Navigating the Homeless Continuum of Care - What It Is and How It Works

C4 Innovations

Community & Behavioral Health | Recovery | Social Change

C4 Innovations

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Agenda

- **What is homelessness?**
- **Systems designed to support people experiencing homelessness**
- **Continuum of Care (CoC)**
- **Coordinated Entry System (CES)**
- **Rural versus urban homelessness**
- **Establishing connections in communities**
- **Questions**

By the end of the session:

1. You should understand the key homeless response systems.

2. Be aware of the latest issues impacting homelessness agencies.

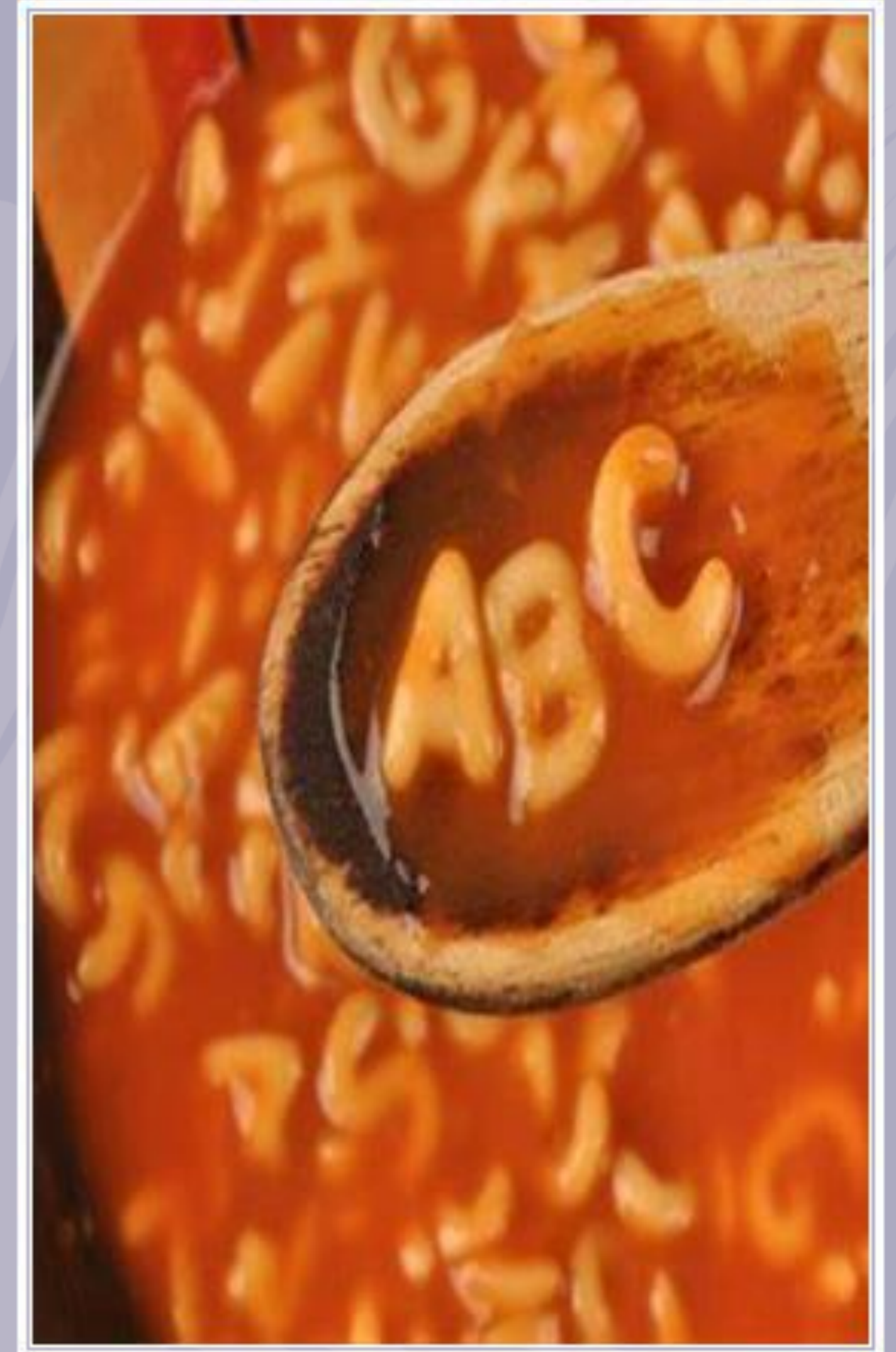3. Have the knowledge and understanding to partners with key homeless agencies in your community

What is homelessness?

HUD's Acronyms

- Department of Housing and Urban Development- HUD
- Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act- HEARTH Act
- Continuum of Care- CoC
- Homeless Management Information System- HMIS
- Emergency Solutions Grant- ESG
- Point-In-Time Count- PIT
- Housing Inventory Count- HIC
- Notice of Funding Opportunity- NOFO
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program- YDHP
- Transitional Housing - TH
- Rapid Re-housing - RRH
- Permanent Supportive Housing - PSH

When you meet someone who says they are homeless, what are the circumstances?

What does "being homeless" mean? HUD's definition.....

- Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

- An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence

- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

What doesn't it include?

- People who are staying with others in a "doubled up" situation

- People living in motels that they pay for

- Leaving an institution after being there for more than 90 days

- Anyone who has sufficient resources must use those resources before receiving assistance

Homeless Response Systems

- State Interagency Council on Homelessness - State interagency councils are made up of cross-system members, provide input into the homelessness strategy for their regions or states, and offer advice and support to the partners.

- Homeless Coalitions - A group of organizations within a community that plan and deliver services as well as advocate for agencies and people experiencing homelessness.

- Continuum of Care (CoC) - A groups that leads a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.

Membership

- A CoC is established by representatives of relevant organizations within a geographic area to carry out the responsibilities set forth in the CoC program interim rule.

- Membership should demonstrate a community wide commitment to ending and preventing homelessness.
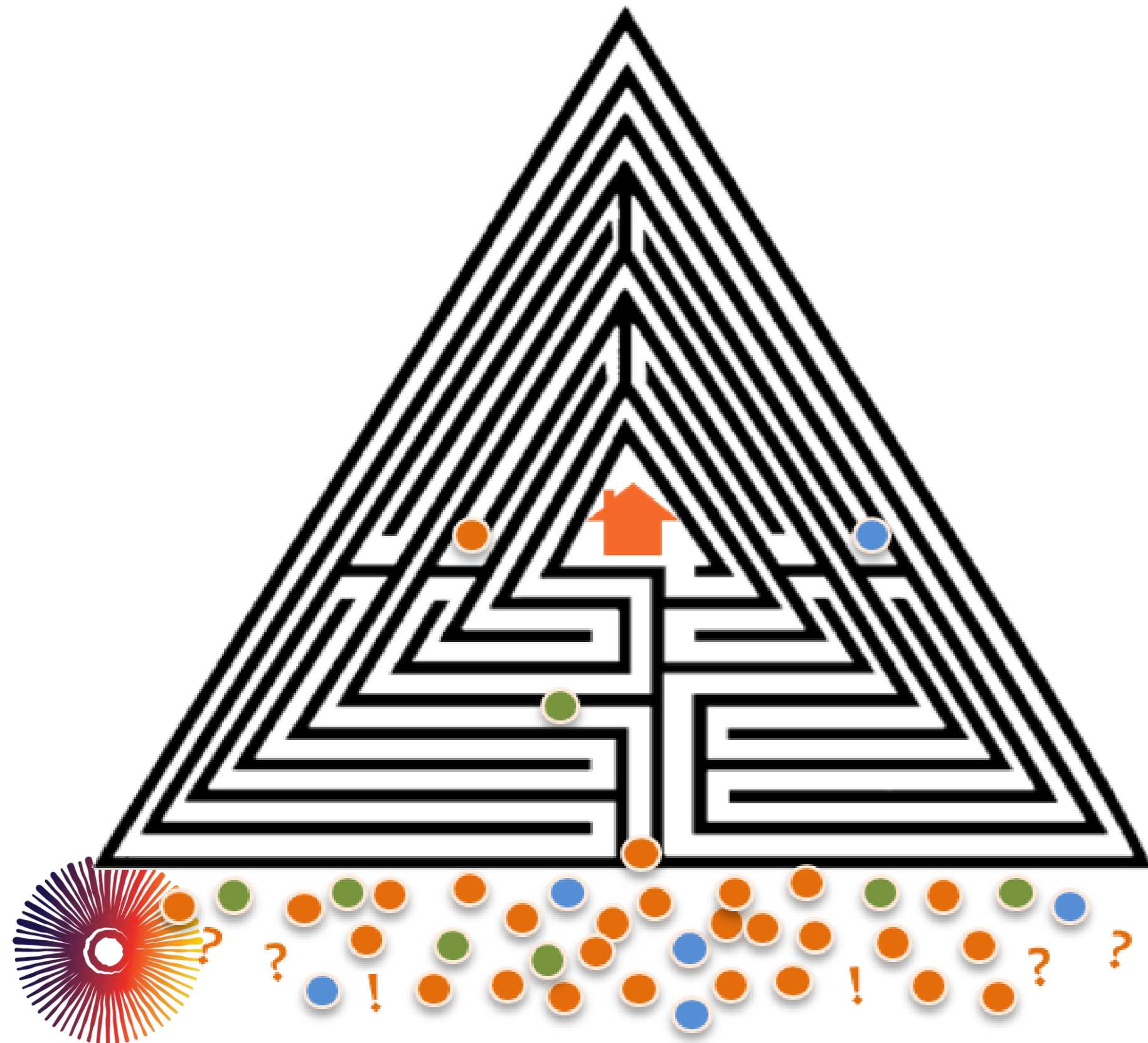
Members should include:

- Nonprofit homeless assistance providers
- Victim service providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Governments
- Businesses
- Advocates
- Public housing agencies
- School districts
- Social service providers
- Mental health agencies
- Hospitals
- Universities
- Affordable housing developers
- Law enforcements
- Organizations that serve veterans
- Individuals experiencing and previously
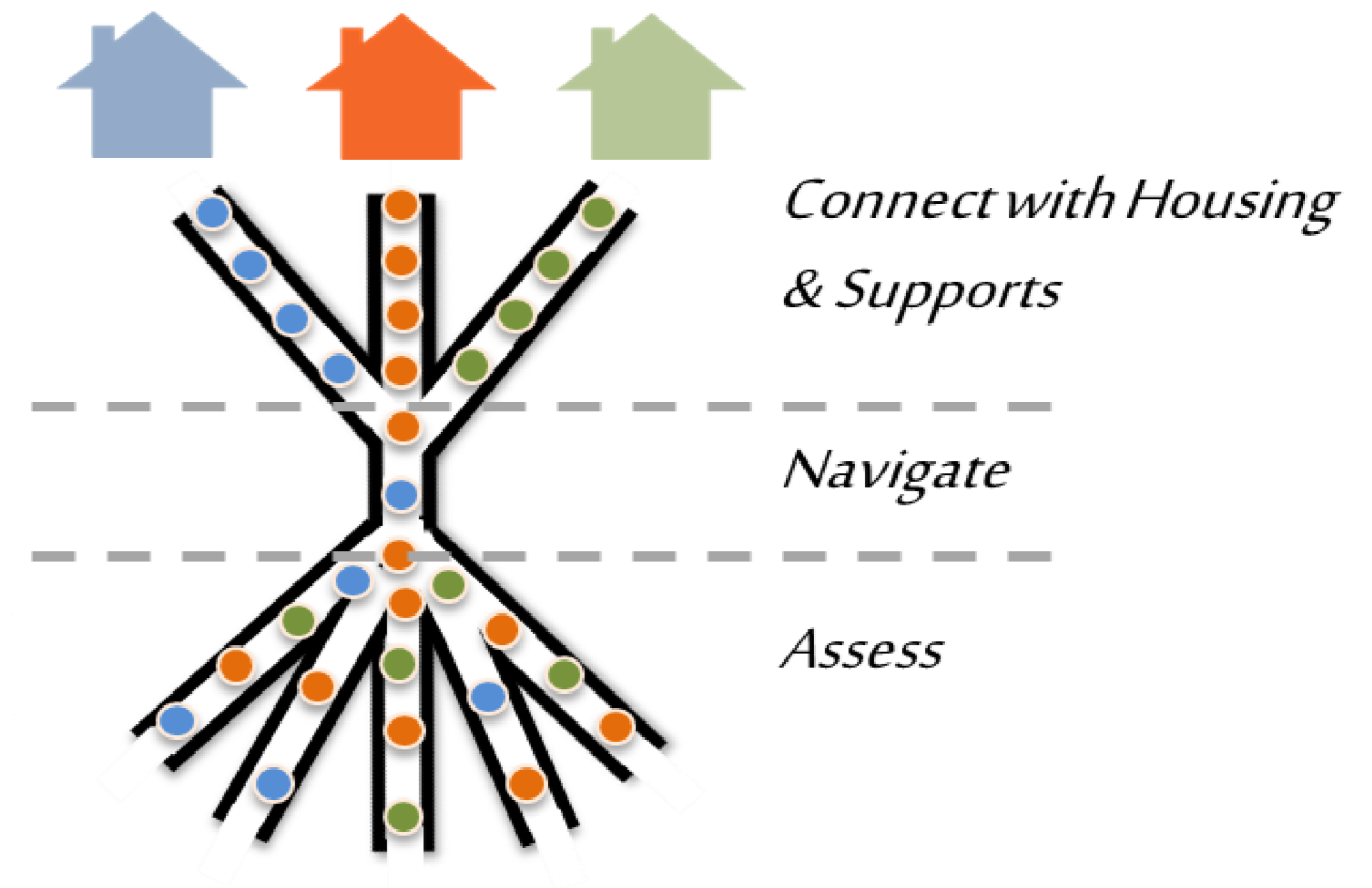
CoC Responsibilities - In General

- Coordinate a local "system" to assist people experiencing homelessness

- Provide services to help them access housing and obtain long-term stability

- Promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness

- Enhance coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness

- Improve data collection and performance measurement

Coordinated Entry

Without CES

With CES

Connect with Housing & Supports

Navigate

Assess

How does Coordinated Entry work?

Coordinated Entry is a framework that can transform a CoC from a network of siloed homeless assistance projects, into a fully integrated crisis response system that places the household experiencing homelessness at its center.

Coordinated Entry matches a household to the service it needs to resolve homelessness and allows them to draw upon the resources of the entire community, rather than being limited to a single service.

How can recovery housing help end homelessness?

Take a few minutes and talk to the 1-2 people next to you about what homelessness looks like in your community

- Do you recognize any of the systems we just talked about working in your community?

- What are the resources for people experiencing homelessness in your community?

- How can recovery housing work within the homeless response system?

Things are changing…….

Housing First

- Last year, the CoC competition did not require all the projects in a community to be housing first compliant.

- The new administration has different feelings on housing first.

- Some communities are understanding that having a choice between differing ways to live independently in the community is a good thing.

Things are changing

Shared Housing

- The cost of housing and the number of available housing units that are affordable impacts all communities nationwide.

- Recovery housing leads the way in shared housing with NARR standards designed to promote ways of living harmoniously in housing.

- Recovery stakeholders understand peer support in a way that homeless response systems are just beginning to understand.
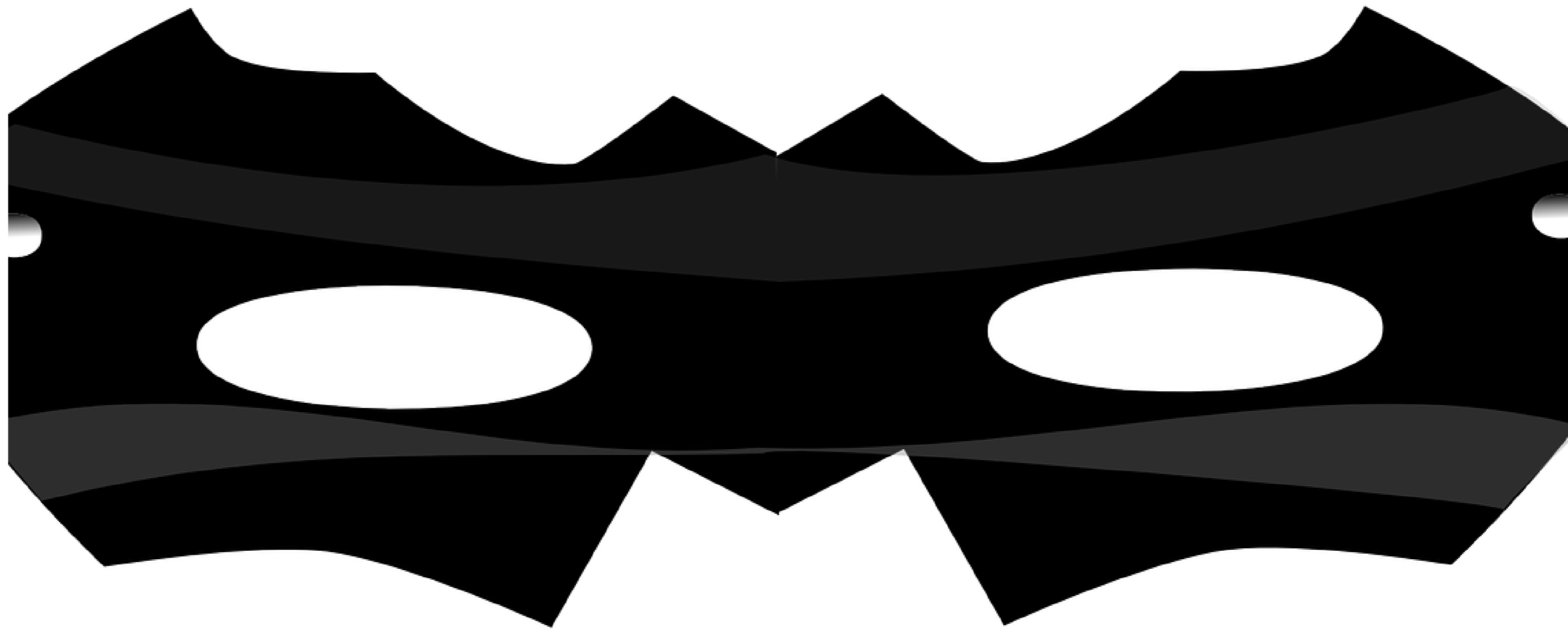
Establishing relationships with homeless agencies in rural areas

- Rural communities often have a few key individuals with great influence on what does or does not happen within the community. People in rural communities must often wear many hats and serve in more than one role or position.

- Rural homelessness programs may have a different focus and have different partners:
    - places of worship,
    - faith-based organizations
    - libraries
    - gas stations, and stores

- Friends, family members, and neighbors in the local area may also be willing to help.

Establishing relationships with homeless agencies in urban areas

- Urban homeless systems of care are often better resourced and have a larger capacity to support individuals. The process relies more on established systems rather than calling the right person.

- Although urban systems have more capacity, there is still a finite amount of funding, agencies frequently compete for funding, causing friction in relationships between organizations.

- Often larger projects where "one size fits all" – larger shelters, or permanent supportive housing projects that can frequently be run in a very institutional way.

What's one way that you have supported someone who is homeless to find housing?

TL/DR:

- Homeless response agencies have traditionally done a poor job of understanding recovery housing.

- For the moment, recovery practices have an opportunity to shape the homeless response system in a way they haven't in the last decade.

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