



Coordinated Assessment: Streamlining the System

October 31st, 2014

Session Descriptions

The primary function of a coordinated assessment system is to make rapid, effective, and consistent client-to-housing and service matches for homeless individuals and families. This is accomplished by standardizing client access and assessment processes and by coordinating referrals across the CoC.

While HUD requires that a coordinated assessment system covers the whole CoC geographic area, is easily accessible and well advertised, includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool, and provides referrals for housing and services, communities have flexibility within these parameters to model their system as befits the local context. These baseline requirements are designed to retool community efforts to end homelessness from a fragmented program-centric homeless service approach to a coordinated client-centric crisis response system model.

Re-orienting how a community works together to end homelessness is no easy task. But by meeting the challenges of developing and implementing coordinated assessment, we can better serve the most vulnerable individuals and families in our communities by moving them into housing more quickly, effectively, and consistently. With knowledge of the guiding principles, practical applications, and requirements of coordinated assessment, we can *streamline the system*. And we can *end homelessness*.

Opening Plenary Panel – Getting Started with Coordinated Assessment

Why should we develop and operate a centralized/coordinated assessment system? What is the value of managing your homeless services from a system perspective versus a programmatic perspective? How does it benefit the community? Monarch Housing Associates introduces the core principles of coordinated assessment, dispelling misconceptions and clarifying what the term 'coordinated assessment' really means. Coordinated assessment is more than just a HUD requirement, it is also a best practice model for a systems enabling them to provide timely access to appropriate referrals for housing and services for the homeless. Monarch will moderate a panel discussion about why and how coordinated assessment is working in communities across the country. Panelists include Rebecca Pfeiffer, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County CoC Coordinator and Chair of the Coordinated Assessment Committee, Leti Egea-Hinton, Deputy Director of the City of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing and Iain DeJong, President and CEO of OrgCode Consulting, Inc., and designer of the Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool, or VI-SPDAT.

Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable – Using Data and Conducting a True Assessment

Who is the most vulnerable person in need of housing right now? What kind of program should this person be referred to? How do we develop an assessment for our community? In order for CoCs to allocate resources and make decisions that effectively address the housing needs of the homeless in their communities, they must be able to accurately discern what areas, populations, and programs should be prioritized. This means collecting enough essential client data about homeless history, housing barriers, and other vulnerability criteria to identify the appropriate options to end the client's homelessness. This session will provide guidance about how standardizing the collection and utilization of data to inform client housing options and referrals makes a successful coordinated assessment. Leti Egea-Hinton of Philadelphia's Office of Supportive Housing will be teaming up with Monarch Housing Associates to emphasize the importance of prioritization and using local data effectively to adjust the system.

Planning and Development – Key Steps for a Successful Implementation Process

Who needs to be part of the coordinated assessment planning process? How do communities develop these systems? What pitfalls should be avoided? Thinking through the decision making process for your homeless service system and planning activities is key to moving forward with a coordinated approach to ending homelessness. Communities across the country are working through these critical issues and some have made great strides in establishing effective centralized intake/coordinated assessment systems. National experts will discuss local strategies that communities can use to develop their own successful coordinated intake and walk through next steps in the process. Joining Monarch Housing Associates to discuss this topic will be Iain DeJong, President and CEO of OrgCode Consulting, Inc., and designer of the VI-SPDAT assessment.

The Nuts and Bolts of Coordinated Assessment – Finding the Right Model and Tool

If we are to truly function as a coordinated system, how can we streamline the system intake/entry process? Would a single point of entry, multi-site centralized access, assessment hotline, no wrong door, or other coordinated entry model work best for our community? Communities across the country have developed creative ways to structure system access and have seen impressive outcomes as new intake and assessment processes are put into place. Because each local context presents unique challenges and constraints, every community must find the coordinated assessment that best addresses its needs; there is no 'one size fits all' solution. In this session, presenter Rebecca Pfeiffer, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County CoC Coordinator and Chair of the Coordinated Assessment Committee, will join Monarch Housing Associates to share the successes and challenges found during the development and implementation of her community's coordinated assessment model and tool.

Closing Remarks and Open Discussion Session

Across the nation many communities are developing and implementing centralized intake/coordinated assessment systems to strengthen their joint efforts to end homelessness. As we work towards implementing changes to homeless service systems we must continually ask how we can better serve those who are most vulnerable. This session opens up the floor for discussion of how to apply what we know about the need for coordinated assessment in our own community.