



Engagement Principles

Adopted 1/16/26

The Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care (CT BOS CoC) uses an engagement approach that centers on connecting people experiencing homelessness with safe, stable housing and the services and supports they need to achieve long-term stability, recovery, and increased self-sufficiency. The CoC follows a rules-in approach, meaning that services and housing programs are designed to include and engage individuals whenever possible, with eligibility limitations applied when necessary to ensure safety or comply with funding or legal requirements.

Project Entry

- CT BOS projects, in partnership with local Coordinated Access Networks (CANs), offer individuals and families experiencing homelessness access to interim and permanent housing options, accompanied by assessment and service planning that address barriers to stability such as mental health, substance use, and employment.
- Projects and CANs apply admission criteria, consistent with funder requirements, to ensure participant and community safety.
- Screening and admission practices follow a rules-in philosophy, emphasizing inclusion and support rather than exclusion. Screening and admission practices are designed to balance accessibility with safety. For example, applicants are evaluated holistically; challenges such as substance use, treatment history, poor credit and criminal or rental history are not automatically disqualifying but may be reviewed case-by-case in the context of a plan for stability.
- CT BOS CoC, along with its state partners, make efforts to ensure that sufficient sober housing options are available to meet the need for such models.

Community Integration and Recovery

- Housing and services are structured to promote integration into the community and support recovery, stability, and independence.
 - a. Housing is located in neighborhoods accessible to community resources such as employment opportunities, schools, libraries, healthcare providers, faith communities, and transportation.
 - b. Housing is designed to blend with surrounding residences and reflect community standards.
 - c. Services help participants build supportive relationships, engage in positive activities, and strengthen family and community ties.
 - d. Services are recovery-oriented, helping participants set and achieve personally meaningful goals related to health, employment, education, and wellness. Service participation is required and reluctance to engage is used as a critical indicator of service quality. Projects continuously evaluate service participation and adjust services to meet each individual participants' needs to achieve 100% service participation.



Lease, Occupancy Agreement and Service Contract Compliance and Housing Retention

- Participants are expected to comply with standard leases/occupancy agreements and service contracts. Programs provide services and supports to promote housing stability and prevent eviction.
 - a. Program expectations align with standard tenancy obligations and community standards.
 - b. Services identify and mitigate risks to housing stability, health, and well-being.
 - c. Case management and coordination with treatment and service providers help participants address issues before they jeopardize housing.
 - d. Involuntary termination from housing or services occurs only with due process and is consistent with legal eviction procedures when applicable.

Coordination of Housing and Services

- Projects are structured so that property management and supportive service functions are clearly defined and coordinated to promote stability and accountability.
 - a. Property management and support services are handled by distinct staff or entities with separate responsibilities.
 - b. Communication protocols support coordination while maintaining confidentiality.
 - c. Property management staff are responsible for enforcing tenancy and occupancy agreement requirements.
 - d. Property management and service staff collaborate to address issues impacting housing stability and ensure early intervention and problem-solving.

Participant Choice

- Participants are supported to take an active role in service planning and decision-making, with an emphasis on informed choice.
 - a. Programs provide meaningful opportunities for participant feedback and involvement in program design, activities, and policy development, integrating input on the type, frequency, location and focus of services offered.
 - b. Staff use person-centered approaches to motivate and support progress toward stability, recovery and independence.
 - c. Participants are supported in understanding and reducing risks associated with their choices.
 - d. Staff intervene when necessary to protect the safety of participants and others.
 - e. Participants are informed of their rights and responsibilities and are assisted in maintaining lease/occupancy agreement compliance.