Introduction to Coordinated Access under Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

Coordinated Access is a community-wide system that organizes how people connect to **homelessness services, housing, subsidies and supports** in a **consistent, transparent, efficient** and **effective way**. The system relies on shared governance, processes, data and decision-making to improve outcomes for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

The Government of Canada is supporting communities to **coordinate their local response to homelessness**, using **trusted and reliable data** to drive these efforts.

Under Reaching Home, communities are required to implement, maintain and improve a system called Coordinated Access where there are no "wrong doors" to accessing services. People are not sent from one service provider to another, repeating their story to get the help they need. Instead, efforts are coordinated between workers using the same data system, so they can start and update shared Housing Plans. People are supported every step of the way and organizations work together to make sure no one is left behind.

With a Coordinated Access system in place, people seeking help follow four steps through the Coordinated Access workflow.

1. People connect with a worker at an **access point** (e.g., phoneline, shelter, outreach).
2. Through **initial triage**, workers help people meet urgent safety and basic needs, and start a Housing Plan. People are supported to stay housed (**prevention**) or diverted to safe, appropriate alternatives (**diversion**).
3. If needed, workers conduct a **more in-depth assessment** of strengths, needs, preferences and situations to guide Housing Plans, referrals and prioritization.
4. When housing units, subsidies or supports become available, they are **matched** to people based on **resource eligibility** and **client profiles** (strengths, needs, preferences, situations). Referrals are made in an order that aligns with **community priorities**.
   - When there is a vacancy, a Unique Identifier List is generated from the community's data system (e.g., HIFIS). The Unique Identifier List includes **people experiencing homelessness** that **recently interacted** with the system and **consented** to being known and served. It can also include housing history, as well as health, housing and service needs, and key demographic information.
   - To determine a match, the data is filtered and sorted. The matching process can include case conferences where workers discuss and agree on next steps.

A Coordinated Access system is supported by four pillars.

1. Integrated **governance and partnerships** that strengthen shared vision, leadership and decision-making across the community.
2. A complete, shared picture of the resources that form part of the local homelessness response:
   - A **Systems Map** of service providers that play a role in the Coordinated Access system.
   - A **Resource Inventory** that includes the housing, subsidies and supports that fill vacancies through the Coordinated Access system.
3. Using the community's data system (e.g., HIFIS) to collect, access, share and use **person-specific data**. This data is used for filling vacancies and the Outcomes-Based Approach, where baselines and homelessness reduction targets are set at the community-level, and progress against targets is tracked over time.
4. Helping people to **navigate** the system by removing service barriers, so that people can exit homelessness as quickly as possible.

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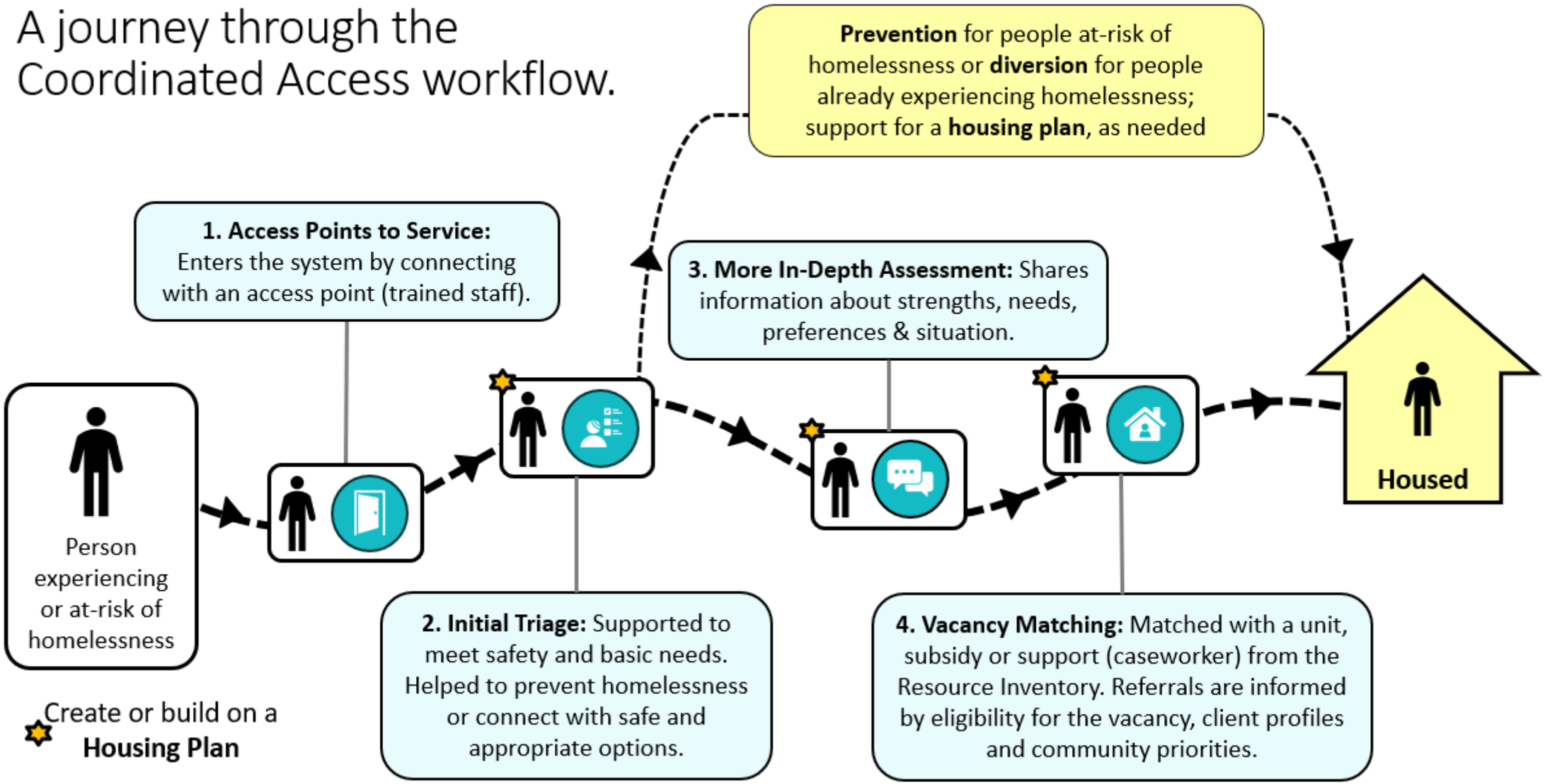
A journey through the Coordinated Access workflow.