

Cambridge Continuum of Care Homeless Services Planning Committee (HSPC)

March 3, 2022
11 AM – 12:30 PM



Agenda

1. Announcements
 - COVID Testing schedule update
 - Upcoming meetings
2. CoC Updates
 - ESG & CoC Program funding updates
 - Reporting
3. Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program
 - Implementation Progress
 - New Phase 1 Assessment process for Individuals

Announcements: COVID Testing

Appointment-only testing, provided through a partnership with CIC Health, will be available 7 days per week to people who live or work in Cambridge. Beginning Saturday, March 5, 2022, Testing at CIC Health's 295 Third Street location is available during the following hours:

Sunday, from 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Monday - Friday, from 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Based on lower testing demand at walk-in sites and improved city COVID-19 metrics, walk-in COVID-19 PCR testing will be offered two days per week, beginning Monday, March 7, 2022. Walk-in testing sites will be open during the following hours:

Monday, from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at CambridgeSide in the Parking Garage on Level G3. This will remain walk up only not drive through. Level G3 is accessible by the CambridgeSide's elevator and escalators. Visitors can park in the garage and proceed to Level G3. Parking will be validated. The Parking Garage entrance is located on CambridgeSide Place.

Wednesday, from 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at 2254 Massachusetts Ave, St. John the Evangelist Church.

Announcements

- Ad Hoc Working Group on Homelessness issued report with recommendations:
Addressing Homelessness in Cambridge
 - **March 23, 5 PM:** City Council's Human Services and Veterans Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss the final report
- Opportunity to submit comments on proposed use of HOME-ARP funds
 - Public Hearing on HOME-ARP funds – date change; meeting will be later in March; **meeting details will be shared once finalized**
 - All are welcome to submit comments to Robert Keller (rkeller@cambridgema.gov)
- Form to submit project ideas to City Manager's Office for ARPA funds:
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/arpa>

CoC Updates: Grant Funding

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program –
 - Formula-based allocation amounts for FFY22 for CDBG, ESG & HOPWA have not yet been announced
- Continuum of Care (CoC) Program –
 - FFY21 competition
 - CoC submitted application for \$6.2 million (\$5.7 million in Tier 1, \$400K in Tier 2) in November
 - Award announcements from HUD anticipated any day
 - FFY22 competition
 - Registration anticipated in coming weeks, unsure of competition timeline



CoC Updates: Reporting

- **Point-in-Time (PIT)** count – annual count was postponed from late January to Feb. 23-24 due to Omicron surge; Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory due to HUD in April
- **Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA)** – includes data for full Federal Fiscal Year; submission finalized in February; this information is ultimately included in HUD’s Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress; this is the dataset used for HUD’s STELLA tool
- **System Performance Report (Sys PM)** – reports on the 7 System Performance measures defined in the HEARTH Act; submission finalized last week; data will be shared at upcoming meeting

Thank you to all partners for the collective contributions to these reports!



CoC Updates

- CoC email list and communications
- Resource guide updates
- Future meeting/agenda topics:
 - CoC membership, working groups and Board nominations (focus on racial equity and increased partnerships with people with lived experience)
 - Equal Access Rule
 - Domestic Violence training
 - System Performance & updating CoC competition scorecards
- Staffing updates

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

- Part of American Rescue Plan (70,000 vouchers total); 128 to Cambridge Housing Authority
- Partnership formalized by MOU between Housing Authorities and CoCs; referrals to Housing Authority come from CoC's Coordinated Entry system (or directly from Victim Service Provider)
- EHV requires CCAN system to expand significantly to assess and refer broader group of eligible populations
 - Homeless individuals
 - Homeless families
 - At-risk households
 - Recently homeless households

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

CCAN system designed to identify highest need chronically homeless clients and refer to very limited supply of PSH; EHV requires system to quickly identify, prioritize and refer eligible households across multiple eligibility categories.

Challenges

- New procedures and systems needed to include new eligibility categories
- Significant number of individuals without CCAN Streamlined Assessment
- Market flooded with vouchers
- Tight timeline for utilization – risk of recapture
- Utilization Goals: 100% of vouchers issued by June 30, 2022; 100% of vouchers leased by Dec. 31, 2022

Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program

Implementation Progress & Updates:

1. Homeless households with children
2. At-Risk of homelessness
3. DV
4. Homeless individuals
5. Recently homeless

- bi-weekly meetings with CHA

- significant investments in new Housing Navigation & Stabilization staffing

- consultation and recommendations from HMIS vendor in Fall 2021 to incorporate needed changes into system

- Plan to convene CoC CE Working Group to monitor implementation and facilitate ongoing coordination among partners as system expands

-HUD's EHV Dashboard:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ehv/dashboard
(data on right pulled from Dashboard on 3/2/2022)

Summary of EHV Award, Current Issuances and Leased Vouchers

PHA Code	PHA Name	Total Awards	Active Issuances	Current Leased Vouchers	Unit Utilization
MA024	Brockton Housing Authority	31	10	13	41.94%
MA012	Worcester Housing Authority	73	27	26	35.62%
MA026	Northampton Housing Authority	17	9	5	29.41%
MA003	Cambridge Housing Authority	128	29	27	21.09%
MA005	Holyoke Housing Authority	25	9	5	20.00%
MA007	New Bedford Housing Authority	25	19	4	16.00%
MA020	Quincy Housing Authority	24	10	3	12.50%
MA094	Franklin County Regional Housing Authority	15	11	1	6.67%
MA002	Boston Housing Authority	480	120	20	4.17%
MA901	Department of Housing & Community Development	917	75	27	2.94%
MA023	Lynn Housing Authority	18	6		
MA035	Springfield Housing Authority	27			
Total		1,780	325	131	7.36%

Targeting EHV's

Initial EHV Allocation Plan

Eligible population	Proposed # of EHV	% Allocation
Homeless	77	60%
Families	12	
Individuals	65	
At-risk	25	20%
Fleeing DV	13	10%
Recently homeless	13	10%
Total	128	

Updated EHV Allocation Plan

Eligible population	Proposed # of EHV	% Allocation
Homeless	67	53%
Families	12	
Individuals	55	
At-risk	35	27%
Fleeing DV	13	10%
Recently homeless	13	10%
Total	128	

CHA has committed additional 40 mainstream vouchers for homeless individuals, to be issued after EHV's fully utilized, bringing total % allocation of "new" vouchers dedicated to homeless households to 64%.

Improving Access to Coordinated Entry

- Coordinated Entry is a systems orientation mandated by HUD of all CoCs, and is defined most basically as *“a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals.”*
- As HUD’s guidance on Coordinated Entry has changed over time, the Cambridge CoC has evolved our system alongside, since first launching the Cambridge Coordinated Access Network (C-CAN) in 2017.
- Most recently, the enormous changes brought about by the pandemic and ensuing federal resources have prompted another look at our CE system.

Improving Access to Coordinated Entry (con't)

- One of the most important changes in HUD's guidance has been an increasing shift away from complex processes of assessment and prioritization, emphasizing a more practical approach.
- While our C-CAN process has often been successful at prioritizing some of the highest-need clients for housing, we have come to understand that the assessment process, and challenges with assessment capacity, do pose a barrier to access for some in the community, including longest-stayers.
- New "Phase 1 Screening" allows us to screen CoC clients into EHV and other housing opportunities with an even more simplified process that focuses on functional information related to housing/service needs rather than general assessment of vulnerability.

The Phase 1 Screening

- Broader pool of assessors will make access significantly easier.
- Prioritization via the Phase 1 Screening (for EHV and other opportunities) will be by Length of Time Homeless.
 - This datapoint is initially populated with our shelter data from Cambridge HMIS, with the opportunity for providers to attest to additional time spent on the street or sheltered in other communities.
- As part of the Phase 1 roll-out, we are introducing greater operationalization of “document-readiness”, in response to lessons learned about how documentation lag affects our ability to utilize housing resources.
- CoC PSH projects will continue to fill units using the existing C-CAN Streamlined Assessment process for the time being, with likelihood of future changes.
 - Looking at possibilities for using the Phase 1 Screening to identify those who should be targeted for C-CAN assessment into CoC PSH.



EHV Prioritization/Eligibility for Homeless Individuals

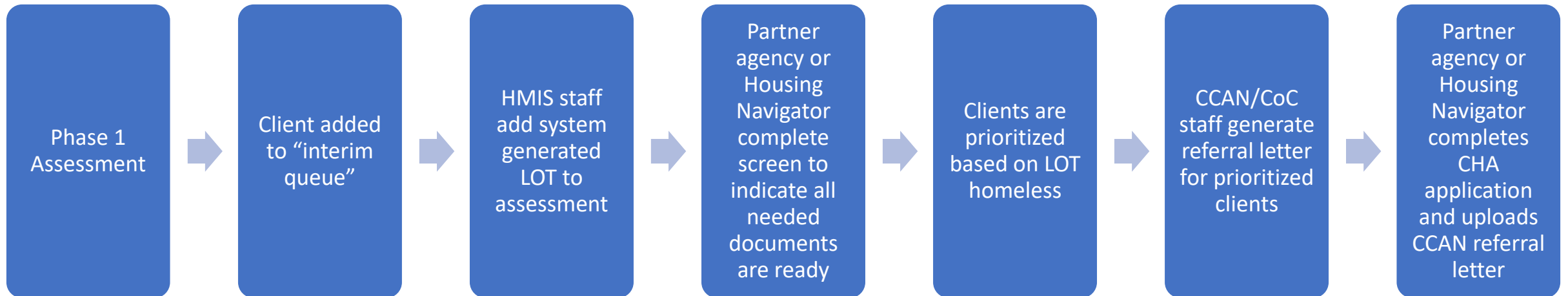
- Must have active enrollment in Cambridge shelter, outreach or drop-in project
- Client must “opt in” via Phase 1 Assessment
- Prioritization by length of time homeless

Eligible and prioritized households will be referred to the CHA when required documentation is in place:

- Copy of Photo ID
- Copy of Social Security card (if a US citizen) or official document containing Alien Registration ID number (if a resident with legal status)
- Copy of current bank statement or readiness to certify lack of bank account, if the family has none
- Copy of birth certificate

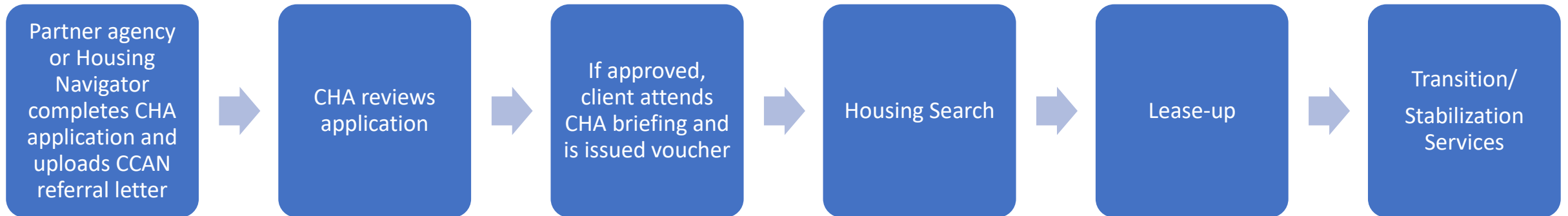
CHA application also requires income documentation (this does not need to be complete to receive referral from CCAN)

Workflow for Individual Phase 1 Assessments (Referrals from CCAN System to CHA)



- Phase 1 HMIS Assessment trainings will be 1 hour long; there will be 2 training sessions offered the week of 3/14
- First referrals will be issued on 3/25 and will continue in batches on weekly or bi-weekly basis depending on volume
- Note that referral from CCAN to CHA does not guarantee that client will be issued voucher
- Partner agencies will be provided link to CHA application form along with instructions on how to complete when referral letters are generated

Process after referral from CCAN complete



- Note that referral from CCAN to CHA does not guarantee that client will be issued voucher
- Funds for up front costs such as security deposit, moving costs, etc. are available from patchwork of funding sources
- Transition/stabilization planning critical; stabilization services may be funded by CSPECH, ARPA funds, or RRH funds depending on the partner providing services

Components of Coordinated Entry

Access

Assessment

Prioritization

Referral

Current CE Model

Within Cambridge HMIS/Clarity

In HMIS, our CE system has been contained in one agency and one project -

- Coordinated Access Agency

- Cambridge CAN project

- HMIS Users are CCAN staff, housing navigators, First Step Outreach, other partners trained to assess clients with our housing needs assessment.

CCAN staff and partners enter data, enroll clients in this project, complete assessments, record notes and refer to a queue

The queue is the launching point for matchmaking and referrals to Cambridge CoC funded housing (Heading Home, HomeStart, Fenway, etc.)

New CE Model

Based on new and required HUD CE data elements our model is changing


In HMIS, Coordinated Entry data points are collected across agencies

- Coordinated Access Agency
 - Cambridge CAN project – still enrolls clients, completes the housing needs assessment, etc.
 - Now, will receive data from agencies across system through Phase 1 assessments and facilitate care coordination
- Other Agencies Across System
 - Complete Phase 1 assessments (a way to document clients' interest in getting matched to housing, provide wider access for long term shelter stayers and others known to you that have not yet been connected to CCAN).
 - Play a greater role for clients that you know, coordinate in getting document ready, advocacy and maintaining connection
 - Record other HUD CE data elements when applicable – for clients within enrollments in your own projects


What will this look like in HMIS?

A preview

Assessment recorded in your own program

PROFILE	HISTORY	PROGRAMS	ASSESSMENTS	FILES	CONTACT	LOCATION	REFERRALS
Assessment Date	03/02/2022						
Assessment Location	240 Albany Street						
Assessment Type	In person						
Assessment Level	Housing Needs Assessment						
SECTION A: PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS							
Are you currently working with a case manager or housing navigator on obtaining housing or other services?	Yes						
Please list this person's full name.	Maddie Keefe						
Name of provider's agency	Baycove/CASPAR						
What services are you currently in the process of seeking, or that you would like someone to help you obtain?	Obtaining new SSN (it was stolen), working on applications in CHA portal. Need help with finding any housing.						
Is there anyone else who is a trusted provider/case manager/advocate etc. who you would want to be included in your housing navigation process?	Yes						
Please list this person's full name.	Joey Bagabones						
Please list their agency, if applicable	Store Owner						
SECTION B: HOUSING PREFERENCES/HISTORY							
Which of the following types of housing would you be willing to live in, even if you have a preference for one over the other? Please share any information that you think would be useful for a housing navigator to know about your preferences for housing location, including places where you especially would want or not want to live.	Any type of housing						
	I have a dog, so I need help finding a place where dogs are allowed.						

SECTION D: REFERRAL PARTNER QUESTIONS

 Assessor, these are questions for you to answer as the referring staff person. Please do not ask the client these questions.

Can you or your program/agency provide support in collecting the documents that this client needs for housing? Yes 

Can you or your program/agency provide support to this client in housing search, if they receive a voucher or other mobile housing opportunity? Yes 

To your knowledge, is this client CSPECH eligible? Yes 


To your knowledge, is this client connected to services through other systems of care? Yes 


Department of Mental Health (DMH)


Veterans Administration (VA)

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)


Other

To your knowledge, has this client spent significant periods of time in the past 3 years sleeping unsheltered? (CoC staff will likely reach out to you to after this assessment to learn more.) No 

To your knowledge, has this client spent significant periods of time in the past 3 years sleeping in shelters outside of Cambridge? (CoC staff will likely reach out to you after this assessment to learn more.) No 

 Thanks for completing this assessment on behalf of your client. The remainder will be filled out by HMIS lead staff.

POST-ASSESSMENT DATA ENTRY - TO BE COMPLETED BY HMIS LEAD STAFF



Feedback, Questions