What is CAS?
CAS is a statewide system that connects people who are homeless with agencies that can provide the resources they need. Anyone can connect to CAS over the phone (through 2-1-1, United Way’s 24/7 information and referral service) or at an agency. After completing a brief assessment with a trained specialist, CAS matches the person with available resources based on near real-time information. CAS is available to anyone who is at risk of losing their housing or who is currently homeless.

The primary goal of CAS is to ensure that people experiencing a housing crisis have efficient and effective access to a safe place to live.

How will CAS work?
CAS will quickly assess the needs of people in crisis to make a high quality referral to a shelter or financial assistance. The second step, or tier, involves a deeper intake examination to consider options for housing placement.

CAS will implement a common assessment and eligibility tool to guide these interactions. Using this common assessment, service providers, outreach workers, and 2-1-1 call center operators will be able to systematically and universally assess needs, determine potential services, and electronically refer clients to the most appropriate resource.

What are the benefits of CAS?
As CAS grows, benefits will include:
- Statewide common intake forms
- Documented agency eligibility criteria
- Faster housing referral process
- Accurate data regarding system inadequacies and service gaps
- Prioritized placements based on vulnerability
- Improved communication and collaboration between homeless service providers across the state.

How do you access CAS?
Call 2-1-1’s 24/7 information and referral line or visit a homeless provider agency in your area. Most agencies are partners in the system and we hope all community and faith-based organizations providing homeless services or prevention funds will partner with CAS in the future.

FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

How will CAS help my current situation?
CAS was developed to help people find the resources they need, fast. Instead of making appointments and visits to multiple agencies not knowing program criteria or availability of space, the initial conversation with the provider or 2-1-1 should match you to what you need the first time.

Can CAS guarantee I’ll get into a program?
CAS can help match to the best program for you, but CAS cannot guarantee program acceptance. Many times, demand is very high and space fills quickly. CAS makes every attempt to only refer programs where you have the best opportunity for admission, based on the information we get from the agency.
What happens if I’m referred to a program and it’s full? CAS makes referrals based on the information from the agency; however, program space can change quickly when demand is high. If you are referred to a program and you cannot be accepted for some reason, the agency should be able to help you find alternative options.

Am I required to give my personal information? No, you are never required to give personal information to any provider to receive help, but CAS will not be able to refer you to a program without knowing your needs. CAS is a secure system and agency users receive training. We treat everyone’s personal information as we would our own. Information is collected to match resources and make referrals. CAS never shares information on clients outside the system.

For Funders of Local Programs

How can local funders support CAS? First, require all grantees serving homeless people with housing or services to use CAS. Please note – domestic violence providers are restricted by federal guidelines from using the system electronically via HMIS, but they are able to participate in other ways. Communicate with your local homeless coalition to ensure your grantees are complying with the CAS use requirements.

Second, participate in local CAS planning efforts and your local homeless coalition to better understand local housing and services needs and the use of CAS.

Third, be an advocate for CAS. At times, discussions related to homeless and housing issues arise in the community and people are not fully informed of current work. Ensure that you promote the knowledge and use of CAS in the community.

Finally, fund your local homeless coalition to ensure need infrastructure is available to make CAS successful. While very limited federal resources are used for CAS staffing, these funds only cover a portion of what’s needed because the federal government expects local communities to match and support with private and local funds.

How can CAS benefit our work? CAS has powerful data tracking and research capabilities. South Carolina has already begun a research plan analyzing local and statewide trends related to homeless subpopulations and data over time. However, CAS is also the foundation for tracking community level performance measures for reducing homelessness, helping people maintain stable housing, preventing duplication of services, and identifying gaps.

For Service & Housing Providers

How will CAS help our work? The main goal of CAS is to increase the quality of client referrals to programs so people in crisis get to the right program faster and avoid multiple interactions with agencies that cannot meet their needs. CAS will use an eligibility screening to better understand needs prior to making referrals. 2-1-1 Call Specialists will be trained to utilize CAS, but training will also be offered to agencies—so no matter how clients enter the system of care they will find help quickly.

Will CAS add work to our staff? CAS will get people to the right place first. Most agencies already use HMIS. CAS adds a new Eligibility Module to be used by program staff that will match client needs with eligibility criteria. The additional process of matching client needs to program criteria is countered by the anticipated reduction in referrals for clients that do not fit in your program.

How do I join CAS? Contact your local homeless coalition to join CAS. For more information, visit schomeless.org.

Is there a fee to use CAS? For most agencies there is no cost to use CAS, and training and technical assistance is provided for free. For a small number of agencies with special circumstances (such as an extremely high number of CAS users or are using other data systems that require special importing of data) there may be a fee to cover costs incurred due to integrating CAS but this is the exception. Most agencies use CAS for free.

Is CAS secure? CAS is an encrypted, secure database housed on a dedicated server with our software vendor, Bowman Systems. Each CAS agency is required to sign a User Agreement documenting privacy and security requirements. Agency end-users are required to attend CAS training and sign an annual use agreement.

Will CAS offer new resources? The purpose of CAS is to help people reach the right resources faster and more effectively identify gaps. With limited federal and local dollars CAS may help prioritize use of funds and demonstrate need for new resources. Ultimately, CAS works to improve our system through efficiency.