



**SONOMA COUNTY
HOMELESS
COALITION**

**Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Coordinated Entry Committee
Agenda for May 1, 2024
12:00pm-1:30pm Pacific Time**

Zoom link:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/92281657937?pwd=SW42V2tOcHdlY0o5OStQNfK3WUY4UT09>

| # | Agenda Item | Packet Item | Presenter | Time |
|----|--|-------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1. | Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions | | Committee Chair | 12:00pm |
| 2. | Approval of agenda and minutes (Action item) | 1,2 | Committee Chair | 12:05pm |
| 3. | Updates to Coordinated Entry policies and procedures (Action item) | 3 | Lead agency staff | 12:10pm |
| 4. | Coordinated Entry Self-evaluation (potential action item) | 4 | Lead Agency staff | 1:45pm |
| 5. | Public Comment on non-agenized items | | Public | 1:25pm |

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public Comment may be made via email or during the live zoom meeting. To submit an emailed public comment to the CE committee email Thai.Hilton@sonoma-county.org. Please provide your name, the agenda number(s) on which you wish to speak, and your comment. These comments will be emailed to all Board members. Public comment during the meeting can be made live by joining the Zoom meeting using the above provided information. Available time for comments is determined by the Board Chair based on agenda scheduling demands and total number of speakers.

Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee (CEA)

April 3, 2024, 12:00pm. – 1:30pm.

Meeting recording

https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/xj5PEP49PR5ahoZKv5qd65sK_WodY27_qGwlUU_n-Nv83c-xKvKjpb2sqNk6Vriy.nSlSrsb3qUd2rbky?startTime=1712170979000

Passcode: ht+zrkT1

- 1. Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions:** Committee Chair Matthew Verscheure called Meeting to order; Thai Hilton, Coordinated Entry Coordinator, went over Zoom rules around public comment and Brown Act guidelines. Matthew Verscheure asked 2 new committee members to introduce themselves. The new members, Kate Mather, and Araceli Zavala introduced themselves to the committee. Kate Mather is replacing Mary Haynes and Araceli Zavala is replacing Sue Pierce. Matthew Verscheure informs the committee that Sara Hunt stepped down from her committee seat and that the seat will be filled through the open application process.

Roll Call:

Present: Staci Questoni (proxy for Robin Phoenix), Kate Mather, Margaret Sluyk, Ben Leroi, Matthew Verscheure, Justin Milligan, Araceli Zavala, Kathleen Pozzi, Sasha Brown, Heather Jackson

Absent: Lauren Taylor

- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Justin Milligan motions to approve the agenda, Kathleen Pozzi seconds.

Public Comment: None

Vote:

Objections of abstentions: None

Motion passes

- 3. Updates to program standards (Action item):** Thai Hilton presents changes to the Emergency Shelter (ES), Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Standards.

Staff is recommending changes to the length of stay policy for ES standards. The change removes the requirement for shelter stays to be limited to 180 days. Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis but cannot be conditioned on participation in case management.

Staff is also recommending changes to the non-discrimination policy for the ES, RRH and PSH standards. The new policy describes HUD's Equal Access Final Rule, HUD's Gender Identity Final Rule and provides information on preventing family separation in ES projects. The reason for this change was motivated by information contained in the 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Continuum of Care program which indicated that communities would be scored in part on their non-discrimination policies for ESG and CoC funded projects. This change makes the non-discrimination policy more explicit. The lead agency plans to hold mandatory trainings on these changes in the future.

Staff responds to questions from committee members.

Public Comment: None

Staff presents a draft of the new Street Outreach (SO) standards. The standards are a new model for SO for the system of care. Ben Leroi asks about the standard for general outreach. He expresses concern that it is not enough general outreach. There is committee and staff discussion on whether the general outreach refers to each outreach member or each pair of SO workers.

Motion: Ben Leroi motions to approve all the standards with a change to the general outreach policy. The change clarifies that there will be 2 hours of general outreach per outreach worker FTE, per week. Sasha Brown seconds

Public Comment: None

Vote:

Objections of abstentions: None

Motion passes

4. The Commons referrals

Staff presents information on The Commons eligibility requirements. Coordinated Entry (CE) has been referring to the project but the requirement to have an active HCV has made it increasingly difficult to refer clients. CE has referred almost all the individuals in the PSH range with an active HCV to the project, but some units remain open. Many of these referrals have not come from the top of the list like most PSH projects because CE must search the list for individuals with HCVs. To do so, CE has had to go down the list. For context, normal PSH referrals are for individuals who score around 35 on the prioritization tool. The individuals being referred are close to the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) range for referrals (4-8).

This is concerning because our PSH policies state that we will only refer individuals who score 9 or above. Referring people outside the PSH range would be outside the PSH and RRH standards. Additionally, CE cannot be sure that less vulnerable individuals will meet the chronic homelessness status. Currently, CE is still able to make PSH level referrals. Staff reported they have spoken to the operator of The Commons, St. Vincent De Paul (SVDP), and expressed these concerns. SVDP has stated they are seeking other rental assistance options like project-based vouchers and/or seeking other rental assistance funds through the CoC program.

Sasha Brown asks if SVDP would be open to partnerships with local jurisdictions to fund the rental assistance if/when there are no longer individuals who are chronically homeless with a voucher. Other committee members ask for clarifying information around the CoC program requirements. Sasha Brown states that she is open to meeting with stakeholders offline to troubleshoot the issue.

Public Comment: none

5. Coordinated Entry Self Evaluation: Thai Hilton provided update and overview on work/review that been done for the Coordinated Entry Self-Assessment. In total there are 7 sections in the CE Self-Assessment. Staff will be taking the committee through section 5.

Public Comment: None

6. Public Comment on non-agenda items: None

Meeting is adjourned at 1:23pm.



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**Sonoma County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee
Executive Summary**

Item: 3 Updates to Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures

Date: May 1, 2024

Staff Contact: Hunter Scott Hscott@homefirstsc.org Thai Hilton thai.hilton@sonoma-county.org

Agenda Item Overview

HomeFirst will regularly provide updates to the Coordinated Entry policies and procedures. These updates put into place the final stage of Dynamic Prioritization. This final step includes participant choice in referral decisions. Staff believes this will reduce the number of referral rejections for participant choice. The updated standards are attached. A description of the changes is below.

Recommendation

Approve the updates to the CE policies and procedures.



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Change: Changes were made throughout the document in alignment with Dynamic Prioritization: describing further how a “priority group” is to be established each month of participants likely to be referred, establishing a process to collect those participants’ preferences among available housing options, and sending referrals based on those preferences first rather than Total Prioritization Score. TPS will still be used as a tie-breaker between participants who have the same preferences of housing options. TPS also is used to establish the Priority Group each month.

Reasoning: HomeFirst first presented a plan to move towards a “Dynamic Prioritization” model of CES at the CEA and Homeless Coalition Board in May 2023. This change process included 3 “stages.” Stage 1 was implemented in June of 2023 and included creating a “Priority Group” of people likely to be referred in the following month and collecting Verified Contact Information for all people in the Priority Group. Stage 2 was implemented in November 2023 which required all referrals to have “Verified Contact Information.” The changes described here form “Stage 3” of this process, and will shift the referral process to take into account Participants’ ranked choices between housing options. Making referrals based on participant choice is a best practice for Coordinated Entry systems and continues to pivot the system to being more participant-centered. As of the last CES Performance Evaluation report for last quarter 32% of referral rejections in the system were due to client choice. This change will hopefully reduce that percentage to near zero. In addition, these changes build in an additional stage to collect any last-minute eligibility changes to assist the referral process. 23% of referral rejections are due to the participant not being eligible for the program.

These changes are heavily dependent on active participation from subregional outreach and BNL leads in each subregion and could only be possible with the establishment of the subregional structure through the new Homeless Coalition Outreach Standards that were passed in April. Prior to these CES changes being brought to the CEA and Homeless Coalition for approval, input was sought by the BNL Leads for each subregion who represent outreach in their regions, as well as by Catholic Charities who form the largest provider for two subregions. HomeFirst also operates South County and Sonoma Valley By-Name-Lists and sought input from providers in those subregions as well. A group of people with lived experience of homelessness who sit on the Lived Experience Advisory Planning Board provided crucial input early on in the design process for the various stages. It was that group that suggested the process culminate in what is being presented in these changes. Finally, HomeFirst has heard from many Cooperating Agencies a desire to take into account clients’ regional and provider preferences when making referrals at every single CES Performance Evaluation Input session since operation start in 2022.

Other small changes to the Policies:

- “By-Name-List” was updated to include “CES By-Name-List” where applicable to differentiate between different county-wide By-Name-Lists.
- References to “Continuum of Care” and “CoC” were removed except where they referred to CoC funding or otherwise made sense in context. “Homeless Coalition” replaced these references.
- Relevant Dynamic Prioritization terms were added to Definitions.



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- Updates made throughout to align with new Sonoma County Street Outreach Standards: “Collaboration with Street Outreach and Virtual Entry”; Definitions, “Warm Handoff”; “Collection of Initial Eligibility Documents”.
- Removed all references to a 25% cap on referrals for people who were prioritized through the Enhanced Assessment process. This cap has never been used and no longer makes sense in the current process.
- Removed reference to “housing in hand” step down schedule for RRH referrals. This schedule concluded over a year ago.

Main changes to language (aside from references to BNL and CoC, which are throughout) can be found on the following pages:

Pg 5

Pg 27

Pg 31-34

Pg 37-42

Pg 50



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**Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee
Executive Summary**

Item: 4. Coordinated Entry Self evaluation

Date: May 1, 2024

Staff Contact: Thai Hilton thai.hilton@sonoma-county.org Hunter Scott: hscott@homefirstscc.org

Agenda Item Overview

The Sonoma County Coordinated Entry (CE) policies and procedures state that the Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee (CEA) will complete HUD's CE self-assessment annually. This self-assessment is sometimes required for funding applications. Staff and HomeFirst staff guided this committee through most of the self-assessment but did not complete it.

Lead-agency and HomeFirst staff will guide the committee through several questions. Lead agency staff has created a slide deck that will help you understand what each question. Each question will be listed and in red, below is information on the local CE system that responds to it.

Recommendation

None. Information only