

BACKGROUND: Since 2012, Orange County has been working to coordinate and systemize how people access homeless programs and services through the Home Committee (formerly known as the 100,000 Homes Task Force). In November 2017, service providers will expand these efforts to encompass a single point of entry and shelter diversion through the OC Connect Coordinated Entry System.

OC Connect institutes consistent and uniform access, assessment, prioritization, and referral processes to determine the most appropriate response to each person's immediate housing needs. This system of Coordinated Entry is recognized nationally as a best practice which can improve efficiency within systems, provide clarity for people experiencing homelessness, and can help serve more people quickly and efficiently with assistance targeted to address their housing needs. In January 2018, the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness initiated a process to formalize and codify the policies and procedures for the coordinated entry system to ensure compliance with the mandate from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that every CoC establish and operate a coordinated entry process (24 CFR 578).

OC Connect Policies and Procedures document is an operational manual, providing guidance and direction for the day to day operation, management, oversight, and evaluation of Orange County's coordinated entry system.

This document will be updated and revised on an on-going basis as the actual application and practical experience of implementing a coordinated entry system design principles are refined and improved.

This manual was developed by the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness, serving as the Chapel Hill/Orange County Continuum of Care.

OVERVIEW: The Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness, in consultation with recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) funds, hereby establishes Written Standards for providing homeless service assistance and the Policies and Procedures for OC Connect, coordinated entry in Orange County.

Service providers allow for coordinated screening, assessment and referrals for ESG projects consistent with the written standards for administering ESG assistance. As of January 2018, these are the current partner agencies:

Agency	ESG Recipient	CoC Recipient	HUD-VASH or SSVF Recipient	OC Connect Planning Committee	HOME Committee	Data & Grants Workgroup
Cardinal Innovations		X			X	X
Chapel Hill Police Department					X	
Community Empowerment Fund				X	X	
Durham VA Medical Center			X		X	
Freedom House					X	
Inter-Faith Council for Social Service	X	X		X	X	X
Lutheran Family Services					X	
Peter Elst LLC (peer support)					X	
Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Dept.					X	
Orange County Dept. on Aging					X	
Orange County Dept. of Social Services	X				X	X
Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness		X (planning grant)		X	X	X
UNC Horizons					X	
UNC Hospitals					X	
Volunteers of America			X		X	

- OC Connect Planning Committee
 - Meets first and third Thursday, 3-4:30 pm at CEF, 208 N. Columbia St. Suite 100
 - Purpose: work on coordinated entry system level issues, coordinate evaluation and ongoing system improvements
- HOME Committee
 - Meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 9-noon at Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Rd in Chapel Hill
 - Purpose: review by-name list, case conference client needs, and prioritize referrals for PSH and RRH
- Data & Grants Workgroup

- Meets on the third Monday of each month, 3-4:30 pm at Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Rd in Chapel Hill
- Purpose: review and promote excellent data quality for all projects serving people who are homeless in Orange County, work on annual CoC application, shape and implement data elements of coordinated entry process with OC Connect and HMIS, set standards for homeless program performance, and implement a program performance improvement process

Other agencies partner to coordinate referrals for services, including: Carrboro Police Department, Chapel Hill Department of Housing & Community, Chapel Hill Fire Department, Compass Center, Hillsborough Police Department, Orange County Emergency Services, Orange County Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Orange County Rape Crisis Center, Orange County Sherriff's Office

Overall

- OC Connect supports **client choice**: participants are freely allowed to decide what information they provide during the assessment process, to refuse to answer assessment questions and to refuse housing and service options without retribution or limiting their access to other forms of assistance.
 - Participants will maintain their place on the HOME Committee list, the coordinated entry prioritization list, when they reject referral options.
 - Programs may require participants to provide certain pieces of information to determine program eligibility only when the applicable program regulation requires the information to establish or document eligibility.
- OC Connect uses **Housing First**: transitioning people experiencing homelessness back to permanent housing as quickly as possible and helping people maintain housing
- OC Connect uses **prioritization**: allocating limited housing resources, including Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing, to the most vulnerable households in our community
- OC Connect applies a consistent process throughout the community in order to achieve fair, equitable, and equal access to homeless programs and services within Orange County
- OC Connect will not screen people out of the coordinated entry process due to perceived barriers to housing or services, including, but not limited to, too little or no income, active or a history of substance abuse, domestic violence history, resistance to receiving services, the type or extent of a disability-related services or supports that are needed, history of evictions or poor credit, lease violations or history of not being a leaseholder, or criminal record.
- OC Connect does not require disclosure of specific disabilities or diagnosis – this information may only be obtained for purposes of determining program eligibility to make appropriate referrals.

Access

- OC Connect is designed to be available to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, disability, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identify, or marital status.
- All people have fair and equal access to OC Connect, including people experiencing chronic homelessness, veterans, families with children, youth, and survivors of domestic violence.
- OC Connect will operate within the hours listed below. Persons are ensured access to emergency services during hours when OC Connect intake and assessment processes are not operating by leaving a message on the centralized phone number. When participants leave a voicemail, a service provider will call them back to complete intake and assessment within 14 hours.
- All physical locations are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including accessible physical locations for individuals who use wheelchairs, as well as people in the CoC who are least likely to access homeless assistance.
- People seeking homeless services can go in person to explore options for services and housing referrals during non-holidays:
 - Chapel Hill, Monday-Friday, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), 208 N. Columbia St. Suite 100
 - Hillsborough, Wednesdays, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Orange County Dept. of Social Services (DSS), 113 Mayo St
- People seeking homeless services can call the Homeless Hotline 24 hours a day during these times to explore options for services and housing referrals. The hotline calls will be forwarded to agencies:
 - REGULAR, Monday-Friday
 - 12:00 am – 6:00 am, IFC HomeStart
 - 6:00 am – 10:00 am, voicemail
 - 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Community Empowerment Fund
 - 3:00 pm – 12:00 am voicemail
 - REGULAR, Saturday-Sunday & HOLIDAYS
 - 12:00 am – 6:00 am, IFC HomeStart
 - 6:00 am – 12:00 am, voicemail

OC Connect Coverage							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC
2 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC
3 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC
4 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC
5 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC
6 AM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
7 AM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
8 AM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	👤 DSS Hillsborough	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
9 AM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	👤 DSS Hillsborough	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
10 AM	Voicemail	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF Chapel Hill	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	Voicemail
11 AM	Voicemail	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF Chapel Hill	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	Voicemail
12 PM	Voicemail	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF Chapel Hill	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	Voicemail
1 PM	Voicemail	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF Chapel Hill	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	Voicemail
2 PM	Voicemail	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF Chapel Hill	👤 / ☎ CEF	👤 / ☎ CEF	Voicemail
3 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	👤 DSS Hillsborough	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
4 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	👤 DSS Hillsborough	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
5 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
6 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
7 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
8 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
9 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
10 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
11 PM	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail	Voicemail
12 AM	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC	☎ IFC

Standardized Assessment Process

- People who have experienced homelessness for 14+ days and are interested in housing referral are assessed using the VI-SPDAT version 2 in the OC Connect system. Agencies across Orange County are training in OC Connect, as of January 2018 the list of agencies that participate are:
 - Chapel Hill Police Department
 - Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)
 - Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC), inclusive of IFC Community House and IFC HomeStart shelters
 - Orange County Department on Aging
 - Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Office
 - Orange County Department of Social Services
 - Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCEPH)
- Orange County uses this VI-SPDAT score referral range:
 - Score of 10-17 – prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Score of 4-9 – prioritized for Rapid Re-Housing
 - Score of 3 or lower – no formal program referral, households will be assisted with case management and links to mainstream resources as best fits their needs
- Households with scores of 4 and higher are placed on the HOME Committee list each month. OCEPH staff reshuffle this list each month giving each household a unique prioritization number that encompasses: (1) households with higher VI-SPDAT scores, (2) longer lengths of time homeless, and (3) people living unsheltered vs. in emergency shelter or transitional housing programs. OCEPH distributes the updated HOME list before the monthly HOME Committee meeting, adding households who have presented for services scoring 4+ on the VI-SPDAT. OCEPH also distributes the list after each HOME Committee meeting, updating households who have been housed or removed from the list.
 - Agency staff prioritize housing voucher availability based on vulnerability but are looking for individualized housing solutions for all people on the HOME Committee list
- OCEPH is working on materials to provide clarity and information for households on the HOME Committee list about the purpose of the list and how to obtain updated information while maintaining client confidentiality and privacy.
- When primary program referral is not available, service providers will work with households to find other community options that are available to transition to permanent housing
 - For example, a household with a score of 11 would be prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), but no PSH vouchers are currently available – this household would be referred to Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) if RRH funds are available, or for Section 8 Public Housing, if units/vouchers are available, or SOAR, if a person in the household has a disability and does not yet receive SSI/SSDI, or SNAP benefits if the household is eligible, etc. etc.
- Service providers meet regularly (as of January 2018 monthly on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 9 am – noon) to case conference the by-name list of the most vulnerable people seeking housing at the HOME Committee. Service providers work together to prioritize primary referrals and other community options to transition households to permanent housing as quickly as possible using Housing First principles and methods.

Overall Prioritization Policies

- For program types with multi-level prioritization criteria, individuals/households will be referred to actual open slots in programs from the HOME Committee list – the person highest on the list will receive the housing referral
- The HOME Committee list is prioritized by
 - VI-SPDAT score – higher scores prioritized
 - Length of time homeless – longer times prioritized
 - Living situation – unsheltered situations prioritized over sheltered homeless
- If households fall into multiple prioritization categories (i.e. they have a high acuity score from the VI-SPDAT and they are Chronically Homeless), they shall be prioritized based on the highest level of priority they qualify for
- Orange County has adopted HUD Notice CPD-16-11 to prioritize people experiencing chronic homelessness: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5108/notice-cpd-16-11-prioritizing-persons-experiencing-chronic-homelessness-and-other-vulnerable-homeless-persons-in-psh/>

Prioritization by Program Type

- **EMERGENCY SHELTER & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING:** Households will be referred by OC Connect to IFC HomeStart and IFC Community House and out of county shelters to be placed in these programs as beds are available, not prioritized based on severity of service need or vulnerability.
 - Women & Families: IFC HomeStart has beds available for single women and for families, including families headed by single fathers and two parent-headed families in addition to families headed by single mothers and
 - Single women call the Homeless Hotline for shelter referral, 919-245-2222
 - Families call Orange County DSS for a referral 919-245-2800.
 - Men: IFC Community House continues to have beds available for men 18 and older, call the Homeless Hotline for shelter referral, 919-245-2222
 - Seasonal: When weather.com predicts overnight low of 39 degrees or less, IFC Community House & HomeStart have seasonal beds available for single men and single women.
 - For women, 3 beds available: call HomeStart ([919-932-6025](tel:919-932-6025)) between 1-5 pm to sign up; If staff person says space is still available, they will instruct you on when to arrive that evening; Eat dinner before coming.
 - For men, 17 beds available: Call Community House ([919-967-1086](tel:919-967-1086), option 0) to reserve a spot or go to Community Kitchen by 7 pm for ride to Community House; Eat dinner before coming; No walk-ups to the shelter are accepted.
- OC Connect will work with households to secure out of county shelter beds at Urban Ministries of Durham, Allied Churches of Alamance County, the Wilmington Street shelter in Raleigh, and other shelters as dictated by client need and client choice.
- The one transitional housing program in Orange County serves as an emergency shelter for single men and does not have separate prioritization or operational procedure, thus Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing are listed here together .

- **PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** OC Connect prioritizes households per the following criteria
 - Priority 1: Chronic homelessness
 - Priority 2: Highest VI-SPDAT score
 - Priority 3: Length of time homeless
 - Priority 4: Living situation (sheltered vs. unsheltered)

- **RAPID RE-HOUSING:** OC Connect prioritizes households per the following criteria
 - Priority 1: Same as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) when PSH is not available
 - Priority 2: Highest VI-SPDAT recommended score range of 4-9
 - Priority 3: Length of time homeless
 - Priority 4: Living situation (sheltered vs. unsheltered)

- Rapid Re-Housing case managers will use best practice program models, including case management paired with financial assistance and progressive engagement, to work with each household individually to determine the amount of rent, if any, the household must pay while receiving Rapid Re-Housing assistance using these factors:
 - Amount of household income (if any)
 - Amount of household expenditures
 - Any other factors affecting household's ability to enter and maintain permanent housing
 - Given that the community need for Rapid Re-Housing services outstrips community resources and national data show RRH can be successful in most cases with 3-5 months assistance, RRH case managers will attempt to transition each household as quickly as possible to self-sufficiency while not jeopardizing and household's long-term stability

- **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION:** The CoC does not currently fund homelessness prevention services with ESG or CoC funds. The CoC works with DSS and faith based partners offering prevention and guides people at risk of homelessness to a regularly updated Google doc listing emergency financial assistance. Each prevention program currently determines program eligibility and prioritization. The CoC will work with these agencies to bring prevention services under the coordinated entry umbrella. At that time, the CoC will take referrals for prevention services through OC Connect. OC Connect will prioritize using prevention funding for shelter diversion, then by the immediacy of the spell of imminent homelessness. People will be prioritized for other prevention services based on funding availability.
 - As of January 2018, there are no private (i.e. non ESG -funded) homelessness prevention services that participate in OC Connect. People will be prioritized for referrals to these programs based on the same methodology above
 - No separate access point(s) for homelessness prevention services exist in Orange County. The CoC will work with all agencies providing prevention services, regardless of funding source, to coordinated how persons will be prioritized for referrals to homelessness prevention services

- **STREET OUTREACH:** The CoC does not have a street outreach program as of January 2018, but is working to establish this needed program type. Once operational, people experiencing homelessness will be referred to Street Outreach per Priority 1 of the HUD Homeless definition:
Persons residing on the streets, in vehicles or other places not meant for human habitation that have refused or are unlikely to engage with other homeless service providers in the community; or people residing on the streets, in vehicles or other places not meant for human habitation and are matched to transitional housing, rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing but are not yet housed.

- All street outreach will offer clients the same standardized process as persons who access coordinated entry through site-based access points. Street outreach efforts will be linked to OC Connect, the coordinated entry process.

Addressing the Needs of Households Fleeing Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

- Households fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking will be connected immediately to the domestic violence service provider Compass Center for safety planning, even when households are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers. OC Connect screens for safety concerns in three different places in the intake process. People fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and victims of trafficking have safe and confidential access to OC Connect and victim services, including access to the comparable process used by victim service providers, and immediate access to emergency services such as domestic violence hotlines and shelter.

Grievances

OC Connect will protect participants' rights and inform participants of their rights and responsibilities by People shall have their rights explained to them verbally and in writing when completing an initial intake. At a minimum, rights will include:

- The right to be treated with dignity and respect
- The right to appeal housing referral decisions
- The right to be treated with cultural sensitivity
- The right to have an advocate present during the appeals process
- The right to request a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the project's tenant/person selection process
- The right to accept housing/services offered or to reject housing/services;
- The right to confidentiality and to be informed about when confidential information will be disclosed, to whom, and for what purposes, as well as the right to deny disclosure
- The right to file a grievance for violation of nondiscrimination policies

Grievances about OC Connect referrals and procedures could come from clients trying to access services or from participating agencies. Please submit grievances as soon as possible, preferably within 10 days of the decision or problem arising, on agency letterhead for agencies. Client or agency grievances can be sent in writing to the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) via email to

Croot@orangecountync.gov or via mail at PO Box 8181, Hillsborough, NC 27278 stating:

- A detailed account of the grievance
- Why/how the agency or household believes OC Connect, the HOME Committee, or others were in error
- Proposed solution(s)

OCPEH staff or another designee will reply to any grievance within 3 days, stating:

- Confirmation of receipt of grievance
- Details of the next steps regarding the appeal for both the aggrieved party and others
- A timeline with deadlines and/or meeting dates

The State ESG Office staff will be carbon copied (cc) on this and any further correspondence regarding appeals. OCPEH will identify a group (either a sub-group of the HOME Committee, OC Planning Committee or the Regional Committee at large) to hear appeals and to determine a decision.

Within 15 days of receipt of a grievance, the group will respond in writing with:

- A summary of the grievance
- A recap of activities since the grievance was filed
- The decision of the group
- If needed, any further steps or actions to be taken by the agency or OCPEH, including a timeline with

dates

OCPEH or other Orange County homeless service agencies will offer assistance to anyone who needs accommodations to complete the above process.

Privacy

- OC Connect uses a digital consent process to obtain participant consent to share and store participant information for purposes of assessing and referring participants through the coordinated entry process
- The consent form will be updated ongoing as partner agencies shift over time. Please see the OC Connect consent form as of January 19, 2018 in APPENDIX A
- Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness protects all data collected through the coordinated entry assessment process by
 - All computers running OC Connect are required to have password protection
 - Maintaining all written OC Connect materials in locked cabinets
 - Not collecting any information not necessary for service or program referral
 - All people attending the HOME Committee meeting are required to sign the confidentiality policy, see APPENDIX B
 - Requiring all staff administering OC Connect to be trained, inclusive of privacy trainings

Nondiscrimination

- Orange County has developed and operates a coordinated entry that permits recipients of Federal and State funds to comply with applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and requirements. Recipients and sub-recipients of CoC Program and ESG Program-funded projects must comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws, including the following:
 - Fair Housing Act prohibits discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status.
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
 - Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits public entities, which includes State and local governments, and special purpose districts, from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in all their services, programs, and activities, which include housing, and housing related services such as housing search and referral assistance.
 - Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits private entities that own, lease, and operate places of public accommodation, which include shelters, social service establishments,

and other public accommodations providing housing, from discriminating on the basis of disability.

- In addition to federal policies, agencies in Orange County shall not discriminate based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Orange County wants to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities. Recipients of Federal funds and CoCs must provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services necessary to ensure effective communication (e.g. Braille, audio, large type, assistive listening devices, and sign language interpreters).
- Process to File Nondiscrimination Complaint - nondiscrimination complaints are requested to be filed as soon as possible, preferably within 10 days of the issue arising, on agency letterhead if coming from an agency. Complaints can be sent in writing to the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) via email to Croot@orangecountync.gov or via mail at PO Box 8181, Hillsborough, NC 27278 stating:
 - A detailed account of the complaint
 - Proposed solution(s), if any

OCPEH staff or another designee will reply to any grievance within 3 days, confirming receipt of grievance and detailing next steps including a timeline with deadlines and/or meeting dates. OCPEH or other Orange County homeless service agencies will offer assistance to anyone who needs accommodations to complete this process.

Mandated reporting

All agencies offering homeless services should ensure all front-line staff members have full training to understand North Carolina law on mandated reporting. As the coordinated entry system, OC Connect does not contain specific mandated reporting information. If agencies have specific mandated reporting procedures, these should be followed.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and procedure manual, for those definitions identified in this section as a HUD Definition, the actual definition provided by HUD shall supersede those enumerated in this document.

- Chronically Homeless (HUD Definition) - HUD defines a chronically homeless person as a person who:
 1. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - a. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the cumulative total of the four occasions is at least one year. Stays in institutions of 90 days or less will not constitute a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the cumulative total; and
 - b. Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-

- traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability;
2. Has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition, before entering that facility; or
 3. Who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) of this definition.
- Disability (HUD Definition) - HUD defines a person with disabilities as a person who:
 1. Has a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.423), or
 2. Is determined by HUD regulations to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment that:
 - a. is expected to be of long, continued, and indefinite duration;
 - b. substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently; and
 - c. is of such a nature that more suitable housing conditions could improve such ability, or
 3. Has a developmental disability as defined in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 15002(8)), or
 4. Has the disease acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any conditions arising from the etiologic agent for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV).

To qualify for low income housing under HUD public housing and Section 8 programs, the definition does not include a person whose disability is based solely on any drug or alcohol dependence.

- Literally Homeless (HUD Homeless Definition Category 1) A person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
 1. An individual with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, camping ground; or
 2. An individual living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government program for low-income individual); or
 3. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
- At imminent risk of homelessness (HUD Homeless Definition Category 2) A person who will imminently lose their housing (within 14 days) and become literally homeless
- Homeless under other Federal statutes (HUD Homeless Definition Category 3)
A person defined as “homeless” by other federal statute (e.g., Dept. of HHS, Dept. of Ed.)
- Fleeing domestic abuse or violence (HUD Homeless Definition Category 4)
A person fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, stalking, dating violence, or sexual assault
- At Risk of Homelessness
 1. Category 1: A person who:

- a. Has an annual income below 30% of median income for the area; AND
- b. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place defined in Category 1 of the “homeless” definition; AND Meets one of the following conditions:
 - i. Has moved because of economic reasons 2 or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for assistance; OR
 - ii. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; OR
 - iii. Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance; OR
 - iv. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for people with low-income; OR
 - v. Lives in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room; OR
 - vi. Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care; OR
 - vii. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient’s approved consolidated plan.
2. Category 2: A child or youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under another Federal statute
3. Category 3: An unaccompanied youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) or that child or youth if living with him or her.

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A Homeless Management Information System is an electronic web-based data collection and reporting tool designed to record and store person-level information on the characteristics and service needs of people experiencing homelessness throughout a Continuum of Care (CoC) jurisdiction. Usage of the HMIS is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for any program receiving CoC or ESG funds.

- Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)


The Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) is a triage tool that provides information to assist with finding an appropriate ‘match’ to a particular housing intervention to people based on their acuity in several core areas. Within those recommended housing interventions, the VI-SPDAT allows for prioritization based on presence of vulnerability across five components: (A) history of housing and homelessness (B) risks (C) socialization and daily functioning, (D) wellness - including chronic health conditions, substance usage, mental illness and trauma, and (E) family unit. Orange County uses Version 2 of the VI-SPDAT for both individuals and families as the universal assessment tool across the Continuum of Care. Staff administering the VI-SPDAT should complete OC Connect training (available free and online) prior to administering the tool. OCEPH staff will ensure access to training for all agency staff on-going.

APPENDIX A: Digital Consent Form

The client must always be given a copy of this form after signing.
 In the following cases, minors have the right to release information without a parent's signature and have the same rights as adults:

1. Emancipated minors;
2. Minors receiving substance abuse treatment; and
3. Minors receiving treatment for pregnancy, emotional disturbance, and sexually transmitted diseases.

If the client prefers Spanish, print this [Spanish Version](#) for them for them to read and sign, and then fill out the form below with their responses.

 **OC Connect: Consent to Exchange Information**

The **HOME Taskforce** (Housing in Orange Made Effective) connects people experiencing homelessness to appropriate services and housing. This group is coordinated by the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness and includes representatives from Cardinal Innovations, Carramore, CASA, Chapel Hill Police Department, Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), Community Link, Durham VA (Veteran Affairs) Medical Center, Freedom House, Inter-faith Council for Social Service (IFC), Law Office of Judith Romanowski, Lutheran Family Services, Orange County Department on Aging, Orange County Department of Social Services (DSS), Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA), Peer support agencies licensed through Cardinal Innovations, Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Office, Orange County Emergency Services (EMS), Outreach Court, Piedmont Health Services, UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health, UNC Horizons, UNC Hospitals, Durham Continuum of Care, and Volunteers of America. The purpose of this form is to provide your consent for the members of the HOME Task Force to exchange information about you to coordinate their services to better help you.

I understand what information will be released, the purpose for the release of the information, and that there are statutes and regulations protecting the confidentiality of the information to be released. I understand further that the federal privacy law (45 CFR Part 164) protecting health information may not apply to the recipient of the information and, therefore, may not prohibit the recipient from redisclosing it. Other laws, however, may prohibit redisclosure.

I understand the terms of this release and voluntarily give my authorization. I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization form and understand that my treatment, payment, enrollment in a health plan, or eligibility for benefits will not be conditioned on any of the entities listed above receiving my signature on this authorization.

I further understand that I may revoke my authorization by giving written notice to my caseworker or the Homeless Programs Coordinator, Corey Root (croot@orangecountync.gov, 919-245-2496). Such revocation does not affect the validity of the consent for information disclosed prior to the revocation. If not revoked earlier, this authorization expires automatically one year from the date it is signed or upon (Date you wish consent to expire:) whichever is earlier. (date specified by client or dictated by the purpose of the authorization)

I, **BrandyCayton**, hereby authorize the exchange of information to/from Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness/ HOME Task Force.

Please **initial below** indicating which information regarding your treatment may be exchanged. Release of information is limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose for which the request is made.

I authorize periodic exchange of information between the above noted agencies, including information related to assessment/diagnoses, medical history, treatment history.

I authorize the exchange of information even if such exchange contains information related to mental health treatment.


I authorize the exchange of information even if such exchange contains information related to substance abuse.

I authorize the exchange of information even if such exchange contains information related to HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases.

Other (specify):

I have read and understand the information in this Consent to Exchange Information form.
You may sign using either:


1. Your Name followed by your birthdate: BrandyCayton 12/30/1981
2. Your DV Agency #
3. Your OC CONNECT ID #

Signature:  Date:

Signed By: (Specify if signature is that of client, parent(s), legal guardian, or personal representative)

If not signed by client, explain representative's authority to act on behalf on client:

(Witness signature is required only if the above client signature has been signed by a mark, DV # or, OC Connect #)

Witness Signature:  Date:

THE INFORMATION RELEASED IS CONFIDENTIAL AND REDISCLOSURE IS PROHIBITED EXCEPT AS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY STATE OR FEDERAL LAW.

APPENDIX B: HOME Committee Confidentiality Agreement



*HOME Committee
Confidentiality Agreement*

As part of the work with the HOME Committee you may have access to view, update, or modify sensitive information about partners' clients. You must treat this information as confidential and not share with anyone unless specifically authorized. OCPEH defines sensitive information as:

- Client names, nicknames, or any other identifying information
- Client address, location, or whereabouts
- Client personal finance information including social security numbers, financial data, or related info
- Client health information including information on medical conditions, treatment, or history
- Information on the OCPEH/100,000 Homes Task Force plans and operations

All information collected, accessed, or viewed, as part of the OCPEH HOME Committee is to be treated as confidential in written, electronic, printed, and all other forms. Information is the property of the OCPEH and should not be released, shared, or discussed without prior authorization. This includes communication in any form with clients, co-workers, outside agencies, or any other party. In the event of you are unsure if information can be shared, **DO NOT DISCLOSE INFORMATION**. Contact your immediate supervisor or the Homeless Programs Coordinator at OCPEH to obtain approval. Unauthorized disclosure of OCPEH/100,000 Homes Task Force information may result in disciplinary or legal action or may result in dismissal.

As a participant in the OCPEH's HOME Committee, I understand that I may have access to sensitive information as defined by OCPEH. I agree to maintain the security and confidentiality of client and related HOME Committee information. I will not disclose, share, publish, copy, or distribute any HOME Committee information without express permission. I will not disclose or share my username or password to OCPEH's OC Connect client notes, and will report any questions, issues, or suspicious activities to my supervisor or to the Homeless Programs Coordinator.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

Would you like to be added to the HOME Committee email group to receive meeting notices and meeting materials by email? YES NO

If yes, email address: _____