



PA-509 Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Training

Fielding the Housing Assessment Tool

November 2024

Training and Presentation by Jason D. Alexander, Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry Consultant and Principal, Capacity for Change, LLC

Learning Objectives

1. The “Five Ws” of the new Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment Tool (HAT).
2. How Coordinated Entry Specialists should complete or update the HAT in PA HMIS as part of the newly updated Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project workflow.
3. Policies and procedures related to using the HAT to prioritize households for limited CoC housing resources like Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing.
4. Resources for using the HAT effectively.

The CE Housing Assessment Tool Five Ws

Who?	Coordinated Entry (CE) Specialists field the HAT as part of the intake process for households in the Eastern PA CoC region who meet the HUD Category 1 or 4 definitions of homelessness.
What?	The HAT is a standardized, twelve-question assessment tool fielded to all Heads of Households who meet the HUD Category 1 or 4 definition of homelessness. Seven of the twelve questions are answered and scored from “Universal Data Elements” required by HUD for all CoC and ESG-funded housing programs. The remaining five questions address significant barriers to permanent housing stability and vulnerabilities to the worst aspects of homelessness and are self-reported answers from the Head of Household (HoH). <i>(Note that CE Specialists are required to ask these questions, but the HoH has the right not to answer.)</i>
Where?	The HAT is fielded by Call Center and Access Site CE Specialists in PA HMIS.
When?	The HAT is fielded during the Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project intake workflow in PA HMIS (ClientTrack).
Why?	Every CoC is required by the federal government to use a standardized housing assessment tool to prioritize households for limited housing resources that best meet their needs and goals. The HAT replaces the VI-SPDAT as a shorter, more trauma-informed tool built from scratch by CoC members, including people with lived experience and expertise.

Housing Assessment Tool Section 1: Universal Data Element Answers/Scores (1 point each)

Housing Assessment Tool (HAT)

Section 1

Is the household experiencing chronic homelessness ?	Yes	1
Is the household living outside or in a place not meant for human habitation?	Yes	1
Is the household fleeing, or attempting to flee , domestic violence or human trafficking?	Yes	1
Does any household member have a disabling condition ?	Yes	1
Is any household member pregnant ?	Yes	1
Is any household member a veteran ?	Yes	1
Is the Head of Household aged 24 or younger ?	No	0
Section 1 Total:	6	

Housing Assessment Tool Section 2: HoH Self-Reported Answers/Scores (1 point each)

Housing Assessment Tool (HAT)

Section 2

Has your current living situation made it **difficult** for any school-aged children in your household to **attend and do well in school**? Yes 1

Is your current experience of homelessness the result in whole or in part due to **discrimination**? Yes 1

If yes, **what kind(s)** of discrimination?

- Racial/ Ethnic
- Gender
- Sexual
- Family Composition

Is your current experience of homelessness the result in whole or in part due to **criminal background or justice system involvement**? Yes 1

If yes, **what kind(s)** of criminal background or justice system involvement?

- Felony Conviction
- Misdemeanor Conviction
- Criminal Charges (No Conviction)
- Probation

Have you **been evicted** from a housing unit (rental or home ownership) in the *past seven (7) years*? Yes 1

Since becoming homeless, has anyone in your household been **engaged in dangerous or illegal activities**? Yes 1

Section 2 Total: 5

< Optional if self-disclosed by HoH

< Optional if self-disclosed by HoH

Housing Assessment Tool Section 3: HAT Score (Max 12), Comments, and Prioritization Status

Assessment Scoring and Prioritization

Total Score: 11

Assessment Comments:



Update Comments:



Prioritization Status: *

Placed on prioritization list 

HAT Policies and Procedures

Replacement of the VI-SPDAT with the new Housing Assessment Tool in Coordinated Entry

Effective November 13, 2024, the Eastern PA Continuum of Care no longer uses the VI-SPDAT Housing Assessment Tools (Family, Single Adult, and Transition Age Youth) during Coordinated Entry intake for households experiencing literal homelessness under the HUD Category 1 and 4 definitions. The VI-SPDAT has been replaced by a new unified Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) for all household types that was designed by CoC members and people with lived experience. The HAT was authorized for use by a unanimous vote of the CoC Governing Board.

Related Procedures:

1. Households enrolled in Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry (CE) and active on the By Name List (BNL) in PA HMIS who have a VI-SPDAT score are still eligible for housing and supportive services. However, prioritization for referral to Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) from the BNL will be made by the appropriate Coordinated Entry Regional Manager in consultation with local housing providers.
2. Any household enrolled in CE that has not received a HAT assessment should be encouraged to do so by CE Specialists and CoC participating case managers.

HAT Policies and Procedures

Fielding the Eastern PA CoC Housing Assessment Tool

The HAT is intended as a brief, trauma-informed housing needs assessment based on a Head of Household's self-reported answers to a combination of HUD-required and local CoC chosen questions. The purpose of the HAT is to prioritize households for scarce supportive housing services and subsidies in a way that is fair, equitable, person-centered, and informed by the root causes of homelessness in the communities that comprise the CoC's geographic area. The HAT score is not intended to be the only piece of information used to refer households from Coordinated Entry to housing programs and services, but it is a valuable guide to inform prioritization and the design of housing stability goal planning.

Related Procedures:

1. All Access Site and Call Center Coordinated Entry Specialists are required to field the HAT during CE Intake for households who meet the HUD Category 1 or 4 definitions of homelessness.
2. The HAT is integrated and should be used in both the regular and DV Anonymous Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project workflows.
3. Participant household members should never be informed of their HAT score since it is not an accurate measure of their prioritization nor wait time for CoC housing or services.
4. Participants may refuse to answer any HAT Section II questions, but doing so will reduce their overall prioritization score.

HAT Policies and Procedures

Updating the Eastern PA CoC Housing Assessment Tool

HAT scores may change as a result of changes to either the household's family composition or current living situation. In either case, if the household contacts Coordinated Entry after initial CE enrollment and either its family composition and/or living situation has changed, the CE Specialist must update the Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project workflow, including Universal Data Element, Family Members enrolled in the project, Triage Assessment questions, and HAT questions. This is done by editing the CE project workflow from start to finish.

Related Procedures:

1. If the Head of Household wishes to change any answers to their HAT score after the HAT is completed in PA HMIS for an active CE enrollment because of one or more changes to their current living situation, Coordinated Entry Specialists should update the current HAT from within the existing CE workflow. *CE Specialists should never create a new HAT in PA HMIS if a completed HAT is already associated with the Head of Household's current CE intake.*
2. If the Head of Household changes (for example, the current HoH leaves the household but the others remains HUD Category 1 or 4 eligible), the entire household should be exited on that date from the CE project enrollment and a new CE project enrollment should be created on that date with the new Head of Household answering CE intake questions and other household members enrolled if appropriate.
3. If the households splits into two or more households composed of people who still remain HUD Category 1 or 4 eligible, and one of these maintains the current HoH, exit everyone leaving this household on that date and create one or more new CE enrollments for the new Head(s) of Household and their family members on that date.

HAT Policies and Procedures

Household Enrolled in Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry No Longer Eligible Under the HUD Category 1 Definition of Homelessness

HUD requires Coordinated Entry Specialists to document every contact with a Head of Household currently enrolled in a Coordinated Entry project in PA HMIS. The appropriate way for CE Specialists to document this contact is to add a new Current Living Situation connected to the active CE project enrollment.

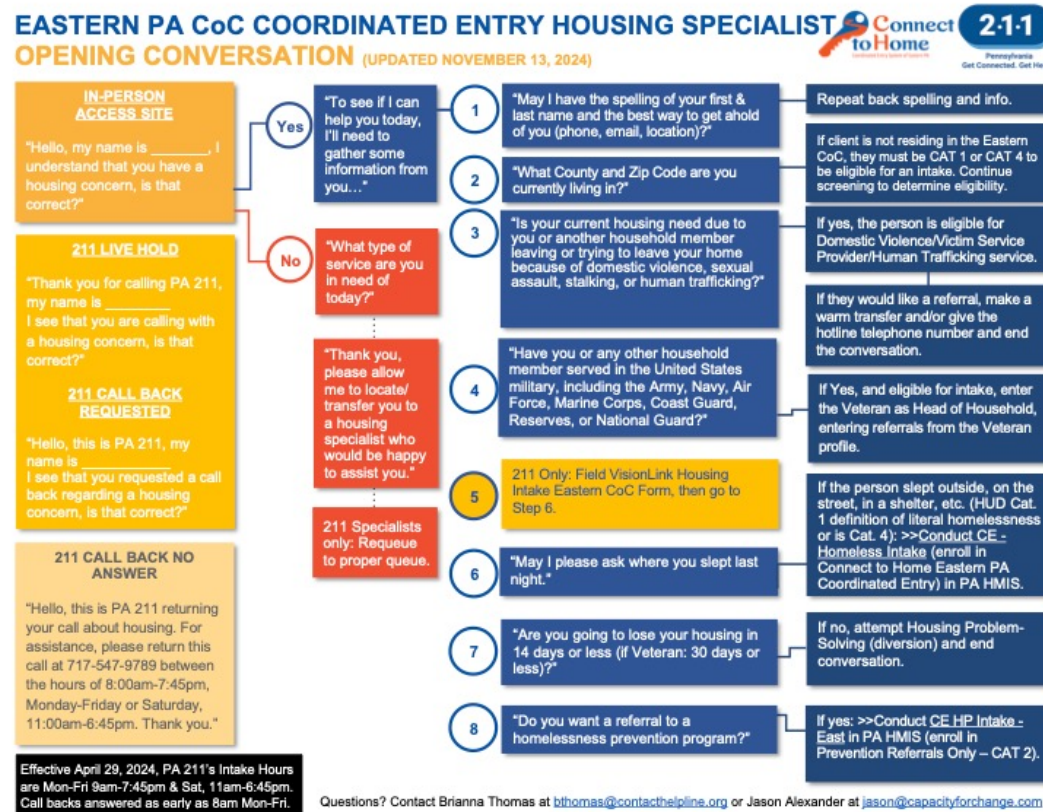
If the Head of Household's Current Living Situation (primary nighttime residence) has changed since project enrollment and is no longer one of the following, please add a CE Intake Note and send an email notification whose subject line includes the Head of Household's PA HMIS Client ID to the appropriate Coordinated Entry Regional Manager (see below). The body of the email should contain the content of the CE Intake Note.

Eligible living situations that meet the HUD Category 1 definition of literal homelessness include:

- Living and sleeping outside or in places not meant for human habitation.
- Staying in an emergency shelter.
- Staying in a hotel or motel paid for by a charitable organization or government program.
- Exiting an institution (ex. jail, prison, a psychiatric hospital, medical hospital, or drug/alcohol treatment program) after staying there for no more than 90 days and having been homeless before entering that institution.
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking.

If a household that is already enrolled in the Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry project in PA HMIS has resided in one of the eligible living situations listed above for at least one night during the seven (7) nights prior to contact, the household may remain enrolled in Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry. If not, then the household should be exited from the Coordinated Entry enrollment. Households exited for this reason may be enrolled into the Connect to Home Homeless Prevention Cat. 2 project if they now meet the eligibility criteria for the HUD Category 2 definition of homelessness.

HAT-Related Update: Coordinated Entry Opening Conversation



Download: <https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/balance-stateeastern-pa-coc/connect-home-coordinated-entry-system-eastern-pa>

HAT Related Update: Medicaid Question Added to Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Triage Assessment

CE - Client Intake

Scott Summers
11/22/1967
Man (Boy, if child)
ClientID 688

CE - HMIS Triage Assessment (Eastern PA CoC)

Assess the clients current situation with the questions below. This data can be used for prioritization of services needed for the client.

Assessment Active

Assessment Date: 11/08/2024

Assessment Location: Connect to Home

Assessment Contact Type: Phone

What is your household type: Household without children

Mental Health Diagnosis: -- SELECT --

Do you or another household member currently receive Medicaid benefits from the State of Pennsylvania?

Current Living Situation

Information Date: 11/08/2024

Enrollment: 11/08/2024 - Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry

CE Intake Notes Save No Changes

If prompted: *Medicaid covers a broad range of physical and behavioral health services, including doctor visits when you're sick, preventive care like health screenings, vaccines, hospital stays, prescription medications, mental health and substance use disorder care, and more.*

Additional HAT Resources

- Eastern PA CoC Website Coordinated Entry pages:
<https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/balance-stateeastern-pa-coc/connect-home-coordinated-entry-system-eastern-pa>
- PA DCED CoC YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@dcedbalanceofstatecocs7569/videos>
- PA HMIS Help Tickets (for technical issues only)
- Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry Office Hours and Mailing List (for technical and policy issues) – to join, please send an email to the CoC Coordinated Entry Consultant at jason@capacityforchange.com.
- HUD Coordinated Entry Core Elements Guidebook:
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5340/coordinated-entry-core-elements/>

Connect to Home News in PA HMIS

The screenshot displays the ClientTrack web application interface. On the left is a dark blue sidebar with navigation icons and a search bar. The main content area shows a user profile for Jason Alexander at Eastern Pennsylvania CoC. Below the profile is a 'News' section with a 'Welcome to ClientTrack' message. The primary focus is a news article titled 'Register Now: Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Training for Access Site CE Specialists November 2024'. The article text includes registration details, dates (November 8 and 12, 2024), and Zoom links for two training sessions. It also notes that call center specialists are welcome to attend but will receive mandatory training before the launch date.

Search

Home / Welcome Jason Alexander

Jason Alexander Eastern Pennsylvania CoC

Connect To Home

News

Welcome to ClientTrack
from your administrator, Data Systems

ClientTrack™ unites all elements of your operation into one comprehensive system, enhancing your ability to quantify and broadcast your positive impact. Our software drives efficiency into managing and coordinating all core aspects of a social mission organization. A robust...
[Read More](#)

Connect To Home News

Register Now: Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Training for Access Site CE Specialists November 2024

All Access Site Coordinated Entry Specialists should register to attend one of two identical online trainings on how to field the new Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) which is replacing the VI-SPDAT in the Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project workflow in PA HMIS on November 13, 2024.

*Please register in advance for one of two identical trainings. For those unable to attend either date/time, a recording of one of the trainings will be distributed via email blast and posted on the Eastern PA CoC website and YouTube channel. CE Specialists who do not attend nor watch the training video may be unable to complete new CE intakes.

Registration is required. Register in advance for one of the two following training dates and times:

Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry Training - Fielding the Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Option 1: November 8, 2024, 1:00 PM Eastern Time <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqfuupzwiGd3zt38kuZhE3qe7tB1KXm6e>



Coordinated Entry Training - Fielding the Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Option 2: November 12, 2024, 11:00 AM Eastern Time <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pc06hrj8qGdZgVwa7A31aT-DYZVctyw1V>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*Call Center CE Specialists are welcome to attend but will receive mandatory training from PA 211 before the November 13, 2024, launch date.

Coordinated Entry Resources in PA HMIS

The screenshot shows the PA HMIS Reading Materials page. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Dashboard, Quick Services - Multiple Clients, Recent Clients, Query Designer, Report Designer, Files on Server, PA HMIS Training (with sub-items: PA HMIS Training Videos, PA HMIS Reading Materials, Fillable Forms, Add New Training Video), My ClientTrack, Project Descriptors, and Global Administration. The main content area shows the user Jason Alexander from Eastern Pennsylvania CoC. The page title is "PA HMIS Reading Materials". The display format is set to "Icons Grid" and the document type is "Eastern CoC Coordinated Entry". There are 5 results found. The table below lists two documents:

Preview	Document Title	Created Date	Document Type
	Eastern PA CoC CE Training - Fielding the Housing Assessment Tool November 2024	11/08/2024 6:51AM	Eastern CoC Coordinated Entry
	CE Specialist Procedures - Opening Conversation Updated 11.07.24	11/08/2024 6:50AM	Eastern CoC Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Training Completion Form

All Coordinated Entry Specialists are required to view a live or recorded video training on how to field the new Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) which is replacing the VI-SPDAT in the Connect to Home Eastern PA Coordinated Entry - CAT 1/4 Project workflow in PA HMIS on November 13, 2024.

Please complete the form linked below after you have participated in at least one HAT training:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HATTraining>