

Coordinated Assessment Work Group Minutes

August 13, 2015

1:00-3:00pm

Attendees: Chad Harris (Sacred Heart Community Service), Andrea Urton (HomeFirst), Jeff Butron (Community Solutions), Alicia Anderson (SCC Dept of Alcohol & Drugs), Juliana Juarez (Abode Services), Sharon Miller (Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph), Colleen Haley (Destination: Home), Paul Bagan (Eden Housing), Kathy Robinson (Charities Housing), Trish Dorsey (Goodwill), Camille Coletto (Goodwill), Consuelo Collard (Catholic Charities), Alejandra Herrera (Destination: Home), Valerie Tang (MidPen Housing), Janine Burrier (Housing Authority), Theresa Alster (Housing Authority), Jessica Orozco (Downtown Streets Team), Erin O'Brien (Community Solutions), Lynn Morison (Abode Services), Jennifer Garcia (MUSD/Milpitas High School), Regina Abadajos (Sunnyvale Community Services), Laura Foster (Bill Wilson Center), Beth Leary (Family Supportive Housing), Christine Tronge (SCC Dept of Alcohol & Drugs), Michelle Covert (City of San Jose), Soo Jung (Office of Supportive Housing), Shelly Barbieri (Office of Supportive Housing), Jason Satterfield (Bitfocus), Hilary Barroga (Office of Supportive Housing), Erin Stanton (Office of Supportive Housing)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. CoC Updates

- *HMIS Transition* – The new Clarity software will launch October 1st. HMIS in ServicePoint will end September 25th at 5pm. HMIS will not be available from 9/25 – 10/1 while data is being migrated. Data will be migrated based on data quality: programs with 95%+ good data will go live in Clarity immediately, programs with 80%-95% data quality will be quarantined in a staging site until data quality is improved to 95%. All programs with data quality below 80% or with other special cases should have a conversation with Bitfocus because they will require special treatment. New user training for Clarity begins September 1.
- *HUD CoC NOFA* – We are expecting the HUD CoC NOFA to come out any day now. Shortly after HUD releases the NOFA we will share more details about the local application process and timeline.
- *Performance Management Work Group* – The Performance Management Work Group approved the list of communitywide system performance measures at its May meeting. This group has been on hiatus for the summer and will begin meeting again in August.
- *Training* – The last training in the CoC Regulations Training Series was held in July. Through the end of the year, CoC-sponsored training will consist of HMIS new user training (September) and VI-SPDAT/SPDAT training (October).

3. Coordinated Assessment System Overview

Coordinated Assessment (also known as “Coordinated Entry”) is a consistent, community wide intake and assessment process to match people experiencing homelessness to housing and services that are the best fit for their situation. So, across our community we will have one coordinated process for assessing people who are homeless and connecting them to the right type of housing intervention, including prioritizing people to serve those with the greatest need first.

People will access Coordinated Assessment at locations designated as “access points.” This is where they complete the assessment. In Santa Clara County, we plan to use multiple access points to make it easier for people to enter the system because we are a geographically large county. The key, though, is that all of the multiple access points are coordinated and entering information into the same system and giving the same referrals to housing. Access points will be places like emergency shelters, drop in service centers, and outreach teams – places where people who are homeless first touch the system of care. At all of the access points, everyone completes the same standard assessment. We plan to use a tool called the VI-SPDAT in Santa Clara County. It is a brief, 7 minute survey that measures an individual’s acuity or severity of need. There are individual, family, and youth versions of the VI-SPDAT.

Based on the results of the assessment, people are referred to the services and resources that are the best fit for them. In Santa Clara County we plan to implement coordinated assessment in phases. In Phase 1, we will use Coordinated Assessment to connect people to permanent housing interventions, including permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH). We know that in Santa Clara County we will not have nearly enough available spaces in permanent housing for all the people who will be referred through coordinated assessment. We will use the assessment to prioritize the list of people matched to each type of permanent housing (PSH and RRH) based on need, so those most in need are served first.

Why do we want to use Coordinated Assessment in Santa Clara County? Coordinated Assessment is required by HUD. If we don’t use Coordinated Assessment, we will no longer receive millions of dollars that support housing and services for people who are homeless in Santa Clara County. In addition, Coordinated Assessment will help our community by:

- Connecting people to the program that is the best fit for their situation
- Reducing the need for people to travel from program to program.
- Maximizing existing resources by triaging and prioritizing those most in need (because we don’t have enough to meet the need, we will triage and use what we have most efficiently)
- Collecting information about how many people in Santa Clara County need different types of housing interventions.

Santa Clara County has been working toward Coordinated Assessment for a few years now. The Care Coordination Project (CCP) uses a coordinated assessment system for chronically homeless individuals on a smaller scale. We’re now broadening that to cover all permanent housing (and ultimately other services as well). The Coordinated Assessment Work Group has been charged with planning and implementation of this phase of Coordinated Assessment in our community and is following this timeline:

- **February – May 2015** – Planning and Preparation
- **June – August 2015** – Gather Community Input
- **August – October 2015** – Develop Policies and Procedures and Set up System
- **October – November 2015** – Training
- **November – December 2015** – Phase 1 Implementation
- **January – March 2016** – Initial Evaluation and Begin Planning for Phase 32

4. Permanent Housing in a Coordinated Assessment System

The standard assessment tool that we are using is called the VI-SPDAT. It is designed to identify the type of housing intervention that is likely to be the best fit for the individual or household. Those who are identified to have high acuity are referred to permanent supportive housing (PSH). Those with moderate acuity are referred to rapid rehousing (RRH). People who are assessed to be low acuity most likely will be able to resolve their homelessness without a housing intervention. Since we have limited housing capacity in our community, we want to save it for those who most need it, so we will refer individuals and households with low acuity to other, non-permanent housing interventions. This could include deposit assistance from an Emergency Assistance Network agency, making sure they are connected to public benefits, and referring to other services that may be of help.

In an ideal world where we had sufficient housing capacity, once a person completes the assessment they would be immediately referred to the appropriate housing intervention. However, in our community we know that we have far more people in need than we have capacity to provide housing. In this crisis type of situation, we will triage people and house those with the highest acuity, who are most in need and most at risk if they remain on the streets, first. All assessments will be entered into HMIS and a community queue will be maintained in HMIS that prioritizes people for openings in permanent housing programs based on assessment results and any additional eligibility criteria.

Based on our review and discussion with HomeBase, we believe that coordinated assessment can be fully compliant with fair housing laws. HUD has not yet issued specific guidance on how to make sure your coordinated assessment system is compliant, but there are a number of sources of information we are looking at and it is already in place in many other communities across the country. Ultimately, in an ideal coordinated assessment system we will no longer have project specific wait lists and all placements will be made through Coordinated Assessment. However, we know that will be a transition and different programs have different requirements from other funders that they must abide by. We will work with you to determine what is best for your program.

Interested permanent housing providers can sign-up for a one-on-one technical assistance call with HomeBase and the Office of Supportive Housing to address questions related to fair housing and wait lists.

5. Permanent Housing – Community Input

The group asked questions and shared written and verbal feedback regarding the implementation of Coordinated Assessment in Santa Clara. Verbal input included:

- Make sure to address the people still on the Housing 1000 list.
- Some providers have concerns about doing away with wait lists at their properties.
- Limit time and barriers in the referral process to avoid lengthy delays in filling vacancies.
- Considerations for tax credit properties and the need to fill them quickly (within 60 days)

6. Check-Out

The next Coordinated Assessment Work Group meeting will be September 10th from 1-3pm at The Health Trust.