

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance Coordinated Entry Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 22nd 2023
8:30AM – 10:00AM

NOTES

Introductions and Announcements

- Stephanie Smith, CVOEO: This meeting schedule will be changing to the 3rd week of the month. We will not be meeting in June.

Updated Sustainability Assessment

- Stephanie Smith, CVOEO: Our current sustainability assessment is not that great and is hard to understand. Though preparing for Prevention CE, we were able to rethink the sustainability assessment. We changed the order of some of the questions in order to make administration of the assessment easier. For example, we moved the question about housing authority vouchers to questions one since having a voucher will make the client automatically score as highly sustainable.
 - Sarah Russell, CEDO: What about time limited vouchers?
 - Stephanie Smith: That will be part of the training that staff receives. If someone loses subsidy, they would need to reassess their clients' sustainability. There is no way to automatically update a client's sustainability score within HMIS.
 - Sarah Russell: In the section about expected income increases we should change the language from "maternity leave" to "family leave".
 - Stephanie Smith updated the assessment to reflect this change.
 - Jason Brill, VA: I do not see shallow subsidy in question 1.
 - Stephanie Smith: We would need to include accompanying instructions. We would have to calculate if the household can afford half of their rent.
 - Jason Brill: What about FMR changes?
 - Stephanie Smith: we can put instructions, link to most recent FMR
- The motion to approve use of the updated Sustainability Assessment carries:
 - Motion was made by Sophia Senning, COTS
 - Second: Ciara Kilburn, STEPS
 - Voting via Zoom chat:
 - In favor: CEDO, Spectrum, VA, COTS, BPD, CHT, Howard Center, AHS, STEPS, BHA, CVSD, Pathways
 - Opposed: None
 - Abstention: None

New Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Vulnerability Assessment:

- Stephanie Smith: Spectrum has been using the TAY SPDAT. While working on assessments for prevention, we also had the opportunity to make rework the TAY SPDAT to be more like the adult vulnerability assessment. Skyla and I worked with Alayna.
- Most changes made to the TAY SPDAT are the same changes that were made for the adult vulnerability assessment. These changes are mostly around making the questions more concise and changing some wording choices.
 - When making these changes we also kept in youth-specific wording from the TAY SPDAT. For example, for the question which asks if the individual has stayed in jail or prison within the last 6 months, we left in the inclusion of “juvenile detention” from the TAY-SPDAT
- We made some other changes to other questions after meeting with Alayna and hearing her feedback from conducting the TAY SPDAT with clients at Spectrum.
 - In the TAY SPDAT, there were a set of questions which asked the individual to answer whether or not the specified reason is the cause of their homelessness. These questions are in the image below.

15. Is your current lack of stable housing...		
a) Because you ran away from your family home, a group home or a foster home?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Refused
b) Because of a difference in religious or cultural beliefs from your parents, guardians or caregivers?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Refused
c) Because your family or friends caused you to become homeless?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Refused
d) Because of conflicts around gender identity or sexual orientation?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> Refused

- Alayna reported that clients often answer “no” to all four questions and she is curious if more people will answer “yes” if the reasons were grouped together into one question so that the person does not have to identify which reason is pertinent to the cause of their homelessness. We combined all the reasons into one yes or no question. See the new question below

15. Has your lack of housing been caused by one of the following reasons?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You ran away from your family home, a group home, or foster home.• A difference in religious or cultural beliefs from your parents, guardians, or caregivers.• Conflicts around gender identity or sexual orientation.• Your family or friends caused you to become homeless.			

- Additionally, Alayna reported that clients also rarely answer “yes” to the following two questions in the TAY SPDAT.

e) Because of violence at home between family members?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Refused
f) Because of an unhealthy or abusive relationship, either at home or elsewhere?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	<input type="radio"/> N	<input type="radio"/> Refused

- Similarly, to the previous set of questions, Alayna was curious if grouping these two questions together would cause clients to answer “yes” more often if they did not have to specifically admit to violence at home or an abusive relationship. We combined the two questions into one as seen below.

16. Is your current lack of stable housing because of violence at home or because of an unhealthy or abusive relationship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused
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- Jason Brill: What about including a question around suicidality?

- Stephanie Smith: There is a question already in there which asks “Have you threatened to, or tried to, harm yourself, or anyone else in the last year?” This seems like a bigger question for another time, and not just a question for the TAY Vulnerability Assessment.
- Jason Brill: I wonder if we should specifically ask about suicidality to assess risk.
 - Sarah Russel: I agree, there is a difference between suicidality and self-harm. I think that information is important to pull out.
 - Stephanie Smith: I want more time before putting this in to check-in with front-line staff at CHRC as they are the ones conducting the assessment. Asking this may make them uncomfortable.
 - Sarah Russel: I think that this is important and not including it because it may make staff uncomfortable is unacceptable. We have front-line staff supervisors present at this meeting.
 - Stephanie Smith: This is a lot to think about. We would need to update everything and add an extra point. Additionally, we would need to vote on adding that question to all vulnerability assessments.
- Jason Brill: So, we are putting a pin in this for now so we can vote on adding that question to all vulnerability assessments. We should also ask about access to firearms, pills, and other common methods of suicide. This is important to ask to assess risk.
- The motion to approve use of the Transition Age Youth Vulnerability Assessment, pending a vote on adding a question around suicidality for all assessments, carries:
 - Motion was made by Jason Brill, VA
 - Second: Will Towne, Spectrum
 - Voting via Zoom chat:
 - In favor: STEPS, BHA, Howard Center, Spectrum, CEDO, COTS, AHS, VA, CHT, BPD, Pathways
 - Opposed: None
 - Abstention: None

Prevention Sustainability Assessment:

- Stephanie Smith: We added a question about current rent since some prevention clients will be paying rent on their current residence and we will need to calculate if they are able to continue to afford the unit.
 - Jason Brill: What about people who are facing eviction?
 - Stephanie Smith: We should have a work group for prevention. We need an assessment and we need to update our policies and procedures.
 - Sarah Russell: When do policies and procedures need to be done? When we created Coordinated Entry, we did policies and procedures first.
 - Stephanie Smith: The Balance of State is not doing policies and procedures first. However, I agree that it would be nice to be able to do policies and procedures first. We do not have the time.

- Sophia Senning, COTS: I am struggling with assessments for prevention. What is the easiest way to get people into Prevention CE with the least barriers. What if we did policies and procedures and a new assessment.
- Jennie Davis, CVSD: We could form a small working group.
- Stephanie Smith: I think that Prevention CE is mostly couch surfers who go in and out of homelessness, so having an assessment that fits with the assessment for people experiencing literal homelessness makes sense.
- Sophia Senning: I think that is probably true and some people in Prevention CE are going to be just 1 month behind on rent.
- Stephanie Smith: I wanted to get something together so that staff can start getting people into Prevention CE. The biggest problem is that we do not have data on populations – this would give us data. I would rather try something and have it not work and then go from there. I thin BHA has a set of questions they use for their prevention services.
- Sarah Russell: The Balance of State has an assessment, what if this is where we align with the Balance of State?
- Jason Brill: The VA has a prevention questionnaire.
- Stephanie Smith: I'd like to keep the sustainability assessment we have for prevention clients.
- Crystal Jones, BHA: I'd also be interested in a small work group. We'd really need something ready to go 7/1/23.
- Stephanie Smith: I'd like to use the sustainability assessment and around 5 questions around what caused housing insecurity
- Jennie Davis: So, are we tabling this vote for now?
- Stephanie Smith: Yes, we can do that. If you have a short assessment we can turn into something that would work for this population that could act as a placeholder, please send to me.
- Sophia Senning: I have some. I will schedule a meeting. Email me if you are interested. I will send out a poll for a time to meet. I will include Linda and Travis. We will try to meet in April.
- Sarah Russell If anyone is able to identify someone with lived experience who would like to take part in this process, that would be great because collecting input from people with lived experience is a requirement of CCHA
- Jason Brill: Another place to look for a short assessment may be Built for Zero.

Meeting Schedule/Structure

- Stephanie Smith: This meeting schedule will be changing to the 3rd week of the month. We will not be meeting in June.
- Crystal Jones: I've noticed that in these CE Committee meetings, things are brought up quickly and we do not have a lot of time to discuss before we need to vote.
- Stephanie Smith: That is part of why we are moving the meeting time.

- Crystal Jones: I think including more people in conversations before the meeting would reduce time spent on discussions.
- Sarah Russell: Maybe one or two open feedback meetings or a deadline for written feedback would be helpful. Additionally, a lot of committees have co-chairs. With more work, it may be helpful to have a c-chair to spread the load. I recommend we vote on that at the next committee meeting.