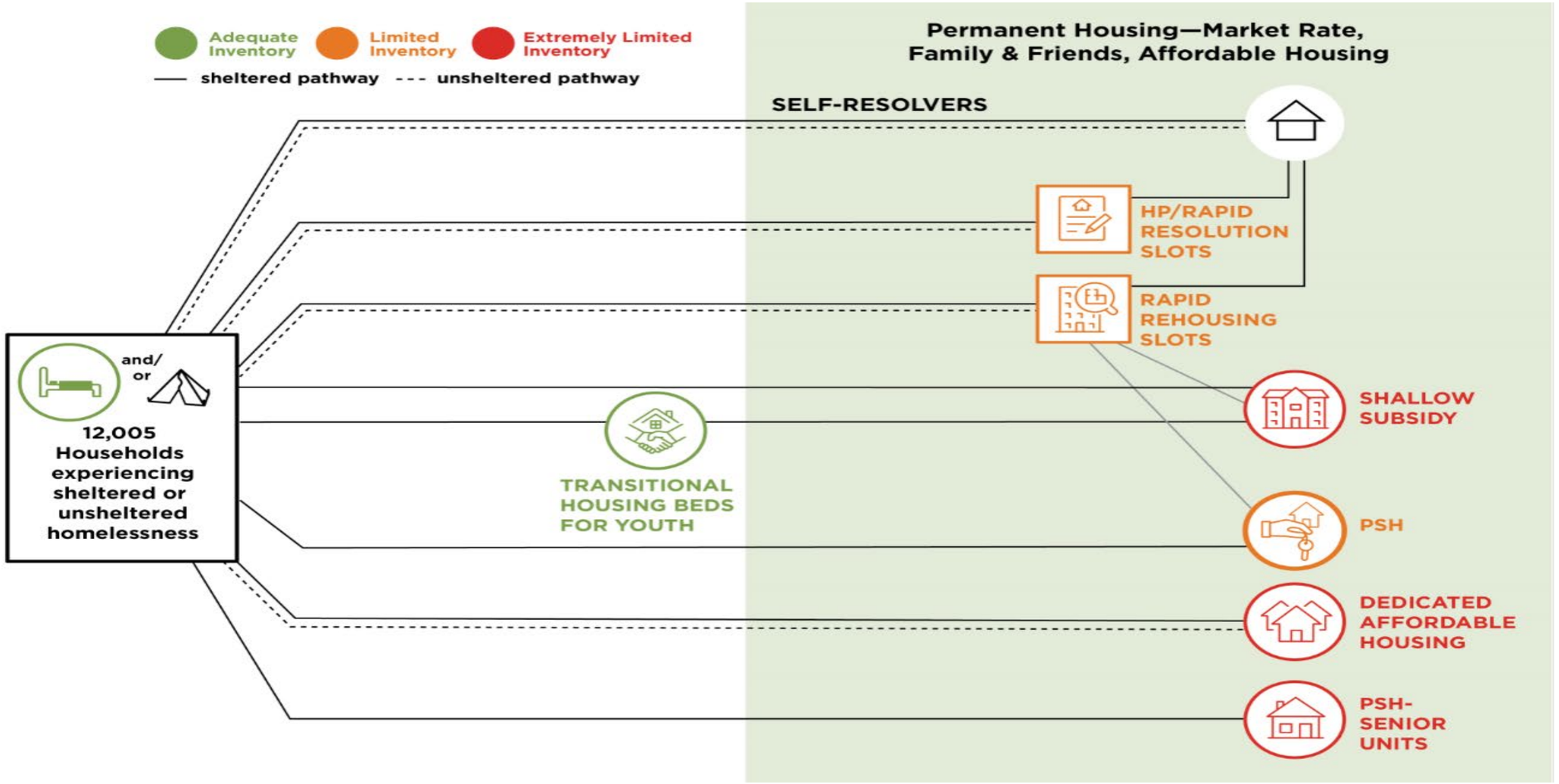
Overview of Alameda County's Coordinated Entry System

July 27, 2022

Alameda County
Health Care Services Agency

Resources included in the Homeless Response System

Homeless System Pathways



The Role of Coordinated Entry in the Homeless Response System

Official Roles in a CES

- **Management Entity:** responsibility to implement day-to-day workflows of the process. HCSA was appointed the Management Entity in 2020, by a vote of the Continuum of Care Board.
- **Policy Oversight:** to establish and review policies and procedures. Continuum of Care Board has approval of all policies developed for CES. They delegate many of the policy-making duties to a subcommittee of the CoC. The subcommittee, along with the CoC Board, include city staff, representatives from County agencies, housing CBOs, and people with lived experience, as well as stakeholders from other systems of care.

What is Coordinated Entry?

Coordinated Entry – The Coordinated Entry process is an approach to coordination and management of the crisis response system's resources that allows users to make equity consistent decisions from available information to connect people efficiently and effectively to interventions that will end their homelessness.

AC Coordinated Entry components:

- Access
- Housing Problem Solving*
- Assessment
- Prioritization for available resources
- Referral/Matching to Housing/Homelessness Resources
- Grievances*

* Includes steps that this jurisdiction wants to also highlight but are not typically listed in HUD descriptions of the other four components of CE.

Key CES Features

- Our **Centering Racial Equity in Homeless System Design** report allows us to plan strategically to stem disproportionate inflow and returns to homelessness, and supply adequate housing resources to work toward functional zero
- Client flow:
  - Focus on housing problem solving for everyone, flex funding for some, connections to resources, support with housing applications for others
  - Crisis assessment only for those who want to get into shelter/transitional housing
  - Housing assessment only for those likely to make it on to the housing queue
- Resource distribution (queues): Housing queue / threshold directly relates to available resources
- Values: **Clear, Transparent, and Timely** communication with consumers to frame expectations
- HMIS Workflow
- Regional Coordination

Who is Involved in CE 2.0?

CE 2.0

- Housing Resource Centers (HRCs)
- Street Health Outreach Teams
- 211 (Eden I&R)
- Regional Coordinators - part of HCSA
- Emergency Shelters and navigation centers
- Office of Homeless Care and Coordination and Home Stretch - part of HCSA

CE 2.0 Regional Coordinators

- **Oakland** Lynette Ward
  Lynette.Ward@acgov.org
- **Mid County**: Phil Clark
  Phil.Clark@acgov.org
- **North County**: Andrea Zeppa
  Andrea.Zeppa@acgov.org
- **East/South County:** Hanna Toda
  Hanna.Toda@acgov.org

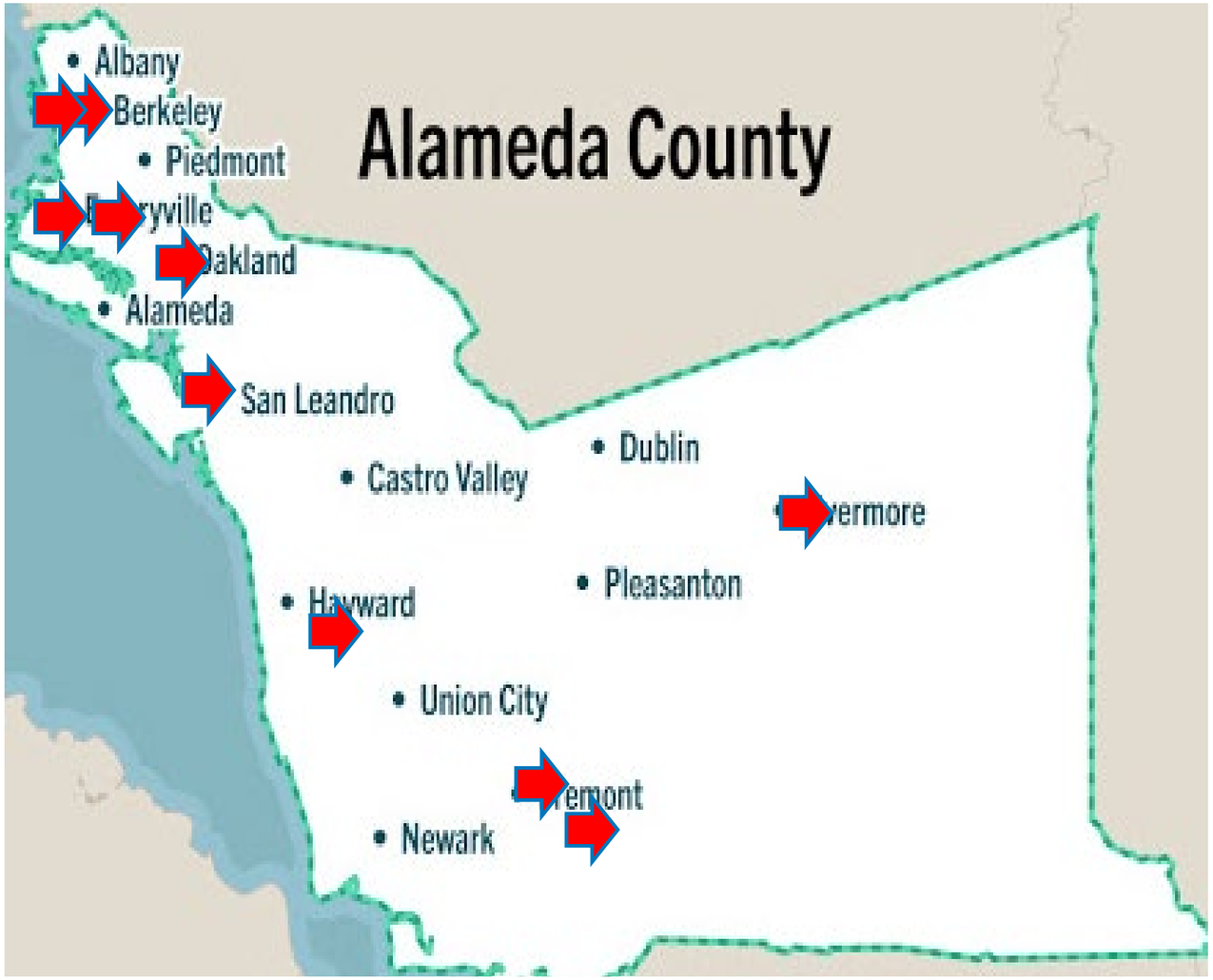
Zones/Regions in Alameda County

CE Zones and Contracted HRCs/Access Points countywide by Geography and Population Served

- North County (2)*
- Oakland (4)*
- East County (1)
- Mid County- E/W (2)
- South County (2)
- Transitional Age Youth (1)*
- Vets (1 Proposed)*

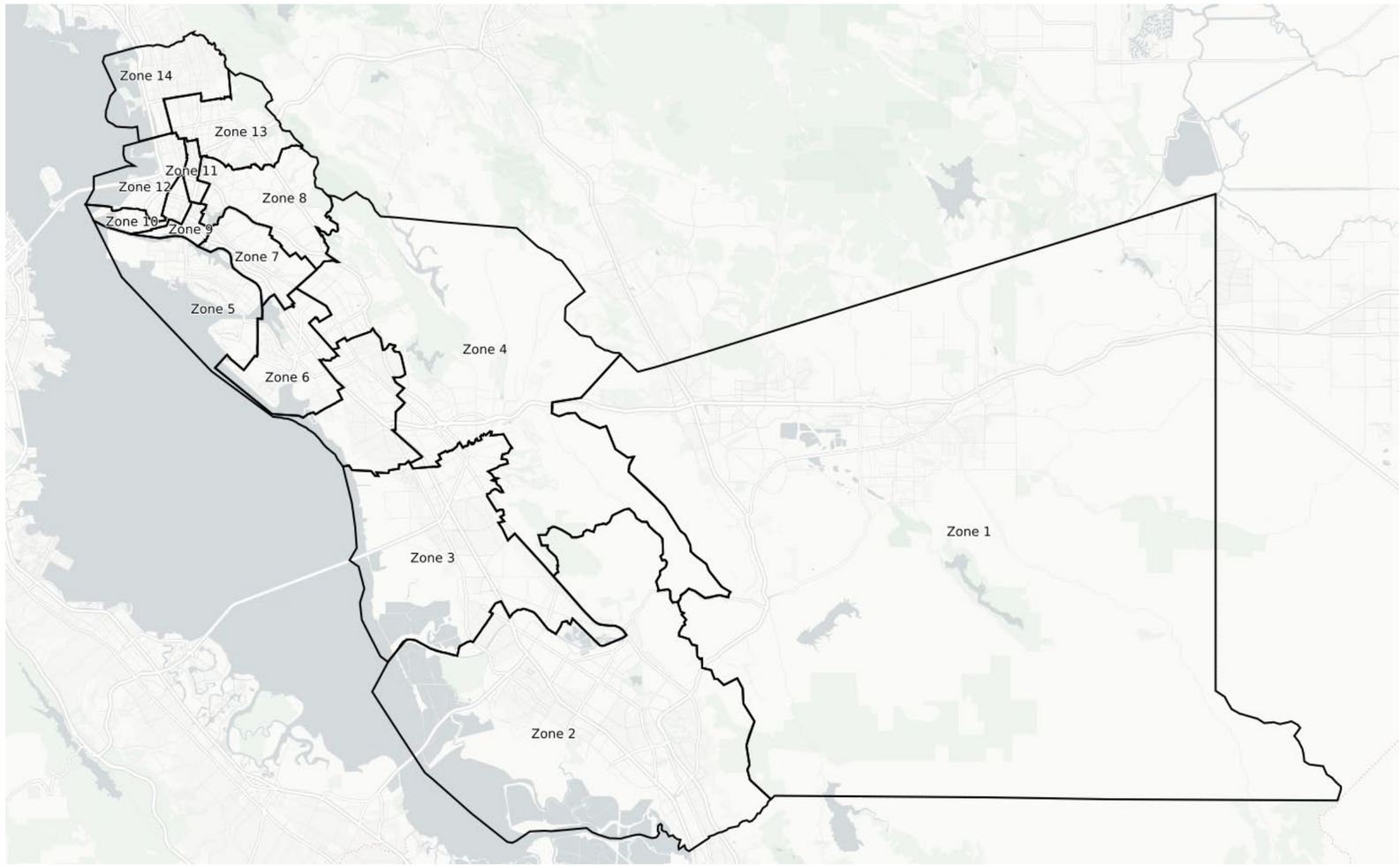
Most Access Points serve the general population including transition age youth, single adults, families, seniors.

* Region has Population-specific site(s)



Street Health Outreach Teams

- 2019 Point-in-Time data on unsheltered homelessness was used to divide the county into zones
- 14 zones were created
- Each zone has approximately 500 unsheltered home less



How CE 2.0 Works: System Access Points

Person or Household seeking Assistance

System Access Points

- Health Care Programs
- 211
- Community organizations
- Outreach/Street Health
- Justice System
- HRC/Access Points
- Schools

Initial Service Access Points to start CE roll-out

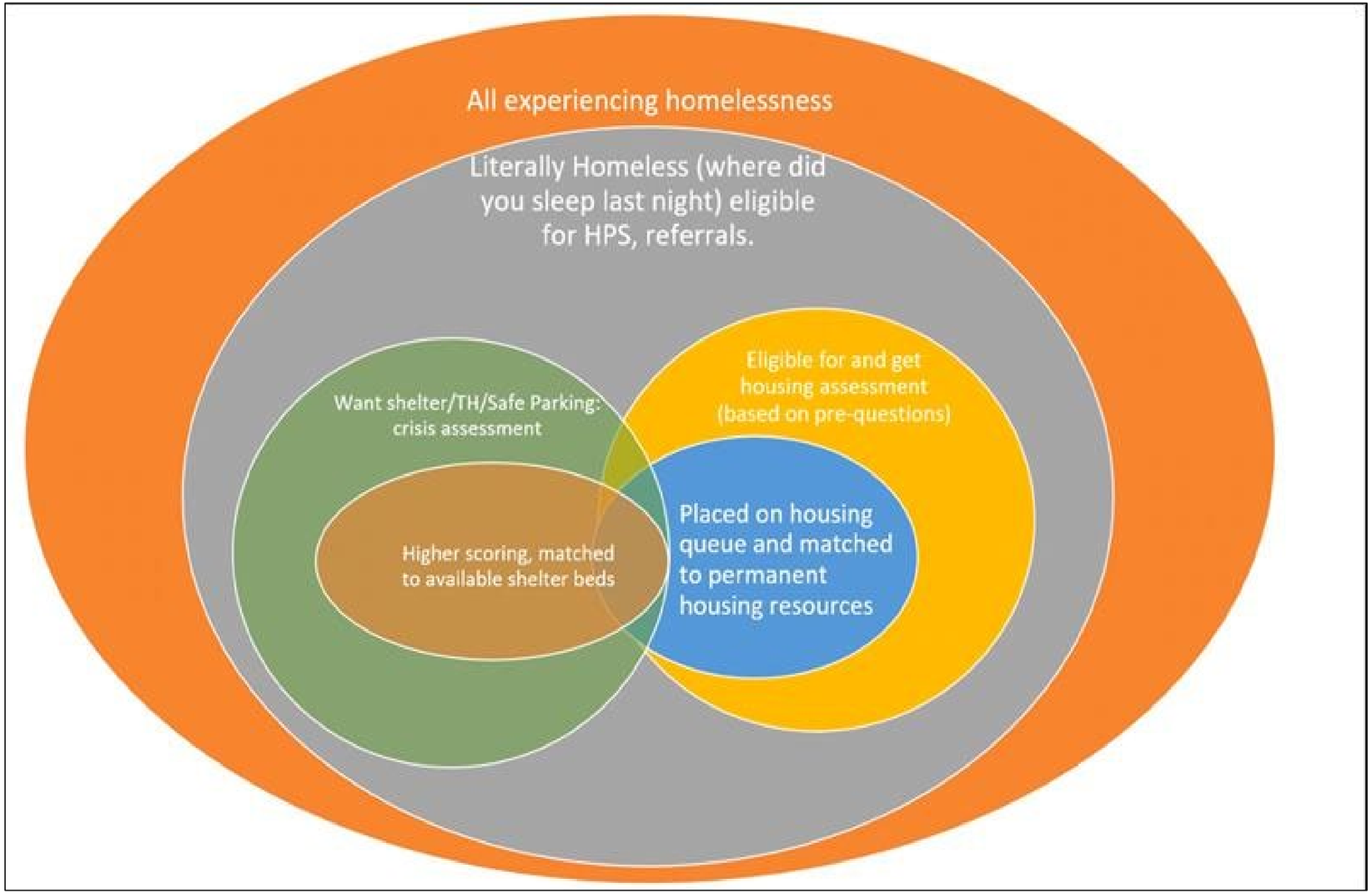
- 211
- HRCs (Housing Resources Centers)
- Street Health Outreach Teams

In-Progress

- Emergency Shelters
- Access Partners

CES Processes

CES Access


All experiencing homelessness
Literally Homeless (where did you sleep last night) eligible for HPS, referrals.
Want shelter/TH/Safe Parking: crisis assessment
Eligible for and get housing assessment (based on pre-questions)
Higher scoring, matched to available shelter beds
Placed on housing queue and matched to permanent housing resources

ALAMEDA COUNTY COORDINATED ENTRY FLOW

ACCESS

- **Information** from **211** or service provider
- Initial **contact** and relationship building by outreach, HRCs/ Access Points
- **Crisis support**, emergency response, or referral to other services
- Review **eligibility** and need for services

ENROLLMENT IN HMIS

ROADMAP OF COORDINATED ENTRY

- Review and request **Release of Information** and create **Profile in HMIS**
- **Describe Housing Problem Solving** services and resource connections
- **Explain** that problem solving must happen before other assessments

HOUSING PROBLEM SOLVING

- **Housing Problem Solving Conversation** and **Enrollment**
- Develop **Rehousing Plan** and provide flexible support if possible to resolve situation
- If no resolution identified, proceed **to pre-questions** or schedule for another time

CRISIS AND HOUSING ASSESSMENTS

- Offer **Crisis Assessment** if interested in Crisis resources like shelter
- Use **pre-questions** and participant interest to consider **Housing Assessment**
- Enroll in **Coordinated Entry** and conduct Assessments
- Use **assessment result** to provide information to participant about next steps

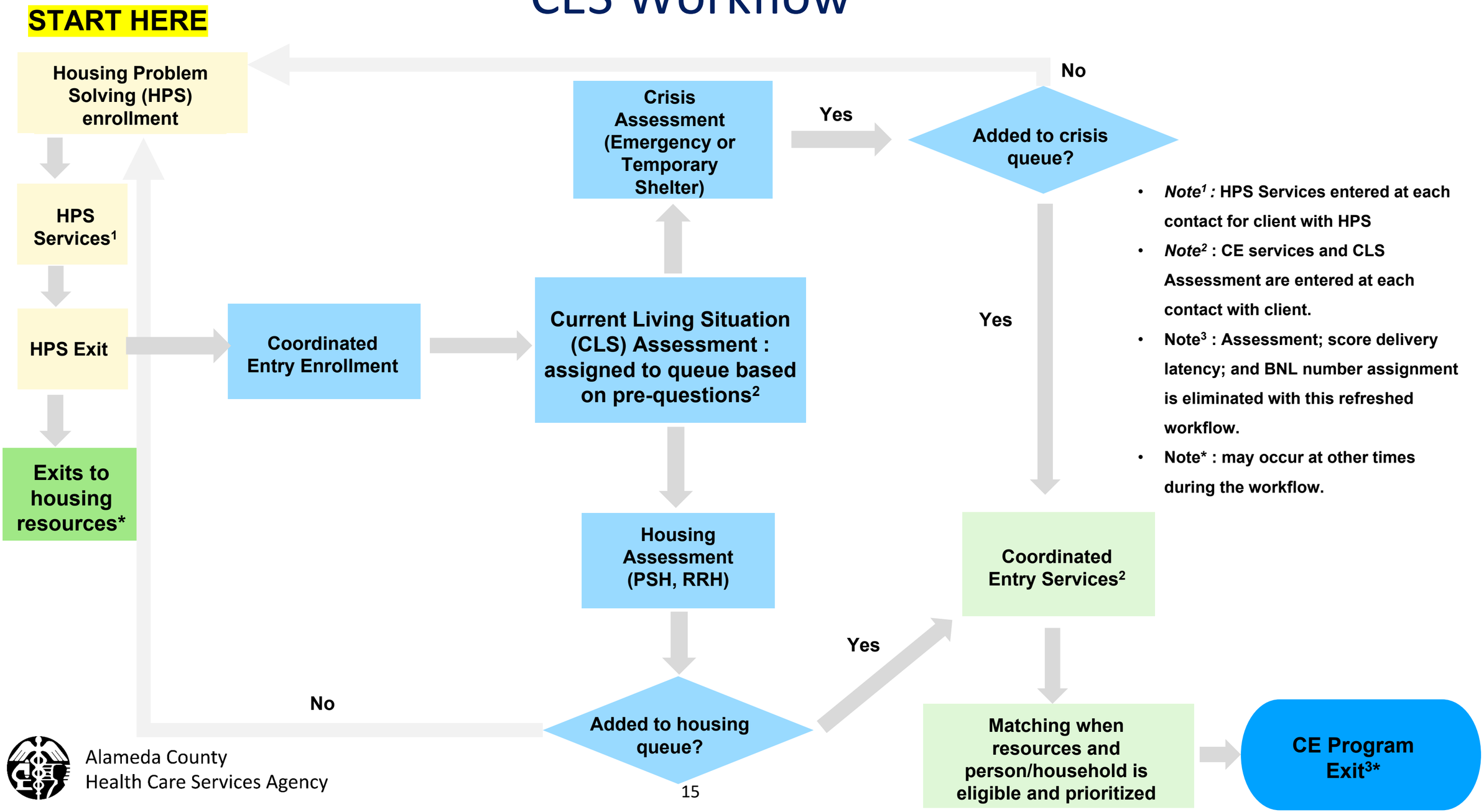
QUEUE MANAGEMENT

- Add **participants** to **queue** based on assessment result
- For participants added to **housing queue**, begin work on document gathering
- **Remove** participants from crisis and housing queues when referrals are made; re-add if not successful
- **Stay in touch**

MATCH AND REFERRAL

- When **openings** are posted, use information from queue to make matches
- Contact participant directly or through provider when **match** is available
- If interested and responds in time, make **referral** to provider

CES Workflow



- *Note[1] :* HPS Services entered at each contact for client with HPS
- *Note[2]* : CE services and CLS Assessment are entered at each contact with client.
- Note[3] : Assessment; score delivery latency; and BNL number assignment is eliminated with this refreshed workflow.
- Note* : may occur at other times during the workflow.

Housing Problem Solving (HPS)

What is HPS?

Client Service Engagement and System Intervention

Client Service Engagement approach that is versatile

- Uses empowering Service Engagement to identify, explore possible options through creative, open, strengths- and resources-focused conversation and interaction.
- Determines options and possible client action to get safe viable housing solutions outside of the formal housing crisis response system asap and without need for ongoing support.
- People who work in different parts of the system can provide housing problem solving services.

HPS as Client Service

Main Parts of HPS Service Engagement

1.	Effective HPS Conversations Active, deep listening; open-ended questions; paraphrase/reflect; empowering; truthful about solutions to homelessness
2.	**A Housing Resolution Proposal/Plan**
3.	**Connections to Relevant Available Resources** a. Referrals b. Conflict Resolution / Mediation c. Housing Search / Housing Location Assistance d. Flexible Funds

CES Assessment

Crisis Queue

- The Crisis Queue is used to match individuals experiencing homelessness to shelter and transitional housing opportunities.
- Focuses attention on the highest-need households in the queue.
- Matching is regional.
- Not all shelter resources are filled through the crisis queue.

Housing Queue

- The Housing Queue is used to match individuals experiencing homelessness to PSH and other permanent housing opportunities.
- Focuses attention on the highest-need households in the queue.
- Households with a Housing Assessment score equal to or higher than the threshold score appear on the Prioritized List for Housing.
- Households on this list are likely to receive a housing match within the next year if they are “document-ready”.
- Currently, 550-650 people are on the Prioritized List for Housing (~5% of system).
- The number of households on the Prioritized List for Housing is related to the number of housing opportunities that are likely to become available in a given year.

What services are people matched to?

- Housing navigation services
- Year-round, publicly funded shelter (not inclement weather shelters, dv/gbv shelters, or privately funded shelters)
- Transitional housing
- Rapid rehousing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Tenancy sustaining services
- Dedicated affordable housing*
- Shallow subsidies*

*Newer resources that are not yet widely available but in the pipeline.

Permanent Housing Matching Reminders

- Verification of Homelessness (VOH) must be on letterhead.
- Verification of Disability (VOD) must be completed by a medical professional.
- If the service provider is verifying homelessness, use the professional assessment of living situation form, *not* the summary of witness statement.
- The Housing History chart does not meet HUD documentation standards, this is a tool, not a verification.
- Thoroughly review the match notification form for eligibility and documents needed.
- Thoroughly review e-mails from the Home Stretch team explaining what is missing or needs to be updated after an incomplete submission.
- Always send documents that are in response to a match notification directly to HomeStretch@acgov.org. If you only upload it to HMIS it will not be reviewed.
- Ensure self-certifications are fully completed: do not skip documenting attempts to obtain 3rd party verification, must provide specific location and living condition.
- Never use self-certification of verification of literal homelessness.

Permanent Housing Matching Best Practices

- Always complete current living situation assessments monthly.
- Have a documentation or chronic homelessness expert support others with less experience.
- Ensure supervisors have a thorough understanding in order to support their teams. Home Stretch will often copy supervisors when support is needed.
- Use HMIS to find other agencies that may be able to help verify chronic homelessness. Provide guidance to those agencies when needed.
- Be creative when thinking about who can verify chronic homelessness: Professionals can be educators, healthcare professionals etc.; consider witnesses if appropriate and client-led.

Resources

HRC-Access Points Drop-in Info 9-15-21.docx - Google Drive

Resources | Homelessness Solutions | Alameda County (acgov.org)

Elemeno (ex. Verifying literal homelessness, add other exs)

Chronic Homeless Verification Training

Questions?