



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

November 15, 2018

Mr. Scott Tibbitts
Continuum of Care Coordinator
Maine State Housing Authority
353 Water Street
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Mr. Tibbitts:

The Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS) invites your Continuum of Care (CoC) to participate in HUD's first Technical Assistance (TA) Community of Practice which will focus on effective and efficient Coordinated Entry. The Community of Practice will take place from January to May of 2019, meeting once per month for approximately 90 minutes via video conference. HUD asks you to select two representatives from your CoC to participate.

SNAPS believes operating an effective and efficient Coordinated Entry process is one of the most important ways CoCs can strengthen their systems of care and better support people experiencing homelessness, and that CoCs will make more progress working with peer communities than endeavoring alone. As a participant in a Community of Practice, you will work with other CoCs on peer- and practice-oriented problem solving, facilitated by two expert TA providers. The facilitators will help participants identify common goals around the Coordinated Entry process and make progress on those goals over the course of five months.

Background

According to Wenger-Trayner (2015) Communities of Practice are:

"... groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."

Each Community of Practice will be made up of approximately 20 participants (two participants from each of the 10 selected communities) and two TA provider facilitators. Each Community of Practice will meet once per month by video conference for approximately 90 minutes. During these meetings, participants will have discussions and activities designed to help them think through the challenging issues in their community. The facilitators are trained in using the dynamic functionality of the video-based meeting platform so that participants gain as many of the benefits of in-person meetings as practicable. In addition to the monthly meetings, participants can engage with their TA providers through "office hours" and other methods

depending on the needs of the CoCs within that group. HUD expects participants to prepare between sessions using exercises designed to help think and plan around their goals, particularly as they work to implement changes in their CoC. These preparation activities range from reading background and framing materials, participating in small group or one-on-one discussions with other participants, and other exercises that help participants apply their knowledge and skills to their CoC.

Through this new method of TA engagement, HUD intends to build strong peer relationships and networks that last long past the five-month Community of Practice sessions. Organized around current top priorities within CoCs, these sessions will help participants address issues, understand goals and next steps, and prepare for (or avoid) common trouble spots. HUD recognizes the need for innovative and adaptive TA that can support communities in charting their own course for local system change.

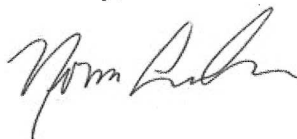
Why the Focus on Coordinated Entry?

SNAPS received hundreds of questions over the past 18 months about how best to carry out various aspects of CoCs' Coordinated Entry processes, and how other communities are implementing their Coordinated Entry. We recognize your CoC and many CoCs across the country are working hard to build out and refine your Coordinated Entry systems. This Community of Practice offers an opportunity to learn and troubleshoot with other CoCs that are similarly deeply engaged in the Coordinated Entry process.

Over the course of five months, participants will improve their coordinated entry systems by identifying challenges and barriers within their community, focusing on centralized list management, and moving towards streamlined non-stagnant processes. Participants will envision a path forward to improving their community's implementation of Coordinated Entry, and gain tools and resources (including peer support) to make that vision a reality.

Please contact HUDSNAPS-TA@icf.com by November 29, 2018, if your CoC is interested in participating or if you have questions. HUD looks forward to your response and appreciates your CoC's efforts to prevent and end homelessness in its community.

Sincerely,



Norm Suchar
Director
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs