Continuum of Care (CoC) 101 Training

Spring/Summer 2021
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Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care

PA pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DMA
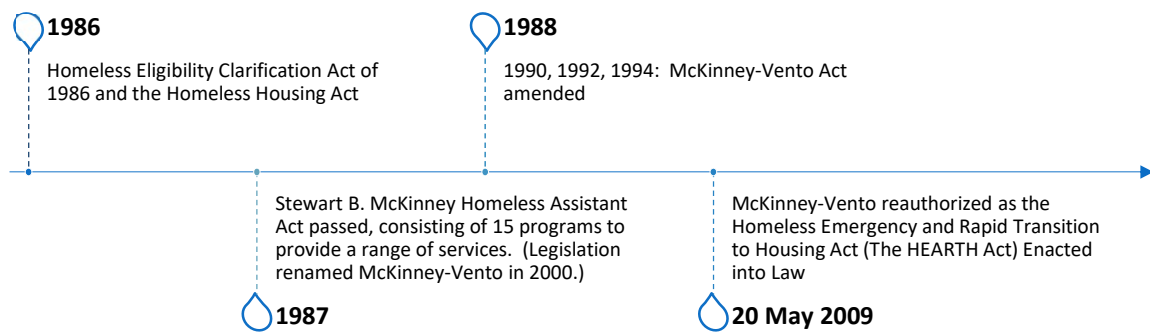
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CoC 101: Part 1
Background and History

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Some Very Abbreviated Housing History

- **1980s**- Emergency Shelters are the key homeless housing intervention, but homelessness remains.

- As a result, Transitional Housing emerges to get people ready for housing from shelter.

- **2009-2010** - Enter HEARTH Act and Opening Doors
  - Housing First becomes the standard. Housing is a tool to achieve stability, not something to be earned once stability is achieved.

- **2010s**: Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing take the forefront of housing interventions

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1986

Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act of 1986 and the Homeless Housing Act

1988

1990, 1992, 1994: McKinney-Vento Act amended

Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistant Act passed, consisting of 15 programs to provide a range of services. (Legislation renamed McKinney-Vento in 2000.)

1987

McKinney-Vento reauthorized as the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (The HEARTH Act) Enacted into Law

20 May 2009

Key Legislation

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- Goal: to **END** (not just manage) homelessness

- Holistic look at homeless services – not just those funded by HUD

- Emphasis on CoC organizational structure and planning

- Coordination in planning – 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, Consolidated Plan, ESG Planning and other community plans

- Focus on Outcomes and Data (full participation in HMIS)

HEARTH: A Paradigm Shift

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Revised Definition of Homeless

Emergency Shelter Program revised and renamed the Emergency Solutions Program
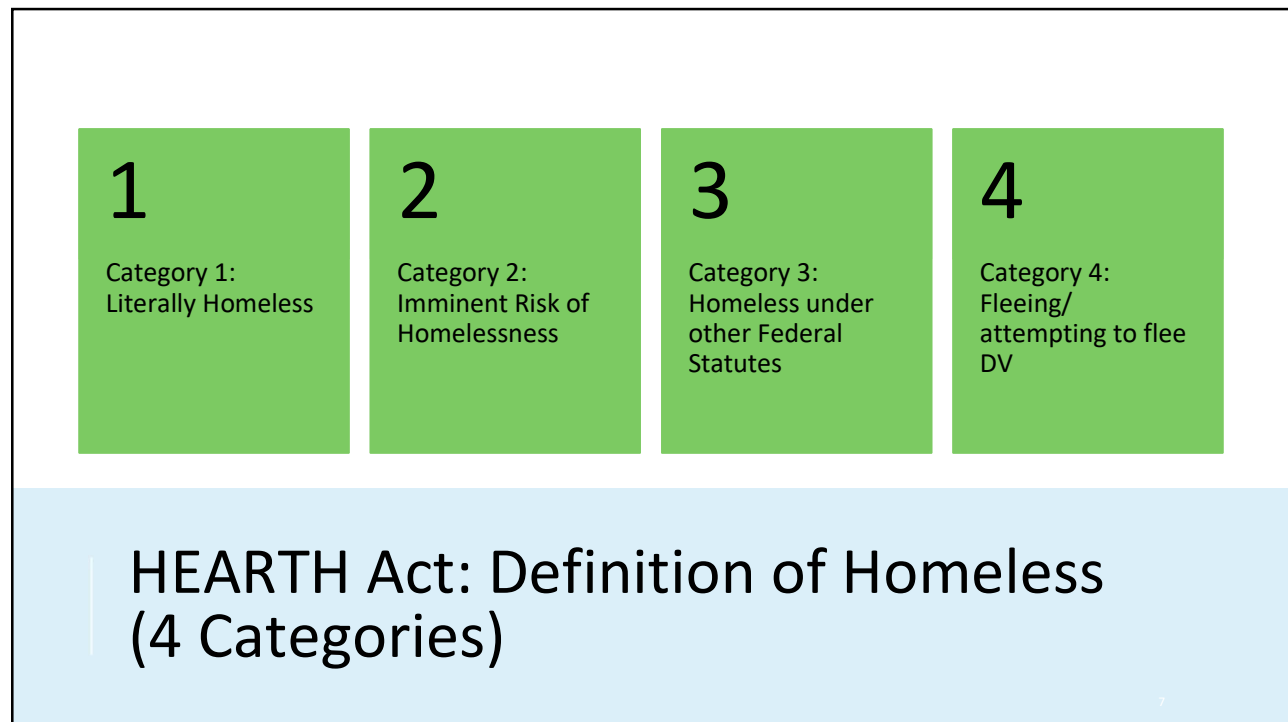
Consolidated the different homeless assistance programs
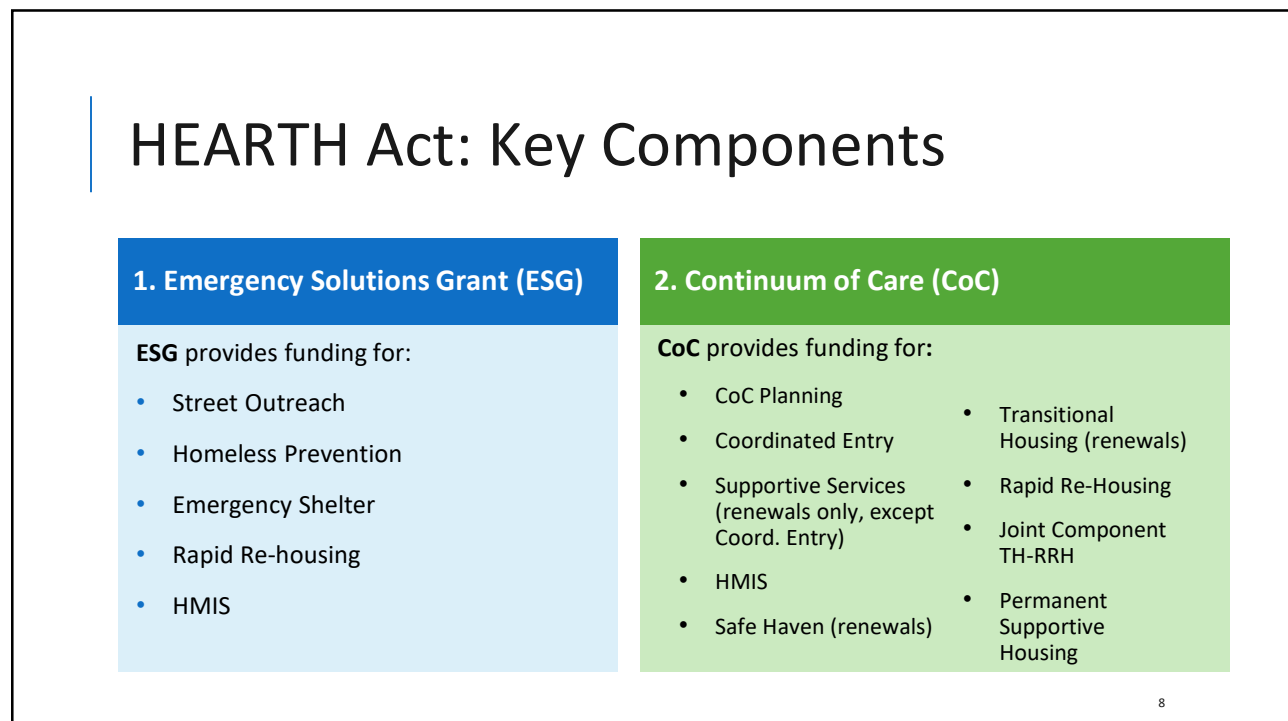
Codified into law the Continuum of Care Planning process

HEARTH Act: What It Did

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1	2	3	4
Category 1: Literally Homeless	Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness	Category 3: Homeless under other Federal Statutes	Category 4: Fleeing/ attempting to flee DV

HEARTH Act: Definition of Homeless (4 Categories)

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HEARTH Act: Key Components

1. Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	2. Continuum of Care (CoC)
ESG provides funding for:	**CoC** provides funding for:
• Street Outreach	• CoC Planning
• Homeless Prevention	• Coordinated Entry
• Emergency Shelter	• Supportive Services (renewals only, except Coord. Entry)
• Rapid Re-housing	• HMIS
• HMIS	• Safe Haven (renewals)
	• Transitional Housing (renewals)
	• Rapid Re-Housing
	• Joint Component TH-RRH
	• Permanent Supportive Housing

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1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Prevent and End Homelessness among Veterans in 2015	Finish ending chronic homelessness in 2017	Prevent/end homelessness for families, youth, & children in 2020	Set Path to end all types of homelessness

Opening doors, Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2010): Goals

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Opening doors, Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Functional zero (effectively ending homelessness) is the state when your homelessness system has enough capacity and resources to prevent homelessness when possible and to immediately, permanently house those experiencing homelessness now and in the future.

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HUD SNAPS Policy Priorities

- Ending homelessness for all persons
- Creating a systemic response to homelessness
- Strategically allocating and using resources
- Using a Housing First approach

SNAPS = Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs

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Housing First as a Guiding Principle, as cited by Opening Doors

Premised on:

- homelessness is a housing crisis and can be addressed through the provision of safe and affordable housing;

- all people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their housing history and duration of homelessness, can achieve housing stability and permanent housing;

- everyone is "housing ready", meaning that sobriety, compliance in treatment, or even a clean criminal history is not necessary to succeed in housing;

- many people experience improvements in quality of life, in the areas of health, mental health, substance use, and employment, as a result of achieving housing;

- people experiencing homelessness have the right to self-determination and should be treated with dignity and respect; and

- the exact configuration of housing and services depends on the needs and preferences of the population.

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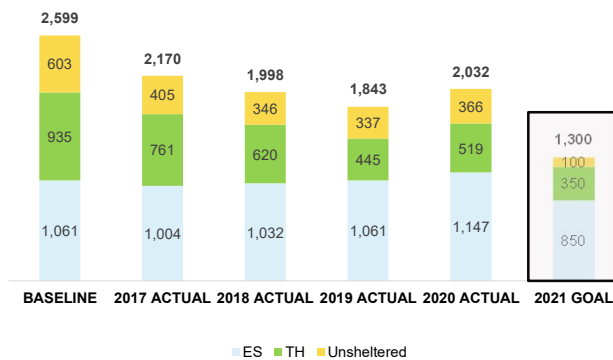## HUD: Components of an Effective Crisis Response System

- Follows a low barrier, housing first approach
- Is housing focused (including Street Outreach)
- Promotes "flow" through the system
- People are diverted from homelessness whenever possible
- Prioritizes most expensive interventions for those with the longest histories of homelessness and the most severe needs

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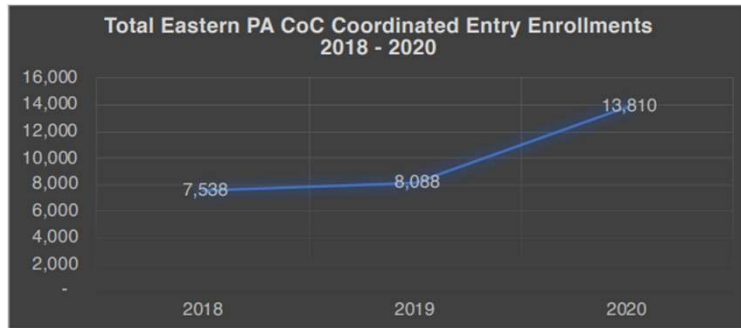
By the Numbers: Homelessness in the Eastern PA CoC

Eastern PA CoC: 2016-2020 PIT Data and 2021 Strategic Plan Goal

	BASELINE	2017 ACTUAL	2018 ACTUAL	2019 ACTUAL	2020 ACTUAL	2021 GOAL
Total	2,599	2,170	1,998	1,843	2,032	1,300
Unsheltered	603	405	346	337	366	100
TH	935	761	620	445	519	350
ES	1,061	1,004	1,032	1,061	1,147	850

Legend: ES ■TH ■Unsheltered

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By the Numbers: Homelessness in the Eastern PA CoC

Total Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry Enrollments 2018 - 2020

Year	Enrollments
2018	7,538
2019	8,088
2020	13,810

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Key Terms (for reference)

- **ARD** = Annual Renewal Demand
- **BNL** = By Name List
- **CES** = Coordinated Entry System
- **CoC** = Continuum of Care
- **DCED** = PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- **DMA** = Diana T. Myers and Associates
- **DV** = Domestic Violence
- **ES** = Emergency Shelter
- **ESG** = Emergency Solutions Grant
- **HIC** = Housing Inventory Count
- **HP** = Homeless Prevention
- **HUD** = U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development

- **NoFA** = Notice of Funding Available
- **PA-509** = the HUD code for the Eastern PA CoC
- **PA-601** = the HUD code for the Western PA CoC
- **PIT** = Point in Time Count
- **PSH** = Permanent Supportive Housing
- **RHAB** = Regional Homeless Advisory Board
- **RFP** = Request for Proposals
- **RRH** = Rapid Rehousing
- **TH** = Transitional Housing
- **TH-RRH** = Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing Joint Component
- **VI-SPDAT** = Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool
- **USICH** = US Interagency Council on Homelessness

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CoC 101: Makeup of a CoC

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The CoC is a group of organizations and individuals working together to:

- Promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness

- Provide funding for efforts to quickly re-house individuals and families who are homeless, which minimizes the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness

- Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs

- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness

What is a Continuum of Care (CoC)?

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Definition of a CoC

Simple definition from HUD:

A Continuum of Care is established by *representatives of relevant organizations* within a *geographic area* to *carry out the responsibilities* set forth in the CoC Program interim rule.
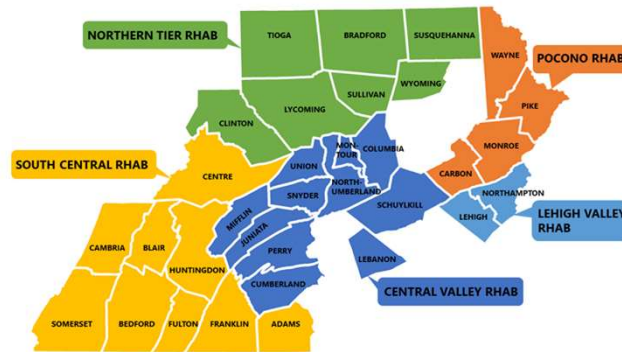
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Who are the Participants of the CoC?

Representatives from the following relevant organizations within the geographic area:

- Nonprofit homeless assistance providers
- Victim service providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Governments
- Businesses
- Advocates
- Public housing agencies
- School districts
- Social service providers

- Mental health agencies
- Hospitals
- Universities
- Affordable housing developers
- Law enforcement
- Organizations that serve veterans
- Homeless and formerly homeless individuals

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Geography: Eastern PA CoC

- 33 counties
- Covers nearly 21,000 square miles
- Includes eleven cities including City of Allentown, PA's third largest City;
- Includes 672 townships;
- Includes 337 boroughs, including Centralia Borough the state's least populated borough (10 residents) and St. Clairsville Borough which has the smallest land area of any borough in the state (0.03 miles)

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CoC Meetings & Trainings

- Full CoC meetings occur 2x/year in April and October
- The CoC solicits new members at least once annually (members can join anytime during the year)
- The CoC hosts various trainings throughout the year for CoC grantees and CoC membership

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What is a RHAB?

RHAB: Regional Homeless Advisory Board

- Each RHAB is responsible for operationalizing the policies adopted by the CoC by working with *their* community to address and end homelessness *locally.*

- The Eastern PA CoC has 5 RHABs:
    - South Central RHAB
    - Lehigh Valley RHAB
    - Central Valley RHAB
    - Northern Tier
    - Pocono RHAB

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THE COC PROGRAM INTERIM RULE

General Information

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What is the CoC Program Interim Rule?

- The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Interim Rule focuses on regulatory implementation of the CoC Program, including the CoC planning process.

- CoC recipients and subrecipients must follow regulations in the CoC Program Interim Rule.

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CoC Responsibilities

Operate the Continuum of Care

Hold meetings of the full membership at least twice a year

Make an invitation for new members to join at least annually

Adopt and follow a written process to select a board to act on behalf of the Continuum of Care.

Appoint additional committees, subcommittees, or workgroups

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CoC Responsibilities

CoC Governance Charter: Develop and follow a **governance charter** that establishes the functions of:

- CoC Board
- CoC committee structure and roles
- HMIS lead
- Staff roles
- Process for amending the charter

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CoC Responsibilities

Written Standards	*Evaluate performance*	*Establish Coordinated Entry System*
• Establish written standards (policies and procedures) for CoC assistance	• Establish performance targets for programs that receive CoC funds, monitor performance, and report outcomes to HUD	• The CE System ensures that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access to services within the CoC and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing.

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CoC Responsibilities

Design and operate the HMIS system (Homeless Management Information System)	Point in Time Count	Other planning responsibilities
· HMIS is the database used by homeless service providers within the CoC. · Establish an HMIS Lead agency. · **NOTE:** The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is the HMIS Lead Agency for the CoC	• Plan and conduct the Point-in-Time Count	• Coordinate with "Consolidated Plan" jurisdictions • Coordinate with ESG recipients • Establish a community plan for delivering homeless assistance

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CoC Responsibilities

Apply for HUD Funding Annually

This process is called the CoC NOFA (NOFA= Notice of Funding Availability)

Establish priorities for funding projects (both new and existing)

The **"collaborative applicant"** collects and combines the required information from all applicants/projects within the CoC that have been selected for funding and submits to HUD.

The collaborative applicant also applies for CoC planning activities.

NOTE: The Department of Community of Economic and Economic Development (DCED) is the Collaborative Applicant for CoC. DMA fulfills some of these goals on behalf of DCED.

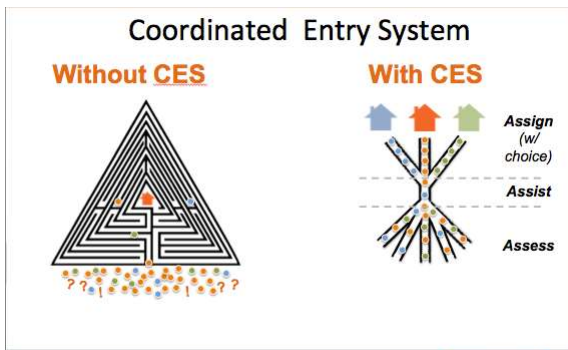30

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CoC 101: What is Coordinated Entry (CE)?

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What is Coordinated Entry (CE)?

- A process designed to coordinate access, assessment, and referrals to homeless assistance services and housing for people experiencing a housing crisis.

- **Goals:**
    - Streamline access and referral to homeless services
    - Use a standardized assessment process for everyone
    - Prioritize assistance for those with the most severe needs and longest histories of homelessness, and those who are unable to end their homelessness without assistance
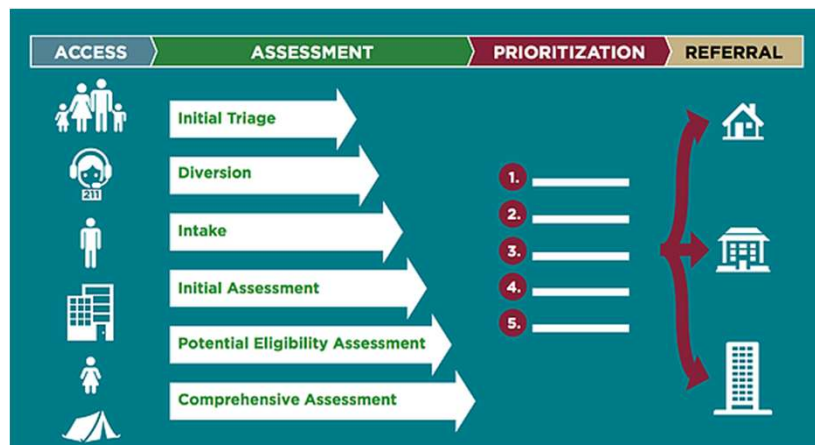
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Why Coordinated Entry?

Coordinated Entry System

Without CES | With CES

- **HUD requirement**

- **Improve access to services for people experiencing a housing crisis**
  - Easier to get to the resources you need
  - More consistent process
  - Prioritize limited resources based on the highest need

- **A more coordinated process for service providers**
  - More appropriate referrals
  - Less screening time

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Core Elements of CE System

- **Access**
- **Assessment**
- **Prioritization**
- **Referral**

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Access

- CE systems must have **a defined entry point to access homeless assistance within the CoC**
  - Physical access point (one location, or multiple locations) OR
  - Virtual access (phone or web-based access)

- Must cover the entire geography of the CoC.

- Must be easily accessible and well-advertised.

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Assessment

- Must use a **standardized assessment tool** to identify the needs of all households seeking housing or services.

- Must use the same assessment process at all access points.

- CE assessors must be trained in conducting the assessment.

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A note on subpopulations:

The coordinated entry system must be accessible to all populations within the CoC.

CoCs **may have different processes for accessing coordinated entry,** *including different access points and assessment tools,* **for the following different populations:**

1. adults without children,
2. adults with children,
3. unaccompanied youth, or
4. households fleeing domestic violence.

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Prioritization

- CE system must create **a process to prioritize households for referral to housing and services**
  - In essence: How will the CoC prioritize limited resources?

- Ensure **people with more severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized** for services
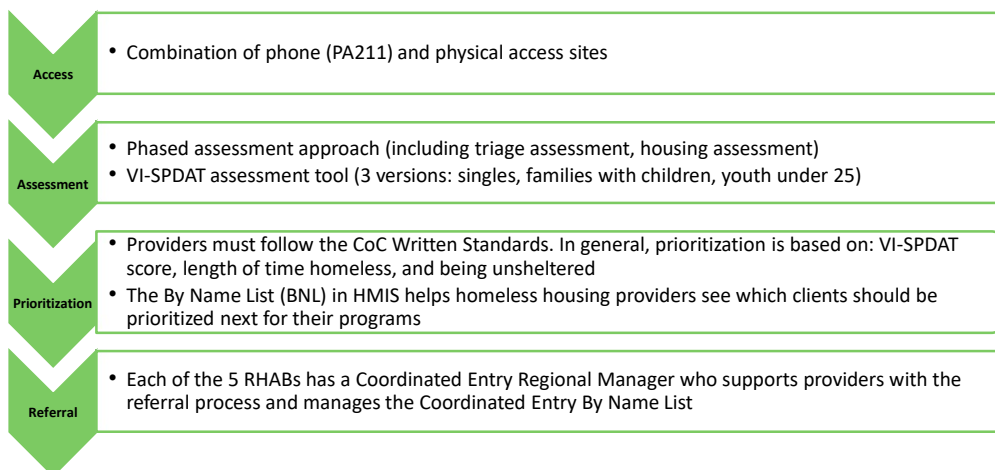 - Not a "first come first served" system

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Referral

- The CE system must have **a uniform and coordinated referral process** for all housing and services available at participating projects.
  - Referral process must follow the prioritization policies set by the CoC.
  - All housing programs follow the same process for accepting referrals. ***No "side doors"***
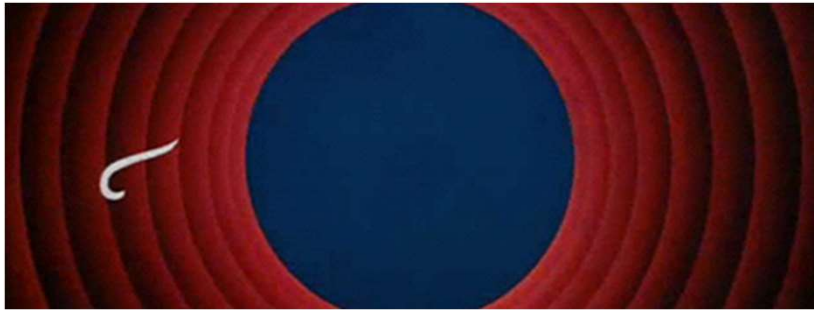
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Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry

Access
- Combination of phone (PA211) and physical access sites

Assessment
- Phased assessment approach (including triage assessment, housing assessment)
- VI-SPDAT assessment tool (3 versions: singles, families with children, youth under 25)

Prioritization
- Providers must follow the CoC Written Standards. In general, prioritization is based on: VI-SPDAT score, length of time homeless, and being unsheltered
- The By Name List (BNL) in HMIS helps homeless housing providers see which clients should be prioritized next for their programs

Referral
- Each of the 5 RHABs has a Coordinated Entry Regional Manager who supports providers with the referral process and manages the Coordinated Entry By Name List

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Thank you for participating in CoC 101 Training!

Questions?

- Lauren Whitleigh, CoC Staff: easternpa@dma-housing.com
- Leigh Howard, leigh@dma-housing.com

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