

Coordinated Entry Homeless Services Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What are the VI-SPDAT and Coordinated Entry for?

Coordinated Entry (CE) is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access to housing services and assistance. Through Coordinated Entry, households in need of assistance are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

Coordinated Entry is one way that some housing programs enroll households identified as those in our community with the greatest housing and service needs. This includes households that have been sleeping in emergency shelter, outside, or in a vehicle, and have experienced long-term homelessness.

The tool utilized in Dane County to identify and prioritize those households is called the VI-SPDAT, which stands for Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool.

The purpose of completing a VI-SPDAT is to be placed on Dane County's Housing Priority List. Depending on their needs, households on the Housing Priority List are eligible for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs.

2. If I am homeless but don't want to go to a shelter, who do I contact to complete the VI-SPDAT?

CE staff are available in person at The Beacon (615 E. Washington Ave, Madison, WI 53703), Monday–Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in office 207.

CE screening and assessments, including the VI-SPDAT, are also available over the phone. Call and leave a message for CE Homeless Services Staff at (608) 826-8019 or go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#). CE staff will be monitoring messages and returning phone calls within 24 business hours. CE hours are Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Street outreach teams serve as CE mobile hubs and can also complete the VI-SPDAT. Please see the [street outreach brochure](#) for a list of providers.

3. I do not have immigration documentation. Is there a point of completing the VI-SPDAT?

Yes. There are no barriers or restrictions on immigration status to having a VI-SPDAT completed. The Coordinated Entry assessment process does not screen people out due

to perceived barriers to housing or services, including, but not limited to, too little or no income, active or a history of substance use, domestic violence history, resistance to receiving services, the type or extent of disability-related services or supports that are needed, history of evictions or poor credit, lease violations or history of not being a leaseholder, mental health issues, medical needs, perceived ability to live independently or criminal history.

4. I am on the sex offender registry. Is there a point of completing the VI-SPDAT?

Yes. There are no barriers or restrictions on those that are registered sex offenders completing a VI-SPDAT. The Coordinated Entry assessment process does not screen people out due to perceived barriers to housing or services, including, but not limited to, too little or no income, active or a history of substance use, domestic violence history, resistance to receiving services, the type or extent of disability-related services or supports that are needed, history of evictions or poor credit, lease violations or history of not being a leaseholder, mental health issues, medical needs, perceived ability to live independently or criminal history.

5. What is the best way to find out if I'm on the Housing Priority List?

You are more than welcome to visit CE staff during their walk-in hours at The Beacon, leave a message for CE staff at (608) 826-8019 or go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#). CE staff will respond within 24 business hours and can confirm whether or not you are on the Housing Priority List.

6. How long is the Housing Priority List? How do I know where I'm at on the list?

Unlike other housing lists, the Housing Priority List is a fluid list, not a time bound waiting list. Households are prioritized relative to everyone on the list based on factors like their chronic homeless status, length of time homeless and VI-SPDAT assessment. There is one list for single adults and one list for families with minor children.

Since they are fluid lists with people being added and removed everyday, Coordinated Entry is not able to confirm or share where people are on the list. If you are matched to a housing program through the list, you will be contacted by the program.

7. Do I get taken off of the Housing Priority List if I report spending a few nights at a hotel or in a doubled up situation?

No. If a household reports spending a few nights self-paying for a hotel or in a doubled up situation, but are sleeping in emergency shelter, in a vehicle, or unsheltered the majority of the time, they will not be removed from the Housing Priority List.

If a household reports spending several weeks or months self-paying for a hotel or in a doubled up situation, they will be removed from the Housing Priority List. This is because the housing programs that fill their units from the list are required to serve those that are sleeping in emergency shelter, in a vehicle, or unsheltered, so those who are self-paying for a hotel or are doubled up would not be eligible for these programs.

8. Can I be in transitional housing and be on the Housing Priority List?

No. If you are in transitional housing, you are not eligible to be on the Housing Priority List. This is because the housing programs that fill their units from the list are required to serve those that are sleeping in emergency shelter, in a vehicle, or unsheltered, so those who are in transitional housing would not be eligible for these programs.

9. Can a couple get into housing together through the Housing Priority List?

Yes. If a household presents as two adults with no minor children, a VI-SPDAT will be completed with each person. Each individual will be referred separately to the list and it will be reflected in the database that they are a couple. If one person is matched to a program through the Housing Priority List, CE will notify the housing program that they want to live with their significant other. The housing program will confirm with the person referred that this information is still accurate.

10. Are pets allowed in the housing programs one can access through the Housing Priority List?

Pets may or not be allowed depending on where the apartment is and/or who manages it. However, you may want to check if your pet is actually a service and/or emotional support animal. With proper documentation from a professional, you may be able to initiate a reasonable accommodation request to have your animal move in with you.

11. Is there a way to update a VI-SPDAT based on a change in circumstances or correct errors in the VI-SPDAT? Do I need to contact the agency I originally completed the assessment with or can any agency help with updating my information?

Yes. Households are eligible to complete a new VI-SPDAT assessment if they experience a major life change (i.e., change in household composition, hospitalization, incarceration, etc.) or otherwise wish to complete a new assessment.

You do not have to contact the agency you originally completed your VI-SPDAT with to update your information. If you are accessing emergency shelter, you can work with CE staff at the shelter to complete a new assessment or update your information. Otherwise, you are more than welcome to visit CE staff during their walk-in hours at The Beacon,

leave a message for CE staff at (608) 826-8019, go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#), or connect with a street outreach provider who serves as a CE mobile hub.

12. How do I get a copy of my VI-SPDAT?

If you would like a copy of your VI-SPDAT assessment, you are more than welcome to visit CE staff during their walk-in hours at The Beacon, leave a message for CE staff at (608) 826-8019 or go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#). CE staff will respond within 24 business hours and can provide you with this. Please note that once an assessment is entered into the homeless services database, hard copies are shredded, but a printout of your responses from the database can be shared with you.

13. How do I update my contact information if it changes?

You are more than welcome to visit CE staff during their walk-in hours at The Beacon, leave a message for CE staff at (608) 826-8019 or go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#). CE staff will respond within 24 business hours and ensure your contact information has been updated.

14. I do not have Internet access or e-mail, how long does it take to hear back from someone if I leave a voicemail message?

Please allow CE staff 24 business hours to respond to your message.

15. I completed a VI-SPDAT months ago, but haven't heard anything. Am I still on the list?

When a household is referred to the Housing Priority List, the staff person who completed the VI-SPDAT assessment is responsible for following up with the household every 30-45 days to make sure their information is accurate and they are still in need of housing. If it has been over that amount of time and you have not been contacted, you are more than welcome to visit CE staff during their walk-in hours at The Beacon, leave a message for CE staff at (608) 826-8019 or go online and complete the [CE Contact Form](#). CE staff will respond within 24 business hours and confirm if you are still on the list.

If you have not secured housing and are experiencing homelessness, you are eligible to remain on the list. Please keep in mind that you will be removed from the list if the staff person who is responsible for following up with you is unable to contact you after making at least three follow up attempts (see question 14 on how to keep your contact information up to date). In addition, households that do not use emergency shelter or outreach services within the Homeless Services Consortium (HSC) for two years will be removed from the priority list.

16. If I'm offered housing through the list, but the housing option doesn't work for me, do I go to the bottom of the list? Do I fall off the list?

No. CE encourages housing choice for those on the list, and your name will continue to remain on the list in the position it was in. There is no limit to the number of times a household may reject a placement. However, we ask that you consider that resources are limited so openings for housing through the list do not occur very often. You may continue to experience homelessness for a while until another opportunity for permanent housing opens up. Members of the Madison/Dane Continuum of Care (CoC) understand that households know best their needs and wants. Households do complete a Participant Interest Form so their housing needs can be considered during placement, but because options are limited, this cannot always happen.

17. What does the Housing Priority List entail and how are individuals who completed the VI-SPDAT referred to programs on the priority list?

The Housing Priority List is a fluid list, not a time bound waiting list. It is generated through Clarity HMIS, which is our community's homeless services database. Households are prioritized based on their VI-SPDAT assessment and length of time homeless (capped at 36 months). There is one list for single adults and one list for families with minor childrens.

When a housing program that fills its units from the priority list has an opening, they contact Coordinated Entry. CE runs the priority list and sends the program a referral. Rapid Rehousing (RRH) programs fill their openings from the top of the non-chronic portion of the priority list while Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs serve those who are chronically homeless and have documentation completed that verifies this.

More detailed information regarding RRH and PSH prioritization is available in the [Dane County Written Standards](#).

18. As a provider, how can I make sure my support staff/case managers in other non-housing related programs can get and share information with Coordinated Entry?

If a household has signed the Coordinated Entry Release of Information and your agency is on this release, CE can communicate with you about them in order to coordinate services or determine eligibility for shelter and housing opportunities.