

Coordinated Assessment Work Group

September 10, 2015

Minutes

Attendees: Shelly Barbieri (Office of Supportive Housing), Valerie Kang (MidPen Housing), Leah Gronlund (Santa Clara Adult Education), Regina Abadajos (Sunnyvale Community Services), Laura Foster (Bill Wilson Center), Consuelo Collard (Catholic Charities), Alejandra Herrera (Destination: Home), Hilary Barroga (Office of Supportive Housing), Erin Stanton (Office of Supportive Housing)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. CoC Updates

- **HMIS Transition Update:** We are still on track for the October 1st launch in Clarity. In order to access HMIS in Clarity, users need to: attend new user training, attend client consent training, and complete the end user agreement. Agencies will need to complete the partner agency MOU, assign a technical administrator and security officer, and submit end user agreements.
- **HUD NOFA:** We are still waiting for the HUD NOFA. 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.
- **Coordinated Assessment Training Opportunities:**
 - **Thursday, September 17th 1-3pm: Webinar overview of VI-SPDAT and SPDAT.**
 - **Wednesday, October 28th 9am-4pm: VI-SPDAT and SPDAT Training**

3. Community Input

The Work Group devoted the summer months to gathering community input related to coordinated assessment.

In June, Work Group members solicited input from people who are homeless and are potential participants in coordinated assessment via surveys, one on one conversations, and focus groups. A summary of feedback included:

- People are cautiously optimistic that it would be beneficial.
- Some frustration that it won't create new housing.
- Sounds like Housing 1000.
- Mixed messages about communication indicate that we need to be very clear in messaging.
- People prefer to complete survey where they are already accessing services.
- People would like to be able to do the assessment survey over the phone, if possible.
- People want messaging to be honest and up front (before, not after, assessment).
- Most people are willing to redo assessment as needed, and as frequently as every 6 months.

Feedback from potential access points (emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, outreach programs, and drop-in service centers) was gathered at a community meeting in July:

- The biggest concern was around staff time and resources to complete the assessment.
- Doing the assessment survey for existing clients within the program's existing workflow sounds doable. Taking on additional walk-ins or referrals might be challenging, especially if they are outside the program's normal target population or in large numbers.

- There is a need for clear communication and guidance on how to respond to people who ask questions.

The Work Group gathered feedback from permanent housing providers at a meeting in August:

- Not as many concerns as expected, likely because most PSH programs are already connected to the CCP.
- Concerns were related to existing project waiting lists (guidance will come from the CoC and HomeBase) and the time it takes to fill vacancies.

4. Coordinated Assessment Policies and Procedures

The basic components of a coordinated assessment system are: access points, one standardized assessment, a community queue (this is the prioritized list), and referrals to services. For now, Santa Clara County's coordinated assessment system will only refer to permanent housing programs (PSH and RRH). At this point, we are planning for multiple access points using HMIS partner agencies because we do not have the resources to staff up centralized intake sites and having multiple access points will be more accessible in our large county. The standard assessment (VI-SPDAT) will be incorporated into the HMIS standard intake for people who are homeless and the community queue will be held in HMIS. OSH staff will facilitate making referrals from the community queue to permanent housing programs.

The Work Group reviewed draft policies and procedures and discussed key points:

- Access Points – ideas for improving access:
 - Another community uses Eligibility Workers to do the assessment survey.
 - Could we get school liaisons trained in VI-SPDAT.
 - Hold a quarterly registry event.
- Prioritization Methodology – what factor(s) should we use to prioritize between people with the same VI-SPDAT score?
 - For Permanent Supportive Housing:
 - Length of time homeless
 - Using Length of time homeless makes it hard for youth to be prioritized.
 - High utilization of County Services (e.g. emergency department, emergency psychiatric services)
 - Wellness Score on VI-SPDAT
 - Risks Score on VI-SPDAT
 - General challenges and concerns:
 - It is challenging to engage and house people who have been homeless for a long period of time (takes a long time and could hold up housing others).
 - How do we make sure people with SMI have accurately reported info?
 - We need to be sure to tell people up front that this is for prioritization for a referral and programs will need to do eligibility screening once the client is referred.
 - Document score range in policies
 - Rapid Rehousing
 - Length of time homeless
 - Length of time on community queue (first come, first served)

- Housing Referrals
 - OSH staff as match makers
 - Need to have considerations about how services providers are allowed to say no to a referral
 - Exceptions would be rare, and two people would need to sign off
 - Note to identify who those two people are
 - Locating Individuals/Households
 - 3-5 reasonable attempts
 - Client Choice
 - No limit on referrals
 - Minimize re-referring to the same agency
 - 3 “Nos” → wait 3 months to refer again
 - 6 “Nos” → wait until client expresses interest to refer again
 - Discussion:
 - Conflicting language about referrals as needed vs. limited number of referrals
 - Review should be done of rejected referrals between match maker and program to which client is referred, and some note or change should be made in referring program
 - Suggestion of readiness vs. expressing interest for people who say no 6x or more
- *Confidential Process for DV Survivors (working on this outside of group)*
 - BWC interested in considering similar processes for youth

5. Transition Process and Timeline

- **CCP Registry**
 - Everyone will have to do VI-SPDAT
 - Will allow time for that to happen
 - Build up to a certain number in the queue before we transition to making PSH referrals from CCP registry to making them from Community Queue.
- **Project Specific Wait Lists**
 - The goal is for all permanent housing programs w/ housing dedicated to people who are homeless to transition to using the coordinated assessment community queue to fill vacancies. However, different programs have different funders and different requirements they have to follow, so we will be flexible about how this happens.
 - Will be determined on a case by case basis.

6. Check Out

The next meeting will be Thursday, October 8th, 2015.