ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN MARYLAND.

TOGETHER.

Coordinated Entry System 101

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What is Coordinated Entry?

Coordinated Entry is a streamlined system developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

Households are assessed using a standard and objective tool that identifies their vulnerabilities and barriers to housing stability. Those who are assessed as having the highest vulnerability and housing barriers will be prioritized for access to available housing programs as vacancies occur.

What is Coordinated Entry?

HUD requires CoCs to establish a Coordinated Entry System that:

1. **Assess all households** experiencing a housing crisis

2. **Connect at-risk households to services** to prevent homelessness - such as diversion, prevention shelter

3. **Connect homeless households to mainstream resources or support networks** to rapidly exit them back to permanent housing

4. **Prioritize homeless households** for permanent housing and support opportunities

5. Support households to **prevent returns to homelessness**

HUD Rules

The regulations for the Continuum of Care Program (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and State Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP) require grant recipients and subrecipients to participate in the established coordinated entry process as appropriate for their project type.

Projects not funded by the CoC, ESG, or HSP programs are welcome and encouraged to participate in Coordinated Entry as well!

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HUD Rules

The CoC Program interim rule requires that:

CoCs establish and operate a "centralized or coordinated assessment system," hereafter referred to as a coordinated entry process. The rule defines coordinated entry as a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. **[Such a] system covers the [CoC's] geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. (24 CFR part 578.3)**

Coordinated Entry System

- An approach to coordination & management of a crisis response system's resources that allows users to make consistent decisions from available information to **efficiently & effectively connect people** to interventions that will rapidly end their homelessness
- The process is not just about assessment but also about facilitating entry into the crisis response system and **exit into housing**
- Coordinated Entry changes a CoC from a project-focused system to a **person-focused system** by asking that "communities prioritize people who are most in need of assistance" and "strategically allocate their current resources and identify the need for additional resources"

Key Components

- **Numerous stakeholders** have roles and responsibilities in designing and implementing and in ensuring the crisis response system is functioning well
- The CoC must establish **policies and procedures governing the operation** of coordinated entry and ensure that those policies and procedures align with CoC Program and ESG Program written standards
- The CoC should **designate a working group** to support the planning of the coordinated entry process itself
- The planning group or another entity should also be responsible for overseeing it, including **reporting on its effectiveness & annual evaluation** to the CoC and to HUD

WHY DO WE NEED CES?

Without CES

With CES

Access & Assess

Prioritize

Match to Available, Appropriate Intervention

COORDINATED ENTRY COMPONENTS

The part of the system we're building now!

ACCESS	ASSESS	PRIORITIZE	CONNECT	STABILIZE

ACCESS
- ☐ Emergency Shelter
- ☐ Street Outreach
- ☐ Hotline

ASSESS
- ☐ HUD Entry Assessment Homeless History
- ☐ Assessment of Housing Barriers & Needs
- ☐ Assessment of Service Needs (custom version of Self-Sufficiency Matrix)

PRIORITIZE
1. Chronically Homeless
2. Longest Length of Homelessness
3. Higher Level of Vulnerability
4. Date of Assessment

STABILIZE
- ☐ Services
- ☐ Prevention
- ☐ Move-On

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What Good CES Looks Like

- Households experiencing a housing crisis **know who to call or where to show up** to get access to diversion, prevention, and shelter resources

- All homeless services programs in the geographic area **use the same comprehensive intake and assessment tools**

- All homeless households are **immediately provided services to rapidly exit homeless system** if possible (return to family/friends, access to income, housing location)

- **Community has a by-name list (BNL)** of every homeless household who needs ongoing services/financial assistance to return to permanent housing

- **Households are matched to permanent housing** based on real-time program/unit availability and household needs/preferences

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What Coordinated Entry Doesn't Do

Coordinated Entry **Doesn't**

- Create new housing or community resources

- Guarantee supportive housing for everyone in the system

- Encompass every possible referral a good case manager will likely make

- Make your client eligible for more resources

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What Coordinated Entry <u>Doesn't</u> Do

Coordinated Entry **Will**

- ~~Create new housing or community resources~~

  - Better optimize the housing we do have so more people can utilize it

- ~~Guarantee supportive housing for everyone in the system~~

  - Finds clients the best **available** housing that they are eligible for

- ~~Encompass every possible referral a good case manager will likely make~~

  - Combine referrals for many programs, but you still need to look beyond the system

- ~~Make your client eligible for more resources~~

  - Make it easier for clients to *apply* to more resources that they were already eligible for

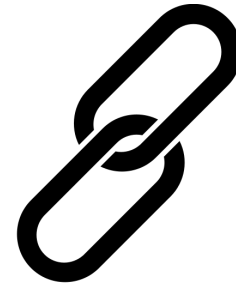# Coordinated Entry Benefits

People Experiencing Homelessness

One Assessment = Access to Multiple Programs Locate Housing & Services Faster

Decrease Program Denials Due to Eligibility

Direct Link to Program with Immediately Available Slot

Ensure Fair Housing & Access to Transparent Appeals Process

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Housing & Services Providers

No Intake, Application Process, or Waitlist to Manage

Referrals are Pre-Screened for Eligibility & Appropriateness

Compliance with HUD and Fair Housing Requirements

Increased Collaboration, Problem-Solving & Permanent Housing Outcomes

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Public and Private Funders

Robust Data on Community Needs for Prevention/Diversion, Housing, and Services

Identify Homeless System Gaps and Invest Strategically
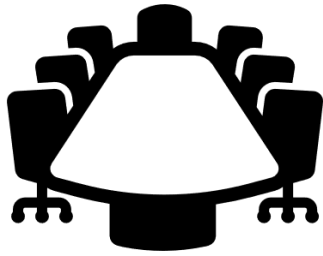
Improved System Outcomes and Reporting Quality

Increased Competitiveness for New Public Funding

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Coordinated Entry &
the Balance of State

System Roles

CoC Board & Coordinated Entry Committee

- Develop System Policies & Procedures
- Evaluate System Performance & Compliance
- Implement Strategic Actions & Identify Resources

DHCD & TeamHMIS

- Develop Assessments, Forms, Training, Technical Assistance for Provider
- Implement HMIS Functions and Tools
- Monitor Project Compliance
- Analyze Data & Produce Reports
- Provide Staff Support for Board & Committee

Local Homelessness Coalitions

- Facilitate Case Conferencing with Local Providers
- Maintain and Update By-Name List (BNL) for Geographic Area
- Coordinate Housing Matches from BNL
- Elevate CES Challenges and Best Practices to BoS Committee & Board

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System Roles

Shelter, Street Outreach, Drop-In Center Staff:

- Designate staff as assessors & complete required trainings
- Work with newly homeless households to ensure safety and connect back to available community and family-based supports for rapid exit
- Assess homeless households who cannot be immediately rehoused for comprehensive housing and service needs
- Inform households about Coordinated Entry & process to obtain housing
- Manage household data
    - Enter assessment info into HMIS
    - Reassess housing and service needs every 90 days
    - Remove clients who have self-resolved or otherwise are no longer active
- Assist participants with obtaining program eligibility documents and documents to be lease-ready

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System Roles

Housing Providers:

- Ensure CES is aware of program eligibility and kept up to date
- Notify CES when program has an opening coming up, unit/subsidy restrictions, and date program will be ready to match with a new household
- Review matches from CES and schedule intake promptly
- Accept only CES referrals - don't keep a separate waiting list
- Adhere to Housing First practices
- Discharge participants only to positive housing destinations or transfer to other housing providers through CES, whenever possible
- Proactively identify participants who are ready to move on (PSH)
- Maintain relationships with landlords to ensure units are available and ready to be leased upon match

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Coordinated Entry Guiding Principles

MD BoS CE Guiding Principles

1. Operate with a person-centered approach and with person-centered outcomes.

2. Ensure that participants quickly receive access to the most appropriate services and housing resources available.

3. Reduce the stress of the experience of being homeless and limit assessments and interviews to only the most pertinent information necessary to resolve the participant's immediate housing crisis.

4. Incorporate cultural and linguistic competencies in all engagement, assessment, and referral coordination activities.

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MD BoS CE Guiding Principles Cont

5. Implement standard assessment tools and practices, and will capture only the limited information necessary to determine the severity of the participant's needs and the best referral strategy for them.

6. Integrate mainstream service providers into the system, including local Public Housing Authorities and VA medical centers.

7. Utilize HMIS for the purposes of managing participant information and facilitating quick access to available CoC resources.

8. Ensure that participants do not wait on the prioritization waiting list for periods in excess of 90 days.

Coordinated Entry Resources

- https://www.mdboscoc.org/coordinated-entry
- https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/responsibilities-and-duties/#coordinated-entry
- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Core-Elements.pdf
- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf
- https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/16-11CPDN.PDF
- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-and-HMIS-FAQs.pdf
- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-and-Youth-FAQs.pdf
- https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-and-Victim-Service-Providers-FAQs.pdf
- https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/