

July | 2016

Consumer Feedback: San Francisco Family Coordinated Entry

This is a summary of a series of focus groups held with homeless, recently homeless, and at-risk-of-homelessness families in San Francisco. Participants learned about the proposed changes to the family coordinated entry system, and shared their feedback about how the changes may affect their experiences in obtaining shelter, housing, and other services.

SUMMER 2016

FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY CONSUMER FEEDBACK

INTRODUCTION

HomeBase conducted four focus groups during June and July 2016 designed to learn from families' experiences with gaining access to San Francisco's shelter, housing, and services. The primary goals of the focus groups were to 1) provide information to families about proposed changes to the family coordinated entry system and 2) gather consumer feedback to improve the coordinated entry, assessment, and placement system for homeless families. Prior to the focus groups, the presentation and questions were reviewed and revised by other stakeholders in the coordinated entry development process to ensure these goals were met.

The focus groups were held at four sites, whose program managers invited clients and program participants¹ via flyers and word-of-mouth.

Location	Date	Number of Participants
St. Joseph's Family Center² 899 Guerrero St., SF	June 27, 2016	4
Providence First Friendship³ 501 Steiner St., SF	July 6, 2016	7
Compass Family Center 995 Market St., SF	July 7, 2016	9
Family Center 1101 Fairfax Ave., SF Organized by the Bayview YMCA	July 13, 2016	24

The focus groups were divided into two parts. Part One featured a presentation of the family coordinated entry system that has been proposed by the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (DHS). Facilitators engaged participants in discussion of the phases of the coordinated assessment and referral system, and elicited feedback about how the proposed entry points and strategies would work for families experiencing homelessness. (See Attachment A for copies of the presentation and questions used by facilitators.)

Part Two featured a presentation of two types of assessment tools used to gather information to assess family needs and prioritize families for housing placement—the Family VI-SPDAT and the Community Focus Housing

¹ At some sites, one to two shelter or program employees sat in for parts of the discussion so they could learn about the new system. Participants agreed to their presence, and there were explicit agreements around confidentiality of the discussion and the need to encourage uncensored and uninhibited engagement.

² The following programs were encouraged to invite their clients to participate: Hamilton Family Shelter; Compass Family Services Shelter; Compass Clara House; Salvation Army Harbor House; Hamilton Family Transitional Shelter.

³ Clients of Hamilton Family 60-day Shelter were also invited to participate in this focus group.

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Prioritization Tool. Participants reviewed the assessment tools and discussed how these questions and approaches might work for families experiencing homelessness, and how to best assess family needs.

Participants' responses were recorded by a note taker at each session (see Attachment B). In addition, participants filled out a short form that gathered demographic information about their families, and an evaluation form for the session. Participants were provided gift cards as an acknowledgement for their time and service.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT THEMES

1. The new system and its access points should be widely available and advertised. One participant suggested creating stickers indicating where information about access points was available, others recommended advertising on buses and billboards. Additional locations suggested as access points included libraries, jails, hospitals, churches, and clinics; participants recommended access points be spread throughout the city based on access to transportation. Some participants were concerned about services only being provided downtown or in high-risk neighborhoods due to their children's safety. Another participant suggested having a mobile screening and/or assessment center that traveled to shelters and other locations.
2. Participants stated that they first encountered housing services in shelters, churches, and at other nonprofit service provider locations. Many did not know other locations to gain access to housing and services and were not sure how the new system would help people find alternative entry points.
3. Participants stated that, for this system model to work, there needs to be more case workers with higher levels of training. Many stated that well-trained service providers can break down barriers that would otherwise prevent families from providing full answers during the assessment process. Some were concerned with not having enough rapport with the case manager to feel comfortable answering invasive and personal questions. However, many stated that they would answer whatever questions were asked in order to find housing for their families.
4. In-person and walk-in assessment points were preferred, but reliable access to appointments by phone or text would work in some situations. It was important that families continue to be connected to permanent-housing caseworkers and other services once they were temporarily diverted or placed in shelter, and that updates occur weekly or monthly, depending on whether people were in longer-term shelters or on their own.
5. Participants questioned how the assessment questions and tools would get them immediate help – the more closely the questions are linked to available housing or other resources, the more relevant and less intrusive they would seem.
6. Participants did not demonstrate a preference for either of the assessment tools. Many expressed that too many questions would be discouraging, intrusive, and unnecessary, but others felt that the more information given, the better the housing placement would be.
7. Participants expressed that certain areas of questioning made them uncomfortable, but their level of discomfort would depend on the skill and empathy of the person asking the questions, as well as whether there was an ongoing relationship between the case manager and the client.

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SAMPLE FEEDBACK

“Making people jump through more hoops will anger and frustrate them – asking them questions that can’t immediately help them just adds stress to their already stressful day/situation.” - Participant at St. Joseph’s Family Center focus group, talking about whether people will feel comfortable answering the questions on the Family VI-SPDAT.

“They should design a program structure on what the family really needs – people will wonder why they are being asked these questions and would interpret these questions as ‘these are the way they interpret you’ and you don’t feel human - you don’t want to be tormented at the places you’re supposed to be getting help.” - Participant at St. Joseph’s Family Center focus group, talking about whether people will feel comfortable answering the questions on the Family VI-SPDAT.

“A lot of it has to do with training service providers on what to say/how to say it/how to be sensitive – this population has a lot of barriers so it comes down to the person asking the questions and their delivery/manner.” - Participant at 1101 Fairfax Avenue, discussing the assessment tools.

“Just seems like they take so much information, so many times, and it is not consistent between case managers [or programs]. Housing and counseling are two different things.” - Participant at First Friendship, discussing the assessment questions.

“They need someone to hold their hand throughout the entire way through the system (providing check-ins every couple of weeks). This is important for people that are experiencing homelessness.” - Participant at Compass Family Services, discussing the proposed redesign of the entry system.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

FOCUS GROUP	SURVEYS RETURNED	MALE	FEMALE	AGE*	LANGUAGES	RACE/ETHNICITY	MONTHS HOMELESS*	YEARS IN SF*
St. Joseph's Shelter, 6.27.16	3	1	2	47	3 English	1 Latino; 1 African American; 1 mixed race	6	21
First Friendship, 7.6.16	7	2	5	38	2 Spanish; 5 English	2 Latino; 4 African American; 1 mixed race	5	8
Compass Family Services, 7.7.16	9	1	8	31	4 Spanish; 5 English	4 Latino; 2 mixed race; 3 African American	9.3	10
Family Center, 7.13.16	24	7	17	42	24 English	3 Latino; 4 Asian Pacific Islander; 12 African American; 1 mixed race; 1 other	**	32**
*Averages	**Most participants at the Family Center focus group were doubled-up and housed with relatives or friends; most had lived in San Francisco their entire lives							

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Forty-four individuals participated in the focus groups, with a small number of additional participants who stayed for portions of the 1.5-hour group sessions.⁴ Six participants were monolingual Spanish-speakers and gave their responses through an interpreter and the remaining participants spoke English. Participants were predominately female, and a small number attended with their partners. All had one or more children. The chart below summarizes the general demographic information.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

Focus group participants filled out evaluation forms that asked participants to rate the focus group from 1 to 5 (highest) in four categories: Overall perception of the group; how comfortable it was to speak in the group; whether the group was useful; and whether the group met expectations. The average score across all questions and groups was 4.65.⁵

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Focus Group Introductory Script and Draft Questions

Attachment B - Focus Group Notes

⁴ Note: Numbers of surveys returned differed slightly from number of participants. Demographic information is available only from the surveys.

⁵ Averages for each group: Fairfax Ave: 4.45; St. Joseph's Family Shelter: 4.8; First Friendship: 4.5; Compass Family Services: 4.85.

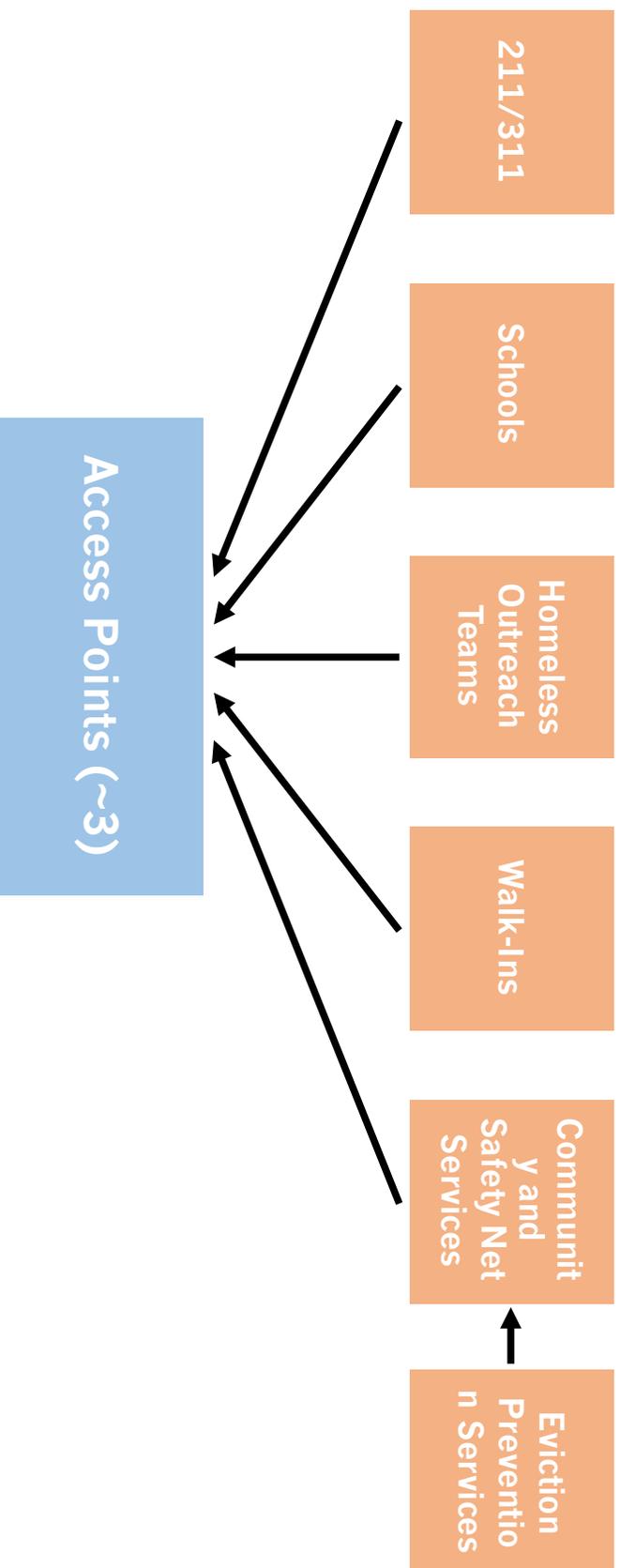
ATTACHMENT A

San Francisco

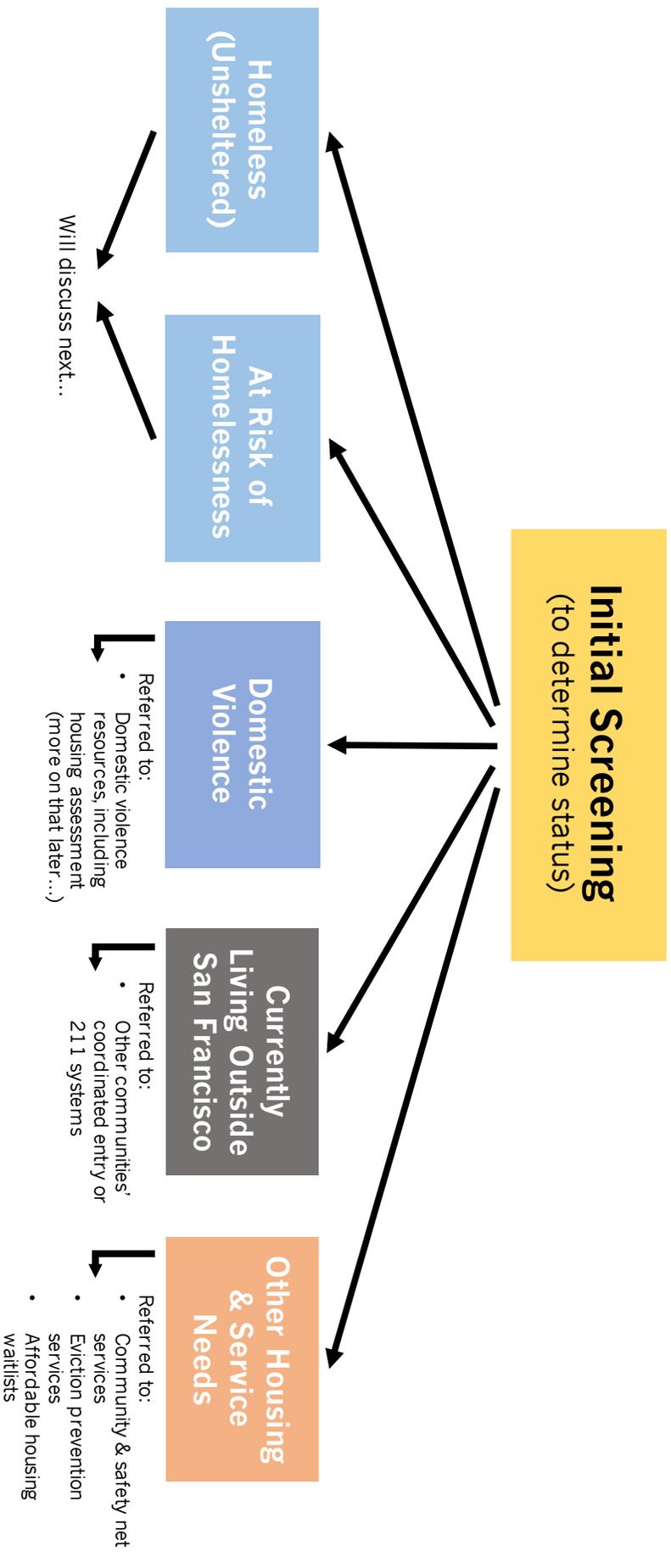
Family Coordinated Entry Focus Groups

July 7, 2016

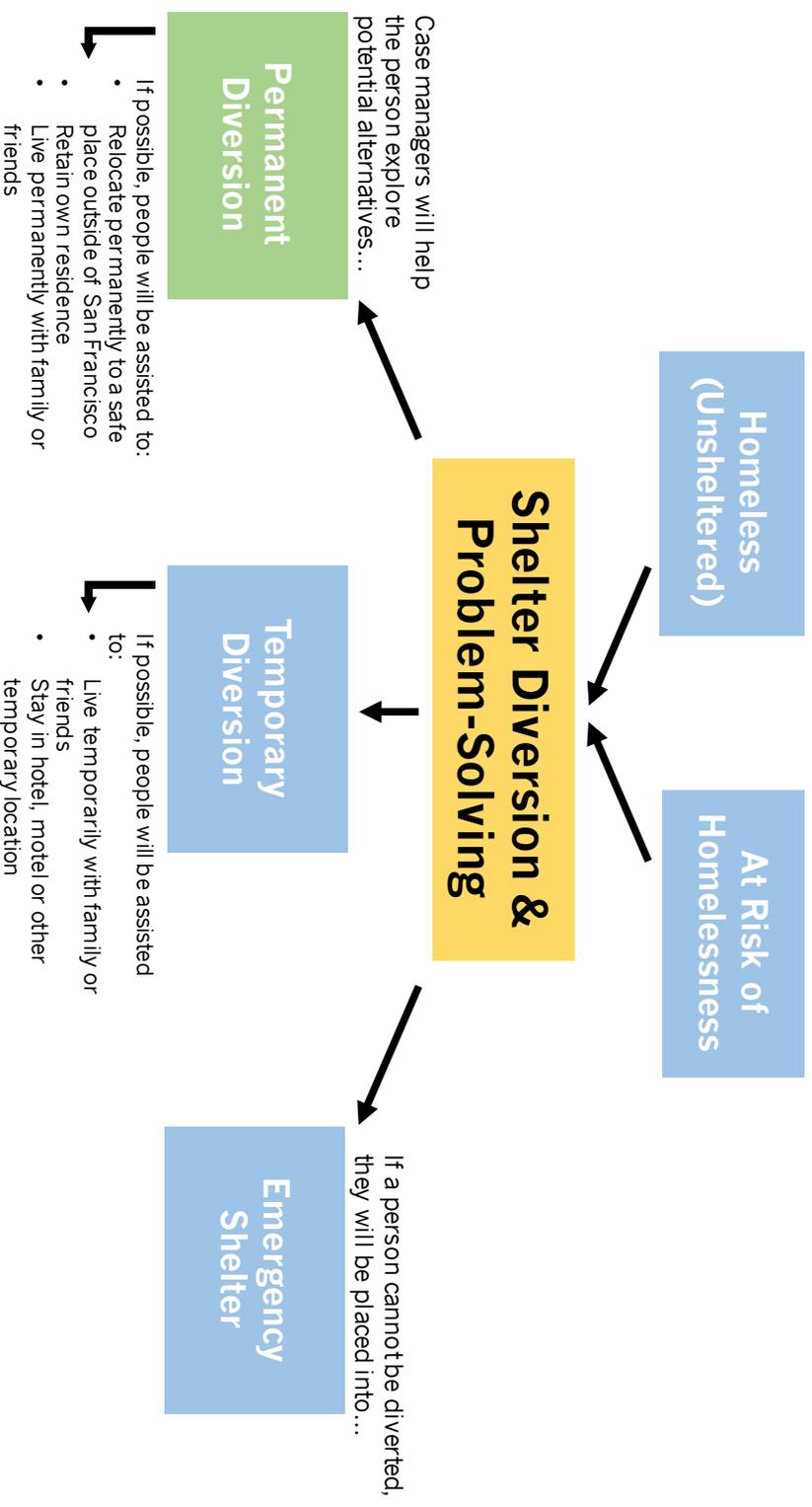
Process for Seeking Help



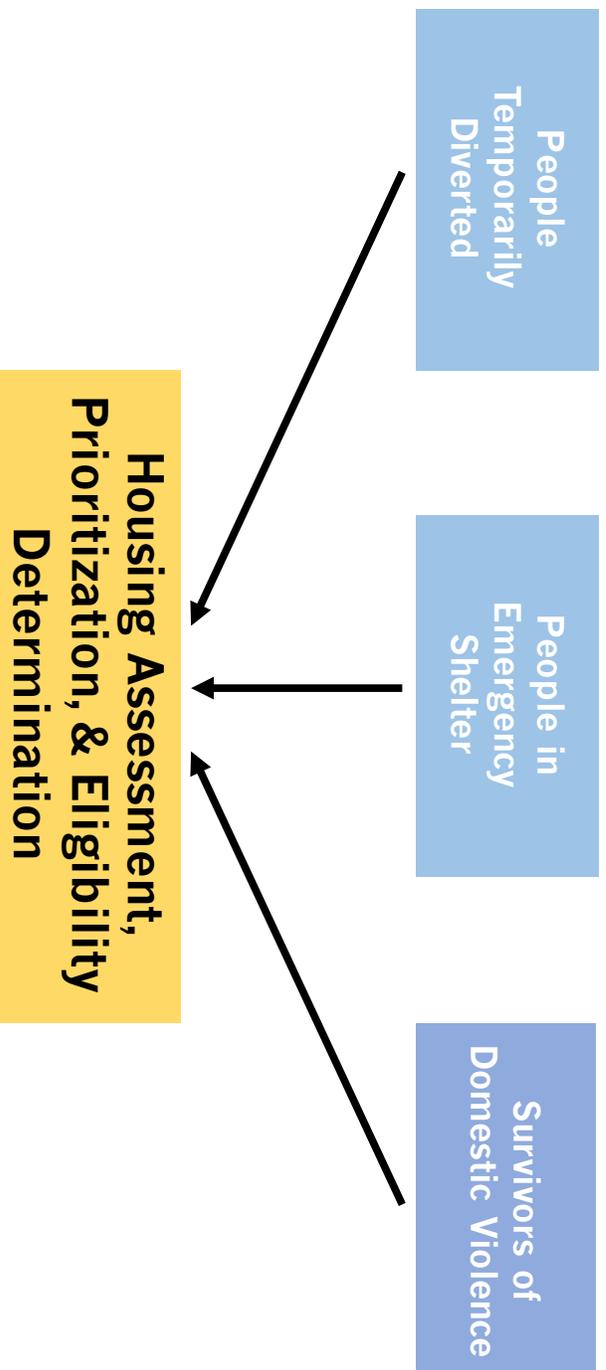
Initial Screening Process



Shelter Diversion Process

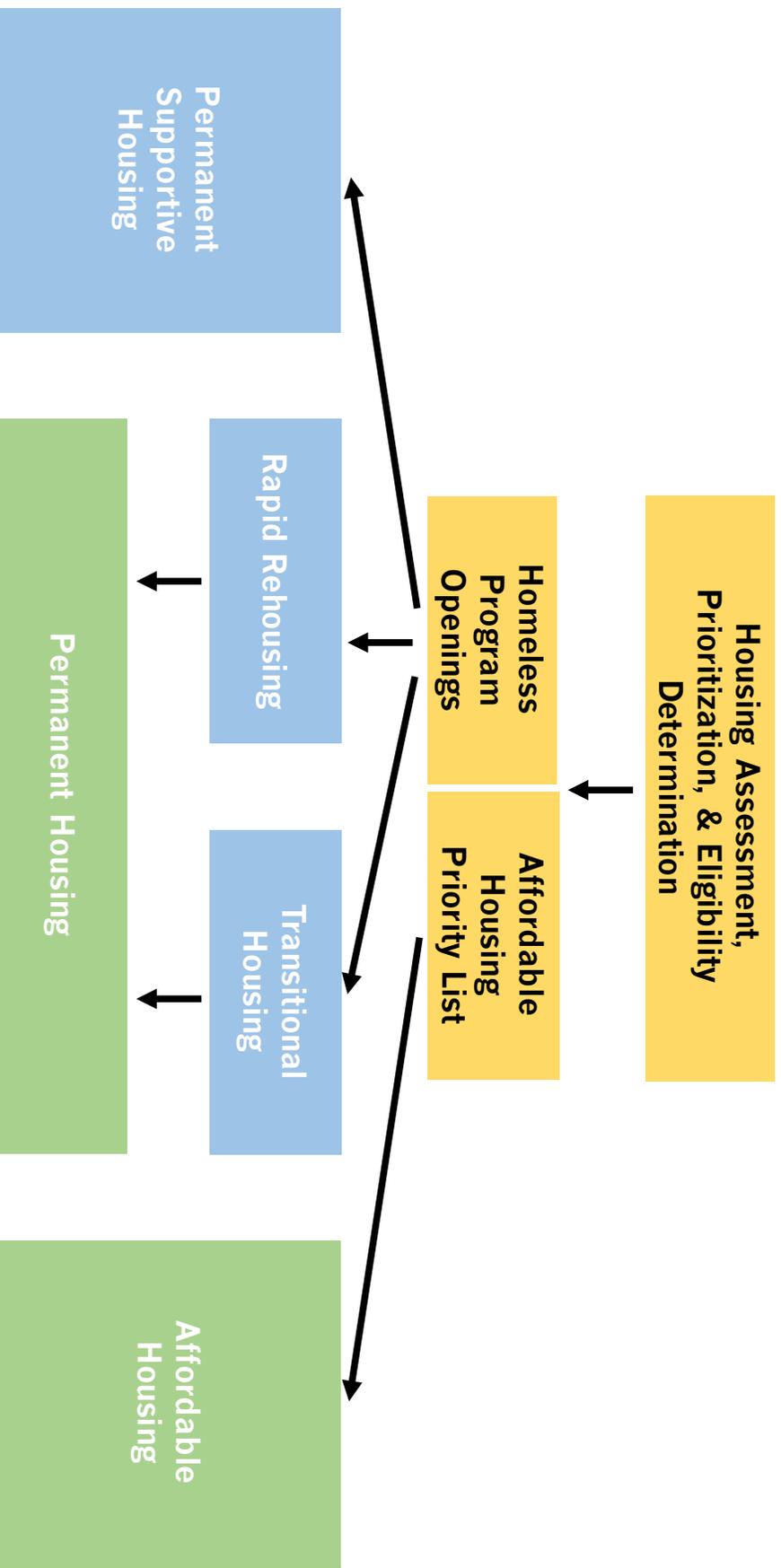


Assessment Process



(the content of this assessment will be discussed in the second half of today's focus group)

Referral and Placement Process



Family VI-SPDAT Overview

- Mental Health, Wellness, and Cognitive Functioning
- Physical Health and Wellness
- Medication
- Substance Use
- Experience of Abuse & Trauma of Parents
- Risk of Harm to Self or Others
- Involvement in High Risk and/or Exploitative Situations
- Interactions with Emergency Services
- Legal
- Managing Tenancy
- Personal Administration & Money Management
- Social Relationships & Networks
- Selfcare & Daily Living Skills of Family Head of Household
- Experience of Homelessness
- Parental Engagement
- Stability/Resiliency of the Family Unit
- Needs of Children
- Size of Family Unit
- Interactions with Child Protective Services and/or Family Court

Mental Health, Wellness, & Cognitive Functioning

- Has anyone in your family ever received any help with their mental wellness?
- Do you feel that every member in your family is getting all the help they need for their mental health or stress?
- Has a doctor ever prescribed anyone in your family pills for nerves, anxiety, depression or anything like that?
- Has anyone in your family ever gone to an emergency room or stayed in a hospital because they weren't feeling 100% emotionally?
- Does anyone in your family have trouble learning or paying attention, or been tested for learning disabilities?
- Do you know if, when pregnant with you, your mother did anything that we now know can have negative effects on the baby? What about when you were pregnant?
- Has anyone in your family ever hurt their brain or head?
- Do you have any documents or papers about your family's mental health or brain functioning?
- Are there other professionals we could speak with that have knowledge of your family's mental health?

Physical Health & Wellness

- How is your family's health?
- Are you getting any help with your health? How often?
- Do you feel you are getting all the care you need for your family's health?
- Any illnesses like diabetes, HIV, Hepatitis C or anything like that going on in any member of your family?
- Ever had a doctor tell anyone in your family that they have problems with blood pressure or heart or lungs or anything like that?
- When was the last time anyone in your family saw a doctor? What was that for?
- Do you have a clinic or doctor that you usually go to?
- Anything going on right now with your family's health that you think would prevent them from living a full, healthy, happy life?
- Are there other professionals we could speak with that have knowledge of your family's health?
- Do you have any documents or papers about your family's health or past stays in hospital because of your health?

Medication

- Has anyone in your family recently been prescribed any medications by a health care professional?
- Does anyone in your family take any medication, prescribed to them by a doctor?
- Has anyone in your family ever had a doctor prescribe them a medication that wasn't filled or they didn't take?
- Were any of your family's medications changed in the last month? Whose? How did that make them feel?
- Do other people ever steal your family's medications?
- Does anyone in your family ever sell or share their medications with other people it wasn't prescribed to?
- How does your family store their medication and make sure they take the right medication at the right time each day?
- What do you do if you realize someone has forgotten to take their medications?
- Do you have any papers or documents about the medications your family takes?

Substance Use

- When was the last time you had a drink or used drugs? What about the other members of your family?
- Anything we should keep in mind related to drugs/alcohol?
- How often would you say you use [substance] in a week?
- Ever have a doctor tell you that your health may be at risk because you drink or use drugs?
- Have you engaged with anyone professionally related to your substance use that we could speak with?
- Ever get into fights, fall down and bang your head, do things you regret later, or pass out when drinking or using other drugs?
- Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs in a way that may be considered less than safe?
- Do you ever drink mouthwash or cooking wine or hand sanitizer or anything like that?

Experience of Abuse & Trauma of Parents

- “I don’t need you to go into any details, but has there been any point in your life where you experienced emotional, physical, sexual or psychological abuse?”
- “Are you currently or have you ever received professional assistance to address that abuse?”
- “Does the experience of abuse or trauma impact your day to day living in any way?”
- “Does the experience of abuse or trauma impact your ability to hold down a job, maintain housing or engage in meaningful relationships with friends or family?”
- “Have you ever found yourself feeling or acting in a certain way that you think is caused by a history of abuse or trauma?”
- “Have you ever become homeless as a direct result of experiencing abuse or trauma?”

Risk of Harm to Self or Others

- Does anyone in your family have thoughts about hurting themselves or anyone else? Have they ever acted on these thoughts? When was the last time? What was occurring when that happened?
- Has anyone in your family ever received professional help – including maybe a stay at hospital – as a result of thinking about or attempting to hurt themselves or others? How long ago was that? Does that happen often?
- Has anyone in your family recently left a situation you felt was abusive or unsafe? How long ago was that?
- Has anyone in your family been in any fights recently – whether they started it or someone else did? How long ago was that? How often do they get into fights?

Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations

- Does anybody force or trick people in your family to do things that they don't want to do?
- Do you or anyone in your family ever do stuff that could be considered dangerous like drinking until they pass out outside, or delivering drugs for someone, having sex without a condom with a casual partner, or anything like that?
- Does anyone in your family ever find themselves in situations that may be considered at a high risk for violence?
- Does your family ever sleep outside? How do you dress and prepare for that? Where do you tend to sleep?

Interaction with Emergency Services

- How often does your family go to emergency rooms?
- How many times have you had the police speak to members of your family over the past 180 days?
- Has anyone in your family used an ambulance or needed the fire department at any time in the past 180 days?
- How many times have members of your family called or visited a crisis team or a crisis counselor in the last 180 days?
- How many times have you or anyone in your family been admitted to hospital in the last 180 days? How long did they stay?

Legal

- Does your family have any “legal stuff” going on?
- Has anyone in your family had a lawyer assigned to them by a court?
- Does anyone in your family have any upcoming court dates? Do you think there’s a chance someone in your family will do time?
- Any outstanding fines?
- Has anyone in your family paid any fines in the last 12 months for anything?
- Has anyone in your family done any community service in the last 12 months?
- Is anybody expecting someone in your family to do community service for anything right now?
- Did your family have any legal stuff in the last year that got dismissed?
- Is your family’s housing at risk in any way right now because of legal issues?

Managing Tenancy

- Is your family currently homeless?
- [If the family is housed] Does your family have an eviction notice?
- [If the family is housed] Do you think that your family's housing is at risk?
- How is your family's relationship with your neighbors?
- How does your family normally get along with landlords?
- How has your family been doing with taking care of your place?

Personal Administration & Money Management

- How are you and your family with taking care of money?
- How are you and your family with paying bills on time and taking care of other financial stuff?
- Does anyone in your family have any street debts or drug or gambling debts?
- Is there anybody that thinks anyone in your family owes them money?
- Do you budget every single month for every single thing your family needs? Including cigarettes? Booze? Drugs?
- Does your family try to pay your rent before paying for anything else?
- Is anyone in your family behind in any payments like child support or student loans or anything like that?

Social Relationships & Networks

- Tell me about your family's friends, extended family or other people in your life.
- How often do you get together or chat with family friends?
- When your family goes to doctor's appointments or meet with other professionals like that, what is that like?
- Are there any people in your life that you feel are just using you, or someone else in your family?
- Are there any of your family's closer friends that you feel are always asking you for money, smokes, drugs, food or anything like that?
- Have you ever had people crash at your place that you did not want staying there?
- Have you ever been threatened with an eviction or lost a place because of something that friends or extended family did in your apartment?
- Have you ever been concerned about not following your lease agreement because of friends or extended family?

Self Care & Daily Living Skills of Family Head

- Do you have any worries about taking care of yourself or your family?
- Do you have any concerns about cooking, cleaning, laundry or anything like that?
- Does anyone in your family ever need reminders to do things like shower or clean up?
- Describe your family's last apartment.
- Do you know how to shop for nutritious food on a budget?
- Do you know how to make low cost meals that can result in leftovers to freeze or save for another day?
- Do you tend to keep all of your family's clothes clean?
- Have you ever had a problem with mice or other bugs like cockroaches as a result of a dirty apartment?
- When you have had a place where you have made a meal, do you tend to clean up dishes and the like before they get crusty?

Experience of Homelessness

- How long has your family been homeless?
- How many times has your family experienced homelessness other than this most recent time?
- Has your family spent any time sleeping on a friend's couch or floor? And if so, during those times did you consider that to be your family's permanent address?
- Has your family ever spent time sleeping in a car, alleyway , garage, barn, bus shelter, or anything like that?
- Has your family ever spent time sleeping in an abandoned building?
- Was anyone in your family ever been in hospital or jail for a period of time when they didn't have a permanent address to go to when they got out?

Parental Engagement

- Walk me through a typical evening after school in your family.
- Tell me about what role, if any, the older kids have with the younger kids. Do they babysit? Walk them to school? Bathe or put the younger kids to bed?
- Does your family have play time together? What kinds of things do you do and how often do you do it?
- Let's pick a day like a Saturday...do you know where your kids are the entire day and whom they are out with all day?

Stability/Resiliency of the Family Unit

- Over the past year have there been any different adults staying with the family like a family friend, grandparent, aunt or that sort of thing? If so, can you tell me when and for how long and the changes that have occurred?
- Other than kids being taken into care, have there been any instances where any child has gone to stay with another family member or family friend for any length of time? Can you tell me how many times, when and for how long that happened?

Needs of Children

- Please tell me about the attendance at school of your school-aged children.
- Any health issues with your children?
- Any times of separation between your children and parents?
- Without going into detail, have any of your children experienced or witnessed emotional, physical, sexual or psychological abuse?
- Have your children ever accessed professional assistance to address that abuse?

Size of Family Unit

- I just want to make sure I understand how many kids there are, the gender of each and their age. Can you take me through that again?
- Is anyone in the family currently pregnant?

Interaction with Child Protective Services and/or Family Court

- Any matters being considered by a judge right now as it pertains to any member of your family?
- Have any of your children spent time in care? When was that? For how long were they in care? When did you get them back?
- Has there ever been an investigation by someone in child welfare into the matters of your family?

SF Housing Assessment Tool Overview

- Living Situation & Housing History
 - Income
 - Legal Domains
- Health Status & History

Living Situation & Housing History

- Where are you currently staying?
- On how many separate occasions in the last 3 years have you lived in a place not meant for habitation, shelter, or motel with an emergency shelter voucher?
- How long have you been homeless this time (lived in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation)?
- When was the last time you or any adult household member had a lease in your/their name?
- How many times has any adult household member had an eviction in the last 5 years (asked to leave a rental or had legal papers filed to ask you to leave)?
- How many members are there in your household?
- How old are each of the members of your household?

Health Status & History

- Are you pregnant?
- Do you have now or has a healthcare provider ever told you that you have any of the following disabilities: alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or both; chronic health condition; developmental disability; HIV/AIDS; mental health disorder; or, physical health condition? What about other members of your household?
- Do you need assistance with activities of daily living and/or access to life sustaining medications, treatments, or equipment?
- How many times have you used crisis services (mental health triage/crisis bed, suicide prevention hotline, detox, etc.) and/or have you been hospitalized in the past year?

Income

- Considering all sources of income, what is your household's monthly income (including employment income, benefits, and all other sources)?

Legal Domains

- Do you currently have US citizenship or legal immigration status?
- How many times in the past five years has someone in your household been arrested or picked up by police (more than a warning or citation)?
- Has anyone in the household ever been convicted of the following offenses: violent crime, offenses that result in registered sex offender status, or arson?

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction

My name is Matt Olsson and I work for a non-profit agency based here in San Francisco called HomeBase. I'm here with my colleagues Mary McGrail and [note taker].

The city is currently in the process of revising the way people get access to homeless programs to make it easier for homeless families to get the housing and services they need. We will be calling this system the "coordinated entry system." We've been hired by the Human Services Agency/City of San Francisco to get feedback from people like you on some of the changes. Your feedback is critical to this process and I want to thank you for your time today – you are the experts that we need to hear from.

This is a safe space where you can say anything you want about your experience with the system, your housing, and the proposed changes that will impact how people enter the system in the future. Your feedback will be included in a general manner in the final report, and your identity will not be disclosed to anyone for any reason. Your responses do not affect your current housing or eligibility for services.

We have a few requests from you today:

- Please respect any differences of opinion that may arise among the people in the room.
- Please stay on topic – again, we'll be asking for your thoughts on the proposed entry system that we'll discuss shortly, as well as on a couple of questionnaires and forms that may be used to assess people for housing placement.
- Please share the time available to us so that each and every person can speak his or her turn without interruption.
- Please respect the confidentiality of this session and do not share what is said in this room outside of it.

Your feedback will be included in a general manner in the final report, and your identity will not be disclosed to anyone for any reason. Your responses do not affect your current housing or eligibility for services.

A few logistical items before we begin:

- Note taker: we will try to capture your statements as accurately and completely as possible.
- Translator
- Room logistics (fire exits/restrooms/safety)
- Timing
- Snacks
- How to contact us after the meeting
- Demographic form: We have a short form to fill out that lets us know general information about you all – please do not put your name on it!
- Gift card: At the end of the session, please turn in your short survey form, and we will provide you with a \$10 gift card.

Does anyone have any questions for me at this time?

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Overview

San Francisco is currently in the process of designing and implementing a coordinated entry system for families experiencing homelessness.

- **By a show of hands, how many of you have heard the term “coordinated entry” before?**
- **For those that have heard of coordinated entry before, what is your understanding of it?**

For those of you who don't know this term, “coordinated entry” describes a new approach to placing people into homeless housing and services. Instead of each organization or program maintaining its own waitlist for housing, with coordinated entry, San Francisco is combining these lists into a single, unified referral system. This system has two main goals: (1) make sure people experiencing homelessness receive the right help as quickly as possible, regardless of how or where they seek assistance; and (2) make sure as many people as possible get the help they need.

Today, we'll be talking about the proposed design of the new San Francisco coordinated entry system for families. We'll be breaking the conversation into four parts, based on the role within the system. Those four parts are:

- Intake
- Assessment
- Referral
- Placement

We'll be showing graphics on the projector related to different parts of this process as we explain, and then will be asking for your feedback on each piece. As we talk about each chunk, we'd like you to think about these questions:

- Will everyone experiencing homelessness be able to access this system?
- Are there parts that you don't understand? Is it too complicated?
- Do you think this system will work for you and other families?
- What do you like about this plan?
- What don't you like about this plan?

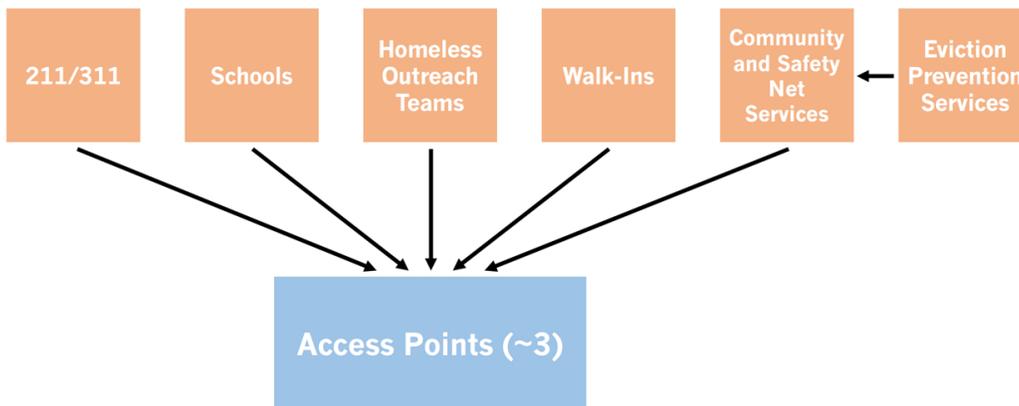
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Process for Seeking Help (Part 1): Process for Seeking Help

The first part of the system describes how people experiencing homelessness look for help and how they will enter the system to get housing and services.

Instruction: Show Process for Seeking Help slide (below).

Process for Seeking Help



This graphic shows the potential ways that a family experiencing homelessness could enter the overall system. There are several routes (including: HOT teams, walk-ins, 211/311, schools, and other community services, but every family will then go to one of three physical access points. These three access points likely will be located in three different parts of the city (i.e., the Bayview, the Mission/Potrero Hill, and the Tenderloin/Downtown area).

- **Does anyone have any questions regarding this part of the system?**

Before we discuss what will happen at these access points, I'd like to ask you a few questions:

- **Are there other places where you asked for help with housing or services that aren't on the list above?** Examples: police, jails, hospitals, etc.
- **Where else should someone be able to seek housing assistance?**
- **How do you feel about being sent to an Access Point? Should they all be physical locations?**
- **Where should these Access Points be located?** Examples: the Bayview, the Mission/Portero Hill, the Tenderloin/Downtown, etc.

Instruction: Show San Francisco Map slide

Map of San Francisco



- [Other questions?]

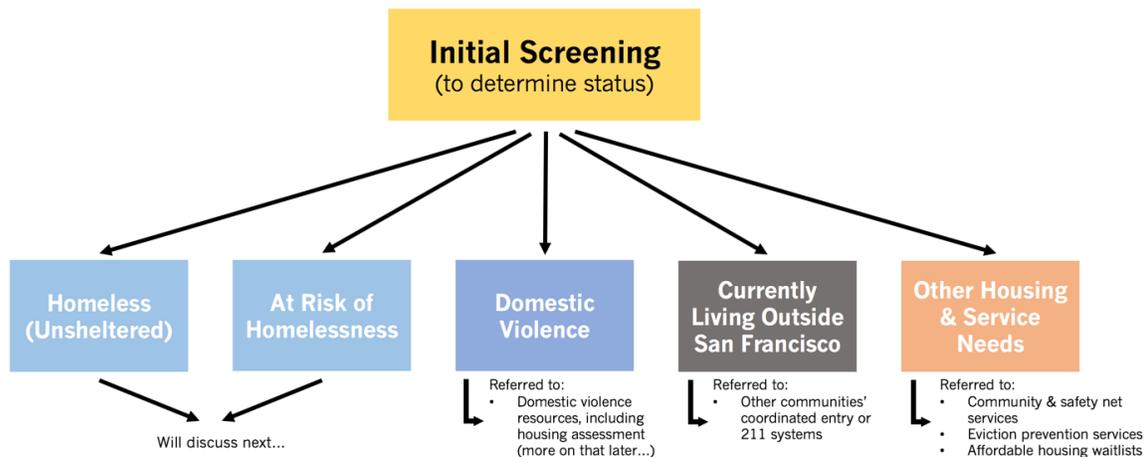
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Process for Seeking Help (Part 2): Initial Screening Process

Once at one of the Access Points, families will be asked a short list of questions to determine their immediate safety needs.

Instruction: Show Initial Screening Process slide (below).

Initial Screening Process



The questions will screen families to determine their homeless and residency status. Questions will be used to determine:

- Basic information regarding the family (household size, etc.);
- Whether the family is experiencing homelessness;
- Whether the family is residing in San Francisco; and,
- Whether the family is safe in their current living situation.

If the family is experiencing domestic violence, they will be directed to appropriate domestic violence resources to ensure their safety, and will skip straight to the housing assessment (more on this later). If the family is currently living outside of San Francisco, they will be directed to housing and services in the appropriate community through their coordinated entry or 211 systems. If the family is not homeless but needs other types of help, they will be directed to other community services like eviction prevention services or affordable housing waitlists.

- **Does anyone have any questions regarding this part of the system?**

Before we discuss what will come next for persons experiencing homelessness or persons at imminent risk of homelessness in San Francisco, I'd like to ask you a few questions:

- **Does this initial screening to determine current status make sense to you? Why or why not?**
- **Is there more that should be determined during the initial screening?**

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- **Would you feel comfortable answering these questions?**
- **Do you think these questions will be able to identify what services families need?**
- [Other questions?]

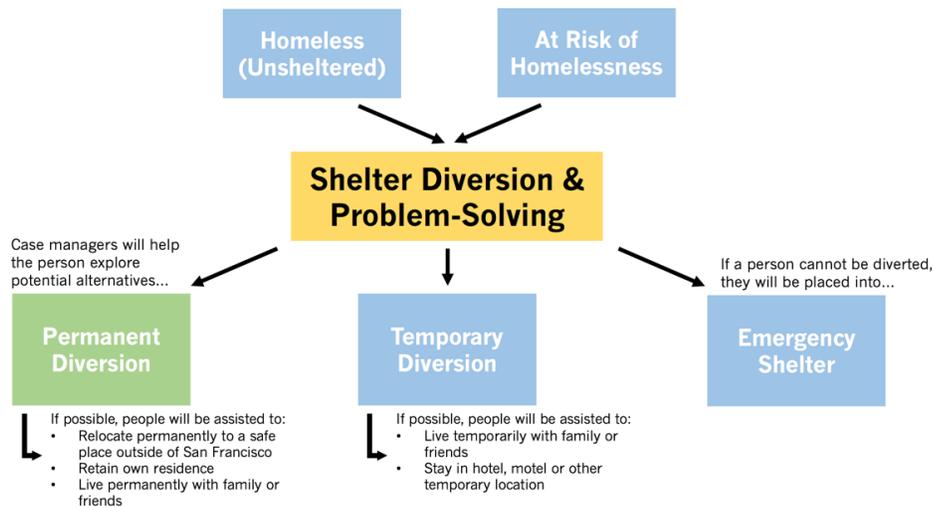
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Process for Seeking Help (Part 3): Shelter Diversion Process

After the initial screening, families who are experiencing homelessness or are at imminent risk of homelessness in San Francisco will work with case managers to determine their short-term housing options.

Instruction: Show Shelter Diversion Process slide (below).

Shelter Diversion Process



If possible, case managers will work with families experiencing homelessness to identify alternative solutions to placement in emergency shelter.

Whenever possible, the goal is to help families prevent homelessness and stay in their housing.

- **What resources, if any, could've prevented your homelessness in San Francisco?**

I'm now going to describe a few approaches San Francisco is considering to help families avoid having to use a shelter and prevent homelessness:

People who want to relocate permanently to a safe place outside San Francisco (for instance, to return to a different city) will be assisted to do so.

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option? Why or why not?**

People who are at immediate risk of losing their housing will get help to stay in their home. .

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option? Why or why not?**

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People who want to live permanently with family or friends will get help in order to do so.

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option? What kind of help would be needed?**

In other cases, case managers may be able to work with families to identify other temporary solutions such as living temporarily with friends or family, or staying in a hotel, motel, or other temporary location. This is called temporary diversion.

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option? Why or why not?**

In other cases, however, neither case managers nor families will be able to identify alternative solutions. These families will then be placed into emergency shelter until permanent housing is identified through the housing assessment and placement process.

- **Does anyone have any questions regarding this part of the system?**

Before we discuss housing assessment and placement, however, I'd like to ask you a few questions:

- **Does this process make sense to you? Why or why not?**
- **Do you think that, if you'd been able to work with a case manager at the right point, you would've been able to avoid emergency shelter altogether through one of these routes?**
- **Other than permanent housing, are there any avenues that the City can explore to help people avoid emergency shelter?**
- [Other questions?]

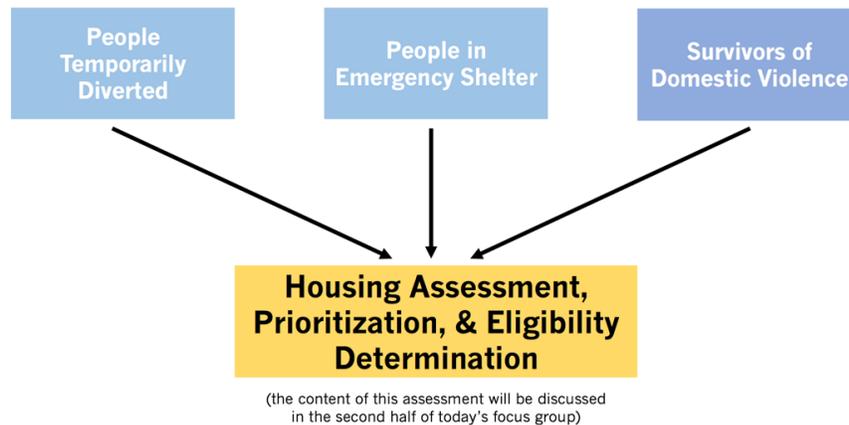
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Assessment

Once families have found temporarily diverted or placed in emergency shelter, they will be administered a housing assessment to determine the appropriate housing program for that particular family. Survivors of domestic violence will be given the housing assessment immediately after the initial screening and will not go through the shelter diversion and problem-solving step we just discussed.

Instruction: Show Assessment Process slide (below).

Assessment Process



We are going to talk about the “assessment process” in the second half of today’s group. But in short it is a series of questions that does two things: 1) Find out enough information about the family to determine what housing solution will work best for the family, and 2) Determine which families have the highest and most urgent need for housing.

We can all agree that there is not enough affordable housing for people in San Francisco. As a result, the city must prioritize the housing resources for those with the highest needs. This assessment process will help do so.

The assessment will be conducted either within the emergency shelter or by case managers if a family has been temporarily diverted and is staying with friends or family, or in a motel, on a temporary basis. The result of this assessment will be a single housing priority list for families experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.

- **Does anyone have any questions regarding this part of the system?**

Before we discuss how this assessment will be used, I have a few questions for you:

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- **Does the timing of the assessment seem right to you?** (At initial screening for survivors of domestic violence and following placement into emergency shelter or a temporary diversion site for all others.)
- **Keeping in mind that assessment questions often ask for personal information, where and how should the questions be asked?**
- **For families not in a shelter, how should case managers get in touch with them to do the assessment?**
- **San Francisco does not have enough housing for everyone who needs it. What do you think is the best way to prioritize who gets the housing first?**
- [Other questions?]

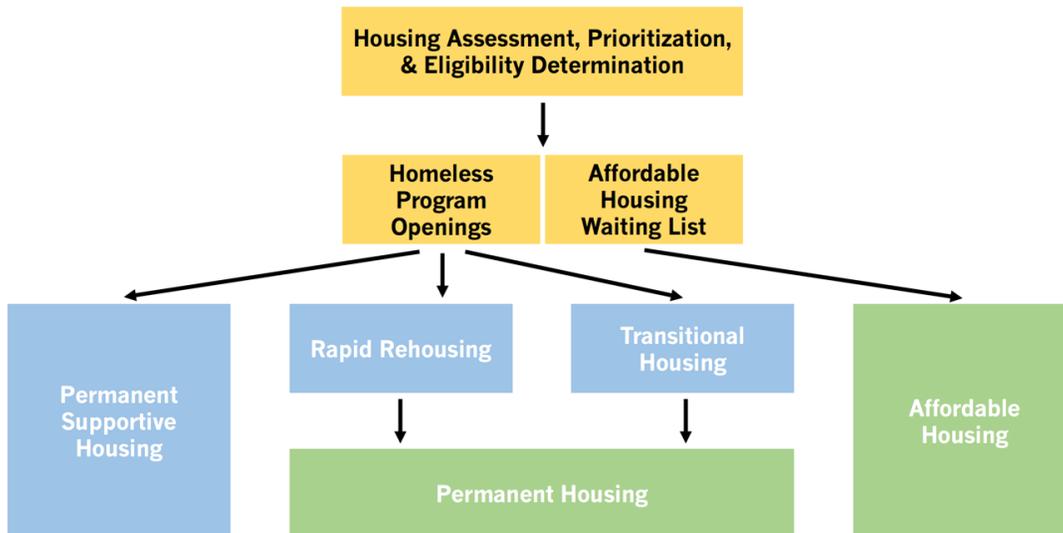
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Referral and Placement

Once families have been given the housing assessment, they will be placed onto a priority list and matched to appropriate homeless housing program to fit their needs.

Instruction: Show Referral and Placement Process slide (below).

Referral and Placement Process



As openings become available in homeless housing programs (including permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and transitional housing), those openings will be filled from the single priority list based on the appropriateness of the intervention. Until that time, assessed families will remain in an emergency shelter, their temporary diversion situation, or other intervention as appropriate.

Matching for program openings will be based primarily on two factors:

- The length of time homeless and level of housing needs/barriers; and,
- The appropriateness of the housing program type given the family's needs.
- **Does anyone have any questions regarding this part of the system?**

Before we move onto the second half of this focus group, in which we'll discuss the potential contents of the housing assessment, I have a few questions regarding the referral and placement process:

- **What information would you like to know to understand where you are in this process?**
- **When would you like to receive that information?** Examples: at the time of placement onto the waiting list and every six months after.
- **How would you like this information to be communicated to you?**

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- **What can we do to make sure this system takes into account where you want to live?**
- **What can we do to make sure this system takes into account the type of program you want to be a part of?**
- [Other questions?]

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Wrap-Up

Now that we've seen the entire proposed coordinated entry system for families, I'd like to ask a couple of questions:

- **What do you like about this system (as I've described it)?**
- **What frustrates you about this system (as I've described it)?**
- **What would do to improve this system?**
- **What could make this process as easy and open as possible for families experiencing homelessness?**

Let's take a ten-minute break and then we'll discuss the housing assessment questions. Thank you very much for all the feedback you've given us. We really appreciate it!

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Introduction & Overview

Welcome back.

The second half of today's focus group will focus on two sets of questions, or assessment tools, that the City is considering using as part of its coordinated entry system. Information gathered from homeless families in response to these questions would be used to prioritize people for access to limited homeless resources here in San Francisco.

As before, [note taker] will be taking careful notes of your feedback and your feedback is completely confidential. You will never be identified to anyone to anyone for any reason.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask you a few questions about prioritizing access to resources:

- **What types of things do you think it's important for the City to consider when they decide who gets housing first?**

Thank you. Now, we're going to talk about two sets of questions in more detail, and walk through the types of questions that people looking for help would be asked in order to figure out where they should be placed on the single priority list for homeless housing. As we walk through the questions, I'm going to ask you the following about each:

- By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?
- Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?
- How should we best collect this information?

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Family SPDAT

The first set of questions is called the Family SPDAT. Answers to these questions would be used to determine a homeless family's level of need. These scores would then be used to determine placement on the priority list. We're going to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each of the questions within it, starting with those related to mental health and wellness.

Instruction: Show Mental Health, Wellness, & Cognitive Functioning slide (below).

Mental Health, Wellness, & Cognitive Functioning

- Has anyone in your family ever received any help with their mental wellness?
- Do you feel that every member in your family is getting all the help they need for their mental health or stress?
- Has a doctor ever prescribed anyone in your family pills for nerves, anxiety, depression or anything like that?
- Has anyone in your family ever gone to an emergency room or stayed in a hospital because they weren't feeling 100% emotionally?
- Does anyone in your family have trouble learning or paying attention, or been tested for learning disabilities?
- Do you know if, when pregnant with you, your mother did anything that we now know can have negative effects on the baby? What about when you were pregnant?
- Has anyone in your family ever hurt their brain or head?
- Do you have any documents or papers about your family's mental health or brain functioning?
- Are there other professionals we could speak with that have knowledge of your family's mental health?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to physical health and wellness.

Instruction: Show Physical Health & Wellness slide (below).

Physical Health & Wellness

- How is your family's health?
- Are you getting any help with your health? How often?
- Do you feel you are getting all the care you need for your family's health?
- Any illnesses like diabetes, HIV, Hepatitis C or anything like that going on in any member of your family?
- Ever had a doctor tell anyone in your family that they have problems with blood pressure or heart or lungs or anything like that?
- When was the last time anyone in your family saw a doctor? What was that for?
- Do you have a clinic or doctor that you usually go to?
- Anything going on right now with your family's health that you think would prevent them from living a full, healthy, happy life?
- Are there other professionals we could speak with that have knowledge of your family's health?
- Do you have any documents or papers about your family's health or past stays in hospital because of your health?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to medications.

Instruction: Show Medication slide (below).

Medication

- Has anyone in your family recently been prescribed any medications by a health care professional?
- Does anyone in your family take any medication, prescribed to them by a doctor?
- Has anyone in your family ever had a doctor prescribe them a medication that wasn't filled or they didn't take?
- Were any of your family's medications changed in the last month? Whose? How did that make them feel?
- Do other people ever steal your family's medications?
- Does anyone in your family ever sell or share their medications with other people it wasn't prescribed to?
- How does your family store their medication and make sure they take the right medication at the right time each day?
- What do you do if you realize someone has forgotten to take their medications?
- Do you have any papers or documents about the medications your family takes?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to substance use.

Instruction: Show Substance Use slide (below).

Substance Use

- When was the last time you had a drink or used drugs? What about the other members of your family?
- Anything we should keep in mind related to drugs/alcohol?
- How often would you say you use [substance] in a week?
- Ever have a doctor tell you that your health may be at risk because you drink or use drugs?
- Have you engaged with anyone professionally related to your substance use that we could speak with?
- Ever get into fights, fall down and bang your head, do things you regret later, or pass out when drinking or using other drugs?
- Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs in a way that may be considered less than safe?
- Do you ever drink mouthwash or cooking wine or hand sanitizer or anything like that?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to experiences of abuse and trauma of parents. People would not be asked to give any detail regarding these experiences.

Instruction: Show Experience of Abuse & Trauma of Parents slide (below).

Experience of Abuse & Trauma of Parents

- “I don’t need you to go into any details, but has there been any point in your life where you experienced emotional, physical, sexual or psychological abuse?”
- “Are you currently or have you ever received professional assistance to address that abuse?”
- “Does the experience of abuse or trauma impact your day to day living in any way?”
- “Does the experience of abuse or trauma impact your ability to hold down a job, maintain housing or engage in meaningful relationships with friends or family?”
- “Have you ever found yourself feeling or acting in a certain way that you think is caused by a history of abuse or trauma?”
- “Have you ever become homeless as a direct result of experiencing abuse or trauma?”

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone’s need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to risk of harm to self or others.

Instruction: Show Risk of Harm to Self or Others slide (below).

Risk of Harm to Self or Others

- Does anyone in your family have thoughts about hurting themselves or anyone else? Have they ever acted on these thoughts? When was the last time? What was occurring when that happened?
- Has anyone in your family ever received professional help – including maybe a stay at hospital – as a result of thinking about or attempting to hurt themselves or others? How long ago was that? Does that happen often?
- Has anyone in your family recently left a situation you felt was abusive or unsafe? How long ago was that?
- Has anyone in your family been in any fights recently – whether they started it or someone else did? How long ago was that? How often do they get into fights?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to involvement in higher risk and/or exploitive situations.

Instruction: Show Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations slide (below).

Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations

- Does anybody force or trick people in your family to do things that they don't want to do?
- Do you or anyone in your family ever do stuff that could be considered dangerous like drinking until they pass out outside, or delivering drugs for someone, having sex without a condom with a casual partner, or anything like that?
- Does anyone in your family ever find themselves in situations that may be considered at a high risk for violence?
- Does your family ever sleep outside? How do you dress and prepare for that? Where do you tend to sleep?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to interactions with emergency services.

Instruction: Show Interaction with Emergency Services slide (below).

Interaction with Emergency Services

- How often does your family go to emergency rooms?
- How many times have you had the police speak to members of your family over the past 180 days?
- Has anyone in your family used an ambulance or needed the fire department at any time in the past 180 days?
- How many times have members of your family called or visited a crisis team or a crisis counselor in the last 180 days?
- How many times have you or anyone in your family been admitted to hospital in the last 180 days? How long did they stay?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to legal issues.

Instruction: Show Legal slide (below).

Legal

- Does your family have any “legal stuff” going on?
- Has anyone in your family had a lawyer assigned to them by a court?
- Does anyone in your family have any upcoming court dates? Do you think there’s a chance someone in your family will do time?
- Any outstanding fines?
- Has anyone in your family paid any fines in the last 12 months for anything?
- Has anyone in your family done any community service in the last 12 months?
- Is anybody expecting someone in your family to do community service for anything right now?
- Did your family have any legal stuff in the last year that got dismissed?
- Is your family’s housing at risk in any way right now because of legal issues?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone’s need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to tenancy management characteristics.

Instruction: Show Managing Tenancy slide (below).

Managing Tenancy

- Is your family currently homeless?
- [If the family is housed] Does your family have an eviction notice?
- [If the family is housed] Do you think that your family's housing is at risk?
- How is your family's relationship with your neighbors?
- How does your family normally get along with landlords?
- How has your family been doing with taking care of your place?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to personal administration and money management.

Instruction: Show Personal Administration & Money Management slide (below).

Personal Administration & Money Management

- How are you and your family with taking care of money?
- How are you and your family with paying bills on time and taking care of other financial stuff?
- Does anyone in your family have any street debts or drug or gambling debts?
- Is there anybody that thinks anyone in your family owes them money?
- Do you budget every single month for every single thing your family needs? Including cigarettes? Booze? Drugs?
- Does your family try to pay your rent before paying for anything else?
- Is anyone in your family behind in any payments like child support or student loans or anything like that?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to social relationships and networks.

Instruction: Show Social Relationships & Networks slide (below).

Social Relationships & Networks

- Tell me about your family's friends, extended family or other people in your life.
- How often do you get together or chat with family friends?
- When your family goes to doctor's appointments or meet with other professionals like that, what is that like?
- Are there any people in your life that you feel are just using you, or someone else in your family?
- Are there any of your family's closer friends that you feel are always asking you for money, smokes, drugs, food or anything like that?
- Have you ever had people crash at your place that you did not want staying there?
- Have you ever been threatened with an eviction or lost a place because of something that friends or extended family did in your apartment?
- Have you ever been concerned about not following your lease agreement because of friends or extended family?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to self care and daily living skills of the head of the family.

Instruction: Show Self Care & Daily Living Skills of Family Head slide (below).

Self Care & Daily Living Skills of Family Head

- Do you have any worries about taking care of yourself or your family?
- Do you have any concerns about cooking, cleaning, laundry or anything like that?
- Does anyone in your family ever need reminders to do things like shower or clean up?
- Describe your family's last apartment.
- Do you know how to shop for nutritious food on a budget?
- Do you know how to make low cost meals that can result in leftovers to freeze or save for another day?
- Do you tend to keep all of your family's clothes clean?
- Have you ever had a problem with mice or other bugs like cockroaches as a result of a dirty apartment?
- When you have had a place where you have made a meal, do you tend to clean up dishes and the like before they get crusty?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to meaningful daily activities.

Instruction: Show Meaningful Daily Activity slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to parental engagement.

Instruction: Show Parental Engagement slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to stability/resiliency of the family unit.

Instruction: Show Stability/Resiliency of the Family Unit slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to the needs of children.

Instruction: Show Needs of Children slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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The next set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to the size of the family unit.

Instruction: Show Size of Family Unit slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

Finally, the last set of questions on the Family SPDAT are related to interactions with either Child Protective Services or family courts.

Instruction: Show Interaction with Child Protective Services and/or Family Court slide (below).

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

Housing Prioritization Tool

The second, alternative set of questions is called the Housing Prioritization Tool. Answers to these questions would be used to determine a homeless family's level of need and vulnerability. These scores would then be used to determine placement on the priority list. As before, we're going to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each of the questions within it, starting with questions regarding families' living situations and housing histories.

Instruction: Show Living Situation & Housing History slide (below).

Living Situation & Housing History

- Where are you currently staying?
- On how many separate occasions in the last 3 years have you lived in a place not meant for habitation, shelter, or motel with an emergency shelter voucher?
- How long have you been homeless this time (lived in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation)?
- When was the last time you or any adult household member had a lease in your/their name?
- How many times has any adult household member had an eviction in the last 5 years (asked to leave a rental or had legal papers filed to ask you to leave)?
- How many members are there in your household?
- How old are each of the members of your household?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Housing Prioritization Tool are related to health status and history.

Instruction: Show Health Status & History slide (below).

Health Status & History

- Are you pregnant?
- Do you have now or has a healthcare provider ever told you that you have any of the following disabilities: alcohol abuse, drug abuse, or both; chronic health condition; developmental disability; HIV/AIDS; mental health disorder; or, physical health condition? What about other members of your household?
- Do you need assistance with activities of daily living and/or access to life sustaining medications, treatments, or equipment?
- How many times have you used crisis services (mental health triage/crisis bed, suicide prevention hotline, detox, etc.) and/or have you been hospitalized in the past year?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

The next set of questions on the Housing Prioritization Tool are related to income.

Instruction: Show Income slide (below).

Income

- Considering all sources of income, what is your household's monthly income (including employment income, benefits, and all other sources)?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

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Finally, the last set of questions on the Housing Prioritization Tool are related to legal issues.

Instruction: Show Interaction with Legal Domains slide (below).

Legal Domains

- Do you currently have US citizenship or legal immigration status?
- How many times in the past five years has someone in your household been arrested or picked up by police (more than a warning or citation)?
- Has anyone in the household ever been convicted of the following offenses: violent crime, offenses that result in registered sex offender status, or arson?

Please take a moment to review these questions.

Instruction: Read questions/highlights out loud if necessary.

- **By a show of hands, do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**
- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**
- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**
- **How should we best collect this information?**

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS

Wrap-Up

Now that we've seen the entire proposed coordinated entry system for families, I'd like to ask a couple overarching questions:

- **Which set of questions seem more important to you: the Family SPDAT or the Housing Prioritization Tool?**
- **What do you like about these prioritization questions?**
- **What frustrates you about these prioritization questions?**
- **What would do to improve this process?**
- **What could make this process as easy and transparent as possible for people experiencing homelessness?**

That wraps it up for us today. Thank you so much for participating in today's focus groups. As a reminder, please hand in your demographic forms and you'll receive a gift card for your time and energy.

We really appreciate everything you've discussed with us today!

ATTACHMENT B

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
Compass Family Services 7.7.16

Part 1: Overview

- **By a show of hands, how many of you have heard the term “coordinated entry” before?¹**

Notes:

- No one has heard of coordinated entry

Process for Seeking Help (Part 1): Process for Seeking Help

- **Are there other places where you asked for help with housing or services that aren't on the list above?** Examples: police, jails, hospitals, etc.

Notes:

- All people have called 311/211
- No one with the HOT Team
- Walk-in's some: Hamilton House, shelter, CalWORKS,
- Eviction prevention services: a lot of them don't help you
- Job/employment services
- Colleges
- Churches
- Youth Groups
 - These places get scared and they can't help you
- Hospital: they will get you a hotel room for a couple of days, but it is not a guarantee
- Schools and near support groups

- **How do you feel about being sent to an Access Point? Should they all be physical locations?**

Notes:

- Not using technology
- I like to physically see the person face to face
- I would like both options, to be able to go to a place and also have the option to use technology
- What about a van or a bus: it would work if they came to you

- **Where should these Access Points be located?** Examples: the Bayview, the Mission/Potrero Hill, the Tenderloin/Downtown, etc.

Notes:

- Downtown billboard to show where they were
- Logo idea
- Different neighborhoods all over the city
 - Haight is limited

¹ Note: These notes have been edited for clarity. Additional questions or topics may have been raised by facilitators, but if there were no responses or feedback from participants, those questions were not included.

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
Compass Family Services 7.7.16

- Oceanview
- Bayview

Process for Seeking Help (Part 2): Initial Screening Process

- **Does this initial screening to determine current status make sense to you? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Same thing as EBT, they will see if you qualify

- **Is there more that should be determined during the initial screening?**

Notes:

- DV: Should make sure that there is a restraining order in place to to prove that the DV happened
 - It would be harder to help that person, but it would show that the person is serious about leaving the situation and that they aren't going to go back to the perpetrator
- Depending on the household
- If something is really serious
 - Mental illness
 - Physical illness
- Traumatized/takes time to get the person to a place where they are serious
 - In that case they should be seeking help for mental illness
- The whole system is disjointed and the case manager won't have the correct information
- Treatment of those currently living outside of San Francisco
 - Needs to be more nuanced
 - Needs to be client centered
 - They won't help you
 - Regional Coordination
 - Do it by state
- It shouldn't matter
- You aren't able to get help and the kids are with you and the case worker will ask questions you don't want to answer in front of them
- Some shelters won't take men, so it splits up families

- **Would you feel comfortable answering these questions? Would this work for you?**

Notes:

- No, if you are at risk of homelessness and there is nowhere for you to go and the emergency shelters are full
- I think it's backwards, it should be emergency shelter first and then you get help
- But not everybody wants to go to shelter
 - The system can help in that way by giving an incentive
- They need someone to hold their hand throughout the entire way through the system (providing check-ins every couple of weeks)
 - This is important for people that are experiencing homelessness

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
Compass Family Services 7.7.16

- **Do you think these questions will be able to identify what services families need?**

Notes:

- Tax write off
- Incentives
- It's hard to stay in the hotels because they are dirty and it takes all the money to pay for rent, but then didn't have money for food
- Staying with family doesn't allow you to cook sometimes because there isn't enough space to store food
- There aren't temporary solutions to homelessness, for example people that need time to graduate school just need the extra steps
- How many kids, are you going to school are you going to work

Process for Seeking Help (Part 3): Shelter Diversion Process

Assessment

- **Does the timing of the assessment seem right to you?** (At initial screening for survivors of domestic violence and following placement into emergency shelter or a temporary diversion site for all others.)

Notes:

- I think there is enough housing but they aren't giving it to the right people
 - I start working in September
 - They gave my apartment to people that are doing drugs
 - They aren't screening for drugs
 - I am still homeless with my children

- **San Francisco does not have enough housing for everyone who needs it. What do you think is the best way to prioritize who gets the housing first?**

Notes:

- Citizens and people who were born here
- People with jobs
- People with a paper trail
- People that are going to school
- It should be factored into how severe the medical issues are
- They should see what they are doing to make sure you are in a stable situation
- Physical disability section often doesn't include a preference for people with developmental disabilities and it seems like only people with physical disabilities are prioritized
- What I have experienced is that because my child is only mildly disabled she isn't considered as disabled
- The person that is on the list first
- Who is more eligible to get back on their feet faster
- I have to go where the job is and where the housing is
- Schools, childcare
- Stockton doesn't have childcare so I can't take a job there

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
Compass Family Services 7.7.16

- It is hard because even with the subsidy childcare they make you choose a certain provider, but I need that childcare in order for me to even work and get housing
- Her and her two daughters and the daughter has therapy but the dad works at night, there isn't enough space to live
 - They have to move all their stuff out twice a year because the landlord will come and they are illegal tenants
 - There should be more of a priority for people with more kids and kids with disabilities

Referral and Placement

How important is having a neutral, private place to discuss the issues?

- They should have a space for this if they are

What do you want from a caseworker?

- You need the worker to show you a lot of care
- You would rather be in the shelter than putting stress on family members, but the children are more comfortable there. People in emergency shelter are prioritized
- People don't care about people that don't have a place to stay/some people are exhausted

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
Compass Family Services 7.7.16

Part 2: Overview of Assessment Tools

Family VI-SPDAT

Comments?

- Unrealistic to expect to get this information without a longer term relationship with a case manager that would build trust.
- One participant would be more comfortable to tell this information to someone with whom they have a case manager relationship.
- Two people felt very comfortable with this level of detail; wanted to screen out noncitizens
- Often get asked about citizenship for housing
- Need to come up with a better system for how they can come up with who gets housing. Should give it to people on the list, especially if they have children.
- Even if you are working, if get put out of a shelter you can't go to work because not stable.
- Should do something like get everyone gets an opportunity for housing but once you abuse it then they should get cut off.
- It's all who you know; housing situation, something like auntie works in system, they get housing.
- This would work if the list was narrowed down – health, legal, financial, experience with abuse, needs of children – those are most important areas.
- Just what you see on the outside, is not what's going on. I can work and function, but have a mental disability, and have to control it on my own. Don't want to put a Band Aid on what I am going through; I am homeless, don't look at me like I am homeless.
- Size of family is difficult to deal with but that is what you have to deal with.
- Perhaps there should be a time limit.
- One participant had a voucher for rapid rehousing – but then they told her that the voucher was exhausted so she wasn't able to use it. Kept calling, and person was nice and put her on another program but so hard to find a place. Not good communication with apartment. Now they tell her she has insufficient income so can't find a place even though she has a job starting in September.
- Family needs change over time – difference between high needs and building on success and strengths – need to be transparent in looking at needs vs. encouraging success.
- Not fair to say you only have one child so you don't get anything. Being a single parent makes it harder – single parent with 5 kids – have to take all my kids or I don't go.
- Easier for one kid with two parents; not an excuse. Struggling with five kids alone is very difficult.
- All people with families in general should be prioritized, because even if there are two parents they have to work, and if not eligible for certain things because there are two parents, you still have to make sure that the kids are the priority.
- Difficult because programs all have different rules.
- Difficult for a single parent because she because only works 3 days a week, no support from a partner, disqualified because not able to work full-time.
- Can't find a place to live even with a subsidy – no list of places that accept subsidy, no help in finding a place, not like Section 8. Has a subsidy but not getting a chance to use it. Had to leave kids with mother in Georgia but she doesn't like to do so.
- Some landlords don't like vouchers because they don't like to declare the right amount of rent because without the vouchers they can disguise their rent and pay less taxes.

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Compass Family Services 7.7.16

Housing Prioritization Tool

Presentation of Housing Prioritization Tool.

How would this work to assess families' needs for housing?

- So long as it has information about family size, it should work.
- Providers should make people sign contract to not abuse system, and to get off drugs, and work before they can get housing.
- Look at issues and see what can be done – need to be pushed to work
- Make people make a plan, with long-term goals, ask questions about their lifestyle and plan, home inspection, documented that what they say is true
- If not taking care of business, they should be removed from the program, if ill, need to be going to doctor
- If not doing what plan says, then they should be removed – maybe one mistake, but no more
- Longer application maybe has some benefits but also can be a problem, and traumatizing
- Other states need a drug testing for welfare and housing and California should do that

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
1101 Fairfax Avenue 7.13.2016

Part 1: Overview

- **By a show of hands, how many of you have heard the term “coordinated entry” before?¹**

Notes:

- 0 people

Process for Seeking Help (Part 1):

- **Are there other places where you asked for help with housing or services that aren't on the list above?** Examples: police, jails, hospitals, etc.

Notes:

- Personal referrals, religious portal (church), shelters

- **Where should these Access Points be located?** Examples: the Bayview, the Mission/Portero Hill, the Tenderloin/Downtown, etc.

Notes:

- Bayview, the Tenderloin, the Mission, Bernal Heights (communities with large homeless population), Golden Gate Park
- Prioritize downtown, strategically place access points between neighborhoods where neighborhoods cross

- **Does this initial screening to determine current status make sense to you? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Participants had questions about the process, including:
 - Do you make mental health a factor?
 - What does at risk of homelessness mean?
 - What will happen for people outside of San Francisco?
 - What happens for people who are coming in to San Francisco from other places for DV issues? Will they receive services?
 - What happens for people once they are housed? Do you get services that will help you stay housed?
 - Who would be determining priority?
 - Is Rapid Rehousing free?
 - How do undocumented parents of children who are born in the US fit into this?
 - Are the rapid rehousing and transitional housing units that you're talking about in existence now or are they just an idea?
 - How are you going to manage landlords who don't want low income residents?

¹ Note: These notes have been edited for clarity. Additional questions or topics may have been raised by facilitators, but if there were no responses or feedback from participants, those questions were not included.

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
1101 Fairfax Avenue 7.13.2016

- People mentioned that they would be uncomfortable answering questions regarding their income
- Case workers felt that income related questions would be useful as a part of the initial investment
- People noted that when you ask the substance abuse questions, it's important to make sure that they understand that their answers won't hurt them if they're honest
- This could set a lot of people up to fail because it's just touching on the surface

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Part 2: Overview of Assessment Tools

- **What types of things do you think are important for the City to consider when they decide who gets housing first/What is your reaction to the questions and the assessment tools?**

Notes:

- I think everybody is going to be different - depends on the individual themselves on how they feel about answering the questions and talking to strangers
- You'll get a feel for what they want to fill out and not at the initial interview
- If it were me being assessed and I want housing for my kids I'm going to answer what I have to
- Too many questions would be discouraging to people
- A lot of it has to do with training service providers on what to say/how to say it/how to be sensitive – this population has a lot of barriers so it comes down to the person asking the questions and their delivery/manner
- Are these questions going to exclude them from housing? How do you know if a person is using drugs?
- Woman telling her story: moved from Atlanta for DV issues - moved from shelter to shelter for 6 months
- What happens with people who have substance abuse problems? How will they score?
- Once this gets up and running is it going to be a faster process?
- Important to ask about prior evictions - this would be helpful as a first step to get people housed
- Need a third party money management system – credit is often a barrier
- What if there are people who are homeless because of the housing crisis in San Francisco and were forced to move to another county?

- **What would you want the city to know about you when looking for housing:**
 - I would want them to know that I'm clean, I have a job etc. so that you aren't subject to discrimination right off the bat
- Need to screen the landlords as well - a lot of the landlords in the section 8 system are slumlords
- Would these units be rent controlled?

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

Part 1: Overview¹

- **By a show of hands, how many of you have heard the term “coordinated entry” before?**
0

Notes:

- No participants had heard the term before - they wanted clarification of whether it was a list, etc.

Process for Seeking Help (Part 1): Process for Seeking Help

- **Are there other places where you asked for help with housing or services that aren't on the list above?** Examples: police, jails, hospitals, etc.

Notes:

- One has had experience going straight to a shelter, didn't know anywhere else to go
 - Suggested advertising, putting information on buses, billboards etc. because he didn't know where to seek help – making information more available in general would be helpful
 - In his experience there was no access to computers so walk in access points would be good
 - Hospitals, jails
 - Access points don't give you any information just a few materials like sleeping bags
 - Took one person 3 months just to get a caseworker- need more caseworkers
 - For this to really work other cities and states have to get on board so that the city of San Francisco doesn't get overloaded with people travelling to the city
 - For this to really work other cities and states have to get on board so that the city of San Francisco doesn't get overloaded with people travelling to the city – too much pressure on the city
- Would it be hard for you to get across town just to access assessment info? Would it be better if you could do an assessment over the phone?
 - Probably in person is better - on the phone you can't see people and their situations/desperation- important to see the human side
 - Didn't know how big the homeless family community was until he entered the system
 - You could have a ton of resources but if there aren't enough people it won't work
- **Where should these Access Points be located?** Examples: the Bayview, the Mission/Potrero Hill, the Tenderloin/Downtown, etc.

Notes:

- Market St. or Mission St.

¹ Note: These notes have been edited for clarity. Additional questions or topics may have been raised by facilitators, but if there were no responses or feedback from participants, those questions were not included.

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

- Somewhere that isn't in an extremely busy area – homeless community would rather be away from the violence and drugs that are downtown
- One in the downtown area, one in the Mission
 - Have to make sure that the buses go there - if these are families with lots of people you don't want them to have to walk too much

Process for Seeking Help (Part 2): Initial Screening Process

- **Does this initial screening to determine current status make sense to you? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Single parents need a place too - lots of doors shut on you when you're a single parent
- Yes – and he likes the idea of putting people exactly where they're really supposed to be based on their physical location as well

- **Is there more that should be determined during the initial screening?**

Notes:

- Anything helps
- Making sure that there are immediate options for high-risk situations – get you in out of the cold and figure out where to place you from there

- **Would you feel comfortable answering these questions?**

Notes:

- Yes

- **Do you think these questions will be able to identify what services families need?**

Notes:

- Yes
- Childcare services are needed

Process for Seeking Help (Part 3): Shelter Diversion Process

- **What resources, if any, could have prevented your homelessness in San Francisco?**

Notes:

- Accommodations – A participant is disabled off of his bipolar medications and it took a while to get him the medication that he needed so he was unable to care for his 9-year child. If he had gotten medication earlier he would have been more capable of dealing with his eviction - he's the only breadwinner and his wife doesn't speak English. This is the first time he became homeless, but his parents died, lost his job, got injured.

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St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

- Help with benefits and medical help
- Domestic violence situation - caseworkers only offered them assistance to get further into the situation with an abusive spouse; nobody offered him help getting out of the situation

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option (stay in own home)? Why or why not? What if a case manager said they could get you back in touch with family you'd lost touch with, would you do that?**

Notes:

- One participant has family in other states but never reached out – he would take advantage of that
 - Veterans would be very open to that - they would love to get back to their hometowns if that were an option
 - People need to be aware of these programs and they need resources in order to go
-
- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option (live temporarily with friends/families, or stay in hotel/motel)? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Sometimes you break away from family for various reasons (unhealthy relationships etc.) but it's worth exploring with case managers -- depends on the individual situations
-
- **Other than permanent housing, are there any avenues that the City can explore to help people avoid emergency shelter?**

Notes:

- One participant stays in transitional housing which he thinks is good but he thinks that shelters should be open 7 days a week- a lot of doors close for homeless with kids
- One participant questioned how the permanent housing system was supposed to work

Assessment

- **Does the timing of the assessment seem right to you?** (At initial screening for survivors of domestic violence and following placement into emergency shelter or a temporary diversion site for all others.)

Notes:

- Participants need to get in to shelter first and then they can answer questions
- Make sense for access points to give the assessments
- Do the assessment right away
- It depends - in order to find out what is best for a person you have to establish a relationship with them so it's important to get a plan in place – you need to educate people first (you can get a place but if you don't know how to manage your finances you're going to get back into the system)

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

- **Keeping in mind that assessment questions often ask for personal information, where and how should the questions be asked?**

Notes:

- It depends on each person - the severity of what they need at the time
 - Regular human reaction is not to want to offer that information - but the rules can get tricky because as a parent you're desperate and asking people in that position questions that don't seem to have anything to do with that can be tough - it can become an emotional situation as well
 - **What could make that more comfortable for people?**
 - Humanizing the process, teach case managers how to be human,
 - Have to be careful asking people things because they won't trust you
 - If people had a better idea/understanding of why they're being asked these questions they would be more amenable to answering them
-
- **San Francisco does not have enough housing for everyone who needs it. What do you think is the best way to prioritize who gets the housing first?**

Notes:

- Put families first (people go to drug programs just to get beds even if they aren't drug users) there are more programs for single people on drugs than other situations
 - Build more facilities for families
- Only one drug program in the city for fathers and it's a sliding scale from day to day whether you get through there – they'll tell the fathers every day that they have no other options (lose custody of their children)
- More transitional housing
- People generally need housing options for longer than they think - shelters don't let you get in after 11 and hotels are often already overcrowded and they still charge you to stay and they feed off of your desperation and charge more
- If caseworkers were more available people would be able to get into housing much faster or resolve their problems much faster
- Having children makes it much more difficult to find any shelter

Referral and Placement

- **What information would you like to know to understand where you are in this process?**

Notes:

- Participant question: what is rapid rehousing?
 - People would like to know where they should be placed
 - Anything that can get you more privacy with your family is welcomed
-
- **When would you like to receive that information?** Examples: at the time of placement onto the waiting list and every six months after. How should the system work?

Notes:

- A lot of people will live in any part of San Francisco
- Some people cannot go to certain parts of the city for various reasons so you have to take that into consideration
- Makes sense for people to be able to choose where they don't want to live

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

- It's often the only place people know so they are hesitant to travel or move - they don't know how to get around or where to go

Wrap-Up

- **What do you like about this system (as I've described it)?**

Notes:

- People like the sound of the program but other cities have to start working with each other – the system will get overrun if not
- Kind of sounds like the current system

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St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

Part 2: Overview

- **What types of things do you think are important for the City to consider when they decide who gets housing first?**

Notes:

- Families – focus on getting kids taken care of
- How would you choose between families?
 - The one that lives in/is from San Francisco

Family VI-SPDAT

Mental Health, Wellness, & Cognitive Functioning

- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- Doesn't think it's that important- the whole world has problems- doesn't see how it's related to how or when you will housing
 - Learning disability question is important

- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**

Notes:

- They would want to know who you are and why you're asking them
- Are there any questions that you would feel uncomfortable answering – not specifically just doesn't seem all that relevant
- Parents not comfortable with their kids getting asked questions without them present or in general
- It's awful when you get into these situations and the people who are supposed to be helping you are terrible
- How do you know people are even telling the truth?
- Depends on the person asking the questions
- Good to ask people about their mental health in order to get more comfortable

Physical Health & Wellness

- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- Important – but general feeling that it is unfair to place some people over others- making anyone wait longer comes with its own consequences- people who didn't have these issues before may develop them – healthy people get sick waiting and living in shelters

SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY COORDINATED ENTRY FOCUS GROUPS
St. Joseph's Family Shelter 6.27.2016

- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important? If they made a point to explain why they are asking these questions, would that be helpful?**

Notes:

- Reaction is basically why are you asking me questions if you can't offer me help - people in this situation just need housing and resources
- Important to know about prescriptions needed and serious illnesses
- Parents are concerned about results, being able to get their children housed above anything else

- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**

Notes:

- Yes
-

Medication

- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**

Notes:

- These questions seem like you're being accused of having a drug addiction

- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**

Notes:

- Basically if you're not going to get a place to stay these questions are worthless
- If you knew the answers that would get you housed would you say that regardless?
- They should design a program structure on what the family really needs - people will wonder why they are being asked these questions and would interpret these questions as these are the way they interpret you and you don't feel human - you don't want to be tormented at the places you're supposed to be getting help
- Making people jump through more hoops will anger and frustrate them - asking them questions that can't immediately help them just adds stress to their already stressful day/situation
- People need to feel like they're in control of their situations
- Participants are under the impression that these questions have to be asked
- People are already lying about their situations and case workers tell their clients to say the things that will get them housed faster even if it isn't true
- People might be nervous to answer these questions honestly because they could get more requirements or strings attached to the housing and resources they get based on the questions

General impressions of the Family SPDAT

- Maybe some of those questions are important but you can get better answers about people if you put them in housing - people aren't going to care about these questions if they don't give them immediate help

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- People might leave if they're getting asked all of these biased questions- seems like they're labelling homeless people- will make you wonder if they're even interested in your personal situation
- Not fair to prioritize people with substance abuse problems and can be discouraging to others who know that's happening
- A lot of these questions could make people feel like they're being looked down on - it's not a positive message - could get offended by these questions- placing labels on people
- Word it in a way that doesn't sound accusatory
- Might just tell people what they want to hear so they'll leave you alone

Housing Prioritization Tool

The sections of the tool were presented, and then general feedback was given.

Wrap-Up

- **Which set of questions seem more important to you: the Family SPDAT or the Housing Prioritization Tool?**

Notes:

- The second set of questions seems like applying for a government job
- Doesn't see how this last part of the second set of questions is relevant

- **What frustrates you about these prioritization questions?**

Notes:

- They seem accusatory/ biased
- They put people with problems above people who are trying to be upstanding citizens
- They don't ask about your personal situation - whether it's hard to raise kids etc.
- Seems like they're assuming everyone is a criminal
- Reword the questions
- Explain how these questions are going to help (we have a unit available for you right now but we need to ask you these questions because there are requirements etc.)
- Doesn't see how a lot of these questions are relevant to a lot of people - some questions are too deep/specific and don't address the problem

What would you want the city to know about your situation to prioritize you?

Born and raised in San Francisco - been exposed to situations in the city that made you vulnerable - bottom line need a place to stay and want help getting a job and have done a lot of self-improvement

You can tell who really cares about their family and really wants to make improvements

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Part 1: Overview

- **By a show of hands, how many of you have heard the term “coordinated entry” before?¹**

Notes:

- None

Process for Seeking Help (Part 1): Process for Seeking Help

- **Are there other places where you asked for help with housing or services that aren't on the list above?** Examples: police, jails, hospitals, etc.

Notes:

- Counseling/Therapy (Mental Health Services)
- Child Protective Services
- Churches (Community/Safety Net)

- **Where else should someone be able to seek housing assistance?**

Notes:

- Tom Waddell (HIV Clinic)
- Libraries – they have certain services already available

- **How do you feel about being sent to an Access Point? Should they all be physical locations?**

Notes:

- Should be “all points” – physical and online and by telephone.
- A logo in Nevada that was in gas station windows, library windows, to be visible to those who are accessing those services. The owner of that building and all employees were aware that individuals might want to access services at that location. This is for safety purposes.

- **Where should these Access Points be located?** Examples: the Bayview, the Mission/Potrero Hill, the Tenderloin/Downtown, etc.

Notes:

- Center of town, such as the Financial District; this is the first point of contact for people new to San Francisco
- Should be in a “safe” neighborhood. Self-help center is in the Tenderloin, which might not be very safe.
- Should be in multiple neighborhoods, as well - every district.
- Feedback: Want to know about the different policies from agency to agency to assist those looking for services. Perhaps some families don't feel comfortable with the

^{1 1} Note: These notes have been edited for clarity. Additional questions or topics may have been raised by facilitators, but if there were no responses or feedback from participants, those questions were not included.

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policies of certain programs. Also want to understand why there are differences in the policies.

Process for Seeking Help (Part 2): Initial Screening Process

- **Does this initial screening to determine current status make sense to you? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Questions concerning the amount of information; how much information is too much information? Follow up in later part of presentation.
- Feedback about “at risk of homelessness” and “homelessness (unsheltered)” – confusion as to why these are separate. Clarification: Homeless but gets housing, but may be at risk of losing housing again (still needs help). Sees this more as a fluid concept.
- “At risk of homelessness” needs more explanation; explaining that some are at risk and not eligible for services, and those that are eligible.

- **Would you feel comfortable answering these questions?**

Notes:

- Yes, but concerns about confidentiality and access to information by case managers. Sharing information with multiple case managers for the same services has not been efficient/successful.

- **Do you think these questions will be able to identify what services families need?**

Notes:

- Yes

Process for Seeking Help (Part 3): Shelter Diversion Process

- **What resources, if any, could’ve prevented your homelessness in San Francisco?**

Notes:

- Going into a shelter right away.
- Also need more on-site child care. This is a big concern, and can help a lot with the diversion.
- Finding shelter right away, no matter where, is a priority.
- Counseling and educational classes for those at risk of becoming homeless (i.e. money management).

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option (relocate permanently outside San Francisco)? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Consensus – yes.

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- Help they would need: Support services to help with the relocation, and a transitioning spot to help get everything arranged.

- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option (live permanently with friends/family)? What kind of help would be needed?**

Notes:

- It would help if there were services that made incentives to stay with family.
 - This is also a “temporary” solution. Some don’t have a family support system that can provide this.
-
- **Do you think that many people will be able or want to take advantage of this option (live temporarily with friends/families, or stay in hotel/motel)? Why or why not?**

Notes:

- Hotel for a limited amount of time; concerns however that it could be exploitative – abuse of this service by putting multiple strangers in a room for the price of placing individuals in different rooms.
-
- **Do you think that, if you’d been able to work with a case manager at the right point, you would’ve been able to avoid emergency shelter altogether through one of these routes?**

Notes:

- Yes
- Experiences with HPRP voucher; not informed about other services with enough time to divert individual from becoming homeless (highlights need for coordination).

Assessment

- **Does the timing of the assessment seem right to you?** (At initial screening for survivors of domestic violence and following placement into emergency shelter or a temporary diversion site for all others.)

Notes:

- Would this be done categorically? You would be screened and then placed into a category after assessment
-
- **Keeping in mind that assessment questions often ask for personal information, where and how should the questions be asked?**

Notes:

- You would make need to your score competitive, someone that is CH that is mentally ill
- Some case managers would be good at taking this information, but not all.
- Someone that is fresh out of college is not as good as someone that has been around awhile

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- **For families not in a shelter, how should case managers get in touch with them to do the assessment?**

Notes:

- By phone or by email
 - We have DV cases here and a lot of clients that have that situation and will call the case manager, they will have a safe space and the case manager could come here and do the assessment
 - It should be separate situations
 - You need a place with your own room, there is not enough privacy, it depends on the parents on if they want the kids present or not
 - Should have an option
 - Case managers should come to them and even if it is over a cup of coffee
 - The call could be scheduled
-
- **San Francisco does not have enough housing for everyone who needs it. What do you think is the best way to prioritize who gets the housing first?**

Notes:

- Children
- Health Issues
- Elderly
- Common list (first come first serve)
- The length of time homeless

Referral and Placement

- **What information would you like to know to understand where you are in this process?**

Notes:

- Length of time homeless
 - And what are the barriers facing the family
-
- **How would you like this information to be communicated to you?**

Notes:

- Weekly, tell us something
- Maybe based on the time in the shelter (i.e.)
 - 60 days: weekly
 - 90 days: monthly
 - 180 days: every 60 days

Wrap-Up

- **What do you like about this system (as I've described it)?**

Notes:

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- Permanent Housing: straight to housing
 - Weekly update on where you are on the list
 - Email/text
 - To stay connected, it's hard to remember all the places you have applied for and it's hard to know
 - During the TH/RRH, want the services to help
- **What would do to improve this system?**

Notes:

- TH is like recidivism, what happens typically, I get a job that is still not enough for me and my family, then they have subsidized housing, which is scary because you either need to get enough money or you need, there is no food share cost and the rental subsidy goes away, and then I am back into homelessness
- Follow-up would be nice, I feel like I am left by myself and no one knows my situation

Part 2: Overview

- **What types of things do you think it's important for the City to consider when they decide who gets housing first?**

Notes:

- Where do the case managers stand in terms of which tool to use? And what is the training?
- All case managers should be trained to handle all situations like DV

Family VI-SPDAT

Mental Health, Wellness, & Cognitive Functioning

- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- Too personal – don't want anyone to know about some personal mental health. Maybe ask a few of them but not all – first one is the best (anyone received help for mental wellness/trouble learning or paying attention).
- I answered these questions at welfare office because they want to know if I could do a job; I thought I would be exempt from one of the Calworks programs; ok for training but not for one of the programs under the training. At first I thought it was intrusive, but then understood that it was to make sure they know what the barriers are and could be successful in the program.
- Documentation could help provide information instead of these intrusive questions – talk to case manager and be truthful.

Physical Health & Wellness

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- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- We have a lot of people coming across bridge, they want you to transfer all your resources over here but you already are under the care of a doctor across the Bay. How is that going to work?

- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**

Notes:

- These seem easier to answer – easier to talk about physical health than mental health

- **Do you think homeless families will be comfortable sharing this information with non-profits in San Francisco? What could make them more comfortable?**

Notes:

- Hard to keep saying the same thing over and over to case worker.

- **How should we best collect this information?**

Notes:

- Any problem with HIPPA? Case managers would ask. How much information to give that person.
- Would feel OK having case manager talking to doctor.
- Definitely have a release of information

Medication

- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- Depends on the level of training of case managers – they need to be trained to help not just take information. They gather information but what do they do with it?

- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**

Notes:

- Just seems like they take so much information, so many times, not consistent between case managers, etc. Housing and counseling are two different things.

Personal Administration and Money Management

- Found these questions very personal and intrusive but they may be helpful. OK if they do not go behind these questions
- Could be useful but some people would feel vulnerable
- Fear of being screened out and disqualified

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Social Relationships & Networks

- **Which of these questions seem most important? Which seem less important?**

Notes:

- If they had that support, they wouldn't be in shelter. Family shouldn't be part of the questioning if necessary – families also stretched. Social relations and networks shouldn't be on it – too personal.
- Questions a lot about how you used to live – but I want to talk about how I want to live.
- If you are doing any of those things you are already high risk – you will be thrown out if you do those things
- The family member problem is common.
- This is more part of the prevention session

Meaningful Daily Activity

- **Do you think it is not important, important, or very important to know this information to determine someone's need for housing?**

Notes:

- Need counseling – always good.
- Personally don't want to share information with a counselor – therapist or worker – they don't care about you.
- Also use it against you.
- Best way to find out what is really going on, is to spend three days in a place, to see what's really going. Spend some time homeless and find out for yourself.
- Give people a lunch – do a survey. Exploits them.
- A broken system that needs more oversight – stop contracting with slumlord landlords, more training for case manager, CS worker does not help my situation.
- Five different case managers for five different programs.
- SF has biggest recidivism rate – leave on a subsidy and come back once it is over. Recycling same people in and out of homelessness.

Housing Prioritization Tool

The sections of the tool were presented, with discussion following during the wrap up.

Wrap-Up

- **Which set of questions seem more important to you: the Family SPDAT or the Housing Prioritization Tool?**

Notes: The second seems shorter and better.

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- Think they don't need as many questions
- One person thought they needed the longer survey to get to know what's going on and get more information.
- It might be scary to answer all questions but if it helps get the right information and get past the barriers and get real.
- Wrong help can be a hindrance
- Two avenues – answer the questions and get the support you need; or don't answer the questions and pay your own way
- Depends on situation – need to develop
- Don't want to waste time – don't want to tell same story all the time
- Just like Obama phone – nothing for free
- Have a passion for social work people need a place to stay – what age your grandfather died is irrelevant.
- Some of that information is irrelevant, signing birth certification – who needs it. I am trying to get my own spot.
Not going to be straight across the board. This is our process.
- The sooner the process gets going the sooner you get going
- If you have issues with the process then hustle harder. We can do more; some days don't have it in you.