

## Coordinated Assessment Implementation in Santa Clara County

The Santa Clara County CoC will implement coordinated assessment for all homeless populations in phases, beginning with phase one in November 2015. In phase one, we will use coordinated assessment for referrals to permanent housing only (permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing programs), and assessments will be done by HMIS partner agencies as part of the standard HMIS intake. Later phases may include expanding access to the assessment beyond existing HMIS partner agencies and coordinating referrals to emergency shelter and transitional housing programs.

### ***What is Coordinated Assessment?***

Coordinated assessment (also known as coordinated entry) is a consistent, community wide intake process to match people experiencing homelessness to community resources that are the best fit for their situation. For a few years, we have used this type of process for chronically homeless people in the Care Coordination Project (aka Housing 1000). Now, we are expanding to use coordinated assessment for all permanent housing programs for people who are homeless in Santa Clara County, including permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH). Our vision is to ultimately implement coordinated assessment for shelter and transitional housing programs as well, but that will be a later phase.

In Santa Clara County's coordinated assessment system, all homeless individuals and families will complete a standard triage assessment tool (the VI-SPDAT) that considers the household's situation and identifies the best type of housing intervention to address their situation. Permanent housing programs, including PSH and RRH, will fill spaces in their programs from a community queue of eligible households generated from the standard assessment. This coordinated process will reduce the need for people to traverse the county seeking assistance at every provider separately.

### ***Who will participate in Coordinated Assessment?***

**People experiencing homelessness:** Our goal is for every individual or family that experiences homelessness in Santa Clara County to participate in coordinated assessment by completing the VI-SPDAT assessment with their service provider.

**Organizations working on homelessness:** Our goal is for all service providers in Santa Clara County to participate in coordinated assessment in the following ways:

- **HMIS Partner Agencies:** Complete the VI-SPDAT as part of HMIS intakes and updates for all clients that are currently homeless.
- **Permanent Housing Providers (PSH and RRH):** Fill all program openings through referrals from the coordinated assessment system.

All service providers receiving HUD CoC or ESG funds are contractually required to participate in coordinated assessment. Additionally, local funders including the City of San Jose and the County of Santa Clara may also require grantees to participate in coordinated assessment.

## **Assessments**

Santa Clara County is using the VI-SPDAT ([Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool](#)) created by OrgCode Consulting and Community Solutions as the standard triage assessment tool.

- All HMIS partner agencies that conduct HMIS intakes for homeless individuals and families are expected to complete the VI-SPDAT as part of the HMIS intake.
- The VI-SPDAT is available in HMIS under the Assessments Tab and may be completed starting Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- Staff and volunteers who conduct the VI-SPDAT must be trained HMIS users and must complete VI-SPDAT training by:
  - Attending in-person SPDAT & VI-SPDAT Training (offered October 28, 2015 and January 13, 2016) **OR**
  - Completing online training and submitting a certification of completion at <http://scc.hmis.cc/training/schedule-a-training/>.
- Staff conducting the VI-SPDAT should follow the community guidelines and utilize the FAQs to communicate about coordinated assessment and the VI-SPDAT (available on the CoC website: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/oah/coc/assessment>).

## **Referrals**

Starting in December 2015 all referrals to permanent housing programs within the Continuum of Care (including PSH and RRH) will be made through the coordinated assessment system. Referrals will be facilitated by staff in the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) based on policies and procedures developed by the Coordinated Assessment Work Group (posted on the CoC website: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/oah/coc/assessment>). Referrals will be based on:

- Matching individuals and families to best type of housing intervention for them, determined by the VI-SPDAT assessment (PSH, RRH, or no housing intervention at this time).
- Screening individuals and families for basic eligibility for each program based on information in the VI-SPDAT assessment and the HMIS intake (e.g. veteran status, disability status, chronic homelessness).
- Prioritizing individuals and families based on need for services, as described in the policies and procedures developed by the Coordinated Assessment Work Group.

OSH staff will work with permanent housing providers to refer the most highly prioritized individual/family that appears to be eligible for their program, based on the information in HMIS. Actual eligibility will be determined by the program receiving the referral. OSH staff will work with individual permanent housing providers to address any unique issues or concerns, such as funder requirements that conflict with the coordinated assessment process.

### ***Timeline for Implementation:***

- **November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – VI-SPDAT Assessments Begin:** The VI-SPDAT will be made available in HMIS and trained staff at HMIS partner agencies will begin conducting VI-SPDAT assessments with current and new clients.
- **December 2015 – Permanent Housing Referrals Begin:** Once we reach 500 completed VI-SPDAT assessments in HMIS, we will begin making permanent housing referrals through HMIS. This is expected to be sometime in December 2015, and will be no earlier than December 1st.

- **January 2015 – Full participation in Coordinated Assessment:**
  - All HMIS partner agencies should have staff trained to complete the VI-SPDAT and should be completing it in HMIS.
  - All permanent housing providers should be utilizing coordinated assessment to fill any openings in their programs.

### ***What about Housing 1000?***

The Housing 1000 campaign ended in December 2014. The Care Coordination Project (CCP) currently maintains a registry of chronically homeless individuals that was developed as part of the Housing 1000 Campaign. These individuals were screened using the Vulnerability Index (VI), which is similar to the VI-SPDAT, but not similar enough for the scores to be comparable. The CCP will seek to communicate with each person on the registry via HMIS partner agencies that they will need to complete an HMIS update and the VI-SPDAT in order to stay on the registry. While the coordinated assessment registry is built up in the community queue, we will continue to make CCP placements from the CCP registry. This will allow time for people on the existing registry to complete the VI-SPDAT.

### ***SPDAT Assessment for Case Management***

In addition to the coordinated assessment transition, Santa Clara County is adopting the [Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool](#) (SPDAT) created by OrgCode Consulting, Inc. as a new assessment tool for case management, replacing the Self-Sufficiency Matrix. The SPDAT is a sister tool to the VI-SPDAT. It provides a deeper level of assessment in each of the key domains used on the VI-SPDAT and enables evaluation of changes over time. The SPDAT will be incorporated into HMIS allowing for easy tracking of client progress and program outcomes.

The CoC strongly encourages all case management programs in the CoC to transition to using the SPDAT for case management. The Self-Sufficiency Matrix is no longer supported in HMIS and, going forward, the CoC will use the SPDAT to measure community wide performance measures, replacing the Self-Sufficiency Matrix. The SPDAT may be required to measure mandatory performance measures for some local funders.

Programs may begin using the SPDAT as soon as staff are trained and should plan to complete their transition no later than July 1, 2016. Staff *must* be trained by a certified SPDAT trainer prior to using the SPDAT. The next training will be held Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Contact Erin Stanton at [erin.stanton@hhs.sccgov.org](mailto:erin.stanton@hhs.sccgov.org) for more information.