

# Morris County Continuum of Care

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<https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Departments/Community-Behavioral-Health-Services/Continuum-of-Care>

## **Morris County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Memorandum of Understanding**

### **I. Parties of the Memorandum**

- A.** Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum) are:
  - i.** Members of the Morris County's Coordinated Entry Sub-Committees, which are Sub-Committees of Morris County's Continuum of Care. **See Attachment A** for a list of Collaborating Partners.

### **II. Purpose**

- A.** The purpose of this memorandum is to specify the agreements with the Collaborating Partners as participants in the Morris County Coordinated Entry project. The parties to this memorandum agree to participate in the Morris County Coordinated Entry project. The goal of the project is to provide and improve consumer information, referral, assistance, and access for those Morris County residents who are chronically homeless, currently homeless, and those who are imminently homeless or precariously housed seeking a wide range of services.

### **III. Description of Coordinated Entry**

- A.** All Collaborating Partners agree to provide information about the Morris County Coordinated Entry project and make referrals as appropriate. The Collaborating Partners will implement the Coordinated Entry model by directing seekers of housing services to a funded lead entity, which will provide a safety assessment, prevention, diversion, and tiered screening tool to inform the referral process. The Coordinated Entry process only seeks information necessary to determine the severity of need and eligibility for housing and services. Evidence of length of homelessness and severity of need is defined by the tiered screening tool. The Coordinated Entry protocol provides the opportunity for callers to freely refuse to answer questions without retribution or limiting their access to assistance. Those that are unsure about sharing information on a screening tool will be encouraged to participate to receive the best, most appropriate services. A HIPAA-compliant electronic referral process has been

established amongst the agencies to reduce duplication of basic client information common to applications for services and to streamline access to needed services.

- B.** Evaluation of activities provided under this agreement will be conducted to work towards the continued improvement of the system in line with identified system performance measures and annual needs assessments conducted at the county level.
  
- C.** Key qualities of Morris County’s Coordinated Entry System include:
  - i. Prioritization:** The Coordinated Assessment screening tool ensures that community members with the greatest needs receive priority for housing and homeless assistance available.
  - ii. Low-Barrier:** The Coordinated Entry System does not screen community members out for assistance due to perceived barriers to housing or services.
  - iii. Housing First Orientation:** Community members are housed quickly and efficiently with minimal preconditions or service participation requirements.
  - iv. Person-Centered:** Community members have a choice in their housing services.
  - v. Fair and Equal Access:** All people in Morris County have fair and equal access to the process and can easily access the system via phone – assistance is advertised and promoted.
  - vi. Standardized Access and Assessment:** There is one point of access for entry into the Coordinated Entry System.
  
- D.** The Following are Core components of the Morris County Coordinated Entry System:
  - i.** Pre-screen and safety assessment
  - ii.** Prevention Services
  - iii.** Diversion Services
  - iv.** Shelter and Transitional Housing
  - v.** Rapid Re-Housing
  - vi.** Permanent Housing, including Housing Vouchers
  - vii.** Tailored and Tiered Assessment Tool(s)

- viii. Case conferencing committees amongst collaborating partners that are action-driven to connect community members to immediate housing services
- ix. Housing Navigation to provide wrap-around services to those most vulnerable with the goal of expedited placement into permanent housing or voucher opportunity

#### **IV. Collaborating Partner Responsibilities**

- A. Collaborating Partner responsibilities apply to all Case Conferencing Committees and workgroups under the Coordinated Entry System. Collaborating Partners Agree to:
  - i. Distribute information to the public regarding the Morris County Coordinated Entry System, including their websites.
  - ii. Promote the process and outcomes of the Morris County Coordinated Entry System to the public, local officials, state and federal agencies, and other interested parties.
  - iii. Identify a representative(s) to sit on appropriate Case Conferencing Committees to review community members' service needs, in accordance with attendance requirements established in the Policies and Procedures.
  - iv. Remain engaged in the development, training, marketing, evaluation, and reporting aspects of the system.
  - v. Enter Coordinated Entry specific data events within the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and uphold data quality as per Data Governance standard operating procedures.
  - vi. Offer services to clients deemed appropriate for their agencies' services.
  - vii. Adhere to the established Policies and Procedures.
  - viii. Not to discriminate in providing referrals and/or services based on race, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, financial status, religion, age, or disability.
- B. Support and uphold the Morris County Stigma-Free Communities Initiative in providing care.
- C. Help Identify funding to assist with costs associated with the continued development and implementation of this project.
- D. Provide training and technical assistance to agency staff to ensure standardization of information, assistance and referrals offered to community members.

- E. Provide training and technical assistance to agency staff to ensure standardization of information, assistance and referrals offered to community members.
- F. Participate in training on services and procedures of the Morris County Coordinated Entry System.
- G. Ensure that all Memorandums of Understanding and Confidentiality Agreements are signed upon initial execution and any/all modification.
- H. Hold harmless all participating partners and solely claim responsibility for services provided by their agencies under this agreement. Collaborating Partners shall not be responsible for any claims, loss, liability, damages, costs, and expenses of any kind caused by or resulting from this agreement; all Collaborating partners will carry general liability insurance with a minimum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in coverage to insure their own agency in regard to this agreement.

**V. Confidentiality**

- A. By signing this agreement, individuals participating in any Coordinated Entry Case Conferencing meeting or workgroup are required to sign and adhere to the *Morris County Continuum of Care Case Conference Confidentiality Pledge*. This pledge is an agreement to keep all client information confidential and shared only with Collaborative Partners with the intention of providing services. It further authorizes Collaborative Partners to release, exchange, and discuss medical, housing, social, psychological, employment, education, progress, and other information among each other concerning clients for the purpose of shelter, housing, and making appropriate referrals for other services. Information will only be shared with providers that are relevant to the specific need.

**VI. Term of the Memorandum**

- A. The effective date of this memorandum shall be the date of execution by each Collaborating Partner and shall continue in effect until modified or terminated by the Collaborative Partners under the oversight of the Morris County Continuum of Care's Executive Committee. The agreement will be reviewed annually and may be amended as stipulated in Section VIII of this agreement.

**VII. Amendment of the Memorandum**

- A. This memorandum may be amended at any time by mutual agreement of the parties, as determined by the Collaborating Partners with final approval from the oversight entity of the Morris County Continuum of Care. Such amendments shall not be binding upon any party unless they are in writing and signed by personnel authorized to bind each of the parties.

**VIII. Termination of Memorandum**

- A. Any party may terminate their participation in this agreement with written notification at least 30 days prior to anticipated termination to the lead of the Morris Continuum of Care, funded lead of the Coordinated Entry Project, and Collaborating Partners.

**IX. Entire Agreement**

- A. This contract represents all the terms and conditions agreed upon by all parties. No other understandings or representations, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the parties hereto.

**X. Conformance**

- A. If any provision of this agreement violates any statute or rule of law of the State of New Jersey or Federal statutes, it is considered modified to conform to that statute or rule of law.

**XI. Approval**

- A. This Memorandum of Understanding shall be subject to the approval of the Morris County Continuum of Care Executive Committee; and shall not be binding until so approved. This agreement may review on an annual basis by the Coordinated Entry Committee. This agreement may be altered, amended, or waived only by a written amendment executed by all parties.

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**, consisting of six (6) pages is executed by the persons signing below who warrant that they have the authority to execute the Memorandum of Understanding.

All collaborating agencies will be required to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding to formally authorize their participation in the **Morris County Coordinated Entry** project.

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**Collaborating Partner**

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**Agency/Business Address (printed)**

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**Agency/Business Representative Name (printed)**

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**Title (printed)**

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**Agency/Business Representative Signature**

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**Date Signed**