

NWCoC Coordinated Entry Training

NWCoC Coordinated Entry
Prioritization and Referral

January, 2023





Prioritization

- ▶ Prioritization is utilized for all dedicated supportive housing programs to help strategically and fairly target available resources, better assuring that those who are most vulnerable receive housing more rapidly than those with who are less vulnerable.
- ▶ The prioritization process uses the information gathered from the assessment stage to analyze a person's level of vulnerability. The persons priority is set based on the NWCoC prioritization guiding values and eligibility through discussions at case conferencing meetings.
- ▶ This process values client choice and a strength-based client-centric approach. In order to provide the best possible outcomes, the NWCoC will use a Dynamic Prioritization process. Dynamic Prioritization is a dynamic process that uses prioritization criteria (i.e., assessment result, unsheltered status, length of time homeless) to identify the most vulnerable through the case conferencing process based on the number of anticipated housing placements across all resources that will occur in a set number of days.

Prioritization

- ▶ The Coordinated Entry System Priority List is a centralized list of persons in need of and seeking designated supportive housing in Northwest Minnesota. It is NOT a Waitlist for those seeking services. The Priority List is meant to be a real time up to date list of the most vulnerable persons in the region seeking services. Persons who are a better fit for less intensive programs should not be on the list.
- ▶ The length of time someone has been homeless is an indicator of vulnerability and a factor in being prioritized for services. The length of time a person has been on the priority list is not.



Guiding Values of Prioritization

- ▶ Serve the most vulnerable clients who without supportive services, case management and/or ongoing rental assistance will remain homeless or become homeless.
- ▶ Addressing disparities in the homeless response system and improving access to programs.
- ▶ Clients are referred through a case consultation process to the best available resource.
- ▶ Clients who are not referred to supportive services are offered help problem solving to end their housing crisis.
- ▶ Prioritization is client-centric and strength focused. Clients are referred to services they identified are appropriate to end their housing crisis.
- ▶ Through prioritization clients will be referred to programs they are in fact eligible to receive support from.

Household Prioritization Criteria

- ▶ Individuals will be prioritized based on eligibility and NWCoC prioritization criteria for housing vacancies. Prioritization outcomes will be informed by client choice, program eligibility, and a set of client-centric and strength based questions.
- ▶ The following questions are meant to inform the case conferencing process for making a referral to an eligible program opening:
- ▶ What households on the priority list are eligible for the particular housing program opening being discussed?
- ▶ What is the length of time the eligible households have been homeless? Are any of them Chronic Homeless?
- ▶ What households have indicated having the greatest amount barriers to accessing housing?
- ▶ Where do the identified households wish to live? Does it align with the program opening location?
- ▶ Does the program opening align with the clients identified housing needs? Does it match client choice?
- ▶ Of the identified households which household is eligible, has the greatest barriers, and aligns with the program opening?



Barriers and Client Choice Criteria

Barrier or Client Choice	Explanation
Impact from Societal Issues and Discrimination	The client answers “Yes” to being asked if discrimination or other societal issues have impacted the ability to access housing. This can include but is not limited to racism, medical diagnosis, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.
Interaction with Institutional Systems	The client answers “Yes” to being asked if time spent in institutional settings has impacted their ability to find housing. This can include but it’s not limited to, foster care, jail/prison, chemical healthcare, or registered sex offender.
Clients Physical and Emotional Health Needs	Without housing clients will have difficulty meeting their current and future emotional or physical health needs.
Client Choice	Clients have choice in determining where they want to live, and are offered a variety of supportive housing options to determine what is best for them.
School Stability	Certain programs in the NWCoC require school aged children for eligibility. Keeping children safe and in a stable school environment is a consideration for prioritization.
Client Reported Barriers	Client may have additional barriers including, but not limited to, communication access, transportation access, and in general unable to access mainstream resources or benefits on their own.
Family Reunification	Clients may require housing in order to safely reunite with children.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Explanation
Current Living Situation (Where is someone living right now) <u>Needs to be updated through interim assessment.</u>	<p>Where a client is currently living impacts the current level of vulnerability and eligibility of programs. The following current living situations are prioritized for referrals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Literally Homeless (HUD Homeless)2. At-Risk of Homelessness (Will lose housing within 14 days)3. MN Homeless (doubled up less than 1 year)4. Institutional; Situation (jail, foster care, hospital, nursing home, psych. Hosp., substance abuse treatment facility)
Length of Time Homeless	<p>The length of time a person remains homeless increases the level of vulnerability and increased the difficulty in accessing stable housing. The following lengths of time homeless are prioritized for referrals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chronic Homelessness2. High Priority Homeless (Long Term Homeless)3. Total Months HUD Homeless4. Total Months MN Homeless (Doubled-Up, less than one year)
Fleeing Domestic Violence	<p>Fleeing domestic violence is a consideration for prioritizing referrals, some programs require this for eligibility.</p>
Veteran Status	<p>A person's veteran status is a determining factor in prioritizing for referrals, the CoC will first look to fill program openings specifically for veterans with homeless veterans before other openings.</p>
Disability Information	<p>A person's disability status can determine eligibility to certain programs and the definition of homelessness they will be categorized in. When reviewing disability information whether the client has a documented or self-reported disability will not impact prioritization for vulnerability of client, however it may impact whether not the client is eligible for the program.</p>
Household Type	<p>Household size may determine eligibility for certain projects, it does not determine a client's vulnerability level for prioritization.</p>

Violence Against Women Act

- ▶ No household fleeing a domestic violence situation and is literally homeless should be denied services due to the coordinated entry prioritization policy. DV specific providers do not use HMIS and will place clients on the Alternative Priority List.

Case Conferencing Meeting Outline

- ▶ Case Conferencing meetings are routine meetings designed to manage the Coordinated Entry Priority List. The Priority List Manager will facilitate these meetings. Before each Case Conferencing meeting, the Priority List Manager will pull the current Priority List. The list is organized by Housing Category and the Priorities previously established by the NW CoC.
- ▶ There are three Case Conferencing groups based on geography and population served. The groups set meeting times based on need, at a minimum meeting are held twice per month. The groups are outlined as follows:
 - ▶ Youth Homelessness (Entire Geographic area of NWCoC)
 - ▶ East Area (The county boundaries of Beltrami, Clearwater, and Hubbard)
 - ▶ West Area (The count boundaries of (Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, Norman, and Mahnomen)



Case Conferencing Attendance

- ▶ A housing provider will e-mail the NWCoC Priority List Manager to receive access to Case Conferencing. The following housing provider staff should attend case conferencing:
- ▶ Housing Navigators
- ▶ Case Managers
- ▶ Street Outreach Staff
- ▶ Public Housing Providers
- ▶ Anyone who provides direct service to clients and working to enroll clients in housing programs.



Case Conferencing Steps

- ▶ Review current or potential future program openings and how many eligible households should be referred to the program opening;
- ▶ Determine which clients on the list may be eligible for the program opening;
- ▶ Review households to determine which has the highest need for additional supportive housing services; (who is most likely to remain homeless without access to the program opening) then
- ▶ Determine which household or households to refer to the program opening.

Placement (The Referral Workflow)

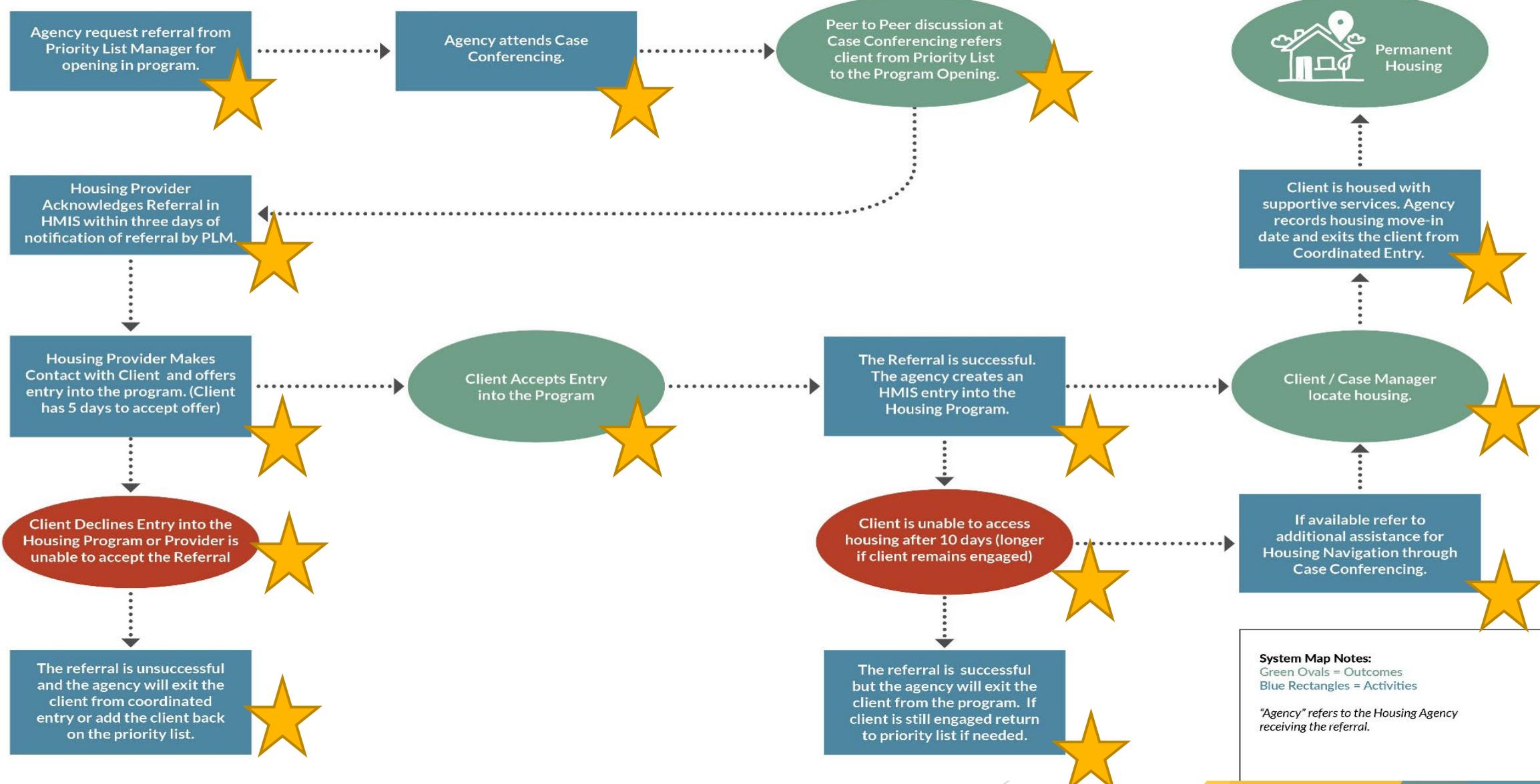
- ▶ Placement, or better known as referral is the process of actually making a referral to a housing program opening.
- ▶ Referrals are determined by the prioritization process. Housing case managers and service providers will meet at case conferencing and determine which clients will be referred from the list to available openings.
- ▶ The list is not a wait list, it is a priority list and people are served based on vulnerability and need not time on the list.
- ▶ The system cannot be used to screen people out based on perceived barriers, but should assist in addressing barriers to stably house the client.

The Referral Phases

- ▶ The referral process can be broken into the following phases
- ▶ **Request a Referral**
- ▶ **Case Conferencing**
- ▶ **Program Referral**
- ▶ **Acknowledge the Referral**
- ▶ **Resolve the Referral**
- ▶ **Program Entry**
- ▶ **Housing Navigation Assistance**
- ▶ **Record Housing Outcome**
- ▶ **Interim Assessment**

Figure 8 of the NWCoC Procedure Manual outlines each phase in greater detail.

Northwest Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Referral Workflow



The Referral Timeline

Request a Referral	Acknowledge the Referral	Contact Client	Client Choice	Program Entry	Housing Search	Housing Move-In-Date or Exit
3 Days	3 Days	10 Days	5 Days	3 Days	10+ Days	3 Days
Within 3 working days of knowing about the opening.	Within 3 working days of receiving the referral from Priority List Manager.	Make 3 attempts over 10 working days and all communication methods to contact.	Client is allowed 5 working days to accept entry into the program.	Enter the client into the housing program within 3 working days of client accepting.	Client is allowed a minimum of 10 days to obtain housing. Client is allowed to search for housing until finding it, no longer contacting provider, or choosing to leave the program.	Record the housing move-in-date within 3 working days of client moving in. Or, exit the client from the program and coordinated entry.



Completing the Referral Process

- ▶ Appendix E Coordinated Entry Referral Process of the NWCoC CES Procedure Manual outlines the referral process and provides details for completing the process in HMIS.
- ▶ There is also instruction available for HMIS Users on the HMIS Coordinated Entry Website as part of your training.

Refusal of Referrals

- ▶ **Refusals by projects are acceptable only in certain situations, including these:**
- ▶ The client does not meet the project's eligibility criteria.
- ▶ The person would be a danger to self or others if allowed to stay or enter into a site-based project.
- ▶ The services available through the project are not sufficient to address the intensity and scope of the participant need, as determined by the project and the client.
- ▶ The project is at capacity and is not available to accept referrals at this time.
- ▶ **The agency must communicate the refusal to the Priority List Manager within three (3) working days upon receiving the referral. The agency may communicate the refusal update through e-mail. The Priority List Manager may ask the agency to report the following information to the Case Conferencing group.**
- ▶ Why was the referral rejected?
- ▶ How the referred participant was informed of the rejection?
- ▶ What alternative resources the client was provided?
- ▶ Whether the project staff foresee additional, similar refusals occurring in the future. How could this be avoided?
- ▶ **If an agency refuses three (3) referrals in a row the Priority List Manager will share the reasons for refusal with the Coordinated Entry Committee. The Committee will discuss the projects future participation in the CES.**



Referrals with a “Warm Handoff”

- ▶ Whenever possible Housing Providers are encouraged to contact the original assessor of the client being referred to them.
- ▶ The original assessor may have information about the client to help contact, or to help build trust. The original assessor may have a positive relationship with the client and can use that to assist in creating a successful referral.
- ▶ Assessor Notes can be the most important part of the process. Adding good notes into the HMIS record can assist in making good referrals and client communication.

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ What factor does not inform the prioritization of a client?
 1. Length of time homeless
 2. Disability status
 3. Geography where client wants to live
 4. Length of time on priority list

Review / Quiz Questions

► Who should use / be on the Alternative priority list.

1. Clients entering from DV Providers, and people who refused entry into HMIS.
2. Everyone
3. People who are on the main list but did not get housed.

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ Which of the following is NOT a guiding value for prioritization?
 1. Addressing disparities in the homeless response system and who is being served by programs.
 2. Clients are referred through a case consultation process to the best available resource.
 3. **A first come, first served approach to utilizing the limited supportive housing services**
 4. Serve the most vulnerable clients who without supportive services, case management and/or ongoing rental assistance will remain homeless or become homeless.

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ What is the primary path for getting referral for your program opening from the coordinated entry list?
 - ▶ Calling the Priority List Manager
 - ▶ Calling 211
 - ▶ Completing a housing referral form and attending case conferencing
 - ▶ Asking the next person to walk in the office

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ Why do we have a referral process in the homeless response system?
 - ▶ Because the COC Coordinator thinks they know to much
 - ▶ To ensure accountability to the guiding values of client prioritization
 - ▶ To share contact information

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ How often do I need to complete an Interim Assessment?
 - ▶ Every 6 months.
 - ▶ Whenever I have time to work it in to my schedule.
 - ▶ At a minimum every 90 days, encouraged to be every 30 days, and every time I have contact with the client.

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ What best describes Case Conferencing?
 - ▶ The Coordinated Entry Committee.
 - ▶ Case Conferencing meetings are routine meetings designed to manage the Coordinated Entry Priority List. The Priority List Manager will facilitate these meetings.
 - ▶ The COC CES user groups.
 - ▶ Where I send my clients.

Review / Quiz Questions

- ▶ What is the first step I should take when I am sent a referral from the NWCoC Priority List?
 - ▶ Acknowledge the referral in HMIS or responding to PLM if using the Alternative List.
 - ▶ Find an apartment.
 - ▶ See if I have a program opening.

Thank You

- ▶ If you have questions regarding this training please reach out to the NWCoC Priority List Manager.