



INDIANA BALANCE OF STATE
continuum of care

Committed to Housing Every Hoosier

Coordinated Entry

Designing a New Coordinated Entry Assessment

Introductions



The Technical Assistance Collaborative is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping our nation's human services, health care, homelessness, and affordable housing systems implement policies and practices that empower people to live healthy, independent lives in the communities they choose.

This commitment requires that we work to advance racial and social justice by embodying racial justice principles, centering lived expertise in implementing our technical assistance strategies, and dismantling oppression both within and beyond TAC.



Ellen Fitzpatrick
(she/her)



Natalie Metzger-Smit
(she/her)

Introductions



Mary Bales, PHD
Manager of Housing Development
Oaklawn - Elkhart, IN
Region 2



Danette Romines
Director of Programs
Aurora Inc - Evansville, IN
Region 12



Crystal Thomas
Housing Support Specialist
Sojourner Truth House - Gary, IN
Region 1a

Coordinated Entry Overview

- Coordinated entry is a system that allows CoCs to organize and utilize their housing resources through standardized **access**, **assessment**, **prioritization**, and **referral** for households experiencing homelessness
- Housing resources that are required to be filled through coordinated entry include **CoC** and **ESG**-funded units
- Indiana BoS CoC has a total of **16 coordinated entry regions** where this process is used to fill permanent housing units at the local level

Why design a new CE assessment?

- Seeking alternatives to the VI-SPDAT
- Moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to assessment to something that is community-driven and reflective of local needs, resource inventory, and data
- Desire for an assessment that is more equitable, trauma-informed, and person-centered
- Opportunity to standardize housing problem-solving practices across CoC

Why design a new CE assessment?

Region	Active Households in CE System	Total PH Beds in HIC
Region 1	313	229
Region 1A	510	446
Region 2	269	166
Region 2A	391	284
Region 3	622	338
Region 4	923	235
Region 5	235	73
Region 6	604	245
Region 7	709	142
Region 8	623	316
Region 9	38	36
Region 10	623	467
Region 11	571	35
Region 12	526	346
Region 13	163	35
Region 14	23	120

2x to 3x the number of households active in CE to the number of available PH beds in many regions (RRH and PSH)

Only **25%** of households exiting homeless system beds (ES, TH, RRH, PSH) to permanent destinations per LSA data (10/1/21-9/30/22)



Exploring a new approach to coordinated entry assessment and prioritization will not fix an inventory challenge; however, it can help the CoC be more *strategic* and *equitable* about how to have the biggest impact with it's current housing resources.

Process to Date

- CE Assessment Task Force formed in **May of 2022**
- TAC hired to begin facilitating task force process in **January of 2023**
- CE Assessment Task Force Meetings:
 - January through April – looked at data, learned about various approaches to CE assessment, weighed benefits and challenges of approaches
 - **During this time, TAC also facilitated 10+ interviews with key community partners to learn more about the current system and assessment, areas of need, etc.**
 - May to present – selection of an assessment approach, multiple group drafting sessions, ongoing review and revision, feedback sessions with community partners and people with lived expertise, incorporation of feedback, development of final draft

Guiding Values & Purpose

Values to Drive Design Process

- Trauma-informed and client-centered
- Racial and social equity
- Phased – only collecting what you need in the moment
- Housing-focused – only collecting what is necessary and relevant for housing placement
- Strengths-focused
- Transparency for participants
- Consistency and reliability across assessor staff
- Accessible for assessor staff and participants
- Conducive to relationship and rapport-building

Purpose of CE Assessment

- Establish preliminary eligibility for housing resources (e.g., youth, veteran, DV survivor)
- Identify potential barriers to housing
- Identify level of need and vulnerability
- Identify participant strengths
- Give participants full and transparent understanding of coordinated entry and their options
- Match participants with housing and services that meet their level of need
- Ensure that all participants feel treated with dignity and respect

Other Key Drivers of Process

- Standardization of housing problem-solving practices (i.e, diversion) across CoC
- Acknowledgement of geographic diversity of CoC
- Assurance that survivors of DV have equitable access
- Consideration for people with involvement in carceral systems, especially Black people and other people of color who are disproportionately impacted by both policing and homelessness
- Development of a process that actually leads to housing outcomes and minimizes scenarios where someone is assessed multiple times without connection to housing resources

Draft Assessment Overview

- Utilizes a phased approach and a progressive engagement model
- Broken out into the following sections:
 - Key introductory points to share with participant and consent to proceed
 - Collection of broad range of contact information
 - Housing problem-solving conversation guide
 - Collection of information related to housing needs and barriers
 - Collection of information related to housing preferences
 - Key points to share with participant upon completion

Begins with 'lighter touch' intervention, moving to deeper assessment for households who cannot resolve their housing crisis with diversion/housing problem-solving supports



Key Intro Points & Consent to Proceed

What does it include?

- A series of talking points, in detail, to share with participants about how the assessment works, what the goal is, and what their rights are when engaging with the CE system
- Two questions to ensure that the participant gives consent to move forward after learning about the process

Why?

- Transparency about process and goal of assessment
- Standardize the way that CE information is shared with participants across regions for fidelity to model
- Honors participant choice and autonomy

Collection of Contact Information

What does it include?

- Multiple opportunities for participants to share different types of contact information; for example:
 - Standard email, phone number, mailing address
 - Name/contact for other people or supports you may reach them through (friends, family, service agencies, etc.)
 - Places where they spend time during the day, evening, weekends and may be found

Why?

- It can be difficult to hang on to a phone, check email, receive mail when experiencing homelessness – the more potential contact methods the greater the likelihood of getting in touch with someone again when they are matched to a housing resource

Safety for Survivors of Violence

What does it include?

- An opportunity, early on in the assessment, to pause and allow the survivor to connect with victim advocacy expert (DV agency, rape crisis center, etc.) before completing the rest of the assessment if that is their choice.

Why?

- If person is in a dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening situation, addressing this first takes precedence over completing the assessment
- Allows for participant choice – some survivors may want to continue with the assessment while others may want to pause and explore resources first

Housing Problem-solving Conversation Guide

What does it include?

- A tool for assessors to use to explore opportunities to rapidly resolve (“divert”) the participant’s housing crisis. The guide lists a series of questions to help the assessor facilitate a successful diversion conversation with the participant by 1) exploring the situation and 2) brainstorming possible solutions.
- If the conversation does not result in identifying a temporary or permanent safe location to stay, then the person moves forward in the assessment.

Why?

- It is a national best practice to use housing problem solving as a strategy to reduce the length of time people experience homelessness by exploring safe alternatives, natural supports, and other resources that a household may have access to

Housing Needs & Barriers

What does it include?

- Questions to learn more about the participant's current situation, housing history, and housing-related needs.
- Information collected in this section includes length of time homeless, history of eviction, household composition, carceral system involvement, disability related information, and more

Why?

- To understand each participant's housing needs and potential barriers
- Information collected helps CE system understand:
 - Households most at risk of continuing to experience homelessness without intervention
 - Information that will help match households to housing resources if/when they become available to them
- Phrasing of questions is intended to maintain person's dignity, with focus primarily on information that speaks to obtaining/maintaining permanent housing

Housing Preferences

What does it include?

- Information about a household's housing preferences, with the understanding that preferences may not always be met depending on housing availability. Preference info includes:
 - Location (specific neighborhoods, cities, counties, other areas)
 - Bedroom Size
 - Accessibility features (wheelchair ramp, first floor only)
 - Population-specific housing supports (youth, DV, HIV/AIDS, etc.)

Why?

- By incorporating a person-centered approach and allowing space for participant's to share their preferences, we avoid making rigid decisions or assumptions about what a household needs

Key Points to Share upon Completion

What does it include?

Talking points for assessors to level set expectations with program participants regarding next steps, including:

- Wait times
- How/when they can expect to hear back from assessor staff
- The process if they are matched to a housing unit
- What should they do while they wait (spoiler alert: keep searching for other affordable housing options!)

Why?

- Increases transparency and understanding for participants
- Allows assessors to work with participants on alternative housing plans, referrals to supportive services and other partners

Other Important Notes

- *Phased* and *progressive* assessment approach allows for assessor to build rapport, complete assessment over multiple interactions if that is the preference of the participant
- Each section of the assessment includes **key information points** to share with the participant in order to promote transparency and participant autonomy
- **Scoring** is based on numeric point structure – points are assigned to several (but not all) of the questions in the Housing Needs & Barriers section of the tool, based on participant response

Support for CoC's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan

Goal 3: Create a More Equitable Homeless Response System to Support and Elevate Minoritized People

- Black and African American households make up about 25% of homeless population, but only 10% of general population statewide
- Task force looked at HMIS data to understand how households of different races are currently moving through system, accessing permanent housing
- Task force discussed racial equity considerations throughout development of draft, including in development of scoring mechanism
- Training to include focus on implicit bias & equity

Goal 5: Right size and Refine Programs Across the Housing Spectrum for People Experiencing Homelessness

- CoC has seen increase in lengths of time people are experiencing homelessness
- Draft assessment uses housing problem solving as one strategy to reduce LOTH overall
- Looked at HMIS data to understand which populations were experiencing longest LOTH, used data to inform assessment and scoring mechanism
- New assessment will allow for opportunity to consider new prioritization model – could move away from static to more dynamic approach

Training

- CoC to develop **robust training plan** to ensure that all assessor staff feel confident administering new assessment – training focus areas will include (but not limited to):
 - How to conduct housing problem solving/diversion conversations
 - Implicit bias and racial equity in CE
 - Trauma informed care and supporting survivors in CE

Ongoing Evaluation will be Essential

- No such thing as a ‘perfect’ approach to assessment
- Approach to assessment and prioritization should be an ongoing and iterative process, driven by a continuous quality improvement plan
- Evaluation of the assessment and whether it is ‘working’ should consider the following, and more:
 - Does the data reflect progress or changes related to stated goals or priorities?
 - Housing outcomes in different demographic groups
 - Length of time to referral and to housing
 - Utilization rates in housing programs
 - Real-time feedback loop with key partners:
 - Qualitative data from people with lived expertise moving through your system (who are paid for their time)
 - Qualitative data from direct service providers carrying out assessment
 - Opportunities for anonymous feedback

So – what now?

- CE Assessment Task Force to request approval of draft from the CoC Board
- TAC to support task force and IHCDA with development of:
 - Training plan for CE partners CoC-wide
 - Timeline and implementation plan for testing and rolling out new assessment approach
- **No immediate changes for now** but be on the lookout for information from IHCDA and your regional coordinated entry leads!

Questions?



Thank you,
CE Assessment
Task Force!

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting grid showing 14 participants. The participants are arranged in a grid with two columns and seven rows. The participants are:

- Row 1: Liz Greene (She/Her) IHCD, Natalie Metzger-Smit, Ellen Fitzpatrick (she/her)
- Row 2: Crystal, Merissa (she/her) (with ICESANT logo: Educate. Engage. Empower.), Brandi Pirtle
- Row 3: Erika Young - ICADV (she/her), Mary Bales, Heather Prater (YWCA Greater Lafayet...)
- Row 4: Debbie Norris, Danette, Christina Bates, YWCA Central Indiana...
- Row 5: Kristin Garvey (she/her), Tonya Dinkins - IHCD
- Row 6: Kristin Garvey (she/her), Tonya Dinkins - IHCD

Thank you for coming!

Resources

- [HUD Exchange Resource: Advancing Racial Equity through Assessments and Prioritization](#)
- [NAEH: Racial Equity & CE – Where Can Disparities Happen in the Process?](#)
- [NAEH Resource: Centering Racial Equity in the Work to End Homelessness: Aligning Vision with Practice at the Systems Level](#)
- [HUD Exchange Resource: Housing Problem-Solving](#)
- [HUD's Disaster Response Rehousing TA Resource Page: Diversion/Problem Solving Materials](#)
- [HUD Exchange Resource: Coordinated Entry Core Elements Guidebook](#)
- [HUD Coordinated Entry Policy Brief](#)
- [IHCDA Coordinated Entry Homepage](#)