

Coordinated Assessment Work Group

February 11, 2016

Minutes

Attendees: Laura Foster (Bill Wilson Center), Alejandra Herrera (Destination: Home), Lynn Morison (Abode Services), Aiko Yep (PATH), Jason Satterfield (Bitfocus), Jessica Orozco (Downtown Streets Team), Michelle Covert (City of San Jose), Madelyn Crawford (Work2Future), Shelly Barbieri (Office of Supportive Housing), Erin Stanton (Office of Supportive Housing), Shila Behzadiaria (City of Sunnyvale), Favour Olumofin (VA PAHCS), Maximilian Nguyen (VA PAHCS), Allison Ulrich (VA PAHCS), Soo Jung (Office of Supportive Housing), Chris Richardson (Downtown Streets Team), Consuelo Collard (Catholic Charities), Jenn Ong (Bitfocus), Leah Gronlund (Santa Clara Adult Education), Juliana Juarez (Abode Services)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. CoC Updates

- *HMIS Update* –Some programs are still not entering housing services consistently. If you notice that housing utilization reports for your program look low, it might be due to missing housing services. There are still a few agency manager licenses available. These are the licenses that provide access to Looker.
- *Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count* – Bitfocus continues to gather information for the Point-in-Time Count and Housing Inventory Count. Please be sure to follow up on requests for information.
- *CoC Training* – The topic of next Thursday's CoC training will be Everything about Housing. The training will be February 18th from 1-4pm.

3. Coordinated Assessment Updates

Reminders for completing VI-SPDATs:

- Make sure to upload the completed ROI prior to entering VI-SPDATs in HMIS. Program referrals cannot be made to a household that doesn't have an ROI in HMIS.
- Provide detailed contact information to help permanent housing program find people.
- If the VI-SPDAT score is 4 or higher, click the "Refer to Community Queue" button in HMIS.
- Permanent housing programs are using the public alert function in HMIS to notify people who were referred to them. If you see a public alert for a household that you are working with please read it and pass the message to the household. The alert will show up as a banner over the household's profile in HMIS.
- Remember, we cannot tell people what "place" they are on the community queue. The queue is not a wait list. It is a database with a variety of information about each household, including VI-SPDAT scores and various eligibility factors, that is used to match program openings to eligible, prioritized households. For more information about how to communicate about coordinated assessment review the FAQs on the CoC website:
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/oah/coc/assessment/>.

Coordinated Assessment Updates:

728 VI-SPDAT assessments have been entered into HMIS to date, representing 693 unduplicated households. 13% of assessments are for families with children and 87% are for individuals. 29% scored in the Permanent Supportive Housing range, 52% scored in the Rapid Rehousing range, and 19% scored in the No Housing Intervention range. Approximately 70 referrals to permanent housing programs have been made from the community queue to date.

4. Evaluation of Initial Implementation

Last year, the Coordinated Assessment Work Group set five goals for its work:

1. *By November 30, 2015, Coordinated Assessment policies and procedures, including those relating to HMIS, are up to date and reflect intended practices for VI-SPDAT and SPDAT.*

Coordinated Assessment policies and procedures were developed over the summer and fall with input from people experiencing homelessness, point-of-entry providers, and permanent housing providers. The policies and procedures were reviewed by HomeBase for HUD compliance and were approved by the Work Group on November 12th, 2015. They are available on the CoC website:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/oah/coc/assessment/>.

2. *By December 31, 2015 (or in conjunction with the launch of the new HMIS), VI-SPDAT is part of the HMIS standard intake for people who are homeless.*

The VI-SPDAT was incorporated into HMIS and made available to all HMIS partner agencies on November 15th, 2015. Training was made available online (accessible via the HMIS website: <http://scc.hmis.cc/training/schedule-a-training/>) and through in person SPDAT and VI-SPDAT trainings in October and January. To date, 17 agencies have entered VI-SPDATs in HMIS. Technically, the VI-SPDAT is available and part of the HMIS intake process. However, not all agencies have incorporated it into their standard practice at this time. More work needs to be done to engage with agencies that are not completing the VI-SPDAT and address barriers to their participation.

3. *By December 31, 2015 (or in conjunction with the launch of the new HMIS), 65% of case management programs use the SPDAT as an assessment tool according to CoC policy.*

Implementation of the SPDAT has been slow, and was a lower priority for the Work Group. OrgCode provided SPDAT training in Santa Clara County in October and January and approximately 200 people completed the training. 16 local trainers were certified by OrgCode in January and will begin work this spring as a local trainer cohort. Bitfocus is in the process of programming the SPDAT into HMIS and implementation will accelerate once the tool is available in HMIS.

4. *By February 29, 2016, 80% of permanent housing programs will fill vacancies from the Coordinated Assessment system.*

Permanent housing referrals from the community queue began in January and approximately 70 referrals have been made to date. We have not yet hit the 80% mark for participating permanent housing referrals. At this time referrals are being made to CCP and SSVF programs. Over the next few months we will continue to add more programs.

5. *By February 29, 2016, Year 2 goals and work plan are set and include Coordinated Assessment for other housing interventions (shelters and transitional housing).*

This is the focus of today's work group.

What is Working Well?

- VI-SPDAT tool implementation was reported to have gone smoothly for HMIS users.
- Identification of other populations to have VI-SPDAT's completed for, such as K-12 families with children, has been positive.
- It was expressed that Coordinated Assessment is helpful for "levelling the playing field" so that there is one process for all households who contact the city, and it's not just the "squeaky wheel" that ends up with the services they need.

Growth Opportunities:

- VI-SPDATS may not yet be done for all emergency shelter clients; this is in process.
- For walk-ins, a VI-SPDAT should be done where the client is receiving services. However, if their service provider is not engaged with Coordinated Assessment and/or HMIS, or in low service areas of the County, this is a challenge. There is not currently the staffing or resources in place to have a team that can specifically address this.
- Suggestion: Create a list of agencies currently doing the VI-SPDAT so that the above agencies/entities who are not engaged with CA can refer out for VI-SPDAT completion as appropriate.
- Some clients are not forthcoming with answers to VI-SPDAT questions; skewing scores or creating a mismatch between clinician assessment and VI-SPDAT.
- The VI-SPDAT may be triggering for some clients, especially where this type of assessment is being done on a first visit with a client.

Planning Process Feedback:

- Need to find best way(s) to connect with and engage faith based organizations who are serving the homeless.
- Need to find best way(s) to connect with and engage workforce organizations who are serving the homeless.
- Suggestion: Send staff to the above sites/organizations to complete VI-SPDATS and/or to train their staff on the tool.
- Need to find best way(s) to connect with and engage with agencies who are not using HMIS generally, whether homeless service providers or not.
- Question: Do we want more people/agencies completing the VI-SPDAT? Or simply more assessments done, perhaps by a smaller number of well-trained folks?
- Suggestion: Partner with these agencies to get VI-SPDAT assessments done rather than have more people doing the assessment, further skewing or watering down results from use of the tool.

6. Planning for 2016

The group brainstormed ideas for the goals and work plan for 2016, focusing on three categories: process improvements, expansion of coordinated assessment for permanent housing, and developing coordinated assessment for emergency shelter and transitional housing.

Process Improvements:

- Identify ways for non-HMIS agencies to participate.
- Add a function in HMIS so that users can see who completed the VI-SPDAT – this person might be able to help locate the individual/household when there is a referral.
- Add a list of agencies who are completing the VI-SPDAT to the website for easy referral.
- Create mobile teams that can travel to high volume programs to help complete VI-SPDATs.
- Add a specific field in HMIS for contact information that can be easily updated.
- Add a reminder on the VI-SPDAT to make sure that the ROI is uploaded in HMIS.
- Involve cities in the referral process to ensure people from their jurisdiction have access to local programs.

Expansion of Coordinated Assessment for Permanent Housing:

- Add more assessment sites by sending well-trained VI-SPDAT assessors to programs that are not able to do it themselves.
- Hold Survey Days where people can come do the VI-SPDAT. Recruit trained staff from programs that currently do the VI-SPDAT, rather than volunteers OR create a core of well trained volunteers, such as MSW interns.
- Balance quantity versus quality – is it better to get more assessments done quickly or to make sure they are conducting properly?
- Engage with other providers in the community that are not specific to homeless populations:
 - Re-Entry Centers and Probation Department
 - Schools
 - Legal Service Providers
 - Programs serving people with disabilities
 - Hospitals
 - Mental health care providers
- Add more participating permanent housing providers:
 - Use funder contracts to mandate that new programs participate.
 - Work with the VA to add veterans' programs.
 - Advertise when people get housing through the process so it will be more attractive for people to participate.

Coordinated Assessment for Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing:

- Considerations are different than permanent housing – different nature of services.
- Transitional Housing – some programs are communal living or have a specific focus. Referrals to these programs need to take this into account.

- Streamline the intake process to reduce the time it takes to turn over units/beds and increase housing utilization rates.
- Emergency shelter and transitional housing may require different processes because shelter is often night by night, while transitional housing programs are longer-term.
- Need to identify the appropriate assessment tool. Will the VI-SPDAT work for these program types? Do we need something different?

7. Check Out

The next Coordinated Assessment Work Group meeting will be March 10, 2016 – 1:00-3:00pm at The Health Trust