The Way Home
Onboarding

Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Welcome

As you join:
• Please enter your name and agency in the chat
• Let us know what you’re looking forward to doing this Fall/Spooky Season.

Please note:
• All participants will be muted
• We encourage you to turn on your video camera
• Please use the “Chat” function to add comments or questions
• Use the “Raise Hand” function during the Q&A portion of the meeting to speak
Meet Your Facilitators

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Onboarding
Agenda

HUD and The Homeless Response System

The Way Home Structure

Housing and Services

Current Initiatives

PLEASE NOTE: This training is NOT to discuss specific program or client details. This is a high-level overview of our homeless response system, which we call The Way Home.
Who/What is HUD?

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is one of the executive departments of the U.S. federal government.

It administers federal housing and urban development laws and aims to provide housing and community development assistance.

To achieve these goals, HUD runs or participates in programs intended to:

• Support underserved communities;
• Ensure access to and increase safe and affordable rental housing;
• Promote homeownership; and
• Advance sustainable communities.
What is the homeless response system?

HUD designates a geographic area to end and prevent homelessness; This geographic area is called a Continuum of Care (CoC).

Our CoC, also referred to as TX-700 by HUD, is named The Way Home.

Our geographic area is composed of the cities of Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe, as well as Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties, Texas.
CoC Program Purpose

The CoC Program is designed to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services, with the goal of long-term stability.

More broadly, the program is designed to:

• Promote a communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;

• Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly rehouse people experiencing homelessness, while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness;

• Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs; and

• Optimize self-sufficiency among people experiencing homelessness.
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<td>Use a Housing First approach</td>
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<td>Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness</td>
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HUD’s Homeless Assistance Priorities

• **Ending homelessness for all persons.**
  • Identify, engage, and effectively serve all persons experiencing homelessness;
  • Measure their performance based on local data;
  • Partner with housing, health care, and supportive services providers to expand housing options; and
  • Develop and utilize a vulnerability tool to address client needs and services.

• **Use a Housing First approach.**
  • Help individuals and families move quickly into permanent housing;
  • Engage landlords and property owners to identify housing units available; and
  • Assess the Housing First approach and tailor the practice to fit our community’s needs.
  • CoCs should measure and help projects reduce the length of time people experience homelessness;

• **Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness.**
  • Explore all available resources, including CoC and ESG-funded assistance, housing subsidies, and supportive services to provide permanent housing options for people who are unsheltered; and
  • Work with law enforcement and their state and local governments to eliminate policies and practices that criminalize homelessness.

HUD’s Homeless Assistance Priorities

- **Improving System Performance**
  - Use system performance measures to determine how effectively they are serving people experiencing homelessness;
  - Use Coordinated Access (CA) to promote participant choice, coordinate homeless assistance and mainstream housing, and services; and
  - Review all projects annually to determine their effectiveness in serving people.

- **Partnering with Housing, Health, and Service Agencies**
  - Improve how all available resources are utilized to end homelessness;
  - Maximize the use of mainstream and other community-based resources and:
    - Work closely with public and private healthcare organizations;
    - Partner closely with PHAs and state and local housing organizations; and
    - Partner with local workforce development centers to improve employment opportunities.

- **Racial Equity**
  - Review local policies, procedures, and processes with attention to identifying barriers that result in racial disparities;
  - Take steps to eliminate barriers to improve racial equity and address disparities.

HUD’s Homeless Assistance Priorities

• **Improving Assistance to LGBTQ+ Individuals**
  • Address the needs of LGBTQ+, transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary individuals and families in their planning processes;
  • Ensure privacy, respect, safety, and access regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation in projects; and
  • Consider partnering with organizations with expertise in serving LGBTQ+ populations.

• **Persons with Lived Experience**
  • Include people with lived homeless expertise and experience in their local planning and decision-making process; and
  • CoC leaders and stakeholders should prioritize hiring people who have experienced homelessness in areas where their expertise is needed.

• **Increasing Affordable Housing Supply**
  • Communicate with jurisdiction leaders, including for the development of Consolidated Plans, about the harmful effects of the lack of affordable housing; and
  • Engage local leaders about increasing affordable housing supply.

HUD System Performance Measures

- Reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness
- Reduce the number of first-time homeless
- Reduce the length of time people remain homeless
- Increase success of housing placement and retention
- Reduce returns to homelessness
- Increases income and employment for program participants
- Submit quality HMIS data/SPMs
- Coordinate housing and healthcare
- Leveraging housing and healthcare resources
- Improve Point in Time Count (PIT Count) methodology
For more information about HUD, the CoC Program, the Annual CoC NOFO Competition, and CoC SPMs, visit the [HUD Exchange/CoC Program website](https://www.hudexchange.info/coc/).
How is The Way Home structured?
Steering Committee

HUD requires that each CoC have one leadership board made up of relevant organizations that comprise the CoC, including projects that serve homeless populations, and include those with lived expertise; Our CoC’s leadership board is called the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee is designated to provide oversight and governance on behalf of the CoC;
• Annual CoC funding competition (i.e., NOFO)
• Assessing the gaps to determine and define community priorities
• Designate the CoC Lead Agency, HMIS Lead Agency, and CAS Lead Agency

View our CoC Charter for a list of roles and responsibilities.
Mission: The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County acts as a catalyst, uniting partners and maximizing resources to move people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with supportive services.

Vision: Everyone in our community has a safe place to call home.

History: Founded in 1982 and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1988, the Coalition has a long-standing history as a leader of the local homeless response system.

Role:
- Coordinate the community response to homelessness
- Lead agency for The Way Home (TX-700 Continuum of Care [CoC])
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead
- Coordinated Access (CA) Lead
Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HVDVCC)
HCDVCC

HCDVCC’s Mission: To improve Harris County’s response to domestic violence, we lead efforts to build collaborative systems and innovative programs that increase access to services and safety.

HCDVCC’s Vision: We envision a community where all persons have relationships that are safe, healthy, and free from domestic violence.

About HCDVCC

- The Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC) is an accredited 501(c)(3) organization serving the Harris County area.
- HCDVCC is guided by charity, safety, honesty, & respect.
- We create collaborations that: increase DV victim safety, hold perpetrators of DV criminally accountable, and maximize community resources.
- Domestic Violence Lead Agency to The Way Home CoC.
The Way Home
Partners of The Way Home are located throughout the cities of Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe, as well as Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties, Texas.

Since 2012, homeless service agencies, local governments, public housing authorities, the local Veterans Affairs office, and other nonprofits and community stakeholders have been working together to refine their programs, practices, and policies so the Houston region can help as many individuals and families experiencing homelessness as possible by providing them with nationally-recognized and effective programs.

The Way Home partners with more than 100+ homeless service agencies, local governments, public housing authorities, the local Veterans Affairs office, and other nonprofits and community stakeholders.
Where can you find this information?

- Coalition for the Homeless Website
- The Way Home Partner Portal
- The Way Home Charter
- The Way Home Website
- HUD Exchange
Pop Quiz!

What is the name of our CoC?

• The Steering Committee
• Coalition for the Homeless
• The Way Home
Questions?
How do we serve clients?
HUD’s Definition of Homelessness

**Category 1 – Literal Homelessness:**
Individuals and families who live in a place not meant for human habitation (including the streets or in their car), emergency shelter, transitional housing, and/or hotels paid for by a government or charitable organization.

**Category 2 – Imminent Risk of Homelessness:**
Individuals or families who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and have no other resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

**Category 3 – Homeless Under Other Statutes:**
Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not meet any of the other categories but are homeless under other federal statutes, have not had a lease, and have moved two or more times in the past 60 days and can be expected to remain unstable due to special needs or barriers.

**Category 4 – Fleeing Domestic Violence:**
Individuals or families who are fleeing or attempting to flee their housing or the place they are staying because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence that has taken place in the house or has made them afraid to return to the house, including trading sex for housing, trafficking, physical abuse, violence (or perceived threat of violence) because of the youth’s sexual orientation, and who lack resources or support networks to maintain or obtain permanent housing.
Chronic Homelessness Definition

Individual with a disability who is experiencing literal homelessness and:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, a save haven, or an emergency shelter; **AND**
- Has been literally homeless (as defined above) continuously for at least 12 months; **OR**
- Has had at least 4 separate occasions of the above in the past 3 years where the combined length of the occasions total at least 12 months

This information must be documented.
How do we serve clients?

Permanent housing combined with services is the key to ending homelessness! The Way Home’s programs are all based on a Housing First model.

This means that we move people into permanent housing as quickly as possible and then we provide them with services (like case management, health care, substance use counseling, income coaching, and more) to help them remain housed and improve their quality of life.

• Click here for more information from HUD about CoC programs and requirements.
• Click here to learn more about Housing First from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
Coordinated Access – What is it?

A centralized, standardized process designed to:

- Coordinate program participant intake, assessment, & referrals
- Cover the CoC geographic area.
- Be easily accessible by individuals/families seeking housing or services.
- Identify the most vulnerable in the CoC using a standardized assessment tool.

The only way to access housing in our CoC
How people get into housing

Access Points
- Hospitals
- Jail
- Call in number
- VA
- Homeless Outreach teams
- Targeted assessment hubs

Coordinated Access Assessment (using the housing prioritization tool)

Waitlist
Matching
Referral

Services/Housing Navigation

Housing!
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

• A housing intervention for singles or heads of households with a disability that combines rental assistance paired with supportive services.
• PSH is permanent and designed to serve the most vulnerable in a community.
• To be eligible for PSH an individual or family must be chronically homeless.
• We are close to ending chronic homelessness so in the event there are no chronics on the waitlist, an individual with a disability will be referred in accordance with our local prioritization tool.
  • The disability must be documented by an individual licensed to make that diagnosis.
  • It must state that the individual can’t work or live independently due to the disability.
Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

- A temporary housing intervention designed to provide rental assistance and case management to help singles and families that don’t need intensive and ongoing support.

- To be eligible for RRH an individual or family must be literally homeless (sleeping on the streets or in an emergency shelter).

- RRH Case Managers cannot determine that a client is better suited for PSH – the intervention is determined by the CA assessment and current resources available within the system.
  - The client still must meet the eligibility criteria for PSH.
  - Once the client is housed, the “homeless history clock” stops, the history doesn’t accumulate while housed.

- Only Coordinated Access can determine the best intervention for households. If there’s ever a doubt, please contact Coalition staff.
Diversion

• An intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing & become homeless or is at imminent risk of homelessness.

• Diversion is a client-driven approach; its goal is to help the person or household find safe alternative housing immediately, rather than entering shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

• It is intended to ensure that the homelessness experience is as brief as possible, to prevent unsheltered homelessness, and to avert stays in shelter.

• It is NOT eviction (homeless) prevention.
Supportive Services

Partners throughout The Way Home may also offer a wide variety of supportive services. Clients who participate in these voluntary supportive services, often result in greater housing stability.

Clients using supportive services are more likely to participate in job training programs, attend school, discontinue substance use, have fewer instances of domestic violence, and spend fewer days hospitalized than those not participating.

Some of the supportive services offered in our CoC are:

- Case management
- Childcare
- Education services
- Food
- Income & employment assistance
- Legal services
- Life skills training
- Mental health services
- Navigation
- Outreach
- Substance abuse treatment services
- Transportation
For victims of DV:

Does your client feel threatened or unsafe in their home? Let them know they are not alone. Help is available. When they're ready, an advocate is here to listen with confidential support. Refer them to an advocate at advocatereferral@hcdvcc.org.

- If they are in immediate danger, call 911.
- If they are a victim of Domestic Violence, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233.

- **HCDVCC Mobile Advocate Flyer** (pdf)
- Visit the HCDVCC website for more information and resources: [https://www.hcdvcc.org/](https://www.hcdvcc.org/).
HCDVCC: Support Mobile Advocates

The support mobile advocate is available to privately discuss any concerns and provide information on services available in the community to survivors of Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence. A few of the services are:

- Personal Advocacy
- Assistance with VAWA paperwork
- Assistance with applying for Crime Victims Compensation
- Danger/Lethality Assessment
- Safety Planning
- Utility waiver for survivors
- Referrals for Divorce
- Referrals for Child Custody/Modification of Custody Orders
- Referrals for Protective order
- Referrals for Counseling
DV Client Referrals

For client referrals to talk with a domestic violence advocate, please send:

- The client’s HMIS #
- Staff concerns or observations
- Client consent to be contacted by us
- Clients contact information that is safe to call
- Statistical non-identifying information on the survivor found in HMIS (race, family size, income levels) all information will remain confidential, this information is for grant purposes and will assist us in providing appropriate referrals for domestic violence services in the community

To: advocatereferral@hcdvcc.org
Are you a Domestic Violence Service Provider looking for additional information and support? Please contact the Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC) Mobile Advocates below:

- Susan Hickey at susanhickey@hcdvcc.org / 832-620-5007
- Shannon Falk at shannon@hcdvcc.org / 832-907-1119
- HCDVCC Newsletter.

For more information about the HCDVCC, the Domestic Violence Lead Agency to The Way Home, visit their website at https://www.hcdvcc.org/.
Pop Quiz!

Which of the following housing interventions is designed to assist someone at who just lost their housing or is at imminent risk of homelessness?

- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
- Diversion
The Way Home’s Success
The Way Home
Homeless Count & Survey Analysis

ANNUAL HOMELESS COUNT

61% decrease in homelessness since 2011
2023 Key Findings

61% DECREASE in overall homelessness since 2011.

59,000 PEOPLE touched the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) in 2022, INCLUDING 22,600 who accessed a homeless program.

3,270 PEOPLE were experiencing homelessness in the three-county area on the night of Jan. 23, 2023.

MORE THAN 9,300 PEOPLE people were living in a housing program (Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing) of The Way Home on the night of Jan. 23, 2023.

MORE THAN 28,000 PEOPLE have been placed in permanent housing since 2012.
30,000+ Housed Since 2011

• BBVA Stadium
• Capacity: 22,039
Our Encampment Response Strategy has been incredibly effective and is used as a national best practice.

Houston Chronicle cover story featured our efforts.
Encampment Decommissioning

“Decommissioning encampments is a community response that uses a system strategy of coordination across multiple partners and jurisdictions.”

Since 2021:
• Decommissioned 113 encampments
• 683 people living in these encampments
• 613 housed or self-resolved

A few key things to know:
• Everyone is offered housing
• Outreach takes place for weeks before the decommissioning
• Collaborative community response!
CoC Meetings
Steering Committee Meetings

The Way Home Steering Committee Meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Thursday of each month (unless noted otherwise on The Way Home Partner Portal), starting at 1 or 3 p.m. virtually via an online meeting platform.

Meeting types:

• Business Meetings: Business meetings occur throughout the year and focus on administrative tasks, funding updates, implementation updates, and system resolutions. These only occur if there is business to be done and/or reported on.

• Strategy Oversight Meetings: Strategy oversight meetings will occur three (3) times a year and take a deeper dive into the data and work done at the client and programmatic level.

Agencies who receive (or are interested in applying for) HUD CoC funding will need to have one representative, either direct staff or leadership, attend at least 75% of these monthly meetings. Please ensure that upon registration, the person(s) register with the full agency name to receive credit on attendance. View the memo sent out to partners for more information.

Visit The Way Home Partner Portal for the meeting schedule, materials, registration, and more information.
The PIF is a quarterly meeting in which provider agencies of The Way Home come together to address and discuss what's happening in the CoC provider community.

Members of the PIF includes all homeless service provider agencies (official partners), and meetings are led by the Lead Agency and Steering Committee Provider Representatives.

Please note that participation in the PIF is no longer being scored in the Continuum of Care collaborative application (or NOFO) and will not earn you points towards your organization's application.

We do encourage all provider agencies to continue participation in this forum as it provides a great networking opportunity for those within the provider community.

Visit The Home Partner Portal for meeting schedules and information.
The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a computerized data collection tool specifically designed to capture client-level, system-wide information over time on the characteristics and services needs of people experiencing homelessness.

The purpose of the HMIS forum is to inform the HMIS community about recent data trends, ongoing system-wide activities, and important developments regarding HMIS and our software ClientTrack.

HMIS trainings/forums are available only for participating agencies. If your agency is not currently participating in HMIS, and you would like to learn more please send an inquiry to Kelita Beechum at kbeechum@homelesshouston.org.

Visit The Home Partner Portal for meeting schedules and information.

Visit the HUD Exchange for more information about HMIS and requirements.
The Way Home is the collaborative effort underway to prevent and end homelessness throughout the cities of Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe, as well as Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery County, Texas.

This onboarding training is designed to help staff of The Way Home partner agencies develop an understanding of the CoC program, HUD program guidelines, and learn about our current initiatives to end and prevent homelessness throughout our region.

This training is only intended for staff of the CoC, it is not intended for members of the general public.
The Way Home Income Initiatives Training

The Way Home has worked to integrate the homeless service system with income services through assessment, triage, and a referral process to ensure all people receiving homeless services can access both housing and income resources.

Helping people experiencing homelessness increase and stabilize their income is a primary goal of the homeless response system and critical to their success.

The Way Home Income Initiatives training is a quarterly training where service providers and their staff learn about referrals which can connect people experiencing homelessness to income.

For more information on income and employment opportunities for our clients, please visit the Income & Employment webpage on The Way Home Partner Portal.
Where can members find/access information?

• You can always reach out to the Lead Agency staff; the Coalition’s Strategic Planning department has a team designated to assist the CoC Steering Committee in relation to business of The Way Home.

• The Way Home Partner Portal is where you can find all important information regarding the business of The Way Home.

• You can access The Way Home Partner Portal through the Coalition’s website.

• Please ensure ALL staff is signed-up for The Way Home CoC Connection – the email distribution list to share all information regarding The Way Home.
  • Please check spam mail and mark the Coalition as a “safe sender”
Current Initiatives
Community Plan Goals

Retain Historical Focus
• End chronic homelessness
• Maintain an end Veteran homelessness
• Achieve effective end to family and youth homelessness

Expanded Focus
• Strive for Racial Equity and Social Justice
• Reduce Inflow by Preventing Homelessness
• Strengthen Crisis Response and Expand Capacity
• Enhance Permanent Housing Options and Expand Capacity
• Decrease Unsheltered Homelessness
• Build Strong Cross-System Partnerships
Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP)

The Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP) was developed to permanently house people who are currently experiencing literal homelessness (e.g., living in shelters, encampments or on the streets) as well as those who may fall into homelessness as a result of the economic effects of the coronavirus.

• **Phase 1 Goal**: House — or provide homelessness diversion services to — approximately 5,000 people experiencing homelessness from Oct. 2020 to Oct. 2022 to limit the spread of COVID-19: **Achieved!**

• **Phase 2 Goal**: Serve an additional 7,000 people experiencing homelessness by Dec. 2024: **In progress.**
Youth & Young Adult Homelessness

The Way Home Continuum of Care (CoC), our local homeless response system, received the fourth-highest award in the country in 2021 -- $10 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) -- for the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP). YHDP’s goal is to achieve an effective end to youth homelessness.
Income & Employment

Helping People Experiencing Homelessness Increase and Stabilize their Income is a Primary Goal of the Homeless Response System.

Programs include Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income Outreach and Recovery (SOAR), Income Now (IN), and CCHP Career and Recovery Income Support Program.
Family Homelessness

The Way Home CoC strives to achieve an effective end to family homelessness.

We were recently awarded a $5 million dollar grant from the Bezos Day 1 Families fund to help solve family homelessness! This grant will assist the direct service partners of The Way Home CoC in providing services to families experiencing homelessness.

Photo provided by The Salvation Army
Domestic Violence

With the leadership of the HCDVCC, our CoC strives to achieve a community where all persons have relationships that are safe, healthy, and free from domestic violence.

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC
Thank you!