MOU between Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Designated Management Entity for Alameda County’s Housing Crisis Response System’s Coordinated Entry process, and the Alameda County HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Committee, acting as the CoC Board

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into between the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Office of Homeless Care and Coordination, hereafter known as the “Management Entity,” and the Oakland-Berkeley-Alameda County Continuum of Care HUD CoC Committee.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to memorialize the agreements and working relationship between the Health Care Service Agency acting as the Coordinated Entry Management Entity and the HUD CoC Committee in the development, implementation, oversight and evaluation of the Alameda County Coordinated Entry (CE) process.

The MOU reflects the following:

1. Agreement and clarity of roles and responsibilities among the parties to the MOU.
2. Clear and responsive processes for making time-sensitive policy decisions that ensure the appropriate and continued functioning of CE.
3. Process for reaching agreed upon and approved CE design and workflow and maintaining the associated Policy manual that is regularly reviewed, evaluated and modified as needed to meet shared goals.
4. Agreed upon roles and cooperation to ensure adequate resource availability to implement the CE design and workflow.
5. Agreed upon process to develop and implement data collection and reporting expectations of the Management Entity.
6. Additional expectations for roles related to other aspects of the CE system including training, grievance procedures and other anticipated areas of work.

II. DEFINITIONS

- **Coordinated Entry Process:** A centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

- **Management Entity:** Entity designated by the CoC Board to implement day-to-day workflow of the Coordinated Entry process. Management Entity responsibilities include establishing day-to-day management structures, a clear and accessible communication plan, promoting standardized screening and assessment processes, developing and delivering training and conducting monitoring.

- **Policy Oversight Entity:** The CoC Board or a designated Committee of the CoC which reviews policy and establishes participation expectations, and data collection, quality and sharing protocols.

- **Evaluation Entity:** Entity designated by the CoC Board to plan annual CE evaluation, collect data evaluate CE implementation process for effectiveness and efficiency and Identify policy and
process improvements. The Evaluation Entity may be the CoC Board, The Policy Oversight Entity or another committee of the CoC, but may not be the Management Entity.

- **Access:** The method by which people experiencing a housing crisis learn that coordinated entry exists, access crisis response services, and are connected to the process to determine through *assessment* which intervention might be most appropriate to rapidly connect those people to housing.

- **Assessment:** The use of one or more standardized assessment tool(s) to determine a household’s current housing situation, housing and service needs, risk of harm, risk of future or continued homelessness, and other adverse outcomes.

- **Prioritization:** The coordinated entry-specific process by which all persons in need of assistance who use coordinated entry are ranked in order of priority.

- **Referral:** The process by which persons who are prioritized for available resources within the Coordinated Entry process are connected to the resource(s) for which they are prioritized and eligible. Referral process includes eligibility screening, monitoring project availability, enrollment coordination, managing referral rejections, and tracking the status of the referral throughout the referral process.

III. **BACKGROUND ON COORDINATED ENTRY IN ALAMEDA COUNTY**

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires via law and regulation and annual NOFA process that every community that receives HUD CoC and ESG funding design adopt, operate and evaluate a Coordinated Entry process consisting of defined components for ensuring access, assessment prioritization and referral to a community’s resources.

- The State of California has adopted requirements similar to those of HUD for certain State resources; and jurisdictions within Alameda County including the County and cities have also adopted certain requirements for programs to participate in the Coordinated Entry process.

- In 2016, the community developed an initial Coordinated Entry design which was adopted and/or incorporated into contract expectations by the CoC Committee, EverOne Home Leadership Board, the County of Alameda and many of the cities. In 2017, EveryOne Home developed a system manual to document to policies and procedures related to the operation of county-wide Coordinated Entry. The guiding principles in the Continuum of Care Governance Charter and the System Manual are the current documents reflecting the agreed upon Coordinated Entry design and process, as amended and modified since implementation.

- Funding for the Coordinated Entry process was initially secured and provided through partnership between the COC, the County Health Care Services and Housing and Community Development agencies with significant support and resources contributed and committed by local cities and providers to develop and operationalize coordinated entry across the region.

- The Alameda County HMIS system is the primary data system to be used for Coordinated Entry.

- HUD requires that CoCs designate a Management Entity to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Coordinated Entry process. The CoC Committee designated the System Coordination Committee to lead the process for selection of a Management Entity and in 2020 the SCC and CoC Committees issued a Request for Interest for parties interested and able to serve as the Management Entity.

- The Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (HCSA-OHCC) applied and was selected by the HUD CoC Committee in June 2020 to serve as the Coordinated Entry Management Entity.
IV. TERM

1. This MOU is executed for an initial three-year term, beginning ____________ and expiring __________ unless extended in writing.

2. The parties will hold at least an annual review of the MOU including the scope of expectations proposed CE budget and staffing and other considerations listed below, and update it as needed during this period.

3. At the end of the three-year period the parties may determine to extend this MOU or to enter into a new or different agreement.

4. Either party may terminate the agreement with 90 days’ notice to the other party.

5. Good faith efforts to resolve differences including updating or reopening the MOU or other agreements will be made before moving to terminate.

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Designation of the System Coordinated Committee as the Policy Oversight Entity

1. The HUD Continuum of Care Committee, acting as the CoC Board, designates the System Coordination Committee to serve as the Policy Oversight Entity and delegates to it the responsibilities of the Policy Oversight Entity included in this MOU. This designation may be reconsidered or changed and would be reflected in modifications to the Governance Charter and revisions to this MOU.

2. The HUD CoC Committee shall exercise appropriate oversight of the Policy Oversight Entity to ensure that the Coordinated Entry process is developed, implemented and evaluated consistent and compliant with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The attached organizational chart reflects the reporting relationships.

   a. The SCC and CoC Committee will put in place mechanisms to ensure that the CoC Committee is apprised and consulted on any significant changes or issues that would potentially generate compliance concerns, could threaten or potentially impact any funding for Coordinated Entry or threaten or impact Alameda County’s standing with HUD in general.

   b. HUD CoC Committee will designate what items, in addition to an annual review of the policies, must come for ratification or oversight and communicate those to SCC. Such designation shall be made with consideration for the timeliness of decisions and to avoid multiple approval or oversight steps whenever possible.

   c. The HUD CoC Committee will be consulted and will determine what actions to take if any program or entity required to participate in coordinated entry based on Federal requirements is not participating in good faith as required, and will determine what actions (whether through the annual NOFA application process or some other manner) to compel or impact for non-participation.
B. Staffing Support to the Policy Oversight Entity

The Management Entity and Everyone Home (the backbone organization for the CoC Board and the System Coordination Committee) will share the responsibilities of staffing the Policy Oversight Entity for all work related to the oversight and decision making for Coordinated Entry.

1. The Management Entity will:
   a. Work with the co-chair(s) and EOH to set the agendas.
   b. Inform, present and facilitate discussions on items related to Coordinated Entry policy and decisions.
   c. Prepare materials in advance for distribution to SCC members.
   d. Document decisions made and ensure that decisions are reflected appropriately in the Housing Crisis Response System and Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedure Manual (see E. below).
   e. Work with the Leadership board, nominating committee and/or the CoC Committee to develop and update SCC membership criteria, roles, and responsibilities to ensure diverse representation and knowledge and experience with Coordinated Entry.

2. Everyone Home, acting on behalf of the SCC, will:
   a. Convene and host the meetings.
   b. Work with the co-chairs and the Management Entity to set the agendas.
   c. Support the co-chairs to facilitate the meeting.
   d. Finalize and send out the agenda, materials, and other notices.
   e. Maintain a distribution list of members and others to keep informed.
   f. Take and post notes.
   g. Ensure that public participation policy and other rules of meeting procedure are followed.
   h. Following the Governance Charter, work with Management Entity to determine whether SCC has appropriate and diverse range of experience and perspective to advise on and provide oversight to the Coordinated Entry process, and refine membership criteria, roles, and recruiting efforts as needed.

C. Design and Participation in the Coordinated Entry Process

The overarching design and form of coordinated entry process must cover four required areas: Access, Assessment, Prioritization and Referral to a range of programs models and type that constitute the Housing Crisis Response System. Certain programs are required to participate in the CE process including those designated by Federal and State funding requirements. Other programs are considered desirable or would be welcome partners in the CE process and will be invited and encouraged to participate.

1. Management Entity will:
a. Develop, with input, and bring to the Policy Oversight Entity for review and approval any significant changes to the overall design of the Coordinated Entry process, including approaches for Access, Assessment, Prioritization and Referral.

b. Bring for approval any proposed significant changes in the design or delivery of CE funded services that change Access.

c. Make recommendations for the desired scope or preferred inclusion of resources/program types in CE beyond those required by law or regulation to participate and suggest methods to encourage participation.

d. After consultation with stakeholders and funders, make recommendations for how, and which resources/program types are prioritized.

e. Work to outreach and engage new partners including through working with other public and private funders, and with other programs to encourage participation or collaboration.

f. Identify and report to the Policy Oversight Entity whether those programs and entities required to participate and those designated as desirable to participate are doing so.

g. Ensure that the approved design, participation requirements, and any modifications are clearly described and reflected in the Policies and Procedures (See E. below), along with, supporting forms and guidance, and in any other documents such as marketing materials or public communications.

2. Policy Oversight Entity will:

a. Work with Management Entity to define and clarify the overall design of coordinated entry, its intent and guiding principles.

b. Consider and approve any significant proposed changes in any of the four components of Coordinated Entry: Access, Assessment, Prioritization or Referral, or other areas of Coordinated Entry design.

c. Consider Management Entity recommendations and make recommendations for the desired scope or preferred inclusion of resources/program types in CE beyond those required to participate (note that for some programs types and resources these will be recommendations only as funders retain final determination of whether to require participation.)

d. Consider Management Entity recommendations and make recommendations for how, and which, resources/program types are prioritized (note that for some programs types and resources these will be recommendations only as funders retain final determination of prioritization for resources.)

e. Consider and adopt significant changes to other required policies listed separately below such as training, evaluation and the appeals process.

D. Operations of Coordinated Entry Process:
The Management Entity shall have primary responsibility and authority to make and implement all operational decisions to manage the day-to-day work of the CE process and to ensure participation in CE.

1. **Management Entity will** have all required responsibilities listed in the “Core Operational Functions for Coordinated Entry Management Entities”1 including but not limited to:
   a. Facilitate CE-related working groups, committees, and forums to coordinate and standardize referrals and monitor and review the coordinated entry process.
   b. Establish a clear, accessible communication plan with specific coordination methods for each part of the CE process.
   c. Develop and deploy a marketing strategy that clearly and transparently shows how and where people can access the CE system.
   d. Manage all PR requests.
   e. Support implementation of system-wide problem solving/diversion strategy.
   f. Manage transition/transfer protocols for different subpopulations within Access points.
   g. Standardize screening and assessment processes.
   h. Manage an updated inventory of CE resources.
   i. Manage the centralized priority list for housing resources for all populations.
   j. Manage the referral, matching and placement process including any case conferencing or other input process.
   k. Coordinate CE data collection, management and reporting with HMIS lead and HMIS software provider.
   l. Establish and operationalize a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process.
   m. All other functions or requirements that are necessary to ensure that the Coordinated Entry process is conducted in an accessible, standard, fair, and consistent manner and connects households to the appropriate service or resource in a timely manner according to requirements outlined by HUD.

2. Except as specified in this MOU, the Management Entity shall have sole authority to identify and act upon all operational issues.

3. The Management Entity will report periodically, as described in VI.A.3 below, to the Policy Oversight Entity on the progress of operations, achievements, challenges or concerns, and future plans.

E. **Develop, Maintain and Disseminate Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures**

HUD requires CoCs to develop and maintain policies and procedures covering a wide variety of CE practices including, but not limited to, geographic coverage and access including for specific

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populations; the assessment, prioritization and referral process and criteria/factors; privacy protections, appeals, marketing, outreach, prevention and evaluation.

1. **Management Entity will:**
   a. Have responsibility to draft, update and maintain all Coordinated Entry policies and procedures and record and share them in an agreed format.
      i. **Policies** included in the official record of policies shall be those presented to and adopted by the Policy Oversight Entity or otherwise required to be adopted or incorporated by HUD, the State or another regulatory or funding entity.
      ii. **Procedures** designating steps and activities necessary to operationalize policies are not subject to approval but will be presented for information and reviewed not less than annually. Members of the Policy Oversight Entity and other interested parties may be asked to participate in the development or review of procedures.

2. **Policy Oversight Entity will:**
   a. Consider, with Management Entity input and recommendations, and adopt a format for the recording and dissemination of adopted policies that apply to Coordinated Entry.
   b. Not less than annually the Management Entity and Policy Oversight Entity will jointly review for any needed updates to the Policies and Procedures and any changes not previously reviewed and provide feedback.

F. **Training**
Regular and high quality training is a recognized need and current gap in the existing Coordinated Entry system. HUD requires at least annual training opportunities to organizations or staff persons at organizations that serve as access points or administer assessments. HUD recommends additional training in culturally and linguistically competent assessment practices, trauma informed techniques and safety planning.

1. **Management Entity will:**
   a. Consult with Policy Oversight Entity on needed and desired training, subject to available resources.
   b. Prepare annual training plan and training protocols.
   c. Provide system-wide training to CE staff and/or host learning communities or other practices to ensure training is provided on standard practices necessary to implement CE, as reflected in agreed to plan.
   d. Provide an annual report on training delivered, including content, attendance and results, and a plan for the coming year.

2. **Policy Oversight Entity will:**
   a. Review annual plan and also review any recommended trainings from HUD and make recommendations for additions, changes or approaches.
   b. Give feedback from annual report and help set new plan for coming year.
VI. REPORTING, TROUBLE SHOOTING AND EVALUATION OF CE PROCESS

A. Management Reports

1. Management Entity is responsible for providing Policy Oversight Entity with periodic and regular CE Management reports that reflect on the operations and outcomes of the CE system, including an equity review.

2. Both parties will work together to review the content and frequency of proposed quantitative/data reports building on those previously described in the RFI and determine:
   a. How they need to be modified to align with the system modeling and to center racial equity;
   b. How the reports and measures fit in with the Results Based Accountability and work already occurring;
   c. What else may be needed to determine how the CE process is functioning and outcomes of the process;
   d. Which reports are most feasible to begin with; and,
   e. Set priorities for reports and establish a calendar for reporting.

3. In addition to the data reports, Management Entity will provide regular Update reports on operations to the Policy Oversight Entity covering work undertaken in the period, achievements, challenges facing and what plan for next period.

4. Frequency of reporting
   a. Data-based Management Reports will be presented in accordance with an agreed to calendar, not less than quarterly once they are able to be generated.
   b. For the first year, Update Reports will be presented quarterly; as the Management Entity work is more standardized and significant changes are more infrequent these reports may become semi-annual.

5. Twice a year, the Management Entity and Policy Oversight Entity will jointly report to and apprise the Leadership Board of progress, changes and outcomes major policy changes for Coordinated Entry.

B. Grievance/Appeals Process

HUD requires that a CoCs written policies and procedures include a process by which individuals and families may appeal Coordinated Entry decisions.

1. Management Entity will:
   a. Develop a proposed grievance and appeal policy and process.
   b. Operationalize the grievance and appeal process, including dedicating staff time to this purpose.
   d. Reports will include volume of complaints and appeals, demographics, and type of grievances and examples of resolutions.
2. **Policy Oversight Entity will:**
   a. Review, provide feedback and approve the policy.
   b. Review the functioning of the process in aggregate but will not review information regarding individual cases or respond to individual grievances.
   c. Include information generated from the process in its annual evaluation and in informing areas for further refinement or improvement.

C. **Annual Evaluation**

HUD requires that CoCs solicit feedback at least annually from participating projects and from households that participated in Coordinated Entry during that time period. Solicitations must address the quality and effectiveness of the entire Coordinated Entry experience for both participating projects and households. This activity may be undertaken by the CoC Board, the Policy Oversight Entity or another entity designated by the CoC Board, but must not be undertaken by the Management Entity.

1. **Management Entity will:**
   a. Work with Policy Oversight Entity to develop the scope for any outside evaluation work.
   b. Will not retain a vote in the selection process for an Evaluation Entity if one is to be selected through a competitive process, but is able to participate in review and discussion.
   c. Will provide access to a selected Evaluation Entity as needed to conduct its work including to Management Entity staff and materials.

2. **The Policy Oversight Entity will**
   a. Lead the annual evaluation process including:
      i. Work with Management Entity to develop a scope of work for the evaluation and to determine whether a third-party Evaluation Entity will be engaged.
      ii. Develop and run the process for selecting an outside Evaluation Entity if one is to be used.
      iii. Make a recommendation to the CoC Committee on the selection of the Evaluation Entity if one is selected.
      iv. Review and forward to the CoC Committee all drafts and final reports/deliverables from any outside Evaluation Entity.

VII. **RESOURCES NEEDED TO CARRY OUT CE FUNCTIONS**

A. **Coordinated Entry Funding**

Resources are needed to carry out the Coordinated Entry functions, both for the operational and monitoring functions of the Management Entity itself and for the community organizations contracted to deliver CE and related services such as housing program solving, assessment, matching and navigation services.

1. **Management Entity will:**
a. Provide an annual budget to the Policy Oversight Entity and the HUD CoC Committee and communicate at least annually, and more frequently if needed, about the scope of activity supported by the current funding and unmet funding needs.
   i. Response to RFI contains an initial budget and identified gap. Final budget to be produced by the end of October 2020 and then each year by June 30 for the following fiscal year.

b. Receive or coordinate and manage funding that comes in to Alameda County from Federal, State, local or other sources specifically dedicated for the CE process.

c. Consider and be brought into any discussions with the CoC Committee and Collaborative Applicant about current and future funding that could be used for CE purposes, and where it is best applied.

d. Pursue other funding that may become available for the CE process as the lead entity or grantee unless another entity is specifically required as applicant or grantee.

e. Issue contracts and fund operators/providers of services that are part of the CE process including determining who to contract with, developing contracts and managing the selection process and monitoring such contracts.

2. The Policy Oversight Entity and the HUD Continuum of Care Committee will:

   a. Take actions as needed to support the continuing receipt of resources for Coordinated Entry from Federal, State and local entities.

   b. Participate as needed with the Management Entity in efforts to generate new resources for this process to fill funding gaps and ensure that the approved design, staffing, etc. is able to be supported.

   c. Not ask or require Management Entity to take on activities for which there is no funding.

B. Management Entity Staff and Structure

Management Entity is required to provide appropriate staffing levels to fulfill the tasks designated to it under this MOU and other agreements or requirements as may be adopted, dependent on the availability of funding.

1. Management Entity will:

   a. Determine staff needs, hiring, supervising and in generally ensuring appropriate staffing.

   i. The Response provided by HCSA to the RFI includes an initial expectation of approximately 12 staff (see RFI response). This number may change depending on needs and resources.

   b. Management Entity will present an annual proposed staffing plan along with the budget for review by Policy Oversight Entity.

2. Policy Oversight Entity will:

   a. Undertake an annual review of current and proposed staffing including:
i. Review an organizational chart and designated positions.

ii. Provide feedback or expressing concerns or considerations.

b. Policy Oversight Entity may make recommendations but will not make final decisions about specific staffing roles or budget items and will not participate in any decisions about hiring or supervision.
Approved this ___ day of ________, 2020 by

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

By:_____________________________
    Colleen Chawla, Director
    Alameda County
    Health Care Services Agency

ALAMEDA COUNTY COC BOARD

By: Doug Biggs

_____________________________
Chair, HUD CoC Committee
   c/o Everyone Home

Approved as to form by:
Donna R. Ziegler, County Counsel

By _______________________
    Name
    Deputy County Counsel