

Coordinated Entry System FAQ's: General Public (NEW)

1. What is the Coordinated Entry System (CES)?

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a federally mandated process that streamlines and standardizes how individuals and families gain access to a variety of services, including housing. This process is done through different levels of assessments and referrals to services and programs. CES is mandated through the implementation of a Continuum of Care under the [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) part 578 title 24](#).

2. What does CES look like in San Diego?

The CES is designed to be an overlay to the work of the community's homeless dedicated service providers. The steps of CES are embedded in the natural progression of someone moving through services such as day centers, emergency shelter, and outreach connections. Clients will enter the system by connecting with a direct service provider. Over repeated engagements, more information will be gathered about the client's needs, vulnerabilities, strengths, and options. At every step of the process, resiliency-based conversations are utilized to strategize rapid resolutions.

3. Who does CES serve?

The Coordinated Entry System serves any household that covers any configuration of persons in crisis, whatever their age or number (adults, youth, or children; singles or couples, with or without children). The homeless system refers specifically to the services and housing available only to persons who are [literally homeless](#). CES is designed to assess eligibility for housing programs targeted to homeless persons. It is not a guarantee that the individual will meet the final eligibility requirements for - or receive a referral to - a particular housing option. Further, the CES is permission based, meaning that clients must agree to participate.

4. If I am homeless or currently facing housing instability what is my first step?

You would call 2-1-1 to find an agency closest to you that provides direct services regarding homelessness. You can reach out and call that organization to find out more about their resources. Here at The Regional Task Force on the Homeless we are not a direct service provider. There are many organizations that partner together to coordinate and help individuals and families resolve their housing crises by accessing valuable resources in an equitable, person-centered, and transparent manner.

Access Sites are located throughout the San Diego region and include emergency shelters, mobile outreach teams, day centers, health and mental health centers, other community-based organizations, hotlines, and homeless-dedicated service providers. Persons experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness can visit or call an access site to learn more about resources that may be available to them. [Click here for an updated flyer](#) with access sites throughout the San Diego region.

5. What is the VI-SPDAT?

The VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) is an assessment administered, if appropriate, to both individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to persons experiencing homelessness. San Diego community uses the VI-SPDAT to enable providers to fairly and uniformly provide housing resources to those based on need. The VI-SPDAT is not a housing application. It is an internal assessment tool used by agencies in the Trusted Network. Completing a VI-SPDAT is not a guarantee for housing.

7. Where am I on the waitlist? How long are wait times?

There are many variables that go into referring someone to a housing resource. There is no way to offer an exact timeframe for anyone hoping to be referred to housing through the Coordinated Entry System (CES). We encourage persons experiencing homelessness to stay connected to homeless dedicated providers that administer services. It is also important to know that entering into the CES is not a guarantee that one will be referred to a housing program. It is important to continue exploring all other opportunities for housing that may include roommate location services, rooms for rent, affordable housing, family, friends, other natural supports, and other community resources.

8. Why did my friend get housed before me?

The San Diego Coordinated Entry System's policies and procedures assist homeless dedicated agencies to figure out which type of housing program is best for you. We use that information to identify programs that you are likely eligible for and that will meet your unique needs. Because each program has different eligibility requirements, we can't refer people in the order they have completed the assessment. People who have received housing referrals through third party referrals made by The Regional Task Force on the Homeless have been referred to programs that meet the needs of the client.