



**Coordinated Entry COVID-19 Interim  
Policy & Procedures**

Effective 03/24/2020

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**Policy:** Homeless service providers have been deemed “essential services” during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Out-Wayne Coordinated Entry System must remain intact as it provides critical access to housing and other community services in our service area. During this time of uncertainty and the call for social distancing, schools and business closings, etc. Coordinated Entry has implemented changes to ensure staff are limiting face-to-face client contact. This document has been developed with ongoing guidance from the following agencies:

- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD);
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA);
- Michigan State Housing & Development Authority (MSHDA);
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) and;
- the Wayne County Health Department.

This document is also developed in adherence to the State of Michigan’s Executive Order 2020-21 (COVID-19), known generally as the Stay Home, Stay Safe order. This order directs residents to remain at their place of residence to the maximum extent feasible. The order is effective Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 12:01am and extends through Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. The full Executive Order can be viewed [here](#).

The following procedures are reviewed with all Coordinated Entry staff and are subject to change pursuant to updated guidance from the above agencies.

**Procedures:**

**A. Overall Changes to Coordinated Entry Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

- Clients entering shelters, outreach, and other Coordinated Entry service areas who report symptoms of fever, shortness of breath, and cough are being directed to contact one of the following for guidance on COVID-19 testing & healthcare services:
  - i. Their local healthcare provider
  - ii. Wayne County Health Department; 734-727-7100
  - iii. State of Michigan COVID-19 Hotline; 888-535-6136
- An updated Coordinated Entry Handout has been created to inform community members of multiple ways to access Out-Wayne County CoC homeless services. See Appendix A.
- The CoC has created an “Out-Wayne County COVID-19 Recommended Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness” Workflow. This will aid staff in directing and serving clients in the appropriate capacity based on their COVID-19 status. See Appendix B.
- All Coordinated Entry staff will attempt to stay in contact with active clients at a minimum of once per week. Contact is being limited to the phone or by

another remote audio/visual format. In person meetings with active clients are not to be scheduled without the approval of a supervisor.

## **B. Coordinated Entry Phone Line**

- In order to ensure safety within the workplace, all Coordinated Entry phone line staff have been moved to working from home full time.
- Information Technology staff have set up equipment for the phone lines to be answered live from a staff's home office during the hours of 9am – 4:30pm. Extended hours have been added and clients can leave a voicemail between the hours of 4:30pm – 7pm to be followed up the next business day.
- Clients will continue to receive basic screening for shelter referrals, housing programs, and be provided other resources as needed.

## **C. Shelter Services**

- Coordinated Entry staff are still providing Eligibility Screenings, document navigation, benefits assistance, and other case management duties to the three shelters in the Out-Wayne CoC:
  - i. Samaritas Family Center (serves families)  
(734) 721-0590
  - ii. ChristNet (serves single adult households)  
(734) 287-8890
  - iii. First Step (serves households fleeing domestic violence)  
(734) 722-6800
- Effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> all interactions with Coordinated Entry staff are being conducted over the phone or by another remote audio/visual format.
  - i. Coordinated Entry staff are utilizing adapted documents for clients to provide verbal information when applicable:
    1. Verbal ROIs for HMIS and Agency needs. See Appendix C.
    2. Self-Declaration of Income forms will be used if a client is unable to obtain proof of income. The form allows clients 60 days to provide proof of income. See Appendix D.
  - ii. Staff will continue to assist clients in obtaining vital documents and other housing eligibility items to the best of their ability. Due to many city clerks' offices, MI Secretary of State, and Social Security offices suspending in person service, Coordinated Entry staff will rely on mail applications and online services which may cause a delay in obtaining documents.
- The Out-Wayne CoC is coordinating with the local shelter providers to provide guidance on shelter protocols to limit the spread of COVID-19. Resources, education, and sanitation products have been provided to partner shelters.
  - i. All shelters have been provided HUD guidance regarding COVID-19 response while in a shelter setting. Response plans and CoC support have been developed.

- ii. All shelters have been provided information about COVID-19 that is visible to clients and staff. These include CDC posters about how to prevent the spread of germs and keeping hands clean.
  - iii. All shelters have been provided health screening questions to complete at least once daily with each shelter guest. See Appendix E for an example of health screening form one shelter is utilizing at intake.
  - iv. Isolation spaces have been secured by the Out-Wayne CoC for shelter clients that show symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19.
- Current CoC protocol for entering shelter requires that a household must quarantine for at least (7) days in motel prior to entering shelter, regardless of having COVID-19 symptoms or not. The shelter manager will contact the household daily to ask COVID-19 health screening questions. If the household remains in quarantine without signs of COVID-19 symptoms then they will enter shelter at the end of their seven-day motel stay.
  - i. Clients currently in shelter that show symptoms or have a medical emergency that involves a hospital visit will also be required to quarantine prior to returning to the shelter. The number of days of quarantine will be determined by hospital and/or Health Department staff.

#### **D. Street Outreach**

- Effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> general street outreach hours are suspended until the appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) can be obtained.
  - i. UPDATE: Effective Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup> Street Outreach has obtained a small amount of PPE. Outreach staff will conduct outreach in areas generally known where clients are sleeping to provide items such as hand sanitizer, blankets, etc. and ensure clients can maintain connection to housing navigation supports.
- New clients for Street Outreach will continue to be referred via the Coordinated Entry Phone Line or Community Partner Referrals.
- Outreach staff will continue to serve their current caseloads over the phone or by another remote audio/visual format if available.

#### **E. Walk-In Locations**

- Effective COB Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> the following walk-in sites for Coordinated Entry are not accessible to the general public:
  - i. Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency - Biddle Office  
2121 Biddle Ave Wyandotte, MI 48192
  - ii. Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency – Westland Office  
Jefferson Barnes Community Vitality Center  
32150 Dorsey St Westland, MI 48186
- Signage has been posted at each walk-in site directing clients to contact the Out-Wayne Coordinated Entry Phone Line at 734-284-6999.

## **F. Special Populations**

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic there have been some changes as to how HUD identified special populations can access services:
  - i. Military Veterans – The Detroit VAMC is available to veterans for emergency medical needs. Homeless veterans are encouraged to contact Veterans Community Resource and Referral Center (VCRRC) at 313-576-1580 to receive a screening for any veteran specific housing programs. The VCRRC and Detroit VAMC are providing virtual services to clients at this time. In addition, veterans can contact the Coordinated Entry Phone Line at 734-284-6999 to be referred for a veteran screening.
  - ii. Youth – All Michigan K-12 school buildings have been closed for the remainder of the 2019 – 2020 school year. However, homeless youth continue to have access to our services. Public schools are still required to identify homeless students during this closure and connect them to McKinney Vento Supports. Youth can access shelter in the city of Detroit by contacting CAM at 313-484-4449 seven days a week between the hours of 7am – 8:30pm.
  - iii. Domestic Violence – Those experiencing Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Assault are encouraged to contact First Step’s Emergency 24-hour hotline at 734-722-6800. First Step’s Emergency Shelter is still operating and all aftercare / outpatient services are being done virtually.

## **G. Changes in Housing Prioritization**

- Coordinated Entry has modified its prioritization of households during COVID-19 to minimize community spread of the disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified populations at a higher risk of contracting and/or having severe illness due to COVID-19. Due to these recommendations, Coordinated Entry will prioritize [high risk populations](#) for housing assistance, which include those over the age of 60 and/or those with significant underlying health problems, particularly those with a weakened immune system or health problems that impact lung function.
  - i. The Out-Wayne CoC has created a COVID-19 Tracking System, which will help determine those clients at highest risk for contracting the disease. Coordinated Entry Staff have access to complete the tracking form upon any referrals from shelters, community partners, hospitals, etc. This form will be completed for clients that exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, are pending COVID-19 testing, have a positive test for COVID-19, and/or are currently recovering from COVID-19.

## **H. Housing Approval & Housing Search Process**

- All clients that have been approved for CoC housing programs, especially those living in congregate settings such as shelters, are to search for housing virtually if available. If not available, then housing search is to be on hold for

- the duration of the Stay Home, Stay Safe order. All clients staying in shelter will get an extension added to their original 30-day deadline to find housing due to the Stay Home order.
- Housing Case Managers are available to help facilitate virtual housing search for those that are able to do so. Clients are encouraged to view pictures or virtual tours. If clients have smart phones, they can utilize the Zoom app to communicate with landlords and case manager during the housing search. It is free and can be used across all platforms, Android and iPhone.
  - Effective Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> and until further notice, all inspections will either be virtual or landlords/property managers can choose to use a lockbox in order for our inspectors to enter units.
  - Effective Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> all lease signings will be done virtually. We recognize that some landlords and clients may not have access to email and/or smart phones, etc. We will do our best to serve each client on a case by case basis. If required lease forms are unable to be completed, this will be documented and physical signatures will be obtained after the Stay Home, Stay Safe order is lifted.

#### **I. Homeless Preference Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Processing**

- The Out-Wayne CoC Coordinated Entry staff have implemented changes to the HCV homeless preference application and recertification process to align with guidance implemented by MSHDA effective Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>:
  - i. HARAs can secure verbal ROIs for HCV Homeless Preference at this time. For any staff completing an HCV application, please note the use of verbal ROI on the HCV ROI document & initial and date.
  - ii. Clients are also not required to sign the 2-page HCV application itself, but can verbally agree that the information is correct. Please note the use of verbal confirmation where the client would normally sign & initial and date.
  - iii. Effective 3/20/2020, deadlines for re-certifications of homelessness for all current applications will be extended an additional 60 days during the period of the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. New applications completed during this time will still be subject to the 120-day recertification deadline and all recertifications will still need to be completed within the 30-day window prior to the deadline.
  - iv. The timeline to complete HCV Homeless Preference applications is extended from 5 days to 30 business days until further notice.

#### **J. Exits from Coordinated Entry**

- Until further notice, exits from SSO Coordinated Entry programs will be done over the phone or by another remote audio/visual format.
- Coordinated Entry staff are encouraged to obtain an email address for clients or assist clients in creating an email address. This will aid in efficient document sharing and can be another option to obtain necessary information such as current income, benefits, disability diagnosis, etc.

## **Appendix A**



# Coordinated Entry Access Points

If you are in need of emergency shelter or are experiencing a housing crisis, please contact us in the way that best fits your situation below. In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Out-Wayne Coordinated Entry has made the following adaptations to ensure no interruption in services for our clients and to maintain the safety of our staff:

## By Phone



You can reach us by phone between the hours of 9am – 4:30pm. Call the Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency Connect Center at 734-284-6999 and press option #1 to speak with someone regarding your housing crisis.

## Shelter



Samaritas (Families)  
(734) 721-0590

ChristNet (Singles)  
(734) 287-8890

First Step (DV / SA)  
734-722-6800

Veterans (VCRRC)  
313-576-1580

Homeless Youth (CAM)  
313-484-4449

## Street Outreach



Our team will continue to serve households living on the streets through virtual appointments. If you are currently living on the streets, please call us at 734-284-6999, press option #1 and we will have our team contact you to schedule a screening.

## Community Referral



If you are connected to services through another agency and you are experiencing homelessness, your case manager can complete our Community Referral form for us to contact you and complete a screening.

## **Appendix B**

# Out Wayne County

## COVID-19 Recommended Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness

**Step 0:**  
Current Status

In Medical Care

Sheltered

Unsheltered

**Step 1:**  
Screening Check

**Check done while in Medical Facility**

**Basic screening check done by shelter/outreach staff**

**if individual answers yes to triage questions, connect to local Health Departments for further evaluation and placement recommendation.**

**If determined low likelihood COVID+, place based on "not positive" categorization in step 2.**

*See attached screening check procedure.*

**Step 2:**  
Priority & Wellness Categorization

Treated & discharged (likely still contagious)

Self-presenting & Discharged

Self-disclosed COVID + or PUI

Presumed COVID - & HIGH risk of complications

Presumed COVID - & LOW risk of complications

**COVID +**

**COVID- or PUI**

**Step 3:**  
Move to Destination

TCF Center Detroit

Motels / Hotels

**Note:** Depending on case will be in hotel for 3,7 or 14 days

If in shelter, remain in current status

**Note:** Separate Space for High Risk

If in unsheltered, provide available shelter options

**Note:** Shelter should meet CDC Guidance

## Appendix C

## COVID-19 HMIS Oral Release of Information Phone Script

You can use this phone script to collect information from callers and enter it in the HMIS for agencies/programs that temporarily suspend face-to-face screenings/intakes because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This script should only be used during this current COVID-19 emergency and should be discontinued once your agency resumes normal operations.

Thank you for calling **Wayne Metro Community Action Agency**. My name is: \_\_\_\_\_. As we talk today I will be entering your information into our record keeping system, HMIS.

Who am I talking to today? \_\_\_\_\_

We are collecting your name, year of birth, the last 4 digits of your SSN, gender and veteran status to share with participating providers in our system. This helps us identify you so we can provide critical services to you. Do you object to sharing this information?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Also, we may share additional personal and health related information with a group of helping some helping agencies to coordinate services for you. More about the information we are collecting and the providers we are sharing this information with is available if you request it.

Each phone intake worker should have a paper release available that lists the providers in the sharing agreement and the data elements being shared. If the client asks for more information, the intake worker should reference it.

This oral release of information is valid for 30 days. Do you authorize this sharing to help coordinate services for you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D



## SELF-DECLARATION OF INCOME

Date:

Name:

Employer Name:

### Certification

I \_\_\_\_\_ certify that \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Employee  
is a current employee at \_\_\_\_\_. During the time  
Employer Name  
span of one week I work \_\_\_\_\_ hours and make \$\_\_\_\_\_ in one week.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Note:** If participant is unable to secure income documents, Wayne Metro is accepting virtual/telephonic self-declarations in response to COVID-19. Program participants are expected to provide income documentation within 60 days.



## **Appendix E**



**Christnet Services**  
**Building Entry Health Screening Form**

Wayne County Health Department has issued emergency directive 20-01 mandating "essential businesses" designated by Michigan's "stay at home" order to screen all employees for illnesses, exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and establish protocols for social distancing within the workplace.

All shelters in Wayne County are now ordered to ask all guests, staff, and volunteers about any current symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or diarrhea), travel history and their contact with individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 within 14-days and take temperature checks with a contactless thermometer.

Do you have a fever?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Do you have a cough?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Do you have shortness of breath?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Do you have a sore throat?	_____ Yes	_____ No
Do you have diarrhea?	_____ Yes	_____ No

Have you traveled outside Wayne County? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
If so where and when? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been in contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Volunteers and Staff:

If the answer is "yes" to any of these screening questions, you are not permitted to work onsite. Instead you should self-isolate or quarantine at home for:

- A minimum of 7 days since symptoms first appeared and 3 days after symptoms ceased.
- 14 days following close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
- 14 days following domestic or international travel.

Guests:

If the answer is "yes" to any of these screening questions, onsite quarantine arrangements will be made for you.

Please note: Christnet Services will continue to follow government directives regarding "Shelter in Place."

In order minimize and/or eliminate hazards to guests, staff, and volunteers any guest departures from the shelter are strongly discouraged.

Anyone entering the facility must have their temperature taken, and must complete this form every time they enter the building. Note that people exiting, but remaining on property are not required to complete a new form (as in the case of cigarette breaks, taking out trash, etc.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature attests that all answers are true. Giving knowingly false information may result in being banned from the shelter.