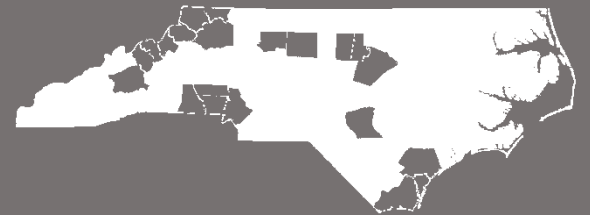# CY2025 NC BoS CoC

ESG Program Grantees Webinar

November 14, 2024

Agenda

- Regulations/Compliance
- ESG Program Overview
- NC BoS CoC Compliance
- Coordinated entry
- HMIS
- Administration
- Wrap Up

Regulations/Compliance

ESG has three levels of regulations/compliance

- **Federal:** HUD Compliance
  - ESG Program Regulations: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/esg-law-regulations-and-notices/#regulations

- **State:** NC ESG Office
  - Desk Guide: https://www.ncdhhs.gov/ncdhhsdesk-guide-2021v2docx/open

- **Local Continuum of Care:** NC BoS CoC
  - ESG Funding Priorities
  - Written Standards for project activity types: http://www.ncceh.org/bos/

ESG Program Overview
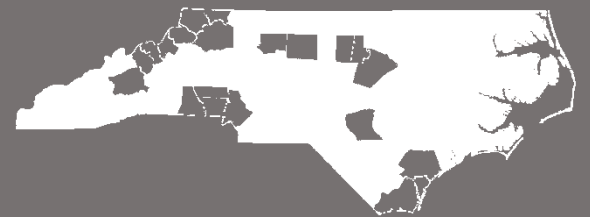
ESG: Emergency Solutions Grants

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide

Purpose: NC ESG Program funds are intended to be used as part of a crisis response system using a low-barrier, housing-focused approach to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, & one-time.

Activities can include:

- *Street Outreach*: Engaging people living unsheltered.
- *Emergency Shelter*: Improving the number and quality of emergency shelters, Assist in meeting the costs of operating emergency shelters, Provide essential services to emergency shelter residents
- *Rapid Rehousing*: Rapidly rehouse persons who are currently experiencing homelessness
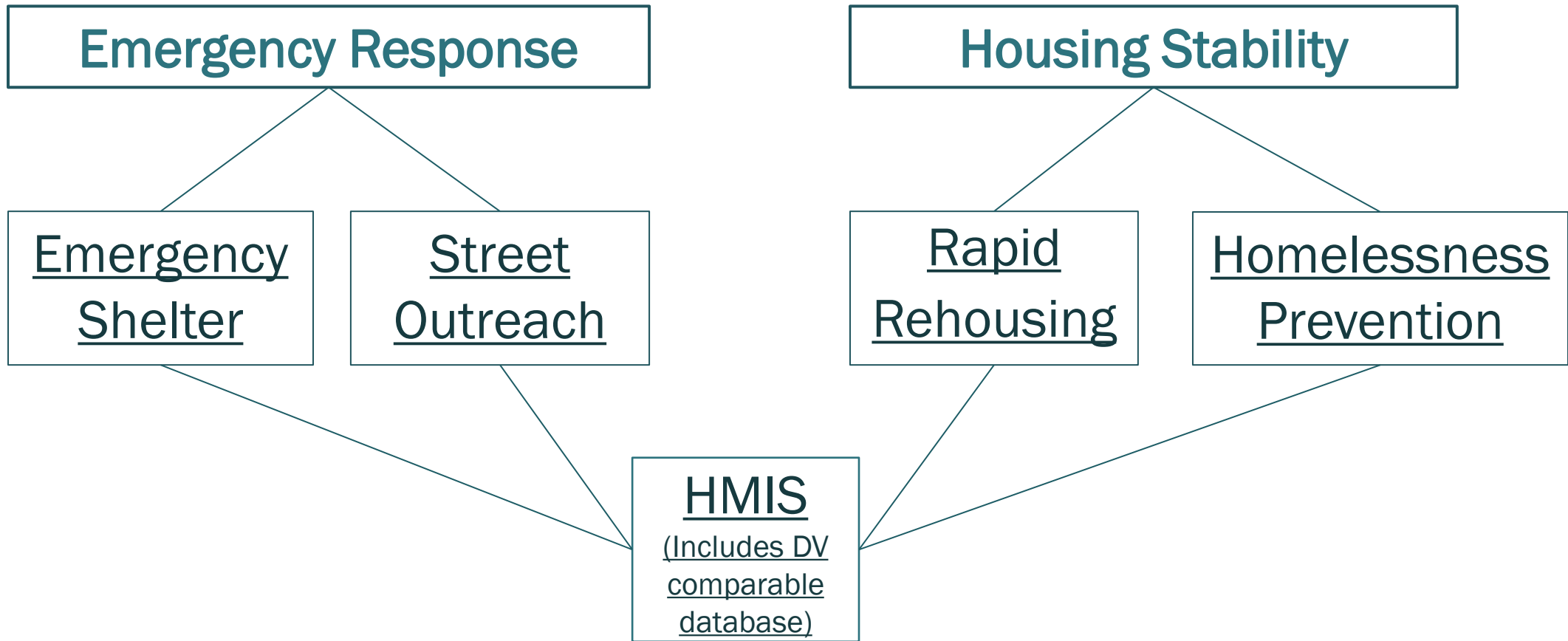- *Homelessness Prevention*: Prevent people from becoming homeless

HUD's main priority for the ESG Program

For every activity type, ESG Program-funded activities should be assisting people to access or maintain permanent housing!
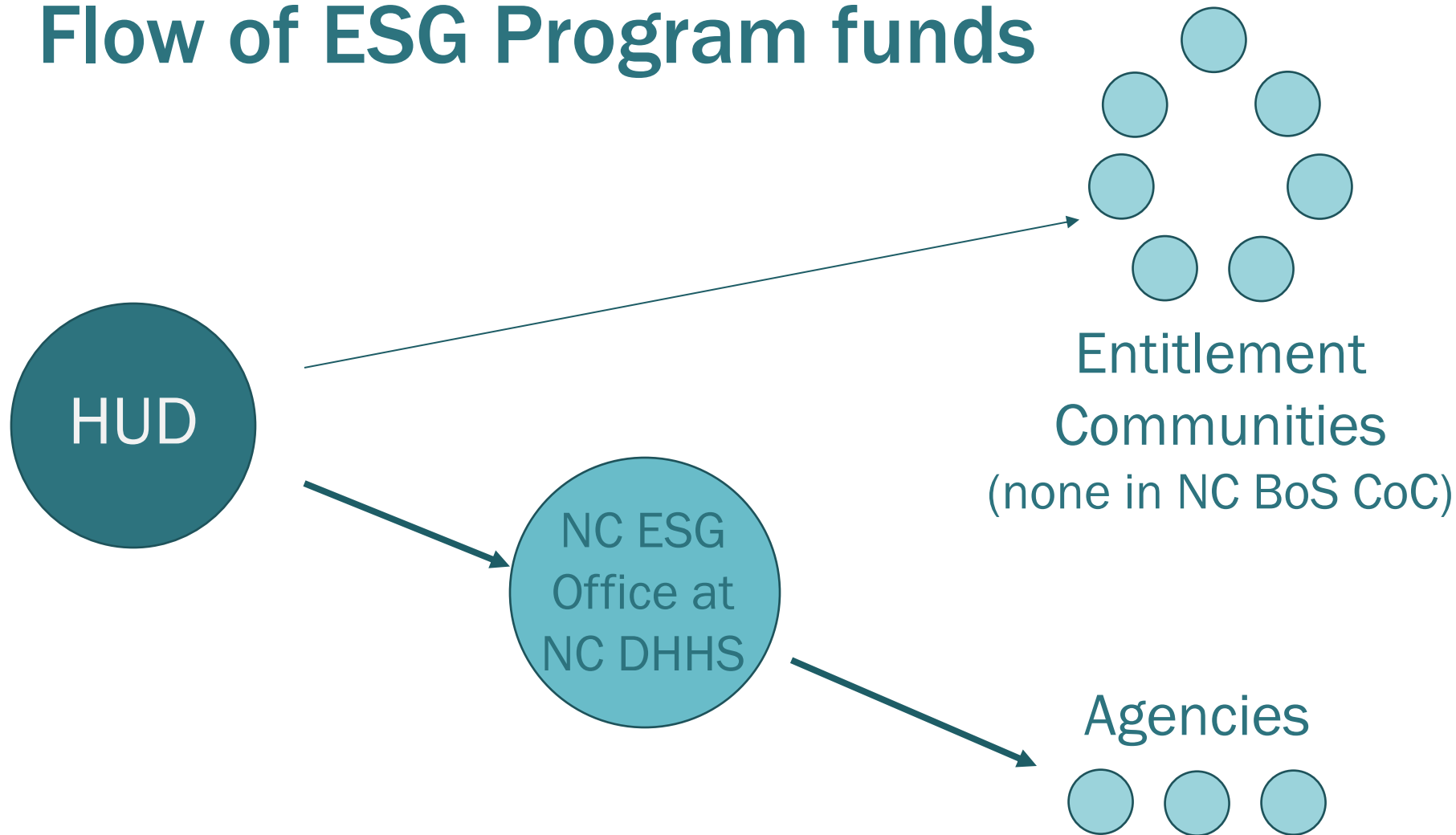
- *Street Outreach*: Engaging people living unsheltered, ultimately to conduct the HART assessment so individuals & families can be referred to housing.

- *Emergency Shelter*: Engaging people in the shelter, ultimately conducting the HART assessment so those individuals & families who do not self-resolve their homelessness (after 14 days of being in shelter) can be referred to housing.

- *Rapid Rehousing*: Rapidly rehouse persons referred through coordinated entry who are experiencing homelessness (Categories 1 & 4 of HUD's homeless definition in the RRH Written Standards definitions section, pgs. 5 - 6)

- *Homelessness Prevention*: Prevent people from becoming homeless by maintaining their current housing or moving into other sustainable housing. Our ESG Funding Priorities target this project type for returns to homelessness.

5 eligible activities under ESG


```
Emergency Response                    Housing Stability

Emergency      Street            Rapid          Homelessness
Shelter        Outreach          Rehousing      Prevention

                        HMIS
                        (Includes DV
                        comparable
                        database)
```

Flow of ESG Program funds

Street Outreach

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide

Serves individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness

- *Assertive outreach* – engaging folks living unsheltered where they live
- *Passive outreach* – engaging folks living unsheltered at service centers

Essential services:

- *Contact*-making initial assessments; addressing urgent physical needs (meals, blankets, clothes, or toiletries); providing information and referrals to services

- *Housing Focused Case Management*: HART assessment; developing individualized housing and service plans

- *Emergency Health Services*: helping participants obtain treatment

- *Emergency Mental Health Services*: crisis intervention; prescription of psychotropic medications

- *Transportation Costs*: transportation costs to emergency shelters/service providers

Emergency Shelter

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide

- Serves people staying in emergency shelters

- Essential services:
  - Case management
  - Childcare, education, employment, and life skills services
  - Legal services
  - Mental health and substance use services
  - Transportation

- Operations:
  - Minor or routine maintenance
  - Rent/Utilities
  - Hotel or motel vouchers when no appropriate emergency shelter is available

Rapid Rehousing

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide

- Serves literally homeless individuals/families
  - People living in emergency shelters (Category 1)
  - People living unsheltered (Category 1)
  - People fleeing domestic violence/interpersonal violence situations (Category 4)

- Eligible activities:
  - Services: Housing location & stabilization; Housing search & placement; case management
  - Financial assistance: application fees, security & utility deposits; utility payments, rental assistance; rental & utility arrears

Homelessness Prevention

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide & NC BoS CoC ESG Funding Priorities

- Serves people imminently at risk of homelessness *and* below 30% of Area Median Income & in the NC BoS CoC Homelessness Prevention should be used solely for participants to avoid returns to homelessness.
  - Stay in current housing
  - Move into other sustainable housing

- Eligible activities:
  - Housing location services, if needed
 - Financial assistance (limited)
  - Housing Stabilization services

HMIS (DV Comparable Database)

From the ESG Policy and Procedure Desk Guide

- Support entry of data for ESG program activities
  - Available to all agencies for HMIS or Comparable Database

- Eligible costs:
  - Computer hardware, software
  - Salaries for staff who do data entry & reporting HMIS/comparable database data
  - Staff travel for training/intake activities
  - Participation/License fees (none in NC BoS CoC for HMIS)

NC BoS CoC
Compliance
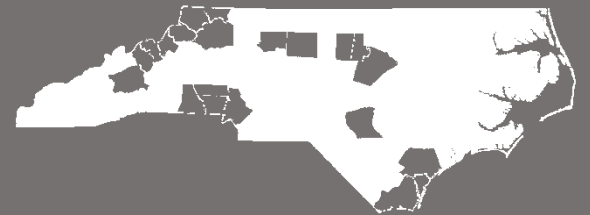
Agency Policies and Procedures must stay aligned with NC BoS CoC Policies

- NC BoS CoC Written Standards All ESG Program funded agencies must operate in accordance with the Written Standards for the program they are implementing & Coordinated Entry.
- Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Client Bill of Rights

- VAWA Emergency Transfer Plan: For housing providers
- Fair Housing Policy: For housing providers
- RRH Participant Follow-Up Policy

Written Standards guide program design

Written Standards are approved by the Steering Committee & demonstrate elements of program design and operation.

Available on the NCCEH website at https://www.ncceh.org/bos/ (under "CoC Policies" drop-down menu) for SO, ES, HP & RRH, and Coordinated Entry

Revisited regularly and updates are approved by the NC BoS CoC Steering Committee.

Each Written Standards document includes:

Summary of program type

Definitions to common terms

Performance Standards:

Key Elements of Written Standards

Modeled on national best practices to help you succeed.

Client centered, low barrier approach and a Housing First philosophy.

People experiencing homelessness should be able to access the support they need quickly, without preconditions, and the primary goal should be to regain permanent housing.

A community's limited resources should prioritize those who are most vulnerable for housing.

Key Elements of Written Standards

Emergency Shelters

Cannot administer drug tests to clients

Cannot require IDs or background checks to enter shelter

Cannot require participation in services for continued shelter stay

Client "Rules" should be minimal and focused on safety

Primary goal of service should be housing (not recovery, employment, etc.)

Stay is not time-limited

Rapid Rehousing

Must take clients solely through the Coordinated Entry process

Cannot require income from clients to house them

Cannot offer a "standard package" of assistance in terms of time in the program and financial assistance. Should operate with a progressive engagement approach, individualized to each household

Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures

The NC BoS CoC's Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures are approved by the Steering Committee and updated each year, as needed.

Agencies need to have their own Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures & not just a copy of the NC BoS CoC's.

Agency staff need to attend an annual mandatory Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures training by the NC BoS CoC and train agency staff at least once a year.

The Client Bill of Rights

The CBoR is a client-facing policy detailing basic expectations of their rights in the following categories:

- Respect and Dignity
- Services Free of Discrimination
- Safety
- Privacy
- Inclusion and Participation in Decisions about Their Welfare
- Transparency in Agency Policies that Affect the Services They Receive

The Client Bill of Rights grievance process

- If a person seeking services in the NC Balance of State CoC believes a service provider violated any of the stated rights, they may be eligible to file a grievance:
  - The client must first utilize the agency's established grievance process.
  - If an agency-level grievance process cannot address the complaint, the client is eligible to file a grievance with the CoC.
  - NCCEH staff will review each grievance and notify the Steering Committee.
  - Consistent with the Code of Conduct policy, The Steering Committee may then assemble an ad-hoc work group to review the grievance and take action.

NC BoS CoC Code of Conduct Policy established a grievance process

- In February 2023 the Steering Committee amended the Governance Charter for the NC BoS CoC to include a Code of Conduct Policy.
  - https://www.ncceh.org/files/12692/ (Appendix 6, page 104)

- The Code of Conduct Policy establishes a grievance process for situations where an agency is not upholding its responsibilities to the CoC.

- The Client Bill of Rights utilized the same established process but extends the ability to file grievances to persons receiving services.

One access point for multiple processes

- Different grievances may result in different processes.
  - Ex. A grievance about a local coordinated entry decision will first go to the regional committee.
- The Code of Conduct Policy and the Client Bill of Rights have established a single access point for anyone with a grievance to be able access the correct procedure to address it.
- Emailing bos@ncceh.org with a description of the situation is the first step. NCCEH staff will review and direct the grievance to the proper procedure.

Housing Providers

The NC BoS CoC's <u>Fair Housing Policy</u> is approved by the Steering Committee and updated each year, as needed.

The NC BoS CoC's <u>VAWA Emergency Transfer Plan</u> for situations of interpersonal/domestic violence is also approved by the Steering Committee and updated each year, as needed.

Fair Housing Policy: The <u>recording</u> of the Fair Housing Policy Training is posted on our website along with the <u>slides</u>.
VAWA: The <u>recording</u> of the VAWA training is posted on our website along with the <u>slides</u>.

Additional Requirements NC BoS CoC ESG Grantees

To be good partners, agencies awarded ESG Program funding should comply with the following requirements:

- Fully participate in the Regional Committee(s) for their service area (at least 75% attendance; participate in local and CoC-level subcommittees and workgroups).

  - Run quarterly CAPERs for each funded activity and *share key information* with Regional Committee stakeholders
  - Seek approval from Regional Committee(s) prior to budget amendments of higher than 10% of approved budget or change in activity type. Notify CoC staff by email at bos@ncceh.org.

- Fully participate in the region's Coordinated Entry system by attending at least 85% of their case conferencing meetings.

- Actively participate in the Point in Time and Housing Inventory Count and meet published deadlines for the Point in Time and Housing Inventory Count process.

Working toward Racial Equity

- Many of the systems that impact the lives of people experiencing homelessness (banking, housing, criminal justice, policing, etc.) were explicitly designed to exclude and marginalize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
  - The legacy of these policies is still present and impacting the lives of the people we serve.
- Black people are overrepresented in the homeless services system across the USA, including the NC BoS CoC.
- [2024 NC BoS CoC Racial Equity Analysis](#)

Working toward Racial Equity

- CY'25 ESG competition included questions about how programs are operating with racial equity.

- These scorecard items are consistent with the NC Balance of State CoC's Steering Committee decision in January, 2020 to make racial equity, and improving outcomes for BIPOC clients, a priority for the CoC.

- Investing in your agency's understanding of, and investment in, dismantling systemic racism will help your score in future ESG competitions!

Coordinated Entry
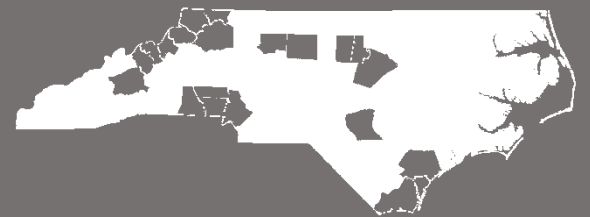
Coordinated Entry

HUD definition of Coordinated Entry (24 CFR 578 – CoC)

- Coordinated entry systems allow CoCs to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. The system covers a set geographic area, can be easily accessed by individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness seeking housing and services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool.

- All ESG Program-funded agencies are required to participate in Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry Core Elements

Access: CES is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services.

Assessment: CES includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool (HART).

Prioritization: CoC uses the coordinated entry process to prioritize homeless persons within the CoC's geographic area and is based on a specific and definable set of criteria.

Referral: ESG-funded programs use the coordinated entry process as the only referral source from which to consider filling vacancies.

Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals and families who need housing across communities.

- Divert people away from the system who have other safe options for housing
- Quickly move people from homelessness to permanent housing
- Save time, effort, and frustration on the part of service providers through targeting and engagement efforts
- Focus on efforts of ending homelessness as a community
- Reduce the length of time homeless
- Increase the likelihood of housing stability
- Provide a picture of current system gaps
- Be good stewards of limited resources

NC BoS CoC Coordinated Entry System
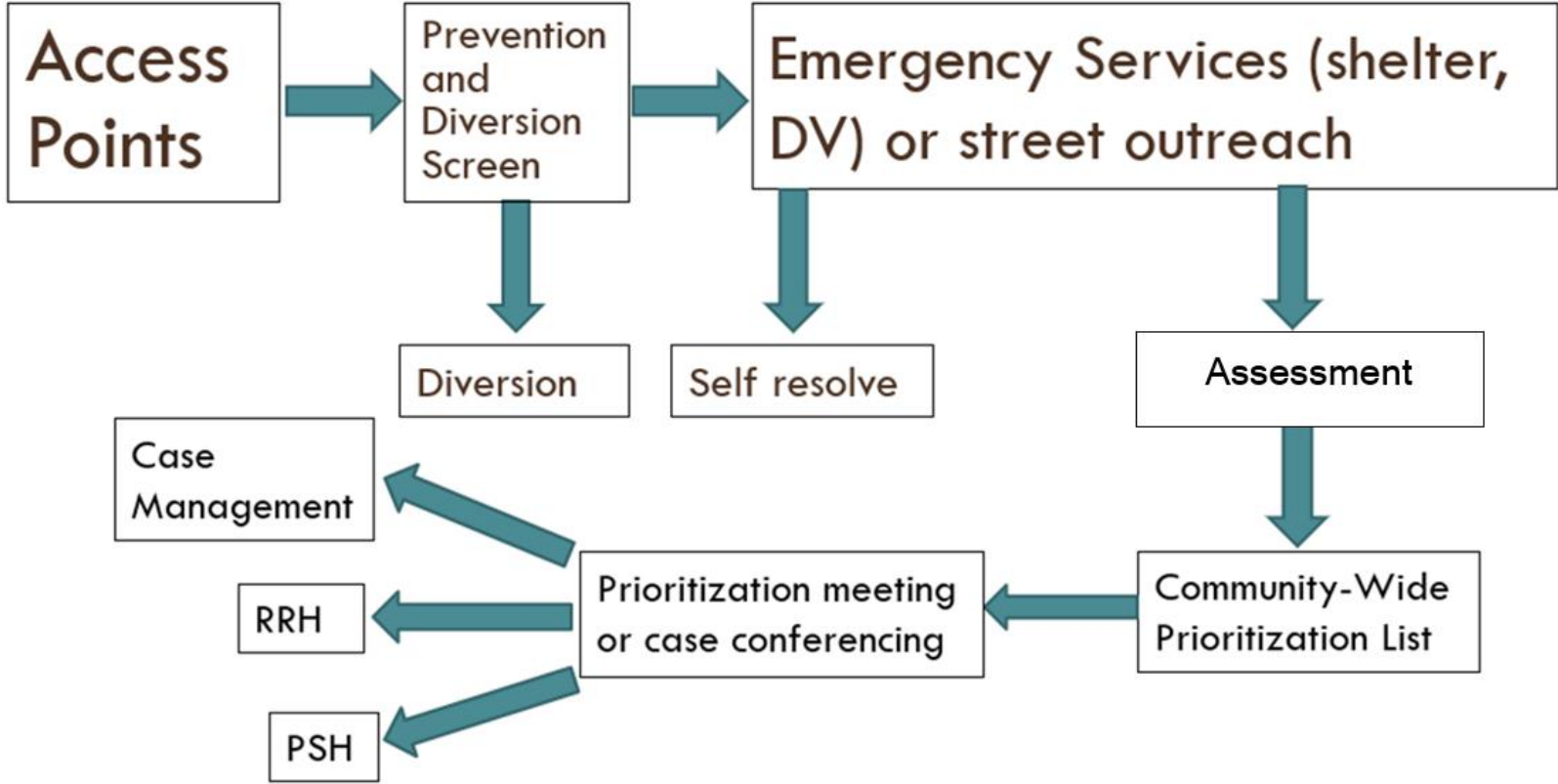
Access points

- "Front Doors" to the homelessness response system

- Administer [Prevention and Diversion Screen](#), then make appropriate referral (with warm handoff), as needed

- Ideally, no one gets a shelter bed or receives diversion assistance without having a Prevention & Diversion screen completed first
  - *unless their safety is in jeopardy

Shelters as access points

- Shelters can be the access points for the CE system.

- They must do the P&D screen on everyone who comes in their doors and make referrals appropriately, regardless of whether someone is eligible for their program.

By-Name List

- Once a HART is completed, the household will be pulled to the by-name list and entered in the CE project.

- List prioritized based on HART score and other regionally agreed-upon factors:
  - Factors could include: DV, being unsheltered, emergency room visits, Veterans, etc.
  - Factors that cannot be included: Income (or lack of), gender, race, disability, substance use history, criminal history

HART

- An equity-based tool used by all regions in the BoS to determine initial acuity and set prioritization and intervention for permanent housing placement
  - Only administered to literally homeless households
  - For newly homeless: administered 14 days after entering shelter
  - For unsheltered homeless, should be administered immediately

- HART, with training, available here:
  - http://www.ncceh.org/bos/coordinatedassessment/

Case Conferencing

- Case conferencing is a regular meeting where all providers in a region come together to:
  - Prioritize and refer households
  - Troubleshoot and get advice
  - Seek other housing options (other than ESG-funded housing programs)
  - Handle exceptions

Lowering Barriers

- CE does not work if programs have too many barriers to entry!

- Programs should lower their eligibility criteria to the bare minimum in order to have a system that best serves people experiencing homelessness.

Resources

- All forms and trainings on each form, as well as the NC BoS CoC Coordinated Entry Written Standards, are available at:
  - http://www.ncceh.org/bos/coordinatedentry/
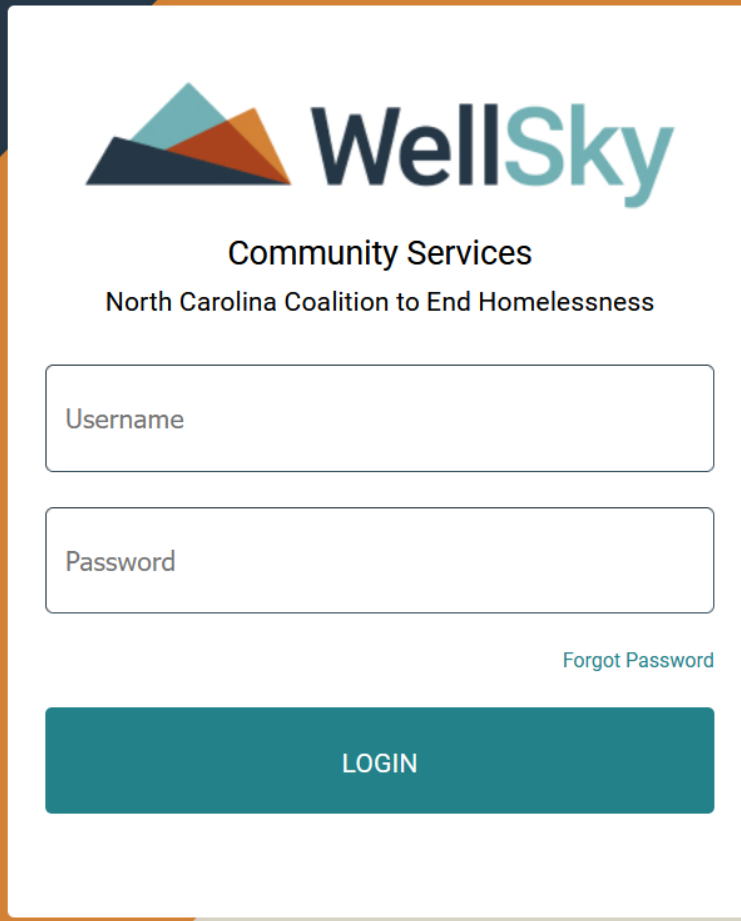
HMIS Introduction
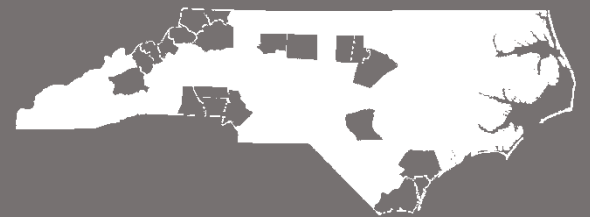
What is HMIS?

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is database required by HUD and other funders to track who we serve, how we serve them, and the impact of our services!

Our HMIS software is called Community Services.

HMIS data will help end homelessness

HMIS data influences policy

The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

PART 1: POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS

DECEMBER 2023

HMIS data helps communities

1.36K Children
▲ 6% from August
1.01K Leavers | 355 Stayers
60 days | 374 days

HMIS provides CoC performance data

NCCEH's Data Center is HMIS Lead for 3 CoCs

Our HMIS@NCCEH database includes 81 counties
The Data Center's Helpdesk supports you all!

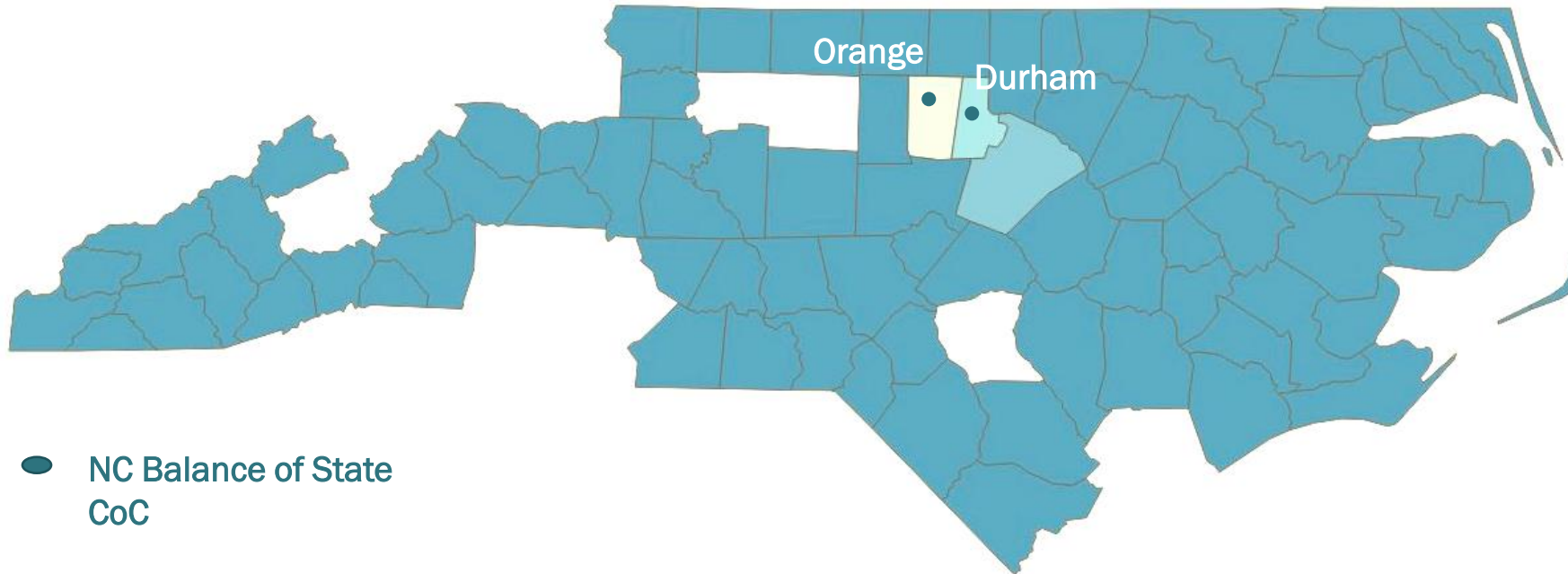NC Balance of State CoC

HMIS Roles

Agency Administrators

- At least 1 required for each agency
- Act as the FIRST point of contact
- Ensure compliance with established policies and procedures
- Attend trainings and meetings related to HMIS
- Maintain data quality standards (runs monthly reports)

Case Managers

- Record client engagement
- Follow policies and procedures
- Attend trainings for HMIS to stay updated

Data Essentials

HMIS client record = Electronic client file

HMIS

Client Record

Accuracy, Completeness, Timeliness

Agencies are responsible for high Data Quality

- Enter accurate information, as completely and as quickly as possible
- HMIS@NCCEH Benchmarks are listed by project type
- The Data Center will regularly check and ask for corrections

Sometimes, information may be missing

- Clients have the right to not know or refuse answers
- Agencies must ask the required questions and attempt to explain

Plan to ensure data is collected and entered quickly

- Within 6 days

Data security depends on all of us

Protect sensitive data

Practice good password management

Never leave your computer unattended

Keep software up to date

Install anti-malware protection

Go to ncceh.org/hmis/privacy for a desk guide and more details

How to access HMIS

Request HMIS Licenses

- Go to ncceh.org/hmis to submit a License Request Form

NCCEH Data Center Forms ⌄

HMIS@NCCEH New License Request Form

If your agency wants to add staff to your HMIS projects, use this form to give us the basic information we need to guide them through training. Agency Administrators and Executive/Program Directors should submit on your agency's behalf.

- *This is a new form for 2023. Please make sure to review all of the questions and provide as much information as possible.*

HMIS@NCCEH License Inactivation/Removal Request Form

If your agency no longer needs a license for a user, please use this form to alert Data Center Staff. Only Agency Administrators and Excutive/Program Directors should submit this form.

The Training Process

HMIS Training is completed through three steps.

1. First, watch the online training videos through the Learning Management System.

2. Then, pass the quizzes listed (if applicable) after the training.

3. Last, you will enter a fake client into the HMIS Training Site to show off your new skills!

All HMIS Users must also sign a User Agreement (via DocuSign).

Questions? Email the Data Center at hmis@ncceh.org.

Data Center Tools: NCCEH.ORG/HMIS

- ## New User Training
  - NCCEH.ORG/HMIS/TRAINING/

- ## Data Center News Archive
  - 1st Wednesday System Updates Meeting at 10 am
  - 3rd Wednesday Optional Training at 10 am
  - NCCEH.ORG/HMIS/NEWS

- ## ZenGuide Knowledge Base
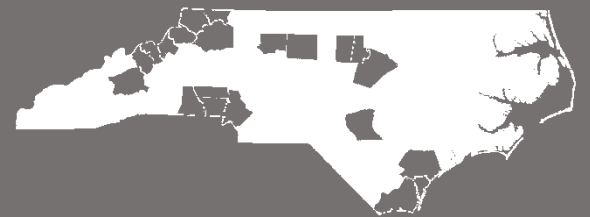 - NCCEH.ZENDESK.COM/HC/EN-US

HMIS@NCCEH ZENGUIDE

Search | **Search**

Administration

ESG is a reimbursement-based grant

- Agencies must expend their own dollars for services and activities <u>first</u> and then submit requests for reimbursement.
  - Must use ESG forms with required documentation
  - Programs must submit reimbursement monthly

- NC ESG Office holds mandatory webinars on the reimbursement process!
  - Be on the lookout soon for dates in 2025!

ESG requires documentation in client files

- All activities have documentation requirements. Forms can be found at:
  - ESG Required Forms
    - ES and SO Client File Checklist
    - HP and RRH Client File Checklist

- NC ESG Office will conduct desk reviews and on-site monitoring of grantees in 2025.
  - Client Data may be printed out from HMIS instead of paper using forms

Grantees need to spend their dollars!

- Don't risk being put on a corrective action plan with the NC ESG office due to underspending!
  - The NC ESG Office expects that grantees to spend according to this chart:

Date Expenses Incurred	Percentage of Budget
03/31/25	25%
06/30/25	50%
09/30/25	75%
12/31/25	100%

Grantees will need to provide CAPER* reports throughout the year

Quarter	Due Dates
Quarter 1: *January 1 – March 31, 2025*	April 30, 2025
Quarter 2: *April 1 – June 30, 2025*	July 31, 2025
Quarter 3: *July 1 – September 30, 2025*	October 31, 2025
Quarter 4: *October 1 – December 31, 2025*	January 31, 2026

Refer to your contract for actual dates and requirements!

*Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

Wrap Up

- Helpful hints to get started:
  - Contact NCCEH's Data Center for HMIS access/VSPs make a plan to obtain a comparable database
  - Reread your application and budget
  - Familiarize yourself with ESG contract requirements
  - Read NC BoS CoC written standards for your activity
  - Attend ESG reimbursement webinar & others!
  - Train all program and admin staff
  - Have a plan of action and start early
  - Ask questions

When you have questions, there is help!

NC ESG Office

- Monthly Webinars (some are mandatory)
- Contract issues
- Reimbursements
- Budget amendments
- Corrective actions/appeals
- Allowable expenses
- Sage access for CAPERs

Before reaching out, refer to the ESG Desk Guide.
It's full of good information that can probably answer most questions!

NCCEH

- NC BoS CoC Staff
  - Program design
  - Written Standards
  - Direct client issues
  - CE issues
  - Regulations
- HMIS@NCCEH (Data Center)
  - HMIS Reports
  - Data Entry/Corrections

Wrap Up

- Keep in touch!
  - NC BoS CoC:
    - bos@ncceh.org
    - (919) 755-4393

  - NC ESG Office contact info: ncesg@dhhs.nc.gov

Lisa Worth	Chris Battle	Alissa Pritchett
ESG Homeless Programs Coordinator Division of Aging and Adult Services North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services 919-855-4993 office Lisa.Worth@dhhs.nc.gov	ESG Homeless Programs Coordinator Division of Aging and Adult Services North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services 919-855-4984 office Chris.Battle@dhhs.nc.gov	ESG Homeless Programs Coordinator Division of Aging and Adult Services North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services 919-855-4991 office alissa.pritchett@dhhs.nc.gov