Serving People Experiencing Homelessness: Best Practices for Collaborating with Homeless Systems of Care June 2024





California Health Care Foundation



ADVANCING SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

- Subject matter expertise in homelessness and cross-system coordination
- Work at the federal, state, and local levels with an emphasis in California
- Assist communities and agencies to establish systems and programs needed to help people experiencing homelessness achieve housing stability and improve health and wellness



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### Innovative Thinking & Solutions Transformational | Strategic | Practical



- Housing is a crucial social determinant of health and health care access is critical for maintaining housing
- People with complex care needs often touch the public health, health care, and homeless systems of care; collaboration is vital
- Many of the key players in homeless systems of care are countybased
- New resources and other initiatives have created opportunities to incentivize and facilitate cross-system partnerships
- Effective cross-system collaboration and partnership requires cross-system education



# Overview of the Homeless Response System



# **Fundamentals of Homeless Assistance**

- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees homelessness
- Happens at the local, community level
- Diverse funding, including from federal, state, county, and/or city governments
- No single entity administers all resources
- Includes a variety of types of assistance
- Majority of housing assistance is prioritized for unsheltered people, those in emergency shelters, and individuals who are "chronically homeless"
- Not entitlement programs (unlike Medi-Cal). Finite resources. Long waiting lists



### **Definition: Literal Homelessness**

Individual or household lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate place to sleep at night:

Primary place to stay and sleep at night is a public or private place not meant for people to live in (e.g., sidewalk, tent, park, abandoned car or building) <u>OR</u>

Residing in a shelter designed to serve as a temporary place to stay (e.g., emergency shelters, transitional housing, and hotels/motels paid for by charitable organizations or by government programs) **OR** 

Exiting an institution after 90 days or fewer **and** resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for people to live in immediately before entering that institution



# **Homelessness: Other Categories**

#### Imminent Risk of Homelessness

 Individual or family who will imminently (within 14 days) lose their place to stay and sleep with no subsequent place to stay, resources, or support networks identified.

#### Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

 Individual or family who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and has no place to stay, resources, or support networks identified.

Homelessness is defined differently by different agencies/statutes and dictates what services individuals receive.

For example, McKinney-Vento school programs includes household who are doubled up or couch surfing.



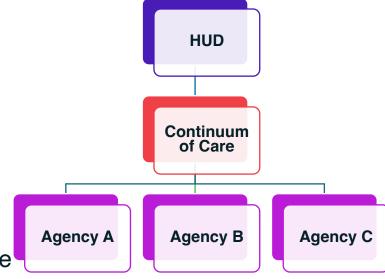
# Fundamentals of the Continuum of Care (CoC)

A CoC is the umbrella term for the group of organizations and agencies that collectively coordinates homeless assistance activities and resources in a community:

• A CoC is not a legal entity.

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- HUD requires every area of the county to be covered by a CoC. May represent one county, multiple counties, or entire parts of the state
- Each designates an entity to apply for federal funds.
- HUD awards funds through an annual competitive process. Funding from HUD goes to the CoC, and then from the CoC to local agencies
- HUD requires CoCs to develop certain processes (PIT, Coordinated Entry)



# **Key Roles in CoCs**

#### **Collaborative Applicant**

- Represents the CoC with HUD
- · Coordinates the local competition for funding
- Often a County role

#### Coordinated Entry Lead

- Oversees and implements the assessment and prioritization process for services and housing
- Key contact for many local access points

#### **HMIS** Lead

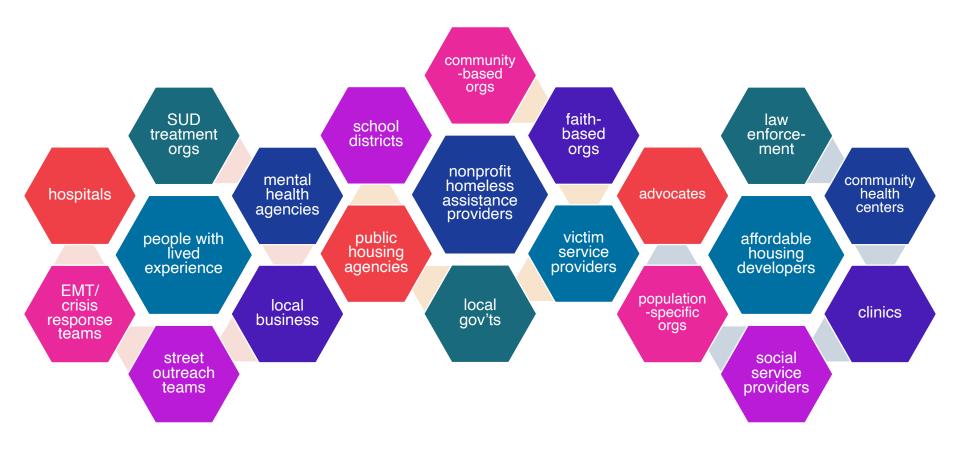
• Oversees the vendor for the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

CoC Board and Leadership

Often the same folks but not always

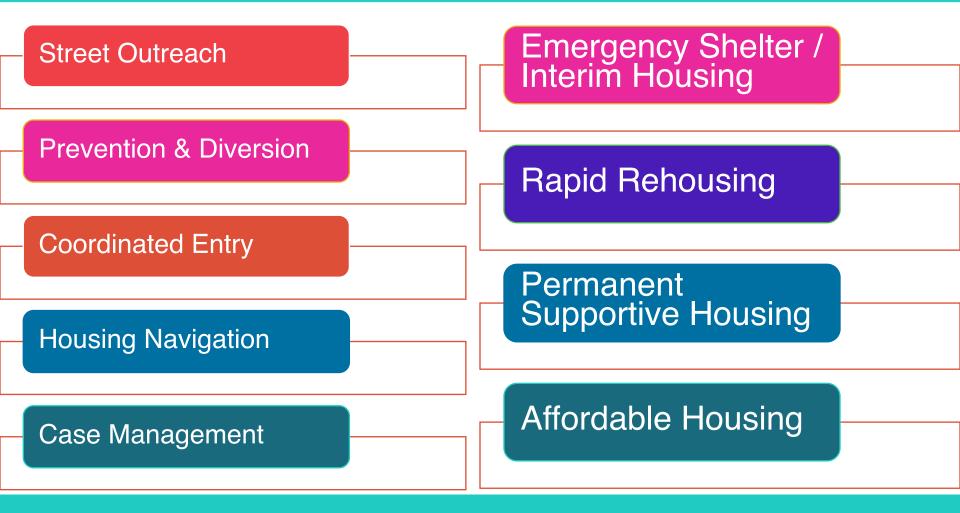
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### **Types of Partners in a CoC**





# **General Housing and Supportive Services**



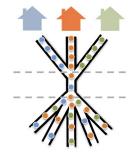
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# CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES)



# **Coordinated Entry System (CES)**

- Process each CoC sets up to ensure people experiencing or at risk of homelessness are:
  - prioritized for resources based on severity of need, and
  - matched to available resources most suited to them.
- Primary purpose is to allocate housing resources equitably and appropriately.

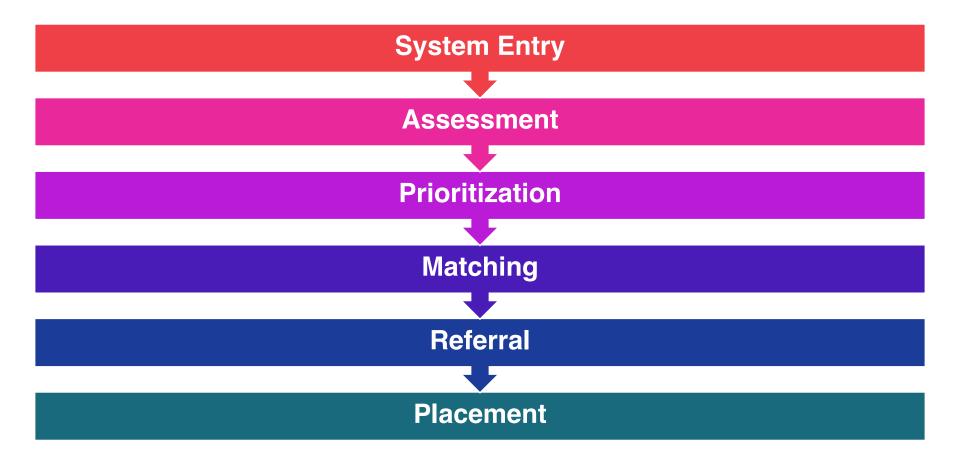


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# **Key Components of Coordinated Entry**





# System entry

People seeking housing or services make contact with the community's homeless response system, usually by interacting with an outreach worker, calling 211, or showing up at a service provider's site.



# Assessment

All individuals and families who enter the system are assessed in a consistent manner, using a uniform decision-making process and standardized assessment tools.



# **Prioritization**

People are prioritized for housing and community resources based on need-based factors agreed upon by the CoC.



# Matching

As housing resources become available, people at the top of the community's priority list are given a choicé to accept those resources for which they are eligible and which appear to meet their needs.



# Referral

People matched with a resource are referred to the program holding that resource, which requires communication between those who made the match decision, the person being matched, and the program providing the resource.

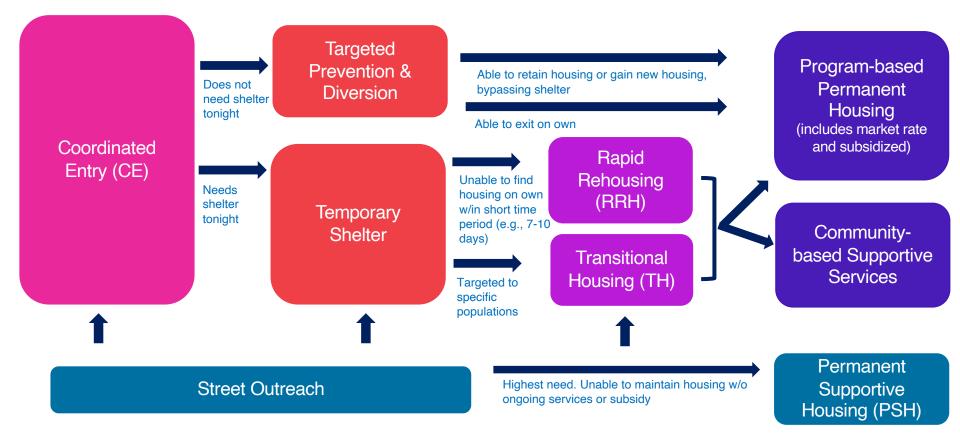


# Placement

People are placed into the program and ultimately into housing. This usually entails ensuring that the person is "document ready" and often requires the person, program, and other partners to work together to address various barriers to housing placement and stability.



# Homeless Crisis Response (General Components & Client Flow)



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# Examples of Local Health Jurisdictions' (LHJs) Involvement in the Coordinated Entry System (CES)

- Referrals
  - Work with CoCs to receive and provide direct referrals.
  - Simplify case management by accepting referrals through the CES.
  - Utilize HMIS to input, track and manage referrals within CES.
  - Provide holistic support by engaging clients from initial contact to ensure access to CES.
  - Clinical staff refer clients directly to CE for additional housing resources.
  - Work with homeless system providers to support clients needs or updates.



# Other Things to Know about California's Homeless System of Care

- California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) oversees the implementation of Housing First guidelines and regulations, and identify resources, benefits, and services to prevent and end homelessness in California.
- <u>Homeless Data Integration System</u> (HDIS): Collection of homelessness data from all of the CoCs across California (updated quarterly)
- California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM): Medi-Cal initiative focused on improving the health of Californians with the most complex needs; provides housing supports and services

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# General Resources about Homelessness & Health Care

- <u>California Interagency Council on</u> <u>Homelessness (Cal-ICH)</u>
- Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS)
- <u>Medi-Cal Renewal Toolkit to Help People</u>
  <u>Experiencing Homelessness</u>
- Homelessness Response 101
- <u>CalAIM Basics</u>
- Homebase
- Contact us at: <u>healthcare@homebaseccc.org</u>



# **Resources in your Community**

- Your local <u>Continuum of Care (CoC)</u> and CoC-funded providers
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients
- Public Housing Authorities
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) program
- Local government Department of Housing, Homelessness, Human Services, Social Services and/or Community Development
- Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)-funded outreach providers
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- <u>Runaway and Homeless Youth providers</u>
- Privately funded homeless service organizations
- Faith-based homeless service providers



# **Upcoming Webinar Opportunities**

- Cross-Sector Collaborations: Best Practices between Departments of Public Health and Homeless Systems of Care
  - June 10<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am 12 pm
  - <u>https://homebaseccc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAude2hrTwvE9HrFav</u> <u>EWIzFgR4oLU6WxIBw#/registration</u>
- Understanding CalAIM's New Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports for LHJs
  - June 12<sup>th</sup> − 9:30 − 11:00 am
  - <u>https://homebaseccc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrdOqtrzgqE9FQSJY</u> <u>G8z6Zo7eo8cXGQm8U</u>



# Thank you!

### Reach us at <u>healthcare@homebaseccc.org</u> with any final thoughts or questions

