

Hennepin County Family Coordinated Entry System (CES) Operations Manual

Prepared by the Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness

In 2013, the Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness (OEH), on behalf of the Heading Home Hennepin Strategic Plan and the Minneapolis/Hennepin County Continuum of Care, initiated a process to improve the delivery of housing and crisis response services and assistance to families and individuals who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness throughout Hennepin County by redesigning the community's process for access, assessment, and referrals within its homeless assistance system.

This process, the Hennepin *Coordinated Entry System (CES)*, institutes consistent and uniform access, assessment, prioritization and referral processes to determine the most appropriate response to each individual or family's immediate housing needs. This new system of Coordinated Entry is not only mandated by HUD and many other funders, but is recognized nationally as a best practice, can improve efficiency in large systems like Hennepin County, and can help serve more people more quickly and efficiently with assistance targeted to address their housing needs.

This CES Policies and Procedures document is an operational manual, providing guidance and direction for the day to day operation, management, oversight and evaluation of Hennepin County's coordinated entry approach. This manual will be updated and revised on an ongoing basis as the actual application and practical experience of CES design principles are refined and improved. Please refer to <https://www.hennepin.us/residents/human-services/coordinated-entry> to view the most up to date version of this document as well as up to date forms and materials.

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Introduction and Purpose

The Coordinated Entry System is Hennepin County's approach to organizing and providing services and assistance to persons experiencing a housing crisis throughout Hennepin County. Persons who are seeking homeless or homelessness prevention assistance are directed to defined entry points, assessed in a uniform and consistent manner, prioritized for housing and services, and then linked to available interventions in accordance with the intentional service strategy defined by Hennepin County's CoC leadership. Each service participant's acuity level and housing needs are aligned with a set of service and program strategies that represent the appropriate intensity and scope of services needed to resolve the housing crisis.

Hennepin County's CES design is informed by local planning efforts including homeless assistance providers from programs serving families, single adults, youth, and persons fleeing domestic violence. In addition, much of Hennepin County's CES design is derived from statewide CES planning efforts coordinated through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

Guiding Principles

The design, operation, and evaluation of CES is informed by a set of Guiding Principles established by the Hennepin County CES Leadership Team and adopted by the Hennepin County/Minneapolis CoC.

Principle 1: Ensure service accessibility

- Allow anyone who needs homeless services to know where to get help and be able to access services as promptly as possible through an assessment process that is consistent and respectful
- Ensure staff conducting assessments are trained and competent in the assessment process

Principle 2: Prioritize swift exit from homelessness

- Facilitate exits from homelessness in the most rapid and appropriate manner possible given available resources; shelter is not housing

Principle 3: Align services to client need

- Ensure a homeless response system that includes a variety of program models targeted to serve a range of subpopulations driven by an analysis of client needs
- Ensure that clients gain access as efficiently and effectively as possible to safe placement options and the type of intervention most appropriate to their immediate and long-term housing needs and preferences
- Ensure that the Coordinated Entry System is sufficiently flexible to enable tailored responses to individual client needs and circumstances

Principle 4: Prioritize services for clients with the greatest need

- Establish uniform, consistent eligibility criteria and prioritization standards
- Limit eligibility criteria to those required by funding sources or other formal external requirements in order to end homelessness for all people as promptly as possible
- Ensure that people who have been homeless the longest and/or are the most vulnerable have priority access to the project model to which they have been matched

Principle 5: Build a system that works efficiently and effectively for clients, referral sources, and receiving programs

- Ensure clarity, transparency, consistency, and accountability for clients experiencing homelessness, referral sources and receiving programs throughout the assessment and referral process
- Incorporate provider and client choice in enrollment decisions, including the ability to opt into a less-intensive intervention
- Promote collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing regarding resources among providers

Principle 6: Invest in continuously strengthening the system

- Leverage Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data and infrastructure whenever possible for system evaluation, monitoring, and client care coordination and ensure data quality
- Limit data collection to that which is relevant to the Coordinated Entry process
- Continue to make enhancements to the Coordinated Entry System in response to emerging findings and needs and changes in City, State, or Federal policy
- Continuously invest in opportunities to build provider capacity and enable more efficient and effective services

Process for creating and amending the CES Policies and Procedures

CES Policies and Procedures governing the management and oversight of Hennepin Coordinated Entry System shall be documented in the Hennepin County CES Manual. Updates and changes will be periodically reviewed and approved by the CES Leadership Committee.

Provider engagement on the process and procedures will be critical in ensuring this CES works as well as possible. The leadership committee will solicit feedback from existing community committees to identify pain points in the system. These groups will include:

- Family CES Quarterly Meeting
- Family Service Network
- HMIS User Group
- FHPAP Advisory Committee
- Hennepin County Youth Collaborative
- Youth Case Conferencing
- Survivor Service Provider Network

Beyond that, the CES website (www.hennepin.us/coordinated-entry) for Hennepin County will provide a clearinghouse for up to date information, forms, news, and a chance to provide feedback.

Coordinated Entry System Terms

Terms & Definitions	
HUD Chronically Homeless	<p>HUD’s definition: <i>Chronically homeless</i> means: (1) A “homeless individual with a disability,” as defined in Section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a Safe Haven, or an emergency shelter; AND ii. Has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four 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 in (i) above.
Disability	<p>HUD defines a person with disabilities as a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. has a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.423), or 2. is determined by HUD regulations to have a physical, mental or emotional impairment that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is expected to be of long, continued, and indefinite duration; b. substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently; and c. is of such a nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions, or 3. has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 15002(8)), or 4. has the disease acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV). <p>For the purpose of qualifying for low income housing under HUD public housing and Section 8 programs, the definition does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.</p>
HUD Category 1 (Literally Homeless)	<p>An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, camping ground; or ii. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government program for low-income individuals); or iii. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

<p>HUD Category 2 (imminent risk of homeless)</p>	<p>Individual or family is being evicted within 14 days from their primary nighttime residence and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. No subsequent residence has been identified; and ii. The household lacks the resources or support networks (i.e. family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) needed to obtain other permanent housing.
<p>HUD Category 3 (homeless under other federal statues)</p>	<p>Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers
<p>HUD Category 4 (fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence)</p>	<p>Any individual or family who:</p> <p>Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence; has no other residence; and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.</p>
<p>case conferencing</p>	<p>Local process for CE staff to coordinate and discuss ongoing work with persons experiencing homelessness in the community, including the prioritization or active list. The goal of case conferencing is to provide holistic, coordinated, and integrated services across providers, and to reduce duplication.</p>
<p>Continuum of Care (CoC)</p>	<p>Group responsible for the implementation of the requirements of HUD’s CoC Program interim rule. The CoC is composed of representatives of organizations, including nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.</p>
<p>Continuum of Care (CoC) Program</p>	<p>HUD funding source to (1) promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; (2) provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; (3) promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and (4) optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.</p>
<p>emergency shelter</p>	<p>Short-term emergency housing available to persons experiencing homelessness.</p>
<p>Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)</p>	<p>Local information technology system used by a CoC to collect participant-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and to persons at risk of homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD’s data collection, management, and reporting standards. In Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota we use a platform called ServicePoint to manage our HMIS. ServicePoint and HMIS have become synonymous in MN, but are really separate entities. Minnesota’s System Administrator is Institute for Community Alliances (ICA).</p>

permanent supportive housing (PSH)	Permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability.
rapid re-housing (RRH)	Program emphasizing housing search and relocation services and short- and medium-term rental assistance to move homeless persons and families (with or without a disability) as rapidly as possible into permanent housing.
release of information (ROI)	Written documentation signed by a participant to release his/her personal information to authorized partners.
transitional housing (TH)	Program providing homeless individuals and families with the interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing funds may be used to cover the costs of up to 24 months of housing with accompanying supportive services. Program participants must have a lease (or sublease) or occupancy agreement in place when residing in transitional housing.
Minnesota Long Term Homeless (LTH)	<p>Persons including unaccompanied youth, or families with children who lack a permanent place to live continuously for a year or more or at least four times in the past three years. Any period of institutionalization or incarceration shall be excluded when determining the length of time a household has been homeless. Definition includes persons doubled up or “couch hopping” (doubled up or couch hopping is considered an episode of homelessness if a household is doubled up with another household and duration is less than one year or couch hops as a temporary way to avoid living on the streets or an emergency shelter).</p> <p>Time spent in transitional housing (TH) is a neutral event. Housing history prior to or after transitional housing should be evaluated to determine if it meets the state’s LTH definition.</p> <p>Minnesota's definition does not require that the person have a disabling condition.</p>
Minnesota High Priority Homeless (HPH)	<p>Households prioritized for permanent supportive housing by the Coordinated Entry system. The eligibility change applies to all LTH units and HTF LTH rental assistance programs funded by Minnesota Housing (capital funding includes housing tax credits, deferred funding, bonds, etc.)</p> <p>NOTE: The HPH eligibility option only applies to Minnesota Housing funded LTH units and HTF LTH rental assistance programs. If you have other funding for the LTH units that requires LTH eligibility, you will still need to follow the LTH eligibility and documentation requirements for that funding source (e.g., Housing Support (formerly GRH) and the LTH Supportive Services Grant Fund).</p>
Area Median Income (AMI)	<p>The Area Median Income (AMI) is the midpoint of a region’s income distribution – half of households in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. For housing policy, income thresholds set relative to the area median income—such as 50% of the area median income—identify households eligible to live in income-restricted housing units and the affordability of housing units to low-income households. These are determined and published annually by HUD and can be found at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html.</p>

VI-SPDAT	<p>The VI-SPDAT is a triage tool that seeks to assign housing interventions to individuals based on their acuity in several core areas. This tool combines the Vulnerability Index that has been used for morbidity assessment, with the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool that prioritizes housing interventions. There are three versions of the VI-SPDAT in use in Hennepin County; the Family F-VI-SPDAT, the Transition Age Youth TAY-VI-SPDAT, and the original VI-SPDAT which is used with single adults. This tool is not to be confused with the full SPDAT that is used as a longitudinal case management tool and a more comprehensive assessment.</p>
<p>Hennepin County Continuum of Care Written Standards</p>	<p>The Hennepin County Continuum of Care (CoC) Operations Board, has worked in partnership with Hennepin County’s Office to End Homelessness, in its capacity as the CoC’s Collaborative Applicant, to develop the following set of Written Standards to guide the design, delivery and evaluation of homelessness prevention and homeless assistance that is provided through the community’s CoC Program and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program funded projects, as required by § 578.7(a)(9) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) CoC Program interim rule.</p> <p>These standards were developed after careful consultation and work with providers, agency leadership, funders, and community planners and evaluators that work across the CoC’s geography, and are intended to reflect the core values, principles and evaluation criteria that projects within the CoC are expected to adhere to, and that projects that receive CoC Program and ESG Program funding are required to follow.</p> <p>As needed, these standards will be reviewed and revised by the CoC, to ensure that they remain relevant and reflective of the community.</p>
<p>Single Adult</p> <p>Family</p>	<p>A single adult is an individual that is 18 years of age or older and does not have custody of children 51% of the time</p> <p>A family is an individual or couple that has a child under the age of 18 in their custody at least 51% of the time</p>
Youth	Persons under age 25, including children under age 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.
<p>Decline</p> <p>Cancel</p> <p>Housing Move-In Date</p>	<p>To deny the referral and place back on the Priority List</p> <p>To deny the referral and remove from the Priority List</p> <p>Date referred individual enters housing</p>
CES Connect	<p>A Hennepin County application utilized to capture CE participant assessment data for those who wish to remain outside of the Homeless Management Information System, minor youth aged 16-17 and those experiencing domestic violence, and those assessed by VAWA agencies. CES Connect captures minimum necessary information for minors and those experiencing domestic violence to directly make housing referrals, following national best practice. CES Connect also merges the priority list with the HMIS priority list report.</p>

Staffing Roles and Participation Responsibilities

Families CES Leadership Committee

Oversight and monitoring of Coordinated Entry functions is conducted by the Leadership Committee of Hennepin County stakeholders to ensure consistent application of CES policies and procedures and high quality service delivery for persons and families experiencing a housing crisis.

The Leadership Committee shall meet monthly to monitor progress, hear appeals, assess progress, and implement changes and updates to CES operations. Meeting minutes will be published publically on the Hennepin CES website.

Subcommittees shall be defined and created as necessary.

Membership is comprised of up to ten Hennepin County stakeholders originally selected via an application process facilitated by the Housing Stability Area. Members serve two year terms and are not eligible for re-nomination. Initially, this turnover will be staggered in order to ensure continuity in planning. As the openings in the Committee occur, the process of filling those spaces will be facilitated by the Committee itself with support from Hennepin County staff. The CoC Operations Board will be responsible for ensuring adequate community representation on this committee.

Membership is drawn from the following provider and population concerns:

- Native American Community Service Provider
- African American Community Service Provider
- People living with HIV Service Provider
- Domestic Violence Service Provider
- Shelter / Outreach Provider
- Schools / Education Services Provider
- Other Culturally Specific Provider (specify)
- Housing Provider
- State or Local Government Employee
- Homeless or formerly homeless person
- Employment Services Provider
- Funder
- PSH or RRH Service Providers
- Landlord / Property Manager
- Shelter Team
- Coordinated Entry Family Assessor

The Leadership Committee will be led by appointed Co-chairs who are responsible for the following but not limited to:

- Managing agenda items
- Designated representative for community stakeholders

The Leadership Committee shall meet monthly to monitor progress, hear appeals, assess progress, and implement changes and updates to CES operations. Meeting minutes will be published publically on the Hennepin CES website.

Subcommittees shall be defined and created as necessary.

Roles:

1. CES Leadership Committee reviews CES **operations** on a monthly basis and establishes and/or updates CES Policies and Procedures as necessary and in accordance with Guiding Principles.
2. Establishes an annual CES **evaluation plan** and reviews evaluation results prepared/compiled by OEH. Evaluation findings and results are used by the CES Governing Board to inform updates and changes to CES operational practices.
3. Review and approve all supporting CES **documentation**, including but not limited to: participation agreements among CoC and participating agencies, assessment tools, prioritization criteria and tools, case conferencing protocols, etc.
4. Reviewing and approving Transfer Requests
5. Review and respond appropriately to system Grievances.
6. The CES Family Leadership Committee shall be responsible for the revision, review, and approval of the CES Policies and Procedures Manual. The revision process will be completed at least once annually, and anyone who is interested in submitting suggestion for revision to the document should submit them to CES.Hennepin@hennepin.us

Version	Date Released	Key Changes
1.0	August 11, 2016	N/A
2.0	September 2018	
3.0	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIS • Category 4 Access • Grievance and Appeals • Veteran Policy • Transfer Policy

Hennepin County Coordinated Entry System (CES) Team

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) Team provides coordination of services and referral management for Hennepin County’s homeless continuum.

Primary responsibilities include the following:

- A. Oversight of day-to-day operations of Coordinated Entry Referral System**
 - Oversees vacancy reporting, priority list management, and referral functions to:

- facilitate exits from homelessness in the most rapid manner possible given available resources
- ensure that clients are appropriately matched to the type of intervention most aligned with their immediate and long-term housing needs and preferences
- ensure that people who have been homeless the longest and/or are the most vulnerable have priority access to the project model to which they have been referred
- Oversees assessment functions to ensure client needs and preferences are promptly, regularly, respectfully, consistently and accurately determined
- Oversees case conferencing functions to review and resolve rejection decisions by receiving programs and refusals by clients to engage in a housing plan;
- Contributes to Community Case Conferencing monthly meeting
- Oversees appeals processes to resolve client grievances regarding eligibility decisions in accordance with relevant policies and procedures
- Uses data in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to manage client and program level data including assessments, priority list, referrals, and referral outcomes

B. Coordination with and Support for Partners

- Assists in the design and provision of ongoing training for County staff and community partners conducting assessments
- Assists in planning and execution of a strategy to regularly obtain provider and consumer input and promote collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing regarding resources among community stakeholders
- Leads coordination efforts with other local and state-wide Coordinated Entry efforts
- Develops and maintains strong working relationships with referring and receiving agencies including comprehensive knowledge of program types and provider attributes

C. Compliance

- Oversees referral functions in a manner that is in accordance with established eligibility criteria and prioritization standards
- Oversees updates to policies and procedures for the Coordinated Entry System

D. Program Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement

- Leveraging HMIS data and infrastructure whenever possible, leads regular evaluation efforts to assess the extent to which the Coordinated Entry System is:
 - achieving established performance objectives
 - providing clarity, transparency, consistency and accountability for clients, referral sources and receiving programs
 - sufficiently flexible to enable tailored responses to individual client needs and circumstances
- Identifies opportunities to adjust the Coordinated Entry System to strengthen performance
- Assists in implementation of process improvement adjustments
- Works to ensure that evaluation and adjustment processes are informed by a broad and representative group of stakeholders.

Hennepin Coordinated Entry Assessor Description

All trained assessors are expected to be approved by Hennepin CES Team prior to obtaining access to Hennepin CES EDA in HMIS and/or CES Connect. Hennepin CES Team will limit number of authorized assessors based on access points, specialized population, and need.

For Assessors completing assessments in HMIS:

- Complete HMIS New User Training with ICA
- Purchase HMIS User License
- Complete Hennepin specific Assessor Training

For Assessors completing assessments in CES Connect:

- Complete CES Connect training with Hennepin CES team

Assessors are expected to:

1. Assure compliance with data privacy and policies, including having those assessed sign the HMIS ROI as applicable and the CES ROI for all assessments completed. Failure to do so will result in removal from priority list.
2. Follow CES Process to complete VI-SPDAT and supplement assessment questions to determine appropriate service connections, linkages, and referrals.
3. All assessments must be completed and submitted through HMIS or CES Connect by the trained assessor. Third party data entry is detrimental to the system and is not permitted
4. Utilize appropriate VI-SPDAT tool based on age
5. Complete assessments: Enter VI-SPDAT Score and supplemental assessment questions into HMIS under the Hennepin County CES Assessment EDA or CES Connect
6. Data entry and notes must be entered into HMIS or CES Connect within 3 business days from completed assessment.
7. Understand the CES as a whole and the constraints of the system (i.e. housing is not guaranteed)
8. Update the assessment in HMIS or CES Connect until the household is linked to an appropriate housing intervention, or until services are no longer needed.
9. Enter data and updates into HMIS and CES Connect per instructions
10. Remove individuals assessed when person is no longer eligible for housing through CES or no longer in need.
11. Attend required HMIS, CoC, and CES trainings.
12. Provide feedback for annual CES evaluation.
13. Attend annual Assessor Recertification Training
14. If serving a specialized population, Assessment Site protocols maybe appropriately adjusted.
15. If applicable, assessor will complete HMIS New User Training along with the Hennepin specific assessor training
16. Assessor or Assessor's supervisor will notify CES Staff when assessor is leaving position and will no longer be assessing

Hennepin County Housing Stability Area– Policy and Planning

Hennepin County Housing Stability Area includes all staff associated with community planning, , HMIS staff, and CoC management staff..

1. Provide staff support to the CES Leadership Committee
2. Conduct CES analysis, evaluation, monitoring, and review
3. Maintain CES documentation, tools and resources necessary to manage CES access points, ensure consist assessment, prioritize most vulnerable persons and families for assistance, and ensure timely linkage of persons to available housing and services.
4. Provide guidance, training, capacity building support, communication updates, and other project support as needed to ensure all CES participating providers and referral sources have information and resources as necessary to operate and participate in CES successfully.
5. Creating and widely disseminating outreach materials to ensure that information about the services available through the Coordinated Assessment System and how to assessment those services is readily available and easily accessible to the public
6. Designing and delivering training for Assessment Entities and homeless assistance providers throughout Hennepin County
7. Regularly review and analyze HMIS data, including reports on system-wide performance measures that will help gauge the success of the Coordinated Entry system, including clients receiving diversion assistance, vacancy reporting and completion of assessments -
8. Participate in CES Leadership Committee

Hennepin County – HMIS Local System Administrator

1. HMIS Staff maintain HMIS database in accordance with the Local System Administrator (LSA) role as defined by the Minnesota HMIS.
2. Housing Stability staff and HMIS LSA Staff generate ad hoc CES reports and analysis as determined by the CES Leadership Committees and CoC staff.
3. Participate in other planning efforts as appropriate

HMIS State System Administrator

1. HMIS State System Administrator and Housing Stability staff generate standard CES reports on an ongoing basis as defined by the CES Leadership Committee and State CES Workgroup
2. Ensuring HMIS can collect the needed data for monitoring and tracking the process of referrals and system outcomes.

Hennepin County homeless assistance providers participate in CES

1. **Adopt and follow CES policies and procedures.** CES participating providers shall maintain and adhere to policies and procedures for CES operations as identified in this CES Manual, and as established by the CES Leadership Committee for access points, assessment procedures, client prioritization, and referral and placement in available services and housing.
2. **Maintain low barrier to enrollment.** Homeless providers shall limit barriers to enrollment in services and housing. No client may be turned away from crisis response services or homeless designated housing due to lack of income, lack of employment, disability status, or substance use unless the project’s primary funder requires the exclusion or a previously existing and documented neighborhood covenant/good neighbor agreement has explicitly limited enrollment to clients with a specific set of attributes or characteristics. Providers maintaining restrictive enrollment practices must maintain documentation from project funders, providing justification for the enrollment policy.

CoC providers offering Prevention and/or Short-Term Rapid Rehousing assistance (i.e. 0 – 24 months of financial assistance) may choose to apply some income standards for their enrollment determinations as determined by the funding source.

3. **Maintain Fair and Equal Access.** CES participating providers shall ensure fair and equal access to CES system programs and services for all clients regardless of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender identity, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, household composition, disability, Veteran status, or sexual orientation.

If a program participant's self-identified gender or household composition creates challenging dynamics among residents within a facility, the host program should make every effort to accommodate the individual or assist in locating alternative accommodation that is appropriate and responsive to the individual's needs.

CES participating providers shall offer universal program access to all subpopulations as appropriate, including chronically homeless individuals and families, Veterans, youth, persons and households fleeing domestic violence, and transgender persons.

Population-specific projects and those projects maintaining affinity focus (e.g. women only, tribal nation members only, chronic inebriates, etc.) are permitted to maintain eligibility restrictions as currently defined and will continue to operate and receive prioritized referrals. Any new project wishing to institute exclusionary eligibility criteria will be considered on a case by case basis and receive authorization to operate as such on a limited basis from the Leadership Committee and their funders.

4. **Provide appropriate safety planning.** CES participating providers shall provide necessary safety and security protections for persons fleeing or attempting to flee family violence, stalking, dating violence, or other domestic violence situations. Minimum safety planning must include a threshold assessment for presence of participant safety needs and referral to appropriate trauma-informed services if safety needs are identified.
5. **Create and share written eligibility criteria.** Provide detailed written guidance for client eligibility and enrollment determinations. Eligibility criteria should be limited to that required by the funder and any requirements beyond those required by the funder will be reviewed and a plan to reduce or eliminate them will be discussed. Include funder specific requirements for eligibility and program-defined requirements such as client characteristics, attributes, behaviors or histories used to determine who is eligible to be enrolled in the program. These standards will be shared with Housing Referral Coordinators as well as funders.
6. **Communicate vacancies.** Homeless providers must communicate project vacancies, either bed, unit, or voucher, to the CES Team in a manner determined by the CES Leadership Committee and outlined in this Operations Manual.
7. **Limit enrollment to participants referred through the defined CES access point(s).** Each bed, unit, or voucher that is required to serve someone who is homeless must receive their referrals from the CES Team. Any agency filling homeless mandated units from alternative sources will be reviewed with funders for compliance. A finite number of boutique programs serving distinct

populations may receive a waiver for this clause, but will need to provide CES with detailed engagement and eligibility plans. CES access points will need to be informed of every opening and how and when they were filled.

8. **Participate in CES planning.** CoC projects shall participate in Hennepin County's CES planning and management activities as defined and established by the CES Leadership Committee.
9. **Contribute data to HMIS if mandated per federal, state, county, or other funder requirements.** Each provider with homeless dedicated units will be required to participate in HMIS to some extent. Providers should check with funding sources to determine what forms they will need to complete in HMIS.
10. **Ensure staff who interact with the CES process receive regular training and supervision.** Each provider must notify the CES Team to changes in staffing, in order to ensure employees have access to ongoing training and information related to CES.
11. **Ensure client rights are protected and clients are informed of their rights and responsibilities.** Clients shall have rights explained to them verbally and in writing when completing an initial intake. At a minimum client rights will include:
 - The right to be treated with dignity and respect;
 - The right to appeal CES decisions;
 - The right to be treated with cultural sensitivity;
 - The right to have an advocate present during the appeals process;
 - The right to request a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the project's tenant/client selection process;
 - The right to accept housing/services offered or to reject housing/services;
 - The right to confidentiality and information about when confidential information will be disclosed, to whom, and for what purposes, as well as the right to deny disclosure.

CES Policy and Procedures

The four central components of the Coordinated Entry System are Access, Assessment, Prioritization and Referral. Hennepin County utilizes these terms to establish continuity of services across the CoC. The four central components of the Coordinated Entry System are Access, Assessment, Prioritization, and Referral. Hennepin County utilizes these terms to establish continuity of services across the CoC. The goal of access is that all people in the CoC's geographic area have fair and equal access to the coordinated entry process, regardless of where or how they present for services.

Access Policies – Families

Access to the Family CES is available through three routes; staying in any Emergency Shelter, staying in a place not meant for human habitation, and meeting HUD Category 4- Fleeing and Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence. Family be a Hennepin County resident as defined by County of Financial Responsibility.

Emergency Shelter

Families staying in Hennepin County funded shelter will be connected to Next Step Assessors for assessment after entrance into shelter. If family is staying in a community shelter they should call Hennepin County Front Door Social Services at 612.348.4111. Front Door staff will triage the caller to the Next Step Assessors.

Staying in a Place Not Meant for Human Habitation

If family is staying in a Place not meant for human habitation, they should call Hennepin County Front Door Social Services at 612.348.4111. Front Door staff will triage the caller to the Next Step Assessors.

HUD Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

Families can be assessed by Next Step Assessors by calling Hennepin County Front Door Social Services at 612.348.4111. Front Door staff will triage the caller to the Next Step Assessors, or they can be assessed by the contracted Victim Service Provider assessing agency, the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP). Visit CES website for contact information.

Access to the Hennepin County Emergency Shelter System

1. **Access for families.** Hennepin County Shelter Team shall provide directly or make arrangements through other means to ensure universal access to crisis response services for clients seeking emergency assistance at all hours of the day and all days of the year. In accordance with Hennepin County's shelter all policy.
2. **Crisis response during non-business hours.** Hennepin County Shelter Team shall document planned after-hours emergency services and publish hours of operation in an easily accessible location or posted publicly on the Internet. After hours crisis response access may include telephone crisis hotline access, coordination with policy, emergency medical care.
3. **Families fleeing domestic violence or sexual assault.** Hennepin County Shelter Team shall be trained on the complex dynamics of domestic violence, privacy and confidentiality, and safety planning, including how to handle emergency situations at access points, whether a physical or virtual location. Hennepin County Shelter Team shall partner with local victim service provider

agencies to ensure that trainings for relevant staff are provided by informed experts in the field of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. Hennepin County Shelter team shall make safety referrals to victim service providers as determined to be clinically appropriate or at the request of the family.

Access to Emergency Shelter Procedure – Families & Parenting Youth

1. All families in need of emergency shelter can contact the Hennepin County Shelter Team:
 - a. If a family is in need of shelter during business hours (Monday - Friday from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm), they can see the day team in person at 525 Portland Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55415 or visit any Hennepin County service center to be screened for shelter via skype. The day team can also be reached at 612-348-9410 with any questions.
 - b. If a family is in need of shelter outside of regular business hours on evenings, weekends, and holidays, the after hours team can be reached daily from 1:00 pm – 11:00 pm at 612-348-6777.
2. The Hennepin County Shelter Team completes an initial eligibility assessment for all families requesting emergency shelter. Eligible families with no alternative resources are placed in a contracted shelter or overflow space depending on family size and availability.

Assessment Policies – Families

Hennepin County households who are at least 16 years old, and pregnant, or have minor children in their care and/or custody at the point of housing are eligible to access the Family Coordinated Entry System, specifically those who meet the definition of the categories listed below:

1. HUD Category 1, excluding those living in transitional housing or those exiting an institution.
2. HUD Category 4

Assessment is an iterative process that may take place over a period of several days and involves several points of contact. Assessment shall only involve the collection of information essential to ascertain the immediate crisis and match the client to the appropriate interventions. To the extent that the assessment entity also provides a longer-term case management function, it is possible that later stages of assessment will probe for information beyond that needed for service-matching; however, at every stage, the information collected should only be the information needed to complete the function at hand. The Hennepin County assessment tool and process shall include the following:

- **Document client’s homelessness history and housing barriers.** Gather sufficient information to allow for appropriate placement and for the creation of an accurate housing and service plan to address a client’s needs.
- **Respect client preferences.** Ask direct questions about needs and preferences of the client in order to ensure the best assessment.
- **Capture just enough data to meet project needs and funder requirements.** Design assessment forms to represent the intake data needs for the full continuum of services that may be offered at the access point.

- **Obtain consent for sharing data with providers.** Comply with local, State, and Federal requirements, including the Coordinated Entry Release of Information and for those participating in HMIS, the HMIS Release of Information.
- **Draft, or at least initiate, a housing plan**
- **Standardized practice.** Apply standard practices at every point of entry for every client in order to ensure consistent assessments.

Assessment Workflow – Families in Hennepin County Funded Shelters

CES providers shall administer the Hennepin County Coordinated Entry System (CES) Tool and Process and defined by the CES Leadership Committee. The assessment process must be standardized with uniform decision-making across all assessment locations and staff. If access points or assessment processes are conducted or managed by providers who do not receive HUD, State of Minnesota, or Hennepin County funds those providers shall nevertheless abide by assessment standards and protocols defined by the CES Leadership Committee. CES will operate using a client-centered approach, allowing clients to freely refuse to answer assessment questions and /or refuse referrals.

1. For families staying in Hennepin County funded shelters, the Hennepin County Shelter Team in concert with the Next Step Assessors shall administer the entirety of the Hennepin County Coordinated Entry System (CES) Assessment Tool and Process as defined by the CES Leadership Committee. The assessment process must be standardized with uniform decision-making across all assessment locations and staff.
2. Shelter Team staff complete a full comprehensive assessment for all eligible homeless families within **1 business day** of affirmative eligibility determinations, most often happening immediately.
3. Families that have immediate alternative options to shelter (are diverted) will be entered into HMIS, but only including the information gathered to the point of diversion.
4. Families with no immediate housing resources are referred to a Hennepin County shelter that is able to accommodate the family's needs.
5. Next Step Assessors meet with each family that is assigned shelter within **10 business days** to complete all remaining CES assessment data, VI-FSPDAT scores, housing preference questionnaire, and other required HMIS data elements as defined by the CES Leadership Committee.
6. If family returns to shelter after a period of absence of less than 30 days, the household is placed back on the priority list without additional assessment/screening.
7. Clients may reject a housing referral due to the health, safety or wellbeing of the household being compromised by the potential referral. Other types of denials by households are subject to the Referral Rejection Policy managed by Hennepin County Shelter Team.
8. Households that leave shelter, that have been assessed for coordinated entry, should be made aware, if they go to a non HC shelter, they are still eligible for CE and should communicate their new location to the CES team.

Assessment Workflow – Families in Non Hennepin County Funded Shelters and other eligible locations

1. For families staying in non- Hennepin County funded shelters, place not meant for human habitation or Fleeing/Attempting to Flee domestic violence Hennepin County Front Door shall be the initial point of contact to begin the process for an assessment within Coordinated Entry.

Families can call Front Door at 612-348-4111. Front Door will complete a CES Referral Form which is then sent to the Next Step Assessor.

2. The Next Step Assessor will call the family within three business days to schedule the family for an assessment.
3. The Next Step Assessor shall administer the entirety of the Hennepin County Coordinated Entry System (CES) Assessment Tool and Process as defined by the CES Leadership Committee. The assessment process must be standardized with uniform decision-making across all assessment locations and staff.
4. Next Step Assessors meet with each family that is assigned shelter within **10 business days** to complete the CES assessment data, VI-SPDAT scores, housing preference questionnaire, and other required HMIS data elements as defined by the CES Leadership Committee.
5. If family returns to shelter after a period of absence of less than 30 days, the household is placed back on the priority list without additional assessment/screening
6. At the point of a housing referral, for those staying in a place not meant for human habitation or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence CES Staff will reach out to the identified Outreach Worker or other identified professional to verify that the family is still residing in an eligible location.
 - a. If the family has left that situation and is doubled up, couch hopping or unable to be located, the referral will not be made.
 - b. If the family has entered an emergency shelter, verification of shelter stay will be provided by the emergency shelter

Assessment Workflow- Families Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

Families who meet the definition of HUD Category 4- Fleeing and/or Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence have the option of being assessed by a designated domestic violence service agency. If a household chooses this option the following workflow will be implemented:

1. Families who meet the HUD Category 4 definition can be referred via phone for assessment directly from their local domestic violence shelter and/or agency to a designated domestic violence service assessing agency.
2. Designated domestic violence assessing agency will return and schedule CES Assessment within **10 business days**.
3. Domestic violence assessing agency will complete full CES Assessment, Release of Information (Appendix A) and Fleeing Violence Verification Form (Appendix B) with household.
4. Domestic violence assessing agency will submit assessment via CES Connect
5. Household will be prioritized equitably with all other households who have been assessed for CES.

Referral Criteria – Families

The matching process and eventual referral linkage process takes into account the prioritization criteria for Hennepin CoC and funding requirements for each CoC project type and program criteria. The order of

client priority on the prioritization list will under no circumstances be determined or adjusted based on disability type or diagnosis.

Prioritization Criteria – Families

Individuals who score 0-4 on the VI-FSPDAT will not be prioritized for any housing option described here and should explore non-homeless designated resources.

Rapid Re-Housing Prioritization

Households will be referred to *Rapid Re-Housing* according to the following prioritization criteria. At least 90% of all available RRH resources must be filled with individuals or families that score for RRH based on the VI-FSPDAT. Households will be prioritized based first off of VI-FSPDAT score and then highest number of HUD months homeless.

First Priority– households scoring 5-8 on VI-FSPDAT and HUD Months Homeless (descending order)

Second Priority– households scoring 4 on VI-FSPDAT and HUD Months Homeless (descending order)

Households scoring 9 on VI-FSPDAT will be eligible and if available offered Rapid Re-Housing or Transitional Housing if they maintain on the Priority List for over 45 days, thus becoming first priority.

Transitional Housing Prioritization

Households will be referred to *Transitional Housing* according to the following prioritization criteria. All of the available TH units within Hennepin County must be filled with households that score for TH based on the VI-FSPDAT (4-8) **AND** meet the criteria of at least one of the priority groups identified below:

- *Youth* – Multiple youth between the ages of 16-24 who present as a household and who are seeking assistance together.
- *Youth Parents* – People between the ages of 16-24 who are the parent of at least one child and are seeking assistance with their children.
- *Domestic Violence survivors* – Families with at least one person who identifies a domestic violence experience as the primary reason causing their housing crisis.
- *Persons being released from correctional facilities* – Families with at least one person who is being released from prison/jail and were homeless before entering prison/jail
- *Pregnant people* who are pregnant, regardless of their age or whether they have any additional children.
- *Persons in the early stages of addiction recovery* - Families with at least one person who recently began receiving services to assist in their recovery from alcohol or other drug addiction. This can include (but is not limited to) people who were recently released from a treatment center or other institution.
- Households scoring 9 on VI-FSPDAT will be eligible and if available offered Rapid Re-Housing or Transitional Housing if they maintain on the Priority List for over 45 days, thus becoming first priority.
- *Veterans (choosing Grant and Per Diem - GPD)*

Households will be prioritized based first off of VI-FSPDAT score and then highest number of HUD months homeless.

Permanent Supportive Housing Prioritization

Families will be prioritized and referred to *Permanent Supportive Housing* for those with the longest history of homelessness and with the most severe service needs. The prioritization order is as follows:

1. Disability? (Descending order from Yes, No, Data Not Collected, Client doesn't know, Missing)
2. Chronically Homeless? (Descending order: Yes, No, Missing)
3. VI-FSPDAT Score (Descending order)
4. HUD Months Homeless (Descending order)
5. Residence Prior- TH (Descending order)

HUD Chronic Programs

The following table describes HUD's allowance for HUD Chronic designated units in the event that no Chronically Homeless Households are on the Priority List.

Priority	Description	Length of Time Homeless	VI-SPDAT Acuity	Documented Disability
1	HUD Chronically Homeless	>12 months cumulative or 4 episodes in 3 years totaling one year in an emergency shelter	9 or greater	Yes
2	HUD Chronically Homeless	>12 months cumulative or 4 episodes in 3 years totaling one year in an emergency shelter	0-8 (descending order)	Yes
3	Most Severe Service Need	High VI-SPDAT Acuity, disability and most severe service need	9 or greater	Yes
4	Long History of Homelessness	Long period of cumulative or episodic homelessness	9 or greater	Yes
5	HUD Homeless	Place not meant for human habitation, safe haven or emergency shelter	9 or greater	Yes
6	Transitional Housing	Homeless families with a disability coming from transitional housing	9 or greater	Yes

Prioritization and Referral Workflow for Hennepin County CES Team

1. A Referral Request Form (Appendix C) is received in the CES inbox. The CES Team reviews *Referral Request Form* to obtain client eligibility information associated with the housing.
2. The CES Team generates Priority List report from HMIS ServicePoint to identify eligible individuals who may be appropriate for available housing and navigation services.
3. The CES Team reviews Priority List report and matches those prioritized to available housing provider based on known information about client demographics, attributes, and housing preferences.
4. The CES Team send the individual referral to the housing provider via HMIS ServicePoint or secure email when necessary.
5. If a replacement referral is requested, the CES Team will review previous associated denial to ensure denial is appropriate and allowable according to CES policies and procedures as established by CES Leadership Committee.
6. If the CES Team determine the denial is valid, staff will attempt to provide replacement to the housing provider in prioritized manner.
7. If the CES Team determine the denial is **not** valid, the staff will promptly initiate contact to further discuss the conclusion. The CES Team may meet with the provider to discuss the referral and encourage/instruct the provider they are obligated to accept the referral per funding requirements. If the provider continues to deny the referral, The CES Team will discuss with funder and contract manager as applicable.
8. If a household has been offered a Rapid Rehousing referral but is not locatable or is restricted from shelter for over 7 days the referral is void and the provider will receive a new referral from the CES team

Housing Provider Referral Workflow

The process of managing referrals has two work flows based on which application was utilized for assessment, CES Connect or HMIS. For individuals assessed in HMIS referrals will be managed in HMIS. For individuals assessed in CES Connect referrals will be managed through encrypted email.

Refer to *HMIS Workflow Instructions* for detailed instructions at <https://hmismn.org/coordinated-entry/>.

Request and Accepting a Referral for Individuals Assessed in HMIS

1. Housing and service providers complete Referral Request Form (See Appendix B) for all vacancies anticipated within 30-60 days, and vacancy form is e-mailed to the Coordinated Entry Inbox. The Referral Request form will be completed for available beds, units, or scattered site housing opportunities or vouchers. Programs reporting vacancies must include criteria for the unit, including physical traits of the particular unit.
2. Vacancies that are unexpected should be reported at the earliest possible time.
3. CES Team identify individual and complete referral process in HMIS
4. Housing Provider receives automated notification from HMIS ServicePoint of referral or secure email with referral packet.
5. Housing provider acknowledges referral and Accepts referrals within *two business days*.
6. Housing Provider should begin to engage with referral immediately upon receiving from CES. Housing Provider is expected to attempt to locate individuals for a minimum of *two weeks*, including utilizing listed alternative contacts, case managers, assessors, shelter advocates and any other applicable individual.

7. Outcome of referrals must be reported in HMIS, including but not limited to, Decline, Cancel, and Housing Move-In Date.

Request and Accepting a Referral for Individuals Assessed in CES Connect

1. Housing and service providers complete Referral Request Form (See Appendix B) for all vacancies anticipated within 30-60 days, and vacancy form is e-mailed to the Coordinated Entry Inbox. The Referral Request form will be completed for available beds, units, or scattered site housing opportunities or vouchers. Programs reporting vacancies must include criteria for the unit, including physical traits of the particular unit.
2. Vacancies that are unexpected should be reported at the earliest possible time.
3. CES Team identifies individual and sends encrypted email with individual's assessment to Housing Provider
4. Housing Provider should begin to engage with referral immediately upon receiving from CES. Housing Provider is expected to attempt to locate individuals for a minimum of *two weeks*, including utilizing listed alternative contacts, case managers, assessors, shelter advocates and any other applicable individual.
5. Outcome of referrals (Decline, Cancel, Housing Move-In Date) must be reported back to CES Team utilizing Referral Outcome form. Email form to CES Team at CES.Hennepin@Hennepin.us.

Referral Outcome

Acceptance into Program

All referred individuals should have a program Entry (Project Start Date) in HMIS. To confirm a successful housing placement, Housing provider should enter Housing Move-In Date in HMIS. For Non-HMIS referrals, submit Referral Outcome form to CES inbox by noting the Housing Move-In Date.

Denials

Decline

Declined referrals should be processed in HMIS ServicePoint for individuals referred through HMIS. For individuals referred through encrypted email (assessed in CES Connect), declines need to be processed by utilizing the Referral Outcome Form (Appendix C) and submitting to CES Team (email at CES.Hennepin@Hennepin.us). Provider will be required to provide justification for denial in detail, including: communication attempts with client, specific criminal or housing history that prevents acceptance of referral, or other similar details. Possible reasons for declining a referral: individual does not meet program eligibility requirements (including property management), individual refuses referral, client safety concerns, etc. To receive replacement referrals, Housing Providers should submit the Referral Request form and check the "Replacement" box.

Cancel

Canceled referrals should be processed in HMIS ServicePoint for individuals referred through HMIS. For individuals referred through encrypted email (assessed in CES Connect), cancels need to be processed by utilizing the Referral Outcome Form (Appendix C) and submitting to CES Team (email at CES.Hennepin@Hennepin.us). Provider will be required to provide justification for denial. Possible reasons for canceling a referral: individual is no longer in need of housing through CES (self-resolved, deceased), unable to locate after at least two weeks of diligent attempts, placed in institutional setting.

To receive replacement referrals, Housing Providers should submit the Referral Request form and check the “Replacement” box.

Referral Denials – Families

By Housing Provider

Hennepin CoC providers may deny or reject referrals from the CES Team, although service denials should be infrequent and must be documented in HMIS or other comparable system with specific justification as prescribed by the Hennepin County CES Leadership Committee. The specific allowable criteria for denying a referral shall be published by each project and be reviewed and updated annually. All participating projects shall provide the reason for service denial, and may be subject to a limit on the number of service denials.

Agencies who would like to deny a referral that is incompatible with their programming must include details about the reason for denial. Details should include communication attempts with client, specific criminal or housing history that prevents acceptance of referral, or other similar details. Some examples of denials that will need significant additional details or documentation include the following:

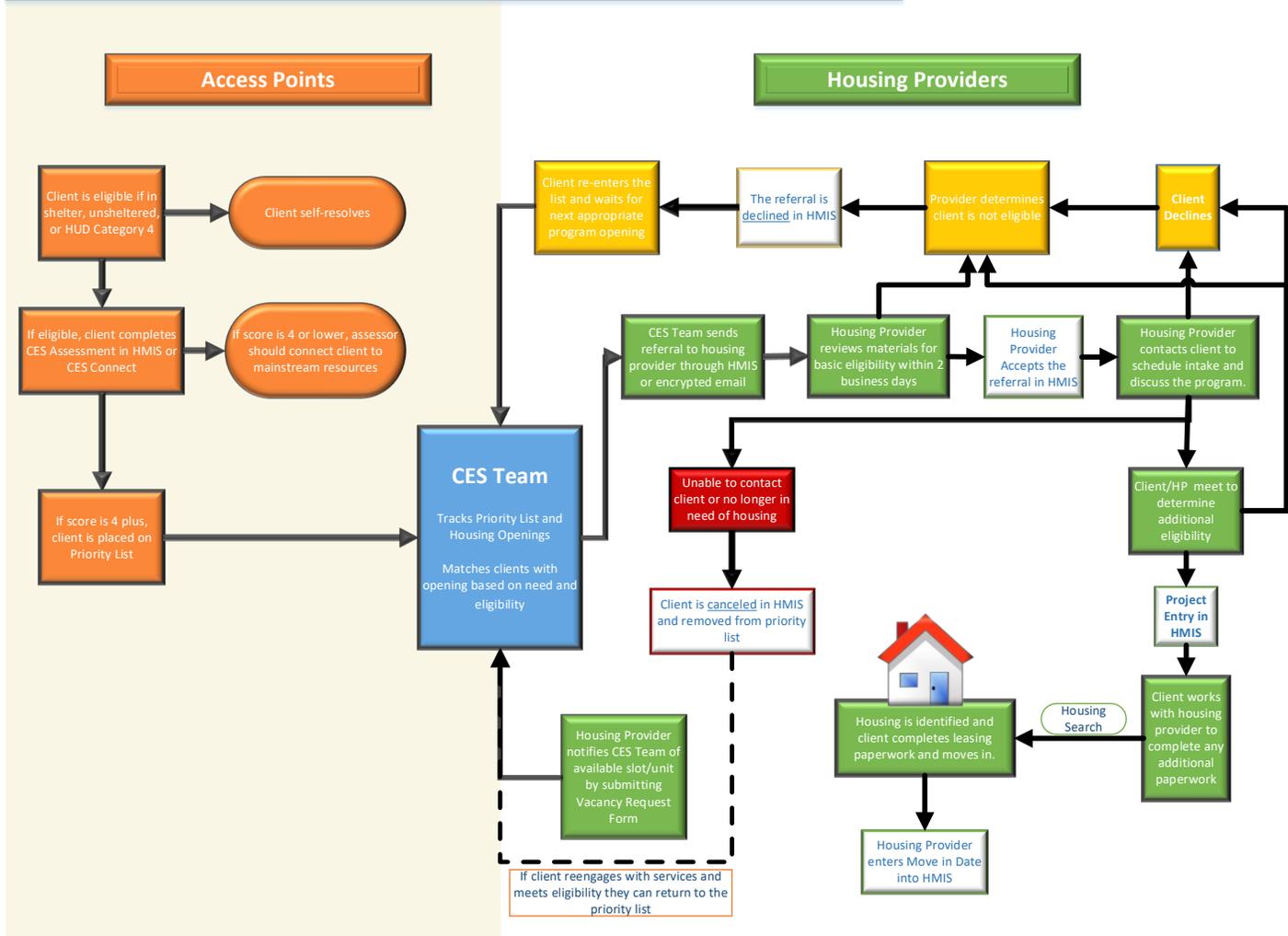
- Family refused further participation (or client moved out of CoC area)
- Family does not meet required criteria for program eligibility
- Family unresponsive to multiple communication attempts
- Family needs or safety cannot be addressed by the program. The family’s needs, health, or well-being would be negatively impacted because the program does not offer the services, staffing, location, and/or housing supports necessary to successfully serve the household.
- Property management denial (include specific reason cited by property manager)
- Conflict of interest

A provider that denies three sequential referrals will be required to participate in a conferencing meeting with the CES Team, a representative of the funding source, and a Hennepin County Staff person (e.g., the CoC Coordinator, Housing Support Planning Analyst, etc.) if applicable.

If the denial is the result of a third party property management/landlord (private or partner of service provider) rejecting the individual’s application, the rejection will trigger a case conferencing meeting. If the household choose to appeal this decision, a new referral will not be provided to the housing program until the appeal process has reached its conclusion.

If a private landlord is unable to be located for use with a voucher or scattered site program after an exhaustive search, the provider may request a new referral.

Hennepin County Single Adults CES Assessment and Referral Process



Fair Housing, Tenant Selection and Other Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

All CoC projects in Hennepin's Coordinated Entry System must include a strategy to ensure CoC resources and CES options (referral options) are eligible to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, disability, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identify, or marital status. Special outreach to persons who might be or identify with one or more of these attributes ensures CES is accessible to all persons.

All CoC projects in Hennepin's Coordinated Entry System must ensure that all people in different populations and subpopulations throughout Hennepin County, including people experiencing chronic homelessness, veterans, families with children, youth, and survivors of domestic violence, have fair and equal access to the coordinated entry process, regardless of the location or method by which they access the crisis response system.

All CoC projects in Hennepin's Coordinated Entry System must document steps taken to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities. Access points must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including physical locations for individuals who use wheelchairs, as well as people in Hennepin County who are least likely to access homeless assistance.

CES Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Reporting of CES

Hennepin County shall adhere to HUD-defined monitoring and reporting plans for CES. The HUD-defined monitoring process will report on performance objectives related to CES utilization, efficiency and effectiveness.

Hennepin County CES Reporting Requirements shall be reported quarterly by the CES Team to the CoC membership and the community at large and include the following elements:

- Narrative description of the status of CES implementation, barriers and challenges experienced, and plans for expansion and improvements in the future
- CES performance indicators will include the following:
 1. Number of persons and individuals receiving CES services
 - a. Number seeking assistance/referred to CES
 - b. Number completing initial triage/diversion screen
 - c. Number completing client intake/assessment
 - d. Number completing comprehensive/housing assessment
 2. Demographics and attributes of persons/households receiving CES assistance (from 1d above)
 3. Number of persons and individuals by VI-SPDAT score
 4. Number of persons and individuals receiving CES referrals to the following
 - a. Self-Resolve
 - b. Rapid Rehousing

- c. Transitional Housing
 - d. Permanent Supportive Housing
 - e. All other
5. Destination of persons and individuals to each service strategy as a result of CES referral
 - a. Rapid Rehousing
 - b. Transitional Housing
 - c. Permanent Supportive Housing
 - d. All other
 6. Length of time from completion of CES comprehensive/housing assessment to program entry
 - a. Average length of time from assessment to referral for each component type
 - b. Average length of time waiting on prioritization list for each component type
 7. Number of persons who waited for each CoC component type for greater than 30 days

Evaluation

Hennepin County will conduct a comprehensive system evaluation of CES to ensure that both qualitative and quantitative information are collected and used to identify opportunities for continuous system improvements. Specially, the CES team on behalf of the CES Leadership Group is responsible for

- Leading periodic evaluation efforts to ensure that the CES is functioning as intended; such evaluation efforts shall happen at least annually.
- Leading efforts to make periodic adjustments to the CES as determined necessary; such adjustments shall be made at least annually based on findings from evaluation efforts.
- Ensuring that evaluation and adjustment processes are informed by a broad and representative group of stakeholders
- Ensuring that the CES is updated as necessary to maintain compliance with all state and federal statutory regulatory requirements.

Evaluation efforts shall be informed by metrics established annually by the CES Leadership Group, in consultation with the community and county staff. These metrics will be displayed on dashboards located on the CES website and shall include indicators of the effectiveness of the functioning of CES itself, such as

- Wait times for initial contact
- Extent to which expected timelines described in this manual are met
- Number/Percentage of referrals that are accepted by receiving programs
- Rate of missed appointments for scheduled assessments
- Number/Percentage of persons declined by more than one (1) provider
- Number/Percentage of CES Team Referral appeals
- Number of program intakes **not** conducted through CES
- Completeness of data on assessment and intake forms

In addition, these metrics shall also include indicators of the impact of CES on system-wide CoC outcomes, such as

- Households referred have length of stays consistent with system guidelines
- Waiting lists are reduced for all services; eliminated for shelter
- Program components meet outcome targets for program-level measures

- Reductions in long term chronic homelessness
- Reduction in family homelessness
- Reductions in returns to homelessness
- Reduced rate of households becoming homeless for the first time.

Client Choice

All Households who are assessed for Permanent Supportive Housing will be given the option to choose a less intensive intervention if, at the point of assessment, the household meets the following community defined markers:

- Households with a strong history of employment and/or those with sufficient income to support their household composition in housing
- Households who do not currently meet the definition of Long Term Homeless or Chronically Homeless

Process: Households will be informed of the potential Rapid Rehousing option by the Next Step Assessor at the point of assessment after the determination the household qualifies for the policy, empowering households to make informed choice regarding the level of services they would like to receive from the Coordinated Entry System.

A housing referral would not be guaranteed for these families but the assessor will record a preference for lower level of services at the point of assessment. At the point of a potential housing referral, households will be required to still meet the community defined markers.

Grievance and Appeals

Coordinated Entry System Grievance and Appeals Policy

The purpose of the grievance and appeals process is to ensure that if a client has a problem or concern with the Coordinated Entry System (CES) they have a confidential means to report the concern. Completing the grievance form (Appendix E) will not negatively affect their status within CES.

The form should be completed if the grievance relates to one of the following:

- Access to Coordinated Entry System (i.e. no assessment provided)
- Assessment (i.e. scoring)
- Prioritization (i.e. disagreement with housing designation)
- Housing referral (i.e. lack of follow through from housing provider)
- Other (please be specific)

Note: if a grievance is about an agency, the Adult Shelter Connect or the shelter system, the client should go through that agency's grievance process. In addition, CES cannot guarantee placement into permanent housing, as demand for housing is far greater than the supply.

Grievance Procedure

1. Client should complete the CES Grievance and Appeals form (Appendix E). Please explain the complaint, grievance or issue, and include the names of those involved and dates. The complaint should be as specific as possible.
2. Client should email the completed form to CES.Hennepin@Hennepin.us with the subject line "CES Complaint". They can expect a response that the form was received within 5 business days.
3. The Office to End Homelessness (OEH) will review the grievance, verify the grievance process is the appropriate place for the complaint, complete an investigation and clearly document their findings.
4. OEH will respond to the complaint with recommended solutions within 10 business days of receiving the complaint.
5. OEH will track all complaints in an effort to determine system wide patterns or problems that can be addressed. They will report the number of complaints received, types of complaints and the outcomes/resolutions of the complaints on a monthly basis to the CES Leadership committees. All identifying Information regarding individual clients will be kept confidential and not shared with the leadership committees.

Transfers

Transfer Policy for Hennepin CoC

Through Coordinated Entry, a clear process has been established for assessing, prioritizing and referring people who are experiencing homelessness to the different categories of homeless designated housing interventions. In order of intensity of support the interventions covered by this document are:

- Rapid ReHousing (RRH)
- Transitional Housing (TH)
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

There are cases, however, when the type of housing intervention may be found to no longer meet the needs of the household post-program entry. Transfers are appropriate for households with the following circumstances:

- The household has a current HMIS program entry for a homeless-dedicated housing program that reports to Hennepin County CES.
and
- The needs of the household have changed since program entry; or
- The understanding of the needs have changed since program entry.

In such cases there can be legitimate reasons for seeking a transfer to another housing program. In considering the types of transfer that may be requested, the committee workgroup on this subject recommends the following decision rules be applied:

Transfer type	Y	N	Needs review
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Single ↔ Families (for same intervention type)	X		
PSH ↔ PSH	X		
PSH → TH	X		
Single RRH/TH → Families PSH		X	
RRH/TH → PSH (for same client group)		< 3 mths service remaining	Transfer request form will be reviewed by CES Leadership Committee

Transfers are not appropriate for reasons related to protected class status only, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and being a member of a local human rights commission.

Transfer Procedure

If 'N': The transfers are not allowed under any circumstances

If 'Y': A transfer request form is required for all transfer requests and will be reviewed by the CES team. Include a CES Release of Information if one is not present in HMIS. The current housing provider is responsible for identifying another provider/program of the appropriate typology that is willing to accept the household and all coordination. Upon agreement of the two providers, the transfer request form is to be sent to the CES inbox (ces.hennepin@hennepin.us) for review and approval. Upon approval:

1. Current program will provide all eligibility paperwork to the program accepting the transfer
2. Current program will request a new referral from the appropriate system (singles/families) upon completion of transfer.

Receiving provider is responsible for confirming eligibility. If no willing provider/program can be found, no transfer is possible.

CES Leadership Committees will receive periodic updates on the number of transfers requested.

If 'Needs review': The Transfer Request Form submitted to the CES Team will be reviewed by the Leadership Committee. If the Leadership Committee approves the request, follow directives for approved transfers.

Please see Appendix E for Transfer Request Form.

Reassessment

There are circumstance under which families who have been screened using the VI-FSPDAT would qualify to be re-screened by the Next Step Assessors.

Reassessment Policy

Families are eligible for reassessment if:

- a. A family has left the shelter system for over 30 days past the initial VI-F-SPDAT screening.
- b. A family has encountered a significant life change defined as one of the following items: a second adult member added or removed to their family, re-unification with child, significant family composition change, or SPMI identified by a credentialed professional.
- c. In rare occurrences, a family who is assessed and referred to a housing program may be eligible for reassessment if the program identifies after extensive efforts the family needs a higher level of support than can be offered in that level of intervention.
- d. A family who has known extensive history within the shelter and other emergency systems but whose acuity is not accurately depicted on their first screening.

Note: Families who qualify under items C and D, listed above will receive the full SPDAT by the Next Step Assessors.

Case Conferencing

As Needed Case Conferencing

It is expected that some families will score within the same suggested intervention range. If a family has been re-screened and scores into the same intervention level but knowledge about the family's acuity and previous history suggests that this intervention will not be successful, a case conference will be held. This case conference will be held by the request of shelter team leadership, CES Team, or the housing provider involved with the family.

The case conference will consist of the Family CES Leadership Committee who will determine if any other suitable intervention first within the original suggested intervention range is possible with a different service provider. If the committee determines that is not possible, they will evaluate whether to move the client on the priority list into the next highest suggested intervention range.

Bi-Monthly Family Case Conferencing

The goal of Family Case Conferencing is to: discuss specific families from the priority list to identify supports and ensure appropriate housing referrals, brainstorm and learn together around the Coordinated Entry and Homeless Response system, rapport-build and collaborate across providers, all

with the ultimate goal of pooling collective wisdom to better serve families and to strengthen the family system. The Family Case Conferencing Team which consists of HC CES Staff, HC Shelter Team Staff, Shelter Providers, RRH providers, Housing Readiness Providers, Family Youth Providers, etc. is currently focusing on the below families from the priority list:

- Pending Referrals
- 45+ Days on the list
- Lower scores in each intervention
- “Failed” out of RRH and scoring back into RRH
- “Failed” out of PSH and scoring into RRH
- Recidivist Families
- Updates on previous families

Sub-Population Specific Protocols

Youth

The CES family system will work in partnership with shelters serving parenting and pregnant Hennepin County youth, who are 16 years of age or older to ensure full access to family CES resources.

Survivor Service Provider Workgroup

The CES Leadership Committee will work in partnership with the Domestic Violence Sub-Committee composed of advocacy organizations/shelters serving victims and survivors of domestic violence across the metro in order to ensure considerations are made to address the specific safety and privacy needs of survivors. This includes individuals having the ability to decline housing in neighborhoods that would compromise their location, the choice to be entered anonymously into databases, and have full access to housing options.

The Domestic Violence Sub-Committee will continue to build coordination, communication and policy recommendations with the homeless response system and providers through:

- Ongoing annual training and cross-training for housing and domestic violence providers and CES Staff
- Ongoing technical assistance for housing and domestic violence providers
- Analyzing and monitoring CES data specific to survivors unmet need for housing and services

Emergency Transfers

Emergency Transfer Policy

CES will attempt to address the safety needs of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking survivors who have been housed in Hennepin County homeless dedicated housing programs through Coordinated Entry, if the Transfer Policy fails to meet the immediate safety needs of the household. Throughout this process wherever possible, household information will be de-identified and kept confidential.

If no immediate, viable transfer is available through the current housing provider, the housing provider should follow the Emergency Transfer Procedure to initiate assistance from the Coordinated Entry System.

Emergency Transfer Procedure

A housing provider may initiate the Emergency Transfer Policy through submitting the Transfer Form [Appendix F] to CES.Hennepin@Hennepin.us and indicating that an Emergency Transfer is needed. The housing provider should indicate household's ideal and needed housing setting for the purposes of safety and security. The household will then be prioritized for the next available housing vacancy. While CES will prioritize the household for the next available vacancy that would meet the indicated need, CES cannot guarantee a housing placement or timing. The current housing provider should continue to safety plan with household and follow best practices to ensure rapid, quick and safe resolution is met. If a match is able to be completed, CES Staff will assist in facilitating a warm hand off between the previous housing provider and new provider.

Veterans

Veterans identified through the CES will be strongly encouraged to sign an additional release of information to be added to the Veteran's Registry. Once on the Registry, veterans who are prioritized based on VI-SPDAT score and who meet program eligibility criteria will have access to both homeless designated housing units available through the CES and to veteran-specific units not accessed through CES (i.e., VASH, SSVF, etc.).

The CES will work closely with representatives from MAC-V, the VA, the State, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure veterans are able to access the full spectrum of housing resources designated for that population.

Accelerated Prioritization for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Policy

Cases have been identified where veterans are not eligible or are otherwise unable to avail themselves of veteran specific resources and are also unlikely to be prioritized for homeless-designated housing in a timely fashion. In order to prevent these and other veterans from falling through the cracks between systems, the CES will utilize a targeted form of "veteran preference" to ensure that such veterans are our highest priority within the Coordinated Entry System.

Accelerated Prioritization for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness Procedure

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) will submit the Accelerated Coordinated Entry for Veteran's Form (Appendix G) on behalf of the veteran who will then be referred to the next rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing program that reports a vacancy and dependent upon which intervention their Coordinated Entry assessment has identified as most suitable. Accelerated Coordinated Entry for Veteran's Form shall be emailed to ces.hennepin@hennepin.us.

On the basis of the veterans identified in the case data review, and to allow for confirmation of veteran status and attempts at resolution through mainstream supports, the policy targets those identified as experiencing homelessness at least 45 days prior to the request.

This applies when:

- Veteran status is confirmed
- Needs can't be met by VASH or SSVF
- Eligible for homeless designated housing and assessed for Coordinated Entry process
- Has not been referred to homeless designated housing and is unable to self-resolve.

Termination

Any Authorized User Agency may terminate their participation in the Coordinated Entry System by giving written notice. Housing programs that are required to participate due to funder guidelines will need funder approval to terminate participation.

Program Closure Policy

Homeless dedicated, supportive housing programs which experience the need to cease operations may utilize Coordinated Entry as a resource for families enrolled in the effected program. However this utilization should not be viewed as the primary solution to all households enrolled in the program and continued, individualized transition planning should continue for each household. Coordinated Entry should be viewed as a resource for families with a continued, ongoing need for supportive housing who are likely to experience homelessness again without the continuation of services.

1. When a program has been notified that its funding source is no longer available and no alternative funding sources have been identified for the continuation of services, Coordinated Entry will no longer continue to place households within reported vacancies.
2. If the program wishes to utilize Coordinated Entry for transition planning for any households still enrolled in the program, as depicted above, a written request is required to be submitted to the Coordinated Entry Leadership Committee Chair who will bring the request to the Leadership Committee for approval. Requests submitted within three months of program closure date will not be approved.
3. The housing provider will be asked to participate in case conferencing with the CES Team per requested transfer- providers will be asked to provide homeless documentation from program entry, disability documentation if applicable and updating current contact information and household composition within HMIS. Providers will be asked to participate in a warm hand off to the new provider if a transfer is made possible through Coordinated Entry.

Coordinated Entry will make every effort to match those approved for transfer to a new program prior to program closure, however, housing is not guaranteed through CES and the original provider should continue to make every effort to transition plan with the household accordingly.

Hennepin County CES Website:

www.hennepin.com/coordinated-entry

Appendix A: Coordinated Entry Release of Information

Hennepin Coordinated Entry System Release of Information

Client's Full Name: _____ DOB: _____

HMIS ID (if known): _____

I understand that I am signing this consent to release information collected by the Hennepin Coordinated Entry System (CES) so that organizations working with people experiencing homelessness can discuss my case and coordinate services to support me in finding housing. This information may be from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), CES Connect or CES paper forms.

I authorize the agencies and appropriate service groups that participate in the Hennepin CES to obtain the following information about my service use:

- History of shelter use and homelessness
- Barriers to housing
- Eligibility for housing programs
- Names of current and past social service providers

This release allows the sharing of data with all providers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area that serve as the homeless response system, including but not limited to:

- Emergency shelter agencies,
- Street Outreach teams,
- Rapid Rehousing providers,
- Transitional Housing Providers,
- Permanent Supportive Housing Providers,
- Subsidy administrators, and
- County case workers.

I understand that:

- I have the right to refuse to sign this authorization.
- If I do not sign it, my services may not be fully coordinated. However, emergency services will not be withheld if I don't sign this.

- I can change or cancel this authorization at any time by contacting any staff in the emergency response system and asking that this form be rescinded.
- This authorization takes effect the day that I sign it and expires upon my request.
- *CES Connect* is an application where my information, for the purposes of Coordinated Entry, will be stored. Only authorized providers within the homeless response system will be able to utilize this application to check on CES Housing Referral Status or whether you are still active on the CES Priority List for the purposes of Care Coordination to assist in finding housing.
- A copy of this authorization is as valid as the original

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Fleeing Violence Verification Form

Fleeing Violence Statement

I, _____, work for _____
Domestic Abuse/Trafficking/Sexual Assault Advocate or Counselor Name of Organization

and do hereby verify as follows:

I have a reasonable basis to believe _____
Name of Survivor(s)/Victim(s)

is homeless. They are an individual or family who: Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence; has no other residence; and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

 Signature of Domestic Abuse/Trafficking/
 Sexual Assault Advocate or Counselor

 Date

Appendix C: Referral Request Form

Housing Provider Contact Information

Agency Name:
Program Name:
HMIS Program ID:
Person Completing Form:
Email: Phone:
Intended Case Manager (if known):
Email: Phone:

**Number of
Vacancies**

**Check Box if
REPLACEMENT
Referral**

Type of Program

- PSH
- TH
- RRH

Household Type

- Single Adult
- Family – Single-Parent Household
- Family – Two-Parent Household

Head of Household Age

- 16-21
- 18-21
- 18-24
- Any Age
- Other:

Family Size

- Any Family Size
- Not Applicable (single adult/youth)
Parent(s), Children

Unit Size (if applicable)

- Studio/Efficiency
- 1BR
- 2BR
- 3BR
- 4BR
- Other:

Location

- Scattered Site
- Site-Based

City:
Neighborhood:
Expected Vacancy Date:

Homeless Status as Required by Funder

- Chronic
- LTH
- High Priority Homeless
- HUD Homeless
- MN Homeless

Sobriety

- No sobriety requirement
- Client must be sober
Please elaborate:

Disability

- HoH must have disability impacting ability to work
- A household member must have a disability
- No disability requirement
- Other:

Income

- Household must have verifiable income
Minimum Monthly:
Maximum Monthly:
- Household may have zero income
Maximum Monthly:

Please send completed form to: – CES.Hennepin@hennepin.us

Appendix D: Referral Outcome Form

Utilize this form to notify the CES of the referral outcome of referrals made through encrypted email. A narrative description is required for all denials. Submit form as soon as outcome is known.

Housing Provider Contact Information

Agency Name:

Program Name & HMIS Provider ID:

Staff Name:

Email:

Phone:

Referral Information

Client ID or HMIS ID:

Date referral received:

Referral Outcome

Declined (Referral Denied, placed back on Priority List)

Canceled (Referral Denied, Needs to be removed from Priority List)

Housed

Date Housed:

If Declined or Canceled, Reason:

- Participant unreachable- after initial contact
- Participant unreachable – disappeared
- Participant refused services
- Participant is eligible but provider unable to accept
- Participant is not eligible, over income
- Participant is not eligible, other
- Participant is placed in institutional setting
- Other
- Property management denial – criminal history
- Property management denial – eviction history/money owed
- Property management denial – both criminal and eviction/money owed
- Property management denial – other
- Participant found housing/Self resolved
- Participant moved outside of CoC
- Participant deceased

Please provide a narrative description of the reason for denial. Be very specific:

How to submit this form:

Please send completed form to:
CES.Hennepin@hennepin.us

Appendix E: Grievance and Appeals Form

Grievance and Appeals Form

If there is a problem or concern about the Coordinated Entry System, we want to know about it. The information on this form will be used to address your concerns and will be kept confidential. If you need assistance completing this form, please contact an advocate. Completing this form will not negatively affect your status within the Coordinated Entry System. Please bear in mind that the Coordinated Entry Process cannot guarantee placement into permanent housing, as demand for housing is far greater than the current supply in our community.

Name of person completing this form (grievant):

_____ Date of Birth:

Cell # _____ Email: _____

Secondary Phone # _____

Preferred Method of Contact: Call Email

Alternative contact information:

Advocate and/or Interpreter

Information: _____

Can we leave confidential info with the alternate contact? Yes No

What is this in regard to:

- Access to Coordinated Entry System (i.e. no assessment provided)
- Assessment (i.e. scoring)
- Prioritization (i.e. disagreement with housing designation)
- Housing referral (i.e. lack of follow through from housing provider)
- Other (please be specific)

Note: if you have a grievance about an agency, the Adult Shelter Connect or the shelter system please go through their grievance process.

Explain the complaint, grievance or issue, including the names of those involved and dates. Please be as specific as possible

What has been done to fix this (by yourself or others)?

Follow up:

Appendix F: Transfer Request Form

Hennepin County CES Transfer Request Form

Hennepin County CES Transfer Request Form

Today's Date: Click here to enter a date.	Client Date of Birth: Click here to enter a date.
Client Name: Click here to enter text.	Client HMIS ID: Click here to enter text.
Current Housing Provider, Program, & HMIS Provider ID: Click here to enter text.	Month/Year Client Moved In: Click here to enter text.
Month/Year of Planned Exit Date: Click here to enter text.	Homeless Status at Entrance: Click here to enter text.
VI-F-SPDAT at Entrance: Click here to enter text.	Family Size: Click here to enter text.

Proposed Housing Provider, Program, & HMIS ID: Click here to enter text.	
Name of Staff Completing Form: Click here to enter text.	Staff Contact Information: Click here to enter text.

Reason for Transfer Request: (Please be sure to include details about the household's circumstance that warrant a transfer request)
[Click here to enter text.](#)

DESCRIBE CHANGE IN SERVICE NEED

1. Have the resident and housing provider discussed the change requested? Yes No
2. Is the resident requesting an increased level of support? Yes No
3. How is the current level of support not meeting the resident's needs?

4. Was the resident's level of service need accurately captured during the initial housing assessment? Yes No
 - a. If no, what was inaccurate or omitted? [Click here to enter text.](#)

 - b. If yes, what has changed since the initial assessment? [Click here to enter text.](#)

5. What other options have the resident and provider reviewed? [Click here to enter text.](#)

6. What options have been considered so the resident can maintain their current residence? [Click here to enter text.](#)

7. Did a specific incident initiate this request? Yes No
If yes, please explain: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name and Signature of Program Manager/Supervisor Approving this Request:

Contact Email of Supervisor Approving Request:

Appendix G: Accelerated Prioritization for Veterans

Hennepin County Accelerated Coordinated Entry for Veterans

Date Completed:	Submitted by (name / agency):
-----------------	-------------------------------

CLIENT INFORMATION	
Name	HMIS ID
Date entered onto the Veterans Registry	DOB

OTHER IMPORTANT INFO	
Veteran Status	Has veteran status been confirmed, as defined in the federal benchmarks for ending veteran homelessness? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Date on which veteran status confirmed:
Housing services	Has this veteran been assessed for Coordinated Entry in Hennepin County? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please note that referrals cannot be made until a completed CES assessment is available
	Can their housing needs be met by VASH resources? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please provide brief explanation
	Can their housing needs be met by SSVF resources? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please provide brief explanation

	<p>Is this veteran in the process of applying for or accessing other forms of housing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, please provide brief explanation and current status</p>
--	---

Please submit by e-mail to CES.Hennepin@hennepin.us