

Coordinated Entry System Partner Agreement

River Valleys Continuum of Care (MN-502)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Partner Agreement is to document and communicate guidelines for agency participation in the River Valleys Coordinated Entry System (CES). CES is a collaborative initiative designed to create a more effective and efficient homeless response system, as well as assure compliance with HUD mandates. By signing this Agreement, participating organizations formally acknowledge the guidelines, roles, and responsibilities outlined in this Agreement and the River Valleys CES Policy and Procedures Manual. Further, the undersigned organizations agree to adopt and comply with the Agreement in order to participate in CES.

By agreeing to be a CES Partner, your agency agrees to:

- Utilize the River Valleys CoC CES process and tools
- Provide your program preferences and eligibility criteria in writing to the CES Committee
- Accept referrals based on the eligibility criteria and program preferences your agency provides to the CES Committee and CoC
- Participate in the evaluation of CES
- Attempt to reduce barriers to housing access
- Maintain timely access to housing and services
- Honor the additional admission criteria for housing projects on Tribal Nation land or programs operated by Tribal Nations

Partner agency maintains the right to:

- Determine eligibility criteria and program preference based on your agency mission, community needs and funding requirements
- Provide input to the development and implementation of CES
- Receive support and training from the CoC and CES Committee
- Access CoC aggregate data collected through CES (except where data would identify a specific agency, person or household, or affect the safety of participants)
- Include the rights and needs of Tribal Nations and their members in the assessment process

CONTINUUM OF CARE ROLES

River Valleys CoC agrees to the following, as well as roles and responsibilities laid out in the CES Policy and Procedures:

Planning:

- Represent the CoC at MN CES (Minnesota Coordinated Entry System) Governing Board meetings, and provide regular updates on the MN CES efforts to River Valleys CoC.
- Execute a CES Partnership agreement with any CoC, tribal nation, or other jurisdiction with which:

- CES data will be shared, or
- eligibility criteria and program preferences will be coordinated, or
- cross-jurisdictional referrals will be coordinated, or
- CES planning and management decisions will be coordinated.
- Coordinate with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients in River Valleys CoC on coordinated entry, performance measurement, written standards, and other related topics.
- Coordinate, integrate, and leverage resources to maximize impact of services for individuals who are experiencing homelessness.
- Identify the CES lead entities within River Valleys CoC charged with managing daily activities associated with CES planning, implementation, operations, and evaluation.
- Develop written standards for River Valleys CoC, as required by the CoC Program interim rule, which include descriptions of program components that are in alignment with the definitions provided in the MN CES Strategic Plan.
- Develop and implement written policies and procedures on how the CoC's CES will be operated;
- Provide at least annual training to all staff dedicated to the CES.
- Provide guidance and feedback to CES staff in their CoC.
- Oversee the client grievance and any case conferencing process as necessary.

Access:

- Identify access points for CES that cover the full geographic area of River Valleys CoC and can be accessed by all households in need of assistance.
- Develop an affirmative marketing plan that communicates how stakeholders can access their CES.
- Provide marketing materials to providers to ensure consistent communication about the CES.

Assessment:

- Incorporate the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) and variations to the VI-SPDAT as appropriate per sub-population, as a component of the Comprehensive Assessment phase of their CES.
- Ensure that the defined assessment process includes an assessment tool that is publicly available, well-crafted, comprehensive, and results in an explicit score or referral result for all households that complete it.

Referral:

- In concert with the VI-SPDAT referral scores, publish standards for prioritization and referral, and ensure that all participating providers are following these expectations.
- Ensure that River Valleys CoC agencies are providing participants with the opportunity to enroll in River Valleys CoC component types that are less intensive, but not more intensive, than the CES referral choice offered.

Data and Evaluation:

- Work with the MN Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) staff and Local System Administrators (LSA) to maintain River Valleys CoC's implementation of HMIS, including the MN CES Workflow.
- River Valleys CoC will maintain non-HMIS Priority List for CES in a separate database from ServicePoint.

- Report CES data quarterly to the MN CES Committee.
- Provide open HMIS access to CES staff in River Valleys CoC.
- Provide regular performance reports to agencies participating in CES.
- Evaluate at least annually River Valleys CoC's CES performance and progress of the CES. Implement quality improvement adjustments to the CES as necessary.

PARTNER ROLES

Partners agree to the following, as well as specific Partner roles and responsibilities laid out in the CES Policy and Procedures:

Responsibilities for All Coordinated Entry Partners

Planning:

- Participate in the CoC's Coordinated Entry planning and management activities as established by CoC leadership.
- Publish written standards for client eligibility and enrollment determination.
- Notify the CoC of any changes to staffing that impact CES.
- Ensure that all staff participating in CES receive at least annual training from the CoC on the system.
- Provide regular supervision of staff participating in CES.

Access:

- Ensure that persons experiencing a housing crisis access CoC services and housing using CoC defined access points.
- Communicate project vacancies (bed and/or unit) to the CES administrative entity established by CoC leadership.
- Limit project eligibility requirements to those that are required by funders.

Assessment:

- Utilize the locally defined assessment tool for coordinated entry when assessing for client eligibility and referrals.

Referral:

- Only enroll those clients referred according to the CoC's designated referral strategy.
- Provide participants with the opportunity to enroll in CoC component types that are less intensive, but not more intensive, than the CES referral choice offered.

Data and Evaluation:

- Ensure compliance with all data privacy policies and procedures.
- Enter all data on clients in HMIS, as required by MN HMIS data timeliness, completeness, and quality standards, unless Partner agency is a non-HMIS provider.
- Review any reports from the CoC on the performance of the agency in CES.
- Ensure that the agency is meeting local performance standards for CES.

Responsibilities for Access Sites:

Access Sites will complete the CES Diversion/Prevention Screen to help determine if the household can be diverted from entering the homeless response system by utilizing mainstream resources. Access sites will make referrals to mainstream services and assist in navigating services to the extent possible.

If the household is unable to be diverted, the household will be referred to prevention or emergency shelter services (shelter, domestic violence shelter, safe house, or motel voucher). Access sites will make referral or assignment to emergency shelter if necessary and available. Access sites will consider the unique rights and needs of all populations including Native Americans.

Access Sites are expected to do the following:

1. Assure compliance with data privacy and policies.
2. Assure that no referrals for homeless services are made without first completing the Diversion/Prevention screening tool.
3. Provide Prevention/Diversion Screen through on-site or phone interview for all households who request entry into the homeless response system.
4. If entry into the homeless response system is necessary, link directly to Emergency Shelter, or to Assessment site.
5. If entry is diverted, complete Prevention Screening tool or provide information or referrals to prevention and diversion resources.
6. Track and share documentation of screenings as outlined in the River Valleys CES Policies & Procedures manual.
7. Attend required HMIS, CoC, and CES trainings.
8. Provide feedback for annual CES evaluation.
9. Follow protocols on working with Native Americans that acknowledges and honors Tribal Sovereignty.

Responsibilities for Housing Assessment Sites:

A trained and approved assessor will conduct the Housing Assessment (ex. VI-SPDAT) in order to identify linkage to appropriate housing intervention (Prevention, Transitional Housing, Rapid-Rehousing, Permanent Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing). Native Americans seeking assistance will also be offered connections with their Tribal Nation.

Housing Assessment Sites are expected to:

1. Assure compliance with data privacy and policies.
2. Follow CES Process to complete VI-SPDAT to determine appropriate service connections, linkages, and referrals.
3. Enter VI-SPDAT Score and eligibility criteria into the River Valleys CES Prioritization List.
4. Follow CES process to update the Priority List until the household is linked to an appropriate housing intervention, or until services are no longer needed.
5. Enter data and updates into HMIS per instructions, unless Partner agency is a non-HMIS provider.
6. Attend required HMIS, CoC, and CES trainings.
7. Provide feedback for annual CES evaluation.
8. Agree to make all referrals to homeless services through the CES Process (ex. River Valleys CES prioritization list).
9. Follow protocols on working with Native Americans that acknowledges and honors Tribal Sovereignty.

Responsibilities for Housing Providers:

Housing Providers will collaborate with designated Access and Assessment sites to streamline access to **ALL homeless dedicated housing programs and beds**. Housing Providers are expected to:

1. Assure compliance with data privacy and policies.
2. Provide program preferences and eligibility criteria in writing to CES.
3. Utilize the CES process to fill all program vacancies based on priority scoring, eligibility criteria, and program preferences.
4. When appropriate, follow-up with Assessor to ensure a smooth transition to the program and to coordinate notifying and offering housing to household.
5. If denied, follow the CES process for denials including follow-up with CES Assessor.
6. Keep household information updated in HMIS according to the CES Process (ex. entry date, program openings, service transactions, and exit date).
7. Provide feedback for annual CES evaluation.
8. Attend required HMIS, CoC, and CES trainings.
9. Follow protocols on working with Native Americans that acknowledges and honors Tribal Sovereignty.

DATA QUALITY & SHARING

By signing this agreement, partner agency agrees to:

1. Participate in required HMIS, CoC, and CES data sharing trainings as applicable.
2. Agree to HUD, state, HMIS and CES data privacy, data rights, and data quality requirements as applicable.
3. Assure data is accurate and up-to-date, responding to any data quality, completeness or privacy concerns addressed by HMIS Administrator, CES, or CoC.
4. Allow CES participants to opt-out of data sharing in HMIS as requested by participant.
5. Follow CES process to ensure Client Privacy Rights are followed.
6. Enter data into non-HMIS Priority List if Partner Agency is a non-HMIS provider, Domestic Violence provider, or participant elects not to have data shared.
7. Data collection and reporting of tribal specific information must be done with the permission and under the supervision of Tribal Nations.

CLIENTS RIGHTS

The CES process is based on a client centered model and strives to give clients the opportunity to be empowered about the services they choose to receive. By signing this agreement partner agency agrees to adhere to the River Valleys CES Policies and Procedures outlining client's rights including:

1. Right to be informed of the CES process and how they can use it to meet their needs.
2. Right to privacy and confidentiality.
3. Right to be informed of how their data will be used and with whom it could be shared.
4. Right to self-determination and to work with service providers who honor that right.
5. Right to Housing First.

6. Right to access and seek services from their Tribal Nation.
7. Right to be informed of agency and CES grievance policies prior to assessment.

GENERAL TERMS

Terms. This Partnership Agreement will begin upon execution. This Agreement will be reviewed annually and updated to incorporate changes and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Any party must provide written notice of change ninety (90) days before the annual termination date or it will be automatically renewed. Otherwise, this Agreement may be terminated in accordance with the section on Termination below.

Termination. Any party may terminate this Agreement for any reason or no reason by giving the other party ninety (90) days prior written notice. The party wishing to terminate this agreement for cause must provide a written intent to terminate notice to the party in breach or default. The notice will provide thirty (30) days for the party in breach or default to respond to said notice with an acceptable plan to cure cause for termination. Termination for cause decisions will be made jointly between agency and the CoC. Note that termination of this Agreement may result in removal from CES and could affect both State and Federal funding opportunities for homeless programs, housing and services.

Confidentiality. As a CES Partner and by virtue of entering into this Agreement partner agency will have access to certain confidential information. CES partners (including staff, volunteers and board members) will not at any time disclose confidential information and/or material without consent unless such disclosure is authorized by this Agreement, the River Valleys CES Policies & Procedures Manual, or required by law. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information shall be considered a material breach of this agreement. At all times client releases will be secured before confidential client information is exchanged. Confidential client information will be handled with the utmost discretion and judgment.

Code of Conduct. CES has adopted the CoC Code of Conduct to guide Partner agencies and their staff when participating in the system. The Code contains broad principals reflecting the types of behavior CES expects Partners to exhibit towards constituents, other Partners, CES governance, funders, employees, peers and the public. This policy does not stand alone, but embodies other ethical standards set by individual agencies, states, funders, and licensures. Rather, it is one element of a broader effort to create and maintain a quality system that gives ethical conduct the highest priority.

Non-discrimination. There shall be no discrimination of any person or group of persons on account of race, color, creed, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, handicap, ancestry or national origin in the operation of CES. Tribal Nations shall not be required to deny their sovereignty as a requirement or condition of this agreement.

Severability. In the event any provision of this Agreement shall be found to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability shall not affect the validity, legality and enforceability of the remainder of the Agreement.

Amendments. This Agreement may be amended only in writing and as authorized by the designated representatives of the respective agencies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorized representatives of the respective Partner Agency, have signed this Partnership Agreement:

Please print clearly and sign and date in ink. Scan and email to Katherine Cross, Coordinated Entry Specialist, kcross@threeriverscap.org.

Agency or Organization:	
Authorized Representative:	Title:
Email:	Phone:
Mailing Address:	

Authorized Representative Signature

Date

Role(s). Check all that apply:

- Access Site
- Housing Assessment Site
- Housing Provider - Eligibility Criteria Addendum REQUIRED

Primary CES contact:

Name	Title	Email Address	HMIS user (Yes or No)

Please enter the names, titles and email addresses of all CES staff at your agency.

Name	Title	Email Address	HMIS user (Yes or No)

Homeless Projects or programs represented in the River Valleys CES:

Name	Location (where someone would access this project/program)	New program (Yes or No)

Thank you for being a CES Partner!

Attachments:

Glossary

Program Eligibility Addendum

VI-SPDAT Training Verification Form

Glossary

1. Eligibility Criteria: Each agency will be responsible for entering their eligibility criteria based on funding requirements and target population in HMIS. Eligibility criteria will be used to determine linkage to appropriate housing and service interventions.
2. CoC Policies & Priorities: Per HUD guidelines, each CoC is responsible for establishing CoC policies and priorities for the administration of Emergency Solutions Grant and Continuum of Care assistance. A CoC system mapping process is conducted to help identify and determine policies and priorities. System mapping includes setting criteria for participant selection and essential program elements including; target population, service components, preferences, and inclusion and exclusion criteria.
3. HUD Mandate: HUD requires that grantees funded by Continuums of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) grants create and participate in a coordinated assessment process. HUD defines coordinated assessment as, *"...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."*
4. Diversion/Prevention Screen: Tool used throughout the River Valleys CoC region at initial client contact to assess current living situation.
5. Vulnerability Index- Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT): The VI-SPDAT helps prioritize who should be recommended for each housing and support option, based on acuity. Depending on score, there are then three categories that an individual may be placed in; permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and prevention services.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY ADDENDUM

Please complete this addendum (on next page) for each program your agency is responsible for managing. This form must be reviewed and affirmed or corrected at least annually.

River Valleys CoC Coordinated Entry System

Program Eligibility Addendum

Instructions for completion

The Program Eligibility Addendum was developed in order for the River Valleys Coordinated Entry System (CES) to collect accurate information on eligibility criteria for families, singles, and youth housing programs in the River Valleys Continuum of Care (CoC) Region. In order for a CES participant to successfully move into a housing opening, we must make sure they meet the eligibility criteria specific to the individual program.

The Program Eligibility Addendum will also assist the River Valleys CoC with the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC).

Please fill out one Program Eligibility Addendum for each individual housing program. ***It is strongly recommended to read through these instructions and the Program Eligibility Addendum before filling it out.***

Instructions

1. Contact Information:

Fill out your agencies contact information starting with agency name and the name of the program. Enter the address of the agency, *not the address of the housing project*. Continue filling out agency and contact information and HMIS information for the program.

2. Program Type:

From the list of program types, check off all categories that apply to your program. Then select which definition(s) of homeless your program uses.

3. Program Criteria:

Under program criteria, list who the program predominately serves.

4. Funder Criteria:

Under funder criteria, list any criteria the funder has placed on the program.

5. Additional Agency Criteria:

If your agency has developed any additional criteria for the program, list that in this section.

6. Describe how you measure “capacity or ability to serve” within your program:

Check off and fill in the appropriate space on how you are able to serve people.

7. Average length of time in program/Maximum time in program:

Put in either months or years what the average length of time that participants stay in your program and the maximum time that participants can stay in your program.

8. List current program funding sources:

List all sources of funding for this program.

9. What services are offered with your program?

List what services you offer with the program, for example; first month’s rent, deposit, or client support dollars. Check yes or no whether or not case management services are offered with this program and what agency provides them?

10. List other programs or services provided by your agency within River Valleys CoC MN-502:

If your agency provides any other services, for example; transportation, energy assistance, home improvement loans, etc., list that in this area.

Questions 11-20- Eligibility Criteria:

Fill out each section as needed for eligibility criteria that your program may have. If a section does not apply to your program, please specify so. **Be as specific as possible!**

River Valleys CoC Coordinated Entry System

Program Eligibility Addendum

Complete this form for each housing program administered by your agency.

1. Contact Information

Agency Name	
Program Name	
Agency Address	
Phone	
Website	
Contact Name	
Email Address	
Geographic Region that Program Serves	
HMIS Provider Name(s) and Number(s) for Program	

2. Program Type

<p>Program Type: (check all that apply for this program)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chronic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Shelter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information and Referral Only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term Homeless</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Market Rate Housing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Outreach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Supportive</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Supportive Housing (scattered site)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Supportive Housing (site based)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prevention</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rapid Re-Housing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Safe Home</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Subsidized Housing (type: _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Housing (scattered site)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Housing (site based)</p>	<p>What definition of homeless does this program use? (check all that apply for this program)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Federal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> HUD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> HUD Chronic Homeless</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> State of Minnesota Long-Term Homeless</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> State of Minnesota</p>
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Complete Information below for Program Named above

<p>3. Program Criteria: Example: This program serves veteran/homeless/disabled.</p>
<p>4. Funder Criteria: Example: Participant household income must be below 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines.</p>
<p>5. Additional Agency Criteria: Example: Participant household income must be below 150% Federal Poverty Guidelines.</p>

River Valleys CoC Coordinated Entry System
 Program Eligibility Addendum

Complete this form for each housing program administered by your agency.

6. Describe how you measure "capacity or ability to serve" within your program:

<input type="checkbox"/> Beds Available #Singles _____ #Families _____	<input type="checkbox"/> LTH Spots Available #Singles _____ #Families _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Apartments Available Studio _____ 1 Bdrm _____ 2 Bdrm _____ 3 Bdrm _____ 4 Bdrm _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Bed Spaces #Singles _____ #Families _____
<input type="checkbox"/> A Certain # of Families Identified via Grants	<input type="checkbox"/> Dollars Awarded to Program
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

7. Average length of time in program:		Maximum time in program:	
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8. List current program funding sources:

9. What services are offered with this program?

Case management services offered? Yes No

If yes, who provides:

10. List other programs or services provided by your agency within River Valleys CoC MN- 502

Name	Description

11. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding documentation? Yes or No. If yes, explain.
Example: Participant must have a copy of their birth certificate or social security card...

12. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding geographic location?
Example: Participant must reside in Mankato, or participant must have lived in Blue Earth County for at least five years...

13. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding homeless status?
Example: Participant must be HUD homeless...

14. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding veteran status?
Example: Participant must have served in the US Armed Forces and has been honorably discharged...

River Valleys CoC Coordinated Entry System
Program Eligibility Addendum

Complete this form for each housing program administered by your agency.

15. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding criminal history?

Example: Participant cannot have committed a felony in the last ten years or have any history of violent crimes...

16. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding unlawful detainers, evictions, notice to vacate, or others related to rental or housing history?

Example: Participant cannot have any evictions on their record for the last two years or have been previously terminated by the program.

17. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding education levels or enrollment status?

Example: Must be enrolled in an accredited college program or must have graduated high school or have a GED equivalent?

18. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding disability or chemical dependency status?

Example: Participant must have a mental health disability...

19. Does your program have any eligibility criteria regarding income or employment status?

Example: Participant's total monthly income can be no more than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or participant must maintain employment.

20. Any additional eligibility criteria that we need to know about:

VI-SPDAT Training Verification

***Please fill out one form for each person that will be conducting VI-SPDATs.**

I hereby certify I, _____, have completed the VI- SPDAT Training video through OrgCode Consulting, Inc.

Link to VI-SPDAT Training: <http://www.orgcode.com/course/vi-spdatt-v2-training/>

Date training was completed: _____

Signature

Date

Agency

Send completed form to Katherine Cross at kcross@threeriverscap.org