



Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://pchomeless.org/> - info@pchomeless.org

What are your ideas for how our community could make Coordinated Entry work better?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 6.17.22

“Among unhoused people, knowing about Coordinated Entry is different than engaging with it. Must have faith and belief in the system. Inform those experienced with CE that the process is different, better, always improving, and give it a chance.”

Overwhelm is the dysfunctional norm.

- The elephant in the room is the lack of resources we have to offer.
- The 211 line is overwhelmed and people are calling over and over and not getting through.
- Hard to get through to CE, long waits to schedule a conversation. It has to be more immediate. Clients routinely report that nobody is calling them back. Multiple mentions of this.
- Service providers are overwhelmed by gap between need and availability of resources.
- Frustration by folks who have been unhoused for a longer period of time seeing those who have been unhoused for less time get services before them.
- Most individuals are not prioritized; others know what to say to get bumped up.
- Case managers have too high of a case load, hence not able to respond efficiently to clients.
- Encouraged by Seattle and California’s social housing campaigns. Need to expand housing available. Taking housing off market makes sense.
- People get on a wait list even when there is no housing stock. People are on wait lists for long periods of time.
- Over 2000 households on the CE list. The clients that are squeaky wheels are the ones breaking through to get the help they need. Not everyone has the wherewithal to do that.

Questions or ideas for improving Coordinated Entry

- Timeliness as part of a performance plan for CE workers – can that be part of their plan to call folks back regularly to keep them informed?
- Hard to get through to CE in the first place, then people knowing what the plan is to get into housing from there.
- Make 211 more efficient with less hold time. Add a call back feature.
- How is CE reaching back out given difficulties with having phones and charging phones?
- Have to wait in line or try to get an appointment – can be challenging to get there or have the time to wait.
- Build and keep trust - don't make promises you can't keep. Under Promise/Over Deliver.
- Promote programs that work well, like McKinney Vento, which provides transportation for homeless school children to their regular school.
- There seems to be a lack of personalization with questions/process. Also, lack of resources to back it up
- Cultural competency by the case manager needs to be addressed.
- Human trafficking should be a training topic.



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- Need ways to ensure first time homeless know about CE.
- Does the prioritization algorithm that is implemented after the CE intake interview score those with criminal backgrounds as being more vulnerable? Who is monitoring the algorithm for any inherent bias?
- System isn't user friendly: How to make edits to your contacts? If it's been a long time since you started the process and you're asked to go back to the agency where you started, what if you can't recall where that was?
- There are many case managers out there who are not CE certified, so they can't put clients in the priority pool?
- Make sure there is enough funding to help case managers get the training they need.
- Prevention is cheaper than treatment, is very unfortunate that can only get help once homeless for a day, and once in crisis.

Advice for Clients

- People are recommending to clients that they cc their emails to multiple points of contact to get in front of multiple eyes.
- Get into CE as early as possible. In this regard, pre-CTI is a great example. Gather documents, etc, so when they do become homeless for a day, they have needed documents.
- Applicants are scared to tell the truth, when in fact to be truthful is to their advantage; encourage and reassure that the truth is the best way to get help.

Relevant Developments

- Community Homeless Resolution Partnership recently got funding to expand their much-needed services.
- Tacoma Pro Bono reports that the "eviction tsunami" we've been expecting is ramping up.