

Continuum of Care (CoC) 101 Training

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contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and
Economic Development)



1

1

CoC 101: Part 1 Background and History

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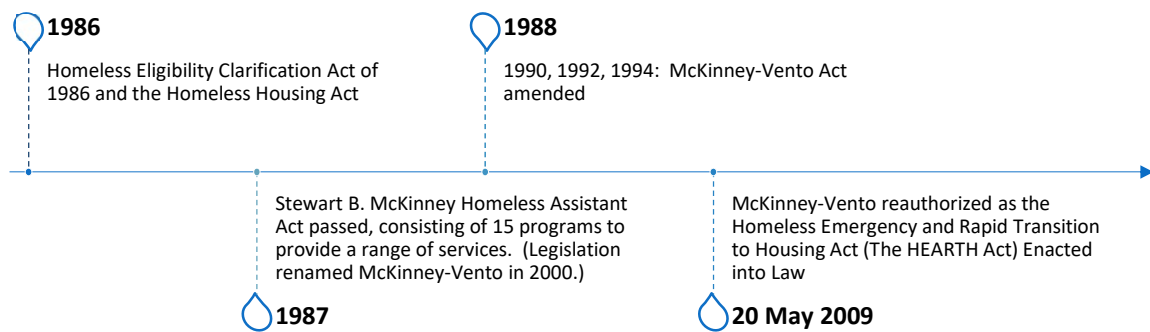
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Some Very Abbreviated Housing History

- **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

3

3



Key Legislation

4

4

- 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

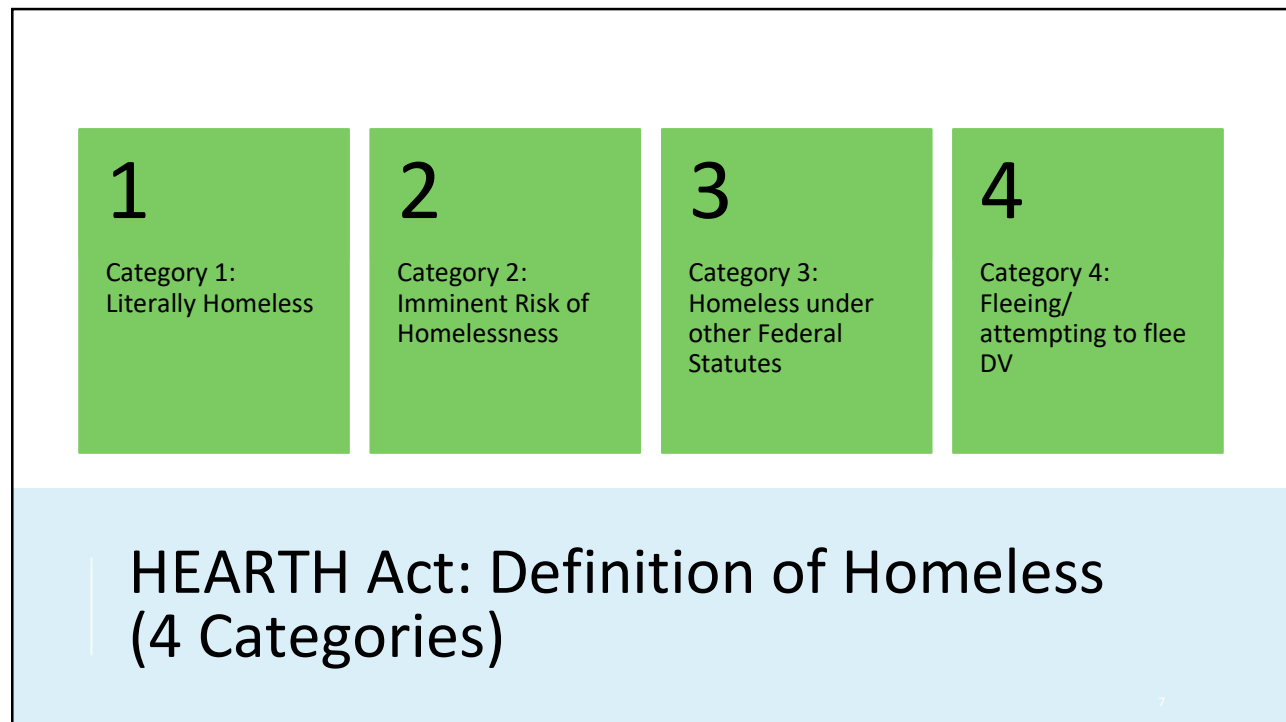
Consolidated the different homeless assistance programs

Codified into law the Continuum of Care Planning process

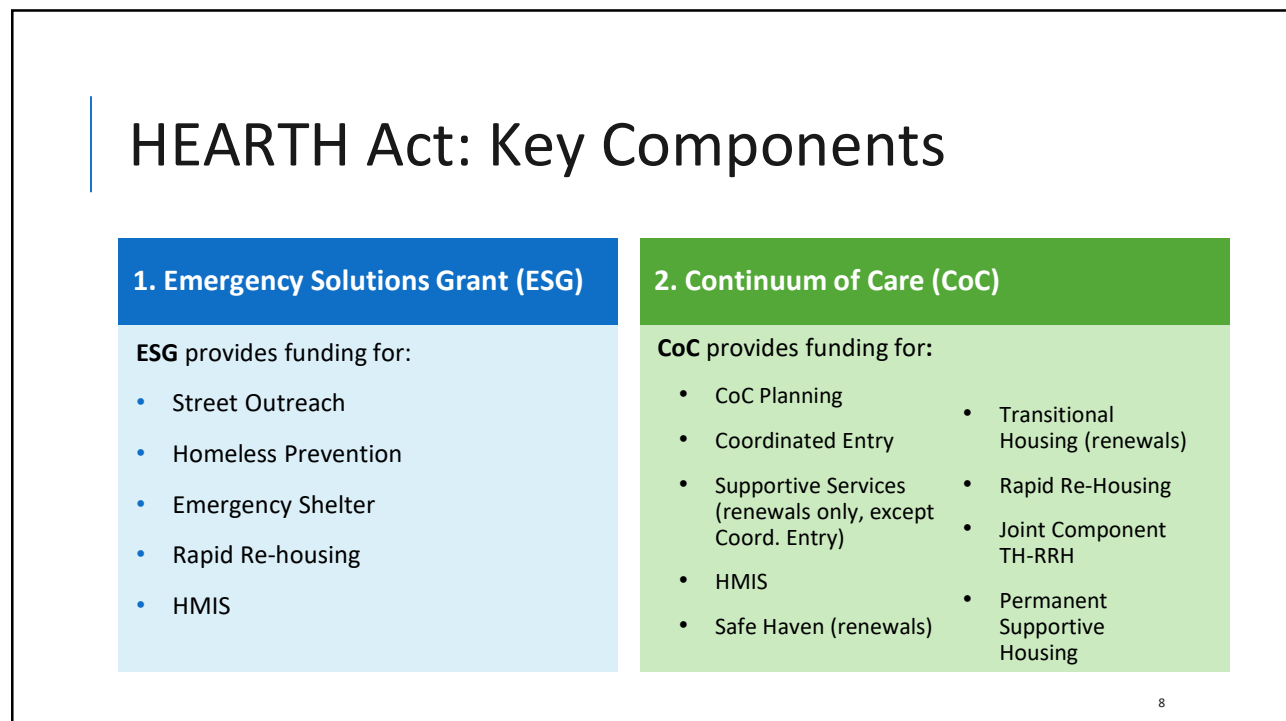
HEARTH Act: What It Did

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<p>1</p> <p>Prevent and End Homelessness among Veterans in 2015</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Finish ending chronic homelessness in 2017</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Prevent/end homelessness for families, youth, & children in 2020</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Set Path to end all types of homelessness</p>
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Opening doors, Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2010): Goals

9

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.



10

Western PA CoC: Effectively Ending Veterans Homelessness

- In summer 2019, the U.S. Inter-agency Council on Homelessness approved the declaration that the Western CoC has effectively ended Veteran homelessness.
- This means that the CoC has built a system that can quickly identify and house any Veteran experiencing homelessness within the CoC's 20 County region.



11

11

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



12

12

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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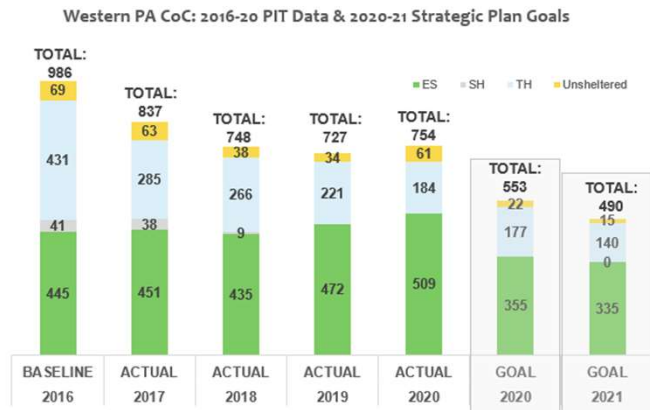
HUD: Components of an Effective Crisis Response System

- 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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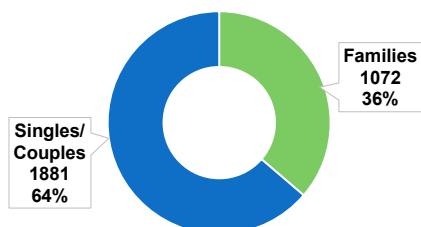
By the Numbers: Homelessness in the Western PA CoC



15

By the Numbers: Homelessness in the Western PA CoC

Households Assessed through CE during 2019



- **2953 unduplicated households** were assessed through Coordinated Entry during 2019
- **Assessed=** assessed via the Eligibility and Prioritization Assessment Tool by an assessment center

Key observations:

- 36% of households assessed were families
- 64% of households assessed were singles/couples

16

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

17

17

CoC 101: Makeup of a CoC

18

18

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)?

19

19

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:

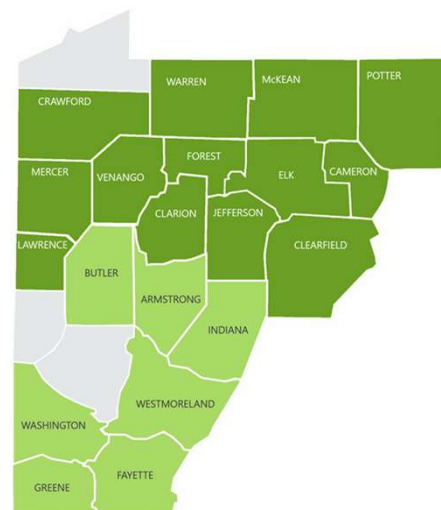
- Nonprofit homeless assistance providers
- Victim service providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Governments
- Businesses
- Advocates
- Public housing agencies
- School districts
- Social service providers
- Mental health agencies
- Hospitals
- Universities
- Affordable housing developers
- Law enforcement
- Organizations that serve veterans
- Homeless and formerly homeless individuals

21

21

Geography: Western PA CoC

- 20 counties
- Home to 1,716,565 Pennsylvanians
- Covers 15,230 sq/miles
- Includes 720 municipalities with 122 school districts
- Largely rural, with 74% of all municipalities having less than 2,500 residents.
- 15,000+ farms with over 2 million acres of farmland.



22

22

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

23

23

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 Western PA CoC has 2 RHABs:
 - Northwest RHAB
 - Southwest RHAB

24

24

THE COC PROGRAM INTERIM RULE

General Information

25

25

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.

26

26

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

27

27

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

28

28

CoC Responsibilities

Written Standards

- Establish written standards (policies and procedures) for CoC assistance

Evaluate performance

- Establish performance targets for programs that receive CoC funds, monitor performance, and report outcomes to HUD

Establish Coordinated Entry System

- 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.

29

29

CoC Responsibilities

Design and operate the HMIS system (Homeless Management Information System)

- 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

Point in Time Count

- Plan and conduct the Point-in-Time Count

Other planning responsibilities

- Coordinate with "Consolidated Plan" jurisdictions
- Coordinate with ESG recipients
- Establish a community plan for delivering homeless assistance

30

30

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.

31

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CoC 101: What is Coordinated Entry (CE)?

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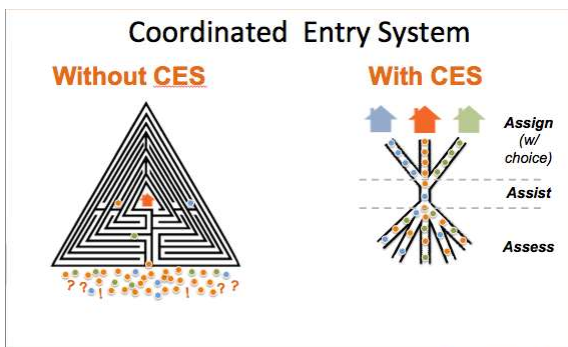
What is Coordinated Entry (CE)?

- 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?



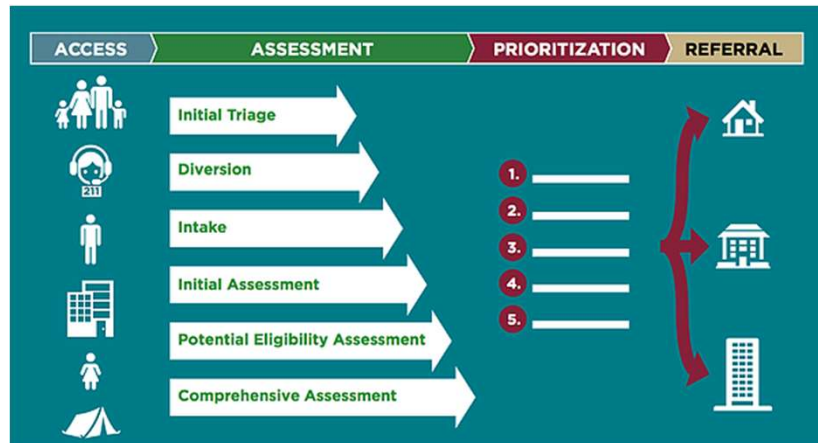
- **HUD requirement**
- **Improve access to services for people experiencing a housing crisis**
 - Easier to get to the resources you need
 - More consistent process
 - Prioritize limited resources based on the highest need
- **A more coordinated process for service providers**
 - More appropriate referrals
 - Less screening time

34

34

Core Elements of CE System

- Access
- Assessment
- Prioritization
- Referral



35

35

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.



36

36

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.

37

37

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.

38

38

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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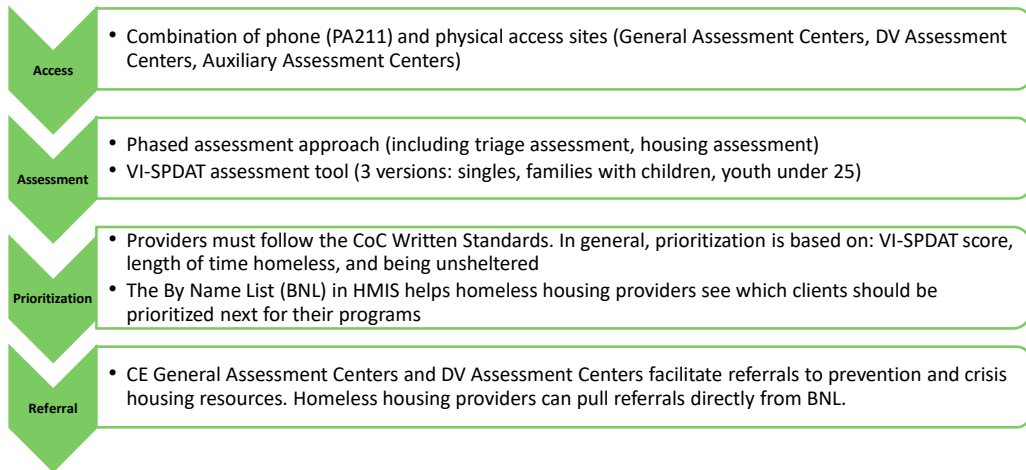
Referral

- 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”***

40

40

Western PA CoC Coordinated Entry



41

41

Thank you for participating in CoC 101 Training!



Questions?

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- Leigh Howard, leigh@dma-housing.com

42

42