

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 (BOSCO) achieves these goals through a set of processes developed and adopted by the BOSCO membership, known as the Coordinated Entry System. The 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 BOSCO Coordinated Entry System includes the following:

- A.** The BOSCO Pre-Screen Form to obtain basic information related to homeless/housing status;
- B.** The VI-SPDAT/VI-F-SPDAT/TAY-VI-SPDAT 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 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-WISP 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 and referral 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.** By-name prioritization lists for individuals/adult-only households and for families 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 individuals/adult-only households and for families 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 ETH funded programs or projects through the processes established by the BOSCO Coordinated Entry System; and
- N.** 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 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, 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) will be completed for all households in order to facilitate connection to an appropriate housing intervention (Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, or other Permanent Housing). All triage tools will be completed by a trained Partner staff.
- C. Referrals:** Partners refer households to the appropriate Prioritization List (Individual or Family/HMIS or Non-WISP) based on household composition and client preference. Connection to appropriate services will be based on assessment, prioritization, eligibility and written programs standards. The Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures and written program standards provide transparent, planned and fair processes for prioritization and housing linkage.
- D. Evaluation:** The 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 consumers, Partners, and 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 BOSCO.

VI. Shared Responsibilities

The following are the responsibilities of all Partners:

- A.** Make Coordinated Entry System processes, including those related to access, assessment and referral 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 BOSCO for this purpose.
- D.** Agree to have a representative on the local CoC or LCAS, 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 Designated Lead Agency, and the Coordinated Entry committee.
- E.** Partners shall agree to follow guidelines for referring clients in a manner that is compliant with the BOSCO Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures. This includes informing households that they are receiving screening and referral services under the 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 Designated Lead Agency, and/or the List Holder when/if a referred household is not accepted into a project/program.

VII. Designated Lead Agency Responsibilities

- A.** Provide leadership, coordination and oversight of the local implementation of Coordinated Entry.
- B.** Ensure that all Partners are involved in and informed of evaluation and reporting aspects of this Agreement.
- C.** Promote the process and outcomes of Coordinated Entry to the public, local officials, state and federal agencies, officials and other interested parties.
- D.** Attend local CoC meetings.
- E.** Ensure the evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System at the local level.
- F.** Liaison with the BOSCO Coordinated Entry Committee and Implementation Team.
- G.** With Local CoC support, maintain a local inventory of homeless assistance resources.

VIII. List Holder Responsibilities

- A.** Manage the Non-WISP 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. This includes indicating whether or not there is an individual or family prioritized higher than the highest prioritized in HMIS.
- C.** Update the Non-WISP Prioritization List when a housing provider accepts or declines a referral.
- D.** Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Designated Lead Agency 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-WISP Prioritization List.
- G.** Share the link to the Local Non-WISP Referral Form only after confirming the Partner staff has completed the required training.
- H.** Submit reports to the Coordinated Entry Committee, CoC Director, and/or BOSCO Board of Directors as requested.

IX. Coordinated Entry Partner Responsibilities

A Coordinated Entry Partner may be a homeless service provider, school, or human services organization that provides services to residents, and who has elected to become a part of the BOSCO Coordinated Entry System, and has agreed to the following provisions:

A. Complete the BOSCO Pre-Screen form for all households experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness that present at your agency.

B. Ensure the appropriate triage tool has been completed (based on household composition).

If you are a DV agency or provider, check the appropriate box:

C. DV Agencies only: Our agency elects to refer all households experiencing homelessness to complete the appropriate triage tool and referral to the Prioritization List.

D. Ensure the household has been referred to the appropriate Prioritization List (HMIS or Non-WISP).

E. Follow-up with all households referred by your agency at least every 90 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.

F. Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Designated Lead Agency, the List Holder, 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 is properly trained on HMIS, assessment tools, and data sharing.

C. Ensure that all staff understand and sign the Coordinated Entry User Agreement.

D. At least quarterly review Partners' data quality and completeness and performance as it pertains to Coordinated Entry.

E. Make sure that clients know their data will be shared and have the ability to refuse to provide information or opt out of data sharing.

F. Use the Non-WISP 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.

XI. Grievance Policy and Rights

Coordinated Entry includes a Client Grievance Policy. Each Partner agrees to the following:

A. The Partner will explain the 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.

Approved by BOS Board of Directors, 1.24.17

C. The Partner will inform clients of both their agency and the BOSCO Coordinated Entry grievance process at intake.

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 LCAS. 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

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 Designated Lead Agency Contact and the BOSCO Coordinated Entry Committee Chairperson.

Participation in the BOSCO 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 BOSCO 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.

Approved by BOS Board of Directors, 1.24.17

Name, Title

Date