Frequently Asked Questions?

Western PA CoC Coordinated Entry

Pre-screening Video

Q1. You noted that the pre-screening will no longer be built into HMIS but the video didn't address explicitly how folks should be conducting the prescreening/diversion. Do we need to be doing this on paper outside the system prior to starting HMIS enrollment?

A1. Currently the prescreening tool is used in two ways- 1) by community partners to know when to refer a household to a General Assessment Center, Auxiliary Assessment Center or Domestic Violence Center, and in this case are not currently recorded anywhere, and, 2) by assessment center personnel in ClientTrack as a mechanism to help "double-check" if a household needed to be referred to an DVAC before proceeding and to prevent an assessment from being completed if a household was not Category 1 or Category 4. Our guidance at this time is that community partners should continue to use these questions as they have done, and that assessment centers should still be asking these questions and additional supporting questions to ensure households are being linked to the appropriate Assessment Center and meet the Category 1 or 4 definition of homelessness, but do not need to be recorded anywhere.

Triage DVAC video

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: There were some possible clarification issues with the chronic homelessness flowchart. In the video explanation it was noted that for the chronic homelessness definition that if any member of the household had a disability that you could move along the flowchart, but the language in the flowchart is correct-- it has to be the head of household for the household that has a disabling condition to meet the chronic definition. While a household can technically qualify for PSH if any member of the household has a disability, the household cannot meet the chronic definition unless the head of household meets the chronic definition.

VISPDAT Training

Q1. Can the training clarify (specifically for DVAC's where this isn't automated) what assessment to give to a parenting youth age 18-24 (the TAY or the family)?

A1. A parenting youth would be assessed utilizing the Family VI-SPDAT

Q2. Can policies/procedures clarify how often someone can or should be re-assessed? For example, if someone's circumstances change significantly and their score may have changed as a result or if they have been on the list for a certain period of time (e.g. over a year?) should they be re-assessed? Or if someone was unwilling to answer all the questions but now is able to answer questions, can they be re-assessed?

A2. We recommend following the current operating procedure for updating assessments and mirror the examples listed in the question.

Q3. Will policies/procedures provide more formal guidance on whether someone scoring 0-3 will be added to the prioritization list vs. being an agency or assessor level decision?

A3. Yes – more guidance will be provided in the future around this issue. In the interim, agencies can add these households to the By-Name List. However, they should do so knowing that it is unlikely that they will receive an offer for RRH or PSH and should therefore focus on providing assistance in exploring other local housing interventions to help this household resolve their homelessness.

DVAC and GAC: Bridging the Gap Training

Q1. Can the DVAC referral tool include guidance from HUD on number of bedrooms for family size?

A1. Yes – this has been added to the tool.

Q2. DVAC Referral Tool- If someone is chronic, and disabling condition, and veteran, should this all go in the same box? That was a bit confusing to me. And if they are none of the above, does that box stay blank? Perhaps some clarification on that.

A2. If you are reporting a household as Chronic, than you do not need to also note that they have a disabling condition as this is a pre-requisite for establishing Chronic status. However, we have the option of indicating if the household has a disabling condition (if they aren't chronically homeless) so they can be identified as being eligible for PSH. You will never have more than two letters in that box CV or DV, but could also have C, D, or V individually. And yes, you could also have none.

Chronically Homeless, Veteran = CV
Chronically Homeless Non-veteran = C
Not Chronically Homeless, Disabling Condition in Household, Veteran = DV
Not Chronically Homeless, Disabling Condition in Household, Non-Veteran = D
Not Chronically Homeless, No Disabling Condition in Household, Veteran = V
Not Chronically Homeless, No Disabling Condition in Household, Non-Veteran = Blank and this section would be skipped: DV – 1 – SA – 7 – 1 – 61+ (which translates as a DV household, who is not chronically homeless, has no disabilities in their household, is not a Veteran, scored 7 on the Single Adult assessment tool, needs 1 bedroom and is 60+ years old)

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION: In the video at the end of the Housing Needs Assessment the household was not placed on the prioritization list prior to finishing the workflow. Please be sure when finalizing this assessment that you also change the status to placed on the prioritization list.

Coordinated Entry Office Hours # 1 – May 28, 2020

Q1. What is the difference between HMIS & CE?

A1. HMIS is a database system that tracks homeless services across our entire CoC. Some programs are required to use this database (including COC, ESG, SSVF, etc), but all programs that serve homeless households are encouraged to use HMIS (like emergency shelters, HAP, etc) so that we have comprehensive data within one system and can look at gaps, trends, needs etc across the continuum. Coordinated Entry is a tool that allows programs to prioritize households and determine who should be offered specific housing interventions.

Q2. Are Category 2 households added to the by name list? If not, do we still complete a VI-SPDAT?

A2. Category 2 households are eligible for some COC & ESG resources, but are most often going to be prioritized lower than Category 1 or Category 4 households. If Category 2 households are going to become literally homeless (there is no diversion strategy available—such as other funds, natural supports, etc), they should be added to the by name list. Those that can be diverted, need not be added to Coordinated Entry. Local communities should have some conversations about their approach to Category 2 based on the resources and stakeholders available.

Q3. Are we going to have access to the old system's CE assessment or do we only have access to the data spreadsheet?

A3. Everyone should have access to the old system for approximately 30 days.

Q4. I am not able to sign into the old system, is that an issue with just my username/password?

A4. Possibly. Stephen will talk to the HMIS administrators to determine the issue.

Q5. Is the prioritization list and the by-name list the same thing?

A5. In the upgraded system, no. The by-name list will contain everyone who has had a coordinated entry event, but only certain households (those with the most barriers) would be prioritized for housing interventions. (The prioritization list will be a subset of the complete by-name list).

Q6. If I have a Category 2 person on my spreadsheet, what do we do?

A6. Please contact them to see if there is a diversion strategy available that can meet their needs. If they are going to become literally homeless, please conduct the coordinated entry assessment.

Q7. Are Category 2 eligible for transitional housing?

A7. YES.

Q8. If a household needs emergency shelter how do we refer them to the nearest out of county Emergency Shelter?

A8. The new system will allow for referrals to be "pushed" out to available programs including emergency shelters. Not all shelters are currently using HMIS, and the list of referrals within HMIS is still a work in progress. The "push" referrals from the system should never take the place of phone calls to local shelters to be sure the connection is made for the client.

Q9. We are anticipating an increase in Category 2 assistance requests as evictions start to resume post COVID. How do these requests relate to Coordinated Entry?

A9. We are all anticipating an influx of Homeless Prevention requests. If Category 2 households are going to become literally homeless (there is no diversion strategy available—such as other funds, natural supports, etc), they should be added to the by name list. Those that can be diverted, need not be added to Coordinated Entry.

Q10. What role do General Assessment Centers play in regards to following up with clients, diversion, case management, etc.?

A10. General Assessment Centers are responsible for making sure clients are followed up with and permanently housed. General Assessment Centers can provide this follow up themselves, or work with other local *stakeholders to be sure follow up has occurred. It is highly recommended that communities work together to scrub their list and determine the best stakeholder to work directly with a particular household.*

Q11. Is there funding available to help pay for the staff time associated with the case management services?

A11. Coordinated Entry does not provide any funding for staffing costs. It is recommended to look at the staff who are conducting assessments (and the funding supporting those positions) and looking at the individuals receiving assessments (and the funding they are eligible for) and determining what funding can support the staff time. Some suggestions include: enrolling households who are assessed in other case management programs (such as HAP) so that staff time can be charged to HAP.

Q12. Is it possible to get a hard copy version of the intake and assessment tools for when staff do not have access to HMIS?

A12. YES. There are links to the hard copy tools on the training site. It is preferred that assessments be completed within the online system.

Q13. Are staff without access to HMIS permitted to perform a VI-SPDAT if usual HMIS staff are not available? Or does the assessment need to be delayed until trained staff are available?

A13. Staff should go through training, but anyone can do the assessment once trained. It is recommended to have anyone that potentially might complete assessments to go through the trainings. Another option is to call a nearby assessment center who could conduct the assessment over the phone.

Q14. Is the screening tool remaining the same? If not, is it possible to get a hard copy version of this as well?

A14. The 3 questions remain the same. These would primarily be used by your community partners to know who to refer to you for an assessment.

Q15. Is it possible to add the VI-SPDAT script into the housing needs assessment?

A15. We can request this customization, but we have had to limit our number of customizations (so this might not be possible right away).

Q16. Are the spreadsheets that were posted earlier the same as the ones that are being emailed to each agency?

A16. YES. The newest version of the spreadsheet does have an additional print feature.

Coordinated Entry Office Hours # 2 & 3 – June 1-5, 2020

Q1. When will additional videos be available regarding the prioritization list?

A1. We are working through these now and they should be available within a week.

Q2. Is there a way we can check if we added someone to the prioritization list?

A2. Currently anyone who is added to the CE Program, even if they only receive a Triage Assessment, will appear on the ByName List. The ByName list is found in the HOME page menu. Various filters are available and the Score column can be sorted in descending order. People who receive only a Triage Assessment will have a 0 score, which will place them at the bottom of the list. This is why it is important to do a Housing Needs Assessment for people in need of a housing intervention (particularly RRH, PSH). To answer your question specifically, you can review the ByName list to assure that a the CE Program attached to the client saved correctly.

Q3. In the intake / housing assessment process there are two places where we can select "Add to prioritization list." Which do we use and what happens if we choose both?

A3. It appears that these are linked so that if you choose "Add to prioritization list" in one place it automatically updates the other. For now, we recommend ignoring the question in the Triage Assessment and answering it in the Housing Needs Assessment. In order for a person to be placed on the Prioritization List, it is necessary for the last answer you give to be "Add on prioritization list." Note, however, that the client will be on the By Name List regardless of your answer. We have requested a customized filter that will allow us to filter the By Name List for prioritized clients and, thus show only people on the Prioritization List.

Q4. And the Prioritization List is with the By Name List?

A4.Yes, that is correct. It is a subset of the By Name List.

Q5. How should GAC's go through the process of adding info for local DV assessment centers?

A5. The CE subcommittee is currently finalizing advice on this issue, but, basically, a GAC will receive a de-identified form containing the client's DV-ID and other critical coding along with a final VI-SPDAT score. Communication between the GAC and DV center will be important as a client moves through the system. DV assessors are not allowed by law to directly enter information into an HMIS system, so it will be up to the GAC and DV Center to assure that anonymous clients are exited from CE in a timely and accurate fashion.

Q6. Do we wait for the DV to send us thos XX-00-XX-00 code numbers?

A6. Yes, that will come on the form containing the VI-SPDAT score. At that point, the anonymous client can be entered into the CE system.

Q7. Do we know about how long it will be until DV centers have access to the system so they can edit things themselves? Or should we prepare for this to be the new normal?

A7. This becomes the new normal. VAWA laws prohibit DV personnel from directly entering any information into an HMIS system. Since our Coordinated Entry system is part of an HMIS system, the new cooperative data entry system is necessary. We do hope this will facilitate increase, productive communication between GAC's and DVAC's, which should prove helpful to our communities.

Q8. Our deadline goal for entering everyone from our spreadsheet is still Friday 6/5, correct?

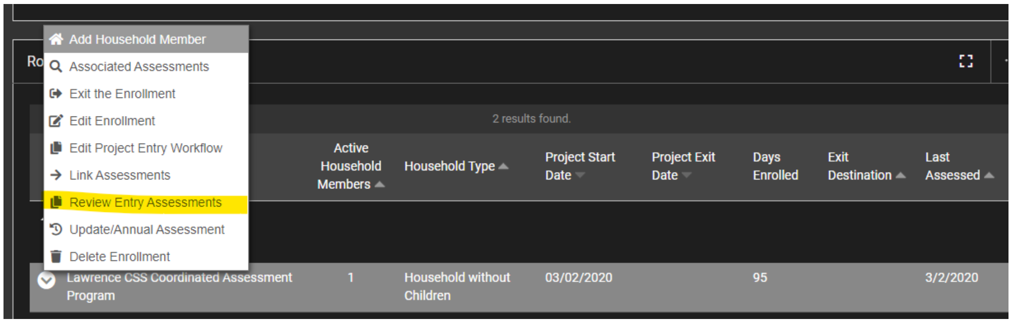
A8. Correct. All clients who need to remain on the CE list need to be migrated into ClientTrack19 by Friday, June 5.

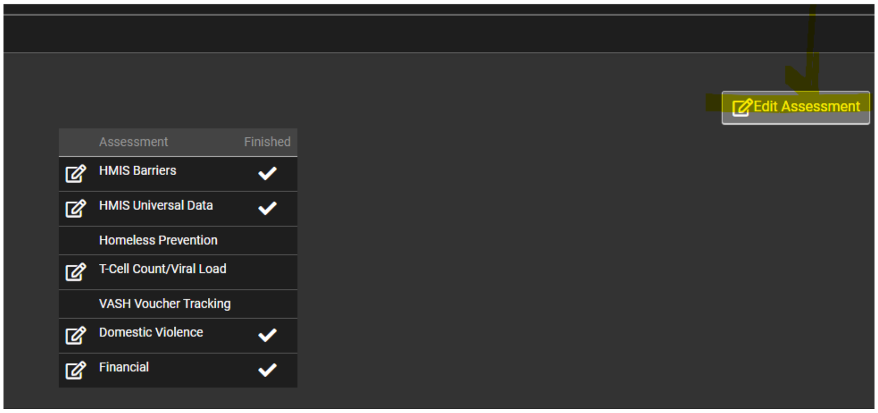
Q9. My coworker was having difficulty pulling a list for her regional grant? Will there be a video or a guide showing what needs to be done to pull a list for programs in the new system?

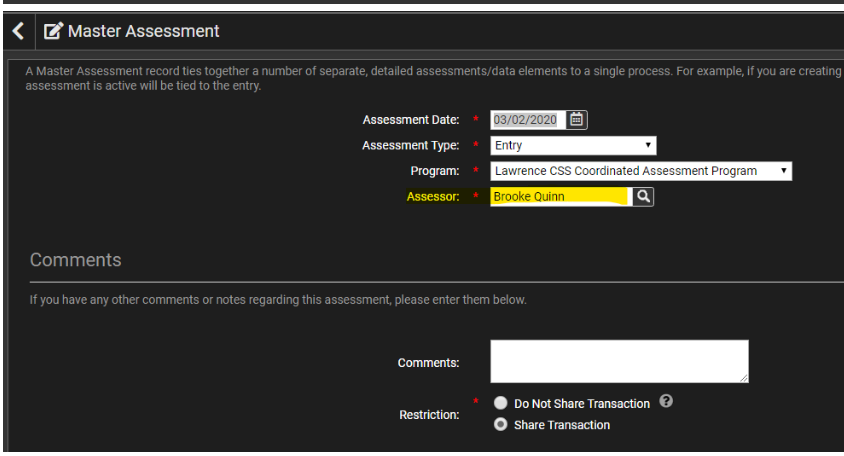
A9. Yes, we are working on that. There is currently a "Bridge the Gap" video on the resources site that partially covers this topic, but more detailed guidance is on the way. With the system still changing day by day, it has been a slower than hoped process.

Q10. When I enter an assessment I'm getting an error for assessor information?

A1. If it's an existing CE record, and we are re-enrolling (i.e. migrating), we may have to edit the Master Assessment to add the assessor name. Here is how you can check this prior to doing the re-enrollment.

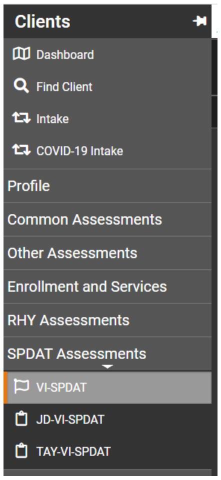




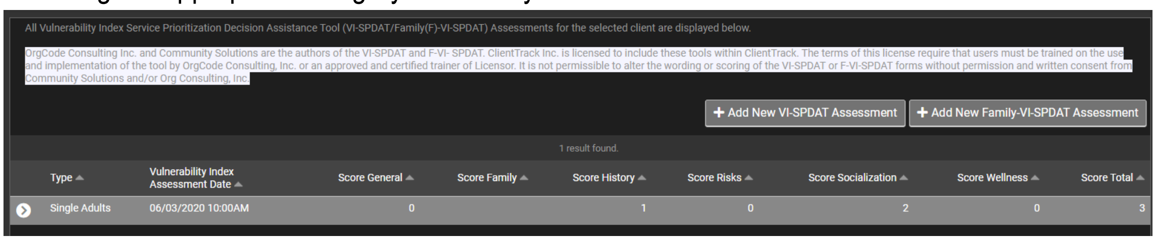


Q11. How can you print the full completed assessment?

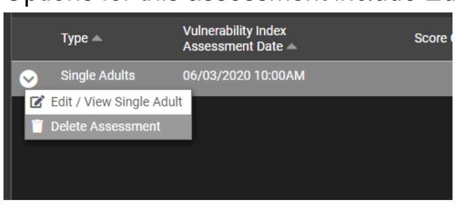
A2. You can print a completed VI-SPDAT (Housing Needs) Assessment from the Clients Page by selecting the SPDAT Assessments section of the menu at left, then the appropriate VI-SPDAT category. For example, if the consumer is a single adult, you would find the completed assessment in the VI-SPDAT section. A Family VI-SPDAT would be found in the JD-VI-SPDAT section and a Youth HoH (w/o children) would be found in the TAY-VI-SPDAT section.



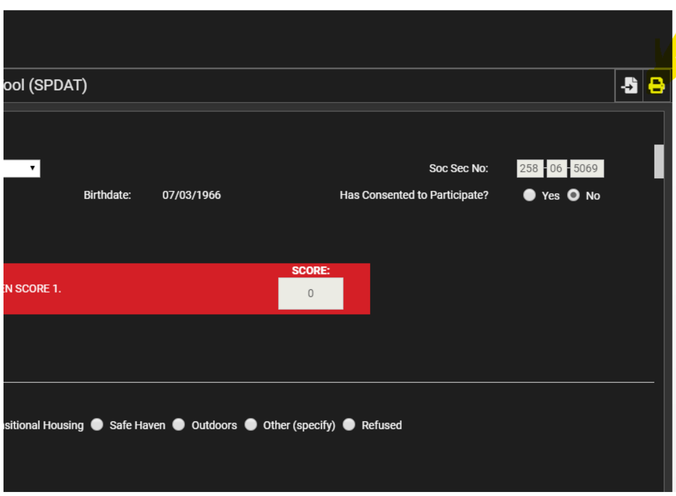
Selecting the appropriate category will show you a list like this



Options for this assessment include Edit/View and Delete

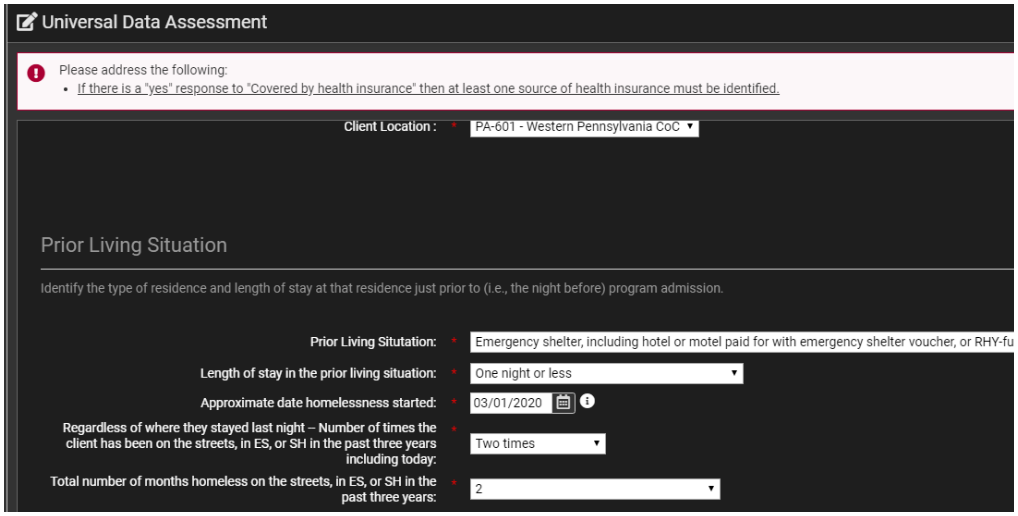


Edit/View will open the VI-SPDAT screen and you can print it from the Printer icon at top right.

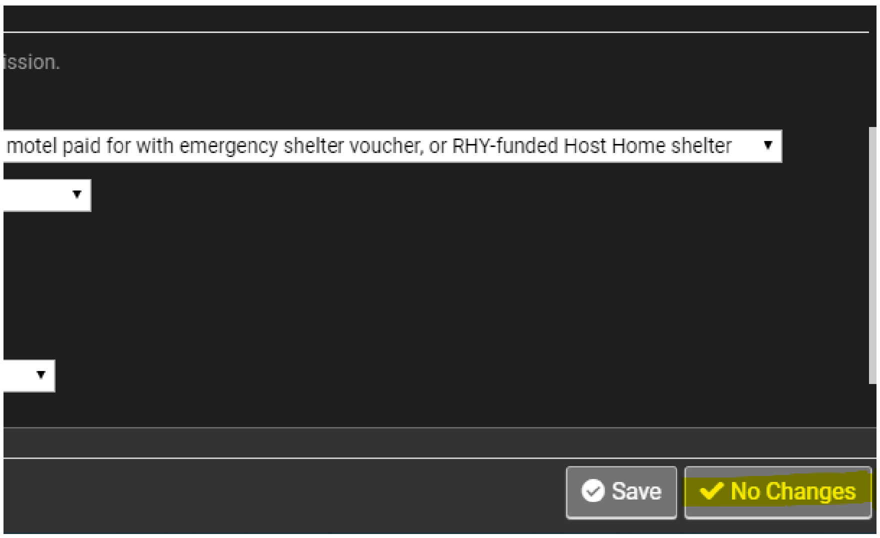


Q12. Can you enter service inquiries and services provided in the new system?
A3. Service inquiries will look a little different. That exact piece is not in the system. There will be videos on “pulling” names for your program put up soon.

Q13. How do we overcome the Health Benefit error that comes up on the Universal Assessment for clients we attempt to migrate?



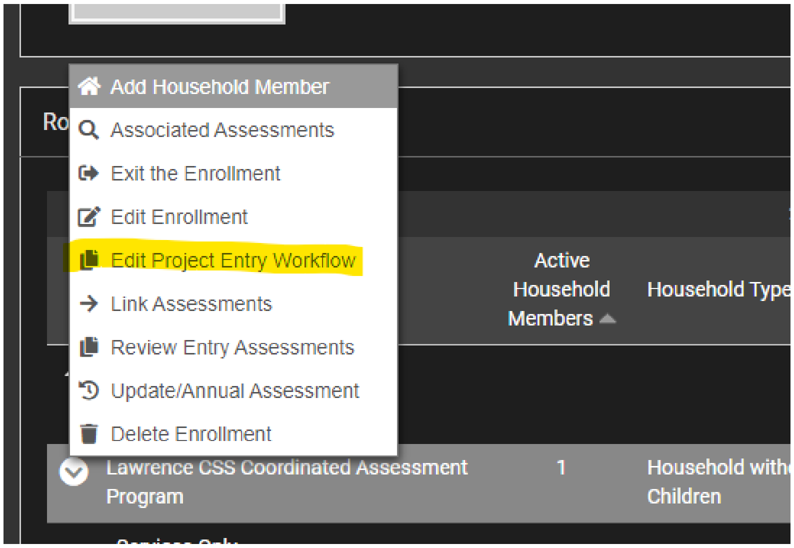
A13. Currently, the only way to avoid this error is to click the No Changes button for this page



That will allow you to move to the next page (and add a Housing Needs Assessment). It prevents you from adding/updating the Prior Living Situation information, but we can't help that at present. We are discussing possible solutions to this issue with DCED.

Q14. If I'm not sure a CE enrollment completed or I get stopped partway through, should I exit the exiting enrollment and do a new intake?

A14. No, the better approach is to edit the existing record's workflow. This will run you through the entire intake and allow you to edit/complete the entry.

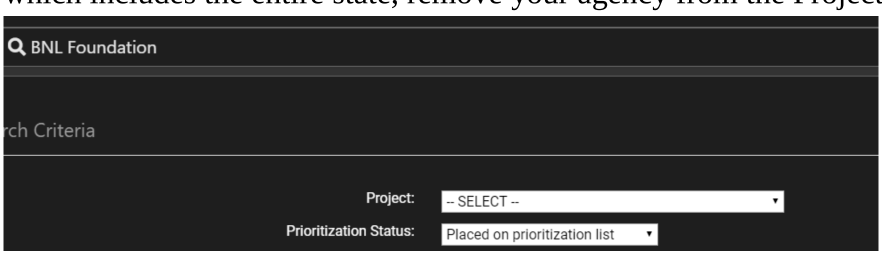


Coordinated Entry Office Hours # 4 – June 8, 2020

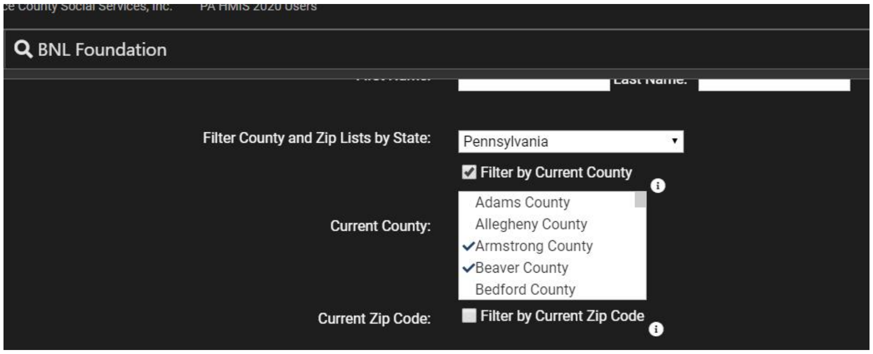
Q1. Can our General Assessment Center call the client directly with a housing offer if the client gives permission?
A1. While the details of communication between agencies within a community can vary quite a bit, it is not a good idea to involve a GAC in the initial offer. This essentially invites a third party into the process. It is better practice to route any initial project offers to the DV case manager.

Q2. How do Service Inquiries work in the new system? Where are they located?
A2. There is a video on the training site that goes into this in detail. Essentially, Service Inquiries have been replaced with push referrals. We have created some interim tools to help you manage and track the referrals you make. A training video also details processes for doing "pull" from the new By Name List. It is a multiple step process. In future, further guidance will be offered regarding the robust referral system being developed for ClientTrack.

Q3. I note that some entries on the full By Name List do not include County Name. Why is that?
First, please note that by default you will see only your agency's coordinated entry clients. To see the full list, which includes the entire state, remove your agency from the Project dropdown.



If you wish to view clients in particular counties, you can select one or more counties in the Current County list. Once you have selected your filters, Click the Search button to refresh the list.



There can be several reasons why an entry in the By Name List does not include a county (or zip code). The 2-1-1 Assessments in the Eastern CoC do not always collect that information initially, and DV clients will not typically have that information either. A future customization of the By Name List includes the ability for clients to select one or more counties where they are willing to reside, which will add the functionality that we had in our prior list.

Coordinated Entry Office Hours # 5 – June 11, 2020

Q1. What happens with DV records when someone needs to come off the list and isn't enrolled in a HMIS housing program?

A1. All records (DV and non-DV records) will have to have to be exited from the CE "program" regardless of whether they are enrolled into a HMIS program, self-resolved, no longer need services, etc.

Q2. Migration List—what happens if I can't get ahold of everyone? I've left messages, sent texts, etc and haven't received a response?

A2. Document your due diligence. It is ok if there are people who are not migrated. If the household needs housing, they will most likely resurface and can be assessed later. If you encounter households who have gained permanent housing, it would be helpful to migrate that record and update the housing placement and exit out of coordinated entry. This will allow your agency to receive "credit" for this placement and help with our data for the APR.

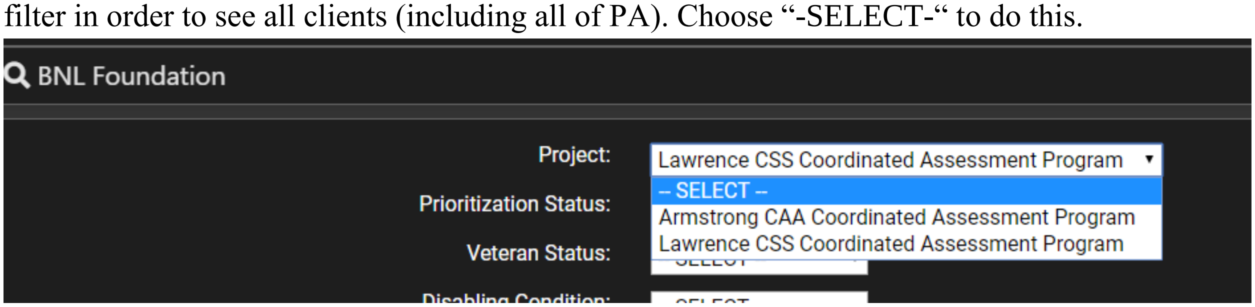
Q3. Should transitional housing residents be assessed and prioritized?

A3. Yes. Transitional Housing residents are Category 1 and should be prioritized for housing interventions.

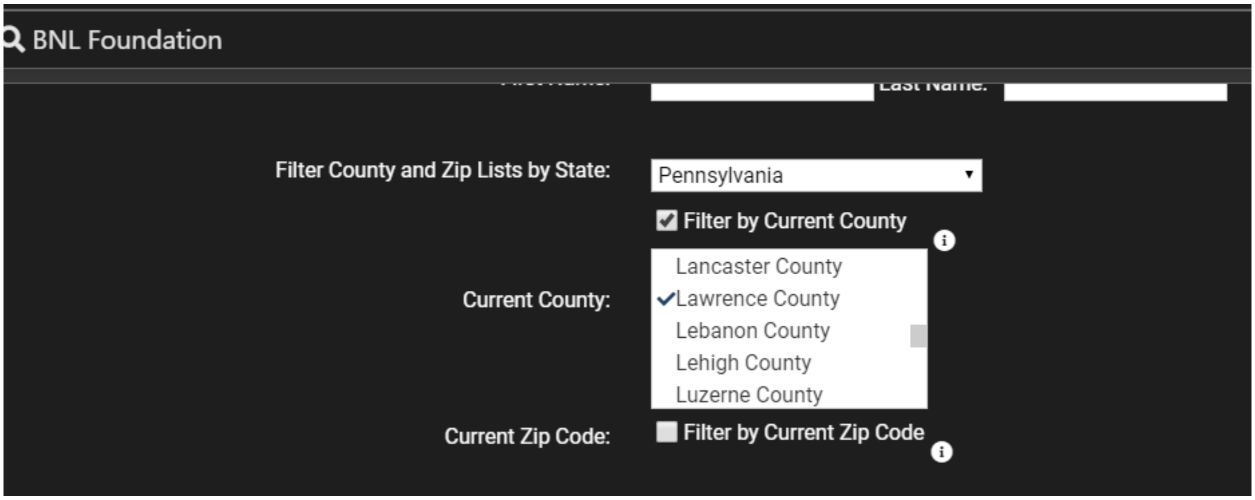
Coordinated Entry Office Hours # 6 – June 18, 2020

Q1. Another agency in our county entered a CE client, but I cannot find them on the ByName List.

A1. This can happen for several reasons. First, be sure to removed your agency name from the By Name List filter in order to see all clients (including all of PA). Choose "-SELECT-" to do this.



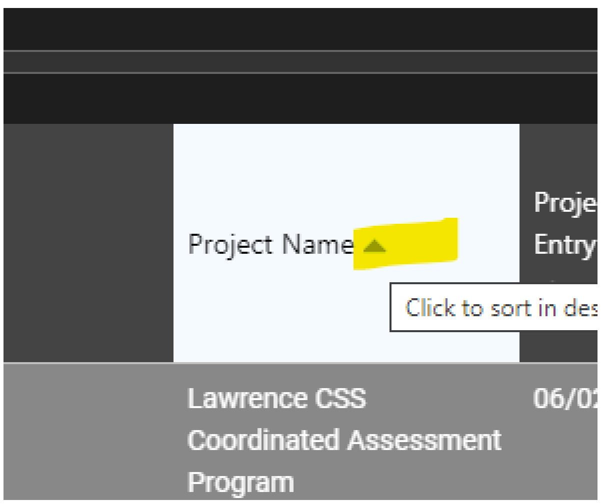
Set any other necessary filters (NOTE: at the time of this writing, the Chronic Filter is throwing an error and you will need to view the Chronic column of the list instead). Then choose Filter by Current Count checkbox and select the County or Counties of interest to you.



Clicking the Search button will populate the list with filtered records.

Please note that this filter is applied to the County or Zip Code of Prior Residence data element entered during the Triage Assessment. If an agency enters a different county or uses a zip code, the record will not show up in this filter. We are advising assessment centers to enter the county of assessment in this field until further customizations are in place later this year.

Another way to search for clients from a particular assessment center is to toggle the sort arrow atop the Project Name column.



This will sort the column by project, so if you know which project or projects you are searching for, those records will be clumped together in the list.

Q2: How do I create s Service Inquiry in the new system?

A2: Service Inquiries are not available in the new CE system. Dan has created a video to show the current workaround process for this process. Please see below (on the Training Site)

Fill Openings

Service Inquiry/ Program Offers

Tools mentioned in the Service Inquiry/Program Offer Video:

Service Inquiry Log

Case Manager Contact List

Service Inquiry Email Form/Text