



Homeless
Services
Center



Smart Path

to Housing and Health

Santa Cruz County Coordinated
Assessment and Referral System



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Smart Path Homeless Coordinated Entry System Launches

This week, with the introduction of a new technology system, the Smart Path to Housing and Health Homeless Coordinated Entry System (Smart Path) officially launched, with the goal of creating a more efficient and effective system of addressing homelessness throughout Santa Cruz County.

An initiative of the Santa Cruz County Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) in conjunction with lead agency Santa Cruz Homeless Services Center (HSC), Smart Path creates systems-wide change by utilizing evidence-based assessments and coordinating resources to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are more quickly matched to housing programs and homeless services. Drawing on the experiences of coordinated entry systems in other communities, Smart Path facilitates the effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources by prioritizing families and individuals with the highest needs.

"Coordinated Entry is a key strategy for preventing and ending homelessness," said Julie Conway, lead staff for the Homeless Action Partnership. The HAP is responsible for coordinating and planning countywide services for people who are experiencing

homelessness, and includes non-profit and government agencies as well as community members.

Over the past few years, under the HAP's auspices, leaders from more than 20 government and non-profit agencies have been working collaboratively to create Smart Path, which allows providers to utilize a single, technology-based assessment tool that matches homeless persons with services based on need. Currently, persons experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County must navigate an overwhelming maze of agencies, systems, and referrals in order to receive assistance. The technology platform enables Smart Path staff to maintain a roster of homeless clients, prioritized by need and vulnerability, for rapid referral to appropriate programs when vacancies arise. This represents a shift from the former first-come, first-served model to a model based on individual need.

"Smart Path is a significant game changing development for the entire county," said Robyn McKeen, Smart Path Coordinated Entry Director at HSC. "By giving us the tools to target the most vulnerable people in our communities and provide them with available help tailored to their specific needs, Smart Path will allow us to have a real, positive impact on many lives."

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to implement a coordinated entry system as a condition of receiving funding, and coordinated entry is a key recommendation of both the countywide plan to address homelessness, *All In – Toward a Home for Every County Resident*, and the City of Santa Cruz Homelessness Coordinating Committee's Final Report and Recommendations. Local implementation of coordinated entry exceeds HUD requirements by including non-HUD funded agencies and programs, maximizing the impact and effectiveness of the project.

Smart Path's funders include Dignity Health, Packard Foundation, Central California Alliance for Health, County Human Services Department, and HUD. The United Way of Santa Cruz County played a key role in supporting Smart Path through implementation.

For more information on Smart Path including where to complete an assessment or how to get involved please go to: www.smartpathsc.org, email connect@smartpathsc.org, or call 211. For more information on HSC, visit www.santacruzhsc.org.