

**Vermont Balance of State  
Continuum of Care**

**Coordinated Entry  
System Overview**

# Continuum of Care (CoC)



- ▶ Envisioned as a local network that plans and coordinates funding for services and housing to assist those experiencing homelessness
- ▶ CoC composition is expected to be tailored to the unique community circumstances, involving all the players required to further local efforts to end homelessness
- ▶ CoCs are designated as the community planning body that addresses the needs of those experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis

# History of the CoC

- ▶ 1987 - The McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act: Congress passes first federal law to address homelessness and authorizes HUD homeless programs.
- ▶ 1988 to 1993: HUD held national competitions for homeless assistance funds every year with individual organizations writing separate applications
- ▶ 1994: HUD requires communities to collaborate on a single comprehensive CoC application (CoC NOFO Notice of Funding Opportunity).
  - ▶ All project applications must be approved by the HUD-approved CoC as part of a collaborative community planning process.
- ▶ 2009 - The HEARTH Act: Amended and reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 with substantial changes
  - ▶ Created U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to establish goals & priorities
  - ▶ Increased Emphasis on Performance (Individual Projects and System-wide)
  - ▶ New Definition of Chronic Homelessness and other Homeless Definitions
  - ▶ Published regulations on the CoC Program (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

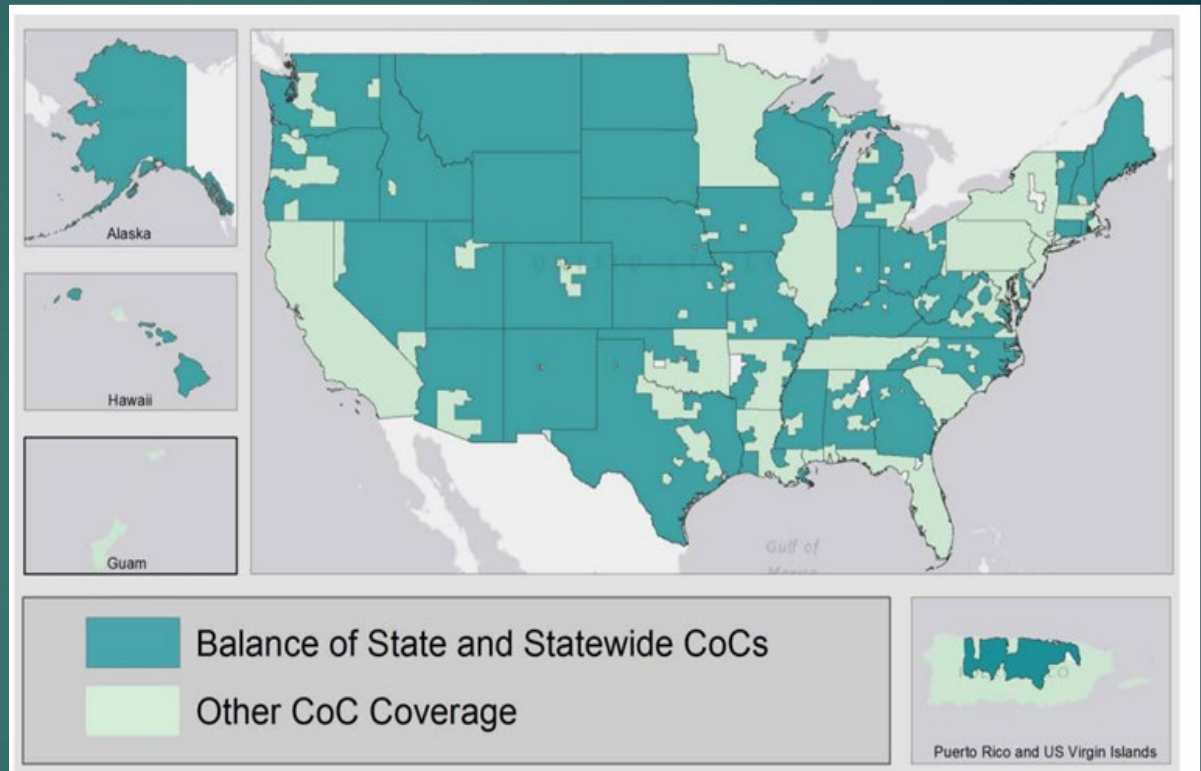
# Different CoC Models

CoCs cover many different configurations of geography:

- ▶ Some focus on population-dense areas, like major cities.
- ▶ Others include multiple cities and the surrounding counties.
- ▶ While others, cover wider areas of a state or are statewide.

Balance of State (BoS) CoCs:

- ▶ Include all the jurisdictions in a state that are not covered by any other CoC
- ▶ Include non-metropolitan areas and may include some or all the state's smaller cities.

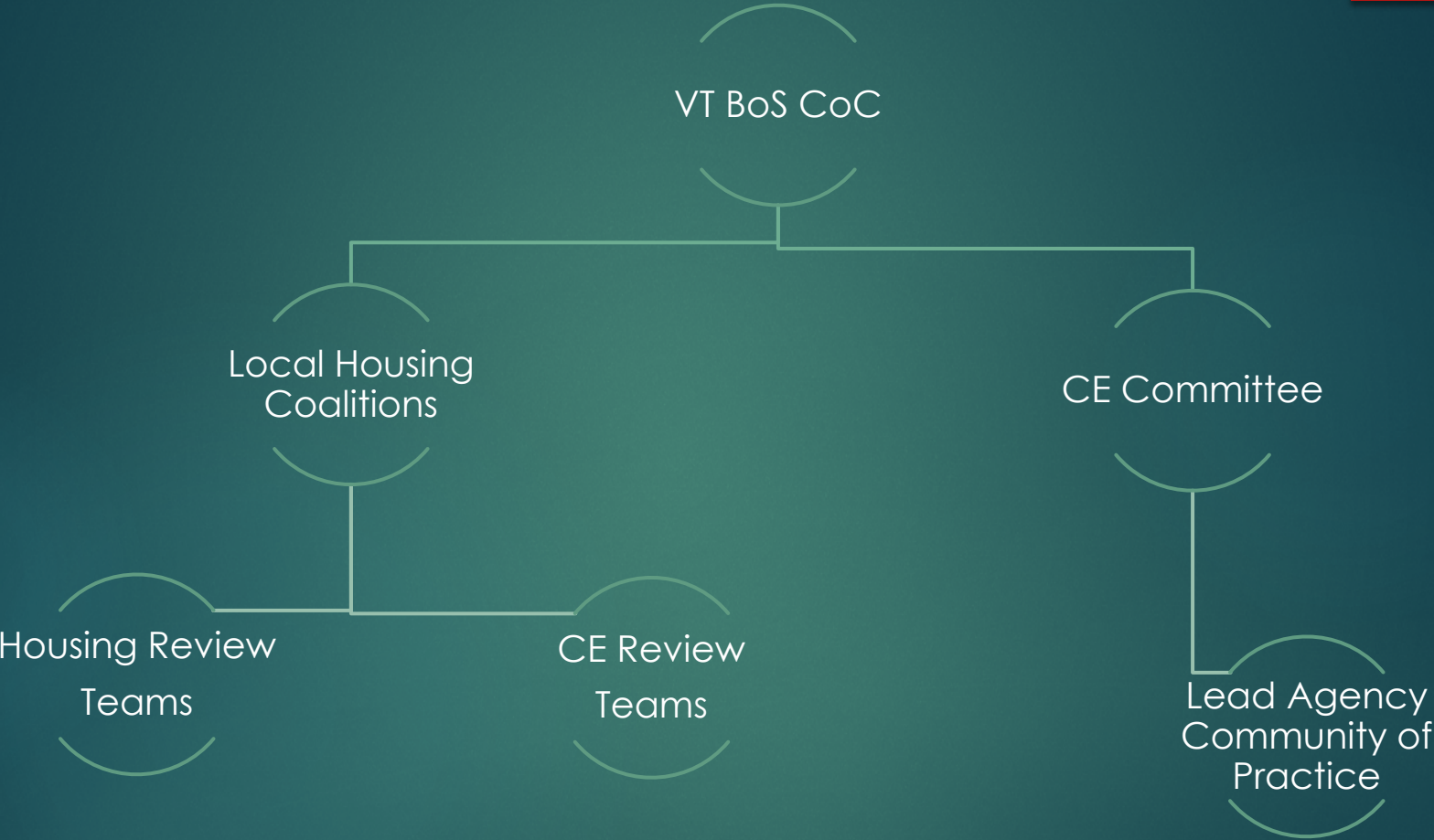


Source: Balance of State Continuum of Care Toolkit  
<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Balance-of-State-Continuum-of-Care-Toolkit.pdf>

# Vermont Balance of State CoC

- ▶ Vermont has two Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-recognized Continua of Care (CoC) that apply for federal homeless funding for their corresponding geographic areas:
  - ▶ Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA) which covers Chittenden County
  - ▶ Vermont Balance of State CoC that encompasses the remaining counties in Vermont.
- ▶ The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) is a HUD-designated entity designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.
- ▶ The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care Board is the planning and governing body for the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (VT BoS CoC).
  - ▶ This board made up of a broad group of service & resource providers, housing developers, state agencies, and others in the homelessness or low-income service system from around the state.
- ▶ The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC)'s mission is to coordinate the planning and implementation of a housing and service system that meets the needs of families and individuals experiencing homelessness within its geographic area, with the ultimate goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

# BoS Organizational Chart



# BOS CoC CE Committee

A subcommittee of the Balance of State CoC, the CE Committee is responsible for planning and supporting implementation of Coordinated Entry across the BoS's broad area, including:

- ▶ Policy and procedure development and training
- ▶ Ongoing evaluation of processes
- ▶ Support for local implementation, such as:
  - ▶ Creation of tools and templates to standardize practices
  - ▶ Monthly Lead Agency Community of Practice meetings

# Local Housing Coalitions

## Franklin – Grand Isle Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties

## Orleans Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Orleans County
- ▶ Covering the Essex County towns of: Norton, Canaan, Warrens Gore, Avery's Gore, Averill, Lemington, Lewis, Bloomfield, Brighton, Ferdinand, Brunswick, and Maidstone.

## Lamoille Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Lamoille County
- ▶ Covering the Caledonia County town of Hardwick

## Caledonia Local Housing Coalition

- Covering all of Caledonia County, except the town of Hardwick
- Covering the Essex County towns of East Haven, Granby, Guildhall, Lunenburg, Victory, and Concord

## Washington Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Washington County

## Addison Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Addison County

## Orange and Windsor North Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Orange County
- ▶ Covering Windsor County towns of Bethel, Rochester, Stockbridge, Barnard, Hartford, Hartland, Norwich, Pomfret, Royalton, Sharon, Bridgewater, and Woodstock

## Rutland Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Rutland County

## Southern Windsor – Northern Windham Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering the Windsor County towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading Springfield, Weathersfield, Weston, West Windsor, and Windsor.
- ▶ Covering the Windham County towns of Grafton, Londonderry, Rockingham, and Windham.

## Bennington Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering all of Bennington County

## South Windham Local Housing Coalition

- ▶ Covering the Windham County towns of Stratton, Jamaica, Townshend, Athens, Westminster, Brookline, Wardsboro, Newfane, Putney, Somerset, Dover, Dummerston, Wilmington, Marlboro, Brattleboro, Whitingham, Halifax, Guilford, and Vernon.



# Local Housing Coalition Responsibilities

- ▶ A. To nominate a Board representative who is responsible for relaying information between the regional Continuum and the statewide Coalition and for voting on its behalf.
- ▶ B. To organize and facilitate regular regional meetings, including outreach to encourage participation in the meetings. Regular meetings shall be held no less than once every two months.
- ▶ C. To the greatest extent possible, actively reach out to and include varying types of organizations and stakeholders in its activities, such as: nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, and other organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.
- ▶ D. To take minutes of each meeting, utilizing the forms provided, and to maintain the minutes should the CoC need to provide evidence of activities. The Chair of the Local Housing Coalition (or designee) is responsible for these minutes and must maintain records for at least five (5) years. The CoC's website may be used to post and archive local meeting minutes and information.
- ▶ E. To facilitate documentation of regional efforts to provide housing and services.
- ▶ F. To coordinate region wide homeless data collection efforts consistent with statewide homeless efforts as needed for planning and reporting.
- ▶ G. To organize regional prioritization of projects to be presented to the Balance of State CoC and to provide updates for the CoC.
- ▶ H. To coordinate regional and statewide housing and services.
- ▶ I. To encourage participation in the CoC planning process by people who have direct experience with homelessness.
- ▶ J. To coordinate the regional response to State and Federal applications for homelessness funding.
- ▶ K. To participate in ad hoc committees as needed.
- ▶ L. To ensure all children are enrolled in schools and connected to appropriate services within the community

# Regional Process

Each region has a Local Housing Coalition. These function as regional mini CoCs and bring together diverse groups including:

- ▶ Community Action Programs
- ▶ Emergency shelters
- ▶ Restorative Justice Centers
- ▶ Food shelves
- ▶ VCCI
- ▶ Age Well
- ▶ Designated Agencies
- ▶ FQHCs
- ▶ Hospitals
- ▶ Homeownership Centers
- ▶ Housing developers
- ▶ Property managers
- ▶ Municipalities
- ▶ Law enforcement
- ▶ Legislators
- ▶ SUD treatment providers
- ▶ Youth services
- ▶ Educators
- ▶ Faith-based community
- ▶ ...and so many more

Each Local Housing Coalition has sub-committees. Some examples include:

- ▶ Housing Review Teams
- ▶ CE Review Teams
- ▶ Seasonal PIT and HAD planning and coordination

These teams meet regularly in many cases weekly to do both case management and planning for individuals as well as systems work.

# Coordinated Entry Partnerships

- ▶ All agencies that administer Continuum of Care (CoC)-funded programs, Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP)-funded programs, or Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) are required to participate in their Local Coordinated Entry Partnership.
- ▶ Other organizations and programs are encouraged and welcome to join; they can join by contacting the Lead Agency, establishing what role they will serve within the Local Coordinated Entry Partnership, and signing the Partnership Agreement. Providers participate in one of three roles as follows and departments or divisions within large agencies may have different roles:
  - ▶ Local Lead Agency,
  - ▶ Assessment Partner
  - ▶ Referral Partner
- ▶ Participating housing providers will work collaboratively to achieve responsive and streamlined access services and cooperate to use available resources to achieve the best possible housing outcomes for clients, particularly for those with high, complex or urgent needs.

# Coordinated Entry Partnership Agreement

Each region has a CE Partnership Agreement that outlines the participating agencies and their roles and responsibilities.

- ▶ [VT Coordinated Entry Partnership Agreement template](#)

# Referral Partner Responsibilities

A Referral Partner may be a care provider agency, or business or organization that provides services to **AREA** residents, who have elected to become a part of the **AREA** Coordinated Entry Partnership; and has agreed to the following provisions in their business model:

- A. Complete the VT BOS COC Housing Crisis\_Referral tool for households they identify as homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- B. Submit completed VT BOS COC Housing Crisis Referral tool to the Lead Agency within one business day.

# Assessment Partner Responsibilities



- A. Complete VT BOS COC Housing Assessment for households experiencing or at risk of homelessness, prior to enrolling clients in the programs/projects required to take referrals from CE
- B. Maintain high level of communication and coordination with Lead Agency and other Assessment Partners, e.g. participation on their local Housing Coalition, Housing Review Team, Coordinated Entry Review Team.
- C. Share assessment information, as needed, to coordinate referrals and ensure that consumers are not completing the assessment multiple times.

# CE Lead Agencies



- ▶ Addison County: Charter House
- ▶ Bennington County: BROCC – Community Action in Southwestern Vermont
- ▶ Brattleboro Area: Groundworks Collaborative
- ▶ Caledonia, Essex, Orleans Counties: Northeast Kingdom Community Action
- ▶ Chittenden County: Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- ▶ Franklin/Grand Isle Counties: Champlain Valley of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- ▶ Orange/Windsor North: Upper Valley Haven
- ▶ Lamoille County: Capstone Community Action
- ▶ Rutland County: Homeless Prevention Center
- ▶ Windsor South/Windham North: Springfield Supported Housing
- ▶ Washington County: Capstone Community Action

# Lead Agency Responsibilities

- A. Provide leadership, coordination and oversight of Coordinated Entry processes.
- B. Ensure that all Partners are involved in and informed of evaluation and reporting aspects of this Agreement.
- C. Seek out funding to help with costs associated with the continued development and implementation of this Partnership.
- D. Ensure that all requirements (programmatic and fiscal) for grant funds received to underwrite any part of expenses associated with the continued development and implementation of this Partnership.
- E. Provide training and technical assistance to Partners to ensure standardization of information, assistance and referral offered to potential households.
- F. Provide training and technical assistance to all Partner staff administering the VT BOS COC Housing Crisis Referral Tool, and the VT BOS COC Housing Assessment Tool.
- G. Promote the process and outcomes of Coordinated Entry to the public; local officials; state and federal agencies, officials and other interested parties.
- H. Convene local CE Partnership meetings.
- I. Ensure the evaluation of the local CE Partnership.
- J. Liaison with the VT BOS COC Coordinated Entry Committee, or delegate participation from the [AREA](#) Partnership.
- K. Act as a local clearinghouse for persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness and in search of support to find or retain housing.
- L. With Partnership committee support, maintain a local inventory of homeless assistance resources.
- M. Follow up with clients referred by Referral Partners within 3 days (target).
- N. Complete VT BOS COC Housing Assessment for households experiencing or at risk of homelessness, prior to enrolling clients in the programs/projects in Attachment A.
- O. Ensure that all Agreements and Partner Staff Confidentiality Agreements are signed and kept in a secure central location; to be kept on file for a minimum of five years.



# Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness

## Local Coordinated Entry (CE) Partnership

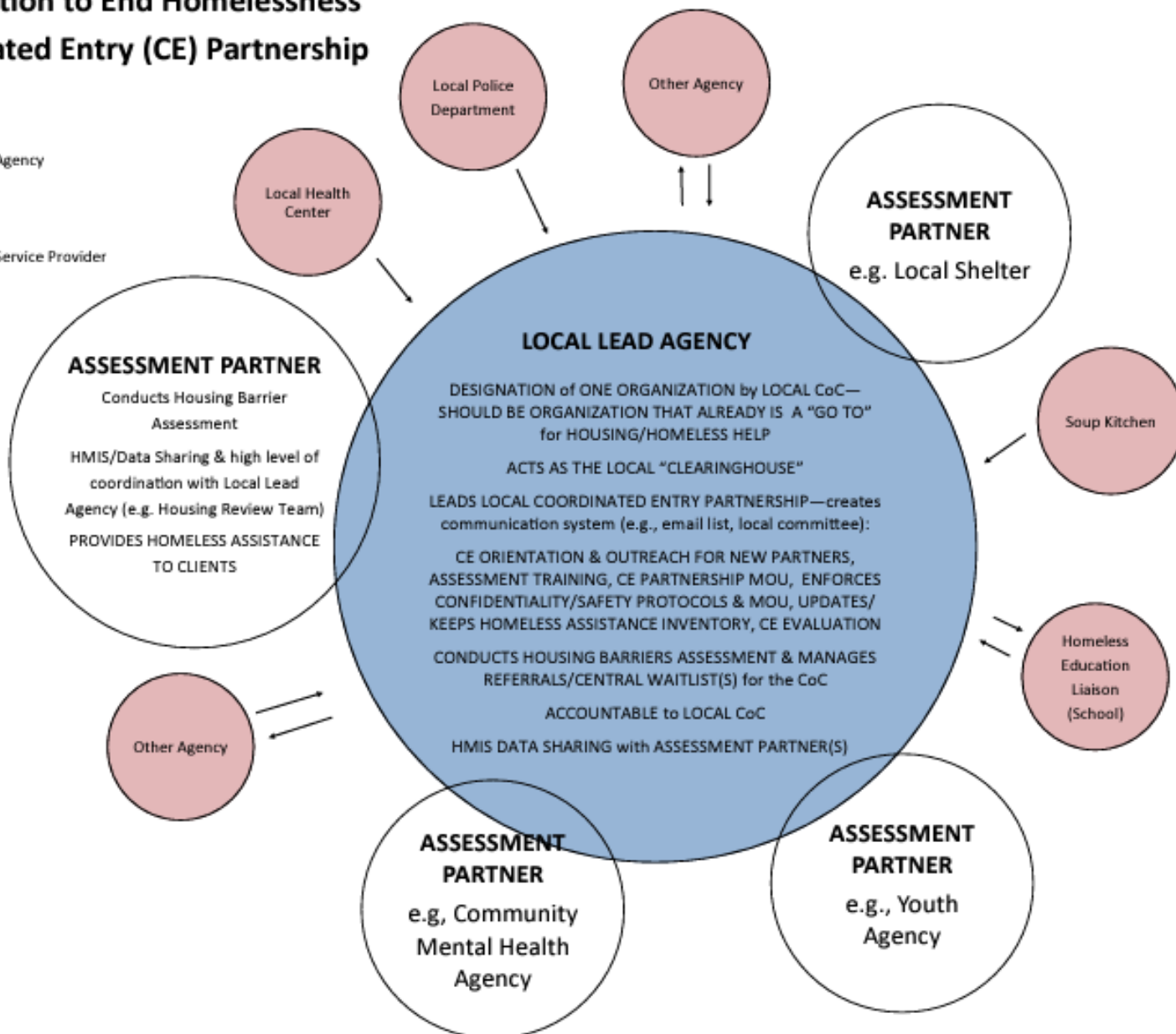
### Key Partners:

Community Mental Health Agency  
 Homeless Shelter  
 Pathways  
 Community Action Agency  
 Domestic Violence Shelter/Service Provider  
 VA  
 VCRHYP Partner  
 Parent Child Center  
 Economic Services Office  
 2-1-1  
 And more



Completes VCEH Referral/  
 Housing Screen and sends  
 to Lead Agency for Housing  
 Barriers Assessment

Agencies may begin as a  
 Referral Partner and  
 become Assessment  
 Partners over time.



# CE Partnerships in SFY23



- ▶ 174 organizations were involved in Coordinated Entry as formal partners (signed onto a local partnership agreement) in 2023.
  - ▶ Partners represent a broad variety of organizations (outreach, homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, etc.).
  - ▶ 64% of the organizations in local partnerships were Referral Partners
  - ▶ 36% were Assessment Partners