

# CAS Evaluation Recommendations: Implementation Planning

September 10, 2020

The most recent Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) evaluation focused on identifying strategies to meet the following goals:

1. **Access.** Increase system accessibility to more effectively reach:
  - a. LGBTQIA+ persons, particularly youth;
  - b. Hispanic/Latinx persons; and
  - c. Asian and Pacific Islander persons.
2. **Assessment and Prioritization.** More accurately assess vulnerability related to physical and behavioral health to effectively prioritize the most vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness and refer prioritized persons to supportive housing programs that will provide them the right level and types of assistance to regain housing stability.
3. **Referral.** Support matchmakers and agencies receiving referrals in promoting consistency and fairness of referral processing to maximize consumer access to supportive housing.

The following recommended strategies from the [evaluation report](#) were prioritized for implementation or further discussion by the Coordinated Assessment Work Group.

## Moderate-Impact, Light-Lift Strategies

1. **Underway:** Provide respondents time to reflect and the opportunity to subsequently adjust answers and/or allow more frequent re-assessment – e.g., quarterly – to encourage candid responses.
2. **Underway:** Revisit the assessment script to provide a more accurate estimate of how long the assessment will take, incorporate safe space agreements (guidelines to set the tone for how the assessor and client will interact with each other during their time together), stress importance of candid responses, and highlight potential impact of not self-disclosing.
3. **Underway:** Provide a mandatory introductory webinar training on the CAS process and provider responsibilities for new housing program staff.
4. **Underway:** Expand the *Standard Location Practices for Community Queue Referrals* to include a written protocol detailing the workflow and best practices for locating referred clients. Emphasize that locating referred clients often requires going out in the field.
5. Expand CAS access to community-based organizations led by and specifically serving Hispanic/Latinx and Asian and Pacific Islander persons.

## Moderate- to High-Impact, Moderate-Lift Strategies

6. Hire more LGBTQIA+ staff and more Latinx, Chinese, and Vietnamese staff to administer assessments, provide services, and manage programs to increase cultural and linguistic literacy and responsiveness and reflect populations served.
7. Provide consistent technical assistance targeted to agencies based on identified patterns to minimize referral rejections.
8. Incorporate the *Standard Location Practices for Community Queue Referrals* into onboarding process for new housing program staff, demonstrate all the ways HMIS can be helpful in locating referred clients, and provide best practices and hypotheticals to test knowledge and troubleshoot.
9. Provide cultural literacy and responsiveness training, including confidentiality, use of pronouns, and available mental health resources to create welcoming, safe spaces for clients.

## High-Impact, Big-Lift Strategies

10. **Underway:** Create a client portal to support housing programs in locating and communicating with referred clients.
11. **Underway:** Have a problem-solving conversation before/instead of administering the assessment to build trust and encourage candid responses.
12. Explore alternative or supplemental assessment tools to more accurately assess vulnerability and service needs.
13. Partner with persons with lived experience of homelessness to develop and pilot alternative formulations of assessment questions to minimize re-traumatization, address racial and ethnic disparities, and more effectively identify physical and behavioral health conditions.
14. Provide and require ongoing training for assessors, including outreach teams, regarding:
  - a. Strategies to minimize and address re-traumatization, including an overview of available community mental health resources;
  - b. Strategies to abate fear that acknowledging disability might harm housing potential or limit options, build trust, and encourage candid responses;
  - c. Conflict and crisis de-escalation;
  - d. Communication and messaging regarding assessment and prioritization;
  - e. Cultural sensitivity and immigrants' rights;
  - f. Elimination of bias;
  - g. Best practices in administering the assessment; and
  - h. Identifying household size and selecting the appropriate assessment, including hypotheticals reflecting common situations.
15. Develop and implement a quality assurance process to ensure consistent and informed administration of the assessment (including distribution of post-assessment FAQs).
16. Explore the possibility of providing an option to self-administer the assessment.