

Coordinated Intake Assessment

Coordinated assessment, also known as coordinated entry or coordinated intake, paves the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by:

- Helping people move through the system faster (by reducing the amount of time people spend moving from program to program before finding the right match);
- Reducing new entries into homelessness (by consistently offering prevention and diversion resources upfront, reducing the number of people entering the system unnecessarily); and
- Improving data collection and quality and providing accurate information on what kind of assistance consumers need.

Coordinated assessment is ideally a system-wide process and can serve any and all populations. Systems may accomplish coordinated assessment through the use of a:

- **Centralized** phone hotline (e.g. a 2-1-1),
- Single Physical Point of Assessment (through an emergency shelter or a Dedicated Assessment Center,
- Decentralized Coordinated System (with multiple assessment points all employing the same assessment and referral process).

Each of these models has its advantages and drawbacks. Each assessment point in a coordinated system handles assessment or screening of consumer need, data entry, referrals, and, potentially, program admissions.

Ideally, these centers are the main access points for prevention and diversion services as well. Assessment center staff, after an initial assessment, should either provide the necessary prevention or diversion services or admit or refer a family to the program that is best equipped to get them into permanent housing as quickly as possible.