

Common Understanding

Glossary

Accessibility

The extent to which a facility is readily approachable and usable by individuals with physical disabilities, such as self-opening doors, elevators for upper levels, or raised lettering on signs. The term also refers to being admitted to programs and activities and having the right to enter institutions, such as colleges and universities.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Affordable Housing

Office of Financial Management – RCW 84.14.020

"Affordable housing" means residential housing that is rented by a person or household whose monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed thirty percent of the household's monthly income. For the purposes of housing intended for owner occupancy, "affordable housing" means residential housing that is within the means of low or moderate-income households.

[https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=84.14.010#:~:text=\(1\)%20%22Affordable%20housing%22,of%20the%20household's%20monthly%20income](https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=84.14.010#:~:text=(1)%20%22Affordable%20housing%22,of%20the%20household's%20monthly%20income)

ALICE

ALICE is a United Way acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.

"ALICE is a hardworking member of the community who is employed yet does not earn enough to afford the basic necessities of life.

ALICE earns above the federal poverty level, but does not earn enough to afford a bare-bones household budget of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care. The United Way ALICE Reports use new measures to provide a more accurate picture of financial insecurity at the state, county, and municipal level."

<https://www.unitedway-thurston.org/ALICE>

<https://www.unitedforalice.org/>

"At-risk"

"At-risk" is a housing status indicated by imminent risk of a household or individual to experience homelessness. Below is a link to the HUD definition.

https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AtRiskofHomelessnessDefinition_Criteria.pdf

Bias

Prejudice: an inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Camp Clean-up

Organized and sponsored removal of a camp that includes adequate prior notice, care for the people being removed, their belongings treated with respect, referrals to other services and housing options offered.

Camp Sweep

A camp removal that is done without notice and without care for the impact on those being removed, their belongings and with no referrals to services or housing options.

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Continuous Stay Shelter

Continuous stay shelter is a category of shelter that can either be low or higher barrier in terms of shelter entry. Individuals enter the Coordinated Entry system and then are prioritized into shelters within the HCRS and are assigned a bed. Most continuous stay shelters are not time limited in Thurston County and most are low-barrier.

Cold Weather Shelter

In Thurston county, shelter that operates from Nov 1st – April 30th each year. Expanding shelter during this time frame.

Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry paves the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by: (1) Helping people move through the system faster (by reducing the amount of time people spend moving from program to program before finding the right match); (2) Maximizing impact of existing resources by preventing “creaming” and by prioritizing higher needs households for more intensive (and expensive) programs; (3) Reducing new entries into homelessness by consistently offering diversion resources upfront, reducing the number of people entering the system unnecessarily; and (4) Improving data collection and quality and providing accurate information on what kind of assistance consumers need.

Coordinated entry is a standardized process for intake, assessment, prioritization, and referral of households entering the system to providers working in the system. Coordinated entry in Thurston County is provided by three agencies (Family Support Center, SideWalk, and Community Youth Services) serving three distinct subpopulations (families with children, childless adults, and youth / young adults, respectively).

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is a humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases, realize they cannot possibly know everything about other cultures, and approach learning about other cultures as a lifelong goal and process.

Cultural humility was established due to the limitations of cultural competence. Some professionals, like social workers, medical professionals, or educators, believed themselves to be culturally competent after learning some generalizations of a particular culture. Cultural humility encourages an active participation in order to learn about a patient's or client's personal, cultural experiences.

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/cultural-humility-definition-example.html>

Discrimination

Actions stemming from conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favor and empower one group over others based on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion and other categories.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Diversion

Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. Diversion programs can reduce the number of families becoming homeless, the demand for shelter beds, and the size of program wait lists. Diversion programs can also help communities achieve better outcomes and be more competitive when applying for federal funding. This paper will describe how communities can begin diverting families from entering their homeless assistance systems. Diversion is very similar to rapid rehousing but is typically faster, lower cost, and targeted to the point of system entry.

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Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, Glossary of Terms

Emergency Mitigation Project

Temporary emergency response due to unprecedented numbers of unsheltered individuals and families in Thurston County. These projects may include but are not limited to: Managed Encampments, Safe Parking Programs, Tiny Home Villages, Faith Based Tiny Home Sponsorship and Shelter-in-Place efforts.

Emergency Shelter

Temporary, emergency intervention for people experiencing homelessness best when utilized only for a short time. In an ideal world we would have adequate housing and services for everyone that needs them thus eliminating the need for emergency shelters--a historically expensive and temporary intervention for homelessness. However, emergency shelters continue to play a vital role in our community safety net for highly vulnerable residents of Thurston County. Emergency shelters should be designed for maximum efficiency, minimum barriers and be tailored to serve the most vulnerable and at-risk homeless population. To ensure evidence-based practices, shelters should be based in the principles of housing first, low-barrier and trauma informed care.

http://100khomes.org/sites/default/files/Common%20Eligibility%20Criteria%20for%20Emergency%20Shelters%20FINAL_0.pdf

Equality / Equity

- Equality is the measure of sameness; being treated in the same way.
- Equity is a measure of fair treatment, opportunities and outcomes across race, gender, class and other dynamics.

This distinction is important. We are told that to be fair we must treat everyone the same (equal), however, when we recognize the legacy of institutionalized and structural racism we understand that differing people and communities need different resources (equity). In order to be equitable we provide specific, unique resources that will support people and communities getting their basic needs met and reaching their full potential. Sameness is not always fairness if the oppressed group remains disadvantaged.

http://depts.washington.edu/lend/pdfs/3_Racial_Equity_Glossary.pdf

Family

HUD defines a family as a 'single person or a group of persons,' including a household with or without children. A family may include unrelated individuals. HUD would also consider a single person without children as a family.

<https://affordablehousingonline.com/glossary/Family-Section-8-Definition>

Functional Zero

“Functional zero” is a measurement for ending homelessness. We will have reached functional zero when the number of people experiencing homelessness at a point in time is less than the monthly housing placement rate. Effectively this means that the resources available fully meet or exceed the need and homelessness has ended as a mass-scale problem.

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Gender

The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and characteristics that a given society categorizes as 'masculine' and 'feminine'; not defined by one's biological sex.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Gender Identity

A person's individual and subjective sense of their own gender; gender identities exist in a spectrum, and are not just masculine and feminine.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf

Harm Reduction

A philosophy that focuses on the risks and consequences of a particular behavior, rather than on the behavior itself. In terms of substance use, it means focusing on strategies to reduce harm from high-risk use, rather than insisting on abstinence. Abstinence from alcohol or drugs is not appropriate or possible for everyone. Abstinence is neither condoned nor condemned in harm reduction services. Instead it is considered one strategy among many others. Harm reduction interventions incorporate a spectrum of strategies from safer substance use, to managed use to abstinence to meet drug users "where they're at," addressing conditions of use along with the use itself. Because harm reduction demands that interventions and policies designed to serve drug users reflect specific individual and community needs, there is no universal definition of or formula for implementing harm reduction.

With regard to housing, harm reduction means that tenants have access to services to help them address their substance use, mental health, personal care, nutritional or other challenging issues. It is based on the understanding that recovery is a long process, and that users need a stable living arrangement in order to address their addictions. Focus is on being healthier rather than on the unrealistic goal of being perfectly healthy right away. Harm reduction programs often provide stronger results than abstinence-only programs.

Principles of Harm Reduction are the basis for all successful Housing First programs and are applicable not only to active drug use or housing programs, but also to mental health challenges, conflict mediation, hygiene and general physical health. People make decisions within the context of their environment. Service providers coming from a harm reduction lens must always aim to "zoom out" to find the context for behavior rather than blaming the individual for their behavior. Every one of our clients has experienced trauma/is currently experiencing systemic trauma that has drastically affected their ability to manage their lives.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nW46y8KEoKFDjkdAFxJG5Dje3sEABTyWjA3_oM9pSsc/edit

High Barrier

Requirements for program entry

- An individual could come in with high barriers
- Shelters can have more restrictions
- Housing programs

Household (See Family)

Housing First

The Housing First Model offers housing without precondition or "housing readiness" requirements. Participants are not required to be sober or to "work a program". Housing is viewed as a support for -

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rather than a reward of - recovery. Rules and requirements in housing first programs are no stricter than a typical lease. Research shows that the best recovery outcomes are achieved through Housing First services (as compared to transitional systems and street homelessness).

HUD Homeless Definition

Office of Housing and Urban Development defines homelessness as existing in four distinct categories. These definitions determine distribution of federal funds for homelessness and affordable housing grants. The four categories are available in the link provided below.

https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf

Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

State of the Science Implicit Bias Review 2013, Cheryl Staats, Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.

Income levels

The **Area Median Income (AMI)** is the midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. ... Translating incomes into affordable housing costs These income levels are also a way to assess housing affordability.

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building. Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005.

Examples:

- Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining").
- City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

LGBTQ

The umbrella community of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, two-spirited, queer, questioning, intersex, and/or asexual. There are other identities under the LGBTQ+ heading. This definition is not definitive as new identities are added ongoing.

Low Barrier

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Housing (or shelter) where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to live there. The aim is to have as few barriers as possible to allow more people access to services. In housing this often means that tenants are not expected to abstain from using alcohol or other drugs and are not required to engage in supportive services in order to maintain housing. Low-barrier facilities follow a harm reduction philosophy. “Low barrier” is fundamentally focused on going the extra mile to accommodate severe disabilities, including behavioral disabilities, and to support people based on the realities of the lives they are living rather than expecting them to conform to unrealistic program expectations.

Low barrier programs eliminate entry screening requirements to the greatest extent possible. Applicants are not turned away for criminal record, eviction history, refusal to engage in supportive services, credit problems, expulsion from other programs, or not being a “good fit”. More than this, “low barrier” is a philosophy that actively seeks to eliminate obstacles, challenges, and sources of discomfort for consumers. Excessive paperwork, appointment-based services, excessive rules governing behaviors, regulating personal autonomy, and inaccessible locations all create obstacles to services for vulnerable people.

<http://lookoutsociety.ca/solutions/minimal-barriers> <http://www.thepeopleshouseonly.org/blog/why-low-barrier-shelter>

In practice, this means:

- Individuals are welcome to participate in available programs but not required.
- No length of stay requirements.
- Sobriety is not required.
- No one is denied service for not having valid ID.
- Criminal history generally does not exclude people from services.
- Couples stay together whenever possible.
- There will be secure storage space for personal items.
- Service animals and companion pets will be accommodated.
- People are not denied service for mental illness or related behaviors, or for not being “a good fit” with a program.

Marginalized

Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Outreach v. Advocacy

The goal of street outreach is to make connections to stable housing with tailored services and supports of their choice, such as health and behavioral health care, transportation, access to benefits, and more. ... Some housing options in the homelessness system may not be available due to specific eligibility criteria.

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf

Advocacy is critical to creating the systemic changes needed to end homelessness. Advocacy means working with people experiencing homelessness to bring about positive changes in policies and programs on the local, state, and federal levels. It means working with various sectors of the community (e.g. city/county officials, members of Congress, direct service providers, and the business community) to develop workable strategies for responding to homelessness. It also means changing your language and behaviors in small ways that may contribute to larger changes in the way people experiencing homelessness are seen and treated in our society.

<https://nationalhomeless.org/taking-action/get-involved>

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People of Color

An umbrella term for any person or peoples that is considered by the society in which they live to be non-white.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Permanent Supportive Housing

Vulnerability based, non-coercive, non-judgmental, low-barrier, permanent housing for chronically homeless and permanently disabled individuals and families. Supportive services including but not limited to holistic health and medical, mental health, substance use, enrichment programs and case management are available on site for people who wish to engage in services or coordinated closely to reduce all possible barriers to residents accessing services once they are ready. As a costly intervention, PSH must be targeted to the people who are most likely to die if they are left on the streets using an objective, standardized assessment tool and placed through a coordinated entry system. An ideal candidate for PSH is a household or individual experiencing chronic homelessness, permanent physical, mental health or substance use related disability, chronic illness and high rates of interaction with law enforcement and emergency rooms.

McKinney-Vento Homelessness Definition

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) has a distinct definition of homelessness. This definition encompasses a much broader definition of what situations constitute homelessness. This is particularly important when working with homeless youth, young adults and families with children. The definition is linked below.

<https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/> "Mitigation Site" (Stability Site)

Mitigation site

Not a formal term in the homeless service lexicon. In Olympia, this is a temporary safe camping site that includes basic hygiene services (portable toilets, potable water, garbage collection), on-site host(s), orderly set-up and a code of conduct and safety protocols.

<http://olympiawa.gov/~media/Files/Executive/Homelessness/One-Community-Plan-Web.pdf?la=en>

Prevention

Prevention is the practice of providing short to medium-term supportive services and rent assistance to households at-risk or at imminent risk of homelessness. Prevention connects people with the care and support needed to maintain their housing and achieve a better quality of life. All prevention programs will provide targeted prevention, an approach where households are strategically prioritized to receive homeless prevention assistance based on a standardized, evidence-based assessment that identifies households who are at highest risk of becoming homeless. Successful targeted prevention reduces the number of households who actually become homeless. The length of assistance 4-6 months on average but can extend to 24 months.

HUD Performance Training

Progressive Engagement

Flexible, individualized service provision aimed at providing the minimal amount of resources necessary to help someone non coercively stabilize in housing and support services. In tandem with a standardized assessment process, progressive engagement helps to ensure that maximum access to resources is preserved for the most vulnerable community members who truly need maximum support. Progressive engagement is rooted in principles of motivational interviewing and harm reduction to create person centered, client led individualized service plans based on the stated needs of the client in their own voice.

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Progressive engagement is considered a best practice and required by all grantees of the Consolidated Homeless Grant

Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Racial Justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Center for Assessment and Policy Development; Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment Report, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, 2009.

Racial Disparity

Differences in measurable societal outcomes based on race. These disparities are rooted in unfairness and injustice and are perpetuated by policies and practices with racial bias (either implicit or explicit)

http://depts.washington.edu/lend/pdfs/3_Racial_Equity_Glossary.pdf

Racism

Individual, cultural, institutional and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for groups historically or currently defined as being advantaged, and groups historically or currently defined as disadvantaged or non-White (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.). Racism may also be said to be prejudice plus power. The relationship and behavior of these interdependent elements has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation, such that systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly promote racial differences in opportunities, outcomes and consequences to maintain those differences.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent, stable housing. Households served meet the HUD definition of literally homeless. Rapid rehousing assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided tailor to the unique needs of the household. Services to support rapid re-housing include housing search and landlord negotiation, short to medium-term financial and rental assistance, and the delivery of home and agency-based housing stabilization services, as needed. The length of assistance 4-6 months on average but can extend to 24 months.

USICH

Recovery Housing

HUD defines Recovery Housing as housing in an abstinence-focused and peer-supported community for people recovering from substance use issues. Typically, residents choose to actively participate together in community activities focused on supporting recovery. In its December 2015 policy brief, HUD recognized the value to communities that have adopted a system-wide Housing First orientation of adding a Recovery Housing option for chronically homeless people with mental and physical health problems who are recovering from substance abuse issues. The key to this approach is that it provides the participant with the option of choosing a program that supports their personal commitment to sobriety and holistic recovery.

Safe Parking

Safe parking programs allow individuals living in vehicles to park in off-street parking lots.

“Not a formal term in the homeless service lexicon. In Olympia, this is a temporary safe camping site that includes basic hygiene services (portable toilets, potable water, garbage collection), on-site host(s), orderly set-up and a code of conduct and safety protocols.”

<http://mrsc.org/Home/Stay-Informed/MRSC-Insight/March-2018/Safe-Parking-Programs.aspx>

<http://olympiawa.gov/~media/Files/Executive/Homelessness/One-Community-Plan-Web.pdf?la=en>

Sexual Orientation

An individual's natural preference in sexual partners; predilection for homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Shelter-in-Place

Outreach activities that center on supporting unsheltered households to remain where they are due to lack of shelter space and affordable and supportive housing. Activities could include providing survival supplies, referrals to housing and other services, sanitation, laundering, and garbage removal.

“Survival Goods”

Subjective, depended on population, housing situation, cultural, etc.

Transgender

Appearing as, wishing to be considered as, or having undergone surgery to become a member of the opposite sex. Transgendered people can include transsexuals, cross-dressers, drag kings/queens, masculine women, feminine men, and those who defy what society tells them is appropriate for their gender.

https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/sections/Diversity/diversity_glossary.pdf.pdf

Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing is a program that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to people who are literally homeless to facilitate movement to permanent housing. The housing is medium-term, typically less than, but up to 24 months and best practices dictate the focus should be on people exiting systems of care and youth. In addition to providing safe housing for those in need, other services are available to help participants become self-sufficient. The focus of Transitional Housing is to move people as quickly as possible into permanent housing, while providing the support they need to remain stably housed.

Source: HUD Definitions

Transitional Housing (Youth)

Transitional Living Programs or Independent Living Programs provide longer term residential services to homeless youth (both minors and transition aged youth) who are unable to live with family either due to a lack of safety or a lack of family. The housing services offered are designed to help young people successfully transition to self-sufficient living.

Transitional Living programs should incorporate the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach in the provision of stable, stable living accommodations for young people. PYD helps youth develop the skills necessary to become independent.

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Trauma Informed Care

Trauma informed care is directed by a thorough understanding of the effects of trauma and the prevalence of these experiences in persons who seek services and the organizations that provide the service. Becoming Trauma Informed as an organization is a holistic and complete process that includes analyzation of all aspects of the organization from top to bottom with a fundamental understanding that the service delivery cannot be truly trauma informed if the organizational structure is not as well. It considers knowledge about trauma — its impact, interpersonal dynamic, and paths to recovery — and incorporates this knowledge into all aspects of service delivery.

Trauma informed care also recognizes that traditional service approaches can re-traumatize consumers and family members. Trauma informed providers are sensitive to the ways in which coercion and control (program rules, disciplinary actions, etc.) re-traumatize consumers and they actively support client choice and self-direction.

<https://alamedacountytraumainformedcare.org/trauma-informed-care/trauma-informed-care-vs-trauma-specific-treatment-2/>

Vulnerability Index

The Vulnerability Index (VI) is a tool for identifying and prioritizing people in the homeless and street dependent communities for housing according to the fragility of their health. The VI is administered in a form of a survey, which utilizes a ranking system to assess the individual's health, risk factors and the duration of homelessness. This ranking allows those with the most severe health risks to be identified and prioritized for housing and other support.

Resource limitations reduce access to vulnerable people who are currently hospitalized or incarcerated who have not been assessed for vulnerability. Additionally, the lack of outreach into Lacey, Tumwater, and rural Thurston County greatly limits VI assessments among the homeless in those areas.

Vulnerability-Based Prioritization

Prioritizing the people most likely to die on the streets and who have higher interactions with costly public services due to their unsheltered status is a more effective and cost-effective approach to referrals from coordinated entry to providers. Thurston County coordinated entry providers adopted the use of an objective, standardized assessment tool.

VI-SPDAT <http://www.orgcode.com/product/spd>