**CE Victim Service Policy**

**Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care**

***Updated May 1, 2019***

Domestic and Sexual Violence service providers play a critical role within the Coordinated Entry (CE) Processes. The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) met recently to discuss Coordinated Entry implementation and how to best serve survivors of domestic violence (DV) in the Ohio BoSCoC. As a result of the meeting, COHHIO, ODVN and other regional partners have agreed to form a Domestic Violence Workgroup to discuss alternate assessment tools and protocol development for survivors. In the meantime, however, we wanted to clarify how providers are expected to assist survivors right now.

**Access Points and Victims of Domestic Violence**

When a person or household in housing crisis contacts an Access Point (AP) and discloses that they are fleeing DV those Access Point providers should continue to offer referrals to victim service providers where available. However, if the person/household declines the referral or if there are no local victim service provider resources, local emergency shelters are required to serve households fleeing domestic violence.

**VI-SPDAT and Victims of Domestic Violence**

The VI-SPDAT is the common assessment tool for the Ohio BoSCoC. However, people/ households seeking assistance, including those fleeing domestic violence, may decline to complete the VI-SPDAT assessment if they are not comfortable doing so. Providers completing VI-SPDAT assessments should always inform the household that they are not required to complete the assessment in order to access services, but it is particularly critical that this is emphasized with households who are fleeing domestic violence. If a household fleeing domestic violence chooses to complete the VI-SPDAT, providers should shred physical copies of the VI-SPDAT once the assessment is completed and the score is recorded.

If a household opts out of completing the VI-SPDAT, it is imperative for victim service providers to identify and collect information about the the following factors in order to be able to advocate for permanent housing (PH) assistance on their client’s behalf:

* Significant challenges or functional impairments
* High utilization of crisis or emergency services
* The extent to which the individual/household has experienced or is currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness
* Vulnerability to victimization
* Other factor determined by the community that are based on the severity of needs

Victim service providers may decline to complete the VI-SPDAT on all households served in their emergency shelter programs (other ES providers may not decline to do so). However, if a victim service provider is not completing any VI-SPDATs then it is their responsibility to participate in local RRH and/or PSH Prioritization Workgroup meetings and share appropriate client-level data needed to make prioritization decisions in order to ensure their clients are able to access local permanent housing resources. See following section for more details.

**Prioritization of Victims of Domestic Violence for RRH and PSH**

A key feature of CE is following a standardized method of prioritizing people/households who are most in need of assistance for local PH resources. Coordinated Entry is intended to assist communities in prioritizing people who are most in need of assistance.

**RRH and PSH Prioritization Workgroups**

RRH and PSH prioritization workgroups must include victim service providers in their prioritization process. RRH and PSH prioritization workgroups discuss severity of need of currently homeless and eligible households in the community, and make decisions about which households need to be prioritized for available assistance. As part of those prioritization processes, victim service providers must share client-level data that is comparable to the data reported in the PSH and RRH Prioritization by County Report. Sharing relevant information helps ensure that victims of DV are able to access available housing resources via the standardized prioritization process, just like other households experiencing homelessness.

**HMIS Data Entry for Victims of Domestic Violence**

As a reminder, victim service providers, such as domestic violence shelters, utilize a database comparable to HMIS and no data from victim service providers, including referral data and assessment data, should be entered into HMIS. This prohibition includes all client level data, both non-identifying and personally identifying information.

Homeless services providers not dedicated to serving victims of DV or sexual assault, are still required to enter client-level data into HMIS. However, if serving a person fleeing DV who requests to have their data entered into HMIS anonymously or not at all, providers are permitted to continue to serve this person and to enter limited or no client-level data into HMIS. The Ohio BoSCoC Data Quality Standards (available at hmis.cohhio.org) allow for missing data related to serving survivors of domestic violence, where the missing data is in response to direct client request. To date, no project has been penalized for poor HMIS data quality relative to serving survivors. However, homeless services providers not dedicated to serving victims of DV or sexual assault are **NOT** permitted to have a blanket policy of not entering data into HMIS for anyone reporting DV. Every client is given the opportunity to consent to data collection and HMIS data entry.

Questions regarding the Ohio BoSCoC CE Victim Service Policy should be directed to COHHIO’s Coordinated Entry Systems Specialist, Valerie Walton at valeriewalton@cohhio.org. HMIS related questions should be directed to COHHIO’s HMIS team at hmis@cohhio.org

**Victim Services Providers Prioritization Inclusion Form**

Ohio Balance of State CoC staff and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) recognize the highly sensitive nature of information gathered from individuals experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence. These groups have developed the following tool to help ensure victim service providers and their clients are included in the Coordinated Entry Prioritization processes while adhering to the strict confidentiality requirements mandated by federal laws protecting victims of intimate partner violence.

To ensure that all RRH and PSH prioritization workgroups are including victim service providers in their prioritization process, please provide the following information for clients that will be considered for prioritization in the local RRH/PSH Prioritization Workgroup meetings:

Client/Family Unique Identifying Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Household:

Individual Family (with dependent children)

Assessment Tool Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_ Total Points Available in Assessment Tool: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Entry Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Project Type:

 Emergency Shelter Transitional Housing

Is the client or head of household a (please check all that apply):

Disabled Veteran

Victim Service Agency Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee Performing Assessment Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee attesting to accuracy of the Assessment Total Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_