

CoC Toolkit Glossary

Term	Definition
Carceral Trauma	The distressing and disturbing effects resulting from exposure to the carceral system. Mental and emotional trauma caused by the isolation and deprivation of time in custody, the dehumanization and criminalization of the criminal justice process, exposure to violence, surveillance, confinement, and loss of control.
Collateral Consequences	Legal consequences resulting from a criminal conviction regardless of whether or not the convicted individual serves any time in custody.
Continuum of Care (CoC)	A regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.
Community Supervision	A set of programs whereby an individual convicted of a crime serves their sentence under supervision in their local community rather than in a correctional facility. The most common forms of community supervision are parole and probation.
Coordinated Entry	HUD requires each Continuum of Care to establish and operate a “centralized or coordinated assessment system” (referred to as “coordinated entry” or “coordinated entry process” with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources, including mainstream resources. The CoC’s coordinated entry process must meet the requirements in this Notice and 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8).
Criminal Background Check	Also referred to as “criminal background screening” or “background check,” this check includes public record information on arrests and convictions.
Criminal Justice System	Refers to the system in place for policing, prosecution, courts, and corrections in the United States. Many institutions intentionally use the term criminal legal system to replace the term criminal justice system. HUD prefers to use criminal justice system until criminal legal system is adopted across all sectors. For more on this language, please see this resource from the Vera Institute.
Criminal Record	Refers to a conviction for any local, state, or federal crime. A criminal record differs from an arrest record, which captures all arrests, even those that did not result in a conviction. Criminal records may be inaccurate, incomplete, or out of date.
Diversion	Refers to “exit points” that move people away from the criminal justice system and offer alternatives to arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. Diversion programs may take place at various points, including pre-arrest, pre-charge, and pretrial. Criminal Justice system diversion differs from homelessness diversion, which focuses on identifying immediate alternate housing arrangements for people seeking shelter and, if necessary, connects them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.

Term	Definition
Equality	The state of being equal wherein all individuals or groups of people are given identical support, resources and/or opportunities regardless of their position.
Equity	A recognition that each individual has different circumstances and that support, resources and/or opportunities should be allocated to each individual in a way that ensures that they all meet the same outcome.
Extremely Low Income (ELI)	The category “extremely low-income households” is a subset of “very low-income households,” and is defined as 30% (or less) of the area median income.
Halfway House	A group residence for individuals involved with the criminal justice system, typically providing temporary housing coupled with supervision and services to assist in transitioning back into the community. Residents can include individuals being diverted from incarceration, serving all or part of a sentence, or transitioning to the community from prison or jail.
Homeless System of Care (or System of Care)	Another way of describing the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the broader network of partners who come together to support people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
Housing First	A well-accepted, national, evidenced-based best practice that eliminates barriers to housing, ensuring individuals and families can exit homelessness as quickly as possible. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.
Implicit Bias	A negative attitude or stereotype of which the individual is not even aware. Implicit bias is often shaped by an individual’s experiences and based on learned associations.
Interim Housing	Shorter-term crisis options for temporary accommodation to help unhoused people stabilize on the way to permanent housing. Interim housing can include emergency shelters, navigation centers, and transitional housing, among other housing types.
Jail	City- or county-run facilities that detain (1) people who are awaiting trial; (2) people who have been convicted and are typically serving misdemeanor sentences under a year; and (3) in most states, people detained under contract with federal or state prison agencies. As of April 2023, 514,000 people are confined in U.S. jails at any given time. ¹
Landlord Incentive Programs	Programs that provide education and incentives to landlords to make it more likely they will rent to people experiencing homelessness and people with criminal records. They can provide funding to support risk mitigation (compensating landlords if tenants harm their premises) and financial incentives that make landlords more likely to rent to people transitioning out of homelessness and the criminal justice system. Most programs include an education component and address racial inequities in voucher acceptance and access to housing.

¹ https://static.prisonpolicy.org/factsheets/55facts_2023.pdf

Term	Definition
Parole	A form of early release for people serving time in prison wherein the individual's custodial sentence is shortened in exchange for their agreement to meet certain terms and conditions. Violation of this agreement may result in rearrest or revocation.
Person impacted by the criminal justice system	This term refers to an individual who has experienced direct or indirect impacts of the criminal justice system, including a person who has been stopped, arrested, detained, tried, acquitted, convicted, incarcerated, or lived under community supervision. It can also include a person impacted in other ways, including family members, friends, employers, and other community members who are affected by the direct criminal justice system involvement of another person.
Person involved with the criminal justice system	This term refers to a person who has been accused of criminal activity and is in some stage of the criminal justice process, including law enforcement, the court system, jails and prisons, and community supervision. This person may or may not have been convicted of a crime.
Person with a criminal record	Term used to refer to a person who has been convicted of a crime. Person-first language is intentionally used over terms such as "offender" or "convict," which can be dehumanizing and stigmatizing.
Person with lived experience of homelessness	Term used to refer to people who have lived through the experience of homelessness and have first-hand knowledge of what it feels like to live without safe and stable housing and/or to move through the homeless system of care.
Person with lived experience of incarceration	Term used to refer to people who have lived through the experience of incarceration and have first-hand knowledge of what it feels like to live in a carceral setting.
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Provides long-term housing with intensive supportive services to persons with disabilities. These programs typically target people with extensive experiences of homelessness and multiple vulnerabilities and needs who would not be able to retain housing without significant support.
Prison	State- or federal-run facility where people are held pre-trial by the U.S. Marshals or incarcerated after conviction of a state or federal crime. 1,047,000 people are currently incarcerated in state prisons and 209,000 are incarcerated in federal prisons and jails.
Probation	A period in which a convicted person agrees to supervision rather than incarceration. Like parole, probation includes various terms and conditions. Failure to meet these requirements may result in incarceration.
Racial Equity	In the context of homelessness, this speaks to the need for communities to address the overrepresentation of people of color among those experiencing homelessness due to historic and continued systemic discrimination and racism.

Term	Definition
RAP Sheet	A Record of Arrests and Prosecutions is the government’s official version of a person’s criminal history, as recorded by local, state, and federal agencies. A RAP sheet includes arrests, charges, convictions, acquittals, dismissals, pleas, sentences, and open warrants. For additional information on how to read a RAP sheet, visit: https://roadmap.rootandrebound.org/understanding-cleaning-up-your-criminal-record/key-concepts-for-understanding-your-criminal-recor/types-of-criminal-records/rap-sheets/ ,
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)	Provides rental housing subsidies and tailored supportive services for up to 24-months, with the goal of helping people to transition during that time period to more permanent housing.
Recovery Housing	A transitional housing option designed to support individuals who are seeking a substance-free and supportive living environment to support their substance use disorder recovery process, and frequently used as a transitional space for people in reentry. Most recovery housing includes some form of peer support, substance use disorder treatment, clinical services, and requirements around community involvement, employment, and attendance at sobriety meetings.
Reentry	Refers to the process of a person returning to the community after incarceration in a jail or prison. Common considerations in ensuring successful reentry include connections to community and access to housing, healthcare, employment and income.
Subsidy (or Housing Subsidy)	Subsidized housing is government sponsored economic assistance aimed at alleviating housing costs and expenses for individuals and families with low to moderate incomes.
Supportive Services	Includes assistance applying for benefits, mental health and substance use services, outpatient health services, information and referral services, child care, education, life skills training, employment assistance and job training, housing search and counseling services, legal services, outreach services, transportation, food assistance, risk assessment and safety planning (particularly for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence), and case management services such as counseling, finding and coordinating services, and monitoring and evaluating progress in a program.
Transitional Housing	Provides temporary housing accommodations and supportive services. While many households benefit most from direct connections to permanent housing programs such as RRH or PSH (which are often more cost-effective over the long term), transitional housing can also be an effective support in the intermediary. Certain subpopulations, such as people fleeing domestic violence and transition age youth, can meaningfully benefit from a transitional housing environment.
Voucher (or Housing Voucher)	A voucher or housing voucher that can be spent on rented housing, such as Section 8 public housing in the United States, to help low-income individuals and families secure housing.