

OVERVIEW

The Maine Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) is comprised of statewide access and standardized assessment for all youth, as well as a coordinated referral and housing placement process to ensure that youth experiencing homelessness, per U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Guidelines, receive appropriate assistance with both immediate and long-term housing and service needs. The entire YCES process, within the state of Maine with participation of its agencies and organizations, ensures a thorough, standardized process from initial engagement to successful housing placement. Individual YCES providers will still maintain their own admission processes and eligibility requirements, as required by each project's existing commitments. YCES will add a layer of collaboration to ensure that each youth experiencing homelessness is connected to the best available housing intervention for them.

The Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC) has adopted the Maine Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) to implement its coordinated housing and services components for youth experiencing homelessness.

Purpose and Background

HUD requires each CoC to establish and operate a "centralized or coordinated assessment system" (referred to as "coordinated entry" "CE" or "Coordinated Entry System" "CES"). Coordinated entry is an approach to coordination and management of a crisis response system's resources to efficiently and effectively connect people to interventions that will rapidly end their homelessness. Both the CoC and ESG Program Interim Rules require use of the CoC's coordinated entry process, provided that it meets HUD requirements. Coordinated entry processes are intended to help communities prioritize people who are most in need of assistance. They also provide information to CoCs and other stakeholders about service needs and gaps to help communities strategically allocate their current resources. The Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) is established in accordance with HUD guidelines that allow for a separate, parallel CES to be established to serve specific sub-populations.

This manual provides the policy and procedure framework for the Maine Youth Coordinated Entry System and serves the following purposes:

- Sets forth the policies governing Maine's Youth CE system.
- Provides all organizations in the homeless and social service systems with a basic overview of how Youth CE operates and what they can expect when engaging with the system.
- Provides an overview of what youth experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis can expect when engaging with Maine's Youth CE system.
- Documents all required CE policies by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as described in CPD Notice 17-01: Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a CoC Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System.

Core Requirements for a Coordinated Entry System¹

The CoC Program Interim Rule establishes minimum requirements that all coordinated entry processes must meet. Per the 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8) requirements and the 24 CFR 578.3 definition of a “centralized or coordinated assessment system”, a CoC’s coordinated entry process must:

- Cover the entire geographic area claimed by the CoC;
- Be easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services;
- Be well-advertised;
- Include a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool;
- Provide an initial, comprehensive assessment of individuals and families for housing and services; and
- Include a specific policy to guide the operation of the centralized or coordinated assessment system to address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim specific providers.
- Individual CoC projects have ultimate responsibility for determining the eligibility of prospective participants in their programs and for collecting and maintaining eligibility documentation.

Guiding Principles for Maine’s Coordinated Entry System

The goal of Youth Coordinated Entry is to provide each youth with adequate services and supports to meet their housing needs, with a focus on diverting them from homelessness or returning them to housing as quickly as possible. Below are the guiding principles that will help Maine meet these goals.

- The YCES will operate with a youth -centered approach, and with youth -centered outcomes.
- The YCES will ensure that youth quickly receive access to the most appropriate services and housing resources available, including access to mainstream health services, social services, and employment programs.
- The YCES will reduce the stress of the experience of being homeless by limiting assessments and interviews to only the most pertinent information necessary to resolve the youth’s immediate housing crisis.
- The YCES will incorporate cultural and linguistic competencies in all engagement, assessment, and referral coordination activities.
- The YCES will utilize prioritization assessment(s) and a comprehensive case conferencing system to assess youth safety as the primary standard assessment mechanisms and will capture only the limited information necessary to determine the severity of the youth’s needs and the best referral strategy for them.
- The YCES will utilize HMIS for the purposes of managing participant information and facilitating quick access to available CoC resources.

The YCES will use and integrate a Housing First philosophy. In practice, this philosophy will work to ensure that regardless of any real or perceived presenting mental health or substance use issues, youth will be connected to housing as quickly as possible. Further, this Housing First philosophy will help to

¹ For more information, please refer to the *Coordinated Entry Core Elements* document, found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5340/coordinated-entry-core-elements/>

ensure that youth presenting with the highest risk will be matched and connected with the most intensive interventions available.

Terms and Definitions²

211 Maine	211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services. Provides a 24/7/365 access point for YCES engagement and maintains an updated list of YCES providers and referral agencies.
Access Point	Access Point: Access points refer to how people experiencing a housing crisis learn that coordinated entry exists and are able to access crisis response services.
Chronically Homeless	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: <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.
Case Conferencing	Local process for CE participating providers 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.
Continuum of Care (CoC)	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 providers of services and/or housing for people experiencing homelessness, 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 people who are currently experiencing, or have a history of, homelessness.

²Please note that HUD often updates definitions and terms, and the CES committee will aim to keep this document as up to date as possible. However, should the definitions listed here not reflect the most up to date HUD information, the HUD terms and definitions will be used in practice, rather than those listed here.

Continuum of Care Program	HUD-funded program 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 individuals and families experiencing homelessness while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; (3) promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by individuals and families experiencing homelessness; and (4) optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
Emergency Shelter	Short-term emergency housing available to persons experiencing homelessness.
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program	HUD-funded program to (1) engage individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including those living on the street; (2) improve the quantity and quality of emergency shelters for individuals and families experiencing homelessness; (3) help operate these shelters; (4) provide essential services to shelter residents; (5) rapidly rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness; and (6) prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless.
Homeless Prevention	Housing relocation and stabilization services as necessary to prevent the individual or family from moving to an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation.
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	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.
Host Homes	Community-based interventions which offer youth a place to live, in an unrelated adult's home, for a temporary period of time as they gain resources to either return to their parent/guardian for family reunification or gain independent living skills while working on goals for greater self-sufficiency.
Maine Service Hubs	Maine has nine Homeless Response Service Hubs that cover all 16 counties in Maine, each staffed by a Hub Coordinator. Hub Coordinators are responsible for coordinating and tracking system-wide efforts to achieve reductions in homelessness across the entire Hub, including managing the Coordinated Entry process.
Long Term Stayers	Long Term Stayers (LTS) were originally defined as people staying over 180 cumulative days in shelters or outdoors within a 365-day period (cumulative). Because of the success in housing this population, the definition was amended in March 2016 to the longest stayer in homelessness inside or outside as determined by local shelters for all parts of Maine except Portland. Portland retained the original definition.

Mobile Navigation and Diversion	Geographically nimble teams designed to respond to immediate housing issues and provide interventions which divert youth from involvement with the homeless response system.
Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)– funded program to provide outreach and services to people with serious mental illness (SMI) who are homeless, in shelter or on the street, or at imminent risk of homelessness.
Public Housing Authority (PHA)	Local entity that administers public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) (aka Section 8 vouchers).
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist people experiencing homelessness 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 persons and families experiencing homelessness (with or without a disability) as rapidly as possible into permanent housing.
Release of Information (ROI)	Written documentation signed by a participant to release personal information to authorized partners.
Transitional Housing (TH)	Program providing individuals and families experiencing homelessness 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.
Youth	A person 24 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care or who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. "Homeless youth" does not include a person incarcerated or otherwise detained under federal or state law.
Youth Case Conferencing Group	A group consisting of representatives from referring CoC funded youth homeless services agencies in Maine, along with the Hub Coordinator. This group can be invited to consult on prioritization outside of the Mainstream Case Conferencing Group, in order to maintain youth privacy while making final referral recommendations.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)	The YHDP is an initiative designed to address systemic responses to youth homelessness and significantly reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness in the United States. The YHDP is funded through HUD, and Maine received a YHDP award which began in 2021, resulting in six funded projects throughout the state. The official demonstration project ended in 2023, but HUD funding for these youth initiatives will continue through the CoC.
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Roles

CoC Board of Directors	Responsible for the general oversight of the CES, including the approval of the CE Policies & Procedures document.
Collaborative Applicant	Entity that must (at the request of the CoC Board and on behalf of the CoC) apply for certain types of HUD funding, including funding for coordinated entry and planning grants. Examples may include Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project or ESG funding.
HMIS Lead Agency	Operates the Homeless Management Information System on the CoC's behalf. Ensures the CE system has access to HMIS software and functionality for the collection, management, and analysis of data on persons served by coordinated entry. Entity designated by the CoC in accordance with HUD's CoC Program interim rule to operate the HMIS on the CoC's behalf. The HMIS Lead designated by the CoC may apply for CoC Program funds to establish and operate its HMIS.
Hub Coordinator	Responsible for hub-level operation and management of the Coordinated Entry System, specifically prioritization, managing the by-names list, and referral case conferencing.
Participant	An individual or family which accesses the CES, at any step in the process. "Participant" encompasses people for whom the following commonly used terms could apply: client, resident, guest, youth, etc.
Statewide Youth Action Board (YAB)	Serves as a representation of Maine youth voice and perspective derived from relevant lived experiences. Offers feedback and review of CE materials and procedures, as requested by the CoC.

CES Participating Provider	Provider agency or organization that has agreed to provide supports/services to people experiencing homelessness on behalf of the CoC. A CES participating provider must execute a CE Participation Agreement with the CoC, and signed annually. The Participation Agreement outlines the standards and expectations for the project's participation in, and compliance with, the policies and procedures governing the CES operations. In order to receive CoC, YHDP, or ESG Program funding from HUD, entities are required to participate in coordinated entry.
Referral Partner	A type of CES participating provider. Referral partners will receive and consider referrals for their project(s) from the CES. They will sign a Referral Partner Agreement with the CE management entity affirming it is aware of, and will adhere to, all expectations for coordinated entry.
Homeless Youth Provider Group (or, Youth Provider Group)	A formally recognized subcommittee of the Maine CoC, this group is intended to ensure shared language, vision and advocacy across sectors and youth providers in Maine, while centering youth voice and choice. This group also advises on and formally approves decisions for Youth Coordinated Entry in the state of Maine.
Policy Oversight Entity	The entity that is responsible for outlining the expectations for participation in coordinated entry. This includes CoC expectations for use of appropriate assessment tools, participation in case conferencing or other coordination mechanisms, use of the coordinated entry process to fill project vacancies or openings, addressing the safety needs of survivors of domestic violence, and the associated incentives or penalties associated with meeting or failing to meet those expectations.
Evaluation Entity	The entity responsible for the evaluation of the CES process of using participant and provider data to measure the functioning of the CE process.
Management Entity	The entity in charge of the day-to-day operation of coordinated entry involves staff, recordkeeping documentation, technology, and other infrastructure that supports the implementation of coordinated entry at the CoC or homeless system level.
Mainstream and/or Youth Services Provider	Agency or entity that can provide necessary services or assistance to people served by coordinated entry. Examples of mainstream and/or youth service providers include, but are not limited to, hospitals, mental health agencies, employment assistance programs, and schools.
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Federal agency responsible for administering housing and homeless programs including the CoC and ESG Programs.
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)	Federal agency responsible for providing health care and other services, including assistance to end homelessness, to Veterans and their families.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Maine's Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) is designed to identify, engage, and assist youth experiencing homelessness, and ensure that those who request or need assistance are connected to appropriate resources. The YCES service coverage area is the entire geographical area of the state of Maine. The YCES aims to be easily accessible to all individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including those with disabilities. Primary access points will be the participating youth provider agencies. Any youth who contacts agencies participating in the mainstream Coordinated Entry System can also opt into being matched with a youth-specific housing resource.

Coordinated Entry is an opportunity for homeless service professionals to improve the quality, access, customer service experience, and coordination of services of Maine's homeless response network. YCES relies heavily on the competency, knowledge, experience, and fostered relationships of its providers and staff to improve entry, divert when assessed best practice, and soften landings to homelessness for youth. Coordinated Entry is a tool to help problem-solve individual, and often unique, issues in connecting youth to the best available resource. The Maine CoC strongly recommends CoC members, partners, and all other collaborative parties participate in a unified fashion.

Version

The Maine Youth Provider Group shall be responsible for the revision, review, and recommendation for approval of the YCES Policies & Procedures to the CoC Board of Directors and the MCoC. The MCoC is committed to continuous improvement, and will review and revise this document as needed, and anyone who is interested in submitting suggestions for revisions to the document should submit them to Chair(s) of the Homeless Youth Provider Group.

Version	Date Approved	Key Updates
1	2/20/2020	Approved by MCoC
2	12/16/2021	MCoC Approved use of ME YYA CE Prioritization & Assessment Tool in place of TAY-VI-SPDAT
3		MCoC Approved new Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool and User Guide; and updated YCES Policies & Procedures Manual (which included updated language about Hub Coordinators taking an integral role in Youth Case Conferencing and decisions made by an ad hoc subcommittee of the Youth Provider Group as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement process of the Youth CES).

Coordinated Entry Participation and Coordination Policy

All CoC and ESG (24CFR§576.400(b) funded projects are required to participate in Coordinated Entry under 24 CFR 578.23(c)(9) and (11). The MCoC aims to have all homeless assistance projects participate in its CES and will work with all local projects and funders in its geographic area, including VA-funded homeless programs and PATH outreach programs, to facilitate their participation in the CES.

The CoC is committed to aligning and coordinating all CES, including Youth CES, policies and procedures governing assessment, eligibility determinations, and prioritization with its written standards for administering CoC and ESG Programs funds, as required under 24 CFR 576.400(d) and (e) and 578.7(a)(9).

Fair and Equal Access Policy

All youth participating in any aspect of the YCES, such as access, assessment, prioritization, or referral, shall be afforded equal access to CE services and resources regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, pregnancy, citizenship, familial status, marital status, household composition, disability, Veteran status, or sexual orientation. 211 is available by phone twenty-four hours a day with trained staff to assist persons and provide information about and/or referral to appropriate resources.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The YCES System supports the fact that all COC Program, ESG Program, and HOPWA Program funded projects are required to comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws, including the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and HUD's Equal Access Rule included in 24 CFR 5.105(a)(2), which prohibits discriminatory eligibility determinations in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing programs based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, or marital status. The CoC Program Interim Rule also contains a fair housing provision included in 24 CFR 578.93 (24 CFR 576.407(a) and (b) for ESG, and 24 CFR 574.603 for HOPWA).

Youth accessing the YCES are to be informed they have the ability to file a discrimination complaint. Discrimination complaints can be filed with the agency of the alleged complaint.

The YCES prioritization and referral processes comply with Federal, State, and local laws to ensure participants are not "steered" away or toward particular housing facilities or neighborhoods based on age, race, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity in accordance with all relevant and applicable laws.

Low Barrier Policy

CoC providers will make enrollment determinations on the basis of limiting barriers to enrollment in services and housing. CoC projects and YCES participating providers may not screen potential clients out of assistance based on perceived barriers including, but not limited to: income; substance use disorder; domestic violence history; resistance to receiving services; the type or acuity of needed disability-related services or supports; history of evictions; poor credit; lease violations or history of not being a leaseholder; or criminal record. YCES access points which restrict access to resources based on specific client attributes or characteristics, must provide documentation to the MCoC which includes a justification for their enrollment policy.

Marketing Policy

The YCES is well advertised through the statewide 211 system, and the network of YCES participating programs, which are already part of the homeless system. Flyers are displayed at the physical location of YCES participating programs in a conspicuous location and are available throughout the community.

Each project participating in the YCES is required to post, or otherwise make publicly available, a notice provided by the MCoC that describes CE. This notice should be displayed at the physical location of YCES participating programs in a conspicuous location, such as waiting areas, as well as areas where people may congregate or receive services (i.e., dining halls). All YCES participating provider staff are required to know which personnel within their agency can discuss and explain CE to a participant who seeks more information.

ACCESS

No Wrong Door Approach³

The coverage area of YCES is the entire state of Maine. Access to the YCES follows a “No Wrong Door” approach, which ensures that youth have the same access to resources, referrals, assessments, and prioritization processes regardless of which homeless assistance provider they present at for assistance. The principles of this approach are:

- Youth can seek emergency assistance through any of the CES access points, including 211 Maine, local Emergency Shelters, PATH, and other local outreach providers.
- All access points utilize the Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool and provide standardized linkages to subpopulation access points and emergency service referrals; eligible youth will be referred to ESG or YHDP funded homeless youth agencies and, at the youth’s request, also have access to the housing resources of the mainstream Coordinated Entry System.
- Youth have equal access to information and advice about the housing assistance for which they are eligible, to assist them in making informed decisions about available services that best meet their needs and to address emergency and crisis needs, as applicable.

In some cases, youth may need additional accommodations to access the YCES. In these instances, the COC designates that:

- YCES participating providers provide linkages to communication accommodations through translation services to effectively and clearly communicate with people who need them, including visual, auditory, and limited English proficiency.
- It will be ensured that access to the YCES will be accessible to youth with mobility barriers.

Emergency Services

In case of emergency, call 911. After-hours housing crisis response access is available via telephone through 211, which can refer to police, and emergency medical care services for youth seeking

³ For more information on the No Wrong Door approach, please refer to the HUD CES Core Elements Document: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Core-Elements.pdf>

emergency housing assistance twenty-four hours a day year-round. This can include your local General Assistance office, 211 also coordinates with domestic violence providers, emergency services, shelters, and other housing crisis programs. The YCES system does not utilize prioritization to access emergency shelter services. However, each individual provider utilizes their own process for programmatic eligibility. It is important to note that due to the limited number of shelter beds in the state, it is possible that a bed might not be available for a youth when they are seeking it. In this case, providers will work to connect that youth with other resources to help address their immediate needs.

Diversion and Homeless Prevention

Acknowledging the potentially traumatic nature of literal homeless, providers will help youth to explore possible safe alternatives to emergency shelter. The YCES will ensure that all potentially eligible youth will be given the opportunity to explore options for diversion and homeless prevention, and screened for homelessness prevention assistance, regardless of the access point at which they initially seek assistance.

ASSESSMENT

All projects participating in Youth CE will follow the assessment and protocols of the YCES. The assessment process will collect only enough participant information to prioritize and refer people to available housing and support services.

Maine Youth CES Assessments

The assessment component of the coordinated entry process will be implemented in phases in order to capture information on an as-needed basis as youth navigate the process, recognizing that youth-centered and trauma-informed approaches are necessary throughout the CE process.

The following will be completed as a part of the YCES standardized assessment process:

Safety & Diversion Assessment: This first phase is intended to assess the immediate housing crisis, and determine if the youth can be diverted from, or must be directed towards, emergency services. YCES participating providers conducting the assessment will examine existing CoC and youth resources and all other options that could be used to divert the youth from entering the homeless system of care. This initial assessment will also be aimed at assessing the immediate safety of the youth. If a youth is presenting as fleeing, or attempting to flee from domestic violence, the entity doing the assessment will act in accordance with the Individuals and Families Fleeing Domestic Violence policy. See the ME YYA CE Assessment User Guide for more information about this assessment.

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool: Each youth is assessed for overall risk as related to their safety and health needs and their history of displacement/systems involvement using the Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool. The tool will be completed when a youth is ready to begin exploring housing options and in accordance with the assessment policy and procedures outlined in this document. This assessment is meant to

collect information to identify a youth's housing and service needs with the intent to resolve that youth's housing crisis. This step may also include other Housing Barrier assessments necessary to refine, clarify, and verify the youth's housing and homeless history, barriers, goals, eligibility, and preferences. Please see the ME YYA CE Assessment User Guide for more information about conducting this assessment.

Data Collection: When a youth accesses emergency services, such as entering an emergency shelter or engaging with a homeless outreach team, basic Universal Data Elements (UDEs) will be collected. These UDEs include the youth's name, date of birth, social security number, living situation the night before accessing emergency services, and length of time homeless. Access points will also collect HMIS Common Data Elements and Universal Data Elements as necessary to enroll the youth in a crisis response project, such as emergency shelter or other homeless assistance projects.

Due to individual programmatic eligibility requirements, there may be further documentation necessary beyond this assessment process. Further information on a youth's eligibility for specific programs and resources will be determined in the referral phase of CE.

Assessment Criteria

In accordance with HUD guidance, the YCES includes a standardized assessment process, ensuring uniform decision-making and coordination of care for persons experiencing a housing crisis. The Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool screens for risk based on the youth's current ability to meet their health and safety needs as well as any previous history of displacement or system involvement.

The Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool is administered by providers for young people experiencing homelessness and mainstream providers, in accordance with the written standards, and is the approved prioritization tool for all homeless services providers wishing to refer a youth to a YCES housing resource. Based on a youth's answers to the specific set of questions inherent in the tool, a youth will be given a score.

If a trained provider believes the assessment does not accurately reflect the youth's situation, the score can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis, through discussion with the case conferencing group. The Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool can only be conducted by a provider who has been appropriately trained to use this tool. Any adjustment in score will focus on safety considerations for the youth being assessed that are not reflected in the ME YYA CE Prioritization & Assessment Tool questions.

Youth have the right to refuse to answer any assessment questions. If there is a youth experiencing homelessness that declines to complete the Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool, that youth will remain unscored. If this is the case, case conferencing and length of time homeless will be used to help establish prioritization for that youth. The case conferencing group will make every effort to ensure that the youth is not negatively impacted by their refusal, however this refusal may impact a youth's eligibility for individual programs in the referral phase.

All CES participating providers must use the standardized assessment methodology, to ensure that all youth served are assessed in a consistent manner, using the same process.

Privacy Protection

CES participating providers are required to notify and obtain consent for the collection, use, and disclosure of youths' Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Disclosure

Throughout the assessment process, youth must not be pressured or forced to provide CES participating providers with information that they do not wish to disclose, including specific disability or medical diagnosis information.

Updated Participant Information

CES participant information will be updated regularly based on existing programmatic policies and procedures. Additionally, CES participating providers may update youth participant records with additional and/or revised information as it becomes available and/or known to them.

Youth who choose not to participate in data collection upon initial assessment or project entry may later decide that their information can be collected and entered into HMIS. Youth data in HMIS can be updated after an initial CE data collection period, and throughout project enrollment to reflect emergence of new information, corrections to previously collected information, or additions of previously unanswered questions. CES participating providers should continuously work to improve youth engagement strategies to achieve completion rates of required HMIS data elements that are as high as possible.

Participant Consent

As part of the assessment process, participants will be provided with a written copy of the Maine's HMIS Authorization to Disclose Information form (Exhibit A), which identifies what data will be collected, what data will be shared, agencies with whom the data will be shared, and the purpose of said data sharing. Youth must opt in to sharing data. Refraining from data sharing does not affect eligibility for YCES, or the resources which it encompasses.

PRIORITIZATION

YCES will use data collected through the assessment process to prioritize youth experiencing homelessness within the YCES's geography for available housing resources. Emergency services are a critical crisis response resource and access to such services will not be prioritized.

Once the assessment has been completed, each youth who may be eligible for COC-funded, youth-specific housing resources will be placed on a centralized prioritization list, managed by the Hub Coordinator in the hub where the youth wishes to reside. Youth open to living in multiple areas of the state will be placed on the centralized prioritization list for multiple hubs. It is the responsibility of the

referring agency to inform Hub Coordinators if a youth is no longer eligible for, or no longer wishes to seek housing within their hub. This list will ensure that those with the highest score are prioritized for resources and that their wait times are as short as possible.

YCES is committed to continuous improvement and will consider including other factors in the prioritization formula, such as housing barriers and potential eligibility factors, as the system develops.

YCES will use a dynamic prioritization approach and a case conferencing structure, which will allow for flexibility when prioritizing youth for particular housing interventions. Dynamic prioritization will allow for those experiencing homelessness to be prioritized for available housing interventions even if another resource would be ideal. (For example, a youth prioritized for PSH may be offered a RRH intervention, as to decrease wait time and connect the youth to permanent housing as soon as possible.)

The Case Conferencing Group will meet regularly (as determined by each individual hub), and all YCES participating providers will be invited to attend. At case conferencing meetings, the Group will discuss youth on the prioritization list, their respective assessment score, and any recent updates to their situations that might impact their prioritization. This discussion will focus on any considerations that are not accounted for in the Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Assessment Tool. Then the Group will choose which to refer for housing resources that may come available soon. The Hub Coordinator will then facilitate the referral process when applicable.

Where possible and reasonable, the Case Conferencing Group may consider provider eligibility requirements (e.g., chronic homelessness) before deciding upon referrals. However, it remains the responsibility of the provider receiving the referral to determine and document the eligibility of the youth referred through YCES, in accordance with its funding requirements and governance.

Should the need arise, Hub coordinators will facilitate a separate and private youth Case Conferencing session to allow for open conversation and case planning that does not violate youth confidentiality, or otherwise cause un-interested parties to become aware of the details of their personal and private situations.

REFERRAL

All CoC, ESG, and YHDP program recipients and subrecipients that provide specific services to youth experiencing homelessness will use the YCES established by the CoC as the only referral source from which to fill vacancies in housing and/or services funded by CoC, ESG, and YHDP programs.

When the case conference identifies a youth to be referred to a particular housing resource, the Hub Coordinator will facilitate connection and communication between the identified youth, their caseworkers, and the housing resource(s) in question.

Referral Rejection Policy

Youth Declined Referral: One of the guiding principles of CE is participant choice. This principle must be evident throughout the CE process, including the referral phase. Youth in the YCES can reject service strategies and housing options offered to them, without repercussion.

Provider Declined Referral: There may be instances when agencies decide not to accept a referral from the YCES. When a provider agency declines to accept a referred prioritized household into its project, the agency must notify the Hub Coordinator of the denial and the reason for the denial.

Refusals by projects are acceptable only in certain situations, including these:

- The youth does not meet the project's eligibility criteria.
- The youth would be a danger to self or others if allowed to stay at this particular project.
- The services available through the project are not sufficient to address the intensity and scope of the youth's need.
- The project is at capacity and is not available to accept referrals at this time.
- Other justifications as specified by the project and the MCoC.

The agency must notify the Hub Coordinator why the referral was rejected, how the referred youth was informed, what alternative resources were made available to the youth, and whether the project staff foresee additional, similar refusals occurring in the future. This information will then be shared with the case conferencing group, which will discuss and decide on the most appropriate next steps for both the project and the youth.

DATA MANAGEMENT

All youth information collected, stored, or shared due to participation in the YCES, regardless of whether data is stored in HMIS, shall be considered personal and sensitive information worthy of protection and security associated with data collected, stored, or shared in HMIS.

All YCES participating providers must ensure participants' data is secured regardless of the systems in which or locations where participant data are collected, stored, or shared, whether on paper or electronically.

YCES participating providers must collect all data required for CE at each step of the YCES process.

Data must not be collected without the consent of youth, according to the defined privacy policies adopted by the CoC. Participants must be informed how their data is being collected, stored, managed, and potentially shared, with whom, and for what purpose.

Maine HMIS Authorization for Disclosure of Health and/or Personal Information (ROI)

Participants must receive and acknowledge an HMIS Release of Information (ROI) form prior to the collection of data for YCES. The form identifies what data will be collected, the purposes for collecting that data, and who has access to that data. Youth must sign this release in order to opt in to sharing data in HMIS with other providers.

The Maine YCES does not require disclosure of specific disabilities or diagnoses to access the system. This information may only be obtained for determining program eligibility and making appropriate referrals.

Privacy Protections

The CoC must protect all participants' personally identifiable information (PII), as required by HUD's HMIS Data and Technical Standards, regardless of whether or not PII is stored in HMIS. All Youth CE participating providers will ensure participants' PII will only be collected, managed, reported, and potentially shared if those data are able to be secured in compliance with the HUD-established HMIS Privacy and Security requirements. The MCoC requires adequate privacy protections of all participant information per 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8) and the CoC Program Interim Rule HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

Maine YCES operations and YCES participating providers must abide by all Federal and State defined privacy protections, included in and defined by the HMIS End User Agreement. Consent protocols, data use agreements, data disclosure policies, and other privacy protections will be offered to program participants upon entry into YCES.

Participants will be informed of the privacy rules associated with collection, management, and reporting of data through the YCES. In order to engage in case conferencing, all YCES providers must have participating youth consent to sharing of certain information through the Maine Coordinated Entry System Authorization to Release Information (ME CES ROI).

The YCES ROI will allow YCES providers to share only the information necessary for prioritization and referral to an appropriate program. PII such as the youth's name will not be included in the case conferencing or prioritization process. Youth who want to access housing resources through the mainstream coordinated entry system can opt to have some of their data made visible to other youth and adult providers.

The prioritization list will be maintained regionally by the Hub Coordinator; it will be available to be viewed at case conferences and will otherwise be maintained in a locked electronic file which can be accessed only by participating CES providers.

HMIS Data Systems Procedures

Maine Homeless Providers (excluding DV providers) utilize a homeless database program called the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The HMIS system manages data, including data related to the CES, and is administered by MaineHousing. Data collected and managed in HMIS is defined by the CoC at each step of the CES process.

Youth assessments must be recorded in HMIS in accordance with the MCoC Data Quality and Best Practice Guide.

EVALUATION

Regular and ongoing evaluation of the YCES will be conducted to ensure that improvement opportunities are identified, that results are shared and understood, and that the YCES is held accountable, where appropriate and applicable.

The System Performance Measures, including as they are affected by the YCES, will be evaluated using HMIS data on a quarterly basis by the CoC Board of Directors. After review by the CE Committee and the CoC Board of Directors, results will be published on the public MCoC website.

Participating Provider Evaluation

YCES participating providers play a crucial role in the evaluation of the YCES. YCES participating providers will collect accurate and meaningful data on youth served by the YCES. In addition, YCES participating providers will review evaluation results and offer insights about potential improvements to the YCES processes and operations. This will be collected through electronic HMIS user-group surveys. Policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated at least annually based on evaluation and feedback.

Participant Evaluation

The Youth Provider Group will evaluate the effectiveness of its YCES using participant feedback, including:

- Appropriateness of questions asked on assessment;
- Effectiveness of process to find and secure referrals; and
- Satisfaction with placement.

Participant feedback can be accepted at any time from participating providers. Participant grievances will also be incorporated into any feedback evaluation. At regular intervals, the Youth Provider Group will issue a participant feedback survey. This survey will be in the field for at least two weeks, after which time the results will be collated and reported out on the Maine Homeless Planning public website.

APPENDIX A.

Grievance and Appeal Policy and Procedure

All participants and programs involved in the CES must be afforded the right to submit grievances against providers or the CES itself, and must be afforded the right to appeal decisions made by the providers or by CES. As a publicly supported process, the CES must also allow grievances from outside parties. This section will enumerate the processes by which grievances and/or appeals will follow.

In all cases, a grievance can encompass any aspect of the CES process with which the aggrieved participant or program is not satisfied. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances

informally, before a formal grievance process is initiated. In the instances where the aggrieved party is dissatisfied with a decision made by a program or the CES, this dissatisfaction would amount to an appeal of that decision. While the terms are distinct, the process for addressing these is the same.

Scope

These procedures shall address grievances and appeals of the CES itself. Any program or person who interacts with the Coordinated Entry System may file an appeal, regardless of whether or not the program or person is participating in the CES. Each participating program must have its own internal grievance and appeal process. In instances where the aggrieved party's complaint involves a program level decision, or the actions of a program staff, then that program's grievance and appeal policy shall be used. CES grievance and appeal procedures will be utilized when the complaint pertains to the one or more of the following:

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

The grievance may also pertain to actions or decisions of the CoC Project Coordinator, or the case conferencing group, in respect to the operation of the Coordinated Entry System. If it is uncertain whether the grievance is program related or system related, the Project Coordinator and a representative from the agency in question will make a determination. Participants are welcome to have an advocate, such as a caseworker, available to support them through the entirety of the process, if this is what they wish.

Participant/Citizen grievance and appeal

Step One Grievance/Appeal

Each participant will have the opportunity to resolve any complaints through an informal conversation, during which the aggrieved person will have an opportunity to express their concerns and have them addressed. This informal conversation should take place within 10 business days of the occurrence of the CES process in question. If a solution is unable to be reached, the participant will have the right to the official grievance and appeal process. Participants will be able to move right to the formal process, if that is what they wish.

If the party chooses to carry their grievance forward, at this point they shall complete a CES Grievance Form. This form will detail the nature of the grievance and include all supporting evidence for the grievance. The form shall be written in a manner that will allow people to complete and submit the form without assistance if necessary, but people may accept the assistance of a caseworker in completing and submitting the form as well. This form should be

submitted within 10 business days of the informal conversation. The grieved party is welcome to submit any supporting written materials with the form, should they wish.

The completed CES Grievance Form will be transmitted to the coordinated entry email listserv at Maine Housing. A member of that listserv will then notify members of the appeal hearing pool that a grievance had been received. This appeal hearing pool will consist of all 9 Hub Coordinators and the tri-chairs of the CES committee. The appeal hearing meeting must occur within 10 business days of the CES Grievance Form being received. Appeals will be heard by two available Hub Coordinators and one CES Tri-Chair. Program participants will be given the opportunity to provide verbal testimony to the hearing group. A ten-minute time frame will be allowed to present the grievance or appeal directly to the group. The hearing group will specify the time and date for that testimony. The verbal testimony must be provided within the ten (10) business days hearing window.

In the case of an appeal, the original decision will be either upheld or overturned. In the case of other grievances, the grievance will be held to be either founded or unfounded. If founded, the Project Coordinator will consult with the MCOC Tri-Chairs to determine what corrective actions must be taken.

In all cases, the aggrieved party will be informed of the decision in writing within ten (10) business days of the filed grievance. The notice of decision will also include information about what next steps may occur. If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision, they may choose to escalate their grievance or appeal.

Step Two Grievance/ Appeal

In cases where the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision of the Step One process, they may escalate their grievance/appeal.

The party will send their Grievance Form, supporting evidence, and a copy of the Step One decision to the COC Tri-Chairs within 10 business days of the Step One decision. The aggrieved person will be given the opportunity to provide verbal testimony to the hearing to the CoC Tri-Chairs. A ten-minute time frame will be allowed to present their grievance or appeal directly to the group. The CoC Tri-Chairs will specify the time and date for that testimony. The verbal testimony must be provided within the ten (10) day hearing window.

The Tri-Chairs shall consider the evidence and choose to either uphold or overturn the Step One decision. If the appeal involves an agency represented by one of the Tri-Chairs, that chair shall recuse themselves from the process. This decision must be rendered within 10 business days of the Step Two process being initiated. The aggrieved party will be informed of this decision in writing. All decisions at this stage are considered final.

Program Grievance vs CES

In the case of a program wishing to lodge a grievance against the CES, a similar process shall be followed. This process is to address interagency concerns; a program may not use this process to file a grievance or appeal on behalf of an individual participant.

Step One Grievance/Appeal

The aggrieved agency shall compose a formal letter that details the nature of the grievance or appeal, and include all supporting evidence. This letter and evidence shall be sent to the CES Committee Chairs. In the case that the grievance involves a CES Chair's agency, the complaint will be forwarded to the CoC Tri-Chairs, who will then hear the appeal.

The complaint and supporting evidence will be considered by the appropriate group as detailed above, who will render a decision within 30 days. The group hearing the appeal will also make any decision on corrective actions if necessary. This group will notify the aggrieved agency in writing as soon as a decision is made, as well as what next steps may occur.

Step Two Grievance/Appeal

If the aggrieved agency is not satisfied with the decision of the Step One group, they may choose to escalate the complaint to Step Two. The agency must submit a Step Two complaint within 30 days of receiving notice of the Step One decision.

A Step Two agency complaint will be sent to the CoC Board President. It will take the form of a formal letter detailing the initial grievance or appeal, supporting evidence, and a copy of the Step One decision.

The Step Two complaint will be considered by the CoC Board at their next regular meeting. If the complaint is received less than five (5) business days prior to the next meeting, the Board may opt to defer the consideration until the following meeting. Any members of the Board whose agencies are involved in the complaint will recuse themselves from the process. The Board shall render a decision, and determine any corrective action if necessary. This will be communicated with all involved parties within five (5) working days of the meeting. All decisions at this level are considered final.

Recordkeeping

The CoC Project Coordinator shall keep records of all CES grievances/appeals, and their results. Those records shall be forwarded to the Evaluation Entity, the CES Committee, CoC or CoC Board at their request. Records of grievances and appeals shall be kept without participant PII; only aggregate data with unique identifiers will be kept to preserve participant confidentiality. As part of the regular quarterly reporting, the CE Operator will present the number and disposition of all appeals and grievances to the CE Committee, as well as the CoC and CoC Board.

Affirmative Outreach

All participants in the Coordinated Entry System must be made aware of their rights to file grievances and appeal CES decisions. CES will provide all CES participating providers with language that can be included in existing outreach documentation, and/or outreach materials. Information about CES grievances and appeals can be posted publicly at CES access points, or given directly to the participant upon their initial assessment.

APPENDIX B.

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

Appendix C.

MCOY Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool User's Guide

Appendix D.

Maine HMIS Authorization to Disclose Information Form

Appendix E

MAINE Continuum of Care (MCoC) COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM (MCES) & Service Hub Case Conferencing Release of Information

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

Introduction

How the assessment works: You will be asked questions to help understand your current housing needs and refer you to available resources to help address those needs.

Right to Refuse Responses: You may refuse any question on this assessment.

Start/Stop: You may stop this assessment at any time and pick it back up at a later meeting.

No Right/Wrong Responses: Your responses will not affect any other services you receive from our agency. The questions are only designed to help explore housing options.

Filing a Discrimination Complaint: If at any time you would like information on filing a complaint because you believe you are being discriminated against, let me know and I can give you information on how to pursue this.

Contact Information

- Full Name: _____ Preferred: _____
- DOB: _____ under age 18? Yes No
- Pronouns: _____
- What are your preferred languages? _____
- Please provide any working phone number(s):
- Please provide working email addresses you use, if any:
- Which of the contact methods listed above is your preferred contact method? Should we text or call that number? We will try this method first when attempting to reach you.
- Are there any other ways that we can get in touch with you?
- Current living situation?
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Unsheltered (outside, place not meant for human habitation)
 - Hotel paid for by government or charity
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - Actively fleeing or attempting to flee violence in housing *

*Survivor Choice (for those fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking): you indicated you are currently experiencing a form of violence. Would you like to be considered for housing programs that are:

- Domestic Violence (DV) programs only**
- Both DV and non-DV programs**
- Non-DV programs only**

***If disclosure is made, please immediately follow the additional steps w/in the MCoC YYA Prioritization Assessment Guide.**

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

Youth Choice in Housing Preferences

For heads of household who are over 18, or are an emancipated minor: Would you like to be considered for:

- Youth-specific programs only
 Both Adult and Youth-specific programs
 Adult programs only

Housing Preferences

Are you seeking any of the following due to a disability? (If yes, you may have to provide documentation of disability-related need.)

- Wheelchair accessible unit**
 First floor/elevator (little to no stairs to your unit)
 Other accessibility _____

Housing Exploration

1. Do you prefer to:

- live independently
 live with a roommate

2. What documents do you have already? Do you need support to obtain the rest?

- State ID need support to obtain? _____
 Birth certificate need support to obtain? _____
 Social security card need support to obtain? _____
 Income verification need support to obtain? _____
 Legal documentation need support to obtain? _____

3. Please select from the below counties where you would be interested in living.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Androscoggin | <input type="checkbox"/> Knox | <input type="checkbox"/> Somerset |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aroostook | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln | <input type="checkbox"/> Waldo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cumberland | <input type="checkbox"/> Oxford | <input type="checkbox"/> Washington |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Franklin | <input type="checkbox"/> Penobscot | <input type="checkbox"/> York |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hancock | <input type="checkbox"/> Piscataquis | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kennebec | <input type="checkbox"/> Sagadahoc | |

Do you have a top option? _____

Conduct the Assessment

Question	Score
<p>1. Red Are your current (within the last two weeks) basic physical and emotional needs being met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have consistent opportunities for shelter? Do you have regular access to food, clothes, and basic need items that fit/meet your needs? 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (0) <input type="checkbox"/> No (2)

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

<p>*if there is any indication that one of these categories is not being met = no</p>	
<p>2. Red Do you feel a sense of safety in your current situation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there times in your current situation where you feel your space is being threatened and/or violated? Do you feel you can be yourself where you are without fear? Provide examples of what it could mean to feel safe. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (0) <input type="checkbox"/> No (2)
<p>3. Red Do you believe that you were ever unfairly asked to leave a housing situation, or were you ever treated unfairly in a housing situation?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)
<p>4. Yellow Do you have a natural support system that you could access for housing support right now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Supports: friends, chosen or bio family (aunts, cousins, grandparents) • Social Supports: people who are outside of your natural supports like, school staff, therapists, etc. People who care for you and who you feelsafe around. People you can trust. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (0) <input type="checkbox"/> No (1)
<p>5. Red Does anyone depend on you for housing or to meet their other basic needs?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)
<p>6. Yellow Have you ever felt like you needed or requested supports while in school? Or did you leave school because you did not receive the support you needed?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)
<p>7. Yellow and Red How many of the following systems have you experienced, or felt that you needed services from? (check the box for each one, or place the total on line below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care/DHHS involvement; <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption; <input type="checkbox"/> Inpatient or outpatient mental health services; <input type="checkbox"/> Substance use treatment; <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile legal system; <input type="checkbox"/> Adult court systems and/or immigration proceedings <p>_____total # of systems</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) - Yellow <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) - Red <input type="checkbox"/> No (0) *check 1 box
<p>*Note: award one (1) point (Yellow) for 1-3 and two (2) points (Red) if 4 or more.</p>	
<p>8. Yellow In the past 6 months, have you experienced any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitalization due to mental health or substance use issues; • Disruption to your education; • Unable to maintain employment; • Been the victim of a crime; • Unsheltered homelessness. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)
<p>Totals</p>	Red: _____ Yellow: _____ Total: _____

MCOC Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool User's Guide

Purpose and Background

The Maine Statewide Continuum of Care (MCOC) was granted a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) award in 2018 to be invested into all 16 counties of Maine, with a priority focus on rural regions of the state. The MCOC YHDP State Team, understanding that many of the youth-specific coordinated entry (CE) tools being used were not trauma-informed, identified a handful of prioritization factors they wanted the Maine Homeless Youth Provider Group (MHYPG) and the Maine Statewide YAB (Youth Action Board) to consider during the development of a tool and process. Following some research and discussion, these groups modified the Washington Balance of State (WA BoS) CE tool and process for young adults to be piloted within the MCOC and YHDP funded agencies. The intent is to build a statewide youth CE system that can be built on as Maine gains experience with CE and other providers, agencies and community partners see the benefit of participating in CE.

Youth Action Board of Maine

The Maine Statewide Youth Action Board's vision statement is to end youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness in the State of Maine through proper implementation of programs set forth for adults to help build and develop different projects for Rapid Rehousing, Transitional Housing, Transitional Living, Host Homes, and other supportive services through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP).

The YAB's mission is to enable voices of YYA within the community to collaborate with the legislative process. The Voices of YYA are heard through the YAB so that program directors from Maine Housing, HUD, and the Continuum Of Care (COC), have a perspective which would not otherwise be available. This also includes YYA that identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community or have lived experience being homeless and or in other systems.

Key Principles

As part of the design process, the MHYPG and the Maine Statewide YAB kept the following principles at the core of the work:

Youth created – This is a system designed to serve young people, therefore young people with lived experience need to be key designers of it.

Racial equity – It is understood that many of the systems we operate in are inherently racist. Therefore, it is a priority to create a process and tool that addresses communities of color – because after all, they are the most marginalized, yet overrepresented in those who experience homelessness and housing instability.

Diversion throughout – We want to be asking about natural support systems and available resources throughout our work with young people. It is never too late to divert a young person from the over-burdened, under-funded homeless response system.

Youth as partners – Young people are resourceful and resilient. We are committed to empowering youth to use their natural resources and resisting the urge to “save” them. Instead, we will practice seeing them as partners in solving their housing crisis.

MCOC Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool User's Guide

Do no harm – We are aiming to use a phased approach so we are not repeatedly asking trauma inducing questions.

Easy access – To ensure the resources are easily accessible, CE points of entry should include both mobile and site-based strategies.

Innovation - We are trying new things. Status quo is not effective, which means we are going to take some risks, try new things, fail fast and make corrections along the way.

Inclusion- The current youth homeless response system relies heavily on traditional HUD, FYSB and state funded providers. It is our intent to join with other community partners to identify and serve youth in communities (especially rural ones) that are underserved and to help those communities build their capacity to end and prevent youth homelessness locally.

Community Choice – We recognize that Maine is a large, rural state with limited service hubs. Our priority is to ensure youth are able to stay in their community of choice whenever possible.

The coordinated entry system is intended to be low-barrier and must also adhere to state, federal, and local anti-discrimination laws. Young people are not screened out of coordinated entry based on any of the following criteria:

- Having too little or no income
- Having poor credit or financial history
- Having poor or lack of rental history
- Having involvement with any system of care, including but not limited to the juvenile justice system, child welfare system, mental health or substance use treatment, etc.
- Having active or history of alcohol and/or substance use
- Having a history of victimization
- The type or extent of disability-related services or supports that are needed
- Lacking ID
- Lacking proof of U.S. Residency Status
- Any actions that are perceived as indicating a lack of “housing readiness,” including perceived resistance to receiving services

Pre-Assessment

The Role of Diversion & Problem Solving Conversations

Before beginning the MCoC Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool, youth must be engaged in a conversation to learn more about their unique situation and support them in identifying natural supports that they could call upon to address their housing insecurity instead of a shelter or other resource designed for youth experiencing homelessness.

Once a youth is assessed, revisit this conversation often - diversion conversations should continue for the duration of the youth's time in the Youth Coordinated Entry System.

If you already have a relationship with the youth you are assessing, simply confirm what you think you know. It is better to be safe than sorry-situations can change rapidly.

MCOY Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool User's Guide

If this is the first interaction you are having with a youth begin the conversation with open ended questions that:

1. Introduce Youth Coordinated Entry

- a. Share who you are, where you work and context for what that means
- b. Help define the intention of the meeting: "I am here to help you (and your family) find a safe place to stay.
- c. Confirm that the individual is in a safe place to speak at this time & obtain appropriate call-back number should the call become disconnected.
- d. Name that we are going to explore / partner to find permanent alternatives to staying in the shelter or to help you, safely and permanently, return to where you were staying.

2. Explore the Situation

Ask about natural support systems that may be available to this youth, as well as to gain an understanding of the participant's living situation. Engage in active listening and think about/reflect back strengths they may share with you.

- a. Over the last 6 months, what have you been able to do to avoid sleeping on the streets or in a shelter?
- b. Can you share about a time you have been a support to others?
- c. What were things like for you when things were going better?
- d. Who are your friends, family members, and allies?
- e. Assess their income & housing history and successes

3. Brainstorm Possible Solutions

Brainstorm possibilities and use motivational interviewing skills. Explore potential options with the participant.

- a. Is there anyone that may want to know you are seeking housing right now, or who may want to know you need help?
- b. Do you have family, friends or anywhere to stay other than shelter, even temporarily?
- c. Tell me about past places you've stayed that have been positive.
- d. Tell me about some strengths you have to navigate difficult situations.
- e. What support would you need to stay somewhere else or make a housing option work?

Additional examples:

- Have you tried other living situations in the past? What were these and how did they work for you?
- You said you were living . Is this a safe situation to return to and if so could you stay there for a few days, weeks or a month while other options are explored and resources accessed?
 - What would it take for you to be able to stay there a few more days, weeks, or a month? (think about financial needs we can support with, talking with different supports, roommate situations)

MCOC Youth & Young Adult Prioritization Tool User's Guide

4. **Assistance to Resolve the Housing Crisis**

If a potential diversion resource is identified, join with the youth to further explore this option by engaging them in a visioning conversation. Of their identified potential options help them choose which, if any, to pursue.

Considerations

- a. Safety
- b. Appropriateness for individual's unique circumstances
- c. Reality-Testing
 - How would this look?
 - What is the timeline?
 - Have you done something like this before?
 - What other options have you considered?
 - What resources do you have to carry this out?
 - In the case this does not work out as well as you would like, would you like to explore a back-up plan?

Action Steps

- a. Assist in calling identified supports (family, friends, allies)
- b. Determine plan for any financial assistance needs
- c. Referrals to other resources

5. **If a housing solution is not easily identified, proceed to the assessment.**

About the MCoC Youth and Young Adult Prioritization Tool

This tool is designed to allow for rapid assessment of a youth's safety or risk level, as their homeless episode compares to the experiences of other youth and young adults currently experiencing similar housing related challenges.

Completing this assessment does not consider a youth for all housing solutions that may be available to them. Educate youth about other options and resources, such as the Mainstream (aged 18+ or emancipated minor) Coordinated Entry System and support them in applying where appropriate.

Becoming familiar with this guide before administering the tool will allow the administrator to best understand the justification and purpose for each item that is reviewed, as well as how to elicit the most accurate answer from the youth.

This guide provides additional background information on each section of the tool, including reasons for asking specific questions and strategies to further explain the assessment process to the youth.

Use this additional information to ask follow-up questions, or otherwise interpret and record the answers you are receiving within the context of assessing the youth's level of comparative risk. This additional guidance is easily identified as the italicized text. Note: this guidance does not appear within the youth-facing prioritization tool.

Maine Youth & Young Adult Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

Introduction

Explain the Purpose of the Assessment: The purpose of this assessment is to gather information to explore Maine's Youth Coordinated Entry (YCES) housing assistance resources. Completing this assessment does not guarantee assistance, but it does provide YCES with the minimum information needed to connect individuals and families with available housing opportunities within the Maine Continuum of Care.

How the assessment works: You will be asked questions to help understand your current housing needs and refer you to available resources to help address those needs.

Right to Refuse Responses: You may refuse any question on this assessment.

Start/Stop: You may stop this assessment at any time and pick it back up at a later meeting.

No Right/Wrong Responses: Your responses will not affect any other services you receive from our agency. The questions are only designed to help explore housing options.

Filing a Discrimination Complaint: If at any time you would like information on filing a complaint because you believe you are being discriminated against, let me know and I can give you information on how to pursue this.*

**Any complaints should involve an informal conversation during which the aggrieved person should have an opportunity to express their concerns and have them addressed. Should the person choose to carry their grievance forward, at this point they shall complete a CES Grievance Form. This form will detail the nature of the grievance and include any and all supporting evidence for the grievance. The completed CES Grievance Form will be transmitted to the CES Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator shall consider the grievance and render a decision within the case conferencing cycle for the locality where the grievance was filed. If the grievance or appeal involves the Project Coordinator, then the Coordinator shall recuse themselves from the process. In this case, the CES Committee Chair(s) will be asked to consider the grievance or appeal.*

Contact Information

Basic demographics are collected at the time of assessment.

- Full Name: _____ Preferred: _____
- DOB: _____ **under age 18?** **Yes** **No**
- Pronouns: _____
- What are your preferred languages? _____

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Every effort should be made to capture contact information; get creative with identifying ways to keep in touch with the youth. Collecting this information allows us to make the youth aware of a potential match to a housing opportunity.

- Please provide any working phone number(s)

Alternately, the youth may provide the phone number to a voicemail service, or friend/family member or other service provider who they check in with regularly or that is able to get a message to them. Record the name and relationship to the person for each phone number provided. If the youth identifies an individual to receive this information on their behalf, please complete any related releases of information.

- Please provide working email addresses you use, if any:
- Which of the contact methods listed above is your preferred contact method? Do you prefer text messaging or phone calls? We will try this method first when attempting to reach you.
- Are there any other ways that we can get in touch with you?

Capturing the individual's current living situation informs eligibility decisions for certain housing based programs.

- Current living situation?
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Unsheltered (outside, place not meant for human habitation)
 - Hotel paid for by government or charity
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - Actively fleeing or attempting to flee violence in housing *

***If youth discloses that they are actively fleeing or attempting to flee violence in housing, pause here to complete the Survivor Choice assessment.**

*Survivor Choice (for those fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking): you indicated you are currently experiencing a form of violence. Would you like to be considered for housing programs that are:

- Domestic Violence (DV)-specific only:** (DV-specific programs are with agencies who have a focus on populations experiencing violence; they may be able to offer specialized services for survivors in-house, such as support groups, clinical services, and legal services)

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- Non-DV programs only:** *(Non-DV programs serve people fleeing violence, but may need to link you to outside, specialized agencies for specific services such as DV support groups, clinical services and legal services.)*
- Both DV and non-DV programs**

If youth indicates domestic abuse, offer to contact the local Domestic Violence Resource Center. If youth indicates sexual violence, offer to contact the local Sexual Assault Response Center. If youth indicates human trafficking, please offer either the appropriate local service or National Human Trafficking Hotline. If a youth under the age of 18, or an incapacitated youth over the age of 18 discloses any of the above, please also make a report to Maine's Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-452-1999.

Youth Choice in Housing Preferences

Questions in this section are used to support youth in identifying the housing opportunity that most closely aligns with their needs and housing desires.

For heads of household who are 18 yrs. or older: Would you like to be considered for housing programs that are:

Youth-specific only: *(Youth-specific programs have a focus on young populations; they may be able to offer drop-in spaces for youth, as well as community-building, connections with other youth, as well as ongoing support services)*

Adult programs only: *(Adult programs serve youth who are 18-24 but may not have built in community space or activities to connect with other youth but can help you find those opportunities. **(Requires completion of Maine's standard Coordinated Entry assessment)**)*

Both Adult and Youth-specific programs: *(Requires completion of Maine's standard Coordinated Entry assessment and MCOC Youth and Young Adult Prioritization tool)*

Housing Preferences

Documentation of any disclosed disability may or may not be required as justification for any of the following housing preferences. Record what the youth reports.

Are you seeking any of the following due to a disability? (If yes, you may have to provide documentation of disability-related need.)

- Wheelchair accessible unit
- First floor/elevator (little to no stairs to your unit)
- Other accessibility need _____

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Housing Exploration

Housing exploration questions allow the Y-CES to best support youth in deciding to accept a referral to a housing opportunity. The combination and intensity of services provided varies, and may impact a youth's self-assessment of their readiness for a particular program.

1. Do you prefer to

- live independently
- live with a roommate*

**Has the roommate been identified? Also, is the roommate also eligible for housing opportunities through YCES? If so, assess them as well, and submit the youth with the highest score.*

2. What documents do you have already? Do you need support to obtain the rest?

- State ID need support to obtain? _____
- Birth certificate need support to obtain? _____
- Social security card need support to obtain? _____
- Income verification need support to obtain? _____
- Legal documentation* need support to obtain? _____

** This can include documentation related to criminal, civil, immigration or other legal proceedings. The youth need not identify the nature of the legal document that they need support with obtaining.*

3. Please select from the below counties where you would be interested in living.

Androscoggin	Knox	Somerset
Aroostook	Lincoln	Waldo
Cumberland	Oxford	Washington
Franklin	Penobscot	York
Hancock	Piscataquis	
Kennebec	Sagadahoc	

Do you have a top option? _____

**Please note that if a youth chooses multiple counties, they may end up on multiple Hub by-name lists, and therefore case conferenced in multiple hubs.*

Conduct the Assessment

Ask each question as written in bold text, taking opportunities to paraphrase and further clarify as needed or requested by the youth.

The assessment does not contain prompts to clarify each question. Consult this guide to learn the justification and intent behind each of the questions, as they are understood to negatively impact a youth's ability to self-solve their housing crisis.

Question	Score
<p>1. Red Are your current (within the last two weeks) basic physical and emotional needs being met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have consistent opportunities for shelter? • Do you have regular access to food, clothes, and basic need items that fit/meet your needs? <p><i>*if there is any indication that one of these categories is not being met = no</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (0)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (2)</p>

Question 1 screens for immediate risks to the youth's health and safety. While access to a shelter or other emergency housing resource provides improved access to basic physical needs, it can also contribute to a decline in basic emotional needs. All needs must be met to check "yes" for this question.

Question	Score
<p>2. Red Do you feel a sense of safety in your current situation?</p> <p>Are there times in your current situation where you feel your space is being threatened and/or violated? Do you feel you can be yourself where you are without fear?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (0)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (2)</p>

Question 2 screens for immediate risks to the youth's health and safety. While access to a shelter or other emergency housing resource minimizes short-term vulnerability, it does not ensure safety or ongoing protection from lacking a basic need.

Alternately, a youth may be able to stay somewhere besides a shelter, but make a concession (host will only refer to youth by dead name, youth must sneak in and out to avoid being seen by neighbors, host places other conditions that would not be present if the youth were the leaseholder). Consider asking the youth to provide examples of what it could mean to feel safe, as a way to help them identify their own baseline of what safety feels like.

In this question, physical safety is weighted equally with all other forms of safety.

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Question	Score
3. Red Do you believe that you were ever unfairly asked to leave a housing situation, or were you ever treated unfairly in a housing situation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)

Question 3 asks the youth to reflect on any previous housing losses. If the youth believes that any of those disruptions are due to features of the youth's identity or personality that are outside of their control, select Yes.

Examples of this could include the youth holding different values than the person/people they live with, or the youth being treated as less than others in the household.

In this question, the youth does not need to divulge the details of their experience in order to check the "yes" box.

Question	Score
4. Yellow Do you have a natural support system that you could access for housing support right now? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Supports: friends, chosen or bio family (aunts, cousins, grandparents) • Social Supports: people who are outside of your natural supports like, school staff, therapists, etc. People who care for you and who you feelsafe around. People you can trust. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)

Question 4 explores the likelihood that a youth could go to for housing support instead of accessing resources for youth experiencing homelessness. When selecting "yes" for this question, clarify with the youth that their natural or social supports are safe to engage with – are there realistic conditions on the youth if they accept the housing support? Does receiving the support place the youth in any danger (over-crowding, etc).

Question	Score
5. Red Does anyone depend on you for housing or to meet their other basic needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)

Question 5 determines if the youth is a member of a household where there are additional individuals experiencing homelessness that will benefit from the youth being matched to a Y-CES housing opportunity.

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Question	Score
6. Yellow Have you ever felt like you needed or requested supports while in school? Or did you leave school because you did not receive the support you needed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)

Question 6 considers a youth's historical need for extra support when accessing educational services and also whether or not the youth feels that those educational needs were adequately met. This question does not require a youth to explicitly reveal the need that was not being met, nor does it require the youth to provide documentation of any such need.

Example: a youth may have needed extra time to complete homework due to an inability to focus, or due to a lack of internet within the home to complete the assignment. Either reason demonstrates a lack of appropriate intervention within the context of an educational setting.

Additionally, select yes if the youth chose to leave the educational setting as a direct result of their needs not being met (the youth dropped out because not being able to complete homework was causing them to fail the class).

7. Yellow and Red How many of the following systems have you experienced, or felt that you needed services from? (check the box for each one, or place the total on line below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care/DHHS Involvement; <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption; <input type="checkbox"/> Inpatient or Outpatient Mental health services; <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Use treatment; <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile legal system; <input type="checkbox"/> Adult court systems and/or Immigration proceedings <p>_____ total # of systems</p> <p><small>*Note: award one (1) point (Yellow) for 1-3 and two (2) points (Red) if 4 or more.</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) - Yellow <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) - Red <input type="checkbox"/> No (0) *check 1 box
---	--

Question 7 scores as red or yellow, depending on the level of system involvement the youth has previously experienced. Youth do not need to identify the specific systems that they have been involved with, but can if they choose to by checking the box next to each system. Minimally, youth should provide the total number of systems they have been involved with, record this number at the bottom of the section on the line next to the word "total # of systems".

- For youth reporting involvement in zero systems, select no (zero points).
- For youth reporting involvement in 1-3 systems, select yes (1) - Yellow.
- For youth reporting involvement in 4 or more systems, select yes (2) - Red.

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8. Yellow In the past 6 months, have you experienced any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitalization due to mental health or substance use issues; Disruption to your education; Unable to maintain employment; Been the victim of a crime; Unsheltered homelessness. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) <input type="checkbox"/> No (0)
--	---

Question 8 explores recent challenges to stability that could contribute to increased risk or loss of ability to meet their basic needs. Youth do not need to identify which of the events has occurred. Check "yes" if one or more events is reported to have occurred in the last six months.

Totals	Red: _____ Yellow: _____ Total: _____
---------------	---

When all questions have been answered, write the following in the corresponding lines:

- Total red points awarded*
- Total yellow points awarded*
- Total points awarded (red plus yellow)*

Wait Times and Next Steps

The prioritization process is dynamic (youth move up and down the list based on newly completed and changes to the assessments of youth experiencing similar homeless episodes). Encourage youth to continue exploring other options, and to update their assessment as their situation changes.

Review the following explanation and Q&A with the youth at the conclusion of the assessment:

Wait times can change from time to time based on how many people are interested, and the openings that are available.

What should I do to try to find housing if I am not matched with a housing opening?

We encourage you to keep thinking about other ways you may be able to move out of homelessness, like with roommates or people you know at the same time you are applying for affordable housing.

Who will I hear from if I am matched to a housing opening?

If you are matched to a housing opening the providing agency will reach out to you. They are going to use all of the contact information you have given us to try to connect with you as quickly as possible. If any of your contact information changes, let me know and I can change it in the system. You can check in with me as well.



Am I automatically approved for the housing openings when I'm matched?

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No, this is an initial discussion to see which programs and providers can best meet your needs. Each provider can decide who participates in their program based on additional factors. When an opening is available you can choose whether to take what is offered or wait for something that better suits your needs.

Prioritization Policy

Health and Safety are worth 2 points, and History of Displacement/Systems Involvement will be worth 1 point.

 2pt.	Safety/Health needs
 1pt.	History of Displacement/Systems Involvement

The young person with more red factors would be prioritized over a young person with yellow factors.

EXAMPLE:

Jason has 4 yellows and 0 reds = 4 points

Karen has 0 yellows and 3 reds = 6 points

Aaron has 1 yellow and 2 reds = 5 points

Bobby has 2 yellow and 2 reds = 6 points

Jacob has 2 yellows and 3 reds = 8 points

The prioritization would then be:

1. Jacob
2. Karen
3. Bobby
4. Aaron
5. Jason

Special Considerations

If you are doing the assessment with two or more young adults in a household, each youth should complete a separate assessment. Prioritize the household based on the highest score.

Use information and any previous knowledge you have to get an accurate score during the assessment phase. The tool is intended to be used in a relationship building way. As the relationship evolves and more information is shared, you should update the tool to ensure the individual has an accurate score and is prioritized accordingly.

Maine's HMIS Authorization to Disclose Information

Agency: _____

For: _____
Print First, Middle, and Last Name (Complete one form for each adult)

_____ Date of Birth

Children/Incapacitated Persons: _____

_____ Date of Birth

_____ Date of Birth

_____ Date of Birth

Your personal information is confidential. We and anyone with access to the information we collect from you must keep your information confidential and protect the information under strict safeguards. Your personal information and that of the above listed persons for whom you have authorization to sign will be collected by the above Agency and entered into Maine's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). With your consent, your personal information, including historical information in HMIS, will be made available to other agencies providing services to you through HMIS for the purposes of coordinating care and facilitating access to housing resources.

A list of agencies participating in HMIS that may have access to your information if you sign this authorization is at www.mainehmis.org and available from Agency.

Why disclose your information to other agencies?

- Sharing reduces the amount of time you have to spend answering basic questions about your situation.
- Sharing allows agencies to focus on quickly meeting your unique needs.
- Sharing makes it easier for multiple agencies to coordinate housing and services for you and your family.

What information might be disclosed to other agencies?

- Family/Household Information
- Name, birthdate, Social Security Number
- Gender, race, ethnicity
- Reasons for seeking services
- Living situation and housing history
- Services you receive
- If you are homeless or not
- Your income and income sources
- Disabling condition(s)
- Public benefits you receive
- History of domestic violence
- Educational background
- Employment information
- Military history
- Health information, including physical health, HIV status, behavioral health (mental health and substance use disorder information)

Please check (✓) a box:

DISCLOSE (Share): I consent to have the information collected by Agency about me and historical information about me already in HMIS disclosed through Maine's HMIS to other partner agencies in order to improve services to me and the services offered to others. I intend that this authorization permit Agency to disclose, through the HMIS system, any HIV status, mental health and substance abuse or substance use disorder information Agency may collect about me. Maine law requires us to tell you that releasing HIV status information may have implications. Release of HIV status information may help us better serve you. However, misuse of the information could result in discrimination.

This consent does not apply to any information collected by:

- Milestone Recovery;
- All Youth Emergency Shelters;
- Maine DHHS Youth Outreach Services;
- Any Runaway and Homeless Youth Program;
- Any other Youth program entering data for clients 17 years of age and younger.

This consent does apply to information collected for Youth Homeless Demonstration Project projects (18 plus)

Maine's HMIS Authorization to Disclose Information

YOUTH PROVIDER DISCLOSE: *I am an individual seeking services at a youth emergency shelter, Maine DHHS Youth Outreach Services, or a Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, and my record is locked down. For the purposes of accessing the Maine Coordinated Entry System, I consent to having only my Client Record information (Name, Social Security Number, and Veteran Status) and my Coordinated Entry Assessment Information shared.*

DO NOT DISCLOSE (Do Not Share): I do **not** want **any** of the information collected by Agency about me disclosed (shared) to any other agencies through Maine's HMIS. I understand that not disclosing my information to other agencies may affect the ability to quickly and appropriately identify services for me.

When you sign this form, it shows that you understand the following:

- You have the right to refuse to sign this authorization.
- **Agency will not** deny you help if you do not want us to disclose your personal information to other agencies. At the same time, disclosing your information does not guarantee that you will receive assistance from the recipient agency.
- If you permit us to disclose your information to other agencies:
 - This consent is valid for five (5) years.
 - You have the right to review any mental health information that may be disclosed under this authorization, upon request prior to signing this authorization.
 - You may change your mind and cancel this authorization at any time. If Agency is a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) covered entity, see Agency's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices on how to revoke this authorization. If you cancel this authorization, your information will no longer be disclosed from that date forward, except to the extent that your authorization has already been relied upon by Agency or others.
- Subsequent disclosures may be made under this same authorization.
- A (1) separate sub-contractor of Agency or (2) social service agency may be collecting my information on behalf of the above listed Agency to send to the above listed Agency. This sub-contractor or social service agency is bound by the same privacy rules in handling your personal information as Agency is.
- You have the right to receive a copy of this authorization.

SIGNATURE OF CLIENT OR AUTHORIZED
REPRESENTATIVE

DATE

SIGNATURE OF AGENCY WITNESS

DATE

Verbal Authorization obtained by phone (Agency Staff Signature): _____ **Date:** _____

If client chooses not to disclose their information, ask that they put a check mark next to the "Do Not Disclose" box and sign the document. Fax to: HMIS Team 207-624-5768. Visibility from this point forward will be removed.

Maine's HMIS Authorization to Disclose Information

Maine's HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices

This Agency (Name: _____) and other service providers, homeless agencies and social service agencies, including street outreach, shelters and housing programs, collect personal information about the people we serve in a computer system called Maine's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). *If Agency is a HIPAA covered entity, this HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices is a supplement to Agency's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices, and you should also review Agency's HIPAA Notice for additional information about how Agency protects the privacy and security of your protected health information.* This HMIS Notice of Privacy Practices may be amended at any time and an amendment may affect information given to the Agency prior to the amendment.

Why do we collect this information?

- So we know how many people we serve and the types of people we serve at our Agency and in the state.
- So we all understand what people need and can plan services to meet those needs.
- To satisfy U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requirements.

Who can see information that is in Maine's HMIS?

- People who work for this Agency will use it to help provide services to you or your family.
- Other agencies like this Agency that provide services and have received permission from you to see your information. The agencies that participate in Maine's HMIS may change from time to time. A copy of the current list of participating agencies is available upon request or on our website: www.mainehmis.org.
- Auditors or funders who have legal rights to review the work of this Agency, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other state or local government entities.
- Organizations that run, administer, and work, on the HMIS system. When these organizations work on the system, they may see information about you. They are required to protect your confidential information.
- The law says we have to report physical or sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults. If we have cause to suspect that there is abuse or neglect in your household, we must report it to Child or Adult Protection.
- We may disclose your information to protect the health or safety of you or others as required by law.
- Others as required by law, including officials with a valid subpoena, warrant, or court order.
- We may disclose your information to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of an individual or the public

We will not disclose your information for any other use unless you permit us in writing.

How is your privacy protected?

- All users of HMIS data must sign an agreement to protect your privacy and comply with state and federal laws and policies before seeing any information.
- The HMIS computer program used for this purpose has industry standard security safeguards and protocols and is updated regularly to meet these security requirements.

What are your rights?

- **If you do not want your name, social security number, or date of birth entered in HMIS, tell the intake worker.** This Agency will **not** refuse to help you if you refuse to authorize Agency to share your information with other providers/agencies through HMIS. However, federal and state regulations may require limited data collection for funding purposes.
- You have the right to request a copy of Maine's HMIS information about you.
- You have the right to correct mistakes in HMIS information about you.
- If you think this Agency or Maine's HMIS violated your privacy rights, you have the right to complain or appeal. Ask a staff person for a complaint and appeal form. *If Agency is a HIPAA covered entity, see Agency's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices for information about how to file a HIPAA privacy complaint.*

**MAINE Continuum of Care (MCoC) COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM (MCES) & Service Hub
Case Conferencing Release of Information**

Agency Name: _____

This Agency is part of a group called the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC) Coordinated Entry and Service Hub _____, which is a group of agencies working together to provide housing resources to people experiencing homelessness. A list of all member agencies in the MCoC and Service Hubs is available online at www.mainehomelessplanning.org.

Purpose: The purpose of this form is to obtain consent to share your information at service hub case conferencing meetings and to place your name on the Service Hub By Name List (BNL). By doing this, Service Hub agencies will work to refer you to housing available through the Coordinated Entry System.

This form allows you to choose how information will be shared during case conferencing. Service Hub case conferencing is defined as meetings of Service Hub members to best match individuals experiencing homelessness to available resources. Case conferencing meetings will also use a By Name List, which is a comprehensive list of individuals who have been identified as experiencing homelessness in our community.

By signing this release, you allow MCES and Service Hub _____ member agencies to share information about you and your household. This helps agencies focus on your housing needs and work toward your household's identified goals.

You may decline to allow any of your information to be shared with other agencies. If you choose not to share your information, you and your household may have fewer housing opportunities through CES. You or your household will never be denied services if you decline to share information.

Case conferencing meetings will focus on how providers can best meet your needs and end your homelessness as quickly as possible, including providing outreach services to you and connecting you to housing resources. Types of information that might be shared on the By Name List during case conferencing meetings include:

- Personal identifying information for you and your household (examples: name, date of birth, gender, etc.)
- Past or current participation in other housing and supportive service programs
- Contact information
- Information about your military service and VA eligibility
- Housing history and housing status
- Household income, financial assistance and source(s)
- General disability information relevant to housing

I, _____ (Printed Name of Participant) agree to share information with the Maine Service Hub _____ and MCES and its participating member agencies as detailed below.

Please initial your preferred level of disclosure and participation in Service Hub Case Conferencing:

_____ **Share my information:** I authorize _____ (Name of Agency) to share the above listed information about me and my household members during case conferencing to determine eligibility for housing openings and connect me to other services, as applicable.

_____ **Share my information using a case number:** I authorize the agency listed above to share the following

information about me and my household members during case conferencing: age bracket, veteran status, disability status, household size, length of time homeless and housing history. Instead of sharing my name during case conferencing, I understand that a case number will be utilized to identify me and my household members. *

_____ **Do not share my information:** I do not wish to have any of the above listed information discussed at case conferencing. I understand that not authorizing the sharing of this information may limit participating agencies' ability to locate me and notify me of available openings.

***PLEASE NOTE: PERSONS UTILIZING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTERS AND ARE FLEEING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND/OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REFERRED BY CASE NUMBER, ASSIGNED BY THE VICTIM SERVICES AGENCY.**

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, or have had read to you, all the information above and have chosen to sign this form voluntarily. Your signature also indicates you understand that:

- Participation in the MCES does not guarantee you housing assistance
- Additional information and documentation may be required by an agency that is offering housing or supportive services before entering the housing or supportive services program
- This consent is valid for one (1) year from the effective date of your signature below
- You can cancel your consent any time by written request
- You have a right to request a copy of this consent form after you have signed it

Participant Printed Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Representative Printed Name: _____

Representative Relationship to Participant**: _____

Representative Signature: _____ Date: _____

Agency Witness Printed Name: _____

Agency Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Examples of authorized representative are: guardian, power of attorney and others as defined by law.

For Agency Use only (please initial)

_____ The participant above received a telephonic explanation of this form. On behalf of the participant, staff at this Agency served as the representative.

_____ The Consent was read in its entirety.