

## **Completing the VI-SPDAT**

### ***Santa Clara County Community Guidelines***

#### **Who should complete the VI-SPDAT:**

- **People Experiencing Homelessness:** The VI-SPDAT should be conducted with any individual or family that is *literally homeless* (living on the streets or staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program).<sup>1</sup>
- **Service Providers:** Any staff or volunteers conducting a VI-SPDAT must have completed HMIS and VI-SPDAT training, including client consent training. If you are not trained, please access training resources at: <http://scc.hmis.cc/training/schedule-a-training/>.

#### **When to use the VI-SPDAT:**

- **New Clients:** The VI-SPDAT should be conducted as part of the standard HMIS intake for any new clients who are currently homeless.
- **Existing Clients:** The VI-SPDAT can be done as an update to the HMIS intake for existing clients.
  - **Note:** The VI-SPDAT is a universal assessment in HMIS. If the client already has a VI-SPDAT in HMIS completed by another service provider, he/she does not need to do another one, unless he/she is due for an update.
  - **Updates:** The VI-SPDAT should be updated annually (if the client remains homeless) and/or when there are significant changes in the client's situation.

#### **Why conduct the VI-SPDAT:**

The Santa Clara County Continuum of Care (CoC) uses VI-SPDAT assessments to 1) identify possible referrals to existing permanent housing programs in the community; and 2) understand the need for housing and services for people who are homeless in our community. Please note that due to the overwhelming need for housing assistance in our community, *most people who complete the VI-SPDAT will NOT receive any housing referrals through this process. It is critical that you are honest about this when completing the assessment with people and do not falsely advertise this as a housing application or guaranteed match to housing.*

It is still beneficial for people to complete the VI-SPDAT because it provides information about the person's/family's situation that will help you, as a service provider, (and other providers that the person accesses in our community) to better serve them. Additionally, aggregate data from all assessments completed in the community will be used to better understand the need for housing and services across Santa Clara County.

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<sup>1</sup> The VI-SPDAT can be used for households that are couch surfing or at-risk of homelessness to identify what level of support they would benefit from; however, most programs receiving referrals through coordinated assessment require that households meet HUD's definition of homelessness to be eligible and thus couch surfing/at-risk households are less likely to be matched to housing.

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#### **Before Completing the VI-SPDAT:**

1. **Check in HMIS to see if the individual/family has already completed a VI-SPDAT** by looking under the Assessments Tab.
2. **Upload a Signed Client Consent Form into HMIS:** No information, including the VI-SPDAT, may be entered into HMIS until a signed client consent form (aka Release of Information or ROI) is uploaded into HMIS.

#### **Completing the VI-SPDAT:**

1. **Select the appropriate version of the VI-SPDAT:**
  - a. **VI-SPDAT for Single Adults** – Use this version for adults age 25 or older with no children in the household.
  - b. **VI-SPDAT for Families** – Use this version for households with at least one child under the age of 18.
  - c. **TAY VI-SPDAT** – Use this version for transition age youth (age 18-24) and unaccompanied minors.
2. **Introduce the VI-SPDAT:** Explain to the client what you are doing using the introductory script on the next page.
3. **Enter the VI-SPDAT in HMIS:** You can find the VI-SPDAT under the Assessments tab in the menu bar at the top of the screen in HMIS. This is a universal assessment that is not connected to any specific program.

#### **After Completing the VI-SPDAT:**

1. **Collect Contact Information:** Collect as much contact information as possible (phone, email, service provider or case manager that the individual/family works with, locations that they frequent, etc.). It is critical that we have as much contact information as possible in case any referrals become available for the individual/family. Ask them to come back and update their contact information if it changes.
2. **Share information with the individual/family:** Do NOT share the numerical score from the VI-SPDAT. If the person is interested, you can provide an explanation of the type of housing program that looks like the best fit for the individual/family.
3. **If the score falls into the “no housing intervention” category:** Explain that the assessment shows that they have the skills and ability to get back into housing with limited assistance. Refer the individual/family to resources in the community that will help them address barriers, such as: public benefits, employment programs, security deposit assistance, etc.

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### Introducing the VI-SPDAT:

- **New Clients:** If you are doing the VI-SPDAT as part of an intake, you do not need to provide additional information about coordinated assessment. You can simply include the VI-SPDAT as part of your intake (and may omit or shorten the script below if you have already gone over this information in introducing your intake process). If you choose to do the survey at a different time, you can use the provided script to introduce it.
- **Existing Clients:** You can ask your current clients to complete the VI-SPDAT as part of an HMIS update. Please note that this is in addition to the new client consent form (aka ROI) that they may have already completed when we transitioned to the new HMIS software in October. When you introduce the VI-SPDAT, use the provided script and refer to the Santa Clara County Coordinated Assessment FAQs to answer any questions about coordinated assessment.

### ***Introductory Script:***

*I am going to go through a short survey with you that will provide us with more information about your situation. The answers will help us determine how we can best support you. Some of the survey questions are personal in nature, but they only require a Yes/No or one word answer. I really only need that one word answer. You don't need to feel any pressure to provide more detail. You can also skip or refuse to answer any question. Skipping multiple questions may make it harder for us to identify services for you, but it is your right to refuse to answer questions you don't feel comfortable with.*

*Please do your best to answer all of the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. Honest, accurate answers are important to help us identify the right services for you. In addition, if we are able to refer you to any services based on the information in this survey, that program will still need to verify all eligibility information. So, if your answers aren't honest, it could prevent you from being accepted into a program.*

*The information that I collect with this survey will be stored in HMIS along with the rest of the intake information you provided. Sometimes we are able to identify services that might be a good match for you based on the information you provide. If that happens we will try to contact you, so it's really important that you provide current contact information. This could include phone numbers, locations you frequent, case managers or organizations that you work with, or any other information that might help us find you.*