

# Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Agency Partnership Agreement

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this Agreement is to specify what Agency Partners agree to as members of the Wisconsin Balance of State Coordinated Entry System. \_\_\_\_\_ (“Partner”) agrees to participate in the Wisconsin Balance of State Coordinated Entry System. Coordinated Entry is intended to increase and streamline access to housing and services for households experiencing homelessness, match appropriate levels of housing and services based on their needs, and prioritize persons with severe service needs for the most intensive interventions.

The Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care (WI BOSCO) achieves these goals through a set of processes developed and adopted by the BOSCO membership, known as the Coordinated Entry System. The WI BOSCO is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the Coordinated Entry System.

## **II. Guiding Principles & Strategies**

- A. Coordinated Entry will be easy for the client, by providing quick and seamless entry into homeless services.*
- B. Individuals and families will be referred to the most appropriate resources for their individual situation.*
- C. Coordinated Entry will prevent duplication of services.*
- D. Coordinated Entry will reduce the length of homelessness for individuals and families.*
- E. Coordinated Entry will improve communication among agencies.*

## **III. Core Components of Coordinated Entry**

The WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System includes the following:

- A.** The WI BOSCO Pre-Screen Form to obtain basic information related to homeless/housing status, the Client Rights and Responsibilities, and HMIS Release of Information (as needed);
- B.** The VI-SPDAT/VI-F-SPDAT/TAY-VI-SPDAT/Prevention triage tools used to assess the health and social needs of people experiencing homelessness and match them with the most appropriate support and housing interventions that are available;
- C.** Screening for safety issues related to domestic/sexual violence or abuse, and appropriate referrals according to the client’s wishes;
- D.** Screening for chronic homelessness and priority need for Permanent Supportive Housing. Referral and project enrollment according to the agreed protocol;
- E.** The WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry User Agreement for Partner staff;
- F.** Use of HMIS, according to funder requirements and in compliance with Wisconsin HMIS Policies and Procedures;
- G.** Use of the Non-HMIS Referral Form for people requesting an anonymous referral to the Prioritization List &/or for agencies without access to HMIS;
- H.** Initial and ongoing training of Partner staff to ensure uniform application of screening, assessment, referral, follow-up, and project prioritization protocols;
- I.** A local inventory of homeless assistance resources;
- J.** Regular Coordinated Entry meetings at the local level to evaluate the success of the Coordinated Entry System in achieving goals, analyzing data, and assessing gaps in services, as needed. A commitment by Partners to engage in problem solving with mutual respect;

- K.** HMIS Prioritization lists for households with children/households without children that are homeless and/or at-risk of homelessness for the purpose of referral and enrollment in appropriate Partner projects and programs;
- L.** Anonymous Prioritization lists for households with children/households without children that are homeless and/or at-risk of homelessness for the purpose of referral and enrollment in appropriate Partner projects and programs;
- M.** Agreement to only accept clients into CoC and EHH funded programs or projects through the processes established by the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System; and
- N.** WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry Committee and Implementation Team planning, oversight and evaluation of coordinated entry policies and protocols.

#### **IV. Description of Coordinated Entry**

- A. Access:** The WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System follows a “No Wrong Door” approach. A client can seek housing assistance through any of the Partners and will receive integrated services. Partners have a responsibility to respond to the range of client needs pertaining to homelessness and housing, and act as the primary contact for clients who apply for assistance through their agency unless or until another Partner assumes that role. Partners will complete the Pre-Screen Form, Client Rights and Responsibilities, HMIS Release of Information (as needed), identify immediate housing or shelter needs, and assist clients with accessing services for these immediate needs.
- B. Assessment:** One of the triage tools (VI-SPDAT/VI-F-SPDAT/TAY-VI-SPDAT/Prevention) will be completed for all households in order to facilitate connection to an appropriate housing intervention (Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, other Permanent Housing, or Prevention programs). All triage tools will be completed by trained staff.
- C. Referrals:** Partners refer households to the appropriate Prioritization List (Households with Children/Households without Children) based on household composition, as well as the HMIS or Non-HMIS List based on client preference. Connection to appropriate services will be based on assessment, prioritization, eligibility and written programs standards.
- D. Follow-Up:** Referring Partners will follow-up with each household no less than every 30 days. Timely follow-up ensures Prioritization Lists are accurate and keep the Coordinated Entry System current.
- E. Evaluation:** The WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System will include evaluation of consumer outcomes and system performance in order to: increase effective use of resources, improve quality of service to consumers, and to proactively identify and plan services. Partners will promote and review system-wide performance standards. Additionally, an annual review of Coordinated Entry tools and processes will be conducted with feedback from clients, Partners, and WI BOSCO members.

#### **V. Term of the Agreement**

The effective date of this Agreement shall be the date it is signed and shall continue in effect for one year, or until modified or terminated by the Local Coordinated Entry System or the WI BOSCO.

#### **VI. Shared Responsibilities**

The following are the responsibilities of all Partners:

- A.** Make Coordinated Entry System processes, including those related to access, assessment, referral, and follow up to homeless programs and services, well-known to all clients.
- B.** Agree to make appropriate staff available for training on policies and procedures to follow for Coordinated Entry in their agency. To the extent possible, the training will focus on standardizing the level of information and understanding that Partners’ staff have, in order to give consistent and accurate information through Coordinated Entry.
- C.** Agree to distribute information to the public regarding how to access homelessness assistance. Brochures, fliers, websites, public services announcements may be created by the WI BOSCO for this purpose. All Coordinated Entry marketing materials must use WI BOSCO branding standards.

**D.** Agree to have a representative on the local homeless coalition to provide input into the operations and evaluation of the Coordinated Entry processes. When issues arise, agree to joint problem solving with individual Partners, the local Coordinated Entry Lead, and the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Specialist.

**E.** Partners shall agree to follow guidelines for referring clients in a manner that is compliant with the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures. This includes informing households that they are receiving screening and referral services under the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System, signing compliant releases of information, and sharing any information with Partners in a compliant manner.

**F.** Agree to use established Coordinated Entry policies and processes to refer and accept clients into projects and programs. Agree to communicate with Partners, the Local Coordinated Entry Lead and/or the List Holder when/if a referred household is not accepted into a project/program.

### **VII. Local Coordinated Entry Lead Responsibilities**

**A.** Provide leadership, coordination and oversight of the local implementation of Coordinated Entry.

**B.** Ensure that all Partners are complying with WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System policies and procedures.

**C.** Attend local homeless coalition meetings.

**D.** With local homeless coalition support, maintain a local inventory of homeless assistance resources.

**E.** Ensure the evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System at the local level.

**F.** Liaison with the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Specialist, Coordinated Entry Committee and Implementation Team.

**G.** Promote the process and outcomes of Coordinated Entry to the public, local officials, state and federal agencies, officials and other interested parties.

### **VIII. List Holder Responsibilities**

**A.** Manage the Non-HMIS Prioritization List by ensuring referrals have all required information to be prioritized appropriately and deleting duplicate referrals.

**B.** Respond to inquiries from housing providers seeking referrals to their programs within 2 business days. This includes length of time homeless, assessment score, and other prioritization data.

**C.** Update the Non-HMIS Prioritization List when a housing provider accepts or declines a referral.

**D.** Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Local Coordinated Entry Lead, WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Specialist and other Partners.

**E.** Maintain a working knowledge of various technologies, including Google Drive, and Microsoft Excel.

**F.** Attend all required trainings to ensure consistent and competent management of the Non-HMIS Prioritization List.

**G.** Maintain the security of the Non-HMIS Prioritization List, which includes, but is not limited to, sharing the link to the Local Non-HMIS Referral Form *only after* confirming the Partner staff has completed the required training.

**H.** Submit reports to the Coordinated Entry Committee, Coordinated Entry System Specialist, CoC Director, and/or WI BOSCO Board of Directors as requested.

### **IX. Coordinated Entry Partner Responsibilities**

A Coordinated Entry Partner may be a homeless service provider or other organization that provides services to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, and who has elected to become a part of the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System. Partner responsibilities differ based on funder requirements and the services provided by the agency.

### **CoC and EHH Partners**

- A.** Complete the WI BOSCO Pre-Screen form for all households experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness that present at your agency. If the client consents to entering Coordinated Entry, complete the Client Rights and Responsibilities and HMIS Release of Information (as needed).
- B.** Ensure the appropriate triage tool has been completed (based on household composition).
- C.** Ensure the household has been referred to the appropriate Prioritization List (HMIS or Non-HMIS).
- D.** Follow-up with all households referred by your agency at least every 30 days. Follow-up will include confirming/updating the following information: housing/homeless status, contact information, household composition, new information that may impact placement on the Prioritization List.
- E.** Update the referral in HMIS or with the List Holder with follow-up information so the household is prioritized accurately.
- F.** Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Local Coordinated Entry Lead, the List Holder, WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Specialist, and other Partners.

### **CoC and EHH Funded Domestic Violence Service Providers**

- A.** Complete the WI BOSCO Pre-Screen form for all households experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness that present at your agency and who are asking for housing assistance. If the client consents to entering Coordinated Entry, complete the Client Rights and Responsibilities.
- B.** Ensure the appropriate triage tool has been completed (based on household composition).
- C.** Ensure the household has been referred to the Non-HMIS Prioritization List.
- D.** Follow-up with all households referred by your agency at least every 30 days. Follow-up will include confirming/updating the following information: housing/homeless status, contact information, household composition, new information that may impact placement on the Prioritization List.
- E.** Update the referral with the List Holder with follow-up information so the household is prioritized accurately.
- F.** Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Local Coordinated Entry Lead, the List Holder, WI BOSCO CE System Specialist, and other Partners.

### **SSVF Providers**

- A.** Complete the WI BOSCO Pre-Screen form for all households experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness that present at your agency. If the client consents to entering Coordinated Entry, complete the Client Rights and Responsibilities and HMIS Release of Information (as needed).
- B.** Ensure the appropriate triage tool has been completed (based on household composition).
- C.** Ensure the household has been referred to the appropriate Prioritization List (HMIS or Non-HMIS).
- D.** If the household has a veteran member:

Follow-up with those households referred by your agency at least every 30 days. Follow-up will include confirming/updating the following information: housing/homeless status, contact information, household composition, new information that may impact placement on the Prioritization List.

Update the referral in HMIS or with the List Holder with follow-up information so the household is prioritized accurately.

If the household does not have a veteran member:

Contact your local Coordinated Entry Lead to determine which agency will complete follow-up with the household.

- E.** Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Local Coordinated Entry Lead, the List Holder, WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Specialist, and other Partners.

### **X. Data Sharing**

In respect to data sharing, each Partner agrees to:

- A.** Ensure that all staff understand and agree to HUD, State and HMIS data privacy, data rights, and data quality requirements.
- B.** Ensure that any staff entering data into HMIS are properly trained on HMIS, assessment tools, and data sharing.
- C.** Ensure that all staff understand and sign the Coordinated Entry Participating Staff Agreement.
- D.** At least quarterly review Partners' data quality and completeness and performance as it pertains to Coordinated Entry.
- E.** Make sure that clients understand how their data will be shared, with whom it will be shared, and the purpose for the data sharing. Also ensure clients understand they can refuse to provide information or opt out of data sharing and it will not impact their ability to be referred to a Prioritization List.
- F.** Use the Non-HMIS Referral Form for any client that requests their information remain anonymous until housing is offered.
- G.** Receive Client Release of Information prior to sharing information about a client's household, services, shelter or housing with another Partner, including prior to entering data into HMIS when such data will be shared in HMIS. Partners can obtain verbal consent to share this information, which must be documented on the Client Release of Information. If verbal consent is obtained on the Client Pre-Screen Form or a Release of Information (including the HMIS Release of Information) a signature must be obtained at the next in-person meeting. Domestic violence service providers are not allowed to obtain verbal consent.

#### **XI. Grievance Policy and Rights**

Each Partner agrees to follow the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry Grievance Policy. In addition, each Partner agrees to the following:

- A.** The Partner will explain the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry process to clients so that they are empowered to make an informed choice about available services that best meet their needs.
- B.** The Partner will provide each client with a copy of their Rights and Responsibilities so that they understand their responsibilities and those of the Coordinated Entry System Partners.
- C.** The Partner will inform clients of both the Partner's and the WI BOSCO Coordinated Entry grievance process at system access.

#### **XIV. Confidentiality**

The Partner agrees that by entering into this Agreement they will have access to certain confidential information regarding each other's operations related to this LCES. The Partners agree that they will not disclose confidential information and/or material without consent of the affected party unless such disclosure is authorized by this Agreement or required by law. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information shall be considered a breach of this agreement. At all times client Releases of Information will be secured before confidential client information is exchanged. Confidential client information will be handled with the utmost discretion and judgment.

#### **XV. Non-discrimination**

Pursuant to 24 CFR part 5.403 and the ESG Interim Rule 576.102(b), there shall be no discrimination of any person or group of persons on account of race, ethnicity, national origin, disability status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender identity, or age.

All individuals or groups of individuals, regardless of age, actual or perceived gender identification, actual or perceived sexual orientation, and marital status, identifying as a family at a program or project that serves families, must be served as a family and must not be separated when entering the program or project. There will be no inquiry, documentation requirement, or "proof" related to family status, gender identification and/or sexual orientation. The prohibition on inquiries or documentation does not prohibit inquiries related to an individual's sex and/or age for the purposes of determining the number of bedrooms to which a household may be entitled.

ESG and CoC funded programs are not permitted to limit assistance to female-headed households with children. If the program serves families, it is unacceptable to exclude male-headed households with children. Programs cannot enter into an MOU or agreement with another service provider in the community, or provide motel/hotel vouchers, as an alternative to complying with this rule.

The definition of “family” can be found under the Equal Access Rule at 24 CFR part 5.403. The involuntary family separation requirement can be found at section 576.102(b) of the ESG Interim Rule.

**XVI. Termination of Agreement**

Any party may terminate their participation in this agreement with written notification to the Local Coordinated Entry Lead and the WI BOSCOOC Coordinated Entry System Specialist. Participation in the BOSCOOC Coordinated Entry System is a requirement of certain funders, including HUD’s CoC and ESG programs. **Termination of this agreement may negatively impact the Partner’s ability to obtain and/or retain funding.**

**XVII. Costs**

Unless otherwise specified by grant funds that may become available during the duration of this Agreement, any and all expenses incurred by the participants of the BOSCOOC Coordinated Entry System are the responsibility of the Partner.

**XVIII. Conformance**

If any provision of this Agreement violates any statute or rule of law of the State of Wisconsin, or Federal statutes, it is considered modified to conform to that statute or rule of law.

**XIX. Approval**

The signature of the Executive Director or designated signee of the Partner Agency indicates agreement with the terms set forth in this Agreement.

By signing this Agreement, I understand and agree with the terms within.

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Name, Title	Date
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- Initial Agreement
- Renewal Agreement      Effective: \_\_\_\_\_
- Submitted to Local Coordinated Entry Lead
- Submitted to WI BOSCOOC Coordinated Entry System Specialist
- Copy retained by Agency