

Coordinated Entry: Written Standards

Lane County Continuum of Care

Approved by Poverty & Homelessness Board 4/20/17

Review for Poverty and Homelessness Board Approval

This document contains information regarding eligibility for receiving services, the use of local assessment tools, and details about the referral system as provided locally through HUD's Continuum of Care Grant Program. This document combines the Coordinated Entry technical guidance with the Coordinated Entry written standards.

Revision History

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Acronyms

CE Coordinated Entry
CoC Continuum of Care
CWL Centralized Waitlist
ESG Emergency Solutions Grant
HH Household
HMIS Homeless Management Information System
HoH Head of Household
HPP Homeless Prevention Program
HUD United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
PSH Permanent Supportive Housing
RRH Rapid Re-Housing Program
SP ServicePoint
TH Transitional Housing
VI-FSPDAT Vulnerability Index Family Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool
VI-SPDAT Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool

About this Guide

The Written Standards in this guide apply to all: Screening and Assessment activities; referrals made to recipient programs; referrals accepted or rejected by recipient programs; and HMIS data entry associated with the Coordinated Entry (CE) System. The Written Standards guide the Lane County CE System for Lane County as approved by the Poverty and Homelessness Board, the governing board for the Continuum of Care (CoC). Unless otherwise stated, the terms “Program” or “Programs” mean the specific program(s) that serve homeless households as a part of the CE System.

Background

Coordinated Entry in Lane County

Coordinated Entry (CE) is a community-wide process to match people experiencing homelessness to housing resources that are the best fit for their situation. Homeless households in the community work with Front Door Assessors, located at various social service agencies, to complete a standard assessment that identifies the best type of services for the household. Front Door Assessors then make a referral to the Centralized Waitlist (CWL), which feeds into a limited number of housing slots designated for homeless households. The referrals are received by Lane County Human Services Division staff where the households are prioritized by level of vulnerability and referred to housing program as appropriate. The housing programs participating in CE no longer maintain their own waitlists and do not have to recruit households for their programs. They are able to serve the most vulnerable households in the community, and households no longer must advocate for themselves at multiple agencies to access housing programs.

Overview of Coordinated Entry Process:



HUD Requirement

In 2012 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released policy guidance in the form of an interim rule regarding the requirements related to governance structures as well as the eligible services and activities provided through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Grant Program. The National Alliance to End Homelessness succinctly summarizes the Interim Rule’s requirements about the CoC program’s written standards as follows:

“Written Standards for HUD’s CoC Program:

- Communities must develop written standards for rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing that cover:
 - Eligibility
 - Prioritization
 - Method for determining appropriate amount of rent household should pay
- Common Assessment tools should be designed locally
- Ensure DV survivors are connected to housing opportunities
- Must work with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) grantees”

The Interim Rule also requires each CoC to implement a Centralized intake or Coordinated Assessment System, which HUD defines as “a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.”

The term Coordinated Entry (CE) used by Lane County CoC (OR-500) is synonymous with the Coordinated Assessment System as defined by HUD.

Scope of the Coordinated Entry System Project

Lane County CoC (OR-500) implemented a one-year CE System Pilot Project for families on August 1, 2013. The pilot project was successful and singles (households without children) were added to the system in September of 2014.

CE System Project’s Definition of “Family”:

For the purposes of the CE System Project, OR-500 uses the term “family” to describe those: Homeless households needing assistance to obtain housing whose:

- Head of Household is age 18 or older and has:
 - One or more minor children currently in their care and custody.
–OR–
 - One or more minor children currently staying in foster care and hopes to reunite their family and resolve their DHS Child Protective Services case.”

CE System Project’s Definition of “Single”:

For the purposes of the CE System Project, OR-500 uses the term “single” to describe those: Homeless households, needing assistance to obtain housing, whose household is made up of 1 or more adults over the age of 18.

Emergency Shelter

Homeless households do not need to go through the Coordinated Entry process to access emergency shelters. If an individual presents to a front door assessor in need of emergency shelter, the front door assessor will provide the following referrals to the client, as appropriate:

- Domestic Violence: refer to Womenspace Crisis Line: 541-485-6513 or 800-281-2800
- Emergency Shelter: refer to Eugene Mission and/or First Place Family Center

Front Doors for Screening, Assessment and Referral

Front Doors

Clients will be directed community-wide to the established “Front Doors” for screening, assessment, and referral.

A Front Door is one of the agreed upon entry points into the Coordinated Entry System, and is a site which does formal screening and assessments for clients’ entry into the housing programs provided funded by HUD’s ESG and CoC grant programs for the Homeless Assistance System. Screening and assessment collects information to guide housing referrals based on program eligibility and services offered for Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Front Door staff are referred to as “front door assessors” throughout this document.

Depending on presenting need and household composition clients will be directed to the following locations to access screening, assessment, and referral services:

- Youth-Head of Household is Age 18-21: Looking Glass New Roads
- Families or Singles with a U.S. Military Veteran: Support Services for Veteran Families
- All Other Families: Catholic Community Services Springfield or Eugene, First Place Family Center
- Singles: Eugene Service Station (St. Vincent De Paul Lindholm Center), Eugene Mission, ShelterCare-Shankle, ShelterCare-Housing Services Navigators, Catholic Community Services Eugene
- Fleeing Domestic Violence: Womenspace

Front Doors will utilize ServicePoint HMIS to document screening and assessment interactions. If an agency is restricted by State or Federal statutes from participating in a shared Homeless Management Information System, i.e. providers serving survivors of Domestic Violence, the CoC will make reasonable accommodation to provide either a separate system with similar data entry and aggregate reporting functionality, or an alternative method of recording Screening and Assessment results.

The CE System will provide the following information about Front Doors to clients and partnering agencies: contact information; address; hours of operation; and whether screening/assessment is available face-to-face, by phone, or both.

Screening

Before starting an assessment, front door assessors should explain the CE process to households and inform them that there is no guarantee that they will secure housing through the Centralized Waitlist (CWL). With the exception of transitional housing (more detail in the “prioritizing HHs for receiving services” section of this document), households must establish chronic homelessness status to be eligible for the CWL. It is important to explain to households that it is possible they will not qualify for a referral to the CWL.

HUD’s definition of “Chronic Homelessness”:

Does the household include at least one adult who:

- Has a disabling condition
–AND–
- Has been homeless for at least one year continuously
–OR–
- Experienced 4 episodes of homelessness in a 3 year period adding up to 12 months total

See the section titled, “Prioritizing HHs for Receiving Services” regarding prioritization and section “Program Eligibility” regarding eligibility for TH, RRH, and PSH programs.

Assessment

The purpose of the Comprehensive Assessment is to identify the most appropriate referral to locally available housing programs based on a household's potential eligibility for specific housing programs: i.e. an adult HH member has recently completed a substance abuse recovery program, has a documented Developmental Disability, or has a documented serious mental illness.

Front Door staff will complete the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) and the LC CE Comp Assessment for HOH (2015). The VI-SPDAT for Singles (households without children) and the LC CE Comp Assessment for HOH can both be found in ServicePoint HMIS. The VI-FSPDAT for Families (households with children) is available in ServicePoint HMIS.

Front Doors are encouraged to screen households for chronic homelessness and complete the VI-(F) SPDAT first as the length of homelessness and score generated will determine if the household is eligible for referral to the Coordinated Entry System. If the household is determined to be eligible, the LC CE Comp Assessment for HOH (2015) will be completed in ServicePoint.

Referral to the Centralized Waitlist

Once the assessment is complete, referrals to TH, RRH, and PSH will go to the CWL via ServicePoint HMIS. Lane County Human Services Division staff will review the referral and update the CWL as appropriate. Front door assessors are encouraged to review the CWL for confirmation their referral made the list. Assessors contact the CE coordinator with any questions or concerns regarding referrals added or not added to the CWL.

In order to keep the CWL accurate and current front door assessors will regularly review the posted CWLs in ServicePoint for potential errors or omissions, and notify CWL staff to correct any errors.

Reassessment

The VI-(F) SPDAT is only good for 6 months. Front door assessors are encouraged to view the CWL for households up for reassessment and either make an appointment to reassess or refer the household to another front door assessor. Households needing a reassessment will be removed from the CWL when the VI-(F) SPDAT ages 7 months. Households referred to housing programs and working with a provider does not need to be reassessed.

The reassessment will include the following:

- Exit the old LC CE Comp assessment and open a new LC CE Comp assessment
- Complete a new VI-(F)SPDAT and enter the score in the LC CE Comp assessment
- Update any information in the LC CE Comp assessment
- Make the appropriate referral for type of housing program. NOTE: some households may exhibit a rise in VI-(F)SPDAT score due to length of time homeless and will need to move from an RRH referral to a PSH referral
- Update contact information

Program Eligibility

Limits on HH Income at Time of Program Entry

HUD's CoC Grant Program does not establish income limits for Transitional Housing (TH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) at the date of Program Entry or at the Required Annual Recertification.

Lane CoC (OR-500) does not restrict HH income at program entry unless otherwise required by the funding source (i.e. HUD CoC, HUD ESG, or Local HSC funds). If documentation illustrating HH financial need for assistance or lack of other resources is required for entry into or continued participation in program, such documentation will be kept in a HH's file for auditing purposes.

Individual programs may limit HH income at time of entry, though this must be clearly explained and contained in their written policies and procedures governing the services provided by their program. Additionally, any program's income policies must be consistent with HUD regulations regarding the specific program component.

Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing

TH and RRH programs (HUD) in Lane County CoC (OR-500) may serve those eligible HHs who meet the HUD definitions of homeless. Additionally, they should meet all other HUD-required eligibility for TH and RRH.

Additional Prioritization for service will be applied to HHs once they are placed on the CWL for TH and RRH. Further details regarding prioritization are found in the section titled, "Prioritizing HHs for Receiving Services" of this document.

Permanent Supportive Housing

PSH programs (HUD) in Lane County CoC (OR-500) may serve those eligible HHs who meet the HUD definitions of Category 1 as defined by HUD, as well as those that meet the Chronically Homeless definition. Additionally, they should meet all other HUD-required eligibility for the specific grant requirements per the project description (i.e. Developmental Disability; Serious Mental Illness; or Substance Abuse and another co-occurring condition).

Additional Prioritization for service may be applied to HHs once they are placed on the CWL. Further details regarding prioritization are found in the section titled, "Prioritizing HHs for Receiving Services" of this document.

Referrals

Referrals to the CWL

Front Door Assessors will generate referrals to RRH, TH, and PSH via ServicePoint HMIS. Referrals include: Coordinated Entry Comprehensive Assessment and the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). Upon review from CWL staff, referrals to TH, RRH, and PSH will go to the CWL via ServicePoint HMIS.

Referrals Requests from the CWL to TH, RRH and PSH Providers

When a TH, RRH or PSH program is ready to receive a referral from the CWL, authorized program staff will request referrals from the CWL via email. The number of referrals shall not exceed the number of current or anticipated openings. The CWL will refer the number of HHs requested by the housing program within a reasonable amount of time.

Accepting and Denying Referrals

Referral recipient programs will notify the CWL staff regarding acceptance or denial of a referral from the CWL no later than two weeks from the date the referral was received. Households may be denied program access if they are determined to be ineligible for the specific program or if the program is unable to locate the household. Lack of income, bad credit, rental history, difficulty securing a unit, and other similar conditions are not allowable criteria for referral denial.

HMIS and the Coordinated Entry System

ServicePoint is a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that contains these necessary tools for documentation and communication of CE System-related processes. These front door screening and assessment tools include:

- LC CE Comp Assessment for HoH 2015
- LC CE Comp Assessment for Other HH Members
- LC VI-SPDAT for Singles
- LC VI-FSPDAT for Families
- LC Contact Info

To refer a household to the Centralized Waitlist the above forms will be completed and submitted in ServicePoint HMIS. The LC CE Comp Assessment for HOH will be completed with the Head of Household. The LC CE Comp Assessment for Other HH Members will be completed with any additional household members. If no other household members exist, this form will not be completed. The VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT will be completed in ServicePoint. For both Singles and Families, the VI-(F) SPDAT score will be entered in the LC CE Comp Assessment for HoH.

Referral recipient staff and Front Door Assessment staff will be adequately trained in the use of the HMIS tools relevant to their role in the system.

Enter Data as Group Access

Only those HMIS Users trained should create, review, or discuss the data contained in a client/household's assessments related to their participation in the CE System. Front Door Assessors will follow all HMIS Policies and Procedures regarding confidentiality, the use of their ServicePoint License, and safeguarding of their User Name and password as established by the NW Social Services Connections Lane County User Agreement.

Prioritizing HHs for Receiving Services

Following HUD guidance, as well staff and program feedback, Lane County CoC prioritizes households for service as follows:

- Only Chronically Homeless households will be accepted to the RRH and PSH lists (includes singles and families)
- The Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) wait list for singles will only accept CH households with a VI-SPDAT score of 8+
- Rapid Rehousing (RRH) wait list for singles will only accept CH households with a VI-SPDAT score of 4 - 7.
- If there are not enough households available for RRH, households from the PSH list will be referred to RRH programs and/or RRH providers will enroll clients they are providing services to.
- CH Families with a VI-SPDAT score of 4 - 8 will be accepted to the RRH list
- CH Families with a VI-SPDAT score of 9+ will be accepted to the PSH list
- The Transitional Housing (TH) waitlist for families will accept non-CH households with Children
- The VI-SPDAT will be weighted +1 point for every 5 years homeless in current episode.

Consumer Rights, Responsibilities and Grievance Procedures

Front door assessors shall inform all clients of their rights and responsibilities regarding Coordinated Entry each time a client presents to complete an assessment. Clients will sign the Grievance Procedures form, in which front door assessors will then scan into ServicePoint.

Consumer Rights

All clients who participate in the CE process have the following rights:

- Nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws, including the: Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Prohibits discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
 - Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in certain health programs and activities. Lane County extends protection to additional classes including language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran's status, or political beliefs.
- View, correct, or ask for a copy (fee may be associated) of the information in their ServicePoint Client record.
- Obtain a copy of the ServicePoint Privacy Notice and disclosures of how their personal information will be shared.
- Refuse to: consent to share their data, participate in the coordinated entry process or any of the housing services such as Street Outreach, work with a housing program provider, or accept the housing offered to them.

Consumer Responsibilities

As participants of CE, consumers have the following responsibilities:

- Follow up with the CE Assessor to check if they have been placed on the CWL.
- Keep contact information current. They may call any front door agency to update contact information. Note: if after being referred to two housing programs and neither are able to make contact, consumers will be removed from the CWL.
- To schedule an appointment with a CE Assessor for a reassessment after waiting for housing for 6 months. If they are not reassessed at the six month period, they will be removed from the CWL on the date listed below.
- Look into other housing opportunities while on the CWL, as wait times can be long and there is no guarantee that they will secure housing through CE.

Grievance Procedures

Consumers have the right to file a grievance if they feel their rights have been violated. If the grievance is concerning:

- Coordinated Entry Assessor who has completed the VI-SPDAT and Assessment with the consumer, file a grievance with the front door agency.
- Housing Program Provider: File a grievance with the housing program they were referred to.
- Coordinated Entry Process: if they have concerns re: Denied entry to or removal from the Centralized Waitlist, contact Pearl Wolfe at 541-628-4629 or Pearl.Wolfe@co.lane.or.us to file a grievance.

Appendix

Types of Shelter and Housing Provided in the Eugene/Springfield Lane County Homeless Service System

1. Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)

Homeless Prevention Services are housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance necessary to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter.

2. Emergency Shelter (ES)

Emergency Shelter is often the first stop for individuals, youth and families entering the homeless service system. These shelters provide short-term shelter-generally up to 60 days. Area shelter providers indicated emergency shelter stay policies range from a maximum of 1 - 60 days. Stays beyond 60 days may be extended for reasonable, housing-related cause.

Domestic Violence Services

Womenspace is the sole domestic violence facility in the area that provides emergency shelter to people experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence.

3. Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

Rapid Re-Housing Assistance is housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance necessary to help an individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Homeless persons may remain in Rapid Re-Housing for up to 24 months.

4. Transitional Housing (TH)

Transitional housing facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. Homeless persons may live in transitional housing for up to 24 months and receive supportive services such as childcare, job training, and home furnishings that help them live more independently.

5. Permanent Housing Supportive Housing (PSH)

Permanent Supportive housing is for those in the community who have long-term physical or mental health needs and need housing in settings that include permanent housing for homeless persons with disabilities means community-based housing for homeless persons with disabilities that provides long-term housing and supportive services. The following table describes the availability of these permanent housing services. Lane County Continuum of Care's Written Standards for Providing Services through the HUD CoC Grant Program.

References

1. Summary and Analysis of the Interim CoC Rule; August 2012; *National Alliance to End Homelessness*.
2. *CoC Interim Rule formatted version (pg 53); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*