

Requirements of a Coordinated Assessment System from the CoC Interim Regulations

Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care (Subpart B)

The CoC is responsible for establishing and operating a centralized or coordinated assessment system that will provide an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services.

Centralized or coordinated assessment system is defined to mean a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals.

A centralized or coordinated assessment system:

- covers the geographic area
- is easily accessed by **individuals and families** seeking housing or services
- Is well advertised
- and includes a **comprehensive and standardized assessment tool**
- must be **designed locally in response to local needs and conditions**
 - For example, rural areas will have significantly different systems than urban ones. While the common thread between typical models is the use of a common assessment tool, the form, detail, and use of that tool will vary from one community to the next.
- The CoC must develop a specific policy to guide the operation of the centralized or coordinated assessment system on how its system will address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers.

(This definition establishes basic minimum requirements for the Continuum's centralized or coordinated assessment system.)

Why

As detailed in the Emergency Solutions Grants program interim rule published on December 5, 2011, through the administration of the Rapid Re-Housing for Families Demonstration program and the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing program, as well as best practices identified in communities, HUD has learned that centralized or coordinated assessment systems are important in ensuring the success of homeless assistance and homeless prevention programs in communities. In particular, such assessment systems help communities systematically assess the needs of program participants and effectively match each individual or family with the most appropriate resources available to address that individual or family's particular needs.

Examples

Some examples of centralized or coordinated assessment systems include: a central location or locations within a geographic area where individuals and families must be present to receive homeless services; a 211 or other hotline system that screens and directly connects callers to appropriate homeless housing/service providers in the area; a “no wrong door” approach in which a homeless family or individual can show up at any homeless service provider in the geographic area but is assessed using the same tool and methodology so that referrals are consistently completed across the Continuum of Care; a specialized team of case workers that provides assessment services to providers within the Continuum of Care; **or in larger geographic areas, a regional approach in which “hubs” are created within smaller geographic areas.**

Costs and Risks

HUD recognizes that imposing a requirement for a centralized or coordinated assessment system may have certain costs and risks. Among the risks that HUD wishes specifically to address are the risks facing individuals and families fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In developing the baseline requirements for a centralized or coordinated intake system, HUD is considering whether victim service providers should be exempt from participating in a local centralized or coordinated assessment process or whether victim service providers should have the option to participate or not.

Public Comment

HUD invites suggestions for ensuring that the requirements it imposes regarding centralized or coordinated assessment systems will best help communities use their resources effectively and best meet the needs of all families and individuals who need assistance, particularly the barriers faced by victims of domestic violence.

Grant Recipients and Sub-recipient Requirements

Grant recipients must agree to use the centralized or coordinated assessment system established by the Continuum of Care, unless the recipient or sub-recipient is a victim service provider. Victim service providers may choose not to use the centralized or coordinated assessment system provided that all victim service providers in the area use a centralized or coordinated assessment system that meets HUD’s minimum requirements. HUD has provided this optional exception because it understands the unique role that victim service providers have within the Continuum of Care.

Supportive Services Eligible Costs (relevant to coordinated assessment)

Case management: the costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant(s) are eligible costs. Component services and activities consist of: . . .

(iii) Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system as required under § 578.23(c)(9).