

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



Navigating Coordinated Entry



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



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



3 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.



4 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).



5 **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.



6 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 reengages** with shelter or outreach services, they must complete a new intake and be reenrolled. At this point, their prioritization **timeline restarts, and they re-enter the Tier 1 process in HMIS.**



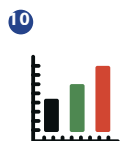
7 **Urban Triage** creates individualized housing plans for **Tier 1 participants in Outreach or Housing Navigation** and works to overcome housing barriers through case management and community relationships. Participants **housed through Outreach or Housing Navigation are exited** from HMIS and no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



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



9 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.



10 **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.**



11 **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 by HUD's Coordinated Entry System

- **Literally Homeless (HUD Category 1):** People living on the streets, in vehicles, in emergency shelters, or in places not meant for human habitation.
- **Imminent Risk of Homelessness (HUD Category 2):** People who are expected to lose their housing within 14 days and have no safe or appropriate alternative, such as those facing eviction, being asked to leave their housing, or fleeing domestic violence.
- **Precariously Housed / Doubled Up (HUD Category 3 – Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes):** People temporarily staying with friends or family due to housing instability, often moving between locations and lacking a stable, permanent place to live.
- **Fleeing Domestic Violence (HUD Category 4):** Survivors escaping domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence, regardless of whether they are in shelter, doubled up, or temporarily housed.

***Note: Not all CoC-funded housing programs serve every HUD homelessness category. Eligibility varies by program type and funding requirements.

Who Makes It Through Tier 1 Prioritization?

All households actively enrolled in street outreach programs or staying in 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 length and history of homelessness, income, eviction history, involvement with the criminal legal system, disabilities, number of children in the household, and overall household size. Depending on program type, additional considerations may include age, medical or behavioral health needs, and whether the household is newly homeless. Households in Tier 1 are eligible to receive engagement, assessment, and support services, including street outreach, emergency shelter, housing navigation, basic needs assistance, and referrals to prevention, diversion, or mainstream resources. Tier 1 does not guarantee access to housing placement. Households must be prioritized to Tier 2 through Coordinated Entry to be considered for housing programs such as Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing.

Who Makes It Through Tier 2 Prioritization, and What Services Are Offered to Them?

Tier 2 is the secondary assessment and prioritization stage of the Coordinated Entry (CE) system. Households invited to Tier 2 are required to complete the VI-SPDAT, administered by trained shelter, outreach, or CE staff. Tier 2 combines VI-SPDAT results with select Tier 1 data to rank households in the Community Queue for referral to Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Transitional Supportive Housing (TSH), or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). **While on the Tier 2 list, households continue to receive shelter or outreach services.** Outreach providers remain responsible for engagement and support until the household is formally enrolled with a housing provider. **When referred, the receiving RRH, TSH, or PSH agency conducts additional program- and unit-specific eligibility screening.** This may include verification of homelessness status, disability (for PSH), income, household composition, rental history, and other funder or property requirements. A referral does not guarantee housing.

Once accepted by the housing provider, services transition to them for housing navigation, case management, move-in planning, and rental assistance (if applicable). If not accepted or no unit is available, the household remains in Tier 2 and continues to receive outreach or shelter services while awaiting future opportunities.

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 periods when individuals and families are awaiting movement through the Coordinated Entry (CE) process, housing placement is not always immediate. Many households require interim support and housing options outside immediate CE placement, including scattered-site transitional housing (both CE/CoC-funded and non-CE resources) and continued stabilization and engagement supports.

Urban Triage fills this gap by providing housing navigation and interim housing supports for households actively engaged in outreach and Coordinated Entry. Our work includes Dane County Rapid Re-Housing, Unsheltered Tiny Homes, Youth and Domestic Violence housing programs, and ongoing coordination with CE partners to support households that meet eligibility criteria and are awaiting referral or placement.

What distinguishes Urban Triage is that eligibility for CoC-funded programs is not a requirement to receive support. When community members do not qualify for—or are waiting on—CE or CoC-funded services, we continue to provide assistance through unrestricted dollars, our workgroup-based education and healing programming, and Medicaid 1915(i) services.

We do not turn people away. Whether support involves connecting to other resources, navigating complex systems, making calls on a participant's behalf, or simply sitting with someone in crisis, we meet people where they are. Because of the trust and social capital Urban Triage has built in the community, our engagement outcomes differ from traditional service models and support sustained progress toward housing stability.



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