Community Connect Policy

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Applies To: Washington County Housing and Homeless Services
Division/Unit: Homeless Services
Approved Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy documents is to outline the policies related to Washington County's Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry system which will hereafter be referred to as "Community Connect." Grant recipients and subrecipients under the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program must use the Coordinated Entry System (CES) established by Washington County Department of Housing Services, in accordance with requirements established by HUD, to ensure the screening, assessment and referral of program participants is consistent with the written standards established. Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funded housing programs must also utilize the CES to receive referrals.

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I. Planning

A. Definitions and Interested Parties

Chronic Homelessness (HUD)

- A homeless individual with a disability as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who:
  - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and
  - Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months* or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described.
- An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for less, including jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria of this definition before entering that facility**; or
- A family with an adult head of household (or, if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

*A “break” in homeless is considered to be 7 or more nights.

**An individual residing in an institutional care facility does not constitute a break in homelessness.

Coordinated Entry – CE

Centralized approach to connect the CoC’s most vulnerable homeless residents to housing through a single community wide assessment tool and program matching system. CE processes, deployed across an entire community, make it possible for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness to have their strengths and needs quickly assessed (triage), and to be swiftly connected to appropriate, tailored housing and services within the community. People with the greatest needs receive priority for any type of housing and homeless assistance available, including permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and other interventions. This is locally referred to as “Community Connect.”

Community Connect provider

The agency contracted to manage the day-to-day operations of the Community Connect phoneline access point such as maintaining the phone line and staffing walk-in locations.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Board
Referred to as "Solutions Council Advisory Committee" in Washington County. The board will be referred to as the "CoC Board" in this document.

Domestic violence (DV)
Includes dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or family member that either takes place in, or him or her afraid to return to, their primary nighttime residence (including human trafficking)

Fleeing domestic abuse or violence
Defined as any individual or family who: (i) Is fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; (ii) Has no other residence; and (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith- based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing (24CFR 578.3).

Homeless Management Information System – HMIS
Local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

Homeless Service Providers (HSP)
Defined as CoC Program and ESG Program recipients and subrecipients, Supportive Housing Services recipients and subrecipients, and other homeless prevention and assistance programs that provide housing and/or services.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987
A federal law created to support the enrollment and education of homeless students. McKinney- Vento is intended to provide homeless students the same educational opportunities as housed students by removing as many barriers to learning for homeless students as possible.

Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure
This measure funds many of the programs which Community Connect refers into. In this document, funding related to the measure is referred to as SHS funded programming.

Participants
People in a current or previous housing crisis who are accessing or being assessed by coordinated entry.

Phase 1 Assessor
Includes any job description that performs assessment duties, as outlined by this policy. The Assessment Specialist may include housing specialist, outreach worker, and case management positions with Homeless Provider Agencies identified in this policy.

Phase 1 Assessment
Initial tool used for intake into the Community Connect Coordinated Entry System. This assessment gathers the basic data necessary to determine basic eligibility for resources and prioritize participants for those resources.

Phase Four Assessment
Referred to as the Housing Needs Review. This assessment reviews a participant's ongoing housing stability after enrollment into a housing program, and it utilized to determine when a program transfer is appropriate.

Prioritization
Helps the CoC manage inventory of community housing projects, ensuring that those persons with the greatest need and vulnerability receive the supports they need to resolve their housing crisis.

II. Access

A. Coverage

Community Connect covers the geographic area of Washington County, Oregon. Community Connect is easy to access by individuals and families, including people fleeing domestic violence, via connections to street outreach teams, housing liaisons, some designated "assessor-only" agencies, visiting access centers, or by calling the Community Connect phoneline (503) 640-3263, a phone number managed by the Community Connect provider.

Community Connect operates as a component of outreach, mobile screening and assessment to address the safety and special needs of subpopulations (e.g. chronically homeless, those fleeing domestic violence, people with serious and persistent mental illness) that will operate in compliance with the written standards identified in this policy to ensure fair access for people receiving screening, assessment and referral to community resources regardless of coordinated entry access point.

B. Outreach

Outreach and engagement with homeless populations least likely to engage in the Community Connect system is performed by providers contracted to perform street outreach. Providers, participants, and the public may make requests for an outreach worker to visit a participant by completing a request through Show The Way.

To ensure 100% geographic coverage, Washington County has divided the region between contracted partners: Outreach and Encampment Response | Washington County, OR. As outreach requests are identified, street outreach teams are deployed depending on which region the request falls into.

Utilizing those requests, outreach staff attempt to locate the participant and collect basic demographics information for enrollment into outreach programs.

After sufficient rapport is built with the participant, a Phase 1 Assessment is completed and entered into HMIS.

In addition to contracted outreach providers, interested parties may elect to become an assessor only agency.

C. Assessor only agencies

Agencies who are required to utilize HMIS under the terms of their contract receive priority status for allocation of HMIS user licenses.

Assessor only agencies may be allocated user licenses paid for by the County. The County will allocate no more than 2 (two) licenses per assessor only agency. Additionally, the County may allocate up to 5% of total HMIS licenses available for assessor only organizations. If an agency requests more than 2 (two) Phase I Assessor licenses, additional licenses may be allocated if the number issued does not cause the total percentage of licenses issued to assessor only agencies to rise about 5%.

Assessor only agencies must demonstrate that they:

- Are a governmental organization, qualify for 501(c) (3) status, are funded by the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act, or are a health care organization.
- Have offices within the Washington County boundaries.
- Predominantly serve participants who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness or staff members identified to complete Phase 1 Assessments predominantly serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Are typically in consistent contact with the participants they serve.
- The staff person who will be a Phase 1 Assessor is able to complete 4-6 hours of training per year related to the Phase 1 Assessment and Data Privacy and Security.

The County reserves the right to deny the request for licenses if any of the following conditions are met:

- There are no licenses available.
- The requestor is not part of a governmental organization, does not qualify for 501(c) (3) status, are not funded by the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act, or are not a health care organization.
- The requestor is a member of law enforcement.

- The requestor has previously lost access to HMIS due to inappropriate use of the system.
- Any other condition as determined by Washington County.

To maintain HMIS Licenses and status as an assessor only agency, participating organizations must meet the following requirements:

- Assessors must complete an average of at least three (3) assessments per month over a 6-month period. All assessments must be correctly completed.
    - A correctly completed assessment is defined as having correctly completed all applicable ROIs (assessment ROI, login provider ROI), ensured the Privacy Notice is completed, correctly completed program entry, minimal data entry errors on the assessment, and a correctly submitted referral to the housing matching system.
- When requested by the client, assessors must complete Shelter Screenings. All screenings must be correctly completed.
    - A correctly completed screening is defined as having correctly completed all applicable ROIs (shelter screening ROI, login provider ROI), ensured the Privacy Notice is completed, correctly completed program entry, minimal data entry errors on the screening, and a correctly submitted referral to the shelter matching system.
- Assessors must complete an average of at least four (4) Interim Updates for Phase I Assessments per month over a 6-month period.
- Assessors must complete an average of at least five (5) Service Transactions per month per assessor.
    - This includes ensuring that the assessor's login provider ROI is entered and has the correct dates, and that the Privacy Notice has been completed.

Assessor only agency monitoring

The County will audit the requirements listed in the prior section a minimum of twice annually to ensure adequate and appropriate system usage. The first audit will be completed in January of the current fiscal year to evaluate the first six months of the fiscal year. Agencies will be provided with a monitoring report no later than the third week of January. If an agency meets all requirements, the next regular monitoring report will be provided to the agency no later than the third week of July of the following fiscal year.

If an agency is found to not meet one or more requirements during a monitoring period, this will be communicated to them by County staff. At that time, County staff will request a meeting with the agency to discuss the requirements that were not met. County staff will work collaboratively with agencies to determine strategies to address the identified concerns. At this time, monthly monitoring will be implemented to ensure that concerns are being adequately addressed. If concerns are unable to be rectified after an additional 3 months, the agency may lose status as an assessor only agency and HMIS licenses may be reclaimed.

The County reserves the right to reclaim licenses if any of the following conditions are met:

- A user has not accessed HMIS in more than 90 days.

- A user has violated the terms of the Agency Participant Agreement or the End User License Agreement.
- An assessor only agency has violated the Agency Participant Agreement.
- An assessor only agency is no longer serving eligible clients within Washington County.
- An assessor only agency's status or type of work changes substantially from the date they signed the Agency Participation Agreement.
- An assessor only agency's contract with Washington County is terminated.
- An assessor only agency does not pass program monitoring and is not able to address concerns within 6 months of identification.
- Any other condition as determined by Washington County.

Assessor only agency procedure

1. Complete Request to become Phase 1 Assessor https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/d9dbe3c52a6b4ed982f5fb5ee58acd78
2. Agency is contacted by the County to review request.
3. Receive notification of acceptance or denial

a. If denial, a new request may be submitted in no less than 6 months from the date of denial.

4. If approved complete the Agency Participation agreement
5. Submit Agency Participation Agreement to the County.
6. Receive confirmation the Agency Participation Agreement has been accepted by the County.
7. Complete New Staff Onboarding form.
8. Ensure new staff attend trainings required to grant them HMIS access.

D. Emergency Services

Emergency services including all domestic violence and emergency shelters funded by CoC, ESG, or SHS funds are required to operate with a low barrier model of service. Referrals to non-domestic violence shelters are maintained through a shelter referral process outside of Community Connect. Coordinated Entry screeners/assessors may offer to complete a shelter referral screening if the participant requests it. Domestic violence shelters are outside the Community Connect referral process and operate in a manner responsive to the dynamic needs of domestic violence survivors.

E. Standardized Access and Assessment

A coordinated assessment system is a system designed to provide people at imminent risk of homelessness (within 14 days), fleeing domestic violence, or experiencing homelessness, with a centralized access point, coordinated intake, assessment and referral process to housing and supportive services. Community Connect operating standards are established in this policy, to include evaluation of Community Connect system performance by the CoC Board. The same assessment is performed at all access points and utilizes a standardized decision-making process.

Washington County uses available Federal guidance on coordinated entry in planning located here: Welcome to HUD Exchange - HUD Exchange

Households experiencing a housing crisis can reach a Phase 1 Assessor by meeting with a street outreach worker, housing liaison, other HSP, assessor only agency, calling the telephone number for Community Connect, emailing the Community Connect provider.

- Community Connect phone access is available Monday-Friday during regular business hours staffed by the Community Connect Provider at **(503) 640-3263.**
- Outside of regular business hours, the phone line is staffed to answer calls and record messages but may not always complete assessments.

All staff administering assessments must use culturally and linguistically responsive practices, including the following:

- Community Connect incorporates cultural and linguistic responsiveness into the required annual training protocols for participating projects and staff members.
- Assessments use questions for all persons that reduce cultural or linguistic barriers to housing and services.
- Access points will take reasonable steps to offer materials and participant instructions in multiple languages to meet the needs of minority, ethnic, and groups with Limited English Proficiency.
- Community Connect materials will be offered in English and Spanish, and translation services will include the use of bilingual staff and/or other provider resources.

F. Marketing and Non-Discriminatory Access

Marketing activities include:

- A wallet-sized outreach information card printed in English and Spanish directing access to Community Connect via telephone at (503) 640-3263 or text telephone TTY via 711.
- Outreach staff and outreach activities administered through contracted agencies.
- McKinney-Vento Local Education Agencies.
- HSSN listserv (the CoC email distribution that includes community stakeholders to include homeless/formerly homeless consumers, community members, and providers of housing, supportive services, mainstream resources, faith-based meal sites, health, education, and employment programs).
- Washington County website Day Centers & Homeless Resources | Washington County, OR (washingtoncountyor.gov) which includes information and referral instructions in Arabic, Bengali, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, English, Filipino, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Malay, Marathi, Myanmar (Burmese), Persian, Polish, Pubnjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telugi, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese languages.
- 211info, a statewide resource and information referral agency.
- Street Roots
- All shelters in the Washington County shelter system

- Public safety officials; e.g. law enforcement, fire/EMS.
- Most pages on the County website can be read by a screen reader and allow visually impaired users to zoom in and out of a page, and to increase and decrease font sizes displayed.

Housing and service providers aligned with Community Connect will implement affirmative outreach written procedures to broaden access and remove participation barriers.

Housing and service providers will comply consistent with all current federal, state, and local laws relating to anti- discrimination, including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S. C. 2000(d) et seq., the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. sections 12101 et seq.), as amended, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101- No person shall be denied services or subjected to discrimination in receipt of the benefits of any services or activities on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or martial status.

Community Connect ensures all people in the CoC's geographic area, including different populations and subpopulations such as people experiencing chronic homelessness, Veterans, families with children, youth, and survivors of domestic violence, have fair and equal access to the coordinated entry process.

Washington County's Community Connect system has a variety of access points available to anyone experiencing homelessness within the CoC. All locations acting as access points for Washington County should be ADA-accessible, and if not, have accommodations for alternative manners of assisting participants with disabilities to take an assessment. All agencies contracted to provide homeless services must provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services necessary to ensure effective communication consistent with access protections outlined in the ADA. All agencies contracted to provide homelessness services are able to access funds to support translation needs. Washington County will make every effort to ensure that documents and systems are linguistically appropriate for participants. Washington County has translated documents into multiple languages to meet the needs of families with limited English proficiency.

Participants will be informed of the ability to file a discrimination complaint or grievance with the agency completing the Phase 1 Assessment during the time the Privacy and Security Notice is read to the participant. If a participant feels that they have been the target of discrimination by a provider or have a complaint about the Community Connect system, including referral, access or assessment, they may file a grievance with Washington County using the Housing Services Grievance Policy | Washington County, OR

G. Safety Planning

Washington County works with programs serving survivors of domestic violence to design a system that is survivor-friendly. Participants may not be denied access to Washington County

on the basis that he or she has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.

Washington County makes every effort to ensure survivors of domestic violence have access to the coordinated entry system and that safety planning is a component of the screening. Washington County seeks to address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim specific providers. People fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and victims of trafficking have safe and confidential access to the Community Connect process and victim services, including access to the comparable process used by victim service providers, as applicable, and immediate access to emergency services such as domestic violence hotlines and shelter. Washington County works in partnership with Domestic Violence Service Providers to incorporate DV participants into the Community Connect system that will allow for access to coordinated entry resources without personally identifiable information accessible from community providers.

All persons accessing Community Connect are asked, via the Phase 1 Assessment, if they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. If a person or persons are identified as fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, the provider must share information on and assistance in accessing emergency services. This includes but is not limited to:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800)-799-7233
- Domestic Violence Resource Center (DVRC): (503)-469-8620
- Family Peace Center of Washington County: (503)-430-8300

The person or persons has the right to decline any and all referrals to emergency services. Declining referrals or assistance with access will not negatively impact the person's access to Community Connect.

Individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, who are seeking shelter or services will also receive information on non-victim specific providers.

H. Privacy

Washington County ensures adequate privacy protections of all participant information per HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards via the Washington County HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual. Washington County CoC ensures all HMIS users are informed and understand the privacy rules associated with collection, management, and reporting of data, and obtain participant consent to share and store participant information for purposes of assessing and referring participants through the Coordinated Entry process.

All Community Connect participating provider agencies must agree to the data sharing policies that allow information to be exchanged among participants. The agreement specifies all participating providers and indicates that additional providers may be added to the agreement later.

Individuals and families who are engaged with Community Connect have a right to know which information is being collected, where it is stored, who has access to it and what it is used for. Therefore, each participant is informed of the Privacy Notice and given additional documentation of the Privacy Notice upon request which addresses these points. A complete list of participating agencies will be maintained and updated on Washington County's website. A participant may opt out of the data sharing agreement and doing so does not exclude them from the Coordinated Entry process or from receiving housing or other services. If the participant refuses to sign, certain information will be excluded or locked from the data system. A participant will not be denied service if they opt out of data sharing.

A client may also decide to opt out of data sharing at any point in the process. To do so, the participant must report their decision to an assessor and the provider must update the data sharing opt out field in HMIS. Where appropriate, non-personally identifiable information about participants who refuse consent to share personally identifiable data should be logged in an electronic case file that uses pseudonyms, e.g., "Jane Doe," to preserve as much non-personally identifiable information as possible for statistical purposes.

Additional safeguards must be put into place for any data associated with anyone who is, was, or may be fleeing or suffering from any form of domestic violence, including dating violence, stalking, trafficking, and/or sexual assault, regardless of whether such people are seeking shelter or services from non-victim-specific providers. HMIS records are only created with consent by the Head of Household in each family and only by non-Victim Service Providers. Families fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking have the option of having their HMIS record locked so that it is not visible to HMIS users other than Washington County and the provider entering the data.

If an individual declines having an HMIS record created then any data collected from them must not be entered into HMIS. Instead, the data can be entered into a parallel database that is only accessible to users who are trained in responding to domestic violence and who have passed a higher level of background checks and/or investigation. Victim Service Providers (VSP) may not use HMIS. If necessary to ensure the safety of potential survivors of domestic violence, victim service providers are allowed to establish an alternative Coordinated Entry process for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking. If such an alternative process is established, it must meet HUD's minimum Coordinated Entry requirements.

III. Assessment

Washington County Department of Housing Services develops and maintains the assessment tools which are reviewed and approved by the CoC Board.

Households are eligible for a Community Connect Phase 1 Assessment if they meet the following requirements:

- Household has strong ties to Washington County including living, working, or attending school in Washington County, majority of health or supportive services are within Washington County, fleeing DV to Washington County, previously displaced from Washington County due to economic reasons; AND

- Meets the Metro Supportive Housing Services definition of Population A or B:

  Population A:

  1. Household earns between 0-30% Area Median Income (AMI); AND
  2. The head of household has a disabling condition. This can include a physical, psychological, or cognitive disability, a chronic illness, or an addiction; AND
  3. Head of household is currently (client only needs to meet one of the following criteria); AND
     a. Literally homeless (staying in a tent, car, emergency shelter, transitional housing or hotel); OR
     b. In an institution or publicly funded system of care (e.g., hospital, jail, prison, or foster care); OR
     c. In housing and will become literally homeless within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance and/or has received an eviction (this includes households that are involuntarily doubled-up**); OR
     d. Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other safe, permanent housing.
  4. Head of household meets one or more of the following criteria:
     a. Has experienced literal homelessness, institutionalization in a publicly funded institution, and/or involuntarily doubled up for a combined total of 12 or more months over the past three years; OR
     b. Has experienced literal homelessness, institutionalization in a publicly funded system of care, and/or involuntarily doubled-up for a combined total of 3 or more consecutive months over the past 12 months; AND meets at least one of the following conditions:
        i. Is age 55 or older OR
        ii. Has a severe and persistent mental illness diagnosis OR
        iii. Has no income and has documentation indicating a Social Security disability insurance claim in process or is receiving Social Security disability benefits.

     Sections i and ii must have third party documentation.

  Population B:

  1. Household income under 50% Area Median Income; AND
  2. Head of household is currently (client only needs to meet one of the following

criteria);

a. Literally homeless (staying in a tent, car, emergency shelter, transitional housing or hotel); OR
b. In an institution or publicly funded system of care (e.g., hospital, jail, prison, or foster care); OR
c. In housing and will become literally homeless within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance and/or has received an eviction (this includes households that are involuntarily doubled-up**); OR
d. Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other safe, permanent housing.

*Imminent risk: Head of household who is at imminent risk of long-term homelessness within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance and/or has received an eviction.
**Involuntarily doubled-up: Involuntarily doubled up means that a participant is temporarily in the housing of others to avoid sleeping outside or in shelter. This could be characterized by:

- Staying in more than one residence over the course of the last 30 days.
- Staying with a household who has a voucher/housing program, and that voucher/housing program is at-risk if the participant continues to stay in that residence.
- Living in home that is overcrowded meaning that there are more than 2 people per bedroom and living room. (Ex. 8 people living in a 2-bedroom unit)
- Staying in a home where the participant's presence jeopardizes the lease agreement of the residents.
- Participant is attempting to flee DV and currently residing with their abuser.

A household that does not meet the Population A or B criteria will receive information and referral to available community resources, to include 211info, mainstream resources serving people in poverty, and other systems of care.

All households seeking housing services will complete a Phase 1 Assessment with a staff person from an agency who is trained to complete assessments. This assessment allows Community Connect to understand the needs and determine the eligibility for households seeking homeless assistance, and effectively match prioritized households with the most appropriate resources available.

In all areas where Phase 1 Assessments are completed, the HMIS Privacy and Security Notice must be posted in a visible and accessible location and if the participant is new to

HMIS, the policy must be reviewed with the participant. Participants are freely allowed to decide what information they provide during the assessment process, to refuse to answer assessment questions and to refuse housing and service options without retribution or limiting their access to other forms of assistance. Participants will never be turned away from services even if they reject referral options previously provided.

Once the Phase 1 Assessment is entered into HMIS, the Eligibility Tool will inform the Assessment Specialist of the level of service the household is eligible for. The two service levels are:

- **Long-term** which includes Housing Case Management Services programs, Shelter Plus Care Programs, and Site-based Permanent Supportive Housing programs.
- **Medium-term** which includes locally funded Enhanced Rapid Rehousing programs and HUD funded Rapid Rehousing programs.

To be eligible for a long-term level of service, participants must meet the Metro Supportive Housing Services definition of Population A.

To be eligible for a medium-term level of service, a participant may meet the Population A or B criteria.

Households identifying as HIV/AIDS positive will receive information for the central intake at **Cascade AIDS Project**: **503-278-3834**.

Veteran individuals and families will receive information for veteran services with:

- Washington County Disability, Aging and Veteran Services
  Phone contact: **503-846-3060**
- Veteran Community Resource and Referral
  Phone contact: **503-808-1256 or 1-800-949-1004, Ext. 51256.**

IV. Prioritization

The By-Name List is a real-time, up-to-date list of all people experiencing homelessness which can be filtered by subpopulation and most vulnerable based on eligibility and shared with participating case conference agencies.

The By- Name List is updated twice per month (or more frequently as needed) to reflect data on who remains homeless or is newly homeless and who has exited to housing or is no longer in contact with the homeless system – measuring the "inflow and outflow" of homelessness.

The Phase 1 Assessment tool determines the household referral by medium or long-term program type. The medium and long-term referral By-name-lists are prioritized in the following manner.

Housing is prioritized in alignment with HUD CPD-16-11 *Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless persons in Permanent Supportive Housing* (supersedes CPD-14-12) through new resources and turn-over of housing units not dedicated and/or prioritized for specific target populations.

Long-term referrals: For all permanent supportive housing resources Community Connect will prioritize housing resources first to chronically homeless, and literally or imminently at-risk of experiencing long-term or frequent episodes of homelessness households. These households can be separated into the following populations in order of priority. Families who are either pregnant or have minor children, transitional age youth, adults over the age of 55, and adults. If a secondary level of prioritization is needed, households will be prioritized in the following order: length of time homeless and lowest income.

Medium-term referrals: For rapid rehousing resources Community Connect will prioritize housing resources first to chronically homeless households through dynamic prioritization. If dynamic prioritization is not needed, the Community Connect system will prioritize literally homeless households based off population type. These households can be separated into the following populations in order of priority. Families who are either pregnant or have minor children, transitional age youth, adults over the age of 55, and adults. If a secondary level of prioritization is needed, households will be prioritized in the following order: length of time homeless, disability status.

The eligibility requirements for a program housing resource may be different than the prioritization of persons in coordinated entry. For example, a program targeted to serve persons living with HIV+/AIDS requires that as a component of eligibility, but Washington County will not create an HIV+/AIDS diagnosis as a prioritization category.

Housing Intervention	Target Population	Priority Level	Primary Prioritization	Secondary Prioritization
Permanent Supportive Housing, Or Long-Term supportive housing	Chronically Homeless, Or Literally or imminently at-risk of experiencing long-term or frequent episodes of homelessness	1	Families - Pregnant or with minor children	1. Length of time homeless
			Transitional Age Youth	2. Program Transfer
			Adults over 55+	3. Income
			Adults	
Rapid Rehousing, or medium-term supportive housing	Literally Homeless	2	Families - Pregnant or with minor children	1. Priority Level One
			Transitional Age Youth	2. Length of time homeless
			Adults over 55+	3. Disability status
			Adults	

V. Inactive Policy

Households will be considered inactive on the By Name List if they meet one of the following conditions:

- Household's intake assessment is older than 90 days and have no record of services in the previous 90 days; OR

- Household has been matched to a housing program and the housing program was unable to contact the participant during the due diligence period; OR
- Household has been enrolled with an outreach team who has not been able to locate or contact the participant after multiple outreach attempts.

If a household meets one of the above criteria, the intake assessment and any corresponding referrals to the Community Connect matching system will be closed and they will no longer appear on the by-name-list.

Households who have become inactive may become active again once a new Phase 1 Assessment has been completed and new referral is submitted to the Community Connect matching system.

VI. Referral

All CoC or ESG grantees and SHS funded partners are required to fill 100% of vacancies through Community Connect referrals. Providers outside these funding streams are encouraged to use Community Connect to identify candidates for housing vacancies.

Participants have the right to reject housing and services for which they are eligible without affecting their prioritization status and Community Connect will explore alternative service strategies and identify new referrals as they come available to the participant.

When attempting contact to the referred household, the HSP receiving the referral will follow the Due Diligence policy as outlined in the Program Manual. In general, this means that the household will be contacted 3 times per week for 3 weeks and expected to meet with the HSP to complete initial intake paperwork within 3 weeks of the first contact attempts.

If ineligible for the resource the household is referred to, the HSP will document reason for ineligibility in HMIS via Service Transaction. If appropriate, the HSP will decline the referral and send a new referral back to the Community Connect Matching System if the participant may be eligible for other resources in the system.

If the participant cannot be contacted within 3 weeks of the first contact attempt, the referral will be declined and no new referral will be sent to the matching system. The household may contact a Community Connect access point to complete a new assessment and referral to the matching system.

Transfer policy

After program enrollment, participants may have the option to transfer between program types or providers. The transfer policy for participants already enrolled in housing programs is covered fully in the Program Manual.

VII. Case Conferencing

Washington County conducts Community Connect case conferencing two times per month.

Community Connect case conferencing is for people on the by-name list (i.e. people who have been screened through CE and are moving toward housing placement). The purpose of Community Connect Case Conferencing will be to:

- match people on the by-name list with the most appropriate and available housing resources
- problem-solve sticking points between engagement and housing placement
- coordinate and facilitate housing navigation challenges
- update inactivity information

Case conferencing participants will come together, with the proper privacy agreements, as:

- homeless services providers
- providers working with people on the by-name list
- providers of additional resources
- collaborating systems of care (e.g. health, behavioral health, education, etc)

Providers participating in Community Connect Case Conferencing recognize they are in a powerful position, making decisions about limited housing resources. Providers commit to acting on the following values during CE Case Conferencing meetings:

- **Strengths-based approach**- Focus discussions on personal strengths, social supports and existing community resources rather than focusing on participant faults.
- **Person-centered decision-making**- Recognize each person is an expert in their own life, knows what will work best for them, and should have their knowledge and preferences accommodated to any extent possible.
- **Trauma-informed**- Present challenges without judgment and with empathy, dignity and respect. Keep people being discussed at case conferencing informed and aware of the process as much as possible. Take care of yourself, recognizing potential for post-traumatic stress and secondary trauma.
- **Confidentiality**- All case conferencing participants sign privacy/confidentiality agreements. Information shared in case conferencing is not shared outside of case conferencing. Special consideration is taken with any health information, sharing only what is necessary to know related to housing needs, maintaining HIPAA compliance.
- **Leading with race** - Our systems of government, healthcare, and housing are rooted in policies that have a history of oppression and continue to create disparate outcomes for communities of color. Leading with a goal of racial equity is essential to unwinding that oppressive history and eliminating racial disparities in program placements and outcomes.
- **Equity and Anti-Bias**- Check our own biases and emotional connection to the information and recognize our own social positionality and privilege. Listen to and uplift voices from marginalized communities during meetings. Ask questions instead of assuming.
- **Meeting Conduct-** Be respectful of other meeting attendees and their perspectives. Ensure turn-taking when speaking and encourage those who tend to speak less to speak up.

VIII. Data Management

Washington County Department of Housing Services is the HMIS Lead Agency, and will

ensure fidelity to the system standards consistent with the HMIS Policies and Procedures and Data Quality Plan.

Washington County will ensure fidelity to the system standards through:

1. New Hire Training and Orientation
   Prior to performing assessments, Phase 1 Assessors will be required to read and acknowledge understanding of all Community Connect policies. Training will be provided on the policy and process to perform assessments, with additional training completed as follows:
   - Overview of the housing programs and resources aligned with Community Connect
   - Training in how to perform an assessment using an equitable, person-centered approach
   - Participant confidentiality
   - Safety planning and training
   - ServicePoint HMIS training
2. Annual system refresher trainings
   This training may include (but is not limited to) the following topics:
   - Review homelessness service continuum
   - Review of the assessment and referral process to ensure fidelity to the Community Connect policies and procedures
   - Confidentiality/privacy training that includes safety for participants fleeing domestic violence
   - Safety planning and training
   - Equal Access Training

IX. Evaluation

The CoC Board will provide oversight to the Community Connect process to provide transparency for people working in the system and ensure consistency with how people access resources communitywide.

The CoC Board will measure project and system performance outcomes based on several criteria:

- Average length of time between assessment and housing referral
- Average number of assessments becoming inactive every month
- Reduction in chronic homelessness
- Consistent access between populations being assessed and matched to housing programs or other positive exits

Measurement period will be on the Washington County fiscal year, July-June.

An annual report will provide CoC Board with results of consultations with participating project and project participants. The purpose of (at least) annual consultations will be to evaluate the intake, assessment, and referral processes associated with coordinated entry. At

discretion of Washington County, annual surveys may also solicit feedback on any updates made to the Coordinated Entry system in the preceding program year. At least annually, feedback on system changes will be incorporated into ongoing system changes to remain responsive to community needs.

X. Coordination

Community Connect will align with prevention and homeless assistance programs targeted to serve the homeless, to include:

A. All CoC Program projects funded under 24 CFR Part 578.23(c)(9).
B. All Emergency Solutions Grant projects and activities funded under 24 CFR Part 576.400(a).
C. Coordination, and to the extent possible, system alignment with other targeted homeless services:
    - HUD-VASH or Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing;
    - Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Grants under title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act;
    - Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (Section 506 of the Public Health Services Act);
    - Healthcare for the Homeless (42 CFR Part 51c);
    - Programs for Runaway and Homeless Youth (Runaway and Homeless Youth Act);
    - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (Part C of title V of the Public Health Service Act);
    - Services in Supportive Housing Grants (Section 520A of the Public Health Service Act);
    - Emergency Food and Shelter Program (title III of the McKinney-Vento Act);
    - Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence (DV), Dating Violence, and Stalking Program (Section 40299 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act);
    - Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (section 5(a)(1) of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act);
    - Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program (38 U.S.C. 2043);
    - Veteran Affairs Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program (38 CFR Part 61);
    - Health Care for Homeless Veterans program (38 U.S.C. 2031);
    - Homeless Veterans Dental program (38 U.S.C. 2062);
    - SSVF or Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (38 DFR Part 62); and
    - Veteran Justice Outreach Initiative (38 U.S.C. 2031).

D. Coordination and integration with other program resources:
    - Public housing programs (Section 9);
    - Housing programs receiving tenant-based or project-based assistance (Section 8);
    - Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811);
    - HOME Investment Partnerships Program;
    - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families;

- Health Center programs;
- State Children's Health Insurance program;
- Head Start;
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants;
- Services funded under the Workforce Investment Act;
- McKinney-Vento School District Liaisons in Washington County; and
- Metro Supportive Housing Services programs

XI. Revision history

Please note that the sections noted in the revision history have been changed overtime and may no longer reflect the references to specific appendixes or sections present in the current document.

Revision Date	Description of Changes
1/17/2014	Original Version
6/6/2018	Section 5 add information in multiple languages; Section 9.4 add.
12/5/2018	Section 7: remove Homeless Verification and Self-Declaration of Housing form 10.6 as agencies submit 3rd party documentation as proof of homelessness. Proof of Community Connect assessment can be printed from HMIS and attached to program application; add A Road Home: Client Consent to Release of Information for Data Sharing form 10.6; Appendix 10.1 includes addition of Severe Weather Shelters who completed HMIS Agency Data Sharing Agreement.
2/14/2020	Section 8.1: Update prioritization matrix and add By-Name List Case Conferencing process. Add Appendix 10.12 By-Name List Case Conferencing Procedures for Chronic Populations. Section 8.4: Revise ESG Program re-evaluate participant from "At least every 3 months" to "At least annually".
9/9/2021	Definitions added: 1.8 Recipient, 1.9 Subrecipient, 1.10 Domestic Violence, 1.11 Fleeing domestic abuse or violence, 1.12 Phased assessment, 1.12.1 Phase One assessment, 1.12.2 Phase two assessment, 1.12.3 Phase three assessment, 1.12.4 Phase four assessment, 1.13 Dynamic Prioritization. Section 2: Community Connect Overview – updated with current information and defined terms. Section 6.2: Determinization of Eligible for Homeless Assistance – Updated with current information and removal of "b)" Section 7: Most of the section was moved to Section 8 – added Community Connect Phased Assessment process. Added 7.1

	Description of the Community Connect Phased Assessment process, Added 7.2 Phase I Assessment – Initial Access and Eligibility Tool, Added 7.3 Phase II Assessment – Housing Placement Assessment , Added 7.4 Phase III Assessment – Housing Stabilization Plan , Added Phase IV Assessment – Housing Needs Review (Not Complete) Section 8: Changed title to "Access" – and following changes or updates were made - 8.1 updated, 8.2 updated shelter names and removal of d), 8.3 updated with Phase One Assessment, 8.4 Removal of scoring and scoring guide references, 8.6 "Referral and Housing Placement" Removal of all scoring references, 8.7 "Prioritizing Populations" updated to reference Appendix 10.3 and removal of a) Permanent housing prioritization matrix, 8.8 "Determining Housing Placement" Removed and updated to reference the Appendix 10.3, 8.9 "Intake and Disposition of Referral/Housing Placement" Updated to reference Phase Two Assessment Appendix 10.3b, Added 8.11 "enrollment: Community Connect Post Housing Placement" referencing Phase three Assessment 10.3c Section 9: Added Enrollment: Community Connect Post Housing Placement Section 10.3: terms updated to Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Section 11: updated Confidentiality language in 10.1 New Hire Training - Added De- escalation and Crisis Resource Training and Annual Training - Added Implicit Bias and Equity Training Section 13 Appendices – Updated The following Appendixes were removed: 10.1 HMIS Data Entry Procedure for CRAs 10.2 *Community Connect* Screening and Intake Flow Chart

	10.3 Screening Tool 10.4 Building Sustainable Partnerships for Housing Matrix 10.5 Assessment Tool (ServicePoint HMIS) 10.5.a Assessment Tool (Paper Form used by Outreach Staff) 10.7 Resource Eligibility and Housing Options form 10.8 Staff Affidavit Form 10.9 Assessment Scoring Guide 10.10 Program Eligibility Tool The following Appendixes were added: 10.1 Inter-agency Data Sharing Agencies with executed agreements 10.2 Community Connect Modernization - New Process Flow 10.3 Community Connect Modernization Policy and Procedures 10.3a Phase I Assessment – Initial Access and Eligibility Tool 10.3b Phase II Assessment – Housing Placement Assessment 10.3c Phase III Assessment – Housing Stabilization Plan DRAFT 10.4 Phase IV Assessment Tool (ServicePoint HMIS – Client Profile Example)
11/3/2021	Section 8.9 increase CoC Program Rapid Rehousing "Income Eligibility" from at or below 30% AMI to at or below 50% AMI.
12/10/2021	10.3a Phase I Initial Assessment amendment to add Q. 15.c regarding justice-involved or criminal history in background and add Q. 24 regarding TANF income. Revised and implemented 2/7/2022.
9/23/2022	7. Clarifies waitlist process 8.b Clarifies case conference teams 8.8.6 Language clarification 8.9 Stricken from policy and moved to new document 11.1.h Opens types of acceptable trainings 11.2 Changes how annual trainings are conducted 12.5 Updates annual report procedure
11/12/26	Combination of the Community Connect Modernization Policy with the Community Connect Policy. Addition of the assessor only policy. Addition of the inactive policy. Clarifications to outreach programming. Updates annual report procedure. Updates links to HMIS Policies and Procedures. Updates to definitions of Population A and B. Updates to glossary to remove terms no longer used in the manual and align with the terms used in the Program Manual.