

CEASe Homelessness in the Trenton/Mercer Community ***Coordinated Entry and Assessment System for Homeless Individuals***

The **vision** of the system is that no one in the Trenton/Mercer area should experience homelessness; everyone should have a safe, stable place to live.

The **mission** is to provide an organized process to ensure that individuals who become homeless can move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Those with the longest history of homelessness will be given priority for housing resources.

PERMANENT HOUSING IS THE GOAL.

To achieve this goal, a **Coordinated Entry & Assessment System (CEASe)** is being created for individuals who are homeless in the Trenton/ Mercer community. The system will operate as the point of entry to access housing and community services for homeless individuals. Through a coordinated assessment process, the needs of the homeless will be identified and prioritized and a plan to move from homelessness to housing will be developed. This system will maximize both government and community resources.

The system has the following components:

CEASe HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM	
SYSTEM COMPONENTS	FUNCTION
1. CEAS Center <i>Operated by the City of Trenton Department of Health and Human Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening & Assessment to determine level of permanent housing and services needed by individuals who are sheltered and unsheltered; Coordination of community services and resources to support goal of permanent housing; and Mobile Outreach to engage the street homeless.
2. Emergency Shelter <i>Operated by the Rescue Mission of Trenton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight shelter while permanent housing is being secured.
3. Day Center <i>Operated by the Rescue Mission of Trenton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe place to congregate where CEAS staff can engage the individuals in services and provide transportation when needed.
4. Emergency Assistance <i>Operated by Mercer County Board of Social Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Emergency Assistance including General Assistance, temporary rental assistance, emergency shelter and transitional housing.

All components will be working towards the same goal of moving individuals to permanent housing as quickly as possible. They will utilize a common data system (HMIS) and operate as a coordinated system with the goal of housing.

The CEAS Center

The implementation of the CEASe System will occur in phases. As Phase 1 of the system is launched, the Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services (CEAS) *Center* will have the primary responsibility for assessing needs and accessing housing for homeless individuals who are at the Rescue Mission or are unsheltered. They will prioritize those individuals with the longest history of homelessness with mental health and substance abuse issues and work with community providers to access housing and services. **PHASE 2 will be for singles**

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that enter through the Mercer County Board of Social Services and are placed in motel and transitional housing. The goal for both phases is to access housing and services to meet the identified need.

The homeless have many needs for direct services that support the goal of accessing permanent housing. Community providers will be provided with space at the CEAS Center to facilitate coordination of services.

The CEASe System is for Mercer County residents only.

Background

In 2013, the *Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness* received a grant from the Princeton Area Community Foundation to plan for a system for homeless individuals. A planning committee, made up of both government and community partners, analyzed shelter and transitional housing data. In 2012, 23% (336) of the 1426 individuals in emergency shelter had had long histories of homelessness and mental health and substance abuse issues. Very few of this population were being returned to housing. The Trenton/Mercer Community needed a **comprehensive system** for homeless individuals that would screen and assess for need and provide a mechanism to connect individuals to housing and services.

The City of Trenton made a major commitment to meet this need. The City of Trenton Department of Health and Human Services will operate a new CEAS Center that will assess and drive appropriate services for those with long histories of homelessness with a goal of permanent housing.

The Trenton/Mercer homeless system has received national recognition for its efforts to end family homelessness.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the CEAS Center?

The CEAS Center is the new component in the Trenton/Mercer COC's Coordinated Entry and Assessment System mandated by HUD for all Continuums of Care. Communities are encouraged to develop a system to assess the needs of families and individuals who become homeless with the goal of accessing housing. Trenton/Mercer has already created such a system for family homelessness with MCBOSS as the entry point for services and housing. The CEAS Center, operated by the City of Trenton, will be an entry point for individuals who are homeless.

*The CEAS Center staff, as the system is launched, will see only those individuals **who have long histories of homelessness. The implementation of the CEASe System will be in phases. PHASE 1** will be for homeless singles who have utilized the Rescue Mission for shelter or have been on the street for long periods of time. These individuals will be screened and assessed to determine their housing needs. **PHASE 2** will encompass singles who enter through the Mercer County Board of Social Services and are placed in motel and transitional housing. The goal for both phases is to access housing and services to meet the identified need.*

CEAS Center is located at: 509 Perry Street, Trenton NJ

Phone Number: 609-989-3722

The CEAS Center's operating hours will be: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

2. Can referrals be made by agencies and individuals to the CEAS Center?

If agencies encounter individuals with long histories of homelessness (priority) who are not already at the Rescue Mission, they can contact the CEAS Center to schedule a screening.

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3. Who are the priority population for the CEAS Center?

*The CEAS Center will prioritize those individuals with the **highest level of need** which will be determined through a scoring process using a screening tool. The factors considered will be length of homelessness, disability (mental health and substance abuse) and health status.*

4. How will individuals who are newly homeless access services?

*Individuals who are newly homeless should be referred to the Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) where their homeless status and benefit eligibility will be evaluated. After MCBOSS business hours, individuals can be referred directly to the Rescue Mission for screening and shelter. **Questions regarding the referral process should be directed to the CEAS Center at 609-989-3722 between the hours of 8:30 am – 4:30 pm.***

5. How will the CEAS Center address housing needs?

The goal of the CEASe System is to match available housing resources to homeless individuals based on their need and to move individuals to housing as quickly as possible. These housing resources include vouchers from US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Veterans Administration (VA), NJ Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Senior Housing and Trenton Housing Authority. The CEAS Center provides the opportunity to access all possible housing resources and will coordinate and maximize all community resources.

6. What community services will be provided at the CEAS Center?

The CEAS Center will host community services that support the goal of moving homeless individuals to housing as quickly as possible. This includes services to obtain identification, to apply for SSI benefits (SOAR), and to gain eligibility for benefits. Health services will be available onsite to screen for health care needs. The Trenton Health Team and Catholic Charities Health Home Services will be utilized as needed. Community providers will be able to utilize space to see clients and engage them in various services.

7. Who are the community partners in the CEAS Homelessness System?

*All current members of the Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care are community partners in the system. The CEAS Center staff coordinate services. Those who provide housing resources will be the primary partners as the system launches. Case conferencing will occur to move high priority individuals to housing vouchers. The goal is to maximize all community resources and move individuals to housing as quickly as possible. The CEAS Center staff will work with the **Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness** to expand resources to meet this goal.*

8. How can Mobile Outreach Services be accessed?

Community agencies and individuals who believe mobile outreach is needed for someone who is homeless can call the CEAS Center at 609-989-3722. The CEAS Center will coordinate mobile outreach with other existing outreach teams.

9. How will we know it is working?

The CEASe System will continue to be evaluated and changes made as needed. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be used to track data on program participants. This one year pilot project will be evaluated using the following Process and Outcome measures:

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Process Measures:

- a. Number of homeless individuals contacted through Outreach
- b. Number of homeless individuals who receive screening
- c. Number of homeless individuals who received a core service (Housing Assistance, Behavioral Health, Primary Health)

Outcome Measures:

- a. Number/Percent of Homeless Individuals Enrolled Who Are Permanently Housed
- b. Number/Percent of Homeless Individuals Enrolled Whose Days of Homelessness (on Street or in Emergency Shelter) are Reduced
- c. Number/Percent of homeless individuals who are enrolled in Mainstream benefits?