



Prioritization Scoring & Eligibility Criteria Guidance

Applicability: Applies to all housing referrals made from the San Luis Obispo Coordinated Entry System¹ (CES)

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Purpose

This guidance establishes the standardized prioritization scoring, eligibility criteria, and documentation requirements used by the San Luis Obispo Coordinated Entry System (CES) when matching households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing resources. Its purpose is to ensure that housing referrals are made consistently, transparently, and equitably using objective assessment data, HUD and program eligibility requirements, and locally adopted prioritization policies.

This document defines how households are prioritized within the Permanent Housing Queue (PHQ), identifies the score ranges associated with each housing intervention, outlines program-specific eligibility requirements, and establishes the minimum documentation required before a referral is made. Together, these standards support timely referrals, reduce

¹ The San Luis Obispo Coordinated Entry System connects clients to services and resources throughout San Luis Obispo County

unnecessary housing denials and unit vacancies, promote efficient use of limited housing resources, and ensure that households with the greatest needs are connected to the most appropriate housing opportunities in accordance with Housing First principles and the CES Prioritization and Referral Policy.

Prioritization Scoring

Households experiencing homelessness will be prioritized based on the Vulnerability Index-Services Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)² version 3 for adults, F-VI-SPDAT³ for families, and TAY-VI-SPDAT⁴ version 2 for youth, score. These assessment tools are used strategically and only when necessary to connect households to community resources. Completed assessments will be entered into the Homeless Management Information System⁵ (HMIS). Households will then be referred to the Permanent Housing Queue⁶ (PHQ) in HMIS. Households will be matched to appropriate and realistic housing resources based on their assessment score, needs as demonstrated by the assessment tool, data in HMIS, and case-conferencing records and client-stated housing preferences, in alignment with the CES Prioritization and Referral Policy.

The Permanent Housing Queue (PHQ) is a dynamic list that reflects real-time needs by subpopulation. In cases where multiple households have the same score, first households with children and then households with multiple adults will be prioritized, when unit occupancy standards allow. If multiple households of the same size and score are on the PHQ, the list will be filtered by the length of time the household has been in the Coordinated Entry Program (CEP). In this situation, the household with the longest duration enrolled in a Coordinated Entry Program will be prioritized for the housing referral.

Households must have an active CES program enrollment in HMIS to be eligible for referral. CES program enrollments must have a Current Living Situation (CLS) entered every 90 days to remain active, per HUD guidance.

² The Vulnerability Index -Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) assesses a single adult's vulnerability to adverse events while experiencing homelessness, which can be used to support connection to permanent supportive housing

³ The Vulnerability Index –Family Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-FSPDAT) assesses a family's vulnerability to adverse events while experiencing homelessness, which can be used to support connection to permanent supportive housing

⁴ Transitional Age Youth – Vulnerability Index–Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) assesses a youth or young adult's vulnerability and service needs while experiencing homelessness and may be used to support prioritization and connection to permanent housing resources.

⁵ Homeless Management Information System is a secure data system used by homeless service providers to record, manage, and coordinate client services, housing assistance, and program outcomes

⁶ The Permanent Housing Queue is CES's centralized queue of households eligible for permanent housing referrals and matching opportunities.

Table 1 — Tiebreakers Within the Permanent Housing Queue (PHQ)

Tie-Breaker Category	Priority Order	Definition / Application
Household Composition	1	Households with children are prioritized first when scores are tied.
Household Composition (cont.)	2	Next, households with multiple adults (if occupancy standards allow).
CE Program Enrollment Duration	3	If still tied, the household with the longest duration enrolled in the CE Program is prioritized.

Households should be re-surveyed if their circumstances have changed, such as additional hospitalizations, a change in living situation or income, worsening health, or if six months have elapsed since the survey was completed. When a household is re-surveyed, the revised score may impact the household's position on the PHQ.

Re-survey Required When:

- Household experiences new hospitalization(s)
- Worsening physical or mental health
- Change in income or benefits
- Change in living situation
- 6 months have passed since previous assessment

Eligibility Criteria

Permanent Supportive Housing with Intensive Services Support (PSH+)

To qualify for these units, a household member's VI-SPDAT score must be 11 or higher. Households will be prioritized based on the highest overall prioritization score. This housing typology has high case management support with low caseload ratios. The supportive services are attached to the units, are not time-limited, and are delivered in a low-barrier, Housing First setting. Examples of PSH+ include, but are not limited to, No Place Like Home-funded units and Housing Now! units.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Generally, households with VI-SPDAT scores of 8-10 are eligible for Continuum of Care (CoC)-funded permanent supportive housing (PSH), with priority given to those with the highest prioritization score. Households scoring higher than 10 on the VI-SPDAT may be offered CoC PSH if they are not eligible for PSH+ or if it is otherwise appropriate to their needs and preferences. CoC PSH provides case management and connects households to additional community resources as relevant and available. CoC housing uses a low-barrier, Housing First approach.

Rapid Rehousing

Households with VI-SPDAT scores between 4-7 are eligible to be enrolled in RRH (e.g., Emergency Solutions Grant Program Rapid Rehousing ⁷(ESG RRH), etc.) based on the client's preferences and the criteria for each program. Households with VI-SPDAT scores of 8 or higher may be considered for referrals to RRH as appropriate.

Lesser of No Intervention (Problem Solving)

Households with a VI-SPDAT score between 0-3. These cases should be addressed using problem-solving techniques, light-touch reunification, and/or available resources.

Table 2 - VI-SPDAT Score Ranges and Housing Pathways

VI-SPDAT Score Range	Housing Pathway	Description

⁷ Emergency Solutions Grant Rapid Rehousing Program provides short- to medium-term rental assistance and supportive services to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness quickly obtain and maintain permanent housing.

11+	PSH+ (Permanent Supportive Housing with Intensive Services Support)	High-intensity supportive housing with low caseload ratios in a Housing First framework.
8–10	CoC Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Long-term, low-barrier PSH with case management and community resource linkage.
4–7	Rapid Rehousing (RRH)	Short- to medium-term rental assistance with case management.
0–3	Lesser/No Intervention (Problem Solving)	Diversion, reunification, light-touch support, or self-resolution strategies.

Table 3 - Eligibility Requirements by Housing Type

Housing Type	Score Requirement	HUD/HCD Eligibility Requirements
PSH+	11+	Must meet HUD chronic homelessness definition; county residency not required.
CoC PSH	8–10 (higher accepted if appropriate)	Must meet HUD chronic homelessness definition.
HDAP PSH	8–10	Must have disability; must not yet have SSI benefits.
RRH	4–7 (8+ if appropriate)	Depends on ESG or program criteria.
Problem Solving	0–3	None.

Documentation Requirements for Referral

CE will only refer clients who have uploaded a Social Security card or Birth Record, and a government-issued ID or suitable replacements, to HMIS. This benchmark supports CES's aims

to reduce denial frequency, queue time for clients, and the number and duration of vacant units, promoting CES's policy of efficient utilization and progressive engagement.

Suitable replacements for a Social Security card include a current Social Security card receipt, which will be provided at the earliest opportunity. A letter from the Social Security Administration, listing both the client's legal name and Social Security number.

Suitable replacements for a Birth Record are a notarized copy of the application, treated as a receipt, or a U.S. passport.

Suitable replacements for a Photo ID include a CA ID request receipt and a U.S. Passport card with photo ID.

ID, Social Security card, and Birth Record receipts are valid for only 30 days from the date they are issued. After this period, case managers are expected to upload the received documents to HMIS.

Table 4- Documentation Requirements for Referral

Required Document	Acceptable Forms
Social Security Verification	Social Security card; SSA letter showing legal name + SSN; SS card receipt (valid 30 days).
Birth Record	Copy of Notarized Application for Birth Record (valid for 30 days), US Passport.
Photo Identification	Government-issued ID; CA ID request receipt (valid 30 days); U.S. Passport card.