



# Board Meeting Agenda

---

**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2026  
**Time:** 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM  
**Location:** **Virtual option listed below:**  
Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85968097899?pwd=0Waw55dELVYw1Xr8W8sD8CEXJs48iJ.1>  
Meeting ID: 859 6809 7899                      Passcode: 693156

## Agenda Items:

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Review of Mission Statement
- III. Guest(s)/Public Participation
- IV. February Meeting Minutes Approval
  - a. Any corrections or additions
- V. Old Business
  - a. 100 Day Challenge – Shelter Diversion Project
  - b. Monthly Agency Presentations
    - i. March – IRIS Presentation/Demonstration by Robert Jones (Rosecrance)
    - ii. April – looking for suggestions
- VI. New Business
  - a. Northwest Illinois Deflection Initiative (See attached documents)
    - i. Primarily we receive 98% of our referrals from Law Enforcement
    - ii. Discuss how we can possibly use you as a housing resource for our clients
- VII. Reports
  - a. Chair / Vice Chair
    - i. Letter of Support
      1. Veteran's Path to Hope
      2. Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans
      3. Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois (Denial)
    - ii. NIHC Policy Draft
  - b. Treasurer
    - i. Current Balance / Expenditures
    - ii. Update on Membership Applications received to date

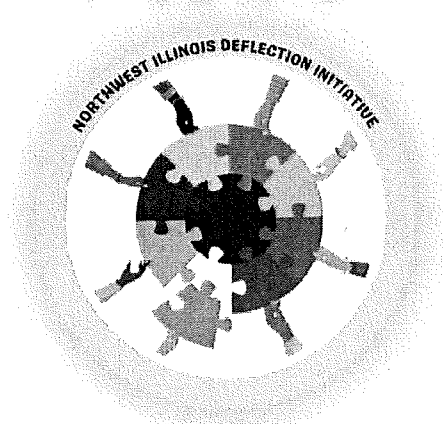


# Board Meeting Agenda

---

- c. HMIS Lead Agency
  - d. Collaborative Applicant
  - e. Current shelter capacity
    - i. Hope Haven
    - ii. Rockford Rescue Mission
    - iii. Remedies
    - iv. Safe Passage
    - v. Youth Services Network
    - vi. DeKalb Youth Homeless Shelter
    - vii. Comprehensive Community Solutions
    - viii. DeKalb Warming Center
    - ix. Overnight Café (Closed March 2)
    - x. Current Unsheltered Count
- VIII. Committee Updates – Since Full Membership Meeting
- a. Case Conferencing Committees
  - b. Built for Zero
  - c. Membership, Ed & Public Relations
  - d. JEDI
  - e. Day/Night Warming Centers (Adhoc) – No longer meeting as the Café is closed for the season
  - f. Where’s the Funds? (WTF) (Adhoc)
- IX. Public Health Update
- a. Meningococcal Disease in the Homeless Update
    - i. Rockford Rescue Mission Outreach
- X. Agency Updates/Announcements
- XI. Adjournment

# NWIDI



The Northwest Illinois Deflection Initiative fosters collaboration to increase access to essential services, strengthen community connections, and raise awareness of resources in Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Carroll. We focus on reducing stigma, enhancing communication, and respecting diverse experiences to prevent justice system involvement for individuals with behavioral health needs.

## MISSION

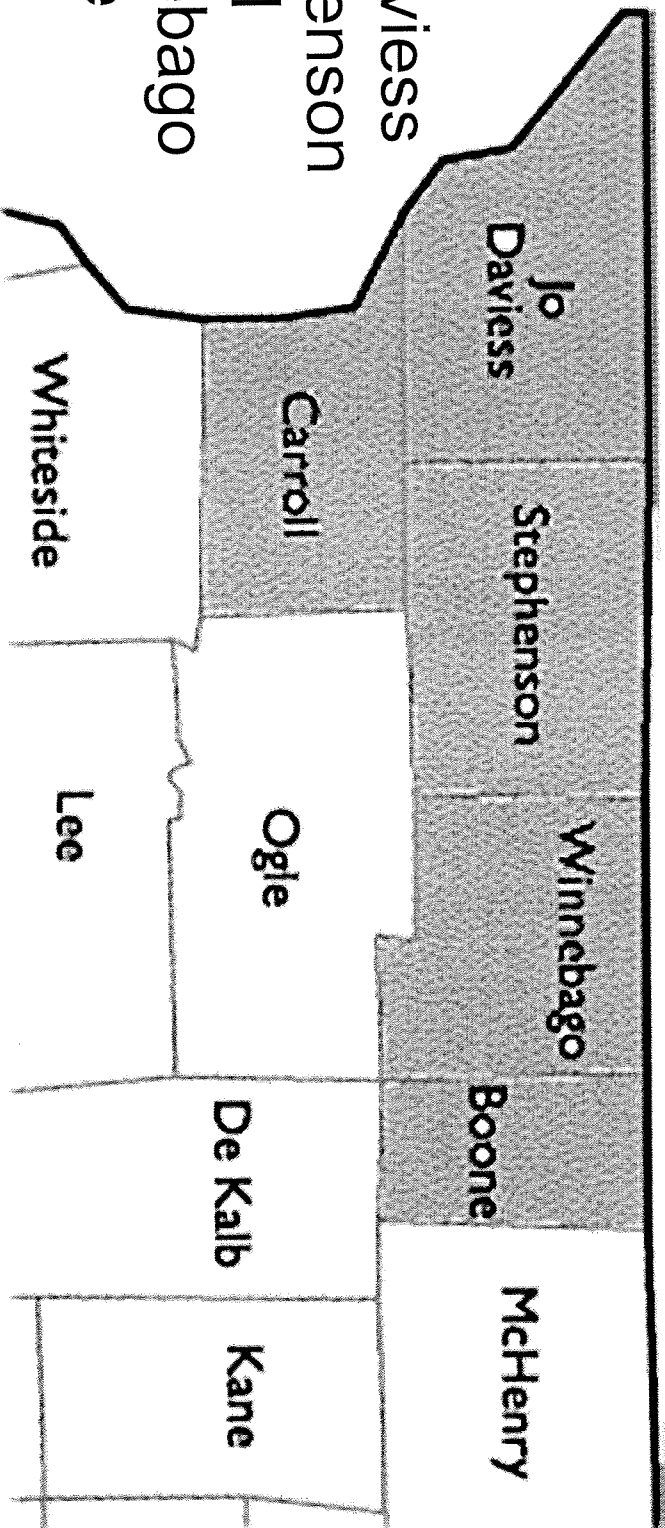
The Northwest IL Deflection Initiative seeks to foster community growth by reaching diverse populations and connecting individuals with essential services that provide alternatives to entering the justice system. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all, we aim to collaboratively bridge the gap between first responders and available resources.

## VISION

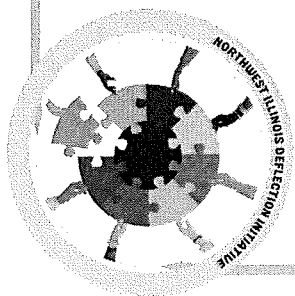
- Reduced violence, incarceration rates, and fewer overdose incidents.
- Enhanced access to essential services, including substance use and mental health support, with first responders trained in deflection and equipped to assist individuals in crisis.
- Increased community collaboration, valuing lived experiences to foster stronger community cohesion.

To learn more about deflection services, please email [nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org) or call (815)987-0489

# Where does NWIDI operate?



- Jo Daviess
- Stephenson
- Carroll
- Winnebago
- Boone



# What is Deflection?



CENTER FOR  
HEALTH & JUSTICE  
AT TASC

Deflection gives law enforcement the tools to address the root causes of criminal behavior—like substance use, mental health issues, and social challenges—before they lead to arrest. By connecting people to support early, it can lower repeat offenses, support recovery, and help build safer, more stable communities. This approach changes the role of law enforcement, creating new ways to meet community needs and reduce crime.

## HOW DOES DEFLECTION WORK IN ILLINOIS?

### On-the-Spot Review



In real time, officers become advocates, identifying individuals who need support and could benefit from treatment or services.

### Connection to Services



When officers encounter someone eligible for deflection, they easily refer them to deflection specialists who connect them to tailored services—whether mental health support, substance use treatment, or social services.

### Follow-Up Support



Deflection specialists use “relentless engagement,” providing ongoing outreach to keep individuals connected to services. This sustained support helps people overcome barriers and fosters long-term positive outcomes that ripple through communities.

## WHY SHOULD LAW ENFORCEMENT EMBRACE DEFLECTION?

- **Break the Cycle of Repeat Encounters:** By addressing the underlying issues of repeated law enforcement contacts—like behavioral health challenges and homelessness—deflection connects individuals to care, leading to stabilization, reduced reoffending, and less strain on officers and the entire justice system.
- **Improve Public Safety:** Redirecting low-level interactions to community services allows officers to focus on serious crimes. Connecting individuals to support can reduce recidivism, improve community safety, and boost resource efficiency. Collaborative efforts equip officers to address complex issues effectively, benefiting both officers and community members.
- **Build Community Trust:** Deflection promotes compassion and proactive problem-solving, strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community.
- **Save Resources:** Reducing arrests and court costs enables agencies to reinvest in training and tools, leading to fewer incarcerations and improved policing efficiency.

CONTACT: Koren VanderWeele,  
CHJ Senior Program Manager, State and Local Deflection  
✉ kvanderweele@tasc.org 📞 (312) 866 - 2072



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

July 2025

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR OFFICERS?

## ➤ More Time for High-Priority Calls:

Using deflection for non-violent, low-level interactions, officers save officers time—allowing them to focus on critical incidents, investigations, and proactive crime prevention.

## ➤ Enhanced Officer Safety:

Through deflection, officers minimize prolonged engagements in unpredictable situations, reducing risk and boosting overall public safety—an advantage strengthened by the trust and rapport built with community members.

## ➤ Job Satisfaction & Pride:

Witnessing the tangible, positive effects of their efforts—helping individuals get the support they need—allows officers to have pride in their dual role of ensuring public safety and facilitating recovery.

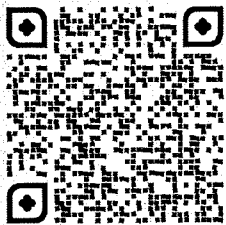
## ➤ Strengthened Skills & Tools:

Deflection equips officers with valuable training and resources to navigate complex social issues more effectively. This broadens their skill set and enhances professional development.

## ➤ Recognition for Leadership:

Agencies that champion deflection are regarded as trailblazers in community-oriented policing. By adopting these initiatives, officers elevate their reputation and that of their departments, positioning themselves as leaders in law enforcement.

## JOIN THE DEFLECTION MOVEMENT!



Are you ready to transform your department and your community?

Discover how deflection can make a profound difference!



CENTER FOR  
HEALTH & JUSTICE  
AT TASC

Together, we can create a safer, stronger future for all.

CONTACT: Koren VanderWeele,  
CHJ Senior Program Manager, State and Local Deflection  
✉ [kvanderweele@tasc.org](mailto:kvanderweele@tasc.org) 📞 (312) 866 - 2072

[www.centerforhealthandjustice.org](http://www.centerforhealthandjustice.org)  
July 2025

# Examples of Deflection Referrals

## General Police Responses

- **Domestic Disturbance (verbal only):**
  - Occurs when one person is intoxicated or under the influence; instead of making an arrest, the officer can refer them for substance use disorder (SUD); often involves domestics with no crime, no mandated arrest, no DV history—typically arguments between parents and kids, not intimate partners.
  - When called to a domestic where a parent is arguing with a child about drugs or behavior, police have no authority to act—time to deflect and refer to appropriate resources.
  
- **Trespassing:**
  - Called for a trespasser who is clearly under the influence or experiencing mental health issues; instead of arrest, the officer can refer them for deflection.
  
- **Traffic Stops:**
  - Officers can refer passengers—and even the driver, if not arrested, even if traffic tickets are issued.
  
- **Overdose Calls:**
  - When responding to an opioid overdose, officers can refer the individual to a substance abuse treatment program or community-based recovery support, rather than making an arrest.
  
- **Public Intoxication/Disorderly Conduct:**
  - When officers encounter a person intoxicated in public but not causing harm or being violent, they can refer them to a sobering center or addiction counseling service instead of making an arrest.
  
- **Minor Drug Possession:**
  - During a routine traffic stop, if officers find a small amount of marijuana with no associated violent crime, they can refer the individual to a drug education program instead of making an arrest.
  
- **Mental Health Crisis:**
  - When police are called to assist a person in a mental health crisis exhibiting erratic behavior, they can connect the individual with a mobile crisis unit or mental health crisis intervention team instead of taking them to jail.
  
- **Truancy or Curfew Violation:**
  - When officers find a teenager out past curfew or skipping school, they can refer them to a community youth program or school-based intervention service instead of making an arrest.
  
- **Domestic Dispute Without Violence:**
  - When police respond to a domestic dispute with shouting and arguing but no physical violence, they can refer the involved parties to family counseling services or a domestic violence prevention program instead of making an arrest.
  
- **Non-Violent Theft or Shoplifting:**
  - When an individual is caught shoplifting low-value items, officers can refer them to a restorative justice program instead of charging them with theft, offering support for underlying issues like poverty or addiction.



- **Homelessness-Related Calls:**
  - When officers are called to a location where a homeless individual is trespassing or loitering, they can refer the person to a homeless shelter or social services for housing assistance instead of issuing a citation.
- **Minor Property Damage:**
  - When a person is reported for vandalizing property with graffiti, police can refer them to a community service program where they can repair the damage and engage in constructive activities instead of making an arrest.
- **Public Nuisance Complaints:**
  - When police respond to complaints about a disturbance, such as a loud argument or minor public disorder, they can refer the individual to conflict resolution services or community mediation instead of taking further enforcement action.
- **Veteran in Crisis:**
  - An officer encounters a veteran who is struggling with PTSD-related symptoms and has committed a minor offense. They can refer the veteran to a specialized veteran support program that provides mental health and reintegration services.
- **Prostitution or Sex Work-Related Incidents:**
  - Police come across individuals involved in sex work due to coercion or economic hardship. Instead of arresting them, officers refer them to social services or programs aimed at helping individuals exit sex work and find alternative employment.

#### State Trooper Responses

- **Traffic Violations Involving Substance Use:**
  - A state trooper pulls over a driver for a minor traffic violation and suspects they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Instead of making an arrest, the trooper refers the driver to deflection.
- **Assistance with Stranded Motorists:**
  - A state trooper encounters a motorist stranded on the highway who appears to be homeless and struggling with mental health issues. Rather than citing them for any related offenses, the trooper connects them with a deflection specialist.
- **Minor Traffic Accidents Involving Vulnerable Populations:**
  - In a minor traffic accident involving a veteran showing signs of PTSD, the trooper may refer the individual to deflection rather than pursuing criminal charges.
- **Checkpoints and Roadblocks:**
  - During a routine checkpoint, a state trooper encounters a driver with a suspended license due to unpaid fines stemming from financial hardship. The trooper refers the driver to deflection.
- **Runaway Youth on Highways:**
  - A state trooper finds a runaway teenager hitchhiking along the interstate. Instead of taking the teen into custody, the trooper refers them to a youth shelter or a family reunification program.
- **Human Trafficking Victims:**
  - During a traffic stop, a state trooper discovers that one of the passengers is a victim of human trafficking. Rather than treating the individual as a criminal, the trooper connects them with a deflection specialist..

- **Agricultural Workers with Transportation Issues:**
  - State troopers encounter migrant agricultural workers traveling in unsafe conditions. Rather than detaining them for vehicle violations, the troopers may refer the workers to advocacy groups that provide safe transportation and legal assistance.
- **Illegal Fishing or Hunting:**
  - A state trooper encounters individuals involved in minor illegal fishing or hunting activities. Instead of making arrests, the trooper refers them to wildlife education programs and local community services.
- **Mental Health Crisis on Highways:**
  - A state trooper comes across a person walking along the highway in a distressed state due to a mental health crisis. Rather than detaining them, the trooper refers them to a deflection specialist.

### Detective Responses

- **Fraud Investigation Involving Financial Hardship:**
  - A detective investigates a case of minor credit card fraud and discovers the perpetrator is in severe financial distress. Instead of pursuing criminal charges, the detective refers the individual to financial counseling and assistance programs.
- **Cyberbullying Among Teenagers:**
  - During an investigation into cyberbullying, a detective finds that the perpetrator is a teenager acting out due to personal issues. Rather than moving forward with charges, the detective refers the teen to counseling and school-based intervention programs.
- **Minor Theft Related to Substance Abuse:**
  - While investigating a series of minor thefts, a detective identifies the suspect as someone struggling with substance use disorder. The individual is referred to deflection instead of being prosecuted.
- **Domestic Violence Incidents Without Serious Injury:**
  - In a domestic violence case where no serious injury is involved, a detective finds that both parties are open to counseling. The detective refers them to deflection rather than pursuing prosecution.
- **White-Collar Crime with Restitution Potential:**
  - In a case of minor embezzlement or fraud within a small business, a detective collaborates with the offender to create a restitution plan and refers them to a deflection, focusing on repairing harm without formal charges.
- **Youth Involved in Vandalism:**
  - Detectives investigating local vandalism incidents identify the suspects as teenagers. Instead of filing property crime charges, they refer the youths to deflection.
- **Family-Related Financial Crimes:**
  - A detective handling a check forgery case discovers the offense was committed by a family member driven by financial desperation. The individual is referred to deflection.
- **First-Time Offenders in Property Crime:**
  - Detectives investigating an incident of property damage discover that the suspect has a history of untreated mental illness. Instead of pursuing prosecution, they refer the individual to mental health services and supportive housing programs.

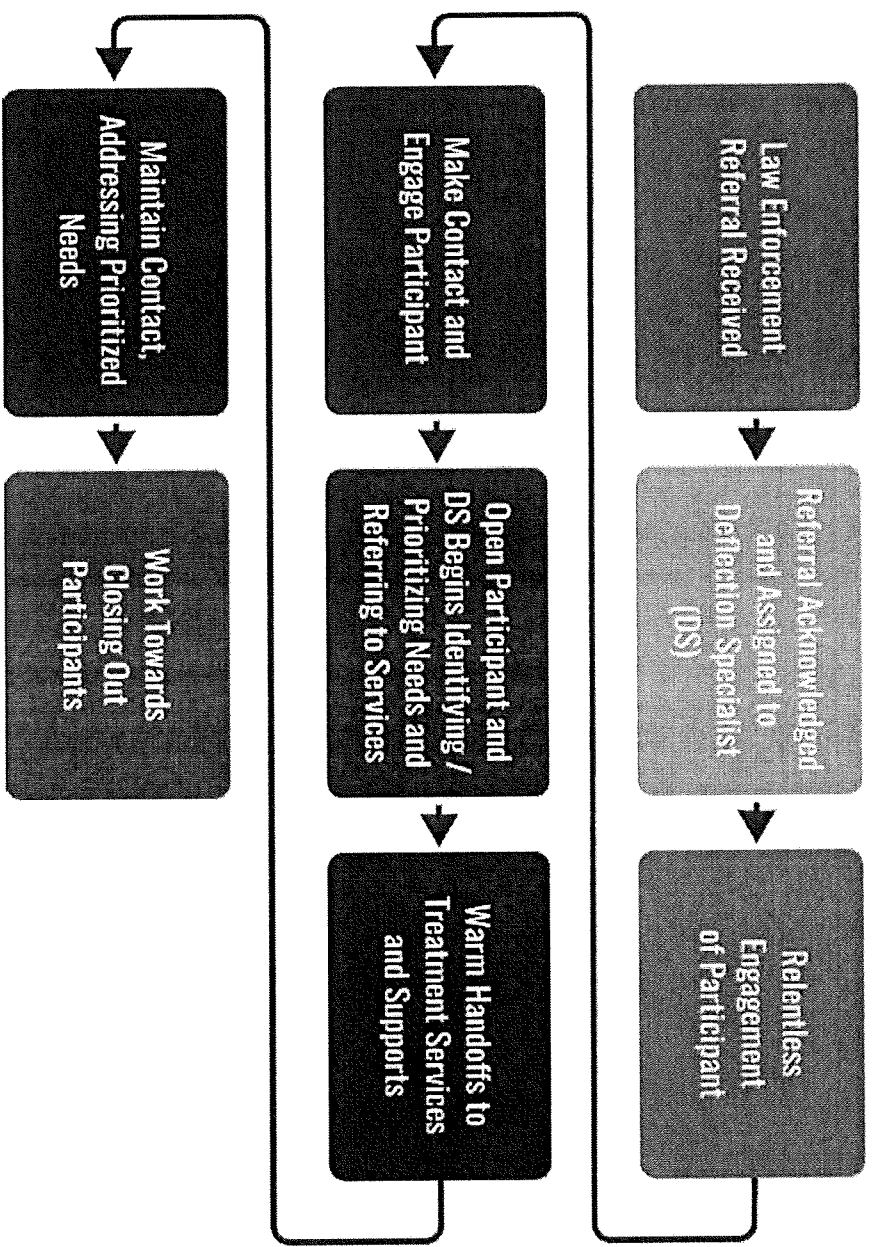
- **Elderly Individuals Committing Minor Crimes:**
  - In cases involving elderly individuals committing minor offenses—such as shoplifting due to poverty or cognitive decline—detectives refer them to deflection rather than pursuing charges.
- **Mental Health-Related Property Damage:**
  - While investigating property damage, detectives find the suspect has a history of untreated mental illness. The individual is referred to deflection instead of being prosecuted.
- **Truancy and Juvenile Delinquency:**
  - During an investigation into repeated truancy and minor juvenile offenses, a detective uncovers underlying family issues. The youth and their family are referred to deflection.
- **Human Trafficking Victims Involved in Crimes:**
  - Detectives discover that individuals involved in minor criminal activity are actually victims of human trafficking. Rather than treating them as offenders, they refer them to deflection.

### Drug Unit Responses

- **Low-Level Drug Possession:**
  - During a routine operation, drug unit officers arrest an individual for possessing a small amount of drugs for personal use. Rather than pressing charges, they issue an appearance ticket and refer the person to deflection. While some view this approach as lacking accountability, the goal is to break the cycle—offering a path to recovery instead of repeatedly encountering the same individuals.
- **First-Time Offenders in Drug-Related Incidents:**
  - Officers apprehend a first-time offender for a minor drug-related offense.
- **Minor Property Offenses**
  - These involve minor damage to property or theft of low-value items, such as:
    - Shoplifting, Vandalism, and Graffiti
- **Minor Assaults**
  - These are minor physical altercations without serious injury, such as:
    - School fights or Minor physical altercations between peers
- **Drug Offenses**
  - Low-level drug offenses involving possession of small amounts of controlled substances or paraphernalia, typically:
    - Possession of marijuana or Possession of drug paraphernalia
- **Public Order Offenses**
  - These involve minor disruptions to public order, including:
    - Disorderly conduct, Trespassing, and Loitering
- **Traffic Offenses**
  - Non-serious traffic violations, such as:
    - Speeding, Driving without a license, and careless driving



# Deflection Process Overview



# Making a Referral



[nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org)

(815) 987-0489, #2

## Deflection - Officer Referral Form

Please complete the form and email to:

[nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org)

Phone: (815) 987-0489, #2

(If you are leaving a message, please include your department or agency name.)

REFERRAL DATE:

OFFICER INFORMATION

Name:

Badge #:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name:

Birth Date:

Address:

City:

Zip Code:

Phone #

Email:

Emergency Contact Name:

Relationship to participant:

Phone #

Referral Issue (Check all that apply):

Substance Use  Mental Health  Housing Services  Food Resources

Other (if applicable - Please note - Deflection Specialists will do a screening with participant to identify needs as well):

Additional Comments:

Making a referral – keep it simple.

- 1) Complete the form and email to [nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org)
- 2) Email [nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org) with the basic information you can get out quickly. We may need to follow up with the officer to identify missing information to assist in contacting participant.
- 3) Contact Deflection Staff directly – Not recommended, but we'll have business cards, we'll be passing out our contact information (leaves more room for gaps.)
- 4) Does your department have a method built out that you'd like to incorporate? Let's discuss.



## Deflection - Officer Referral Form

Please complete the form and email to:

[nwideflection@tasc.org](mailto:nwideflection@tasc.org)

Phone: (815) 987-0489, x2

(If you are leaving a message, please include your department or agency name.)

REFERRAL DATE:

OFFICER INFORMATION

Name:

Badge #:

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name:

Birth Date:

Address:

Gender:  Female  Male  Transgender  
 Non-binary  Prefer not to answer

City:

Race:  Black or African American  White  
 Latinx  American Indian  Alaskan Native  
 Asian  Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific  
Islander  Multi-racial

Zip Code:

Phone #

General Stability check all that apply:

Email:

Homeless  At risk of homelessness  Shelter  
 Stably Housed  Unknown

Emergency Contact Name:

Served in the Military?

Relationship to participant:

Yes  No

Phone #

Referral Issue (Check all that apply):

Substance Use  Mental Health  Housing Services  Food Resources

Other (If applicable - Please note - Deflection Specialist will do a screening with participant to identify needs as well) :

Additional Comments:

# WELCOME TO NWIDI

## CONTACT THE TASC DEFLECTION TEAM:

Russell Warner, Deflection Supervisor, (779)363-2665, [rwarner@tasc.org](mailto:rwarner@tasc.org)

Dawn Kobrick, Deflection Specialist, (779)772-4057, [dkobrick@tasc.org](mailto:dkobrick@tasc.org)

Mexi Shriver, Deflection Specialist, (779)772-4126, [mshriver@tasc.org](mailto:mshriver@tasc.org)

Bob Ciulla, Administrator, (312)978-1218, [rciulla@tasc.org](mailto:rciulla@tasc.org)

Guy Schingoethe, Director of Operations, (312)404-8184, [gschingoethe@tasc.org](mailto:gschingoethe@tasc.org)

## A New Word, A New Practice, A New Opportunity FOR COMMUNITIES TO BE SAFER AND HEALTHIER

TASC, a national-leader in the emerging field of deflection, is pleased to introduce you to this movement that sits at the intersection of community, treatment, and police. This concept, considered to have started only seven years ago, is now active in an estimated 1,200 deflection sites (and growing) across the country.

### WHAT IS DEFLECTION?

Deflection is an early, "upstream" approach to addressing drug use and mental health. Deflection doesn't wait for a crisis such as an overdose, arrest, or mental health episode to take place before acting. Deflection creates a framework that allows a community to decide how best to respond to behavioral health issues and does so early on.

Deflection specialists are not police, but work in the community often alongside police and other first responders to interrupt crisis and help address public health concerns without arrest and incarceration.

### WHOM DOES DEFLECTION BENEFIT?

- **The Police:** Deflection provides an opportunity to build positive and trusting relationships with community members by offering a new approach to drug use responses. Deflection creates a new, third option other than arresting or taking no action, reducing the social burden on police to address issues of substance use and mental health. Instead, police can refer to community-based partners who can engage individuals and do the work they are trained for — helping people achieve health and recovery.
- **The Community:** Deflection is centered in and around the community and its interests. It is guided by treatment and health, and is a true shared public safety and public health approach that reduces crime while promoting well-being.
- **Individuals:** Instead of being arrested, individuals get the help and services that they need to attain health and recovery.

### HOW DO WE START A DEFLECTION MOVEMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY?

We can help get you started, and support your community's efforts operationally with our team of Deflection Specialists!

- For Training and Technical Assistance connect with: Jac Charlier, Executive Director, TASC's Center for Health & Justice at [jcharlier@tasc.org](mailto:jcharlier@tasc.org)
- For Operational Support connect with: Guy Schingoethe, TASC Director of Deflection at [gschingoethe@tasc.org](mailto:gschingoethe@tasc.org)



**Jac Charlier**  
Executive Director  
TASC Center for Health  
and Justice (CHJ)  
[jcharlier@tasc.org](mailto:jcharlier@tasc.org)



CENTER FOR  
HEALTH & JUSTICE  
AT TASC



**Guy Schingoethe**  
Director of Deflection  
TASC, Inc.  
[gschingoethe@tasc.org](mailto:gschingoethe@tasc.org)

**TASC**  
Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities

TASC is actively involved in deflection initiatives in Harvey, Justice, Schiller Park, and Dixmoor, and working to develop new sites across Cook County. Deflection is not limited to urban areas. Around the state, TASC is involved in existing or new deflection initiatives in West, Central and Southern Illinois.



February 24, 2026

Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program Office  
National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans  
4100 Chester Avenue, Suite 201  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Re: Letter of Support for Veterans Path to Hope

To Whom It May Concern:

Veterans Path to Hope (VPH) is an active member of the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition (NIHC) -DeKalb/ Rockford/ Winnebago/ Boone Continuum of Care- IL 501. NIHC supports the Veterans Path to Hope application for grant funding through the SSVF program. This program is vital to both VPH and the communities they serve. The NIHC is committed to partnering and coordinating service delivery among local social service agencies to prevent and to sustain the end of Veteran homelessness in our area.

VPH regularly attends and actively participates in our monthly membership meeting and the coalition including serving on the Board, Executive Committee, and participating in other committees. They provide support to many of our activities such as the Point-in-Time count and make referrals to our Coordinated Entry System. The agency is in good standing with the Continuum.

VPH has been vital in helping our community to ensure housing stability among our Veteran families. They are a great partner, which is why we support this application for funding.

If I may be of any additional assistance, please contact me at 815-720-4071 or [tkisner@publichealth.wincoil.gov](mailto:tkisner@publichealth.wincoil.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd M. Kisner", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Todd M. Kisner, MPH

Chair

Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition

<https://www.northernillinoishomelesscoalition.org/>



March 2, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition (NIHC), the Rockford/Boone/Winnebago/DeKalb IL-501 Continuum of Care (CoC), I am writing to express our strong support for Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans (MSHV) for their application for grant funding through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Grant through the US Department of Labor. With this opportunity, MSHV will be able to serve Veterans in the DeKalb County portion of the IL-501 CoC.

As the HUD-designated Continuum of Care for the region, the NIHC brings together housing and service providers, government agencies, and community stakeholders to coordinate a collaborative and strategic response to homelessness. Our work focuses on advancing evidence-based solutions that reduce and ultimately end homelessness, with a particular focus on vulnerable subpopulations, including Veterans.

As a potential new member of the NIHC, the MSHV staff would participate in CoC meetings, coordinated entry case conferencing, and system-wide data collection and planning efforts. Their program will align with and enhance our efforts to support employment services for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Thank you for considering this critical proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or to talk about our endorsement more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Todd M. Kisner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "K".

Todd M. Kisner, MPH

Chair

Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition

<https://www.northernillinoishomelesscoalition.org/>

**From:** [Todd Kisner](#)  
**To:** [ElisabethH@goodwillni.org](mailto:ElisabethH@goodwillni.org); [Todd Kisner](#)  
**Cc:** [Angie Walker - City of Rockford Community Action Agency \(angie.walker@rockfordil.gov\)](mailto:angie.walker@rockfordil.gov)  
**Subject:** FW: Request for Letter of Support-HVRP grant application  
**Date:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 9:23:16 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

---



Dear Ms. Henson,

Thank you for reaching out and sharing the details of your upcoming grant application for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). It sounds like a commendable initiative.

After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition (NIHC) is unable to provide a letter of support at this time. The Coalition would invite you to become a member and join our partners in moving the homeless population toward self-sufficiency and ultimately to eliminate homelessness in DeKalb County.

We appreciate your interest in collaborating with the NIHC and wish you the best of luck with your application.

Sincerely,

*Todd*

Todd M. Kisner  
Chair  
Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition  
[www.northernillinoishomelesscoalition.org](http://www.northernillinoishomelesscoalition.org)

---

**From:** Elisabeth Henson <[ElisabethH@goodwillni.org](mailto:ElisabethH@goodwillni.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 10:07 AM  
**To:** Angie Walker <[Angie.Walker@rockfordil.gov](mailto:Angie.Walker@rockfordil.gov)>  
**Cc:** Trisha Welte <[TWelte@goodwillni.org](mailto:TWelte@goodwillni.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Letter of Support-HVRP grant application

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning Ms. Walker,

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to follow up on my previous email regarding our request for a Letter of Support for the HVRP grant application. We are approaching the submission deadline on **February 19th**, and I wanted to check in to see if you might be able to provide the letter or if you need any additional information from me.

We greatly appreciate your partnership and the important work you do. Your support would be incredibly valuable in strengthening our application and our shared efforts to serve veterans experiencing homelessness or housing instability across Whiteside, Lee, Ogle, DeKalb, and LaSalle counties.

Please let me know if there is anything I can provide to assist. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Elisabeth Henson  
Veteran's Employment Readiness Specialist  
2216 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sterling, IL 61081  
Email: [ElisabethH@goodwillni.org](mailto:ElisabethH@goodwillni.org)  
Work Cell: 815-290-0987  
<https://goodwillni.org>



*Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois is a community-based not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create opportunities for individuals with barriers to enhance their lives.*

---

**From:** Elisabeth Henson

**Sent:** Thursday, February 5, 2026 10:54 AM

**To:** [angie.walker@rockfordil.gov](mailto:angie.walker@rockfordil.gov) <[angie.walker@rockfordil.gov](mailto:angie.walker@rockfordil.gov)>

**Cc:** Trisha Welte <[TWelte@goodwillni.org](mailto:TWelte@goodwillni.org)>

**Subject:** Request for Letter of Support-HVRP grant application

Good morning Ms. Walker,

I hope you are doing well. My name is Elisabeth Henson and I am the Veteran's Employment Readiness Specialist with Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois', working within the Goodwill Veterans program. We are currently preparing an application for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grant through the U.S. Department of Labor.

As part of the application, we are required to submit letters of support from American Job Centers and COCs within our service area. I have included my program manager, Trisha in this email as well. We are requesting a brief Letter of Support that describes our partnership (or intent to partner) and how coordination between our organizations will support veterans experiencing homelessness or housing instability. We are looking to serve Veterans in Whiteside, Lee, Ogle, DeKalb, and LaSalle counties. The letter does not need to be lengthy— one page is sufficient.

Letters are requested by **2/19/2026**, and may be submitted as a signed PDF.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We truly value the work you do and appreciate your support of this effort to better serve veterans in our community. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Elisabeth Henson  
Veteran's Employment Readiness Specialist  
2216 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sterling, IL 61081  
Email: [ElisabethH@goodwillni.org](mailto:ElisabethH@goodwillni.org)  
Work Cell: 815-290-0987  
<https://goodwillni.org>



*Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois is a community-based not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create opportunities for individuals with barriers to enhance their lives.*



Revision Date:	
Issue Date:	

**I. PURPOSE**

This policy outlines the guidelines that the Coalition will use regarding providing Letters of Support for new and existing projects that provide services to individuals or families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity in the Rockford/Boone/Winnebago/DeKalb IL-501 Continuum of Care (CoC).

Each year, the Coalition receives numerous requests for letters of support from agencies that are applying for new or renewal projects to provide services to people experiencing homelessness in the CoC. The Coalition is establishing this policy for providing a letter of support to ensure it has the necessary information about the agency and project to evaluate whether the project meets the objectives of the Northern Illinois Homeless Coalition (NIHC). Additionally, such guidelines ensure that the Coalition has an appropriate amount of time to compose an effective letter of support for the proposed project.

**II. POLICY**

Letters of support will be provided only to programs that demonstrate support for the CoC's mission to develop, sustain and coordinate a comprehensive Continuum of Care in order to move the homeless population toward self-sufficiency and ultimately to eliminate homelessness.

**III. PROCEDURE**

- A. All requests for letters of support should be emailed to the NIHC's general email account (XXX).
- B. Requests shall be submitted no later than fourteen (14) days before the grant application is due to ensure adequate response time.
- C. The following information must be included in the request:
  - i. Completed "Letter of Support Request" Form
  - ii. Sample Letter of Support
- D. The Executive Committee will review the request and contact the agency requesting support if further information is needed.
- E. The project must receive approval from a simple majority of the Executive Committee.
- F. The Chair will sign the letter and return it to the agency as well as the Executive Committee.
- G. If the request does not receive approval, a member of the Executive Committee will notify the requesting agency of the decision.

**IV. DENIALS**

NIHC reserves the right to deny a request for a Letter of Support for the following reasons:

- A. The requesting agency is not a current member of the NIHC with dues paid for the current membership term.



Revision Date:	
Issue Date:	

Page 2 of 2

- B. The requesting agency has not been participating in the CoC at the minimal level of being able to be considered a participating agency
- C. A previous letter of support was provided, and the project did not follow through on the commitment to fully participate in the CoC's Coordinated Entry process, Consortium collaboration and planning, and CoC project target initiatives.
- D. The project is not a good fit for the overall CoC and/or does not align with the CoC, state, and/or federal priorities for effectively ending homelessness.
  - a. Examples: If the program has strict entry requirements or barriers, strict program participation requirements, or otherwise does not follow housing first philosophy.

**V. FORMS**

Letter of Support Form

DRAFT



**Letter of Support Request Form**

**Email to: XXXXXX to the Attention of CoC Chair**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding Opportunity Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this requesting agency a member of the CoC?  Yes  No

If existing, has this project received a previous letter of support?  Yes  No

Briefly describe the project, including which communities within the CoC will be served or what local priorities will the project seek to address:

How will this project address homelessness/housing instability?

How will this project use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), or comparable database?

How will this project use the Coordinated Entry System?

I have reviewed the CoC Governance Charter and Policies and Procedures:

I have attached a sample letter of support: