



## EFFECTIVE COORDINATED ENTRY IN RURAL COCS

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Housing*

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# Learning Objectives

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- **Understand the fundamentals and origin of coordinated entry.**
- **Identify the core components of coordinated entry and how to assess where your community is in the development and implementation of coordinated entry.**
- **Identify ways to address common challenges faced by rural communities and to engage your local stakeholders in planning and design of coordinated entry.**

# Coordinated Entry – A Systems Approach

## ■ Before CE

- Project-centric
- Many access points with multiple assessments
- Ad hoc referral system
- No strategy or process to prioritize

## □ After CE

- Person-centric
- Standardized access, forms, assessment & referrals

Defined Access Point(s)



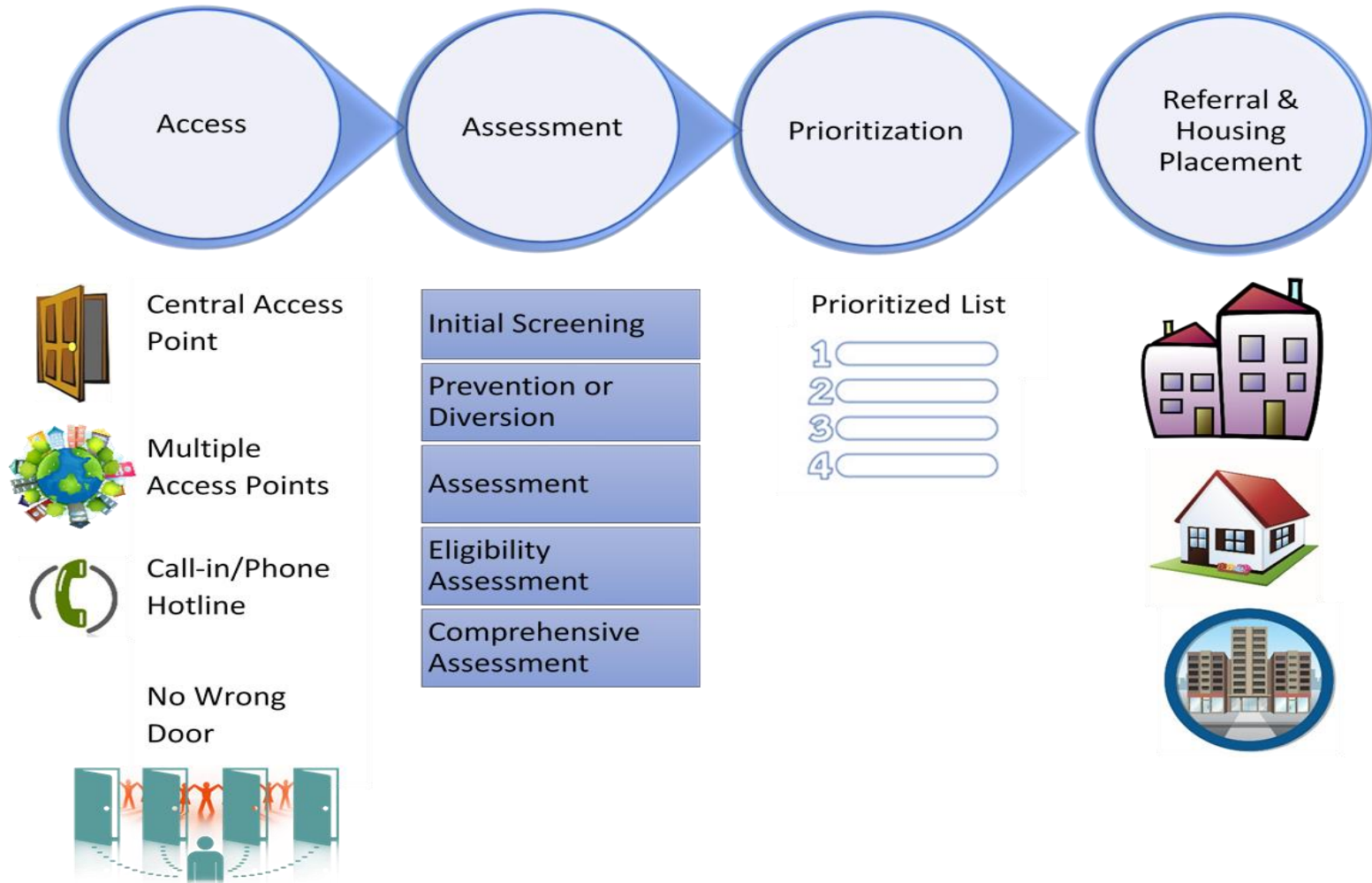
Screening/Triage



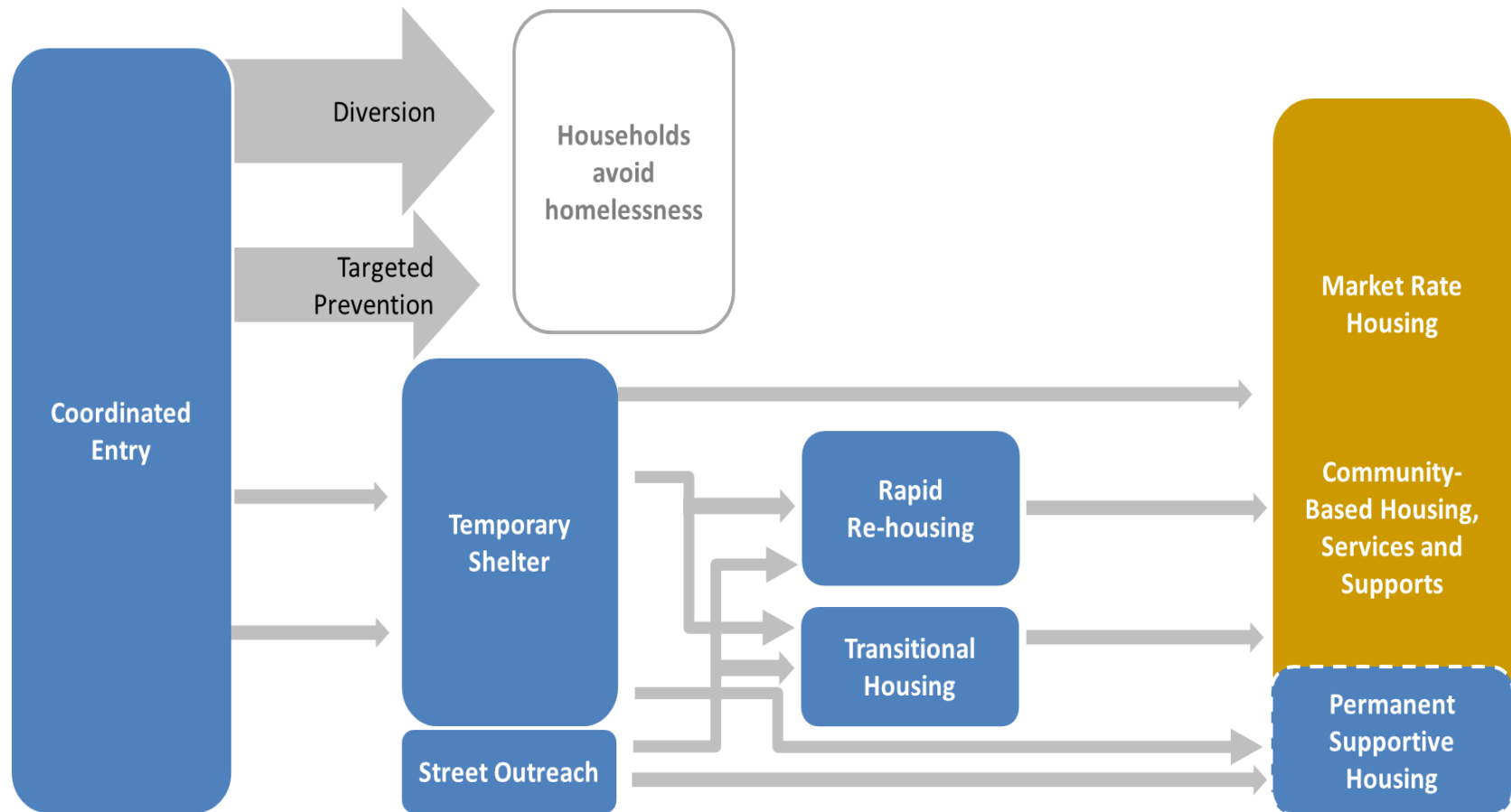
Common/Standardized Assessment



# Coordinated Entry – Core Elements



# Coordinated Entry - The Process





# What Coordinated Entry Is/Is Not...

## ■ **Coordinated Entry Is/Will:**

- It is a systems approach to coordination
- It is inclusive of all CoC providers and resources
- It is a data-driven approach to homeless service delivery
- It will help the CoC make the best use of scarce resources
- It is using Housing First to end homelessness
- It is an evolving process utilizing best practices
- It will succeed using a collective effort

## □ **Coordinated Entry Is Not/Will Not:**

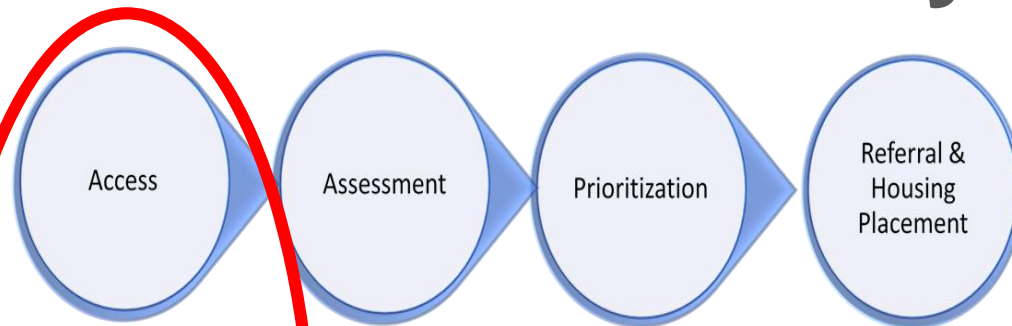
- **It is not** a “program”
- **It is not** creating new units or beds – a more effective referral process alone will not increase housing, services, or other resources
- **It will not** reduce the challenges of serving households with multiple barriers to obtaining or maintaining housing
- **It is not** first-come, first-served
- **It will not** happen without leadership



# Core Components of Coordinated Entry:

**Access, Assess, Prioritization,  
Referral and Housing Placement**

# Coordinated Entry -- Access



Central Access Point



Multiple Access Points



Call-in/Phone Hotline

No Wrong Door



Initial Screening

Prevention or Diversion

Assessment

Eligibility Assessment

Comprehensive Assessment

Prioritized List

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4



**Your system must have a coordinated entry point(s) and standardized approach for homeless households seeking assistance**

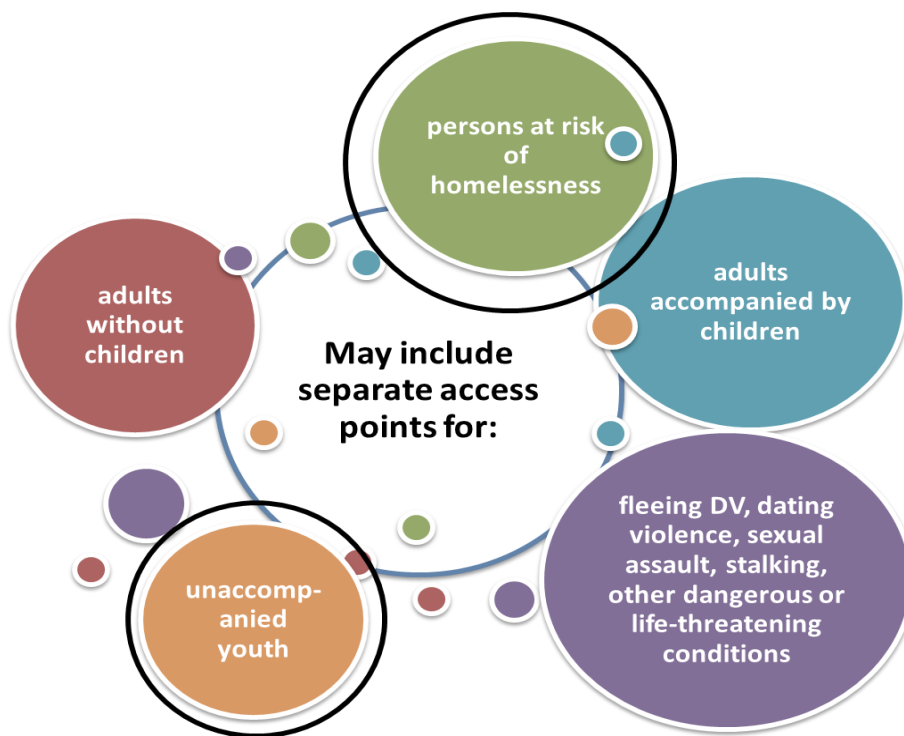
□ Basics of Access include:

- ▣ Full geographic coverage
- ▣ Easily accessible by individuals and families
- ▣ Well advertised
- ▣ Written policies and procedures to document and ensure fair and equal access



# Access

- **Your coordinated entry system may include separate access points for specific populations**



- ★ **Required:** Same assessment approach at all access points



# Special Considerations: Access

- Addressing special considerations and challenges for CE Access in rural communities
  - ▣ Access Points – careful consideration of the CoC geography, transportation, resources, and capacity in order to select your Access model/points
  - ▣ Fewer homeless system providers – particularly agencies that serve exclusively people experiencing homelessness
  - ▣ Wide distance between providers – they can be isolated and very spread-out geographically
  - ▣ Lack of connectedness or collaboration between partners
  - ▣ Limited visibility of homeless population
  - ▣ Limited jobs and affordable housing
  - ▣ Needs in one area of the CoC may be very different than needs in another area

# Coordinated Entry -- Assess

The **assessment phase of coordinated entry** is a **standardized process to document the needs and preferences** of individuals and households accessing the system

- HUD requires standardized assessment tools and activities
- The Assessment process of coordinated entry could be **progressive** and include multiple phases, which may include:
  - ▣ Initial Screening/Triage (what assistance does this person/household need right now)
  - ▣ Prevention or Diversion (can this episode of homelessness be prevented or resolved quickly)
  - ▣ Initial Standard Assessment
  - ▣ Eligibility Assessment (What assistance does this household need to exit homelessness)
  - ▣ Comprehensive Assessment



# Assess – Prevention & Diversion

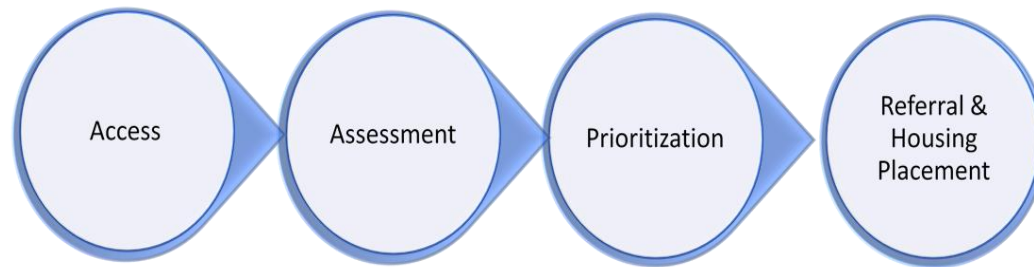
## Prevention

- **Prevention is assistance to help a person or household maintain their current housing (usually financial assistance)**
- **May be one-time assistance**
- **May include short-term service provision (budget help, case management, landlord mediation)**
- **Case management can address the underlying issues of the housing crisis**

## Diversion

- Finding temporary alternate housing options outside of shelter when appropriate and safe
- Prevents unnecessary shelter entry
- Happens when an individual or household comes to the system to request shelter
- Requires service flexibility and light service provision (landlord mediation, negotiating)
- May or may not include financial assistance

# Assess – Standard Assessments



Central Access Point



Multiple Access Points



Call-in/Phone Hotline

No Wrong Door



Initial Screening

Prevention or Diversion

Assessment

Eligibility Assessment

Comprehensive Assessment

Prioritized List

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## Standardized assessment:

- Documentation of participant's needs, preferences, vulnerability
- Can happen in multiple phases (initial, eligibility, comprehensive)
- Determines a household's housing and services needs and informs the 'best-fit' referral



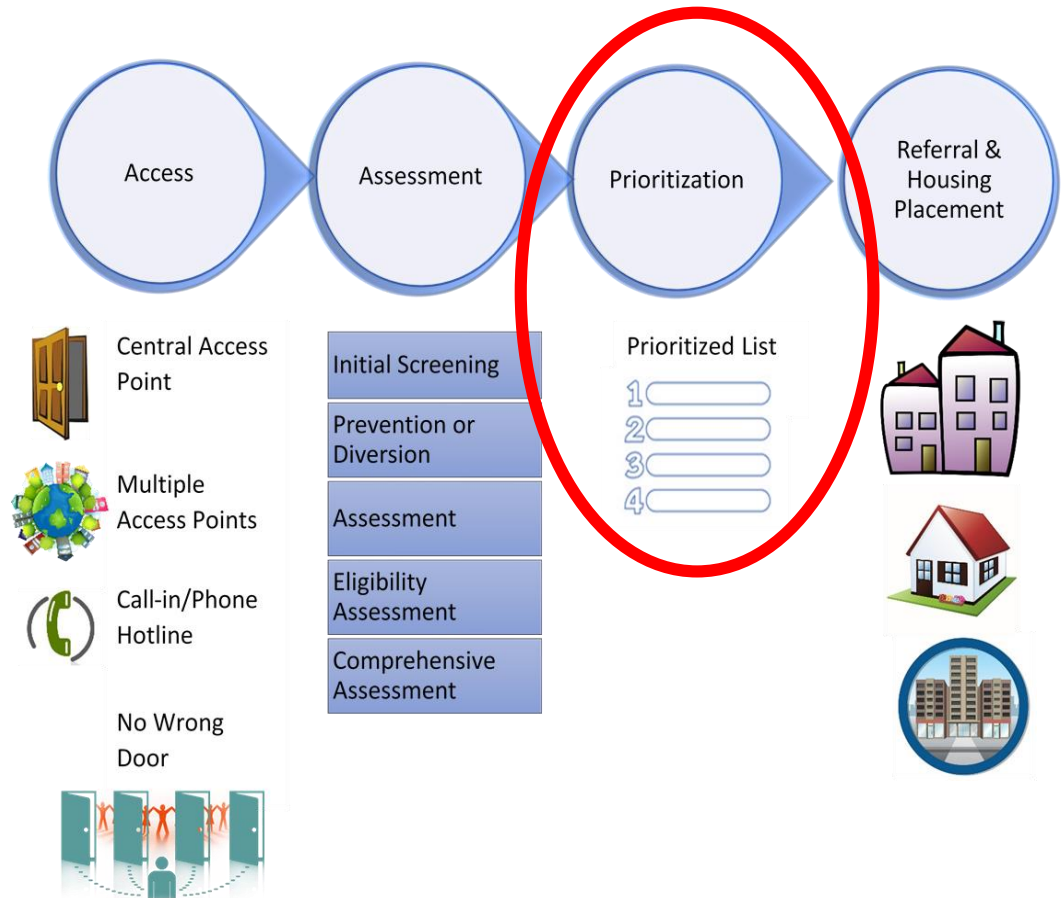


# Special Considerations: Assessment

- **Special considerations and challenges for CE Assessments in rural communities**
  - When planning for your CE assessment process, consider
    - What information will be collected
    - Who will be conducting the assessments
    - How you will train the assessors
    - Data-management and sharing
    - Privacy concerns

# Coordinated Entry -- Prioritization

- What does it mean to prioritize?
  - A CoC must use a coordinated entry process to prioritize households for access to housing and services
  - A CoC must prioritize the most severe service needs/highest vulnerability
  - Prioritization must be defined by specific community-established principles and criteria that are publicly available and consistently applied
  - Prioritization policies must be documented in written standards



# Prioritization & Referral

**The person's assessed vulnerability will establish their level of priority for resources in the homeless system and lead to identification of vacancies at housing and supportive services projects that the person can be referred to.**

- **Components of a prioritization process**
  - Determining priority level
  - Managing the priority list (priority list, master list, by-name list)
  - Using the priority list to fill all vacancies
  - Case Conferencing





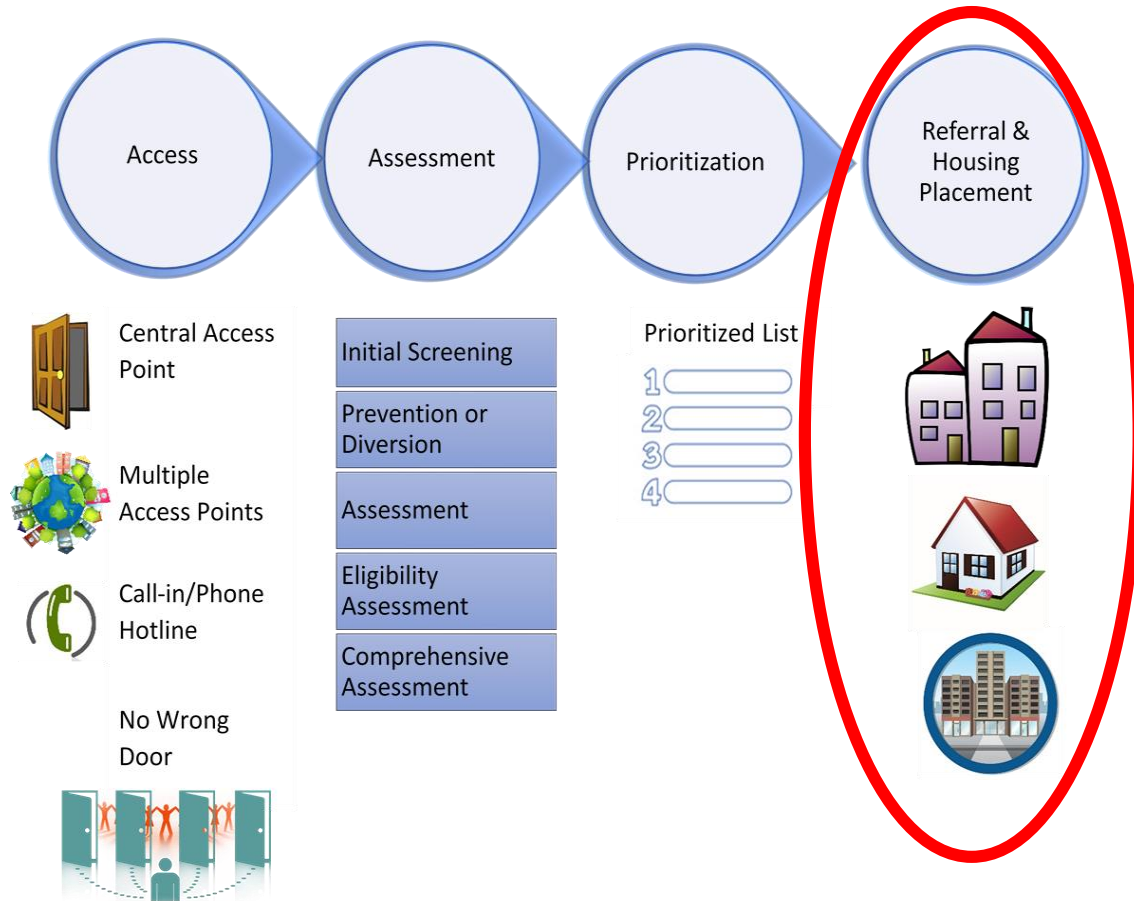


# Special Considerations: Prioritization

- **Special considerations and challenges for CE prioritization in rural communities**
  - Case conferencing – how to manage this in a large geography
  - Establishing a clear and formal decision-making process
  - List conversion – managing the process of converting multiple waitlists in to one centralized priority list

# Coordinated Entry -- Referral and Housing Placement

Once a person is assessed and their level of vulnerability or need is determined (based on the CoC prioritization standards), they will be referred to the appropriate placement



# Additional Elements of Housing Placement

## Additional considerations

- **Avoiding long wait times for referrals**
- **Person-centered approach**
  - Ensure participant choice regarding location and type of housing
  - Setting clear expectations for referrals
  - Process when a person is rejected by a project
- **Programs use a Housing First approach to lower barriers and ensure that high-need households receive assistance**
- **Referral process should account for occasions when a referral is rejected by the potential participant or when the provider rejects a referral under established policies.**
- **Equal access and fair housing protections in place to ensure households are not steered to any particular program**
- **Referral data management and efficiency tracking**

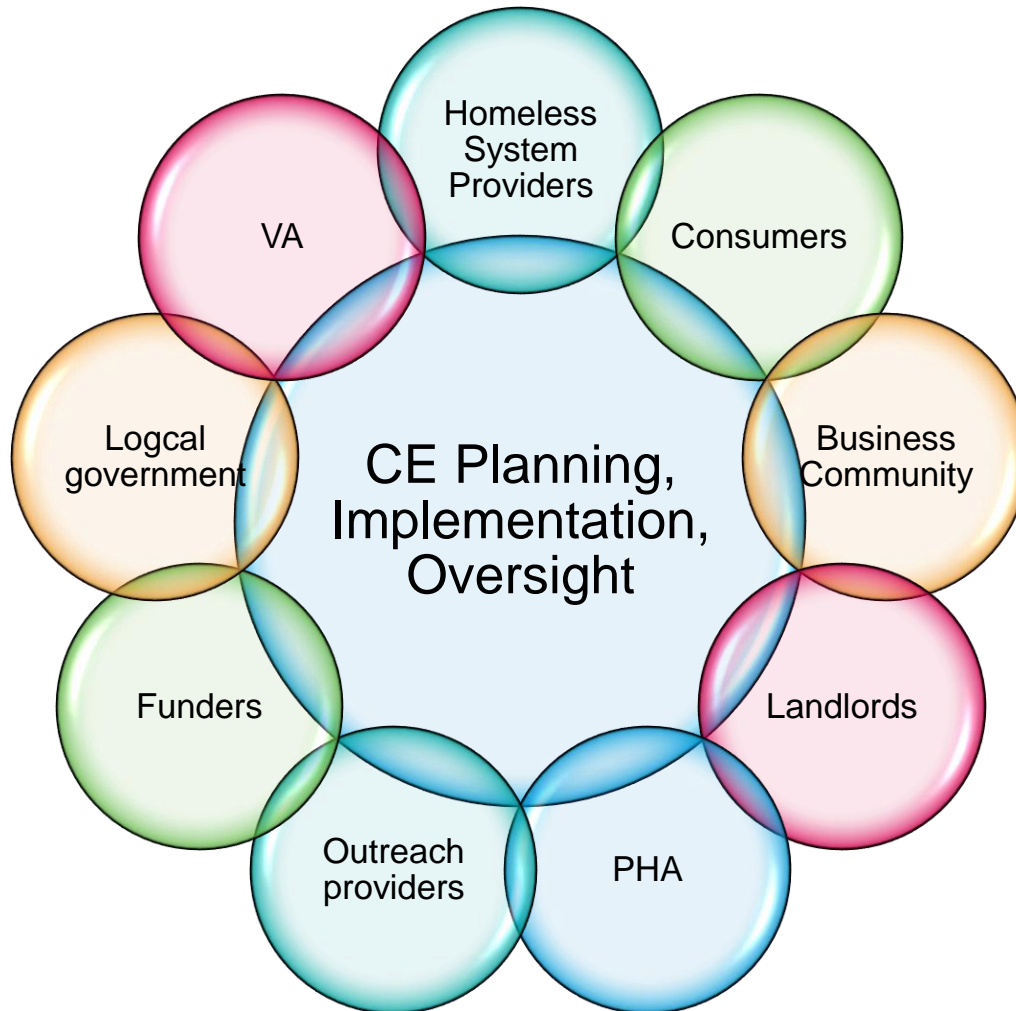




# Special Considerations: Referral & Housing Placement

- **Special considerations and challenges for CE referrals and housing placement in rural communities**
  - Wait times – how you will eliminate long wait times for resources and identify alternative options (housing that may have less intensive services until other more appropriate housing is available)
  - Differing referral strategies
  - How to incorporate a person-centered approach (client choice)
  - Addressing provider concerns

# Engaging Stakeholders





# Local Planning & Implementation

**Infrastructure, Oversight and Engagement**



# Coordinated Entry – Structure and Oversight

**Strengthening your CoC governance model to support system change during the design and implementation of CE:**

- **The CoC is responsible for establishing and operating the CE system**
  - Establishing policies and procedures
  - Appointing a designated entity to oversee/manage CE
- **Planning for the management and oversight of your CES should include:**
  - Identifying where decisions are made
  - Identifying who will be responsible for daily oversight as well as ongoing performance
  - Ensuring comprehensive and diverse stakeholders are involved

# Considerations for CE Structure



- **Establish CE system vision, values and guiding principles**
- **Define CE geography, participation, expectations and roles, oversight and management**
- **Identify your CE model (access points, assessment tool, etc.)**
- **Get community engagement and buy-in**
- **Develop your management/oversight plan and your operational policies and procedures**



# Resources

- **HUD's Notice on Establishing a Coordinated Entry System**
  - <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5208/notice-establishing-additional-requirements-for-a-continuum-of-care-centralized-or-coordinated-assessment-system/>
- **Coordinated Entry Self-Assessment**
  - <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/coordinated-entry-self-assessment.pdf>
- **HUD's Coordinated Entry Policy Brief**
  - <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf>
- **HUD's Continuum of Care FAQs**
  - <https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/programs/continuum-of-care-coc-program/>
  - Select > Program Requirements > Coordinated Entry
- **US Interagency Council on Homelessness Housing First Checklist**
  - <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/housing-first-checklist>

# Questions, Comments and Discussion





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