

**Boulder County Regional Homeless Systems Collaborative:
Talking Points on Approach to Homeless Services for Single Adults
September 29, 2017**

1. What is going to be different under the new approach?

Beginning in October 2017, a variety of changes will be made to services for single homeless adults. The goal of these service changes is to reduce the number of people in Boulder County experiencing homelessness by providing more prevention-oriented services, and short- and long-term housing and services that will more quickly help people out of homelessness.

2. Who will be impacted by the new service system?

Changes taking place starting in October 2017 will primarily impact single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder County.

3. Are there services changes for other homeless populations, including families?

Homeless families, youth and people experiencing domestic violence will continue to use the services that are currently available in the community.

4. How can people access services?

People will access all homeless services through the new **Coordinated Entry** system. Clients will be assessed to determine if they are most appropriate for **Housing-focused Shelter** at Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH) (formerly referred to as program-based shelter), or **Navigation Services**.

5. When will Coordinated Entry start?

In Boulder, beginning Oct. 2, current BSH residents and Bridge House Path to Home clients will be screened for single adult homeless services through Coordinated Entry. For new clients, screening services will be available starting on Monday, Oct. 9.

In Longmont, Coordinated Entry screening will start on Oct. 2.

6. How can new clients in Boulder access shelter before Oct. 9?

People seeking shelter services before Oct. 9 should go to:

- BSH at 4869 N. Broadway between 5-7 p.m.
- Path to Home sites between 6:30-10:00 p.m. (check in starts at 7 p.m.)
 - Monday: Atonement Lutheran, Inca at Baseline Bus 225
 - Tuesday: Boulder Mennonite, Broadway at Table Mesa Bus Skip
 - Wednesday and Thursday: St. Andrew, 37th at Baseline Bus 225
 - Friday: Atonement Lutheran, Inca at Baseline Bus 225
 - Saturday: Announced weekly

7. Where will Coordinated Entry and Navigation sites be located?

In the **City of Boulder**, a longer term site, in which Coordinated Entry and Navigation Services can be co-located, has been identified and is anticipated to open to clients in late 2017 or early 2018.

In the meantime, Coordinated Entry screening will take place at 3460 Broadway (the Boulder County Housing and Human Services Department's North Annex building on the North Broadway campus at Iris and Broadway) in Boulder from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. This location is accessible by the SKIP and 208/F bus routes. Coordinated Entry hours are expected to expand to weekends by late October.

Boulder Navigation Services will begin as an extension of Bridge House's existing Path to Home program, which uses faith community space for overnight sleeping, morning meal service, and case management. Clients will be referred to Navigation Services through the Coordinated Entry screening. Bridge House will supplement this work by also conducting case management at its existing Community Table meal service. Path to Home sheltering is available at the following faith communities:

- **Monday**: Atonement Lutheran, Inca at Baseline Bus 225
- **Tuesday**: Boulder Mennonite, Broadway at Table Mesa Bus Skip
- **Wednesday and Thursday**: St. Andrew, 37th at Baseline Bus 225
- **Friday**: Atonement Lutheran, Inca at Baseline Bus 225
- **Saturday**: Announced weekly
- **Sunday**: Congregation Har HaShem, 37th at Baseline Bus 225

Path to Home Navigation Service clients can begin arriving at the faith community overnight sheltering sites as early as 6:30 p.m. Check in for the night occurs from 7 – 10 p.m.

In **Longmont**, Coordinated Entry will take place at the OUR Center (220 Collyer Street) from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Monday – Friday. Coordinated Entry hours in Longmont are also expected to expand to weekends by late October. In Longmont, Navigation Services will begin in early November.

8. **What are Navigation Services?**

Navigation Services provide short-term support for lower-needs individuals who require limited assistance to get back into permanent housing. Individuals will work with a case manager to develop a housing plan and can receive mediation support, financial assistance, legal assistance, assistance reunifying with support networks, and links to county and other community programs as needed. Overnight sleeping space will also be available to qualified navigation participants who need a place to stay in the short term.

9. **What is Housing-focused Shelter (HFS)?**

HFS (previously referred to as program-based shelter or PBS) facilitates housing entry for qualified moderate- and high-needs individuals by providing overnight sheltering and wrap-around services on an extended basis. Those participating in HFS can remain at

the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH) until they have been successfully, permanently housed. This program will start on Oct. 9 at BSH.

10. **When will HFS be available?** BSH is conducting a Good Neighbor process that is required prior to making changes in its management plan. HFS program elements which can be implemented on Oct. 9 in accordance with the existing management plan include:
- Screening and referral of clients to BSH through the Coordinated Entry process
 - Entry into a dedicated HFS bed for clients who qualify based on screening criteria through the Coordinated Entry process.

Daytime services for HFS clients, and sheltering HFS clients who may not yet be clean and sober between May 1 and Sept. 30, will not be allowed until after a new management plan is approved.

11. **How many people can access overnight sleeping spaces and HFS beds?** BSH will continue to provide 160 overnight beds, which is full capacity. These beds will now be allocated to people assessed through the Coordinated Entry system as moderate- to high-need individuals, with priority for people with a longer history in Boulder County. In the City of Boulder, Navigation Services will provide up to 50 overnight spaces for people assessed through Coordinated Entry as low-need and who are participating in a navigation plan. In Longmont, the number of available overnight sleeping spaces will soon be determined once the city establishes a contract with the chosen service provider, which is estimated to be completed in October 2017.

12. **Will additional shelter be available during episodes of severe weather?** Criteria and locations for severe weather shelter are still being determined for the cities of Boulder and Longmont.

13. **Why are we approaching this problem in this way? What do we know from other communities?** Previously, the approach to homeless services in Boulder County was often crisis-driven and focused on emergency interventions – such as overnight shelter, food, and clothing. This approach has not resulted in sustainable changes for the county's homeless population. The new approach integrates evidence-based practices and leading models of service with Boulder County's unique local context. Specifically, lessons learned from other communities around the Housing First approach, diversion, and rapid rehousing have resulted in increased numbers of homeless individuals finding housing solutions.

14. **How will we know this is working?** This is a long term approach intended to help those experiencing homelessness to obtain and maintain housing in Boulder County, or connect with existing support networks elsewhere. The Regional Homeless Systems Collaborative will be examining data from coordinated entry and exiting programs to understand the size of the local homeless population, and the extent to which programs are helping individuals find

permanent housing. Under the new approach, the Regional Homeless System Collaborative Management Board, which is comprised of key stakeholders (e.g., homeless service providers, faith community representatives, persons with lived experience), will meet monthly to discuss system issues and troubleshoot solutions.

15. What happens if people don't want to go through Coordinated Entry to be screened for homeless services?

To be served by Navigation and Housing-focused Shelter services, individuals must go through the Coordinated Entry screening. Access to meals in Boulder and Longmont is currently being determined with service providers. In Boulder, most meals will be part of navigation or HFS services, so people accessing these meals will need to enter through Coordinated Entry. In Longmont, meal service will be determined in October, once Longmont's navigation service provider has been selected. Access to other public benefits not coordinated by Boulder County or the cities of Longmont and Boulder (e.g., Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)) does not require Coordinated Entry screening.

16. How will people with criminal histories, including those designated as sex offenders, be served through this approach?

People with criminal histories and/or who have been designated as a sex offender will not be disqualified for homeless services under the new approach. Service providers within the system will work with each individual to determine their best option.

17. Can the system serve those with more significant barriers (e.g., mental health issues, substance use issues, etc.)?

We will work with existing service providers depending on the needs of the individual in order to help clients obtain housing as quickly as possible, and to provide the necessary supports to help them maintain that housing over the long-term. We will also work with providers and system data to determine demand for supportive services and ways to align system capacity to meet that demand.

18. Who do I call if I have a concern?

If you have more general questions or concerns about the Regional Homeless Systems Collaborative's approach, please contact:

- Jennifer Biess, Boulder County Homeless Service Systems Manager:
jbiess@bouldercounty.gov
- Karen Roney, City of Longmont Community Services Director:
Karen.Roney@longmontcolorado.gov
- Wendy Schwartz, City of Boulder Homeless Program Manager:
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19. Q: What can I do to help?

Our entire community has a role to play in reducing homelessness, and one of the most effective ways to help is to support efforts designed to create more housing that is

permanently affordable for those who struggle with the rising costs of renting and purchasing a home in Boulder County. When proposals for building permanently-affordable homes are put forward, the voices of supportive community members throughout the process are crucial in helping these proposals succeed.