

Connect to Home Coordinated Entry System of Eastern PA Partnership Agreement

The Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) coordinates and manages access, assessment, prioritization, and referrals to housing and services for any person experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness in the following counties: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Cambria, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Lehigh, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Schuylkill, Somerset, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, and Wyoming.

Participation in CES is required for all projects funded by HUD Continuum of Care or Emergency Solutions Grants (including those administered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) and is strongly encouraged for all other housing and service providers to ensure equitable and coordinated access for all. By signing this agreement, CES partners agree to work with other CES funders, service providers, and referral partners throughout the thirty-three-county CoC region under a shared set of guiding principles, roles, and responsibilities as follows.

I. Guiding Principles

The Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) is guided by the following principles:

- Every person experiencing homelessness should be treated with dignity, respect and kindness, and have their rights to privacy, confidentiality and safety honored.
- By coordinating entry to housing and services for people experiencing homelessness, more families and individuals can exit from homelessness to permanent housing with stability as quickly, efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Coordinated entry is inclusive of all populations experiencing homelessness, including families, youth, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, recent immigrants and people identifying as LGBTQIA.
- Coordinated entry protects the safety and confidentiality of people fleeing/attempting to flee and survivors of domestic violence while simultaneously providing them with access to housing and services.
- Coordinated entry embraces a housing first approach to ending homelessness in which people are housed as quickly as possible without preconditions or service participation requirements.
- People experiencing homelessness are prioritized for appropriate housing and services based on their vulnerability and severity of need using an evidence-based assessment tool rather than on a “first come, first served” basis.
- People experiencing homelessness are not denied access to coordinated entry assessment and referral because of perceived barriers to housing and services such as sobriety, income level, mental health status or other factors.
- Coordinated entry should be aligned with affordable housing, veteran affairs, child welfare, health, mental health, education, legal, judicial, and other public systems to the greatest extent allowed by law and policy.
- Coordinated entry is a continually evolving system that requires a commitment to ongoing learning, evaluation, and quality improvement.

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- Ongoing coordinated entry planning efforts strive to incorporate diverse stakeholder voices and needs, including those of people with the lived experience of homelessness.
- The long-term financial sustainability of coordinated entry requires the commitment and alignment of federal, state, local and private funding sources.

II. Roles

Each Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) partner organization holds one or more of the roles outlined in the Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures. All Operations Partner roles (Call Center, Access Sites, and Regional Managers) have been assigned through competitive RFPs, approved by the CoC's elected Governing Board, and implemented to the extent permitted by available funding and/or partner organizations' in-kind contributions. Partner organizations that participate in By Name List or Case Conferencing meetings must sign this agreement and comply with the responsibilities listed below to ensure client privacy and confidentiality.

III. Responsibilities

Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) partner organizations share the following responsibilities:

- Compliance with all CES processes, policies, and procedures detailed in the **Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures Manual**, including policies related to referral, grievance, prioritization, data sharing, and client confidentiality, among others.
- Compliance with all PA HMIS processes, policies, and procedures.
- Ensure that people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness understand how the CES system works.
- Make appropriate staff available for regular CES trainings and meetings.
- Distribute CES marketing and outreach materials.
- Compliance with all applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and requirements.

Recipients and subrecipients of CoC Program and ESG Program-funded projects must comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws as specified at 24 C.F.R. 5.105(a), including, but not limited to, the following:

- Fair Housing Act prohibits discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance;
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance; and
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits public entities, which includes state and local governments, and special purpose districts, from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in all their services, programs, and activities, which include housing, and housing-related services such as housing search and referral assistance. Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits private entities that own, lease, and operate places of public accommodation, which include shelters, social service establishments, and other



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public accommodations providing housing, from discriminating on the basis of disability.

In addition, HUD's Equal Access Rule at 24 CFR 5.105(a)(2) prohibits discriminatory eligibility determinations in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing programs based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, including any projects funded by the CoC Program, ESG Program, and HOPWA Program. The CoC Program interim rule also contains a fair housing provision at 24 CFR 578.93. For ESG, see 24 CFR 576.407(a) and (b), and for HOPWA, see 24 CFR 574.603.

IV. Termination of Agreement

Any party may terminate its participation in this agreement by providing written notice to the appropriate CES Regional Manager and the Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry Committee Chairperson. Referral partners must provide at least 30 days' notice of termination. Access Sites must provide at least 60 days' notice before ceasing operations. Organizations employing Regional Managers must provide at least 90 days' notice to allow the CoC to identify and select a new organization to employ a Regional Manager. Participation in the Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry System is required by certain funders, including HUD's CoC and ESG programs. Termination of this agreement may negatively affect the Partner's ability to obtain and/or retain funding.

V. Expenses

Unless the CoC has provided grant funding to a CES Operations Partner organization through a separate contract, all expenses incurred by the participants of the Eastern PA Coordinated Entry System are the responsibility of the Partner.



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Agreement

The signature of the Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer or designee of the Partner Organization indicates agreement with the terms set forth in this Partnership Agreement.

By signing this Agreement, I understand and agree to the terms herein on behalf of my organization.

Organization Name:

Name and Title of Person Authorized To Sign This Agreement:

Signature of Person Authorized to Sign This Agreement:

Signature

Date

Agreed to and accepted on behalf of the Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care:

Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Committee Consultant

Date