



## **Ad Hoc Committee on Housing Affordability**

### **Overview of Thurston County Homeless Service Network's Coordinated Entry System and the Vulnerability Index**

**Agenda Date:** 4/19/2017  
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#### **Title**

Overview of Thurston County Homeless Service Network's Coordinated Entry System and the Vulnerability Index

#### **Recommended Action**

##### **Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Receive a report on the County's Homeless Service Network's Coordinated Entry System and the Vulnerability Index

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to receive an overview of the role of the coordinated entry system and vulnerability index in the Thurston County Homeless Service Network and what opportunities there are to improve the system to create a more efficient and effective homeless service network.

##### **Staff Contact:**

Anna Schlecht, Community Planning and Development Department, Community Service Programs Manager, (360)753-8183

##### **Presenter(s):**

Anna Schlecht, Community Service Programs Manager  
Jeff Spring, Department of Commerce Consolidated Homeless Grant Manager  
Derek Harris, Deputy Director of Community Youth Services  
Trish Gregory, Acting Executive Director of Family Support Services  
Phil Owen, Executive Director of SideWalk  
Meg Martin, Program Manager of Interfaith Works Shelter and Warming Center

##### **Background and Analysis:**

We will hear an overview on the Coordinated Entry System (CE) and Vulnerability Index. Presenters

will include Jeff Spring from Commerce who will provide an overview on the current government requirements for compliance under the coming HUD regulatory changes for Coordinated Entry and the current State Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) Program requirements.

There will also be representatives from each of the agencies that work together as the Coordinated Entry System. Following is an overview of that system.

<b>SideWalk:</b>	Single adults and couples without children
<b>Family Support Services</b>	Families with children
<b>Community Youth Services</b>	Youth ages 17 and under and ages 18 - 24

Additionally, there are service agencies that work directly with those fleeing domestic violence and those with veteran status. Those agencies who work with these populations continue efforts to be integrated into the CE system's entry points.

Two of the CE point of entry agencies - Family Support Center and Community Youth Services - are currently located in downtown Olympia, and the third will be relocated to downtown within a few months. These CE entry points are supplemented by a single phone number called the **Housing Hotline** for those in need of services who are unable to access these physical locations. While there has been significant demand at each access point, there are known "side-doors" to the system. These entry points tend to hamper efforts to fully utilize the coordinated entry system and lead to gaps in data consistency and quality.

Launched in 2012, the CE system is still relatively young, and each agency is building capacity with their use of the vulnerability index screening and data collection. Part of the Five Year Homeless Housing Plan includes a work plan to improve data quality, efficiencies and to resolve State Commerce concerns regarding performance.

The attached diagram, "**Client Flow in Coordinated Entry**," illustrates the "client flow" or how homeless people are able to work their way through this CE system.

The Coordinated Entry Team also manages a comprehensive listing for the Vulnerability Index, the current best practice for identifying and prioritizing the street homeless population for housing according to the fragility of their health.

**Vulnerability Index** The Vulnerability Index (VI) is a means of triaging homeless and street dependent people for services. The VI is administered in a form of a survey, (Attachment "**Vulnerability Index - Triage Tool**") which captures a homeless individual's health and social status. It identifies the most vulnerable using a web-based data system that produces a report on the interview subjects that is summarized with a numeric "vulnerability" rating. Anyone with a score of 10 or higher is considered at the highest risk based on specific health conditions, combined with duration of homelessness, that cause homeless individuals to be most at risk for dying. This ranking allows those with the most severe health risks to be identified and prioritized for housing and other

support.

For individuals who have been homeless for at least six months, one or more of the following markers place them at heightened risk of mortality:

- 1) More than three hospitalizations or emergency room visits in a year;
- 2) More than three emergency room visits in the previous three months;
- 3) Aged 60 or older;
- 4) Cirrhosis of the liver;
- 5) End-stage renal disease;
- 6) History of frostbite, immersion foot, or hypothermia;
- 7) HIV+/AIDS; and,
- 8) Tri-morbidity: co-occurring psychiatric, substance abuse, and chronic medical condition.

Representatives from the CE system will be prepared to provide more detailed information and answer all questions.

Thurston County's Housing Pipeline process has started to move towards a project funding framework that provides more predictable funding over a multi-year period. Some of the allocations focus on the County's most vulnerable citizens and thereby align some of the homeless resources with the Vulnerability Index.

The Home Fund also proposes to target funding towards the most vulnerable members of our community.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

All Olympia neighborhood's and other community stakeholders are impacted by homelessness

**Options:**

Receive a report on the County's Homeless Service Network's Coordinated Entry System and the Vulnerability Index

**Financial Impact:**

These Coordinated Entry System services are funded by the County's Community Investment Partnership in which Olympia is a funding contributor.

**Attachments:**

Client Flow in Coordinated Entry System  
Vulnerability Index - Triage Tool