The Maine Coordinated Entry System (MCES) Update

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.

Policies & Procedures:

Among the activities that will need to be undertaken is the redrafting of the Written Policies & Procedures specific to Maine's Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all Continuums of Care (CoCs) to adopt "written policies and procedures" to guide the general operations and day-to-day activities of their coordinated entry (CE) systems. HUD detailed these requirements in its 2017 [Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System:]

Each CoC must incorporate additional requirements into their written policies and procedures to ensure that its coordinated entry implementation includes each of the requirements described in [Section II.B].

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.

Working Backwards!

Last year, the Coordinated Entry process focused on Step 1: Access (Triage & Diversion). Learning from that experience, we're looking at this process *with the end in mind*.

Ultimately, Coordinated Entry is about *helping people move from their first experience of homelessness into stable housing*. Our approach this year is intended to start with what's needed for that end goal, then working backwards to design the Access, Assessment, Prioritization, and Referral steps based on that.

In this way, we hope to design a system that works for everyone involved!

Thinking ahead about Data…

Client-Level Data Collection in (or in conjunction with) HMIS

HUD recently finalized a set of [Coordinated Entry (CE) data elements](#) to standardize data collection on core components of CE – access, assessment, referral, and prioritization. These elements are the result of several months of collaboration with key stakeholders to learn from communities' experiences implementing and refining CE data collection and determining precisely what data is needed to effectively manage and evaluate effectiveness of CE.

The data "elements" described below are intended to be combined with the Universal Data Elements in the HMIS Data Standards and to align with the basic structure of coordinated entry described in the [Coordinated Entry Core Elements Guidebook](#). The intent is to collect data about people as they move through the CE process, thus the data collection is not intended to be strictly aligned with any one specific project or structure. In practice, coordinated entry data might be collected by different agencies phased over time, depending on how the coordinated entry is set up in each CoC. The recommended data elements are:

- Coordinated Entry Assessments: a flexible data element that collects an assessment date, location, and assessment result. The element also provides CoCs with the flexibility to define their own assessment questions and responses if desired.
- Coordinated Entry Event: a data element designed to capture key referral, match, and placement events conducted by the coordinated entry process, as well as the results of those events, if necessary.
- Addition to existing Contact and Move-in Date data elements.

CoCs with HUD-funded Supportive Services Only (SSO)-CE projects are required to collect CE data elements beginning April 1, 2020. Regardless of whether your CoC has a HUD-funded SSO-CE project, all CoCs are strongly encouraged to collect CE data using these standardized elements. CE data provides critical information about how quickly systems are stably housing people and where there are system bottlenecks and gaps in system resources, which informs strategies to improve responses to homelessness.

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