



**SONOMA COUNTY
HOMELESS
COALITION**

**Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Coordinated Entry Committee
Agenda for October 2, 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
	Note: Items 2-3 below are proposed for adoption via one motion as the consent calendar			
2.	Approval of agenda and minutes (Action item)	1,2	Committee Chair	12:05pm
3.	Changes to CE policies and procedures (Action item)	3	Committee Chair	
4.	Changes to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing standards (Action item)	4	Lead Agency staff	12:10pm
5.	Coordinated Entry quarterly evaluation	5	HomeFirst staff	12:40pm
6.	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 Committee Chair based on agenda scheduling demands and total number of speakers.



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Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee (CEA)

August 7th, 2024, 12:00pm. – 1:30pm.

Recording: https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/opY8QU1rduf6wk-4PPS_bSh9xwKzCVXBF2C-1V9T2jOR9B6fSXzwSV3LIR9Z-6GQ.61MMQUrkTcfepMN?startTime=1725476597000

Passcode: up^P37+M

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.

Roll Call:

Present: Kate Mather, Ben Leroi, Matthew Verscheure, Kathleen Pozzi, Sasha Brown, Chessy Etheridge, Nathan Somersall, Emily Quig, Sarah Vetter, Justin Milligan, Karla McLaren, Arcelia Zavala, Margret Sluyk

Absent: Lauren Taylor, Robin Phoenix

2. **Approval of Minutes and Agenda:** Chessy Etheridge motioned to approve Minutes from 8/7/2024 and meeting Agenda for 9/4/2024, Kathleen Pozzi seconds.

Public Comment: None

Vote:

Objections/abstentions: No Objections/abstentions

3. **Changes to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing Program Standards:**

Thai Hilton shared PowerPoint and presented several changes/additions to the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) standards. The changes include an update the Emergency Transfer Plan. The changes are discussed in more detail in the 9.4.2024 Meeting packet.

Public Comment: None

Thai Hilton shared PowerPoint presented recommended changes to the Absences from units and the size of units. There is not currently a policy to address these situations and some providers have requested guidance. Proposed policy language is in detail in the 9.4.2024 Meeting packet.

Public Comment: None



Sahsa Brown motions to approve the former policy change that was discussed for transfers from outside county 5 per year, before they get discussed on a case-by-case bases, Justin Milligan seconds motion.

Public Comment: None

Vote:

Objections/abstentions: No Objections/abstentions

Motion Passes

Emily Quig, motions to accept recommendation for reporting timeline to extend to 365 days, Matthew Verscheure seconds.

Vote:

Objections/abstentions: No Objections/abstentions

Motion Passes

Conversation on Absences from units and the size of units will be postponed until the next CEA Meeting.

4. CE Assessment and Prioritization redesign discussion: Use of Rapid Rehousing:

Thai Hilton presented; CEA committee needs to make a recommendation to the Coalition board on how to prioritize future RRH referrals. This committee could decide to direct RRH referrals at lower acuity individuals, as is the current practice or direct them at higher acuity individuals as is the practice in some communities and is a HUD recommendation. This committee requested staff to prepare a pro/con analysis of the approaches. Analysis is included in meeting packet.

Public Comment: Chris Cabral

Ben Leroi motions to recommend to the Funding and Evaluation Committee that they put into the NOFA, a pilot project for a Rapid Rehousing program that would serve the most vulnerable and part 2 of motion to direct the Assessment and Prioritization Redesign working group to develop a prioritization process that minimally overlaps with the permanent supportive housing meaning that it may serve people who are more vulnerable now that might qualify for permanent supportive housing but would not be serving the most vulnerable in the system, Justin Milligan seconds.

Public Comment: None

Vote:

Objections/abstentions: No Objections/abstentions

Motion passes

5. Coordinated Entry Performance Evaluation:



Agenda Item will be moved presented at next CEA Meeting.

6. **Public Comment on non-agendized items:** None



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

Item: 3 Updates to Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures: Consent Calendar

Date: October 2, 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. A description of the changes and rationale is below.

Change: Clarification added to the PSH prioritization that for the purposes of PSH prioritization and eligibility referral screening, Chronic Homeless status need only to be met by the time the household is projected to be enrolled in the project they are being referred to.

Reasoning: There was confusion in a recent CES Case Conference about why someone was referred to a PSH project when they had not yet met the time requirements for the Chronic Homelessness definition, but were projected to by the time they moved in. This clarification is especially important in cases where CES is filling new large project-based PSH complexes which require referrals well in advance of the actual enrollment/move in date. This clarification ensures that participants are not being screened out due to referral timelines unrelated to their vulnerability and prioritization level.

New Policy and Procedure language (pg 31):

Households shall be categorized as 1st priority above if they will meet the definition of Chronic Homelessness (see **Definitions**) by the time they are projected to be enrolled in the project and meet all other criteria of the priority group. This applies to both prioritization and housing project eligibility considerations for the purposes of CES referral screening.

Recommendation

Approve the updates to the CE policies and procedures.



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

Item: 4. Changes to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing Program standards

Date: October 2, 2024

Staff Contact: Thai Hilton thai.hilton@sonoma-county.org

Agenda Item Overview

Absences from unit

In the last meeting, staff presented changes to the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) standards. One of the proposed changes relates to absences from the unit. The Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee (CEA) provided feedback on the proposed language. Some committee members expressed concerns around clarity for programs that master lease properties and their ability to pay leasing costs. Some also expressed concern around the short window someone could be out of the unit for a non-institutional reason. Staff has developed a new proposal to address these concerns.

Staff defined non-institutional absences from the unit. Staff has left the timeframe for this absence open for CEA to decide. CEA could decide that anyone who is absent for 45/60/or 90 days is considered permanently absent from the unit.

Staff clarified that projects that lease a structure can continue to make their lease payments to the property owner if a client is determined to be permanently absent but are expected to fill the units through Coordinated Entry as soon as possible.

The new policy clarifies that rental assistance payments are limited to 30 days after the participant has exited the unit. The policy also provides an example which clearly explains when they must stop paying rental assistance.

Staff believes that these changes have accounted for CEA's concerns. Staff requests that CEA decide how long someone can be out of the unit for a non-institutional reason.

Recommendation

Decide on a length of time for non-institutional absences and approve the revised policy.



Proposed policy language

Absences from Unit

In the event an adult household member is considered permanently absent, the housing provider will conduct a reexamination of the household's income and rental payment. The income, assets and allowances of any adult household members who is no longer part of the family will not be counted towards the household's rental payment.

If the project is supported by vouchers through a Housing Authority, the project will report the absence to the Housing Authority and will follow their absence from the unit policy. Otherwise, providers will refer to the following policies.

Non-institutional Absence from unit

Any member of the assisted household will be considered permanently absent if they are away from the unit for 45/60/90 or more consecutive days except when they are absent due to institutionalization.

Rental assistance payments

Rental assistance payments on behalf of the program participant are limited to 30 days after the participant has exited the project unless the participant is not considered absent under the policies below. For example, if someone is determined to be permanent absent in September of 2024, the last rental assistance payment would be October 2024. Rental assistance payments cannot exceed 90 days from the date the individual vacated the unit.

Leasing payments

If a program participant is determined to be permanently absent, projects that use a master-lease model may continue to make leasing payments to the property owner in accordance with their lease agreement however, they are expected to fill the unit as quickly as possible.

Tenant payments

Regardless of the type of absence, program participants must continue paying their rental portion and any utilities they are responsible for during the absence.

Absence due to institutionalization

If an assisted household member is staying in an institution (jail, hospital, skilled nursing facility etc.) for less than 90 days, they are not considered absent.

Absences due to medical reasons

If any family member leaves the household to enter a facility such as hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center, the housing provider will seek advice from a reliable qualified source as to the likelihood and timing of their return. If the verification indicates that the family member will be permanently confined to a nursing home, the family member will be considered permanently absent. If the verification indicates that the family member will return in less 90 consecutive days, the family member may not be considered permanently absent.

Absences due to incarceration

If an individual is absent from the unit for more than 90 days due to incarceration, they are considered permanently absent.



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Absence while searching for housing

This applies to only tenant-based interventions. If the participant is temporarily staying with family or friends while they are looking for permanent housing, and have been determined to be eligible for assistance, they are not considered absent.

institutional Absences beyond 90 days

In the event a client is absent from a unit beyond 90 days, housing providers will turn over the unit and fill the vacancy with another eligible household. In these cases, the housing provider will leave the client enrolled in the project in HMIS for the duration of the absence. The housing provider would then be permitted to re-house the client in a new unit when they exit the institution. If the participant remains absent after 180 consecutive days, the project will exit the client from the project in HMIS.

Remaining household members

Surviving/remaining members of a household that has lost the qualifying household member due to long-term incarceration, death, or long-term institutionalization have the right to rental assistance until the end of the lease.

Lease bifurcation or eviction as a result of domestic violence

For permanent supportive housing projects, members of any household who were living in a unit assisted under this part at the time of a qualifying member's eviction from the unit because the qualifying member was found to have engaged in criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, have the right to rental assistance under this section until the expiration of the lease in effect at the time of the qualifying member's eviction.

End.



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Unit Size

This policy covers tenant-based PSH and RRH. It provides guidance on how to determine the appropriate size of a unit. The policy follows HUD's guidance on unit size. It provides one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each 2 persons in the household.

Recommendation: Approve the addition of the policy.

Proposed policy language

All units must be an appropriate size for the household. The unit must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons in the household. Children of opposite sex, other than very young children, may not be required to occupy the same bedroom or living room/sleeping room. If household composition changed during the term of assistance, providers may relocate the household to a more appropriately sized unit.

End.



Sonoma County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee Executive Summary

Item: 5. Coordinated Entry performance evaluation

Date: October 2, 2024

Staff Contact: Hunter Scott Hscott@homefirsatscc.org

Agenda Item Overview

Each quarter, HomeFirst conducts a performance evaluation survey. HomeFirst will be sharing the 2024 quarter 4 evaluation. A summary of the report is below. HomeFirst will share more details and welcome questions in the meeting.

Summary

- There was a slight increase in overall CE enrollment in Q4, but we are still seeing lower rates of enrollment for Families and TAY into the system.
- We are still seeing large numbers of exits to Unknown destinations. Over 70% of those exits were due participants not having system contact in over a year.
- When measuring the median time from CE Assessment to housing referral, it takes Individuals almost three times longer than other CE to receive a referral.
- Rapid Rehousing shows to be the fastest housing program when measuring the median time from assessment to housing.
- In spite of having the fewest opportunities available to families, those families who remain in CE have the fewest median days in CE.
- There was a large decrease in the number of referrals declined due to no contact, following the implementation of Verified Contact policy for referrals.
- The number of participants who identify as gender nonconforming currently enrolled and being assessed into CE has continued to decrease.
- When reviewing Total Prioritization Score ranges, Black/African American participants are scored at the "Below RRH" range when compared to all participants.

Recommendation

None. Information only