Racial Equity (REQ) Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 ‖ 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Recording of Zoom Meeting - Chat is within the recording. Materials discussed at the meeting (not provided before the meeting) are below the minutes.

Attendance:

Member	Area of Representation	Present
Aimee Zenzele Barnes	City of Sacramento	Yes
Alicia Gonzales	Greater Sacramento	Yes
Angela Upshaw (Co-Chair)	Veterans	Yes
Anira Khlok	Sacramento, Health System	Yes
April Wick	People with Disabilities	Yes
Ardy Akhzari (Co-Chair)	Sacramento	Yes
Brina Sylve	Greater Sacramento Area	Yes
Dawn Basciano	Sacramento	Yes
Fatemah Martinez	South Sacramento, Unsheltered / Non-Profit / Outreach	Yes
Henry Ortiz	Communities Impacted by Incarceration, Systemic Oppression, Community Violence	Yes
Jessica Thomas	Sacramento, CA / College Students	Yes
Koby Rodriguez	Central City, Non-Profit, BIQTPOC	Yes
Mike Nguy	Government Agency in the Public Health Division	Yes
Patricia Jones	Sacramento	Yes
Shalinee Hunter	Sacramento and Statewide	Yes

Stephanie D Thompson	Oak Park and Marina Vista	Yes
Stephen Hernandez	Sacramento, Veterans	Yes
Steven Seeley	Mental Health Services, Sacramento County	Yes
Tiffany Glass	Elk Grove, Sacramento County	Yes
Tiffany Gold	Youth with Lived Experience, POC	No
Vanessa Johnson	Sacramento County	Yes

SSF Staff	SSF Title
Christina Heredia	Referral Specialist
Glenn Merker	Referral Specialist
Hamid Bashiri	Data and Analytics Manager
Hannah Beausang	Communications Manager
Keri Arnold	HMIS Customer Service Specialist
Lisa Bates	CEO
Michele Watts	Chief Planning Officer
Michelle Charlton	CoC Coordinator
Peter Bell	Coordinated Entry Systems Program Manager
Scott Clark	Systems Performance Analyst
Stacey Fong	Coordinated Entry Analyst
Tamu Green	Systems Performance Advisor

Agenda Item	Presenter(s):	Time	Item Type

I. Welcome & Introductions	Angela Upshaw, BFHP-Roads Home, Associate Director & Ardy Akhzari, CEO/ Founder of Packs for Cold Backs (Co-Chairs)	9:00 AM (10 minutes)	Informational

Meeting started at 9:00 AM. Attendance: around 57 participants.

Angela shared a M.A Davis Poem (video) reflecting on Black History Month. Also available on the Coalition For The Homeless website.

II. Review & Approve 01/20/21 Meeting Minutes	Angela Upshaw	9:10 AM (5 minutes)	Action

Angela motioned for approval: 1ˢ April Wick, 2ⁿᵈ Ardy Akhzari

Motion approved.

III. VI-SPDAT Briefing	Peter Bell, SSF Coordinated Entry System Manager	9:15 AM (30 minutes)	Informational & Discussion

Peter shared a presentation and discussed VI-SPDAT, breaking down the different elements (Assess, Prioritization, Referral…), CE resources, subpopulation variances, key points, prioritization, VI-SPDAT assessment, VI-SPDAT 2.0 vs 1.0, prioritization - HUD standards, shifting prioritizations with a Racial Equity Focus, community examples: (1) LAHSA, L.A., (2) King County, WA, (3) Austin, TX., and potential next steps.

Questions were asked in the chat, see recording link above.

IV. Review & Approve Plan for BIPOC with Lived Experience Interviews & Listening Sessions	Ardy Akhzari	9:45 AM (25 minutes)	Action

Ardy discussed the interviews and listening sessions details. He read over the Interview Consent Form, Interview Recommendation, Interview Survey (provided in the meeting materials prior to this meeting) for the REQC approval. Tamu mentioned the Interview Survey has two purposes: (1) for REQC members to provide input/background and (2) to be used as an interview guide.

Questions were asked in the chat, see recording link above.

Ardy Akhzari motioned for approval with the edits in the:

Interview Recommendations and Interview Survey: (1) name question, (2) involved in interview process (yes/no) question, (3) age group listed (65+) question, (4) adding gender / sexual orientation question, (5) adding instruction at the top, (6) adding a non english speaker question.

Interview Consent form: to edit in plain language (Microsoft Word has a tool to predict education level - 5th grade is ideal), **plain language will be updated and sent to members via email for approval:** 1^s Ardy Akhzari, 2nd Shalinee Hunter

Motion approved.

V. Plan Stakeholder Forum #1	Angela Upshaw	10:10 AM (30 minutes)	Informational & Discussion

Angela shared a presentation and discussed the Stakeholder Forum #1: what do we want to know, who do we want to hear from, how are we going to approach this, where will these forums take place (Zoom), when will this work be accomplished. Discussions were held about whether the REQ Subcommittee can be used to meet and plan and/or we can create another subcommittee to plan for the stakeholder forums. For more details, e.g. who is interested, please see recording provided above.

VI. Debrief Training #1: Implicit Bias	Tamu Green, SSF Systems Performance Advisor	10:40 AM (15 minutes)	Informational & Discussion
Tamu discussed the REQ training #1 session and asked if there are any suggestions to share with her for the next 2 REQ training sessions. She mentioned the REQ Training #2 will be Thursday, March 25th, 2021 from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM and the Courageous Conversation Meeting is Thursday, April 8th, 2021 from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM.			
VII. Announcements - No Announcements.			
VIII. Meeting Adjourned at 10:59 AM. **Next REQ Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.**			

Coordinated Entry System 101 A Focus on Prioritization

Peter Bell, Coordinated Entry System Manager

Topics to Cover - Part One - CES 101

1. What is coordinated entry?

2. The Five Essential Elements of Coordinated Entry (CE)

3. CE Resources

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Topics to Cover - Part Two - A Focus on the VI-SPDAT

1. What is the VI-SPDAT?

2. VI-SPDAT 2.0

3. Prioritization

4. Community Examples of Prioritization Changes

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What is Coordinated Entry?

"Coordinated entry is a process for assessing the vulnerability of all people experiencing homelessness within the CoC to prioritize those most in need of assistance for available housing and services." - CES evaluation

CES goals:

1. To increase the efficiency of the local <u>crisis response system</u>.
2. Improve fairness in how housing and services are allocated.
3. Facilitate rapid access to housing and services.

~17-36% of available housing goes through CE (approx. 250 HH annually)

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Five Essential Elements of Coordinated Entry

1. Access
2. Assessment
3. Diversion
4. Prioritization
5. Referral

*The majority of CE activities can be traced back to one or more of these essential elements

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1. ACCESS

Clients access the CES via 36 different "Access Points"

- 2-1-1
- Outreach Navigators
- Emergency Shelters
- Prevention programs

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2. ASSESSMENT

<u>Clients are Assessed with the VI-SPDAT or one its variations</u>
- F-VI--SPDAT for Families
- TAY-VI-SPDAT for Transition Age Youth

<u>Clients are given a score that identifies a "best-fit" housing resource</u>
1. Permanent Supportive Housing - High Service Need
2. Rapid Rehousing - Moderate Service Need
3. Diversion "Problem-Solving" - Low Service Need

2. Assessment cont.

~150 - 200 assessments are completed monthly

Average assessment score is ~9.5

VI-SPDAT score ranges:

10+ = PSH

5-9 = RRH

<5 = Problem-Solving

3. DIVERSION

Clients are diverted from the system - typically with a little support from a system navigator.
- Low to Moderate service need clients (0-4)
- Often accompanied by a one-time financial assistance (eviction avoidance, first month's rent, deposit, utility, etc.)

Implementation of a system-wide problem-solving (diversion) pilot program in March 2021

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Prioritization

Prioritize the most vulnerable based on prioritization schema

~ 5,000+ people experiencing homelessness at any given time

CES has access to only ~17-36% of the total housing stock
   -Most CE housing is permanent supportive housing (PSH)
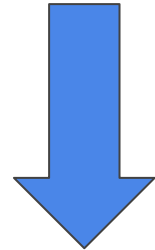
CES connects ~250 clients to permanent housing, annually

5. REFERRAL

3 Lists:

- **By-Name List** - All people experiencing homelessness
- **Community Queue** - VI-SPDAT and "active"
- **Priority List** aka "HOT sheet"
  - Top 50-100 most vulnerable clients
  - There can be multiple HOT sheets based on eligibility
  - Majority of referrals originate from a HOT sheet

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5. Referrals cont.

Other considerations:

- Client housing choice e.g. shared housing

- Program funding -
  - Behavioral health
  - Additional application process
  - Subpopulation restricted (TAY, veteran, families)

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CE Resources

NEW Emergency Shelters
- EBH @ the Grove (TAY)
- Meadowview (Single Women)

Housing Programs
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

NEW Post-PSH
- Move-On Program

Upcoming Expansions
- Survivor System **Apr 21**
- RAPS Problem-Solving **MAR 21**

Subpopulation Variances

Veterans - Few CE resources, developing HUD VASH pathways

TAY - Utilizes **case conferencing** and **dynamic prioritization** when referring clients to available housing resources

Behavioral Health - Cross-system collaboration on access, assessment, prioritization and referral, for PSH eligible, high service need clients

Key Points

Value Driven

Complicated system with many moving parts

Not simply a score

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Part II - VI-SPDAT and Prioritization

VI-SPDAT Assessment

- Vulnerability Index (VI) & Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)
- The HEARTH Act and federal regulations require communities to develop a mechanism for common assessment and coordinated access
- In Sacramento, ~ 250 staff are trained in the use of the VI-SPDAT
- "VI-SPDAT allows communities to assess clients' various health and social needs quickly and then match them to the most appropriate-- rather than the most intensive-- housing interventions available"
- Completion does not guarantee a housing referral

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The 4 Domains of the VI-SPDAT

History of Housing

- History of Housing and Homelessness

Risks

- Risk of Harm to Self or Others
- Involvment in High-Risk and/or Exploitive Situations
- Interactions with Emergency Services
- Legal Issues

Socialization & Daily Functions

- Self-Care & Daily Living Skills
- Personal Administration & Money Management
- Meaningful Daily Activities
- Social Relations & Networks

Wellness

- Mental Health and Wellness & Cognitive Functioning
- Physical Health & Wellness
- Medication
- Substance Use
- Experience of Abuse and/or Trauma

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VI-SPDAT 2.0 vs 1.0

Key differences:
- shorter (questions are simplified)
- can be done over the phone
- eliminated subjective elements
- revised questions which may or may not impact racial responses
- more strengths based

We're moving to version 3.0, but tools are still being developed

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VI-SPDAT Version Changes Example: Mental Health Questions

Version 1

44. Spoken with a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health professional in the last six months because of your mental health – whether that was voluntary or because someone insisted that you do so?

OBSERVATION ONLY – DO NOT ASK:

48. Surveyor, do you detect signs or symptoms of severe, persistent mental illness or severely compromised cognitive functioning?

Version 2

24. Do you have any mental health or brain issues that would make it hard for you to live independently because you'd need help?

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Prioritization - HUD standards

Prioritization must be based on a specific and definable set of criteria that are:

(1) made publicly available through written prioritization standards;

(2) conducted according to the CoC's written prioritization policies and procedures; and

(3) applied consistently throughout the CoC to all households being prioritized.

Normal PSH Prioritization - Single / Families*	Covid-19 PSH Prioritization - Single / Families*
Eligibility: Must be Chronically Homeless	**Eligibility**: Must be Chronically Homeless
Eligibility: VI-SPDAT Score of 10+ / F-VI-SPDAT Score of 12+	**Eligibility**: VI-SPDAT Score of 10+ / F-VI-SPDAT Score of 12+
1. Local Priority for VI-SPDAT scores 14+	1. Covid-19 Vulnerability (65+ or health conditions - see list)
2. Length of time homeless	2. Length of time homeless
	3. VI-SPDAT score (high to low)
<u>Does not</u> utilize Case Conferencing to affirm PSH appropriateness	Utilizes Case Conferencing to affirm PSH appropriateness

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Shifting Prioritizations - Racial Equity Focus

"No protected class (race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, familial status, and disability) can be used as the sole basis for decisions on housing, but communities must take meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination."

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Shifting Prioritizations - Racial Equity Focus

- Start with a racial equity impact assessment (REIA) https://www.unitedphilforum.org/system/files/resources/Racial%20Equity%20Impact%20Assessment-%20Race%20Forward.pdf
- Audit the CES and each element (access, assessment, prioritization, and referral) then move to broader community analysis
- Consider the impact of external sources of discrimination and bias on movement through CE to permanent housing
- Establish goals, benchmarks, and structure for accountability with the aim of shifting the CE system to support racial equity goals

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Shifting Prioritizations - Racial Equity Focus

- Develop and provide appropriate training and support to leadership
- Develop standard equitable questions
- Listen to people experiencing homelessness
- Ensure representative staffing and culturally responsive organizations
- Consider prioritization impacts
- Examine housing and health outcomes across racial groups

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Shifting Prioritizations - Racial Equity Focus

Communities can use factors such as:

- rates of civic participation
- incarceration rates; and
- area median income

to identify geographic areas that need targeted strategies best informed by local residents

CE systems must ensure that assessment questions account for the different experiences of vulnerability and barriers facing racial and ethnic groups

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Possible Questions to Include

- Experience with housing quality and stability
- Employment and economic factors, including work eligibility, veteran status, employment training history, career field and work interest, and current and previous connections to workforce development systems
- Education experience and opportunities including early childhood education, language, literacy, accessible and relevant education programs, and education interest
- Food security and access, personal and family history with food scarcity, and use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Transportation, including personal experience, access, and reliability

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Community Examples - LAHSA (L.A.)

In response to the 2019 *Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness*, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) engaged in a racial equity-driven CE planning process

Guiding Statement: To eliminate racial disparities impacting Black people experiencing homelessness by ensuring racial equity within the homeless crisis response system

Defined racial equity as, **condition achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares**

Community Examples - King County, Washington

- Formed an Interim Prioritization (IP) workgroup
- Revised scoring formulas
- Considered length of time homeless
- Added supplemental questions

TAY: reduced weight of VI-SPDAT and redistributed to chronicity and history of foster care

Families: reduced weight of VI-SPDAT and length of time homeless and redistributed those points to households dynamics

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- Formed a Equity Task Group
- Added 7 additional vulnerability questions:

Racial Equity	Questions	Points
Gentrification	Born and Raised in Austin	1
	Additional point if they grew up, born and raised or ever permanently housed in a ZIP code disproportionately affected by gentrification	1
COA Equity Office Report	Involved in Juvenile Justice System OR in Foster Care System	1
	Did not complete high school or GED	1
	Having a household member under the age of 18	1
Disparate Medical Conditions *	Health Condition associated with Disparate Health Outcomes	2
Total New Potential Points		**7**
Total Current V-ISPDAT Points		0 – 17
Total New Points Available		0 – 24

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Potential Next Steps

Survey of the Surveyors - (minimum of 25 surveys completed)
- operational questions
- training needs

Conduct a REIA, audit CES elements, and establish goals

Helpful Materials:

https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Advancing-Racial-Equity-through-Assessments-and-Prioritization.pdf

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Questions?

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Planning for Stakeholder Forums

Racial Equity Committee
February 17, 2021

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Why are we conducting stakeholder forums?

- Homelessness touches a broad array of people, organizations, and institutions in our community
- Many have experience and expertise that can help us understand the racial underpinnings of our system
- Solving homelessness -- and particularly racial equity in the homelessness system -- requires these many perspectives and the pooling of capacity

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What do we want to know?

- What policies and practices should our homelessness response system use to ensure equal access and non-discrimination when serving prospective and new program participants?
- What should our strategy be to expand funding to underserved and marginalized communities and non-traditional providers who can reach and serve disproportionately impacted communities?
- How should community project grants be made accessible to smaller organizations that have historically been serving communities of color, but may not have previously participated formally in the CoC or a part of the "homeless provider" community?

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What do we want to know?

- How should the CoC Board partner with organizations that are addressing racial equity in the housing and homelessness response system?
- How should we collect racial, ethnic and linguistic data on clients and constituents outside of HMIS? And how can we incentivize greater participation in HMIS?
- What performance measures should we be tracking to determine how well we are doing in addressing racial disparities?

Who do we want to hear from?

- BIPOC with lived experience of homelessness
- Their family members and friends
- BIPOC-serving and BIPOC-led organizations inside and outside of the formal homelessness system of care
- Institutions with overrepresentation of BIPOC (e.g., courts, probation, CPS) and underrepresentation of BIPOC (e.g., colleges and universities, business, banking, tech)

How are we going to approach this?

- Form a small sub-committee to plan protocols and questions, outreach, and other logistics
- REQ Committee members who have not participated on other subcommittees strongly encouraged to volunteer
- Utilize REQ Committee members to lead the forums and data analysis

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Where will these forums take place?

- Safety during the pandemic is paramount
- Via Zoom is safest

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When will this work be accomplished?

- Sub-committee to work on the logistics over the next three weeks
- REQ Committee approves the logistics at March meeting
- Stakeholder Forum #1 to take place in April
- At May meeting, plan Stakeholder Forum #2
- Stakeholder Forum #2 to take place in June - opportunity to report out and confirm findings and recommendations in Draft Action Plan

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Thank you!

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