**Ohio BoSCoC Prioritization Assessment Tool (B-PAT)**

**Pilot Project Plan**

**May 2024**

**Background**

When the Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) initially designed its Coordinated Entry System (CE) around 2017, the CoC agreed to adopt the VI-SPDAT as its official common assessment tool. Even then, CoC staff and providers had reservations about the tool, particularly feeling that it was not the most trauma-informed and that some questions felt invasive and unlikely to yield meaningful responses to aid in prioritization for permanent housing (PH) resources.

Beginning around 2022, the Ohio BoSCoC began participating in HUD’s CE Equity Initiative, which is a federal project aimed at assisting selected CoCs to understand the racial/ethnic disparities in who is experiencing homelessness within their systems and to develop actionable plans to address those disparities through implementation of improved CE systems. As part of this work, the Ohio BoSCoC CE Core Team, which worked on the CE Equity Initiative with CoC staff, developed three goals for its work:

1. Annually conduct and publish a system-wide analysis of the racial disparities in the Ohio BoSCoC system
2. Increase access to the Ohio BoSCoC homeless response for those in need, particularly Black, Brown, Indigenous, and all Persons of Color (BIPOC)
3. Adopt a new, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate common assessment tool

The CE Core Team and CoC staff began work to develop a new common assessment tool in 2023. The first draft common assessment tool, preliminarily called the Ohio BoSCoC Prioritization Assessment Tool, or B-PAT, was finalized in April 2024.

**Pilot of B-PAT**

Once the CE Core Team determined that there wasn’t an off-the-shelf assessment tool that we wanted to adopt for use in the Ohio BoSCoC CE system, it moved forward with the development of a custom tool. Because of this, the CE Core Team then also decided that they wanted to conduct some type of testing of the new tool before rolling it out across the full CoC. Engaging in a pilot project to test out the tool gives the CoC an opportunity to make revisions based on provider and client feedback, to improve guidance and/or training, or to entirely scrap the new tool if warranted by the feedback.

**Goals of the B-PAT Pilot**

The goals of the B-PAT pilot are:

* Determine if the B-PAT returns scores that accurately reflect the needs and vulnerabilities of the households assessed
* Determine if the B-PAT feels – to both provider staff and those experiencing homelessness – more trauma-informed
* Determine if the B-PAT assigns equitable scores to households of various races and ethnicities – meaning, white households are not disproportionately awarded higher scores than BIPOC households

**B-PATH Pilot Plan**

The B-PAT Pilot project will collect and review both qualitative and quantitative data to help determine if the tool is appropriate for use in the Ohio BoSCoC. The qualitative component of the B-PAT pilot will involve testing out the new tool in selected communities and collecting feedback on that experience, running recently exited client files through the B-PAT and analyzing the results compared to their previous VI-SPDAT scores. The quantitative component will involve the CoC and HMIS teams reviewing RRH and PSH project enrollment data in pilot communities to compare rates of enrollment by race/ethnicity pre and post B-PAT pilot

**Pilot Timeframe**

The B-PAT pilot project will begin 5/13/24 and end around 8/12/24. That means, specifically, that testing of the B-PAT tool with current clients will cease and providers will return to using the VI-SPDAT as of 8/12/24. Collection of feedback on experiences with and feelings about the B-PAT will continue after 8/12/24, as will review of HMIS data.

**Pilot Participants**

Providers in the following counties have agreed to participate in this pilot project and test out the B-PAT:

* Champaign
* Miami
* Portage
* Warren
* Wayne

**Responsibilities of Pilot Participants**

Providers in pilot communities will do the following during the pilot period:

* Complete the B-PAT with clients who enter the homeless response system during the pilot period
* Run recently exited client files through the B-PAT to see how the resulting score compares to the VI-SPDAT
* Provide feedback on both of the above to the CoC Team

*Completing B-PATs on New Clients*

In general, the process for and timing of completion of the B-PAT with clients is the same as that for completing the VI-SPDAT. The same providers who completed the VI-SPDATs with client previously will now complete the B-PAT instead. The B-PAT is essentially a one-for-one replacement for the VI-SPDAT. More details are in the *B-PAT Instructional Guide*.

There are two significant differences between the VI-SPDAT and the B-PAT that assessors should be aware of, 1) some questions in the B-PAT require reviewing data from the client’s profile or most recent program enrollment in HMIS to provide a response and generate the corresponding score, 2) there is a B-PAT specific for use with parenting youth.

Entering B-PAT Data into HMIS

Pilot communities should have their providers enter B-PAT scores into HMIS, just as they would have done for the VI-SPDAT. Beginning 5/13/24, pilot project communities will no longer be able to record a VI-SPDAT score on a client (at least until the pilot project ends), as that assessment will no longer be available to providers in pilot communities. Only the B-PAT tool will be available in HMIS.

When reporting the B-PAT score in HMIS, staff will hand enter the sub-total scores from the various sections of the B-PAT tools and calculate and enter the total score.

The Prioritization that is fun out of Rme is also being updated to incorporate a new column for B-PAT scores, where applicable.

*Running a Client File Through the B-PAT*

Prior to the end of the pilot period, participating providers will run previous client files through a B-PAT. This entails identifying a small number of recently exited clients who had been assessed with the VI-SPDAT and then completing a B-PAT on their behalf based on the information you have about the client and their experiences. Providers may choose how many client files to run through the B-PAT. When completing this activity, providers should document the new B-PAT score, compare to the client’s previous VI-SPDAT score, and note any concerns, issues, or significant differences between the assessment tool responses and scores.

*Provide Feedback to CoC Team*

Towards the end of the pilot period, participating providers will be asked to participate in discussion groups or interviews to provide the CoC team with feedback on their experiences with the B-PAT. Providers will only need to participate in one group or interview.

The CoC team will also seek provider support to collect feedback from clients/former clients who completed the B-PAT.

**Additional Considerations**

To help ensure that local PH Prioritization Workgroups can still make prioritization decisions during the pilot project period, the HMIS team is updating the Prioritization Report available in Rme to include an additional column for a B-PAT score. The VI-SPDAT scores will continue to populate on the report as well, where clients have them. Providers may use the ‘VI to B-PAT Comp Tool’ to help them compare a VI-SPDAT score to a B-PAT score, for prioritization purposes.

**Review of HMIS**

Upon completion of the pilot project period, CoC staff will engage in a review of HMIS data in an attempt to determine if there are any differences in RRH and PSH enrollments after the pilot of the B-PAT in pilot communities. This HMIS data analysis will include, at minimum:

* Evaluate rates of enrollment into RRH and PSH projects in the pilot project areas based on race and ethnicity prior to pilot implementation and after
* Compare local ES program enrollment data (by race/ethnicity) to local RRH and PSH enrollment data both before and after pilot project

**Guidance and Support Plan**

Throughout the pilot project, Erica Mulryan, CoC Director, will serve as the primary point of contact for pilot project participants.

The CoC Team has created a shared dropbox folder where pilot project participants can find the B-PAT tools and various guidance documents, including any new FAQs that may be shared in the future.

In the near future, the CoC team may also host and record a training on how to complete B-PAT tools (written guidance is now available).