



OHIO

**Balance of State
Continuum of Care**

HARP Tool Training

**Ohio Balance of State
Continuum of Care**

June 17th 2025

Meeting Information



Please mute
your line
when not
speaking.



Use the
questions
feature in the
control panel
to submit
questions (or
unmute).



This training is
being
recorded.



The recording
will be posted
to the
BoSCoC
website and
eLearning
Center



www.cohhio.org

Ohio BoSCoC Staff

Erica Mulryan
CoC Director

Hannah Basting
CoC Coordinator

Erin Hachtel
CoC Coordinator

Susan Wren
CoC Coordinator

Michael Harhager
CoC Coordinator

Jewel Vaughn
CoC Support Specialist

Carolyn Hoffman
System Administrator

Trevin Flickinger
HMIS Data Analyst

Matt Dicks
System Administrator and Training Specialist

Monica Tillis
System Administrator

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- Coordinated Entry Overview
- New Common Assessment Tool History and Background
- New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction
- Resources
- Questions

Training Objectives

- To provide information about why and how the CoC created a new common assessment tool, the HARP Tool
- To provide a high-level overview of key features of the new common assessment tool and key differences between the VI-SPDAT and the new common assessment tool
- This training does NOT replace the need to complete the HARP e-learning course and will not provide detailed instructions for completing a HARP Tool with clients

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- **Coordinated Entry Overview**
- New Common Assessment Tool History and Background
- New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction
- Resources
- Questions

Coordinated Entry Definition

- Coordinated Entry (CE), also known as coordinated intake, coordinated systems, or coordinated assessment...is a process or system that coordinates entry into, movement within, and ultimately exit from a homeless system. Coordinated Entry processes increase the efficiency of a homeless assistance system by standardizing access to homeless services.

Why Coordinated Entry?

- ***HUD requirement***
- Help allocate homeless assistance resources as effectively and efficiently as possible
- Make crisis resources easily accessible to those in need, regardless of where or how people seek assistance
- Prioritize housing resources for persons with the highest needs and longest homeless histories
- Ensure fair and equal access to resources
- Identify gaps and service needs across your system

Coordinated Entry Components



Access



Assessment



Prioritization



Referral

Fundamentals of Assessment in a CE System

- The assessment process is standardized
- CoC designates an official common assessment tool
- Client-centered approach
- Timing and Setting
- Training for staff completing assessments

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- Coordinated Entry Overview
- **New Common Assessment Tool History and Background**
- New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction
- Resources
- Questions

Background

- The CoC's work with HUD's CE Equity Initiative and the CoC's formal CE Evaluation both identified the need for a new common assessment tool within the Ohio BoSCoC CE system
- CE Core Team drafted new common assessment tool to replace the VI-SPDAT – goal was to make a tool more trauma-informed and culturally appropriate
- CoC piloted the new common assessment tool in select Ohio BoSCoC regions and collected additional feedback at pilot end to inform further tool revisions
- New Tool = Housing Assessment and Resource Prioritization (HARP) Tool

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- Coordinated Entry Overview
- New Common Assessment Tool History and Background
- **New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction**
- Resources
- Questions

HARP Tool

- Housing Assessment and Resource Prioritization Tool
- A set of questions administered to individuals and families experiencing homelessness to help determine the severity of need and assist in prioritization decisions for housing resources.

What is the Same?

- No difference in how the assessment tool is administered and score recorded in HMIS
- HARP Tool is generally administered in the same way as the previous assessment tool.
 - HARP Tool score is valid for one year unless client has experienced significant changes
 - Assess the client within 5-7 days of shelter entry if this is their first episode of homelessness.
 - Assess the client immediately if:
 - They have experienced homelessness before
 - They are unsheltered
 - They have needs precluding a shelter stay.

What is Different?

- New questions that are more trauma informed
- Maximum score is 65 points
 - All tools have the same number of maximum points
- Victim service providers will use the HARP Tool
- Requires use of HMIS data to provide some assessment question responses, rather than asking clients the same questions multiple times
- 4 assessment tools:
 - HARP Tool HH with Children
 - HARP Tool HH without Children
 - HARP Tool YYA HH with Children
 - HARP Tool YYA HH without Children

What is Different?

- No housing intervention recommendations will be provided based on score range.
 - Providers should continue to focus on prioritizing those with longest homeless histories and most severe needs, as evidenced, in part, by higher HARP Tool scores
 - In the future, the CoC may provide more detailed guidance regarding how HARP scores reflect client need for particular types of assistance. But this will not be done until after extensive evaluation of the tool can be completed.

Using HMIS Data

- Some HARP Tool question responses must be obtained by staff using **existing HMIS data**
 - Staff should review client HMIS program enrollment or client profile information, as directed
- Using HMIS data **reduces participant burden**—no need to ask questions they've already answered
- HMIS data can be reviewed **before, during, or after** completing the HARP assessment.
- **Non-HMIS participating agencies** should use data from their comparable databases to document responses that would otherwise be pulled from HMIS
- Only ask participants directly if the data isn't already collected during enrollment.

Understanding Dependent Questions

- Some HARP questions depend on earlier responses
- Ask follow-up questions only if the initial question is answered 'Yes'
- If participant doesn't know or prefers not to answer, skip follow-ups
- Mark follow-ups as N/A when not applicable

Considering All Adult Experiences

- When assessing a household with multiple adults, consider the experiences of all household members to determine the appropriate responses to assessment questions
- Where members have had different experiences, document the response that reflects the **most significant barrier** or challenge
- If some adults aren't present, use known info and/or **update responses later if needed**
- **Income question:** consider total household income (e.g., one adult has zero income, and one adult receives SSI = scored as receiving SSI income).

Additional Assessment Question Guidance

Question 2: How long has it been since the household lived in stable, permanent housing?

- If household members have different answers, the assessor should assign points based on the **highest barrier present**
 - **Example:** If Household Member A has been without stable housing for less than 6 months and Household Member B has been without stable housing for more than 12 months, the assessor should assign points corresponding to the response of "**more than 12 months.**"

Additional Assessment Question Guidance

Question 3: Within the last 5 years, have adults in the household been evicted from a housing unit?

- If household members have different answers, the assessor should assign points based on the highest barrier present.
 - **Example:** If Household Member A has been evicted via a verbal or written 3-day notice, or something similar and Household Member B has experienced a court-ordered eviction, the assessor should assign points for “**Both B and C, or multiple evictions or involuntary exits.**”

Additional Assessment Question Guidance

Question 9: Did any adult household members report any income in their current program enrollment?

- Assessors should consider all household members' income collectively when determining the appropriate response to this question.
 - **Example:** If Household Member A receives SSI while Household Member B has no income, the assessor should assign points indicating that **"Household income includes income from SSI or SSDI."**

Transition from VI-SPDAT to HARP

- Staff completing HARP Tools with clients must complete the HARP Tool e-learning course and review resources and documents on the COHHIO website.
- The **Comparison Tool** helps Prioritization Workgroups compare **VI-SPDAT** scores to **HARP** scores for prioritization decision-making

Transition from VI-SPDAT to HARP

- Clients with an active VI-SPDAT (less than 1 year old) who are *still receiving services* within the homeless response system should not be reassessed using the HARP Tool until it is time for reassessment (i.e., one year passed since VI-SPDAT and/or client experienced significant changes in circumstances)
- Clients who had a VI-SPDAT assessment completed within the past year, but who exited the system and are now returning to shelter or engaging with a CE Access Point, should be assessed using the HARP Tool.

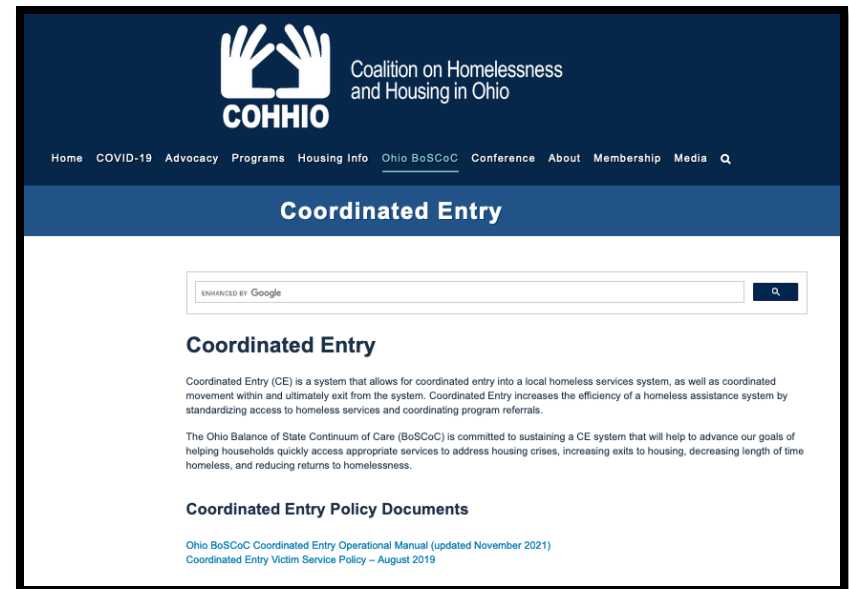
Agenda

- Training Objectives
- Coordinated Entry Overview
- New Common Assessment Tool History and Background
- New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction
- **Resources**
- Questions

CE Documentation and Resources

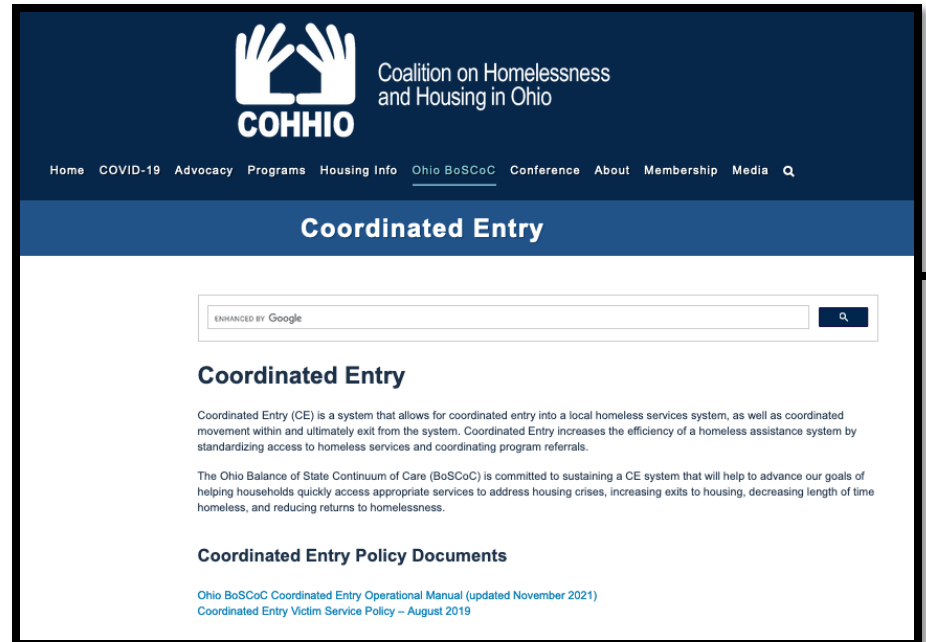
<https://cohhio.org/boscoc/coordinated-entry/>

- Ohio BoSCoC Coordinated Entry Operational Manual
- Referral Guidance
- HARP Tools
- HARP Tool Guidance



CE Documentation and Resources

- HARP Tools
- HARP Tool Guidance



HARP Tool Guidance and Training

[HARP Tool Guidance](#)

[Comparison Tool for HARP Tool and VI-SPDAT Scores](#)

[COHHIO's E-Learning Center Getting Started Guide](#)

[HARP Tool Transition Plan, listserv message – May 12, 2025](#)

Agenda

- Training Objectives
- Coordinated Entry Overview
- New Common Assessment Tool History and Background
- New Common Assessment Tool (HARP Tool) Introduction
- Resources
- Questions

Questions - FAQ



FAQ Q&A

Question: If someone owes money to a friend or family member for staying in their home, how should that response be documented in the HARP Tool?

Answer: If a client owes money to a friend or family member for their stay, **and they are unable to pay and are/were being asked to leave**, this should be considered a threat to their housing stability. In this case, the assessor should answer “**yes**”.

FAQ Q&A

Question: Referring to past HMIS enrollment. If a client is currently reporting that they have no income, but during a previous program enrollment they reported having income, what response should we document in the HARP Tool?

Answer: The assessor should document the response that reflects the income information reported in the current program enrollment. In this case, the assessment response will indicate the client has no income.

FAQ Q&A

Question: What if a client lost their Social Security income due to fraud, over payment, or incarceration? What response should we document in the HARP Tool?

Answer: If the client is currently **not receiving income**, regardless of the reason, and their income is truly **zero**, then the assessor should record the HARP Tool assessment response that indicates the client has **zero income**.

- Please note: This guidance applies specifically to the HARP Tool questions and responses. Program eligibility determination requirements and/or program administration guidance may differ in how income should be calculated or considered.

FAQ Q&A

Question: What constitutes owing money to a landlord?

Answer: A person is considered to owe money to a landlord if there was a formal rental agreement—either verbal or written—and they have an outstanding balance due to the landlord based on that agreement. This applies to current or past rental situations and does not require a formal eviction to be on record. If the household has unpaid rent under the terms of any such agreement, the assessor should respond “yes.”

Contact Information



**Ohio Balance of State CoC
CE Correspondence**

ohioboscoc@cohhio.org

HMIS Correspondence

hmis@cohhio.org

