

**Ulster County Continuum of Care
Policies & Procedures for Coordinated Entry**

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COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

1 INTRODUCTION

The Kingston/Ulster County Continuum of Care (UCCOC) (NY-608) is located in Ulster County and covers 1,161 square miles of mostly rural landscape, including the City of Kingston, which is designated as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as well as 23 towns and villages. Ulster County Department of Social Services is the primary access point for homeless emergency housing and placement in the county, and Family of Woodstock Inc. (FOW) operates all four shelters and two transitional programs to serve homeless. Due to the largely rural geography of Ulster County, the Coordinated Entry (CE) system will use a decentralized (multiple access points) assessment and intake model. The UCCOC, in consultation with recipients of Emergency Solution (ESG) funds within our geographic area, are responsible to ensure the UCCOC's CE process is consistent with coordinated screening, assessments, and referrals as outlined in the ESG written standards.

The following are the core components of the UCCOC Coordinated Entry & Assessment:

- Affirmatively ensures equal access to housing and support services projects to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, handicap, sexual orientation, gender identity or who are least likely to apply.
- Implements standardized assessments for people seeking housing placement.
- Ensures that people that are most vulnerable and with the most severe needs are prioritized for assistance.
- Develops and maintains an active by-name prioritization list of people identified as experiencing homelessness.
- Makes shelter and crisis services available until longer-term housing placements that are appropriate for the client are secured.
- Makes referrals to appropriate programs or agencies

1.1 Inform Local Planning: The UCCOC will collect and maintain aggregate data on homeless individuals and families within the CE for local planning purposes. This information will be provided to the UCCOC board, the CE committee, and Consolidated Plan Jurisdictions (Con Plan) to facilitate the development of a plan to eliminate homelessness and to assist local planning efforts.

2 ACCESS

The UCCOC requires the same assessment tool including standardized decision-making and definitions at all access points. The system will use multiple access points to facilitate easy access by all people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Assessments may be conducted at one of the access points or over the phone for participant convenience.

The CE process is available for all persons including those that have been a victim of domestic

violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. The Safety Planning section 8.1 of these policies details how this sub-population will be assessed.

2.1 After Hours Access: The UCCOC will utilize Family of Woodstock's 24-hour hotline for those persons seeking emergency services after hours when other coordinated entry's intake and assessment processes are not available. If participants are not able to access emergency or crisis housing placement through the hotline, they will be referred to DSS for emergency housing placement during the next business day.

2.2 Written Standards for Prevention Services: If participants are in need of preventative services because they are at risk of homelessness, they will be referred to agencies that provide prevention resources. The UCCOC has a prevention resource list and when possible, assessment staff will contact the preventive agency to provide a more effective referral. A client's safety will be the key determinant for prioritization of prevention services. Participants eligible for prevention services and who do not meet HUD's Homeless Definition will be part of coordinated entry. Participants will also be able to access the CE at the time of emergency housing placement if needed.

- Eligibility definition: Those that are at **“Imminent Risk of Homelessness”** which **are defined** means individuals and families that are able to document that they must leave their current nighttime residence within 14 days, and include household that;
 - Have received a court notice of eviction or foreclosure.
 - Are staying with family or friends AND can document that they must leave within 14 days. Documentation must include a third-party verification of violation. (For example, a lease that states that anyone other than occupants listed on the lease constitutes a lease violation.)

2.3 Fair and Equal Access: All people in the UCCOC area have equal access to coordinated entry process regardless of where and how they present for services. Access to UCCOC the coordinated entry process is accessible to all people in the county either in person or over the phone.

The coordinated entry process will serve people that speak the languages spoken in the community. UCCOC affirmatively markets housing and supportive services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, handicap, sexual orientation, gender identity or who are least likely to apply in the absence of special outreach.

2.4 Anti-Discrimination Policy: The Ulster County Continuum of Care (UCCOC) aims to reduce and ultimately end homelessness, providing services that increase stabilization of individuals and families, monitoring the progress of existing programs and services for homeless, and advocating for funding to promote decent, safe, and affordable housing for all. UCCOC recognizes that individuals must not be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity when seeking support from its housing programs and services. Thus, in accordance with

HUD's "Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs," UCCOC does and shall not discriminate against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender individuals, and families. It is the policy of UCCOC that any discrimination against LGBT individuals and families seeking equal access to all eligible HUD-funded housing programs and services is prohibited.

This policy applies to all UCCOC projects, agencies, and managers of shelters, and other buildings and facilities; and providers of services funded in whole or in part by any HUD program to grant equal access to such facilities, and other buildings and facilities, benefits, accommodations, and services to individuals in accordance with the individual's gender identity, and in a manner, that affords equal access to the individual's family.

2.5 Anti-Discrimination Laws: Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act), as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people obtaining custody of children under the age of 18), and disability.

The New York State Human Rights Law prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of several "protected characteristics." It is illegal for someone to discriminate based on race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, military status, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity (sex and/or disability discrimination).

This policy applies to all UCCOC grant recipients, sub-recipients, projects, agencies, and employees.

2.6 Marketing Strategies can include direct outreach to people on the streets, as well as through UCCOC member sites, informational flyers left in public locations, announcements at UCCOC and other coalition meetings, and through educational programs. All coordinated entry sites will be accessible to persons with disabilities, and accessible by public transportation wherever available. Participants will be given a comprehensive list of access points and agencies providing prevention services.

2.7 Outreach: UCCOC will ensure that persons encountered by street outreach workers will be offered the same standardized assessment process as person's assessed through site-based access points.

3 ASSESSMENT

3.1 Standardized Assessment Tool The UCCOC will utilize the adopted standardized assessment tool to ensure that all homeless participants will be prioritized by the same vulnerability standards. This tool provides uniform decision criteria based upon vulnerability score.

Factors that determine the severity of needs of participants include chronic homeless designation; those sleeping on the streets or places not meant for human habitation; those experiencing Domestic Violence; the age of the head of household either between 18-24 or 60 or older receiving a higher score; Veteran status; little or no income, criminal history; physical or other disability with

households with more than one disability receiving a higher vulnerability score; pregnancy of household member; history of multiple evictions, utility shut offs or code violations; recent involvement with Justice systems or Foster Care.

3.2 Low-Barrier: All UCCOC HUD-funded projects utilize a low barrier approach and do not screen people out for assistance because of perceived barriers such as:

- Having too little or no income;
- Resistance to receiving services;
- Active or history of substance abuse;
- History of evictions or poor credit;
- Having a criminal record with exceptions for state-mandated restrictions; or
- History of domestic violence (e.g., lack of a protective order, period of separation from an abuser, or law enforcement involvement).

3.3 CE Provider Training: CARES of NY, Inc. will provide training annually for CE participating agencies and staff that administer assessments. The CE lead is responsible for coordinating annual trainings and will work with the CE committee to update the policies and procedures and the assessment tool to distribute to all CE members. The purpose of the training is to ensure coordination and consistency of the CE assessment process. The training will reinforce the CE written standards and clearly describe the methods by which assessments are conducted. Opportunities for feedback from CE staff will ensure continuous system improvements.

The curriculum will include a review of UCCOC written policies and procedures, including any adopted variations for specific sub-populations. The curriculum will also include requirements on how to use assessment information to determine prioritization and reinforce uniform criteria for decision-making and referrals.

3.4 Person-Centered: UCCOC respects the participant's choices with respect to location, type of housing, services, and other options, allowing participants to be a part of the decision making when possible. Participants have the right to refuse any housing resource available to them. When participants refuse CE housing placement, the UCCOC will maintain the placement of households on the prioritization list based on the severity of need and vulnerability score.

3.5 Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications: UCCOC Housing Providers will provide reasonable accommodations and modifications to homeless people with disabilities to ensure equal access to housing. Providers, when possible, will make every effort to accommodate a person with a disability to use and enjoy a dwelling. Providers are not required to undergo an undue financial hardship to provide accommodation or make changes to a program.

3.6 Privacy Protection: CARES of NY, Inc. is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead for the UCCOC. CARES of NY, Inc. has a policy and procedure manual that is updated annually. The written standards of protection of client information are included in that manual. HMIS agencies sign MOU agreements with CARES of NY, Inc. annually and all HMIS

users are required to sign off on privacy procedures with the HMIS Lead. Data from the domestic violence population is not included in HMIS. Participants entering the CE may choose to share the information with other partner agencies via the HMIS. Participants have the right to revoke authorization for the sharing of information at any time. Information shared is limited to and for the purpose of the Ulster County coordinated entry prioritization list. The UCCOC will not require the disclosure of specific disabilities and diagnoses. Specific information regarding the participants' disability and diagnoses will only be obtained for purposes of determining program eligibility or to make appropriate referrals.

4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The UCCOC will assess households that meet the HUD definition of homelessness as cited in the key terms section of this document. The assessment will take place in person at site-based CE access points or by phone. **The assessment will be completed within ten business days of emergency shelter placement. The scoring of the assessment determines the prioritization of individuals and families for transitional, rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing placement.**

4.1 CE Lead:

The CE lead will have the following responsibilities:

- Responsible for updating and maintaining the UCCOC CE housing inventory within HMIS and track information on program vacancies and openings.
- Update program eligibility guidelines and contact information so staff can make the best referrals possible
- Follow up with the staff of referring agency to confirm whether the referral is accepted, declined by provider or client, is pending, or if the provider is unable to make contact within the established timeframe.
- Responsible for coordinating CE committee meetings and bi-weekly case conferences.
- Monitor that all points of entry are using the same assessment tool, data collection forms, policies on eligibility verification and referral/information sharing systems on an annual basis.
- Responsible to ensure HMIS data is being maintained by providers and monitored with assistance from HMIS Vendor.
- Responsible to work with access point agencies to seek client level feedback on suggestions and improvements to the intake and assessment process.

4.2 Provider Responsibilities

- All providers receiving funding through HEARTH or a HUD-funded program are required to participate in the coordinated entry process.
- Providers (except domestic violence) must use the HMIS system, and they must maintain HMIS data entry standards set by the HMIS Lead and the UCCOC Board of Directors.
- Providers must provide written documentation to the Coordinated Entry committee within **10 business** days on why an applicant was denied entry into a program.

- Providers must ensure that staff is using the same assessment tool, data collection forms, policies on eligibility verification and referral/information sharing systems.
- Providers are responsible to ensure HMIS data is being maintained and monitored with assistance from HMIS Vendor.
- Providers are responsible to work with the CE Lead to seek client level feedback on suggestions and improvements to the intake and assessment process.
- Providers must have an appeal process for those applicants who have been denied service or entry into a program.

4.3 Provider Denials: CE Providers shall accept all referrals of eligible households if there are vacancies or openings within their program(s). Providers are responsible for ensuring referred households are eligible for the program, and gathering all required documentation. Referred households may be returned to the prioritization list for the following:

- The household does not meet the project's eligibility requirements established by the funder.
- Household fails to engage and complete the provider's intake process.

The provider must notify the housing referral source and CE Lead within 5 business days if the referral is denied, and the referring source may call the provider to understand the circumstances.

4.4 Client Appeal Process: Any client that is denied placement may appeal the decision. The client will first complete the appeal process at the agency level. If the appeal is not successful at the agency level, the client can submit an appeal in writing to the CE lead stating the agency reason for denial and any extenuating circumstances to be considered within 5 business days of the agency appeal decision. The CE Case Conference Committee will act as the Appeals Committee, with an abstention from the agency that denied the referral. The CE Case Conference Committee will review the request and make a determination. Clients will be notified in writing of the outcome of their appeals within two days of the Appeals Committee's decision. The Appeals Committee decision is final.

4.5 Case Conferencing: UCCOC funded agencies are required to participate in case conferencing to prioritize housing placement for persons on the by-name prioritization list. The focus of the case conferences to fill vacancies and openings in HUD-funded programs for the most vulnerable with the highest needs and the greatest barriers. The goal of the case conference is to provide a coordinated, and integrated approach that ensures the most vulnerable homeless participants receive appropriate housing placement.

The Case Conference Committee will be comprised of all CoC funded agencies, ESG recipients and other stakeholders such as agencies representing SPOA, Veteran, and DSS. The Case Conference committee reviews the CE prioritization list bi-weekly, but if a program needs referrals between meetings, the CE lead is designated to provide those referrals.

. Those that have an intake date over 18 months will be contacted to determine if housing is still needed, if there is no contact established that household will be discharged.

5 PRIORITIZATION WRITTEN STANDARDS

Ulster County CE prioritizes homeless persons within the Ulster County geography ensuring that homeless participants with the most severe service needs and the highest level of vulnerability are prioritized for housing. The UCCOC prioritization requirements are consistent with CoC and ESG written standards under 24 CFR 578(a)(9) and 24 CFR 576.4. The UCCOC prioritizes placement of households experiencing chronic homelessness for permanent supportive housing consistent with HUD Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing.

The UCCOC will use the following additional criteria to prioritize individuals and families for housing and homeless assistance:

- Have you slept and are going to sleep in a place not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter within the last week
- Has exiting an institutional setting contributed to your homelessness
- Have you experienced homelessness for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years
- Has aging out of foster care impacted your ability to remain stably housed
- Have conflicts around gender identity or sexual orientation contributed to your homelessness
- Has being unstably housed created barriers to accessing educational opportunities for anyone in your household
- Has lack of information regarding available programs contributed to your current homelessness
- Are you currently fleeing domestic violence
- Has a domestic violence situation personally impacted you and contributed to your homelessness
- Has being a victim of sexual assault, and/or stalking contributed to your homelessness
- Have you or any members of your household been victims of crime/exposed to violence or harassment which contributed to your homelessness
- Are you survivor of human trafficking
- Is there substance use within your family which has impacted your living situation
- Has the distribution or use of substances led to being unstably housed or homeless
- Are you a veteran
- Do you have no income or receive public assistance only
- Have pending/existing legal issues impacted your ability to access housing
- If there was a space available in a program that specifically assists people that live with HIV or AIDS would that be of interest to you
- Do you or someone in your household have a condition or illness that impairs your ability to access and maintain housing
- If there was a space available in a program that provided support for people living with mental illness would that be of interest to you
- Does any household member have a serious underlying medical condition and may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 due to:

- Currently pregnant
- Adults older than 65
- Diagnosed with chronic lung disease
- Diagnosed with severe asthma
- Diagnosed with severe obesity
- Diagnosed with diabetes
- Diagnosed as immunocompromised
- Diagnosed with chronic kidney disease
- Diagnosed with liver disease

5.1 Emergency Services: The UCCOC will not limit access to participants seeking emergency shelter or other services allowing for an immediate crisis response. A vulnerability assessment will be conducted when the participant enters the emergency shelter system. The client will give permission for his/her data to be shared through HMIS. Participants will remain in emergency housing until an appropriate housing placement is available.

The Ulster County Coordinated Entry System prioritizes for HUD-funded rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.

5.2 Rapid Re-Housing: Rapid re-housing will be prioritized for families and/or individuals that can achieve housing stability with short-term subsidies and case management, less than one year. Rapid Re-housing that is HUD-funded RRH programs (except those serving DV Victims) will be required to participate in the Coordinated Entry system. Additional Rapid Re-Housing resources when available will not be part of the Coordinated Entry prioritization list. Support and duration of service will be tailored to meet the needs of each household and the requirements of the funder. Each household has a lease in their name and is connected to mainstream resources in the community in which they reside.

5.2a Income UCCOC Rapid Re-housing (RRH) projects: When there is employment or other income in the household, participants are required to utilize 30% of either the adjusted monthly gross income, entitlements such as SSI or SSDI or the DSS allowance toward rental payments. Clients that enter programs with no income may still be eligible for services and may receive a full rent subsidy up to HUD fair market rent (FMR).

To be eligible for HUD-funded RRH, households must:

- Be literally homeless as defined by HUD
- Prepare a reasonable plan that shows how they are going to maintain housing once housing assistance ends, a budget, a financial worksheet and/or description of changes in household circumstances that made them homeless.
- Providers will follow individual program guidelines to determine the minimum amount of rent and utility assistance and supportive services that a household will receive to stabilize their housing with the goal of moving toward self-sufficiency. If it becomes clear that the amount and duration of assistance are not enough, the household will be reassessed for placement on the CE waitlist for a more appropriate housing program.
- Efforts will be made to house households within 30 days of acceptance into the program.

- Providers are expected to remain engaged with the household from the first contact to program exit.

5.3 Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing programs should provide housing to individuals and/or families, usually for a period of six to twenty-four months along with supportive services to help them become self-sufficient. In addition to providing a place to live, transitional housing providers should help the participant to increase their life management skills and resolve the problems that have contributed to their homelessness. Household who are homeless and have two or more of the following barriers are appropriate for referral to:

Transitional Housing:

- Domestic Violence victims (require only one barrier: being a victim of domestic violence.)
- No income
- Poor rental history
- Sporadic employment history
- No high school diploma or GED
- History of homelessness
- Poor rental history (i.e current eviction, rent/utility arrears)
- Unaccompanied Youth (18-24)

5.4 Prioritization for Permanent Supportive Housing: Chronic homelessness is not a requirement for placement into permanent supportive housing. **The UCCOC prioritizes housing placement for chronically homeless for PSH placement. Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability with Long Periods of Episodic Homelessness and Severe Service Needs that are Chronically Homeless. This is defined as an individual or family that is eligible for UCCOC Program-funded PSH who has experienced four or more episodes totaling 12 months in a three year period, or 12 consecutive months where they have been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter and has been identified as having severe service needs.** **Order of Priority for Non-Chronically Homeless:** In accordance with HUD Notice CPD-16-11, UCCOC Program-funded PSH that is not dedicated or prioritized for chronically homeless will use the following order of priority when selecting participants for housing that is consistent with the agencies current grant agreement. UCCOC uses a vulnerability index score to determine the participant's severity of need.

- **First Priority–Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability with Long Periods of Episodic Homelessness and Severe Service Needs. An individual or family that is eligible for UCCOC Program-funded PSH who has experienced fewer than four occasions where they have been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter but where the cumulative time homeless is at least 12 months and has been identified as having severe service needs.**
- **Second Priority–Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability with Severe Service Needs. An individual or family that is eligible for UCCOC Program-funded PSH who is residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an**

emergency shelter and has been identified as having severe service needs. The length of time in which households have been homeless should also be considered when prioritizing households that meet this order of priority, but there is not a minimum length of time required.

- **Third Priority—*Homeless Individuals and Families with a disability living in places not meant for human habitation, Safe Haven, or Emergency Shelter without Severe Service Needs.*** An individual or family that is eligible for UCCOC Program-funded PSH who is residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter where the individual or family has not been identified as having severe service needs. The length of time in which households have been homeless should be considered when prioritizing households that meet this order of priority, but there is not a minimum length of time required.
- **Fourth Priority—*Homeless Individuals and Families with a Disability coming from Transitional Housing.*** An individual or family that is eligible for UCCOC Program-funded PSH who is currently residing in a transitional housing project, where prior to residing in the transitional housing had lived in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven. This priority also includes individuals and families residing in transitional housing who were fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and prior to residing in that transitional housing project even if they did not live in a place not meant for human habitation, an emergency shelter, or a safe haven prior to entry in the transitional housing.

5.5 Homelessness Prevention: The Coordinated Entry System provides immediate referral to Prevention Services Providers in Ulster County. The UCCOC will use the following additional criteria to prioritize individuals and families for homelessness prevention assistance:

- Sheriff performed lock-out
- Warrant (stayed or not)
- Court/Trial date
- 14 day rent demand
- 21 day rent demand
- Other (specified)
- No income or income to housing ratio 80+
- Income to housing 50-80
- Income to housing 30-50
- COVID (sick, quarantined, income impacted due to COVID)
- Household of five or more
- Single parent with minor children
- At risk of losing, public, subsidized or voucher assisted housing
- At risk of losing supportive housing
- Domestic Violence survivor in the past five years
- Household member with disabling condition (SMI, chronic illness, substance use, developmental disability, physical disability, and/or other disabling condition)
- Any member of the household indicates criminal history, current probation or parole status

- Any member of the household is currently pregnant
- Any member of the household is a veteran

6 REFERRALS

The UCCOC referral protocol provides a uniform and coordinated referral process for all HUD-funded beds, units, and services within Ulster County. UCCOC funded projects will not screen out potential project participants based upon perceived barriers related to housing or services.

UCCOC and ESG programs will use the coordinated entry process as the only referral source from which to consider filling vacancies in housing or services. UCCOC funded projects will admit those that meet the eligibility guidelines for their programs as vacancies occur.

If a household is self-sufficient and wants to find their own housing, case managers may wait several days or a couple weeks before completing an assessment, giving the household time to make connections and exit on their own.

The UCCOC's referral process is informed by Federal, State and Local Fair Housing laws and regulations and ensures participants are not "steered" toward any particular housing facility or neighborhood because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, gender identity or the presence of children.

7 DATA MANAGEMENT

UCCOC uses HMIS to collect and manage participant data for the purposes of reporting, assessing, and managing the CE by-name prioritization list. All users receive HIMS training that follow CARES Inc. CCHMIS Policy and Procedure Manual outlined in section 7.2 of this manual.

- Participant refusal to participate in data sharing in no way impacts the ability of the project to serve the participant, it simply prohibits the sharing of data with other participating agencies.
- Notes/logs are NEVER shared via the HMIS. This is to protect the privacy of participants.
- The signed authorization to release information must match the participant preference as recorded in the HMIS and be kept in the participant file (electronic or physical) for monitoring purposes.

7.1 Participant Consents: UCCOC has a protocol for obtaining participant consent to share and store participant information in HMIS for the CE. The UCCOC utilizes the "Ulster County Coordinated Entry Client Release of Information" form which is signed by the participant at the time of assessment. See Appendix A, "Ulster County Coordinated Entry Client Release of Information"

This release of information gives participants entering the CE options as to the amount of information that will be shared through the HMIS. Participants have the right to refuse or revoke authorization for the sharing of information at any time. HMIS information is used to maintain a

coordinated entry prioritization list and ultimately to the housing agency that determines eligibility for housing placement. The UCCOC does not require the disclosure of specific disabilities and diagnoses. Specific information regarding the participants' disability and diagnoses will only be obtained for the purposes of determining program eligibility to make appropriate referrals.

7.2 Privacy Protection: The UCCOC HMIS vendor and HMIS Lead is CARES of NY, Inc., which has established a policy and procedure manual that is updated annually. HUD funded agencies are required to sign MOU agreements with CARES, and data entry users are required to attend training and review and sign off on privacy procedures on an annual basis. The CARES HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual provides the adopted written standards of protection of client information. Data from victim service providers is not included in HMIS and not shared.

7.3 Security: Electronic security precautions are required of all user of CCHMIS) as per the CCHMIS Policies and Procedures Manual, CCHMIS requires users to: “install and maintain a firewall on the user's computer or the agency network; password protected screensavers set at no more than 5 minute intervals; automatically updating antivirus software installed and maintained on every internet-accessible computer; require the installation of the latest security devices on the operating system at each HMIS access computer terminal; requires all users to attend a formal training prior to being assigned a username and password in the database to ensure users have proper training on security, policies, and procedure that have been established for all users in the database. The CCHMIS does not allow sharing of user names and log-ins and is strictly prohibited for security reasons”.

8 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

8.1 Safety: The UCCOC has specialized services including a hot line and a shelter for those that are trying to flee domestic violence are victims of trafficking, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Records on those individuals are not kept in HMIS but kept in an alternative Emergency Health Record (EHR) to ensure these individuals are provided confidential access to CE and victim services. The CE system for this sub-population will be a comparable process to the one provided to other homeless persons and families and provide immediate access to emergency services.

9 EVALUATION

9.1 Ongoing planning and stakeholder consultation: The UCCOC CE committee will evaluate and update ongoing efforts to coordinate with CE participating agency staff annually. The UCCOC will utilize surveys, focus groups and other means to get feedback on the CE experience and process from individuals and families experiencing homelessness or recently connected to housing through the coordinated entry process. This information is used to revise and improve the process.

9.2 Evaluation of the CE: The CE Lead and collaborative applicant will use outcomes metrics of length of time homeless and returns to homeless in the UCCOC's HUD System Performance measures. The CE committee will review the above mentioned outcomes measures to evaluate the

CE process and make adjustments as needed. Participant input will be provided by surveys to determine whether the coordinated entry process meets their needs.

10 GRIEVANCES

- a. **Housing Program Grievances** are related to a participant's experiences with a homeless housing provider and will be directed back to the homeless program provider to follow the programs grievance policies and procedures.

- b. **Fair Housing Grievances** are related to discrimination.
To file a formal fair housing complaint, contact:
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp
File a complaint online:
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing_discrimination
(206) 220-5170 (800.877.0246)
TTY (206) 220-5185

- c. **Coordinated Entry Grievances**
COORDINATED ENTRY GRIEVANCES are related to Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures, and shall be directed to:
CARES of NY, Inc.
5 Pine West Plaza, suite 503
Albany NY 12205

Questions about these Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures may be directed to:
CARES of NY, Inc.
5 Pine West Plaza, suite 503
Albany NY 12205

11 KEY TERMS

There are a number of key terms and definition associated with UCCOC and coordinated entry.

- **Access Points** – Coordinated Entry Access Points are designated locations within the continuum where individuals or families go for intake and assessment of homeless prevention and housing services.
- **Admission** – Using authority to admit a client into a program
- **Assessment** – Assessment is the process used to reveal a client’s eligibility, needs, barriers and strengths in order to provide appropriate housing and services.
- **Chronic Homelessness**- A chronically homeless individual is someone who has experienced homelessness for at least 12 consecutive months or longer, or who have experienced four or more episodes of homelessness during the last three years which totaled 12 months, and has a disability. A family with an adult member who meets this description would also be considered chronically homeless.
- **Coordinated Assessment** – All providers within the UCCOC using the same assessment tools

to connect clients to services as a means for a coordinated entry system.

- **Coordinated Entry Committee** – The group responsible for implementation of the Coordinated Entry System. Members of the coordinated entry committee are UCCOC members and represent organizations that provide housing or services to homeless individuals and families.
- **Coordinated Entry (CE) Lead** – The CE lead is responsible to update and maintain information on program vacancies/openings. This must be done at least monthly regardless of whether there are new openings to report. Regularly update and make current all programs eligibility guidelines and program contact information so staff can make the best referrals possible. Ensure that when a referral is made, staff confirms within two business days whether the referral is accepted, declined by provider, declined by client, or pending, or the provider is unable to contact the client. Bring problems and suggestions to the monthly coordinated entry and Assessment meeting. Oversee provision of homeless diversion, prevention and housing services for eligible clients. Ensure that all points of entry will use the same screening and assessment tool, data collection forms, policies on eligibility verification and referral/information-sharing systems.
- **Coordinated Entry** – A process developed to prioritize assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner, and that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.
- **HEARTH** – The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 that includes Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) grants.
- **HMIS** – Homeless Management Information System; a centralized database designated to create an unduplicated accounting of homelessness that includes housing and services. Ulster County UCCOC uses CARES Regional HMIS, using the Awards software from Foothold Technology.
- **Homeless** - Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution; (2) Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence; (3) Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; or (4) Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.
- **Housing First** – is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent **housing** without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.
- **HUD** – The Department of Housing and Urban Development; the United States federal department that administers federal program dealing with homelessness. HUD oversees HEARTH-funded programs.
- **Intake** – The general process between the first point of contact and the initial screening for

eligibility. This step involves primary assessment of needs, strengths, and resources to refer households into appropriate services

- **Outcome** – The result achieved from a specific activity or service; for coordinated entry, it is the result attained in relation to housing stability.
- **Prevention** – An approach that focuses on homeless prevention by referring or providing services to households at risk of homelessness.
- **Rapid Re-housing** – Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing.
- **Referral** – The formal process of sending a consumer to another agency to provide services.
- **Screening** – Screening the process used to determine eligibility for housing and services at the initial point of contact with the coordinated entry system. Once screening determines eligibility, the intake and referral process follows.
- **Systems Change** – The purpose of system change is to implement practices that have shown to decrease the incidence and length of time in homelessness, with a long-term goal of reducing and ending homelessness.
- **Personalized Programs and Services** – Case management services that work to match appropriate services to the individual or family needs.
- **Verification** – The gathering and review of information to substantiate the applicants/client’s situation and support program eligibility and priority determination.

12 CE Planning Committee

UCCOC understands the importance of a coordinated entry process including policies, procedures, and written standards. A committee was formed consisting of stakeholder representation to plan and implement a process that fits our community. The committee examined best practices that are reported nationally including those available through the National Alliance to End Homelessness to improve the process to provide homeless housing and services for individuals and families.

The following stakeholders are the initial members of the coordinated entry committee to develop and implement a comprehensive coordinated entry system.

- PEOPLE Inc.
- UC Mental Health/SPOA
- Family of Woodstock
- Gateway
- WestCOP
- Ulster County Department of Social Services
- RUPCO
- CARES of NY Inc.

For additional Information please contact:

CARES of NY, Inc
200 Henry Johnson Blvd
Albany, NY 12210

518-489-4130

Appendix A

Ulster County Continuum of Care

Coordinated Entry Client Release of Information

Coordinated Entry is designed to better assist you in finding permanent housing and supportive services options. We are requesting your permission to share limited information about you with the Coordinated Entry providers in Ulster County. As the owner of your own information within the Coordinated Entry System, you have the right to choose whether other users of the system can see any of your personal information and on what level. HIV/AIDS information, Domestic Violence information, Behavioral health (mental illness and substance abuse) and client notes are NOT shared. This consent will be in effect for a minimum of 36 months but may be revoked at any time.

Please check the (1) box below which indicates the level at which you are willing to share your information with the Coordinated Entry system in Ulster County

- 1) I agree to share my name, gender and program enrollment history through HMIS with the Ulster County Coordinated Entry System.
- 2) I agree to share my name, gender, program enrollment history, demographics, income and contact information through the HMIS with other partner homeless services agencies, and with the Ulster County Coordinated Entry System.
- 3) I do NOT agree to share any of my information through the HMIS with the Ulster County Coordinated Entry System.

By signing this form, I agree to share the above level of information with other partner agencies via the HMIS Computer System:

Print name of Client, Guardian or Power of Attorney

Print name of Witness

Signature of Client, Guardian or Power of Attorney

Signature of Witness

Date:

Date: