

The Maine Coordinated Entry System (MCES) Update

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After receiving specific feedback on the MCES from providers engaged in the system, it was requested that the CoC provide more structured information on the current CES implementation and progress. The MCES Update is one way the CES Subcommittee is trying to meet this request and will publish updates until October of 2019 (and potentially longer).

What is Coordinated Entry?

A Statewide System mandated by HUD that requires the CoC to establish a centralized and coordinated process for persons who are at risk of becoming homeless, or who are homeless, to gain access to housing or supportive services. The Coordinated Entry System (CES) has been established with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources for Maine's homeless residents. Both the CoC and ESG Program interim rules require the use of the CoC's coordinated entry process.

What is the committee up to?

We've been discussing the details of the system and making some decisions about what to recommend to the Board and the CoC. This issue includes some info about things we've decided to include in those recommendations.

What is the current timeline?

HUD's Notice, released January of 2017, outlined the requirements around Coordinated Entry that CoCs must have been able to meet by January 23, 2018. The MCoC chose to pause the Maine CES process on November 9, 2018 to re-evaluate their system. The MCoC CES Subcommittee plans to have suggestions on what changes to implement to improve or modify this process and will present recommendations to the CoC Board by October 2019.

Universal Assessment Tool: VI-SPDAT!

Since many of the participating providers are already using the VI-SPDAT (or other tools in the SPDAT family), it makes sense that the CES will utilize the same assessment tool. That way, you don't have to change your process.

Recognizing, however, that the VI-SPDAT is not perfect, there will be a built-in opportunity for you or your staff to recommend score adjustments based on your knowledge of the person and their situation.

What if people refuse to do the VI-SPDAT, you ask? There'll be provisions for that, too.

Working Together Through Case Conferencing

One of the major mandates of CES is that we all work together to make sure each person or household experiencing homelessness is linked to the most appropriate housing intervention in our system for them. The best way to do this is to talk to each other and make recommendations as a group.

Case conferencing will give all CES participating providers the opportunity to check in about the people in the system, their current situations, and the possible housing resources we can connect them to.

Next Steps:

Approval of Policies & Procedures - The committee is drafting them now. Then they'll go through the Board and the full CoC for approval.

Implementation - There'll be training coming your way as soon as the policies & procedures are approved and we're ready to get started.

Data Sharing - As you may know, there is work being done to improve data sharing in HMIS. This will be very helpful to the CES system. More info coming from MaineHousing soon!

Continuous Improvement – Nothing's ever perfect right from the start! We look forward to your feedback and your help to keep the CES constantly improving.

One final note:

As you may know, MaineHousing was hiring for a Homeless Project Coordinator. The position has been filled – by MaineHousing's own Mike Shaughnessy! (ESHAP shelters may know him from his previous role in ESHAP monitoring.) Congratulations, Mike! We are glad to have you on the team and look forward to working with you on CES!

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