

The Coordinated Entry Welcome Packet

Metro Denver
Homeless Initiative



OneHome

January 2023

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What are Coordinated Entry and OneHome?

1. What is Coordinated Entry?

- Coordinated Entry is a HUD-mandated process developed to ensure households experiencing housing crisis have fair and equitable access to housing and homelessness prevention resources and are assessed based on their vulnerabilities and needs and matched to appropriate resources.

2. What is OneHome?

- OneHome is the Coordinated Entry System for the Metro Denver region. Coordinated Entry is a client-centered process that partners with service providers and community members to assess and identify the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness. OneHome Coordinated Entry matches individuals, youth, and families to the appropriate available housing resource while elevating client choice.
- To learn more about how to become a OneHome Partner, please visit <https://www.onehomeco.org/partnerships> for more information.

3. How Does it Work?

- Coordinated Entry is a collaborative framework developed by communities to transform homeless response systems from networks of homeless assistance projects making individual decisions about whom to serve into fully integrated crisis response systems that prioritize individuals and families who are most in need of available housing resources. This is accomplished through data-informed decision-making, collaboration and leadership of people with lived experience, community partners, and service providers.
- Historically, CoCs allowed each program to operate individually by developing and implementing their own eligibility, assessment, and prioritization processes, and enrollment determinations. Coordinated Entry aligns the community to a standard set of prioritizing principles by which it can make consistent, equitable and trauma-informed decisions on how to use its resources efficiently and effectively. By having standardized processes, the system increases accessibility and equity for households; it is no longer about whom the person happens to speak with on a given day or making a person fit into a program. Rather, it is about understanding and responding to the individual needs of the person so that when homelessness occurs it is rare and brief.

What are the 4 Elements Coordinated Entry?

Access – Initial engagement points (virtual or site-based, including multiple access sites) for households experiencing a housing crisis.

Assessment – Process of documenting a participant’s housing needs, preferences, and vulnerability. The Metro Denver Continuum of Care is currently using the VI-SPDAT for our assessment tool.

Prioritization – Community developed and agreed on process of assigning level of need or vulnerability to households seeking assistance so that housing and services can be allocated to those households with the greatest need. For current prioritization in the Metro Denver CoC, please [click here](#).

Referral – Connection of households to available CoC housing resources and services in accordance with the CoC’s documented prioritization guidelines.

For more information, please refer to [HUD’s Coordinated Entry Core Elements](#).

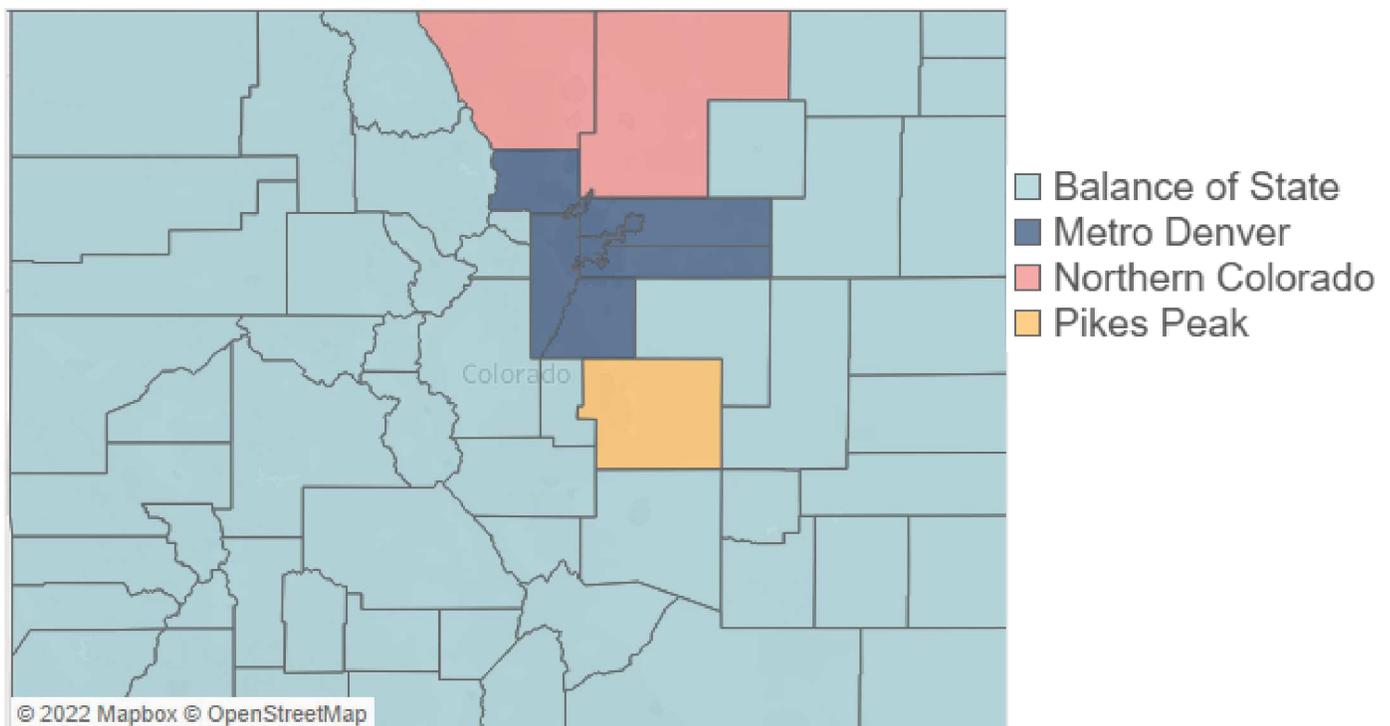
What is a Continuum of Care?

A CoC is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. The goal is to provide a more strategic system that provides an appropriate range of services to people experiencing homelessness.

MDHI is the Metro Denver CoC and manages regional coordination, Coordinated Entry, HMIS (Homelessness Management Information System), distributing funding, and data.

There are four CoCs in Colorado, Metro Denver covers the seven-county metro region; Pikes Peak covers El Paso county, Northern Colorado covers Larimer and Weld counties; and the Balance of State covers the remaining counties.

For more information on how to become a member of the Continuum of Care, please visit <https://www.mdhi.org/coc>



**Colorado Balance of State
Continuum of Care**



Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A Homeless Management Information System is administered locally to collect data on individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Data can also be collected for people at risk of experiencing homelessness, who receive assistance from homeless service or human services providers. There are other use cases as well for our non-profit providers who are providing assistance/services to community members who are not in housing (ex: food banks, budgeting classes, and things of that nature).

The data collected helps us to better understand the size, characteristics, and needs of the population, and plays a part in program evaluation, grant writing, research coordination, tracking of services provided, and advancing effective fact-based funding and legislative decisions.

The statewide HMIS we use is called Clarity; this software is developed by a company called Bitfocus. HMIS is a web-based system, so it can be used securely from any device.

Clarity is a highly collaborative system, which is crucial for providing optimal care and services for clients.



CoC Partners:

OneHome's system is informed by CoC partners, allowing the flexibility to reframe and restructure based on community needs. It is important for the system to remain nimble as the needs of our community experiencing homelessness change quickly and require rapid responses.

CDT (Community Coordinated Entry Design Team) is made up of CoC partner organizations who gather monthly to review data, discuss policies, and inform changes of the Coordinated Entry system utilizing the experience of direct care staff and the experiences of those in the coordinated entry system

Being a community-driven organization means:

- Community ownership and buy-in
- Policies and procedures are created and revised in collaboration with the community to meet the ambiguity of a crisis response system
- Knowledge and expertise of direct care providers inform system improvements
- Lived expertise is valued and incorporated in decision-making

Who Can OneHome Serve?

Households residing in the 7 county Metro Denver Continuum of Care. These counties include: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson.

Households must meet HUD's definition of Literal Homelessness and for certain resources must also meet the definition of Chronic Homelessness.

Once a household has been screened for program eligibility using available client data and matched to a housing resource through OneHome, there may be additional programmatic requirements through the housing provider or Public Housing Authority (PHA).

If a household's situation changes (couch-surfing to shelter) or a vulnerability factor shifts (mental health diagnosis, chronic health condition, etc.) a VISPDAT can be re-administered to ensure data is accurate and household is matched to appropriate resources.

Prioritization

HUD uses the term “Prioritization”* to refer to the coordinated entry-specific process by which all persons in need of assistance who use coordinated entry are sorted based on vulnerability. The coordinated entry prioritization policies are established by the CoC with input from community stakeholders.

The coordinated entry process must ensure that people with more severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for housing and homeless assistance. Prioritization must also be inclusive and equitable.

*Note that determining eligibility is a different process than prioritization.

Dynamic Prioritization

OneHome’s dynamic prioritization identifies the households with the highest needs at the point in time a vacancy is available in the prioritized groups and determines if the referral is appropriate based on the household’s needs, preferences and considers their eligibility for the program.

The amount of housing connected to OneHome is inadequate to meet the needs of our community. Because there are limited housing resources, there is no formulated way to determine when housing resources will become available, and it is dependent on what resources are open and eligibility for available housing resources.

For more information on our CoC's Prioritization process, please visit:

<https://www.onehomeco.org/updates/onehome-prioritization>

Alternate Process

Assessment tools might not produce the entire body of information necessary to determine a household’s prioritization, either because of the nature of self-reporting, withheld information, or circumstances outside the scope of the assessment questions that address one or more of the factors discussed above. For this reason, households may be referred by a participating agency to Metro Denver CoCs Alternate Process.

For more information on the Alternate process, please visit:

<https://www.onehomeco.org/policies-and-procedures>

HMIS Training

Staff must complete training to gain access to HMIS. There is an additional training for access to Coordinated Entry.

Since we have a limited number of HMIS licenses and the system is free for providers, it is important that licenses go to staff who will be using the system frequently. This is why DPALs are the only people who can request training; they should know which staff need training and those who do not.

Once the completed request is received, the staff member will be signed up for the Learning Management System (LMS) and receive an automated email with instructions on accessing the LMS. Once the end user has completed all necessary training for their position, they will be granted access to HMIS as applicable and will be asked to sign our user agreement.

All HMIS users will be required to complete Annual Refresher Trainings, which will include any newly-introduced database and HUD regulatory requirements. These trainings normally occur in the fall.

As the HMIS Lead for the Denver Metro Area, MDHI staff will send out email notices to all DPALs and end users to remind them of upcoming training requirements and deadlines.

If your agency is new to HMIS, please refer to the [HMIS New Agency Welcome Packet](#)

Literal Homelessness



What is Literal Homelessness?

Literally homeless is defined as individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, meaning the individual or family has:

- A **primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, or**
- Is living in a **publicly or privately operated shelter** designed to provide temporary living arrangements.
 - This category also includes individuals who are **exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less** who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entry into the institution.

Public or Private Place Not Meant for Human Habitation

- Vehicles
- Abandon buildings or structures without running water
- Sleeping outdoors

Publicly or Privately Operated Shelter

- Safe Haven
- DV shelter program
- Emergency Shelter
- Hotel rooms paid for by non profits, government programs or faith based affiliates

Exiting an Institution Where He or She Resided for 90 Days Or Less

- Hospitals
- Jail
- Rehab Programs
- Mental Health Facility

Fleeing Domestic Violence Situations

- Fleeing or attempting to flee a violence situation; has no other residence; AND lacks resources for permanent housing

Chronic Homelessness

Chronically Homeless means a person has been:

Literally homeless for 12 consecutive months or has had at least four episodes (and a total of at least 12 months) of being literally homeless in the past three years;

AND have a disabling condition (for families: head of household has a disabling condition), including:

A substance use disorder

A serious mental illness

A developmental disability

Posttraumatic stress disorder

A brain injury

A chronic physical illness or disability

How do households enter the Coordinated Entry System?

Households experiencing literal homelessness can access the Coordinated Entry System through Access Points. Access Points will determine if a household is eligible for Coordinated Entry and complete a HUD mandated assessment to further determine which housing intervention is most appropriate for the family. At this time*, the Metro Denver Continuum of Care is using the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) as our assessment tool for the Coordinated Entry System.

*Due to the inherent racial inequities of the VI-SPDAT, MDHI and our partners are working on a more equitable assessment tool.

Coordinated Entry Access Points

The Coordinated Entry System Access Points then provide follow up case management and resources to households in the Coordinated Entry System.

What is a Coordinated Entry Access Point?

Access Points are locations where those experiencing homelessness can access Metro Denver's Coordinated Entry System (CES). More information on Coordinated Entry Access Points can be found on MDHI's Need Help Page.

What do Coordinated Entry Access Points provide?

1. Administration of the VI-SPDAT
2. Follow up with households every 30-60 days.
 - This information is captured in the Current Living Situation tab in HMIS.
 - Participate in the OneHome inactive process.
3. Assist household with obtaining vital documents necessary for housing

Access Point Best Practices

- Provide prevention and diversion conversations and resources to all households, as needed.
- Have at least one staff member who is an enrolled HMIS and Coordinated Entry user for the purpose of entering VI-SPDATs into the HMIS Coordinated Entry Project.
- Domestic Violence service providers or other victim service providers are exempt. If you are a VSP, please contact the OneHome team directly to further discuss.
- Enroll newly assessed households into HMIS Coordinated Entry Project within 48 hours of completing enrollment and assessment.
- Be easily accessible through transportation, or can provide transportation in some capacity (bus vouchers, etc.)
- Provide regular hours of operation during which households can access the Coordinated Entry System process through screening, triage, and assessment procedures.
- Provide and/or refer to appropriate resources for households that cannot access safe housing immediately (emergency shelter, etc.)
- Establish protocols that ensure at a minimum that people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence have safe and confidential access to coordinated entry and that data collection conforms to the applicable requirements of the Violence Against Women Act, CoC Program, and/or HMIS Data Standards. Survivors of domestic violence may always be referred to the closest victim service provider for services and housing assessment.
- Follow up with households the agency has entered the Coordinated Entry System, ensuring that a Current Living Assessment is completed every 30-60 days for those households still active in the system.
- Assist with Housing Navigation, defined as located housing units for those households who have been enrolled into a housing program.
- Continue to work with households on resource and housing navigation.
- Administer VI-SPDATs to eligible households.

Is Becoming a Coordinated Entry Access Point Right for Your Organization?

Here are some considerations when deciding if your organization would benefit from Coordinated Entry access:

Does your organization have the capacity to serve all eligible households?

About how many eligible households contact your organization daily/weekly/monthly?

Do you have the staffing/funding to provide VI-SPDATs to all eligible households?

Do you have the staffing/funding to provide follow-up with all eligible households every 30-60 days?

Do you have the staffing/funding to assist all eligible households in obtaining vital documents for housing?

Does your organization have equitable accessibility?

Do you provide translation services?

Are your services physically accessible to all?

Are there staff members working in the Coordinated Entry System representing the clientele you serve? (ex: BIPOC, lived experience, etc.)

Are the eligible households seeking services at your organization already connected to homelessness service provider(s)?

Have You Decided that OneHome Access is Right for Your Organization?

Great! Please complete the [OneHome Onboarding Form](#)

This will provide the OneHome team with information about your organization so we know how best to support you.

The MDHI Coordinated Entry Team

Marla Sutherland - Coordinated Entry System Manager

Megan Morales - Coordinated Entry Lead

Nikki Reising - Coordinated Entry Specialist II

Shawn Hayes - Coordinated Entry Specialist II

Katy Owens - Coordinated Entry Specialist

Stephanie Pekala - Coordinated Entry Specialist

OneHome Office Hours

For questions regarding OneHome please also visit our online office hours:

Alternating Tuesdays from 11 am to 12 pm, and Thursdays from 3 pm to 4 pm.

View our [Calendar](#) for exact dates.

Access to OneHome [Paperwork](#)