

Coordinated Entry System

Without CES



With CES



CES stitches existing programs together all across LA County into a no-wrong door system, connecting homeless adults to the best resource for them. This process was born out of a community acknowledgement that our maze-like system was too cumbersome for our most vulnerable neighbors to successfully navigate.

- *Dead ends, closed doors* → *Seamless connections*
- *Endless intakes, applications, and waiting lists* → *1 survey for real-time housing opportunities and supports*
- *Each organization doing it all* → *Each organization doing what they do best*

Components

Know



Coordinated street outreach engages homeless neighbors with a new, universal triaging assessment.

Assist



Housing Navigators help high-need participants collect all documents needed for a housing application & accompany to housing appointments.

Refer



As permanent housing resources become available, CES facilitates referrals to persons of highest priority and best fit for that resource.

These guidelines are a quick reference of the fundamental components and process flow of the Los Angeles County Coordinated Entry System. This is not meant to be a comprehensive outline of every step involved in housing a homeless resident, some which are unique to each community, but rather introduce the shared milestones involved in the Coordinated Entry process. The underlined words are further detailed in a Glossary.

CES Process

Step #1: Know the Name & Needs of Our Homeless Neighbors

- Engagement:** CES is a decentralized system, meaning that there are a diverse set of ways to “enter” the system. Clients are identified and engaged through all the following sites:
 - *Street Outreach: Hotspots, Homeless Count/Census*
 - *Walk-In: Access Centers, Drop-In Centers*
 - *Services: Shelter, Homeless Programs, Clinics, Local Meal Lines, Shower & Laundry Sites*
 - *Institutions: Hospitals, Jails, Prisons*
 - *Events: Homeless Connect Days, Registries, Veteran Stand-Downs*
 - *Virtually: Telephone version of the VI-SPDAT is available*
- Survey:** Outreach workers, social workers, case managers, and volunteers administer the CES Survey at these sites. The survey consists of two parts – the VI-SPDAT & and Housing Preferences – while the two parts can be administered separately, the goal of this step is to complete at least Part 1, the VI-SPDAT:
 - *Clients are reminded that completing the assessment does not guarantee housing, but instead gives service providers a better idea of which type of housing would be the best intervention for the client should it become available.*
- Interim Supports:** Depending on the availability of resources, the client may be offered bridge housing or other social service supports that may be immediately helpful.
- Data Entry:** The information gathered is entered into the technology platform & database (HMIS), and a copy is kept of the survey and consent.
 - *The technology platform automatically calculates the VI-SPDAT score (1-20) and the Housing Intervention Score (1-4) (the scoring scale can be found [here](#)). If updates need to be made to the record, that can be done so later as well.*
 - *Upon data entry, CES SPA & Regional Coordinators are able to immediately view newly-surveyed clients in their region.*

Step #2: Assist Clients in Preparing for Permanent Housing Opportunities

- Housing Alternatives:** The VI-SPDAT may show that the client can succeed in market rate or affordable housing opportunities. In that case, the surveyor may immediately begin helping the client understand and exercise that option.
- Navigator Attachment:** For clients with greater service and rental subsidy needs, the SPA or Region’s CES Coordinator assigns a Housing Navigator to further assist the client toward permanent housing. This is in cases where a Housing Navigator is available and the original surveyor is unable to continue case managing the client.
- Case Management:** The Housing Navigator is responsible for working with the client to secure all necessary documentation to complete a housing application with a Public Housing Authority (PHA) and

accompanying them to all related housing appointments. If Part 2 of the CES Survey Packet (Housing Preferences) was not completed upon initial intake, this must be completed during this time as well.

4. **Coordination:** Two major supports are available to Housing Navigators during this time: Housing Navigators gather in the SPA or region in a regular case conferencing meeting to help provide updates client progress and provide mutual supports to other Housing Navigators. In many communities, Flexible Funds are also made available to the Housing Navigator to aid in obtaining these documents.
5. **Data Entry:** Housing Navigators detail progress on the database, HMIS, and once the Housing Preferences Survey and all required documents have been collected and entered, their client is “Match Ready” and eligible for the permanent housing vacancies listed on CES.

During this same time, Housing Providers are inputting units and vouchers seeking tenants unto HMIS using the PSH Vacancy Form. This form records information unit type & subsidy, eligibility criteria, number of units, and other important information regarding the unit requirements.

Step #3: Refer Clients to Eligible Housing Opportunities

1. **Monitor & Match:** Submissions of the PSH Vacancy Form populate a list of permanent housing vacancies that are regularly monitored by CES Coordinators/Matchers. Each listing is then filled via the Matching tool on HMIS.
 - The HMIS matching tool presents the client that is in greatest need of that particular housing type (by virtue of their VI-SPDAT score) & meets its specific eligibility criteria (by virtue of the answers on their Housing Preferences Survey).
2. **Notification:** The Housing Provider is notified of the match and provided contact information for follow-up. During the follow-up, the Housing Provider explains the housing opportunity and schedules an appointment to verify eligibility information and begin the housing application.
3. **Decision:** The client and Housing Navigator are given 2 business days to respond to the offer and schedule an appointment, 5 additional business days to show up to their appointment, and 10 additional business days to collect any miscellaneous documents needed to proceed with the housing application. At any point in this process, a client may choose to decline the offer and remain eligible for other matches without penalty.
4. **Processing:** The Housing Navigator works with the client to complete the universal Housing Application required for housing with rental subsidies. The completed application is sent onto the Public Housing Authority (PHA), and an appointment is made with the client, Housing Navigator, and PHA. The standard checks and interview of the PHA take place.
5. **Move-In:** If the PHA approves the client, lease-up occurs and the Housing Navigator works to secure any move-in resources needed. Again, in many communities, CES Flexible Funds are available to help with deposit, furnishings, and other potential barriers to the client moving in and retaining their housing.

Glossary of Terms

- **Bridge Housing:** Temporary housing resources offered while working with clients with permanent supportive housing as the final goal.
- **Case Conferencing:** A region's weekly convening of Housing Navigators for the purpose of client updates, resources, and knowledge sharing.
- **CES Coordinator/Matcher:** Person responsible for CES project implementation, management and expansion in each Service Planning Area. The administrative functions of processing a "match" in the system may also fall under this position's responsibilities.
- **CES Survey:** The universal intake packet for CES. It consists of two parts that can be administered simultaneously or separately depending on the circumstances – Part I consists of HUD elements and the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool) and Part II is the Housing Preferences Survey. The packet also includes a cover sheet with tips for surveyors, a checklist as well as instructions to read to the client upon administering the survey.
- **Flexible Funds:** A flexible pool of money available to communities for document collection, transportation, move-in costs, furnishings, property keeping measures and other such costs that may not be covered elsewhere to successfully house and retain clients.
- **HMIS:** The Homeless Management Information System is the technology platform and database of CES. It is a secured, web-based platform that is available free of charge to participating agencies. It has capabilities that allow care coordination between agencies and real-time matching of resources to eligible clients.
- **Housing Navigator:** A client's primary point of contact, often a social worker, case manager, outreach worker, or volunteer. While they have many functions, their primary functions in CES are to **1)** assist clients in collecting the necessary documents to successfully complete a housing application, **2)** and to accompany them to appointments for housing appointments.
- **Housing Provider/Housing Resource Holder:** The entity that operates the housing unit or voucher and is responsible for tenant selection. Housing providers are responsible for submitting PSH Vacancy Forms (see below).
- **Housing Preferences Survey:** Part II of the CES Survey Packet includes questions that mirror the eligibility requirements of major funding sources and allow clients to share additional preferences for living arrangements. This was formerly known as the Matching Initiation Form.
- **PSH Vacancy Form:** A form submitted by Housing Providers to request an eligible tenant for their housing resource through the CES. This form provides necessary information to match a client (subsidy type, eligibility criteria, availability, location, etc.)
- **Service Planning Area (SPA):** The eight areas into which LA County is divided for service coordination purposes. The 8 SPA's are as follows: **1)** Antelope Valley; **2)** San Fernando Valley; **3)** San Gabriel Valley; **4)** Metro LA; **5)** West LA; **6)** South LA; **7)** East/Southeast LA; **8)** Harbor/South Bay. Each SPA is then further segmented into 2-5 regions.
- **VI-SPDAT:** The core of Los Angeles County's universal assessment. It is a holistic triage tool that assesses **1)** housing & homeless history, **2)** risks, **3)** socialization and daily functioning, and **4)** wellness. It can be used by all population types and recommends the best fit permanent housing.

A. CES Building Blocks

- Move to share and consolidate data (local HMIS collaborative starts in 2001)
- Successful demonstration of community prioritization (Project 50 in 2007)
- HACLA begins including language to mandate use of coordinated entry/assessment systems (5 years ago)
- Research concludes significant cost-savings from triaging toward most appropriate permanent housing intervention (3 years ago)
- LA leads the way on collaborative and community approaches to ending homelessness conducting over 30 registries w/ 100K Homes Registry using the VI (last couple years)

B. CES Launches & Scales

- Summer 2011: Home For Good's commissions Community Solutions to explore models and approaches to Coordinated Entry Systems
- Winter 2012: Preparations begin for CES Pilot
- Spring 2013: Skid Row Pilot (134 assessed, 37 housed)
- Summer 2013: Skid Row Pilot 2nd Phase (601 assessed, 56 housed)
- Fall 2013-Spring 2014: 7 Regional Pilots (2,561 assessed, 119 housed)
- July 2014: All 8 SPA's funded to formally begin CES operations (~6,000 assessed, 663 housed)