



# HUD's New Coordinated Entry Data Elements

April 2020

HUD recently finalized a set of Coordinated Entry (CE) data elements to standardize data collection on core components of CE -- access, assessment, referral, and prioritization. These elements are the result of several months of collaboration with key stakeholders to learn from communities' experiences implementing and refining CE data collection and determining precisely what data is needed to effectively manage and evaluate effectiveness of CE.

Most communities are already collecting similar types of data, although the elements might be labeled differently or tailored to communities' unique data collection workflows. HUD wants the transition to these new CE elements to be as seamless as possible. Communities should map the new data elements into existing (or modified) workflows wherever possible and use this opportunity to identify ways to improve data collection based on our collective practice knowledge.

## WHAT COCS NEED TO KNOW

- ❖ CE data elements are part of the 2020 Data Standards and should be available on October 1, 2019, however, HUD understands that some CoCs and vendors may need a little more time to transition from their existing coordinated entry process to a new one. **To allow for this, HUD is making Oct. 1, 2020 the CE data elements "go live" date.**
- ❖ CoCs with HUD-funded SSO-CE projects are required to collect CE data elements beginning October 1, 2020.
- ❖ Regardless of whether your CoC has a HUD-funded SSO-CE project, all CoCs are strongly encouraged to collect CE data using these standardized elements. CE data provides critical information about how quickly systems are stably housing people and where there are system bottlenecks and gaps in system resources, which informs strategies to improve responses to homelessness.
- ❖ CoCs should collaborate with HMIS Leads and vendors to map the new CE data elements to existing data collection processes whenever possible. [TA resources and support are available to assist you with this process.](#)
- ❖ CoCs who do not currently use HMIS who either 1) need to start using HMIS to meet the SSO-CE APR data collection requirements starting on October 1, 2020 or 2) want to begin using HMIS for other reasons, should start working with vendors to begin merging outside data into HMIS to ensure timely and accurate implementations.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



## COORDINATED ENTRY DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

Since coordinated entry is a process that may be supported by multiple agencies and typically spans an extended period, CoCs will set up a CE 'project' in HMIS that all relevant agencies can access. HUD acknowledges that the terminology "CE project" is problematic, as CE is a collaborative and community-wide process and not a single "project." HUD does not use this term in the traditional sense, where data collection is aligned with a single organization. Rather, CE is a system-level "project"—meaning that as households are triaged and identified as experiencing homelessness, they are enrolled in the CE project with a 'start date,' and then data can be collected by different agencies, at different points in time, to populate a single record. Depending on whether your system has a single front-door or multiple front-doors to your CE, the HMIS set-up may include one CE project or multiple CE projects representing regional areas.

Creating a 'CE Project' is simply what allows for a boundary to be drawn around the CE segment of the homeless system for reporting purposes. As a result, communities will now be able to track participants' entire journey through CE – from access to exit - which means communities will have information on how well the CE is performing, and participants' trauma will be reduced because they do not have to tell their story multiple times throughout assessment phases.

For some communities, enrolling and exiting all households experiencing homelessness (who touch CE) requires managing more data, which is a known challenge. CoCs have created technological aids, such as setting up an auto-enroll or auto-exit function (which require very clear business rules for when someone is exited from the CE project). HUD will continue to collaborate with communities on solutions as we work together toward the October 1, 2020 start date for producing reports on the collected elements. HUD is committed to developing a report that is maximally useful for communities and HUD both to assess the effectiveness of their CE.

## OVERVIEW OF NEW DATA ELEMENTS

There are three new data elements, each briefly described below:

- ❖ **CE Assessment Element:** Designed to be flexible a data element that collects an assessment date, location, and assessment results. It allows CoCs to define their own assessment questions and responses, categorize different types of assessments (crisis needs versus housing needs). This element helps communities understand and monitor the assessment process in more detail and as it relates to participant outcomes.
- ❖ **CE Event Element:** Designed to capture access and referral events, as well as the results of those events. It will help communities understand the events that go into achieving desired (and undesired) results through the CE system.
- ❖ **Current Living Situation Element:** Designed to capture information on where a person is staying at a point in time. It can be updated at each point of contact and will help communities track where people are, including those who are not assessed or referred to CE events.

## WHY COORDINATED ENTRY DATA IS IMPORTANT

With this new approach to CE data collection, communities will have information on all households in a housing crisis who touch the CE process, not just information about people who are served by HMIS-contributing housing and service projects. By enhancing data collection and standardizing data on assessment, prioritization, and referrals, communities can assess CE effectiveness as well as whether the CE is operating with fidelity to its policies and procedures. The data from these elements helps answer critical questions to inform strategies for strengthening communities' crisis response systems and ability to appropriately target resources:

- ❖ Are pathways to housing as fast and effective as they can be?
- ❖ Are we successfully diverting people from the system?
- ❖ Are we housing the most vulnerable people in our community? Who's getting left out?
- ❖ What resources are needed to end homelessness and where are the gaps?
- ❖ Which households touch the system and exit without a homelessness intervention versus those who need our assistance?

Collecting these data also supports management reporting on specific parts of the CE process, such as active client lists, coverage and demand, and permanent housing placements and retention. HUD's [Coordinated Entry Management and Data Guide](#) outlines how communities can use their CE data for monitoring and evaluation.

## SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE ROLLOUT

### *What HUD will do:*

- ✓ Provide various forums for HMIS system admins, CoCs, and vendors to engage expert TA providers to help map and incorporate the new CE data elements into HMIS, including:
  - Affinity groups for system admins, grouped by the vendors CoCs use.
  - Regular meetings for system admins and vendors plus ad hoc meetings as needed.
  - If necessary, one-on-one TA assistance to map the new elements to complex custom CE data collection.
- ✓ Publish an online data manual that supports data collection and reporting efforts and helps explain the CE data elements.

### *What communities should do:*

- ✓ Work with HMIS Leads, vendors, and HUD's TA providers to decide the best path to incorporate these data elements into your HMIS.
- ✓ Where there is not already strong collaboration between the CoC and HMIS Lead in your community, use this as an opportunity to build a stronger bridge. In some communities, HMIS Leads were not involved with designing CE or are not familiar with the nuances of the local CE approach. It is important to use this moment to work together to get this right and ensure a seamless transition.
- ✓ Develop a collaborative approach to using CE data to strengthen your crisis response systems in more strategic, impactful ways.

To seek additional support, CoCs can [request TA through the HUD Exchange](#) or submit questions on this topic to HUD's [Ask a Question \(AAQ\) desk](#).