

HOW URBAN TRIAGE FILLS THE GAPS IN DANE COUNTY'S HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEM



Navigating Coordinated Entry



An individual or family experiencing a housing crisis engages with a **street outreach program, emergency shelter, or domestic violence service**



The **shelter or outreach provider** completes the **Tier 1 intake** and enrollment in HMIS, ensuring all required information is entered for the prioritization process.



The **Coordinated Entry (CE) Manager** reviews monthly Tier 1 prioritization reports and, based on system capacity and anticipated housing openings, identifies households to be invited to complete the **Tier 2 VI-SPDAT assessment** for referral to Rapid Re-Housing, Transitional Supportive Housing, or Permanent Supportive Housing.



Once households are identified, the **CE Manager notifies the active shelter or outreach provider**, which retains the household on its caseload and completes the Tier 2 VI-SPDAT assessment within required timelines (30 days at the most).



Locating and engaging households can be challenging due to limited or unreliable contact information. **Agencies coordinate** with other providers for assistance and continue active outreach efforts. If the household cannot be located or engaged, **they may be exited from** the outreach or shelter program in accordance with program policies.



If a household is exited due to loss of contact, they are no longer actively prioritized through Coordinated Entry. If the individual or **family later re-engages** with shelter or outreach services, they must complete a new intake and be re-enrolled, at which point their **prioritization timeline starts over**, and they re-enter the Tier 1 process in HMIS.



Urban Triage creates individualized housing plans for **Tier 1 participants in Outreach or Housing Navigation** and works to overcome housing barriers through case management and community relationships. Participants **housed through Outreach or Housing Navigation are exited** from HMIS and no longer eligible for Tier 2 or other Coordinated Entry housing programs.



When notified, **Urban Triage completes the Tier 2 assessment** and continues support until the participant is **referred by the Coordinated Entry Manager to** another agency or a housing program within UT. **Urban Triage does not self-refer participants into its housing programs.**



Once a client or family is **referred through Tier 2 prioritization to an Urban Triage housing program** (RRH or Transitional Scattered Sites), case managers complete program-specific paperwork and begin housing placement activities.



Monitoring: Data and performance are tracked in HMIS to support accountability and system improvement. **Urban Triage's Quality Assurance** team conducts weekly audits of physical client files, digital records, case management notes, and landlord engagement. **Audit findings** are shared with staff, and targeted **coaching and training are provided based on results to support compliance and continuous improvement.**



Wrap-around services provided by Urban Triage throughout the process may include mental health counseling, employment readiness, benefits navigation, life-skills coaching, conflict resolution, financial coaching, transportation assistance, **complex systems navigation, direct access referrals, advocacy, and other individualized supports** that help clients succeed in **acquiring housing and maintaining housing stability.**

WHY DANE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES SUPPORT MATTERS?

- County funding expands outreach and engagement, strengthening street outreach, housing navigation, and sustained connection with people experiencing homelessness who are active in Coordinated Entry.
- Their investment supports faster stabilization by allowing timely, flexible assistance while remaining aligned with HUD and CoC requirements.
- Flexible county dollars increase responsiveness, enabling services to be tailored to individual needs rather than program limitations.
- County support allows UT to leverage unrestricted funds for prevention and diversion, including mediation, short-term financial assistance, safety planning, and crisis response to help households avoid homelessness.
- Public investment strengthens landlord and community partnerships, expanding housing options for CE placements and County-funded Rapid Re-Housing.

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE: KEY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

This glossary serves as a reference for the terminology and acronyms commonly used in Dane County's homelessness response. The definitions are intended to support a shared understanding and consistent use of language among partners working within these systems.

Data Systems & Governance

- **Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD):** Federal agency that funds, creates, and oversees national housing and homelessness programs.
- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** Shared database used by homeless service providers to collect, store, and analyze client-level information and track services.
- **Institute for Community Alliances (ICA):** Organization that manages and supports HMIS data systems for many CoC across the country.

Housing Programs

- **Rapid Rehousing (RRH):** Short-term housing intervention that helps people quickly exit homelessness through temporary rental assistance and supportive services, with models tailored to specific populations—including youth, Veterans, and survivors of domestic violence—as well as standard RRH for individuals and families. Funding varies and may include 3-month, 1-year, or 2-year assistance, with minimum case management requirements ranging from six to twenty-four months.
RRH assistance generally begins after a person is invited to complete the Tier 2 application and is subsequently referred to the Community Queue. From there, they may be matched to a Rapid Rehousing program. While individuals remain on the CE waitlist, they are not yet eligible for RRH until that Tier 2 referral step occurs.
- **Transitional Supported Housing (TSH):** Short-term housing program that provides structure and services to help people stabilize before moving into permanent housing.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Long-term housing with ongoing supportive services for people exiting chronic homelessness and living with disabling conditions.

System Structure & Processes

- **Coordinated Entry (CE):** How people enter the homelessness response system and get matched to services.
- **Continuum of Care (CoC):** Federal framework that guides homelessness systems, including how communities plan, fund, and coordinate homelessness services. CoCs must follow written standards and use CE.
- **Prioritization / Tiers:** Process used in CE to rank people based on vulnerability and urgency of need. Tier 1 includes those with the highest priority for referral.
- **Outreach (Street Outreach):** Services that engage people experiencing homelessness, helping them access basic resources, assessments, and referrals through CE

Assessment Tools

- **Vulnerability Index–Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT):** Standardized assessment to gauge housing needs and prioritize them for services.

Funding Streams

- **CoC Funding:** Federal funds from HUD's CoC Program to support local homelessness services, including housing programs, outreach, CE, and supportive services.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):** HUD funding for immediate housing crisis response, providing grants to local governments and nonprofits to help people quickly regain stability in permanent housing.
- **Unrestricted Funds:** Flexible dollars that allow organizations to provide services and support beyond what is permitted or funded through the CE program.



Types of Homelessness Recognized in Coordinated Entry

- **Literal Homelessness:** People living on the streets, in cars, in places not meant for habitation, or in emergency shelters.
- **Imminent Risk of Homelessness:** People who will lose their housing within 14 days and have no safe alternative—such as those being evicted, asked to leave, or fleeing domestic violence.
- **Precariously Housed / Doubled Up:** People temporarily staying with friends or family, often moving from place to place, without a stable place to live.
- **Fleeing Domestic Violence:** Survivors escaping violence or unsafe situations, regardless of whether they are in shelter, doubled up, or temporarily housed.

Who Makes It Through Tier 1 Prioritization?

All households actively enrolled in street outreach programs or overnight shelters are included in Tier 1 prioritization. Tier 1 uses data entered in HMIS to assess and score households based on factors such as history and length of homelessness, income, eviction history, criminal legal system involvement, family size, and—depending on program type—age, medical or behavioral health crises, and whether the household is newly homeless. Households with the highest Tier 1 scores are prioritized and selected by the Coordinated Entry Manager to move forward, based on available and anticipated housing openings for Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing.

What Is Tier 2 in Coordinated Entry?

Tier 2 is the secondary assessment and prioritization stage of the Coordinated Entry system. Households invited to Tier 2 complete the VI-SPDAT assessment, which is administered by trained shelter, outreach, or Coordinated Entry staff. Tier 2 further refines prioritization by combining the VI-SPDAT score with select Tier 1 factors to place households on a ranked community queue for Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing referrals. Households remain on the Tier 2 list while they are actively enrolled in shelter or outreach and are matched to housing opportunities as openings become available.

Crisis-Diversion Tools

- **Diversion:** Problem-solving conversation and support used before shelter entry to help people identify safe, immediate housing alternatives outside the homeless system.
- **Prevention:** Services that help individuals and families maintain current housing or avoid entering homelessness through financial assistance, mediation, or case management.

Urban Triage Fills Critical Gaps

- During this period, individuals and families may require interim support and housing options **outside of immediate placement through the Coordinated Entry (CE) system**, such as **scattered-site transitional housing or other non-CE housing resources**, while awaiting movement through the CE process.
- The Dane County Coordinated Entry system utilizes a **two-tier assessment and prioritization model**. Individuals and families enrolled in **street outreach programs or emergency shelters** are included in the **Tier 1 assessment**, which is generated from HMIS data and used to prioritize households for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).
- Households identified by the Coordinated Entry Manager as meeting priority thresholds are **invited to complete the Tier 2 VI-SPDAT assessment**. When a household is pulled for Tier 2, the CE Manager notifies the **active shelter or outreach agency**, which retains the household on its caseload and coordinates completion of the VI-SPDAT within required timelines.
- Because HUD prioritization standards limit Tier 2 invitations to households with the highest vulnerability scores, **not all households enrolled in outreach or shelter will advance to Tier 2 immediately**. As a result, providers must identify **alternative housing pathways and supportive services** to ensure continued engagement and housing stabilization while households await CE referral or eligibility.
- Urban Triage fills critical gaps in Dane County's homelessness response by providing **housing navigation and interim housing supports** for households engaged in outreach and Coordinated Entry. Our work includes **Dane County Rapid Re-Housing, Unsheltered Tiny Homes, Youth and Domestic Violence housing programs**, and active coordination with Coordinated Entry providers to secure **Tier 2 referrals** for households that meet eligibility criteria.

