

## 1.1 HUD, COC & CES

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the role of the Coordinated Entry System (CES) as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure an equitable, streamlined, and efficient approach to assessing, prioritizing, and referring individuals and families experiencing homelessness to appropriate housing and resources. This policy aims to enhance the accessibility and fairness of resource allocation while improving service outcomes through data-driven strategies across the entire Continuum of Care (CoC) serving the entire Memphis/Shelby County geographic area.

### **FORMS**

Appendix B HUD Homelessness Definitions

### **POLICY**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandates that every Continuum of Care (CoC) establish and operate a centralized or Coordinated Entry System (CES). This system is designed to increase the efficiency of local crisis response networks and ensure fair access to housing and supportive services. Projects participating in CES must follow a standardized process for intake, assessment, and prioritization, ensuring that resources are allocated according to the needs and vulnerabilities of the individuals or families seeking assistance. The main goals of CES are to ensure that resources are easily accessible to those in need, no matter where they seek help, and that those with the greatest need receive timely assistance.

Through data collection, CES also provides valuable insights into the gaps in services and emerging needs, allowing communities to strategically allocate resources. These data are captured in the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which helps to track and evaluate CES outcomes and informs continuous improvement of the system.

In the Memphis/Shelby County geographic area, CES manages matches and assessments for CoC Program- and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-funded projects. The system uses a standardized housing needs assessment to identify and prioritize households experiencing literal homelessness. Once prioritized, households are matched with housing programs or other community resources based on their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

The CES operates through designated access points where individuals and families who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness can complete the standardized housing needs assessment. These access points play a key role in connecting people to appropriate housing and services, ensuring that assistance is distributed fairly. The overarching aim of CES is to provide rapid, fair, and equitable access to housing resources, ensuring that episodes of homelessness in Memphis/Shelby County are rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

### KEY TAKE AWAYS

- **Centralized Process:** HUD mandates each CoC to establish a Coordinated Entry System (CES) to standardize intake, assessment, and matchmaking processes across all participating projects.
- **Fair Access and Prioritization:** CES prioritizes assistance based on vulnerability and service needs to ensure that resources reach those most in need, regardless of where they seek help.
- **Data-Driven Resource Allocation:** The CES uses data collected through HMIS to identify service gaps and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the homelessness response system.
- **Geographic Coverage:** The CES covers the entire Memphis/Shelby County area, ensuring that individuals and families experiencing homelessness in this region can access the system.
- **Service Coordination:** CES creates access points throughout the community, enabling households to complete a standardized housing needs assessment and be matched to housing programs or supportive services.
- **Continuous Improvement:** By evaluating outcomes through HMIS data, CES helps refine its processes, ensuring a fair, quick, and data-informed approach to addressing homelessness.

This policy supports HUD's goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring by ensuring equitable access to housing opportunities and improving collaboration among service providers.