# Coordinated Entry

A Better Way Is Possible

# Voices from the Community

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# Equity Issues in Coordinated Entry Systems

**Coordinated entry is the foundation of the homeless response system in San Francisco and across the country in 400+ Continuums of Care.** The equity issues in coordinated entry and automated decision-making are not unique to San Francisco--but San Francisco can exercise bold leadership in addressing them.

**Fundamentally, coordinated entry obscures the mismatch between housing options and unhoused people and minimizes the value of human relationships.**

*The pie is too small. Resource scarcity is not resource equity.*

**Don't shrink the problem--grow the solution.**

**"The reality is that our current systems are not designed to provide care or secure social justice; they are built *to manage the symptoms of austerity*. To somehow more fairly divide a pie that is simply too small."**
**- Virginia Eubanks, *Automating Inequality***

# Prioritization and Racial/Gender/LGBTQ Equity

**Prioritization shrinks the pool of people who are eligible for housing down to the number of people who are referred to housing.** Research shows that prioritization tools imbed racial and gender (and likely also language and cultural) biases:

1. Courtney Cronley, associate professor at the University of Tennessee, found that white women score consistently higher than Black women on the VI-SPDAT.
2. C4 Innovations found that white people scored statistically significantly higher on the VI-SPDAT than BIPOC.

Yet BIPOC are grossly overrepresented in homeless response systems nationally.

**"Critiques are right; the VI-SPDAT was never designed using a racial or gender equity lens."**
**- Iain De Jong, Pres. & CEO of OrgCode**

# Problems in San Francisco

1.  **Problem-solving**: Efficacy rates are low across populations (especially for families) and its use as a category "shrinks the problem." Everyone is homeless.
2.  **Diversity of housing options**: Adults, youth, and families get prioritized to what is available, versus matched with options that will meet their needs.
3.  **Data and transparency**: Providers need regular access to data that show the scope of the problem (total numbers of unhoused people) and demographics (for equity).
4.  **Linguistic, cultural barriers**: Impact the most vulnerable populations.
5.  **Resource scarcity**: *People have to get worse before they can get help.*

**"Coordinated entry is a machine for producing rationalization, for helping us convince ourselves that only the most deserving people are getting help…. Those who fall through the cracks face prisons, institutions, or death."**
**- Virginia Eubanks,** *Automating Inequality*

# Interim Solutions for an Equitable Redesign

1. **Decentralize access with multiple entry points** --particularly in communities of color--while maintaining coordination. The youth CE system operates this way and multiple entry points could be expanded in the adult system as well.
2. **Ensure flexibility in problem-solving resources** by spreading them across community-based programs. Build community capacity to navigate housing options.
3. **Define the scale of the problem accurately**: eliminate categorizations (e.g., "problem-solving status") that understate the problem AND the solution.
4. **Focus on housing exits** and diversify housing options with a system-wide definition of race, gender, and LGBTQ equity.
5. **Minimize prioritization scoring**: focus instead on broadening access, expanding criteria, and targeting solutions based on different levels of need.
6. **Implement recommendations** already made, e.g., by family and youth providers.

# Questions & Discussion

Towards an Equitable Redesign