

Coordinated Entry Work Group – Work Group #2 [Held May 8, 2015]

Pierce County Community Connections

Context: In February, Pierce County held a Community Meeting, to share the results of Focus Strategies’ analysis of our Centralized Intake System and their recommendations for improvement. As a part of implementing those recommendations, Pierce County sought to convene a work group to inform the implementation and re-design of Centralized Intake. Participation in the work group was by invitation and included a cross-section of providers and partners of the homeless response system. The work group was presented with a proposed framework to discuss and provide input.

Additional Materials from the February Community Meeting:

- [Executive Summary of the Focus Strategies Report](#)
- [Community Meeting PowerPoint](#)
- [Community Meeting Q & A](#)

Work Group #2: Housing Assessment Criteria

Materials Sent in Advance:

- [HUD Coordinated Entry Policy Brief](#)

Desired Meeting Results:

1. Prioritization criteria is identified for those most in need
2. Participants gain an understanding of who will and will not be prioritized and implications
3. Participants understand their role as ambassadors

Summary of Results from Work Group #2:

The list below presents a proposed set of criteria that Pierce County will use to identify those homeless people who have the most severe housing needs and receive highest priority for a housing referral. The table presents the proposed criteria, suggested weight of each one, and whether the information is already collected as part of the existing Centralized Intake process.

Proposed Criteria	Proposed Weight in Prioritization Scoring	Information Currently Collected?
1. Vulnerability Factors – Prioritize High Risk of Death or Immediate Harm (Serious Illness, Violence or Victimization)		
a. Age (under 18, over 65)	Medium	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment
b. Acute or chronic medical condition posing immediate risk of harm	High	Yes – Assessment interview
c. Acute current mental health symptoms causing risk to self or others	High	No – would need to add assessment questions
d. Active substance abuse causing risk to self or others	High	No – would need to add assessment questions
e. Pregnancy	High	Yes – Assessment interview
f. Frequent criminal justice interactions	Medium	No – would need to add assessment questions
g. Imminent danger from family, household member, other people in the person’s life (including DV)	High	Yes – Initial phone screen and assessment interview, but probably would need to expand questions.
h. Engaging in risky behavior in exchange for money/shelter	High	No – would need to add assessment questions
2. Housing Barriers Factors – Prioritize People Who Are Hardest to House		
a. Chronically homeless	High	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment

Proposed Criteria	Proposed Weight in Prioritization Scoring	Information Currently Collected?
b. Length of time unsheltered	High	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment
c. Disabling condition (health or behavioral health challenge or functional impairment) impairing ability to secure housing	High	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment
d. No income or extremely low income (below 10% AMI)	Medium	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment
e. Criminal record (felony)	Medium	Yes – Assessment interview
f. Eviction history	Medium	Yes – Assessment interview
g. Lack of recent rental history	Medium	Yes – Assessment interview
h. Large household size	Medium	Yes – initial phone screen and assessment

After reviewing the table, the work group discussed the following questions:

- Is there anything missing from the list of barriers, vulnerabilities factors?
- What's there that shouldn't be there?
- If we are adding something, how would that addition support the goal of the assessment?
- Who do you serve now that wouldn't get served under this new framework?

The following is a summary of feedback collected from the work group:

- Does this criteria align with fair housing law?
- Need to define "large household size," referenced in criteria 2h
- Need relative value between factors
- Setting priorities without knowing the resources available is challenging
- Revisit prioritizing households by child age
- Consider co-occurring disorders and tri-fold morbidity
- Possibly add LEP as a housing barrier

Ambassadors

Participants were thanked for participating in the workgroups and helping the County to think through these big system-wide changes so that together we can make homelessness rare, brief and one-time. Since not everyone in the county or even in participant's agencies know about this effort (but everyone needs to know) the County indicated its hope that participants will share this information and where the system is heading – in other words – be an ambassador for this effort.

Participants responded that it is difficult to be an ambassador now, with so many unanswered questions. Additionally, they indicated they would need talking points that describe the rationale for prioritization. The County agreed to provide such materials at the next work group meeting.