

February 2022



**Three County Continuum of Care
Race Equity Assessment
Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations**

Overview



Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) partnered with C4 Innovations (C4) to conduct a racial equity system analysis of the Massachusetts Coordinated Entry System with four participating CoCs to evaluate their Coordinated Entry Systems (CES) with a focus on achieving more racially equitable outcomes.

As part of the racial equity system analysis, C4 conducted the following activities:

- Review of existing quantitative data reports
- Listening sessions, and an analysis of qualitative data
- Tailor and deliver a tool to survey CES assessors, CES leadership, and outreach workers

The report is organized into sections that reflect each of these assessment activities and highlight identified strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations in each area. Considerations for next steps and sustainability in the community's efforts to advance racial equity are also included.

There are limitations to the quantitative data analysis due to the timeframe of the data set that was provided. C4 acknowledges that based on the data provided which is outdated the CoC's should consider conducting a deeper analysis with more recent data to provide a comparison of trends overtime. Readers of this report should consider how the limitations of outdated data sets may influence the analysis and should not overrepresent these findings in interpretation. This document can be used as a guide for Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) and partnering Continuum of Care's to develop actionable next steps and shared accountability in your efforts to advance a more racially equitable approach to ending homelessness.

Quantitative Data (Reviewed: HUD's CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity 2.1 and Stella P data)

Strengths:

- CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity 2.1 is a tool that can be used by CoCs. It is a great first step in identifying and addressing racial disparities. It compares the racial and ethnic distributions in the CoC's general population (according to census data from 2013-2017), to the percentage of households living in poverty, and the racial/ethnic distribution of people experiencing homelessness (from 2019 Point in Time Count data).

- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5787/coc-analysis-tool-race-and-ethnicity/>

- The Stella Performance Module (Stella P) provides dynamic visuals of CoCs' Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) data to illustrate how households move through the homeless system. It looks at the system's past performance to identify areas for future improvement. Current data is for households identified as adults only from 10/1/18 to 9/30/19
 - <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Stella-P-Race-and-Ethnicity-Analysis-Guide.pdf>
 - <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/stella/stella-performance-overview-videos/>

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Data derived from HUD's CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity 2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black households are 5.7x more likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population. (17% PIT vs. 3% of gen pop) • Native American/Alaskan households are 2.8x more likely to show up in the PIT count as they are in the general population (1% PIT vs. 0% gen pop - used raw numbers for calculation) • Hispanic households are 4.4x more likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population. (22% PIT vs. 5% gen pop) • Other/Multi-Racial households are 2x more likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population (8% PIT vs. 4% gen pop) • White households are 1.2x less likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population (74% PIT vs 90% of gen pop) • Asian/Pacific Islander households are 3x less likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population. (1% PIT vs. 3% gen pop) • Non-Hispanic households are 1.2x less likely to show up in the PIT count as they are to show up in the general population. (78% PIT vs. 95% gen pop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than PIT data, look at disaggregated data within homeless response system (e.g., those active in HMIS, utilization of CE, representation on the By-name list, etc.) to determine how people are showing up in the system vs. how they present in the general population • Work with to better understand and meet the unique needs of communities experiencing inequities in the homeless response system (Black/African American, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic households), including less represented racial groups (e.g., What countries, nationalities, immigration factors shape the Hispanic/Latinx populations in each CoC? What tribal nations are being served in each CoC?) • Partner with more culturally-specific organizations that may be better positioned to engage and support Black/African American, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic households
Stella P Limitations	Identify and address data gaps/limitations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not include data for unsheltered population, supportive services only, coordinated entry, non-HMIS programs (e.g., independently funded shelters) • Does not look at program-level data • Does not look at intersectional data • Defines racial and ethnic groups differently than other parts of the system (e.g., White Hispanic population vs. Hispanic across all races) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use more up-to-date data from most recent PIT count and HMIS • Ensure you are collecting and analyzing disaggregated data about the unsheltered population as well • Conduct more detailed review of distribution of Black, Indigenous and households of color in homeless response system across all program types, coordinated entry milestones (assessment, enrollment/referral, placement) or at the provider level to determine how different demographic groups are faring at the program level • Examine data that is disaggregated by race and ethnicity at the intersection of household composition, gender identity, age, etc. to see where the greatest inequities lie across system performance metrics • Look at longitudinal data (at least 3 years) to see trends and changes over time, to determine if conditions are worsening or improving for different demographic groups, and to measure progress on various system performance measures
<p>Days in Homeless System Prior to Exiting to Permanent Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ave days homeless for all populations is 134 days (under 4 months) • Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (222 days) experience the longest time homeless before move in (this is a small population) • American Indian/Alaska Native (147 days), and Black/African American households (142 days) have slightly longer average days homeless than White Non-Hispanic households (138 days) • Asian households (62 days) and households who identify as having 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the slight difference in average length of homelessness between American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, and White Non-Hispanic households (138 days), it may be beneficial to run another data report to look at more current data, including people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. It may also be helpful to run this data for multiple years to see if there is strong evidence of inequities for populations over time. • Always helpful to do a program type or provider level analysis to dig deeper. Where are households getting “stuck” in the system?

<p>Multiple Races (51 days) have the shortest time homeless before move in (these are relatively small pops)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Indian/Alaska Native (147 days), and Black/African American households (142 days) have slightly longer average days homeless than White Non-Hispanic households (138 days) <p>**Only White Non-Hispanic and households that identify as Multiple Races have bar charts that indicate these HHs moved into RRH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the specific communities to understand why they have a longer length of time homeless and longer stays in RRH (e.g., barriers to income stabilization, lack of access to culturally responsive services, etc.?) It may be valuable to conduct additional listening sessions with specific demographic groups who are utilizing, or who have utilized, the homeless response system to see if they are experiencing identifiable barriers to access. Determine if there is a data reporting error or if all households of color (other than Multiple Races) had no access to RRH during this reporting period.
<p>Exited to Permanent Housing by Race and Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian and Black/African American households have the lowest rates of exits to PH Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (small pop) and White Non-Hispanic households have the highest rates of exits to permanent housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine if populations with lowest rates of exits to permanent housing are not getting prioritized for housing resources. How can you increase exits to PH destinations for these populations? Interrogate program practices/policies to determine if they may be creating barriers for specific households or perpetuating inequities Use HMIS to look at all exit destination types (e.g., temporary, institutional, permanent housing without subsidy, etc.) to determine the rates at which different racial/ethnic groups are exiting to non-permanent housing as well as different types of permanent housing
<p>Race and Housing Pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largest proportion of White households are represented in RRH. In other words, RRH pathway was the pathway in which White households were represented at the highest percentage. White Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander households do not seem to be represented at all in the RRH pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data to determine if current assessment and prioritization process is equitable A program type or provider level analysis can highlight differences in performance of various project types (e.g., RRH, PSH, etc.) or differences in outcomes for each racial demographic group using those projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider looking at retention rates for each demographic group across each exit

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White households are represented at the lowest percentage in the ES/SH &TH population group but a higher percentage of RRH and PSH populations. • White Hispanic and Black/African American households are represented at the lowest percentages in PSH and highest percentages in ES/SH &TH • Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian HHs seem to only be represented in the ES/SH &TH pop (hard to tell with such small pops and no ability to hover over bars from more information) 	<p>destination (i.e., are Black households exiting without a subsidy as likely to retain housing as White households exiting without a subsidy?)</p>
<p>Returns to Homelessness <u>All destination types, Adult Only households, exited in first 6 months of reporting period:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total rate of return for all populations is 6% • American Indian/Alaska Native households have the highest rates of return (14% or 1 out of 7 HHs) • Black households are also returning at higher rates (8% or 9 out of 107) than White Non-Hispanic households (7% or 24 out of 343) • No returns for White Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Asian or those who identify as Multiple Races <p><u>All destination types, Adult Only households, exited in the 12 months prior to reporting period:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total rate of returns for all pops is 5% • Households who identify as having Multiple Races (8% or 1 out of 13 households) have the highest returns. • Households who identify as White Non-Hispanic (6% or 34 out of 611 households) and Black/AA (5% or 8 out of 163 households) also have higher rates of return than other households • No returns for Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform deeper quantitative query or qualitative inquiry into why different demographic groups are returning to homelessness? What factors are present and how can they be mitigated? What interventions were set up to keep individuals retained in their housing? (Could be: Because loss of job/couldn't get a job, choice/location of the housing placement not being a good fit, domestic violence, was there a mismatch in connection to services? Services not culturally responsive?) • Perform deeper inquiry by resource type accessed by the individuals who returned to homelessness - (RRH/PSH). Is there a difference by race? How many of these households were bridged into RRH programs who may have been a better fit for PSH? • Consider looking at the data further to determine where these folks were returning from (i.e., specific program types) to determine if different demographic groups have less success with particular types of interventions.

<p>Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Hispanic households have the next lowest rates of returns (4% or 4 of 95 households) <p><u>All destination types, Adult Only households, exited in the 12-24 months prior to reporting period:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total rate of returns for all pops is 7% • Multiple Race HHs (14% or 1 of 7 households) have the highest returns • White Non-Hispanic households (8% or 30 of 399 HHs) have the next highest rate of returns • White Hispanic and Black/African American households both have return rates of 5% (White Hispanic: 4 of 73 households, Black/African American: 4 of 79 households) • No returns for Asian (0 of 2 households), American Indian/Alaska Native households (0 of 6 households), or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (0 out of 1 households) 	
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Qualitative Data (Based on two listening sessions, one with providers and one with people with lived experience, and four structured interviews with key stakeholders)

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the access points to assessment and shelter throughout Three County CoC was accessible to people experiencing a housing crisis. • “The price is right I have a beautiful apartment and it’s a steppingstone.” Person with lived experience (PWLE) • Beginning to incorporate PWLE in projects like the MHSA equity assessment • Using CARES Act funding to provide housing and resource accessibility. • Perception that some staff go above and beyond to not only address housing but also basic needs, and quality of life issues. • Coordination of care has improved access and outcomes and was strengthened during the pandemic. 	
Areas for Improvement	Recommendations
<p>Cross-sector systems often contribute to barriers related to housing stability and family wellbeing (e.g., child welfare system, criminal justice)</p>	<p>Strengthen partnerships between homeless service providers and cross-sector systems to</p>

system)	allow clients seamless access to comprehensive supportive services.
Lack of quality affordable housing increases length of time homeless and limits client choice	Increase landlord knowledge around housing programs and supportive services to increase access to quality housing stock and mitigate implicit bias. Create and/or strengthen landlord network and provide incentives to engage and retain landlords to increase housing availability.
Implicit bias and stigma around homelessness impacts how program participants are treated by housing and homelessness staff	Provide cultural humility and trauma-informed care trainings for housing and homeless service staff to minimize microaggressions people experiencing homelessness are exposed to while accessing housing resources.
Some housing units are not accessible by public transportation, and this can be isolating	Develop resources to support clients who are housed in areas that are removed from formal and informal supports, ensure they can build community and access opportunities to thrive when housed
Black and brown individuals experiencing homelessness are also disproportionately impacted by experiences with the criminal justice system	Partner with law enforcement to assist with decriminalizing homelessness.
Eligibility criteria creates barriers to being housed	Review eligibility criteria and explore ways to support people with obtaining documents and lowering barriers to entry



The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance has committed to advancing racial equity throughout the regional homeless response system. To sustain the current efforts and develop actionable next steps, consider the following as potential next steps:

- Strengthen the infrastructure and capacity to sustain the race equity work by developing a race equity committee or taskforce and develop a process that embodies true partnership and shared accountability.
- Continue to deepen the CoC shared understanding of racial equity concepts and principles and promote ongoing conversations about race and racism
- Conduct a deeper data analysis utilizing disaggregated data by race and ethnicity
- Strengthen trauma-informed, and client-centered services
- Develop a more transparent communication process to ensure clients are aware of services that are readily accessible to them and opportunities to engage in system planning.
- Finalize a policy to meaningfully engage partners with lived experience into the CoC decision-making process.
- Provide continued learning and training for Staff and Board members on becoming an anti-racist CoC (e.g., implicit bias, LGBTQ+, allyship, trauma informed care, and interrogation of white supremacy cultural characteristics).
- Engage in community-led process to develop a more equitable assessment and prioritization process.