the client move into once this is paid?) This could be a letter from a friend or family member stating how long they can stay, the address, and the stipulations (if any). Or a letter from a landlord saying if debt is paid their application is approved. Receipt of debt paid once debt 	https://www.creditkarma.com/auth/logon Credit Karma is a good resource to use to find out where debt is now being collected, and what debt is owed. Taking a moment to talk about debt collection rights. https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0149-debt-collection
Reunification (Travel Cost)	 Receipt of debt paid office debt collector cashes check. Family/ Friend mediation (prepping client, or facilitating the conversation). Making sure the expectations are set if family/friend agrees to help. Rent amount, utilities, when they can move in, household duties should be covered. Logistics of how they will get to new address from airport/bus station/Amtrak. Letter from friend with expectations Pay for mode of transportation. Keep copy of receipt. 	Best practice to consider the distance and age of children (if any) for determining which mode of transportation. Asking if client has car if they have plans to do anything with it when they leave, or if they want to drive it to destination. It is also good practice to see if the client will need any resources once they arrive at their destination. (I.E., Domestic Violence support, mental health resources, legal resources, etc.)

Move in with friend/family member who is renting/or own their own home	Living with friend/family member who is renting Copy of Family/Friend's Lease and a. W-9 from landlord or the Household Self-Certification Form. Break down of cost to move in family (i.e., deposit, rent amount, or fees like their portion of the utility cost). Parcel information of family/friend's address. Living with a friend/family member who owns their own home A letter from the homeowner stating the household is able to live there (must include dates/timeline household can stay) Break down of cost to move in family (i.e., deposit, rent amount, or fees like their portion of the utility cost). Parcel information of family/friend's address.	If a household will be moving in with a friend/ family member who is renting, it is recommended that the household is added to the lease and living in the unit with approval from the landlord. If a household is approved to living in the unit but will not be added to the lease, the household must self-certify that they are living in the unit legally. The parcel information is collected to make sure the Lease matches the property owners in the King County Property Parcel information. If the parcel information does not, try and find out if the property is managed by a third party. No need to contact the landlord. http://gismaps.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer2/
Paying a bill for exchange of housing Other Creative Options	 Get a copy of the family/friend's lease, that the program participant will be living in. Copy of agreement between participant and family/friend they will be moving in with. Copy of original bill W-9 of where bill is being paid to (if by check and not credit card). Copy of receipt There is room for plenty of other creative options. Just make sure to get a copy of any money spent, and due diligence on making sure there is a plan towards self-sufficiency or housing stability once the payment is being made. 	Clients who move in with friends/family may use Path to Home as a way of helping the family they are moving in with Financial burden cost. This could be a past due utility bill, car payment, medical bill, cell phone bill, almost any kind of bill. The payment of the bill would be in exchange for X amount of months to able to stay with the friend/family. Ask your managers if unsure about what to collect for documentation, if unsure internally what to collect, reach out to your funders.

Appendix C. Allowable Move-in Costs

Move in costs including refundable deposits and first month's rent; cost of moving truck; storage are allowable. See the chart below that outlines what costs are allowable based on the type of lease.

When providing move-in assistance, Path to Home staff are <u>required</u> to provide each household with printed or through electronic link, **information on landlord tenant laws/tenant rights.**

	Month to month lease	Year-long lease
Monthly Rental Assistance	One month rent	First month's rent
Security Deposits	Not allowable under a month-to- month lease	100% up to 2X monthly rent; can only pay for refundable deposits
Damage Deposit	100% up to 1x monthly rent, can only pay for refundable deposits	100% up to 1x monthly rent, can only pay for refundable deposits
Cleaning Fee	Allowable reasonable amounts	Allowable reasonable amounts
Utility deposits & payments	100% up to 1x monthly rate	100% up to 1x monthly rate
Screening fees (application fees, etc.)	100% of 1x fee	100% of 1x fee
Moving costs assistance	Reasonable associated costs directly resulting in an immediate housing placement	Reasonable associated costs directly resulting in an immediate housing placement
Rent arrears	Only if resulting in an Immediate housing placement	Only if resulting in an Immediate housing placement
Utility arrears	Only if resulting in an Immediate housing placement	Only if resulting in an Immediate housing placement
ID, birth certificates, etc.	Allowable reasonable amounts	Allowable reasonable amounts