

Guiding Principles for Coordinated Entry System Design

February 2016 (Revised)

These Guiding Principles were developed and adopted by the Coordinated Entry System Committee and the Coordinated Entry System Funders' Collaborative to guide the planning and design for coordinated entry in Alameda County.

1. Housing First & Low Barrier

- a) The CES system and all programs within it will use a housing first, low barrier approach focused on ending homelessness for each household as quickly as possible.

2. Access

- a) CES will be easily accessible throughout the county, with multiple entry points: potentially will include in-person, phone, internet or app, etc.
- b) CES will include outreach so people least likely to seek services independently have access to the resources of the system.

3. Standardized Process

- a) Every CES point will screen, assess, and refer clients with standardized protocols using standardized tools and processes.

4. Respect for Clients and Confidentiality

- a) Information will be collected in a respectful, strengths-based and trauma-informed manner.
 - i) Tools and decision/referral processes will require only as much information as is needed to assist or refer clients at that point.
 - ii) With client consent, information will be shared within the system.

- b) The number of times people have to repeat their stories will be limited as much as possible.
- c) Client choice and the client's service and personal network will inform options for services, housing, and referrals.

5. Referral Processes

- a) Referrals will be based on meeting the clients' housing and services needs, rather than on filling the beds or slots of programs.
- b) Clear referral and handoff protocols support both the service providers making and receiving the referral.
- c) Programs will only take individuals or families into their program through the CES under established eligibility criteria, and not from alternate sources (except in specific, defined circumstances).
- d) As much as possible, waitlists will be avoided.

6. Services for those who are Literally Homeless (or would be that night)

- a) Entry into services and housing intended for those who are homeless will go first to people sleeping in places not meant for human habitation and those with no safe indoor place to stay that night. No one should have to sleep outside first to become eligible for services.
- b) For those who are literally homeless, deeper resources will be targeted those with the highest needs.
- c) Programs will follow a progressive approach to service delivery, matching the level of service intervention to the level of client need to resolve their housing crisis. Assessment is ongoing and more intensive services will be offered as needed. Clients can opt for less intensive support than what is offered.

7. Housing Problem Solving (Diversion) for those Not Yet Homeless

- a) People not yet homeless will be provided support and problem solving services to avoid an entry into the homeless system whenever safe.

8. Links to Domestic Violence Services

- a) Throughout the system, safety screening and links to domestic violence services will be integrated.

9. CES Management, Oversight, & Evaluation

- a) Resources will be allocated to ensure the coordinated entry system is managed, well-coordinated, and continually improving. Data will be used to assess the impacts and outcomes of the system to inform changes.
- b) Stakeholders — including service providers, funders, and people with lived experience of homelessness — will have an ongoing role in the oversight and refinement of the Coordinated Entry System.