

VCEH Coordinated Entry Annual Evaluation

December 2021



The VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee is responsible for planning, policy, oversight and evaluation of Coordinated Entry in the Balance of State Continuum of Care. For more about the VCEH Coordinated Entry Partnership model, policies and procedures, visit:

<https://helpingtohousevt.org/whatwedo/coordinatedentry/overview/>

This report satisfies the requirement that the VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee provide an annual summary report and analysis to the VCEH Board. *(See Appendix 1, VCEH Coordinated Entry Evaluation Policy)*

Partners have put a countless amount of time, energy, and thoughtfulness into continuing to improve Coordinated Entry and the state and local levels. There is a deep commitment in Vermont to do more than meet a federal mandate when we implement coordinated entry. Partners want to truly impact the lives of Vermonters experiencing housing crisis by connecting people to housing help quickly and advocating for the housing resources that coordinated entry clearly identifies.

Summary of VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee activities from 8/1/20-7/31/21:

- The Committee met twice during this time. 28 people representing 19 organizations participated in committee meetings. *(See Appendix 5, 2020-2021 VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee Members)*
- Sarah Phillips, Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity, chaired the Coordinated Entry (CE) Committee. OEO administered federal CoC-funded and state funded Coordinated Entry grants to Lead Agencies. In the current program year, \$1,361,504 in state and federal funding supports positions in all 11 local Coordinated Entry Partnerships.
- Assisted in the development of two training modules as part of VCEH's new online learning initiative: Introduction to Coordinated Entry and Coordinated Entry Assessment: Before, During + After
- Hosted seven Coordinated Entry Implementer web calls bringing together lead agency staff and key partners to troubleshoot challenges, inform CE Committee work, and identify and share best practices.
- Worked with the Veterans Committee to update the Veteran's Policy/Protocol.
- Supported the development of a data dashboard.
- Reviewed the current evaluation process and drafted suggested updates for next year.

This evaluation provides important information to understand:

- Training and technical assistance needs of each local CoC as well as shared statewide needs
- Areas of policy and planning focus for the VCEH CE Committee in the coming year, including opportunities to clarify or revise policies and procedures that may be confusing, difficult to implement, or inconsistently applied
- Who is served by coordinated entry, and both local and statewide needs
- Future evaluation methods and indicators

2021 Evaluation Process

This evaluation is intended to review and provide analysis on information from CE Partners, CE consumers (clients), and data from the Master Lists.

Partner Survey

- The CE Committee provided a standard survey tool and OEO provided a survey link to all CE Lead Agencies. *(See Appendix 2, Annual Local Coordinated Entry Partner Survey Template)*
- Local Lead Agencies invited partners to provide feedback on how well the Local CE Partnership is being implemented through the survey.
- OEO shared the summary of survey results, with comments, with Lead Agency for local discussion and planning.

Consumer Feedback

- The CE Committee provided general guidance on how local CE Partnerships should be collecting consumer feedback. *(See Appendix 3, VCEH Coordinated Entry Evaluation Report Tool)*
- Lead Agencies were asked to report on the method used by the local CE Partnership, a summary of feedback, and outcomes or action steps that emerged from a discussion of consumer feedback by local CE Partners.

Data Points

- The data points are established in the VCEH CE Evaluation Policy. *(See Appendix 1)*
- HMIS can produce most of the data needed for this part of the report, and Lead Agencies needed to add in non-HMIS data. *(See Appendix 4, VCEH Coordinated Entry Data Indicators)*
- Lead Agencies were asked to report on the local CE Partnership discussion of the data points and any outcomes or action steps that emerged from that discussion.

Partner Survey Summary & Analysis

The Partner Survey was administered in all 11 local CE Partnerships and more than 250 individuals were invited to participate. 110 people responded: 12% from Lead Agencies, 38% from Assessment Partners, 42% from referral partners, and 2% from non-formal partners. 6% of respondents were unsure what their role was. This breakdown of partner type is reflective of the Coordinated Entry Partnership model, where there are 11 lead agencies and each local CoC has various numbers of assessment partners and referral partners. Generally, partners feel both confident (average 4.01 out of 5) and competent (average 3.98) in implementing coordinated entry.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Needs

In some cases, it is the CE Committee who will need to respond to T/TA needs. In other cases, ICA or the Lead Agency will need to take responsibility. The list below highlights statewide priorities based on the survey:

- **Homelessness Prevention and Coordinated Entry**
NEXT STEPS: The CE Committee will recommit to its plan to adapt and incorporate prevention resources into CE and clarify how people at risk of homelessness can participate in the CE process. As in the past, the CE Committee will conduct a planning process that relies heavily on participation from stakeholders.

- **Master List Management, Prioritization and Referral to Housing**
NEXT STEPS: The CE Committee will identify ways that it can continue to support local Lead Agencies, including what tools or training will be most helpful. The CE Committee will work on developing an additional training module for VCEH that addresses master list management. A community of practice for Lead Agencies will be piloted in early 2022, with a goal of defining best practices to engage community partners more effectively in the CE process.
- **Housing Stability Plan Documentation**
NEXT STEPS: The CE Committee will explore developing a Housing Stability Plan template that can be used by Lead Agencies and Assessment Partners.
- **Coordinated Entry Overview**
NEXT STEPS: Lead Agencies will be encouraged to continue to promote and connect staff with the CE-related training modules developed for VCEH.

There were also a number of mid-level priorities for training and technical assistance statewide:

- Client Outreach
- Youth and Coordinated Entry
- Housing Assessment
- Client Communication About CE
- HMIS Data Sharing

In many cases, these are areas that the Lead Agency should be able to provide T/TA locally.

NEXT STEPS:

- The CE Committee will discuss which mid-level priorities need planning or policy support.
- Stakeholder feedback on training needs will be gathered when needed (i.e. from youth providers).
- ICA and Local Lead Agencies should work together to set up HMIS training to meet local needs.

Roadblocks, Bottlenecks, and Challenges

Partners provided comments in response to open-ended questions. Some common themes emerged:

- Partners struggling to understand the system and their role in it
- Difficulties coordinating services across multiple organizations and/or parts of the state
- Inability to reach clients due to changing contact information
- Staff shortages making it hard to respond to the need

One of the most common challenges mentioned was the lack of adequate affordable housing resources. Coordinated Entry serves to streamline access, but it does not create new affordable housing resources.

NEXT STEPS:

- The CE Committee will continue to ask each local CE Partnership to review their own bottlenecks and develop a local action plan during the annual evaluation process.
- The CE Committee will explore ways that it can act as a third party that can provide mediation and support to Local CE Partners experiencing communication or collaboration challenges.

Consumer Feedback Summary & Analysis

At the time of the evaluation, all local CE Partnerships had implemented a formal process for feedback from participants. All but one CE Partnership were able to complete their survey process and report on the results. Many CE Partnerships reported having difficulty getting responses from participants: most felt this was a result of their survey process and barriers associated with it (such as participants not answering their phone). From the responses received, the following themes emerged:

- Most participants had a positive experience and felt respected while accessing coordinated entry.
- There is a need for more housing in most of the state.
- Many participants felt the coordinated entry process was well-explained, but some were unsure what to expect in terms of next steps.
- Agencies are generally doing okay with explaining the release of information form and how a participant's information will be used and/or shared.
- Some participants felt that agencies needed more staff capacity to support the coordinated entry process.
- There may be a need for better advertisement of coordinated entry to build community and participant awareness.

NEXT STEPS:

- The CE Committee will create a standardized consumer feedback survey that is designed to be quick and simple to complete. Lead agencies will be asked to incorporate the survey into their regular coordinated entry process, rather than surveying participants only once per year. By standardizing both the survey tool and process to collect feedback, the Committee hopes to increase the amount of consumer feedback received and be able to compare responses across different CE partnerships.
 - As part of this process, the Committee will discuss how to offer participants the option to provide anonymous feedback.
 - The Committee will incorporate some demographic information into the survey tool to ensure that responses are being gathered from a representative sample of participants.
- The CE Committee will set a baseline target that 30% of participants in coordinated entry complete a survey during the year. The Committee will ask Lead Agencies to report on this benchmark and will use that data to determine if this is a reasonable target for future evaluations.
- The CE Committee will reevaluate the sample advertisement materials available and work on developing new/updated options. They will explore how to better define coordinated entry in outreach materials, including a review of what language is used on outward facing materials, to ensure that community members in need understand how the process can help.

Data Points Summary & Analysis

More than 180 agencies participated in VCEH Coordinated Entry; the number of partners continues to increase from year to year.

2,237 households participated in Coordinated Entry from 8/1/20-7/31/21 (housing assessments completed¹).

- 88% of those households were reached within 3 days of a referral to CE, a major achievement given the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, it took 6 days from the date of referral for a household to be assessed and added to their local master list.
- 1,851 (85%) of the households in Coordinated Entry were literally homeless (place not meant for habitation/unsheltered, emergency shelter, or hotel/motel paid for by an organization). This percentage has remained relatively stable from year to year.
- 9% of the households in Coordinated Entry had been in the CE system at least once before and returned. This is an increase from only 3% in 2019 and reflects the ongoing housing instability Vermonters face amidst the pandemic.

As of 7/31/21, 1,923 households had exited Coordinated Entry.

- 1,139 (55%) of the households who exited Coordinated Entry went to a permanent housing destination; an outcome to be celebrated given Vermont's lack of available affordable housing!
- The average length of stay (LOS) in Coordinated Entry for those households who exited was 152.1 days. A review of the demographics of those who exited, shows that some subpopulations are staying in the system longer than others:
 - Households where one or more members has a disability had an average LOS of 169.4 days, compared to 152 days for households without a disability.
 - Households headed by a person 62+ years old had an average LOS of 169 days, compared to 156.2 and 136.7 days for households headed by a person 25-61 years old and 18-24 years old respectively.
 - Households headed by a person who identifies as Black or African American had the longest average LOS (160.6 days), compared to households headed by people identifying as other races (White, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander)
 - Households identified as being best served by long-term assistance had an average LOS of 182.1 days, compared to 155.4 and 126.6 days for households identified as being best served by short-term or medium-term assistance respectively.²

As of 7/32/21, 1,607 households remained in Coordinated Entry.

- The average LOS in Coordinated Entry for those households who remained on the list is 176.3 days. A review of the demographics of those who have not yet exited, shows that as above, some subpopulations are staying in the system longer than others:
 - Households where one or more members has a disability had an average LOS of 202.6 days, compared to 176.5 days for households without a disability.
 - Households headed by a person 62+ years old had an average LOS of 185.4 days, compared to

¹ Not all questions on the housing assessment must be answered for an assessment to be considered completed. The Household must simply have answered some questions and agreed to have some level of information shared through Coordinated Entry.

² Long-term assistance is for more than 24 months, short-term assistance is for less than 3 months, and medium-term assistance is for 3-24 months.

177.6 and 144.5 days for households headed by a person 25-61 years old and 18-24 years old respectively.

- Households headed by a person who identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native had the longest average LOS (182.4 days), compared to households headed by people identifying as other races (White, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander)
- Households identified as being best served by long-term assistance (see definition above) had an average LOS of 213.3 days, compared to 182.7 and 132.7 days for households identified as being best served by short-term (see definition above) or medium-term (see definition above) assistance respectively.

While the Committee collected and reviewed length of stay data broken down by demographics (as summarized above), it was identified that additional data would be helpful in being able to further understand the equity of our Coordinated Entry system.

NEXT STEPS:

- The CE Committee will work to clarify certain data elements in the report tool that have raised questions about what is being included. The Committee will also adjust the data report tool to provide additional data necessary to evaluate the CE system, including:
 - A way for Lead Agencies to report on those households not reached within 3 days of referral and the reasons it took longer to reach them
 - A further breakdown of the time households spent on the master list (e.g. 3-6 months, 6-12 months, 12-18 months)
 - Additional data on the households that leave CE, including a breakdown of both permanent and non-permanent housing destinations
 - A way to better capture the reasons households removed themselves from CE
 - Additional data related to average length of stay broken down by demographics, to monitor for equity across the system
- The CE Committee will continue to monitor the ratio of assessments completed by Lead Agencies vs. Assessment Partners to ensure sustainability.
- The CE Committee will review resources/funder expectations for time between referral and completed assessment and adjust target if necessary.
- The CE Committee will work with ICA to determine what changes need to be made to the HMIS report used for the evaluation as VCEH shifts to a new vendor.
- ICA will update the HMIS report to use the Current Living Situation data element instead of Prior Living Situation, where appropriate.

Appendix 1: VCEH Coordinated Entry Evaluation Policy

(Section 7 of VCEH CE Policies & Procedures)

Once the Local Coordinated Entry Partnership has been implemented, the local CoC and the VCEH will regularly evaluate its effectiveness. Lessons derived from these evaluations will be used to further improve the coordinated entry process.

VCEH will evaluate the coordinated entry process primarily through local CoC implementation, but will also consider aggregate data.

At least annually, each Local CE Partnership will:

- Survey all local Partners to solicit feedback on how well the Local CE Partnership is being implemented, and
- Collect feedback on the coordinated entry process from consumers through a focus group or survey.

The VCEH will establish uniform questions to support this evaluation process.

Every 6 months, the VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee will review the following data points for each local CoC and the aggregate Balance of State CoC:

- The number of Coordinated Entry Partners, and type (Outreach, Prevention, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Other);
- The number of assessments completed (e.g, the number of households placed on the Master List during the time period), including:
 - the number who were literally homeless
 - the number of households returning to the Master List;
- The number of households on the Master List, including the number that are unsheltered (point in time);
- The number (and %) of households on the Master List more than 3 months, including
 - the # who are chronically homeless
 - the # who were rejected or not referred to a project and the reasons why those households were rejected or not referred;
- The average length of time a household is on the Master List (date of assessment to date inactive or housed) during the reporting period;
- The number of household exits to permanent housing, including the number who exit into Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Re-housing; and
- The number of households who are moved to an inactive list.

The VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee will provide an annual summary report and analysis to the VCEH Board.

Appendix 2: Annual Local Coordinated Entry Partnership Survey Template

1) What local CoC Coordinated Entry Partnership are you part of?

Addison, Bennington, Caledonia/Essex South, Franklin/Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orleans/Essex North, Rutland, Washington, Windham North/Windsor South, Windham South, Windsor North/Orange

2) What role does your agency play in Coordinated Entry?

Lead Agency, Assessment Partner, Referral Partner, Not a formal partner, Don't Know

3) How competent do you feel in fulfilling your coordinated entry role and responsibilities?

Scale of 1 (not at all competent) to 5 (very competent)

4) How confident do you feel in fulfilling your coordinated entry role and responsibilities?

Scale of 1 (not at all confident) to 5 (very confident)

5) Rate how well your Lead Agency is doing with its core coordinated entry responsibilities.

Does not meet responsibility, Somewhat meets this responsibility, Satisfactorily meets this responsibility, Exceptional in meeting this responsibility, Don't Know for each of the following:

- Provide leadership, coordination and oversight of Coordinated Entry processes.
- Ensure that all Partners are involved in and informed of evaluation and reporting aspects of the Local Coordinated Entry Partnership.
- Seeks/allocates funding to ensure the Lead Agency is adequately funded to fulfill its role in the local Coordinated Entry Partnership.
- Ensure that all coordinated entry grants are compliant with requirements; supports compliance with VCEH coordinated entry policies and procedures.
- Provide training and technical assistance to Partners to ensure standardization of information, assistance and referral offered to potential households.
- Provide training and technical assistance to all Partner staff administering the VCEH Housing Crisis Referral Tool, and the VCEH Housing Assessment Tool.
- Promote the process and outcomes of Coordinated Entry to the public; local officials; state and federal agencies, officials and other interested parties.
- Convene local CE Partnership meetings.
- Ensure the evaluation of the local CE Partnership.
- Liaison with the VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee, or delegate participation from our local Partnership.
- Act as a local clearinghouse for persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness and in search of support to find or retain housing.
- With Partnership committee support, maintain a local inventory of homeless assistance resources.
- Follow up with clients referred by Referral Partners within 3 days (target).
- Complete VCEH Housing Assessment for households experiencing homelessness, prior to enrolling clients in housing programs.
- Ensure that Partner Staff review and understand the Confidentiality Principles & Policies.

6) Where, if at all, are you experiencing roadblocks or bottlenecks in the coordinated entry process?

Open Ended – Comment Box

7) What has changed for the better because of Coordinated Entry?

Open Ended – Comment Box

8) If there was anything that could be done to make Coordinated Entry work better for you or your agency, what would it be?

Open Ended – Comment Box

9) What additional training or technical assistance would you like to see?

No, Yes: low priority, Yes: high priority, Don't know/No answer for each of the following:

- Client Outreach
- Partner Outreach
- CE Overview Training
- Client Notice & Grievance Process
- Master List Management
- Inactive List
- Housing Assessment
- HMIS CE Workflow
- HMIS Data Sharing
- Confidentiality
- Client Information Sharing in General
- Using the Release of Information
- Prioritization
- Housing Stability Plan Documentation
- Client Communication about Coordinated Entry
- Changes to Business Processes
- Youth and Coordinated Entry
- Veterans and Coordinated Entry
- Homelessness Prevention and Coordinated Entry
- Other – Please describe below (Comment Box)

10) The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness has created online training on Coordinated Entry. You can check out this training and sign-up for self-paced online modules here:

<https://helpingtohousevt.org/training/online-learning-modules/>

Which of the following online VCEH training modules have you or someone at your organization taken? Check all that apply.

Introduction to Coordinated Entry, Coordinated Entry Assessment: Before, During + After, Another VCEH Online Module, None of the above

Appendix 3: VCEH Coordinated Entry Evaluation Report Form

Annual Survey of local Partners

- 1) Survey was sent to _<#>_ Coordinated Entry Partners on __<date>__.
- 2) Survey results were shared and discussed with Coordinated Entry Partners... <who, how, where, when>
- 3) Where there any outcomes or action steps that came from this discussion?

Annual Report on Consumer Feedback on Coordinated Entry Process

It is critical to get feedback from consumers about how coordinated entry is working for them, even if it can be challenging to get actionable feedback.

Things to consider: Power dynamics, eliciting feedback on the process for getting housing help (vs housing itself), transportation, child care, time, etc.

Recommended VCEH Consumer Feedback Questions:

- How many agencies have you gone to for help?
 - Do you feel the way (process) you get help with housing is fair?
 - How well was the process for getting help explained to you?
 - Did you fill out a release of information form? Did you get an explanation about how your information would be shared?
 - How could the process for getting help with housing be better?
 - Do you know what your next steps for getting housing help is?
 - Do you think that people who need housing in your area know how to get help?
 - Did you feel that the housing assessment was respectful?
 - What else do you want me to know?
- 4) Describe the method used by the Coordinated Entry Partnership to get feedback from people experiencing homelessness on the coordinated entry process?
<survey, focus group, interviews, comment box, etc.>
 - 5) Provide a summary of consumer feedback received. Are there any themes that emerged?
 - 6) Consumer feedback results were shared and discussed with Coordinated Entry Partners...
<who, how, where, when>
 - 7) Where there any outcomes or action steps that came from this discussion?

Coordinated Entry Outcomes – Data Analysis

ICA can help you to run the CE Summary Report to provide these data points. You will need to add in any non-HMIS client data. Please only report in aggregate with no identifying information.

- 8) Complete EXCEL form
- 9) Coordinated Entry Outcomes were shared and discussed with Coordinated Entry Partners...
<who, how, where, when>
- 10) Where there any outcomes or action steps that came from this discussion?

Appendix 4: VCEH Coordinated Entry Data Points

1) # of Coordinated Entry Partners (signed onto partnership agreement):		
# By Type (some providers may be more than one type):		
Outreach Provider:		
Homelessness Prevention Provider:		
Emergency Shelter Provider:		
Transitional Housing Provider:		
Rapid Re-housing Provider:		
Permanent Supportive Housing Provider:		
Other:		
Assessment Partners:		
Referral Partners		
2) # of referrals received by the Lead Agency		
o #/% of households with an initial outreach date within 3 days		#DIV/0!
o Average # of days between referral and initial outreach		
3) # of assessments completed from 8/1/20 – 7/31/21 (e.g. # of HH placed on the Master List during the time period):		
o #/% of assessments completed by Lead Agency		#DIV/0!
o Average # of days between referral to Lead Agency and assessment		
o #/% of assessments completed by Assessment Partners		#DIV/0!
o of these, the #/% of HH who were literally homeless (category 1):		#DIV/0!
o of these, the #/% of HH returning to the Master List:		#DIV/0!
4) Current # of HH on the Master List on July 31, 2021:		
o of these, the #/% that are unsheltered:		#DIV/0!
5) # (and %) of households on the Master List more than 3 months, including		#DIV/0!
o of these, the #/% who are chronically homeless		#DIV/0!
o of these, the # who were rejected or not referred to a project and the reasons why those households were rejected or not referred:		
6) The average length of time a household (HH) is on the Master List (date of assessment to date exit due to being inactive or housed) during the reporting period for: (LEAVERS)		
o all HH		
o HH identified as needing short-term assistance		
o HH identified as needing medium-term assistance		
o HH identified as needing long-term assistance		
o HH with adult(s) and children		
o HH with adult(s) only		
o HH where one or more members has a disability		
o HH with no disability		
o Head of Household is: 18-24 years old		
o Head of Household is: 25-61 years old		
o Head of Household is: 62+ years old		
o Head of Household is: Age Unknown (missing)		
o Head of Household is: Black or African American		
o Head of Household is: American Indian; Alaska Native		
o Head of Household is: White		
o Head of Household is: Asian		
o Head of Household is: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		
o Head of Household is: Multiple Races		
o Head of Household is: Race Unknown (missing)		
o To a Permanent Housing Destination		
o Removed to the inactive list, and a summary of the reasons		
o Removed self from list		
o Transferred to another Continuum of Care		
7) The average length of time a household is on the Master List (date of assessment to date of report) during the reporting period for" (STAYERS)		
o all HH		
o HH identified as needing short-term assistance		
o HH identified as needing medium-term assistance		
o HH identified as needing long-term assistance		
o HH with adult(s) and children		
o HH with adult(s) only		
o HH where one or more members has a disability		
o HH with no disability		
o Head of Household is: 18-24 years old		
o Head of Household is: 25-61 years old		
o Head of Household is: 62+ years old		
o Head of Household is: Age Unknown (missing)		
o Head of Household is: Black or African American		
o Head of Household is: American Indian; Alaska Native		
o Head of Household is: White		
o Head of Household is: Asian		
o Head of Household is: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		
o Head of Household is: Multiple Races		
o Head of Household is: Race Unknown (missing)		
8) The number of households exiting coordinated entry:		
o To a Permanent Housing Destination		
o Removed to the inactive list, and a summary of the reasons		
o Removed self from list		
o Transferred to another Continuum of Care		

Appendix 5: 2020-2021 VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee Members

Capstone Community Action

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity

Charter House Coalition

Economic Services Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services

Groundworks Collaborative

Homeless Prevention Center of Rutland

Institute for Community Alliances (HMIS lead agency)

Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Office of Economic Opportunity, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services

Pathways Vermont

Samaritan House

Southeastern Vermont Community Action

Springfield Supported Housing

Supportive Services for Veteran Families – UVM Vermont Veteran Services

Upper Valley Haven

Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Vermont State Housing Authority

Veterans Affairs – Healthcare for the Homeless Program