



Central Mississippi Continuum of Care MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Mississippi Housing Partnership and partner agencies responsible for providing diverse housing and homeless supportive services in the community are collaborating to develop a central access and case management system for persons experiencing homelessness. This Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter referred to as "MOU," shall stand as evidence that _____, hereinafter referred to as AGENCY, agrees to work with Mississippi Housing Partnership, which serves as the MS-500 Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency for the Coordinated Entry System. To this end, each entity, agency and/or organization agrees to participate in an exchange of services and coordinating efforts to improve effective access to services in support of housing stability. Under 24 CFR Part 578, Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act): Continuum of Care Program Interim Regulations issued in 2012, a centralized or coordinated assessment system (what in Mississippi is referred to as **Coordinated Entry**) is defined as:

"...a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system **covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool...**"

These are the minimum requirements for the Central MS CoC centralized or coordinated entry system.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Central MS CoC is required to establish and operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services.

Mississippi Housing Partnership (MHP) will be the Coordinated Entry service provider ensuring professionally competent and responsive practices, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Serving as the management for all access points for individuals and families seeking housing assistance;
- Conducting standardized initial assessments, identifying individual / family needs, and providing support and referral to individuals / families as appropriate;
- Providing system management and oversight;
- Maintaining a thorough, accurate, and updated resource database;
- Collecting and disseminating community needs data; and
- Communicating and collaborating with partner agencies.

As the Lead Agency, MHP will respond to AGENCY'S concerns, advocate for system improvement, and ensure the Coordinated Entry System for the Central MS CoC remains efficient and effective, distributing updates and communication to AGENCIES in a timely fashion or when the need arises. MHP will oversee and lead efforts of the Coordinated Entry System,

sharing revisions with AGENCIES and the Central MS Continuum of Care Executive Board / Full Body, as needed.

In compliance with 24 CFR Part 578, HEARTH Act and the objectives of the Central MS CoC, by signing this MOU, AGENCIES agrees to participate in the Central MS CoC's Coordinated Entry System. Participation, includes, but is not limited to:

- Supporting efforts to centralize housing and homeless supportive services into a coordinated system;
- Demonstrating “good faith” efforts to improve cross-system collaboration and sustain inter-agency cooperation;
- Evidencing “good faith” efforts to identify and publicize the benefits of centralized screening and assessment that include, but are not limited to:
 - freeing housing staff time for more direct services,
 - improving access to services for individuals with higher needs,
 - sharing responsibility and challenges to meet the needs of hard-to-serve clients across agencies, and
 - centralizing community data to identify gaps that affect the system and streamline improvement efforts.
- Actively engaging in “good faith” efforts to resolve all program implementation challenges;
- Supporting the transition from *first come – first served* to a needs-based service access approach and philosophy;
- Supporting the transition to a Housing First approach and philosophy;
- Addressing concerns from funders and regulators regarding program outcomes and requirements;
- Clearly articulating concerns to Central MS CoC about agency expectations;
- Clearly articulating concerns to Central MS CoC about the interface with other systems (health care, behavioral health, foster care, corrections, basic needs resources, etc.);
- Referring individuals/families who contact their organization and who are homeless or in jeopardy of being homeless to MHP for housing and homeless supportive service assessment screening; as such, MHP will assess the need of the individual/family for housing and homeless supportive services;
- Providing MHP with updated and accurate information about AGENCY's capacity and service delivery and programmatic changes;
- Participating in program evaluation activities, where possible;
- Adhering to policies and procedures as identified within the most recent Coordinated Entry manual;
- Supporting the central access approach to housing referrals being provided by MHP with the understanding that those referrals will match agencies' criteria, making bed/program reservations based on agencies' approval with the expectation that agencies will honor appropriate referrals;
- Understanding that participation is required by the Continuum of Care with funding sources backing up the requirement in their funding/program evaluation criteria; and
- Participating in regularly scheduled Continuum of Care Best Practices to End Homelessness trainings.

TERM

The MOU is an agreement which does not have an ending date, but which will continue for as long as certain other conditions, as identified in this agreement, exist.

The executed Memorandum of Understanding "MOU" and the Coordinated Entry System Manual will be provided to AGENCY's Board of Directors and adopted annually by its Board.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

AGENCY:

(Print) Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Central MS CoC:

(Print) Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mississippi Housing Partnership:

(Print) Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____