Rivers Valleys Continuum of Care (Rochester/Southeast CoC, MN-502)

Training and Development policy

Date approved: March 21, 2019
Date effective: Immediately for CoC training coordination; October 1, 2019 for individual projects

Background

The River Valleys CoC is committed to ensuring high quality service provision for those receiving housing and/or services in the CoC region's homeless response system. The CoC also desires to support ongoing performance improvements for programs and the homeless response system as a whole to ensure better outcomes for communities and to remain competitive for project funding opportunities.

Policy

The policy of the River Valleys Continuum of Care (MN-502) is to ensure that programs within the CoC homeless response system both 1) have staff and volunteers equipped and ready to provide services to participants in the homeless response system and 2) are active and engaged in improving program and system outcomes through training and peer support opportunities. Further, the policy of the CoC is that agencies administering programs within the CoC will document staff participation in training and stay current on relevant topics.

Relevant training topics

Relevant training topics for HUD CoC program grantees and for agency/program partners in Coordinated Entry are as follows. Topics are sorted by those considered Core Competencies and therefore required, and those that are recommended for high-quality program delivery and outcomes.

Additional subtopics and advanced training topics related to required and recommended topics are included in Appendix A.

Training topics for recipients of HUD CoC program funding

Required/Core Competencies	*Recommended*
At employment • HUD Regulatory Requirements, including Grantee Start-up trainings • Understanding Project and System Performance Measures • Fair Housing/ Equal Access/ Housing Law • Housing First • Trauma informed service delivery • VAWA requirements and compliance • Coordinated Entry policies and procedures • Motivational Interviewing • HMIS (or alternative equivalent database) user training • Supporting education of children and youth experiencing homelessness	• CoC Project Grant application preparation • Harm Reduction principles and practice • Crisis assessment and intervention/De-escalation • Strengths-based or Client-based approaches • Advocacy to reduce barriers to housing • Long-term stability and housing choice: Moving on from PSH • Positive Youth Development • Increasing income and employment • Working with LGBTQ identified individuals • Mental illness first aid • Report writing and documentation

Annually after initial training
- HUD Regulatory Requirements, including Grantee Start-up trainings
- Coordinated Entry policies and procedures
- Fair Housing/ Equal Access/ Housing Law
- Housing First
- VAWA requirements and compliance
- Motivational Interviewing

As available after initial training
- HMIS (or alternative equivalent database) user training
- Understanding Project and System Performance Measures
- Supporting education of children and youth experiencing homelessness

Training topics for agency partners in Coordinated Entry System

Required/Core Competencies	*Recommended*
At employment - Coordinated Entry policies and procedures - Fair Housing/ Equal Access/ Housing Law - Trauma informed service delivery - Crisis assessment and intervention/De-escalation - VAWA requirements and compliance - Motivational Interviewing - HMIS (or alternative equivalent database) user training as required by funder - Understanding Project and System Performance Measures **Annually after initial training** - Coordinated Entry policies and procedures - Fair Housing/ Equal Access/ Housing Law - Housing First - VAWA requirements and compliance **As available after initial training** - HMIS (or alternative equivalent database) user training - Understanding Project and System Performance Measures - Supporting education of children and youth experiencing homelessness	- Housing First - HMIS (or alternative equivalent database) user training - Harm Reduction principles and practice - Strengths-based or Client-based approaches - Advocacy to reduce barriers to housing - Long-term stability and housing choice: Moving on from PSH - Positive Youth Development - Increasing income and employment - Working with LGBTQ identified individuals - Mental illness first aid

Training as a component of performance development

The CoC may require or recommend training or peer support for CoC Program grantees or program/agency partners in Coordinated Entry in response to program and/or system reviews in order to support performance improvement and compliance with HUD CoC and/or Coordinated Entry standards. All peer support or training that is recommended or required as part of performance development will be communicated in writing and will allow reasonable timelines for completion.

Access to training and development

CoC provision and support of training opportunities: Assuming adequate and continued funding of CoC planning by HUD and other sources, the CoC will provide, coordinate, or arrange for training opportunities for all topics identified as Core Competencies/Requirements at least once per year. Provision methods may include in-person trainings, webinars, conference calls, peer groups, and other methods as identified. Training provided or arranged by the CoC will be delivered at no cost or a low reasonable cost to participants, and will be offered in the most accessible methods possible for the CoC. Peer support activities may include visits to other program sites or matching new staff with experienced staff mentors in a similar role to provide guidance on data quality, program requirements, and other elements to be identified.

Other training opportunities: CoC program grantees and agency/program partners in Coordinated Entry may access training delivered by other trainers for any of the topics listed, with the exception of two topics: Coordinated Entry policies and procedures and CoC project grant application preparation. CoC program grantees and agency/program partners in Coordinated Entry are responsible for all costs associated with training provided by other entities. CoC program grantees and agency/program partners in Coordinated Entry that choose to attend other trainings to meet Core Competencies/Requirements are advised to consult with CoC staff before attending to ensure that the training will be accepted by the CoC. Additional documentation may be required.

Documenting staff participation

Completion of training activities must be documented in training logs, personnel files, program files, or other standard and viewable agency files. A sample training record is attached in Appendix B with required data elements for tracking: agency name, program name, name of staff person, signature of staff person, position/title, training topic, date of training, total hours, source/provider of the training, location/method of training, and initials or signature of supervisor.

The River Valleys CoC and other funding partners may monitor projects for compliance with this policy. During the CoC project review process, organizations will be asked to provide the detail of individual staff training records, the agency/program's annual staff training policy and protocol, and information on the on-boarding process for new employees. The CoC strongly encourages organizations to utilize any and all available training provided via the Continuum of Care to meet these training expectations.

Supporting Materials

Appendices are attached to provide additional detail on key policy components.

Appendix A: Excerpt from Pierce Family Foundation publication, "Equipped and Ready: A Best Practices Manual for Preparing Homeless Services Staff to Succeed" © 2017.

Below is a list of recommended training and professional development topics for individuals working in homeless service programs. The list focuses on the training needs of staff members working in programs and directly with the organization's clientele; however, it is likely that all employees of a social service agency could benefit from the knowledge base gained from receiving training in any of these areas.

Program Models: Homeless service provision in the U.S. is generally categorized, and funded, in the following ways:

- Emergency Shelter: (As defined by HUD) Any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness in general or for specific populations of the homeless for a period of 90 days or less.
- Transitional Housing: (As defined by HUD) A project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months, or a longer period approved by HUD.
- Permanent Supportive Housing: An evidence-based housing intervention that combines non-time-limited affordable housing assistance with wrap-around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, as well as other people with disabilities. (www.usich.gov)
- Rapid Re-housing: Places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless and entering a program.
- Prevention: Provides rental assistance, utility assistance and supportive services directly related to the prevention of homelessness to eligible individuals and families who are in danger of eviction, foreclosure or homelessness or are currently homeless.
- Drop-in Center: Generally operate as a safe, supportive community environment for individuals experiencing homelessness and/or mental illness where they can have some or all of their basic needs met, receive case management services and have access to rest areas, computers and phones.

This list is not comprehensive as there are nuances and qualities of every organization that are unique and training procedures should be developed to ensure staff are confident in performing all aspects of the work that is expected of them. In addition, there may be topics in this list that are not relevant to the work of some programs.

Basic Training Topic	Advanced Training Topic(s)	Most Relevant Program Model
Connecting agency mission, vision and values to each staff member's work		All
Cultural Competency or Cultural Humility (may also include Restorative Justice)		All
Understanding Mental Illness, including information on common diagnoses,	Suicide/Homicide Assessments Petitioning for Hospitalization Safety Planning	Drop-In; Shelter; Permanent Supportive Housing

interventions and introduction to psychopharmacology	Non-Suicidal Self Injury	
Mental Health or Psychological First Aid		All
Strength Based or Client Centered Counseling		All
Motivational Interviewing	Stages of Change	All
Harm Reduction		All
Housing First		Permanent Supportive
Trauma Informed Care	Vicarious Trauma and Self-care Therapeutic Milieu Brain Development	All
Positive Youth Development		All youth-serving programs
Crisis Intervention and De-escalation		Drop-in;Shelter
Best Practices in working with specific populations	Youth LGBTQ Identified Individuals Trans or Gender Expansive Substance Users Domestic Violence Survivors Veterans Families	All
Providing Effective Supervision (management training)		All
Topics that may be required by specific funders	Mandated Reporter CPR/First Aid Universal Precautions DCFS Regulations Crisis Intervention Food Handler Certification SNAP SOAR	All
Basic Milieu Management		Drop-In; Shelter; Transitional/Interim Housing; PermanentSupportive Housing
Ethics in Social Services	Personal and Professional Boundaries Client Confidentiality	All
Working with Law Enforcement	Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Staff and Clients Alternatives to Calling the Police	All
Addiction and Substance Use	Overdose Detection and Response	All
Engaging and Collaborating with Community Partners and Volunteers		All
Report Writing and Documentation	Unusual Incident Reports Progress/Case Notes Clinical Writing Shift Notes	All
Understanding Government Funding Sources		All

Program Models and Required Activities		All
Program/Role Specific Tasks	Examples: Shift Tasks Outreach Protocol Medication Protocol Intake/Discharge Procedures Caring for Client's Children/Parenting Property Management Procedures in Working with Minors	All
Case Management 101	Creating Service Plans and Goal Setting Promoting Self-Determination Obtaining Mainstream Benefits Advocacy Referrals and Resources	All
Understanding HUD Standards		All HUD funded models
Empowering Clients	Tenant's Rights and Responsibilities Leadership/Consumer Council Board Participation	All
Basics of Customer Service		Drop-In; Shelter; Rapid Re-Housing/ Prevention
New Manager Training	Hiring/Terminating Practices Onboarding New Employees Creating Job Descriptions Performance Evaluations Working with Interns and Volunteers	All
Performance/Outcome Measurement	Quality Assurance Data Entry and Tracking Logic Models Using Data to Inform Service Provision	All

Appendix B: Sample Staff Training Record

Staff Member Name: _____   Staff Member Signature: _____

Position: _____

Required Trainings/Core Competencies	Supervisor Initials	Date	Total Hours	Source/provider	Location/ method

Certificates of attendance, registration confirmations, sign-offs on policy documents, and other materials should be maintained as evidence of training completed.