Santa Clara County CoC
Coordinated Assessment Work Group
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2017

Attendees: Bob Dolci (Office of Supportive Housing), Shannon Robinson (Downtown Streets Team), Michael Mouton (Bill Wilson Center), Eli Hamilton (HomeBase), Jason Satterfield (Bitfocus), Ronny Nojopranoto (West Valley Community Services), Lynn Morison (Abode Services), Elisha Heruty (HomeFirst), Marie Barlahan (Sunnyvale Community Services), Paul Tunison (LifeMoves), Alyssa Crooke (LifeMoves), Betty Rosas (Housing Choices), Nohemi Nogueda (Next Door Solutions), James Henderson (YWCA-SV), Nadia Waggener (Downtown Streets Team), Laura Foster (Bill Wilson Center), Beth Leary (Family Supportive Housing), Alejandra Herrera (Destination: Home), Consuelo Collard (Catholic Charities), Valerie Kang (MidPen Housing), Jenn Ong (Bitfocus), Leila Qureishi (Office of Supportive Housing), Erin Stanton (Office of Supportive Housing)

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

2. **CoC Updates**
    a. **HMIS Updates:**
        i. A new program request form has been posted to the HMIS website.
        ii. Make sure HIC updates are completed for all programs.
        iii. On March 17th UPLIFT programs can begin requesting passes.
    b. **Performance Management** – The next Performance Management Work Group will be Thursday, May 25th. This meeting will focus on setting benchmarks for the system performance measures for FY2017-18.
    c. **Upcoming CoC Meetings:**
        i. **CoC Training on Connecting Clients to Mainstream Benefits** – Thursday 3/16 8:30-11:30 at Sobrato Center Milpitas
        ii. **CoC Membership Meeting –** Monday 3/20 from 2-4pm at Learning Partnership (1075 E. Santa Clara St).

3. **Coordinated Assessment Updates**

General Updates

As of February 28th, 7,763 VI-SPDATs had been completed and entered into HMIS or submitted via the confidential queue. Those VI-SPDATs represent 6,646 unduplicated households. In the month of February there were 624 new VI-SPDATs completed and 458 new unduplicated households that were assessed. The number of households with multiple VI-SPDATs is increasing now that we have passed the one year mark and households are completing annual updates. We continue to average more than 600 VI-SPDATs completed per month.

As of February 28, we had made 896 referrals to permanent housing programs through coordinated assessment. Of those, 320 were to permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs and 576 were to rapid rehousing (RRH) programs. 803 unduplicated households received those referrals. Overall, 12% of households that have completed a VI-SPDAT have received a referral.

VI-SPDAT Subcommittee Recommendations

Last fall we had a discussion at this Work Group about challenges related to using the VI-SPDAT for matching and prioritization for coordinated assessment. The Work Group decided to create a subcommittee to spend more time exploring this issue. The subcommittee met three times and identified three recommendations for improvements to the coordinated assessment system:

1. **Improve Local Training for the VI-SPDAT and Coordinated Assessment** – currently local in-person training is available on request, but most people complete the online OrgCode training. Going forward we would require everyone to complete local in-person training (which would be offered monthly) and also require an annual refresher training. Local training would include the local context, how Santa Clara County's coordinated assessment system works, and communication guidelines for the VI-SPDAT.

2. **Strengthen Local Protocols** – We have 34 different access point agencies and hundreds of VI-SPDAT assessors and we're not all consistent in how we implement the VI-SPDAT. This recommendation would be to develop local agency and user agreements that would outline expectations for how to implement the VI-SPDAT to promote consistency across access points. Expectations would include things like: maintaining client confidentiality, conducting the assessment in a setting that promotes client privacy, and respecting the self-report nature of the assessment.

3. **Change how VI-SPDAT Scores are Used** – The subcommittee considered other factors that could be used in combination with the VI-SPDAT to address some of the concerns about using a purely self-report tool for matching and prioritization. There is no perfect tool, but the subcommittee determined that the best available option would be to incorporate the Silicon Valley Triage Tool. The Triage Tool uses existing data from multiple data sources. Triage tool scores and VI-SPDAT scores would be combined in the prioritization criteria. There are many steps to implementing the Triage Tool, starting with getting the necessary legal permission to access the different data sources and integrating the Triage Tool scores with HMIS.

The Work Group discussed the recommendations. Some questions and concerns were raised regarding Recommendation 3:

- Is this too big a solution for the scope of the problem?
- This puts more emphasis on those who are a high cost to the County. There are other people who may not be high users now, but they still need immediate help.
- What about people who don't consent to sharing their data from different systems, such as the Health and Hospital System?
- Let's not change too many things at once – fix the training and see if that is enough.

Recommendations 1 and 2 will be incorporated into updates to the coordinated assessment policies and procedures. The Office of Supportive Housing will continue working on addressing the legal questions related to using the Silicon Valley Triage Tool and bring updates back to the Work Group. More discussion is needed before this recommendation could be implemented.

Other Coordinated Assessment Updates:

- **Access Points** – currently there are about 35 access points. We are working with other organizations/county departments to expand access, especially to more mainstream locations.
- **Permanent Housing Programs –** we continue to work toward 100% of permanent housing programs taking referrals from the coordinated assessment system. Two more programs were added in the last couple months.
- **Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing –** we discussed these in more depth at last month's work group meeting. The Office of Supportive Housing will work with local providers to determine next steps.
- **Translations –** The County is working on identifying/procuring a translation provider and will hopefully have translations completed in the next few months.
- **Updates to Policies and Procedures** - we are planning to do a thorough review and update to the policies and procedures to align with the new HUD guidelines and incorporate other general updates. The updated document will be shared with the work group for review and approval.

4. **Homelessness Prevention in a Coordinated Assessment System**

HUD Notice CPD-17-01 states that people must be able to access homelessness prevention services that are funded with ESG dollars through the coordinated assessment process. Ideally, all homelessness prevention programs would be coordinated with the system to promote consistency and accessibility.

Homelessness prevention programs target households that are at imminent risk of homelessness and provide financial and/or other assistance to help them maintain their housing and avoid homelessness. There are a number of homelessness prevention programs in existence in Santa Clara County, including SSVF and Emergency Assistance Network (EAN) programs. Similar to homelessness prevention, diversion can help households that are just becoming homeless avoid entering shelters by assisting them in identifying immediate alternate housing arrangements The goal of diversion is to identify households that have other safe options and help them to use those other options to avoid becoming literally homeless or going into shelter. We would like to incorporate diversion into our coordinated assessment system too, but we need to figure out what that looks like. It's not appropriate or necessary for every access point to practice diversion, because many of our access points don't see people until they are already homeless. This is an area for more research and learning for our community.

Once people are identified as at-risk of homelessness, we need a way to assess households and prioritize them for assistance. Homelessness prevention programs should be:

- Effective – stop people from becoming homeless
- Efficient – target the help to people who would become homeless without it

OrgCode recently released a prevention version of the VI-SPDAT. This is one option for us to use to assess and prioritize households for homelessness prevention assistance. It aligns with the VI-SPDAT, which we already use, is relatively easy to implement, is based on research, and has completed testing in multiple other communities. It is very similar to the VI-SPDAT tool that we are already using, but is intended to be completed by households that are currently housed, but at imminent risk of losing their housing.

We are just beginning the conversation about coordinating homelessness prevention across the county. Next steps include piloting the use of a standard assessment tool (prevention VI-SPDAT) through Destination: Home's family homelessness prevention program.

   5. **Check-Out**

The next Coordinated Assessment Work Group meeting will be Thursday, April 13, 2017.