



Coordinated Entry Workgroup

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive • Columbia, MD 21046

Minutes of the December 10, 2019 Meeting

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

Attendance:

Department of Community Resources and Services Staff: Cara Baumgartner, Jennifer Corcoran, Elizabeth Van Oeveren

Attendees: Karen Booth, Jen Broderick, Cami Carr, Shanika Cooper, Tifnie Criner, Kathie DiNoto, Tina Field, Melissa Fitzgibbon, Kevin Lee, John Pomory, Linda Zumbrun

Linda Zumbrun call the meeting to order at 10:35 am.

Draft Policies & Procedures

A final call for questions or comments on the draft Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures was made. A motion to send the draft to the Board was made and approved.

System Residency Eligibility Criteria

There was a question and discussion about NAEH's recommendation to remove County residency as an eligibility criteria for the Coordinated Entry System. There is openness to removing it, or at least shortening the timeframe a household has to be in the county to establish residency, but there is not a clearly defined mechanism to implement a change. This is something that can be elevated to the Board for follow-up.

System Flow

The Committee had been provided two visuals of the Coordinated Entry System to review; the version shared at the last HMIS user trainings was reviewed during the meeting. Staff shared with the committee that recently most prevention needs presenting to the front door are households who are doubled up and being told to leave or households who are living in motel and running out of money rather than households requesting eviction prevention assistance; those needing eviction prevention have little to no income and so are not eligible for CAC because they are not able to move forward as self-supporting.

HMIS Data Standards

HUD has released new HMIS data standards for Coordinated Entry that must be implemented by April 1. One effect of the changes is that we will need to document the outcome of a "crisis assessment" and the outcome of a "housing assessment." This, along with NAEH's recommendation that use of the VI-SPDAT be pushed further into the system rather than occurring at the front door is leading staff to believe we need to revisit the current shelter prioritization standard. Doing so would involve identifying a group of people who should always be offered shelter space. Ideally, there would be a thorough community process to identify who should comprise those populations and that process would include consumer voice. However, there is a limited amount of time to accomplish this and so the committee is being asked to develop a process that will allow for community input over a short period of time that will not damage stakeholder relationships by over-promising how much weight each individual's and agency's input will have or by omitting some stakeholders from the process.

The Committee expressed a need for continued clarification around the factors driving a change in shelter prioritization, and there was a feeling that prioritization without additional resources is not worthwhile. There was also concern that causing a disconnect between the prioritization for shelter and for permanent housing placements will cause the system to revert to being unable to quickly locate households referred to permanent housing placements. While this should be addressed by street outreach once it is operational, concern was expressed that if there is not a pathway to RRH and PSH out of shelter, people will remain in shelter for long periods of time. There was then discussion about the relative importance of increasing the number of housing subsidies within the county and the relative effectiveness of RRH, especially for households with higher levels of housing barriers. SSVF staff then talked about their approach being informed by Housing First, and Bridges staff noted their success with RRH in Howard County.

Though the reason for and process of prioritizing continued to feel abstract, the point was made that capturing data on who is not being served will ideally support efforts to obtain additional resources. Currently, we know people are offered shelter options outside Howard County but don't know if they connect with them. This would at least allow us to capture how often a shelter request is turned away.

Ultimately, the Committee agreed that using the upcoming PIT as the means of gathering information would be a straightforward way to reach both clients and providers. Possible groups to offer for prioritized categories include pregnant women, those on dialysis, those with a chronic health condition or serious mental illness, those with a disability, families with young children or those who have special needs, and refugees. Staff are to explore the mechanics of this approach.