



**Detroit Continuum of Care's
Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM) Implementation
Questions and Answers Document
Published July 16, 2013, Revised March 17, 2014**

Below please find the first document in a series of *Questions and Answers Documents*, regarding the Detroit Continuum of Care's Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM). CAM will launch in October 2013, with Southwest Counseling Solutions serving as the CAM Lead Agency, in partnership with Neighborhood Service Organization. All HUD CoC- and ESG- funded projects within the Detroit Continuum of Care (CoC) are required to participate in the CAM once it is fully implemented; other projects targeted to homeless households are also encouraged to participate in the CAM. The launch of CAM begins in October 2013 and full implementation of all phases is expected by August 2014.

Q: What is the coordinated assessment model (CAM)?

A: CAM is a systems process being implemented in Detroit to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and referrals. It will be easily accessed by individuals and families with a housing need who are seeking housing or housing-related services because they are homeless or at imminent-risk of becoming homeless. One of the main features of the CAM is that it includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool that will be used to uniformly assess every household seeking housing and services.

Q: Why are we implementing CAM?

A: CAM is being implemented for the following reasons:

- Current homeless system is fragmented
- Mandated by HUD, per the HEARTH Act
- Required at the state-level by MSHDA and DHS
- Funding environment means limited resources need to be targeted effectively
- Streamlined access to appropriate and available services is better for consumers

Process Flow

Q: What programs and services will be offered by the CAM Lead Agency?

A: Once the CAM is fully implemented, the CAM Lead Agency will be the access point for the Detroit Continuum of Care homeless system. This means that households that are experiencing a housing crisis may contact the CAM Lead Agency to be assessed for prevention or homeless services and housing. The CAM Lead Agency will assess households to find the available program or services that are the best fit for the client.

Q: How will someone access my shelter/program once the CAM is implemented?

A: The CAM is being implemented in phases. The first phase includes:

- All *family* emergency shelters¹;
- MSHDA ESG program (prevention and rapid re-housing assistance); and,
- Programs that receive City of Detroit ESG program dollars.

Therefore, beginning October 1, all clients seeking services from these shelters or programs will access them by calling the CAM Lead Agency (Southwest Counseling Solutions in partnership

CAM will offer the following services beginning October 1:

- **Shelter placement** – for family households seeking shelter. **Please note: Shelter placement is expected to ramp up considerable during the Spring of 2014.**
- **Homelessness prevention** – case management and financial assistance
- **Rapid re-housing** – case management and financial assistance to households residing in emergency shelter and transitional housing
- **Referrals** – general referrals

In addition to services listed above, CAM will offer the following services at a later date in the phased implementation process:

- **Shelter placement** – for single households seeking shelter
- **Referrals** – referrals to homeless programs in the Detroit Continuum of Care, including TH, PSH and SSO projects

¹ Pending changes to the Emergency Shelter Partnership (ESP) funding by the Department of Human Services (DHS), it is possible shelters serving singles will also be implemented in Phase I.



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with Neighborhood Service Organization). If a household is already receiving services through your program on October 1, then they will not be required to contact the CAM Lead Agency to continue to receive services.

Q: Will consumers be allowed to text in addition to call-in to the CAM?

A: Consumers seeking homeless services will need to participate in a screening process over the phone or in-person with the CAM. This process will require the consumer to answer questions about their housing situation and household characteristics; therefore, it is unlikely that a texting option would be viable. Once CAM is initially implemented, the CAM Lead Agency can explore this idea further if it is identified that there is a need for different modes of contact.

Q: Is web access available through the CAM?

A: No, web access is not currently available.

Q: When will the CAM number be published?

A: We do not yet have a release date; however, once available, the number will be advertised through several mediums including the HAND e-newsletter and website. *****Updated*** For clients that are currently homeless residing in emergency shelters, please conduct the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) Pre-Screen prior to making a referral for ESG rapid re-housing services. For clients that are seeking placement in emergency shelters, please call (313) 481-7909. Clients that are at-risk of homelessness (i.e. received an eviction notice) can contact the CAM directly at (313) 481-7909 for an assessment for ESG prevention services.**

Q: Will consumers have 24/7 access to the CAM line?

A: The ability to staff the CAM for 24/7 access will largely depend on available resources. A 24/7 access line is being explored but the decision is pending. *****Updated***The CAM line will be available during normal business hours from 8:30am – 5pm Monday – Friday.**

Q: If CAM will not be accessible 24/7, what will agencies do with clients afterhours?

A: In the event that CAM is not accessible afterhours, a protocol will be developed and communicated. In emergency situations, the safety of the family is primary. Therefore, shelters may accept families in these circumstances and will be responsible for connecting the family with the CAM when normal business hours resume.

Q: Given the responsibilities of the CAM, what will happen with 1-800-A-Shelter?

A: 1-800-A-Shelter is a statewide hotline that includes services available in Detroit. The CAM will primarily focus on resources available through the Detroit Continuum of Care only. As such, the CAM is not intended to replace the statewide line. We hope to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of services with 1-800-A-Shelter. *****Updated*** As of September 30, 2013, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) ceased operations of the 1-800-A-Shelter line statewide. DHS encourages clients seeking emergency shelter to contact the Housing Assessment Resource Agency (HARA or also known as CAM Lead Agency in Detroit) in their community.**

Q: If my shelter/program currently provides “walk-in” as a way to contact the agency about the shelter/program, how might the “walk-in” policy need to be adapted to ensure that referrals come from the CAM?

A: The CAM concept attempts to eliminate walk-ins at shelters and programs as much as possible, to close the “side door” access to programs. During non-business hours for the CAM Lead Agency and emergency situations, shelters will be allowed to accommodate households that walk-in but are expected to connect that household to the CAM Lead Agency’s when business hours resume. In all other circumstances, walk-ins should be immediately connected to the CAM for assessment and placement.



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Q: If consumers leave the shelter for a few months and need to return, will they return through CAM?

A: Yes. Families seeking emergency shelter, whether repeat or new, will access shelter services through the CAM.

Q: Will shelters have to admit clients that they previously had to ban due to their behavior?

A: Safety for shelter staff and consumers are of upmost importance. If a consumer is a security concern, it will be essential for shelter staff to communicate this information to the CAM Lead Agency so that alternative arrangements (when available) can be made.

Q: What happens if someone contacts the CAM but is not homeless or at-risk of being homeless?

A: If someone contacts the CAM Lead Agency and it is determined the household does not have a housing crisis, they will be referred to other resources in the community, such as 2-1-1.

Q: At what stage in the CAM implementation process will service provider agencies be required to close their "side doors" and only accept referrals from the CAM?

A: Programs that are funded through HUD CoC or ESG funding will be required to accept referrals from the CAM Lead Agency by Phase IV of the CAM implementation and some will be required to accept referrals much sooner. It will be essential for the CAM Lead Agency and the service providers that receive referrals from the CAM Lead Agency to work together quickly to resolve any issues or discrepancies related to accurate and appropriate referrals.

Q: How will persons with physical disabilities access appropriate housing through the CAM?

A: During the assessment process, consumers will be asked to disclose any special needs requiring accommodations, including physical disabilities. HAND has identified projects that are able to accommodate persons with physical disabilities by offering appropriate housing. A referral will be made to the appropriate project based on the disability.

Q: How can my agency assist the CAM in making the most appropriate referrals to our programs?

A: It is essential that the CAM Lead Agency be provided pertinent program information including: hours of operation, target population, eligibility criteria, program vacancies/availability etc. HAND distributed a survey in December to collect most of this information. It is important that answers to the questions on the survey are as specific as possible. Incomplete or inaccurate responses may result in appropriate and/or delays in referrals. Policies and procedures will be developed to communicate changes to your program that may arise in the future.

Surveys with program information:
Please **review your submitted survey(s)** and contact Kiana Harrison at kiana@handetroit.org with any corrections.

Changes to Existing Program Operations

Q: When will my program be required to participate in the Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM)?

A: As stated above, the CAM will be implemented in phases, meaning that not all programs in the Detroit homeless system will be required to participate in the CAM beginning October 1. Please refer to the CAM Flow Chart and narrative to determine in which phase your program will begin to participate in the CAM. Note that TH, PSH and SSO programs – as longer-term interventions – will be phased in during Phase II (families) and Phase IV (singles).

Q: How will clients of outreach providers access the CAM?

A: Outreach is a critical component of the homeless response system, especially for people living in non-traditional settings (i.e. living in cars, on the streets, or abandoned housing). While outreach workers will



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certainly be able to call the CAM on behalf of families, we are exploring more direct ways in which the CAM and outreach teams can best serve consumers, particularly for subsequent phases involving singles.

Q: Are there services that my program currently does that will be duplicative once CAM is implemented?

A: There may be services that your program currently provides that will be duplicative once CAM is implemented – it will largely depend on the services and structure of your individual program. When a household first accesses the CAM, they will be asked a series of questions to determine if there is a housing need or crisis and if there is, the household will receive a pre-screen assessment and their information will be entered into the HMIS. *****Updated*** For families in need of an emergency housing, a referral will be made to the appropriate shelter, where a pre-screen will be conducted by the shelter. Universal Data Elements (UDEs) for the head of household will be entered by the CAM prior to referral, while UDEs for additional family members will be entered by shelter staff.**

Q: What changes will my agency need to make to my staffing to avoid duplication?

A: The changes (if any) will be unique to each agency. In general, staffing functions will mainly focus on the delivery of services. Therefore, staff may need to be re-organized and/or retrained to ensure capacity to provide case management services opposed to intake and assessment activities.

Q: Will agencies be able to move clients from shelters to transitional housing (TH) programs within the agency without accessing the CAM?

A: When CAM is fully implemented (for families, by Phase II and for singles, by Phase IV), clients will not be able to move from shelters to transitional housing programs (or other programs) without accessing the CAM. The goal of the CAM is to ensure that consumers have access to the most appropriate program for their needs as determined by the coordinated assessment tool. This will most appropriately be done by the CAM, who will have access to and knowledge of most housing programs within the Detroit Continuum of Care. If the most appropriate program (for example, TH) for the consumer is within the agency that is currently providing shelter services, the CAM will make that determination and referral accordingly. If a consumer is better suited for a program at another agency, likewise the CAM will make the determination and referral to that agency.

CAM Lead Agency and the HARA

Q: What is the difference between the CAM Lead Agency and the Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA), a term used by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)?

A: The CAM Lead Agency and the HARA both refer to the lead agency responsible for implementing the community's coordinated assessment system; in Detroit, Southwest Counseling Solutions has been selected through an RFQ process to serve as the CAM Lead Agency and the HARA.

Q: When can we start referring our clients to the HARA (Southwest Counseling Solutions in partnership with Neighborhood Service Organization) for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing assistance provided by the MSHDA Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program?

A: Beginning October 1, 2013, Southwest Counseling Solutions will be considered the Detroit CoC's HARA and will be the recipient of the city's MSHDA Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program dollars. The MSHDA ESG program dollars provide homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing services and financial assistance. So beginning October 1, people who are experiencing a housing crisis may contact the CAM Lead Agency for assistance. If persons cannot be assisted by the CAM Lead Agency/HARA, they will be provided an appropriate referral for their particular situation. Until October 1, 2013, the three HARAs in Detroit are: Coalition on Temporary Shelter (COTS), Community & Home Supports (CHS), and United Community Housing Coalition (UCHC). *****Updated*** For clients that are currently homeless residing in emergency shelters, please conduct the SPDAT Pre-Screen prior to making a referral for ESG rapid re-housing services. Clients that are at-risk of**



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homelessness (i.e. received an eviction notice) can contact the CAM directly at (313) 481-7909 for an assessment.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Q. What type of data will be shared?

A: To facilitate better coordinated care and reduce duplication of services, all data will be shared in HMIS. This includes service transactions, exits/entries, case notes, etc. A release of information (ROI) will be completed by consumers for consent to share.

Q: Will shared data be effective retroactively prior to the CAM?

A: No, data sharing for the CAM is expected to be effective Oct 1 and forward. Due to the release of information agreements and system configurations, HAND is unable to share data retroactively.

Other

Q: What benefits might my agency realize as a result of the CAM?

A: All of the benefits are unknown at this time but largely, the following benefits may be realized by your agency:

- Access to more resources for clients (centralized knowledge base of housing resources and real-time availability)
- Reduction in time spent on intake and assessment activities (especially for ineligible clients)
- Reduction in data entry
- Training opportunities on best practices in delivery homeless services provided by the CoC

Q. What opportunities will my agency have to provide feedback about CAM?

A: There are several ways to provide feedback about the CAM. HAND will continue to hold community meetings and service-provider meetings which provide an excellent opportunity to provide response and feedback; there will be a Service Provider Workgroup and a Funders Workgroup that will have representatives from the provider and funding community; and there will be trainings for service provider agencies. And as always, HAND welcomes your written and verbal feedback to HAND staff members by email or phone.

Q: How will existing clients (singles) be serviced if they are not included in Phase I and II?

A: Singles that are appropriate and eligible for prevention and/ or rapid re-housing resources can be served in Phase I and II. If ineligible or seeking other services not available to singles in Phase I and II, a referral will be made to other community resources. There is an expectation that service providers working with singles will help their clients access appropriate resources to end their homelessness.