

**Transition Age Youth -  
Vulnerability Index -  
Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool  
(TAY-VI-SPDAT)**

**“Next Step Tool for Homeless Youth”**

**AMERICAN VERSION 1.0**

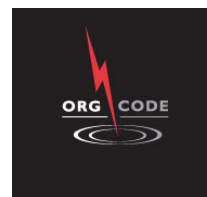
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**COMMUNITY  
SOLUTIONS**



Eric Rice, PhD

**USC**  
SCHOOL OF  
SOCIAL WORK



## Welcome to the SPDAT Line of Products

The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) has been around in various incarnations for over a decade, before being released to the public in 2010. Since its initial release, the use of the SPDAT has been expanding exponentially and is now used in over one thousand communities across the United States, Canada, and Australia.

More communities using the tool means there is an unprecedented demand for versions of the SPDAT, customized for specific client groups or types of users. With the release of SPDAT V4, there have been more current versions of SPDAT products than ever before.

### VI-SPDAT Series

The Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) was developed as a pre-screening tool for communities that are very busy and do not have the resources to conduct a full SPDAT assessment for every client. It was made in collaboration with Community Solutions, creators of the Vulnerability Index, as a brief survey that can be conducted to quickly determine whether a client has high, moderate, or low acuity. The use of this survey can help prioritize which clients should be given a full SPDAT assessment first. Because it is a self-reported survey, no special training is required to use the VI-SPDAT.

#### **Current versions available:**

- VI-SPDAT V 2.0
- Family VI-SPDAT V 2.0
- Next Step Tool for Homeless Youth V 1.0

All versions are available online at

[www.orgcode.com/products/vi-spdat/](http://www.orgcode.com/products/vi-spdat/)

### SPDAT Series

The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) was developed as an assessment tool for front-line workers at agencies that work with homeless clients to prioritize which of those clients should receive assistance first. The SPDAT tools are also designed to help guide case management and improve housing stability outcomes. They provide an in-depth assessment that relies on the assessor's ability to interpret responses and corroborate those with evidence. As a result, this tool may only be used by those who have received proper, up-to-date training provided by OrgCode Consulting, Inc. or an OrgCode certified trainer.

#### **Current versions available:**

- SPDAT V 4.0 for Individuals
- F-SPDAT V 2.0 for Families
- Y-SPDAT V 1.0 for Youth

Information about all versions is available online at

[www.orgcode.com/products/spdat/](http://www.orgcode.com/products/spdat/)

## SPDAT Training Series

To use the SPDAT assessment product, training by OrgCode or an OrgCode certified trainer is required. We provide training on a wide variety of topics over a variety of mediums.

The full-day in-person SPDAT Level 1 training provides you the opportunity to bring together as many people as you want to be trained for one low fee. The webinar training allows for a maximum of 15 different computers to be logged into the training at one time. We also offer online courses for individuals that you can do at your own speed.

The training gives you the manual, case studies, application to current practice, a review of each component of the tool, conversation guidance with prospective clients – and more!

### **Current SPDAT training available:**

- Level 0 SPDAT Training: VI-SPDAT for Frontline Workers
- Level 1 SPDAT Training: SPDAT for Frontline Workers
- Level 2 SPDAT Training: SPDAT for Supervisors
- Level 3 SPDAT Training: SPDAT for Trainers

### **Other related training available:**

- Excellence in Housing-Based Case Management
- Coordinated Access & Common Assessment
- Motivational Interviewing
- Objective-Based Interactions

More information about SPDAT training, including pricing, is available online at

<http://www.orgcode.com/product-category/training/spdat/>

## The TAY-VI-SPDAT – The Next Step Tool for Homeless Youth

OrgCode Consulting, Inc. and Community Solutions joined forces with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to combine the best parts of products and expertise to create one streamlined triage tool designed specifically for youth aged 24 or younger.

## Administration

<b>Interviewer's Name</b> _____	<b>Agency</b> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Team <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
<b>Survey Date</b> DD/MM/YYYY ___/___/____	<b>Survey Time</b> ___ : __ AM/PM	<b>Survey Location</b> _____

## Opening Script

Every assessor in your community regardless of organization completing the VI-SPDAT should use the same introductory script. In that script you should highlight the following information:

- the name of the assessor and their affiliation (organization that employs them, volunteer as part of a Point in Time Count, etc.)
- the purpose of the VI-SPDAT being completed
- that it usually takes less than 7 minutes to complete
- that only “Yes,” “No,” or one-word answers are being sought
- that any question can be skipped or refused
- where the information is going to be stored
- that if the participant does not understand a question that clarification can be provided
- the importance of relaying accurate information to the assessor and not feeling that there is a correct or preferred answer that they need to provide, nor information they need to conceal

## Basic Information

<b>First Name</b> _____	<b>Nickname</b> _____	<b>Last Name</b> _____
<b>In what language do you feel best able to express yourself?</b> _____		
<b>Date of Birth</b> DD/MM/YYYY ___/___/____	<b>Age</b> _____	<b>Social Security Number</b> _____
		<b>Consent to participate</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

IF THE PERSON IS 17 YEARS OF AGE OR LESS, THEN SCORE 1.

**SCORE:**

## A. History of Housing and Homelessness

1. Where do you sleep most frequently? (check one)

- Shelters                       **Couch surfing**                       **Other (specify):**  
 Transitional Housing     **Outdoors**  
 Safe Haven                       **Refused**                      \_\_\_\_\_

**IF THE PERSON ANSWERS ANYTHING OTHER THAN "SHELTER", "TRANSITIONAL HOUSING", OR "SAFE HAVEN", THEN SCORE 1.** **SCORE:**

2. How long has it been since you lived in permanent stable housing? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused

3. In the last three years, how many times have you been homeless? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused

**IF THE PERSON HAS EXPERIENCED 1 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF HOMELESSNESS, AND/OR 4+ EPISODES OF HOMELESSNESS, THEN SCORE 1.** **SCORE:**

## B. Risks

4. In the past six months, how many times have you...

- a) Received health care at an emergency department/room? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused  
 b) Taken an ambulance to the hospital? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused  
 c) Been hospitalized as an inpatient? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused  
 d) Used a crisis service, including sexual assault crisis, mental health crisis, family/intimate violence, distress centers and suicide prevention hotlines? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused  
 e) Talked to police because you witnessed a crime, were the victim of a crime, or the alleged perpetrator of a crime or because the police told you that you must move along? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused  
 f) Stayed one or more nights in a holding cell, jail, prison or juvenile detention, whether it was a short-term stay like the drunk tank, a longer stay for a more serious offence, or anything in between? \_\_\_\_\_  Refused

**IF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS EQUALS 4 OR MORE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE USE.** **SCORE:**

5. Have you been attacked or beaten up since you've become homeless?  **Y**  N  Refused

6. Have you threatened to or tried to harm yourself or anyone else in the last year?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR RISK OF HARM.** **SCORE:**

7. Do you have any legal stuff going on right now that may result in you being locked up, having to pay fines, or that make it more difficult to rent a place to live?  **Y**  N  Refused
8. Were you ever incarcerated when younger than age 18?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR LEGAL ISSUES.** **SCORE:**

9. Does anybody force or trick you to do things that you do not want to do?  **Y**  N  Refused
10. Do you ever do things that may be considered to be risky like exchange sex for money, food, drugs, or a place to stay, run drugs for someone, have unprotected sex with someone you don't know, share a needle, or anything like that?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR RISK OF EXPLOITATION.** **SCORE:**

### C. Socialization & Daily Functioning

11. Is there any person, past landlord, business, bookie, dealer, or government group like the IRS that thinks you owe them money?  **Y**  N  Refused
12. Do you get any money from the government, an inheritance, an allowance, working under the table, a regular job, or anything like that?  Y  **N**  Refused

**IF "YES" TO QUESTION 11 OR "NO" TO QUESTION 12, THEN SCORE 1 FOR MONEY MANAGEMENT.** **SCORE:**

13. Do you have planned activities, other than just surviving, that make you feel happy and fulfilled?  Y  **N**  Refused

**IF "NO," THEN SCORE 1 FOR MEANINGFUL DAILY ACTIVITY.** **SCORE:**

14. Are you currently able to take care of basic needs like bathing, changing clothes, using a restroom, getting food and clean water and other things like that?  Y  **N**  Refused

**IF "NO," THEN SCORE 1 FOR SELF-CARE.** **SCORE:**

15. Is your current lack of stable housing...

- a) Because you ran away from your family home, a group home or a foster home?  **Y**  N  Refused
- b) Because of a difference in religious or cultural beliefs from your parents, guardians or caregivers?  **Y**  N  Refused
- c) Because your family or friends caused you to become homeless?  **Y**  N  Refused
- d) Because of conflicts around gender identity or sexual orientation?  **Y**  N  Refused

IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**.

**SCORE:**

- e) Because of violence at home between family members?  **Y**  N  Refused
- f) Because of an unhealthy or abusive relationship, either at home or elsewhere?  **Y**  N  Refused

IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR **ABUSE/TRAUMA**.

**SCORE:**

## D. Wellness

- 16. Have you ever had to leave an apartment, shelter program, or other place you were staying because of your physical health?  **Y**  N  Refused
- 17. Do you have any chronic health issues with your liver, kidneys, stomach, lungs or heart?  **Y**  N  Refused
- 18. If there was space available in a program that specifically assists people that live with HIV or AIDS, would that be of interest to you?  **Y**  N  Refused
- 19. Do you have any physical disabilities that would limit the type of housing you could access, or would make it hard to live independently because you'd need help?  **Y**  N  Refused
- 20. When you are sick or not feeling well, do you avoid getting medical help?  **Y**  N  Refused
- 21. Are you currently pregnant, have you ever been pregnant, or have you ever gotten someone pregnant?  **Y**  N  Refused

IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR **PHYSICAL HEALTH**.

**SCORE:**

**NEXT STEP TOOL FOR HOMELESS YOUTH**

SINGLE YOUTH

AMERICAN VERSION 1.0

22. Has your drinking or drug use led you to being kicked out of an apartment or program where you were staying in the past?  **Y**  N  Refused
23. Will drinking or drug use make it difficult for you to stay housed or afford your housing?  **Y**  N  Refused
24. If you've ever used marijuana, did you ever try it at age 12 or younger?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR SUBSTANCE USE.**

**SCORE:**

25. Have you ever had trouble maintaining your housing, or been kicked out of an apartment, shelter program or other place you were staying, because of:

- a) A mental health issue or concern?  **Y**  N  Refused
- b) A past head injury?  **Y**  N  Refused
- c) A learning disability, developmental disability, or other impairment?  **Y**  N  Refused

26. Do you have any mental health or brain issues that would make it hard for you to live independently because you'd need help?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THEN SCORE 1 FOR MENTAL HEALTH.**

**SCORE:**

**IF THE RESPONENT SCORED 1 FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND 1 FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND 1 FOR MENTAL HEALTH, SCORE 1 FOR TRI-MORBIDITY.**

**SCORE:**

27. Are there any medications that a doctor said you should be taking that, for whatever reason, you are not taking?  **Y**  N  Refused
28. Are there any medications like painkillers that you don't take the way the doctor prescribed or where you sell the medication?  **Y**  N  Refused

**IF "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, SCORE 1 FOR MEDICATIONS.**

**SCORE:**

## Scoring Summary

DOMAIN	SUBTOTAL	RESULTS
PRE-SURVEY	/1	<b>Score: Recommendation:</b> 0-3: no moderate or high intensity services be provided at this time 4-7: assessment for time-limited supports with moderate intensity 8+: assessment for long-term housing with high service intensity
A. HISTORY OF HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS	/2	
B. RISKS	/4	
C. SOCIALIZATION & DAILY FUNCTIONS	/4	
D. WELLNESS	/6	
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>/17</b>	



## Follow-Up Questions

<b>On a regular day, where is it easiest to find you and what time of day is easiest to do so?</b>	place: _____ time: __ : __ or Morning/Afternoon/Evening/Night
<b>Is there a phone number and/or email where someone can get in touch with you or leave you a message?</b>	phone: (____) _____ - _____ email: _____
<b>Ok, now I'd like to take your picture so that it is easier to find you and confirm your identity in the future. May I do so?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Refused

Communities are encouraged to think of additional questions that may be relevant to the programs being operated or your specific local context. This may include questions related to:

- military service and nature of discharge
- ageing out of care
- mobility issues
- legal status in country
- income and source of it
- current restrictions on where a person can legally reside
- children that may reside with the youth at some point in the future
- safety planning

## Appendix A: About the TAY-VI-SPDAT

The HEARTH Act and federal regulations require communities to have an assessment tool for coordinated entry - and the VI-SPDAT and SPDAT meet these requirements. Many communities have struggled to comply with this requirement, which demands an investment of considerable time, resources and expertise. Others are making it up as they go along, using “gut instincts” in lieu of solid evidence. Communities need practical, evidence-informed tools that enhance their ability to satisfy federal regulations and quickly implement an effective approach to access and assessment. The VI-SPDAT is a first-of-its-kind tool designed to fill this need, helping communities end homelessness in a quick, strategic fashion.

### The VI-SPDAT

The VI-SPDAT was initially created by combining the elements of the Vulnerability Index which was created and implemented by Community Solutions broadly in the 100,000 Homes Campaign, and the SPDAT Prescreen Instrument that was part of the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool. The combination of these two instruments was performed through extensive research and development, and testing. The development process included the direct voice of hundreds of persons with lived experience.

The VI-SPDAT examines factors of current vulnerability and future housing stability. It follows the structure of the SPDAT assessment tool, and is informed by the same research backbone that supports the SPDAT - almost 300 peer reviewed published journal articles, government reports, clinical and quasi-clinical assessment tools, and large data sets. The SPDAT has been independently tested, as well as internally reviewed. The data overwhelmingly shows that when the SPDAT is used properly, housing outcomes are better than when no assessment tool is used.

The VI-SPDAT is a triage tool. It highlights areas of higher acuity, thereby helping to inform the type of support and housing intervention that may be most beneficial to improve long term housing outcomes. It also helps inform the order - or priority - in which people should be served. The VI-SPDAT does not make decisions; it informs decisions. The VI-SPDAT provides data that communities, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness can use to help determine the best course of action next.

### The Youth – Transition Age Youth Tool from CSH

Released in May 2013, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) partnered with Dr. Eric Rice, Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California (USC) School of Social Work, to develop a triage tool that targets homeless Transition Age Youth (TAY) for permanent supportive housing. It consists of six items associated with long-term homelessness (five or more years) among transition-aged youth (age 18-24).

### Version 2 of the VI-SPDAT

Version 2 builds upon the success of Version 1 of the VI-SPDAT with some refinements. Starting in August 2014, a survey was launched of existing VI-SPDAT users to get their input on what should be amended, improved, or maintained in the tool.

Analysis was completed across all of these responses. Further research was conducted. Questions were tested and refined over several months, again including the direct voice of persons with lived experience and frontline practitioners. Input was also gathered from senior government officials that create policy and programs to help ensure alignment with guidelines and funding requirements.

## The TAY-VI-SPDAT – The Next Step Tool for Homeless Youth

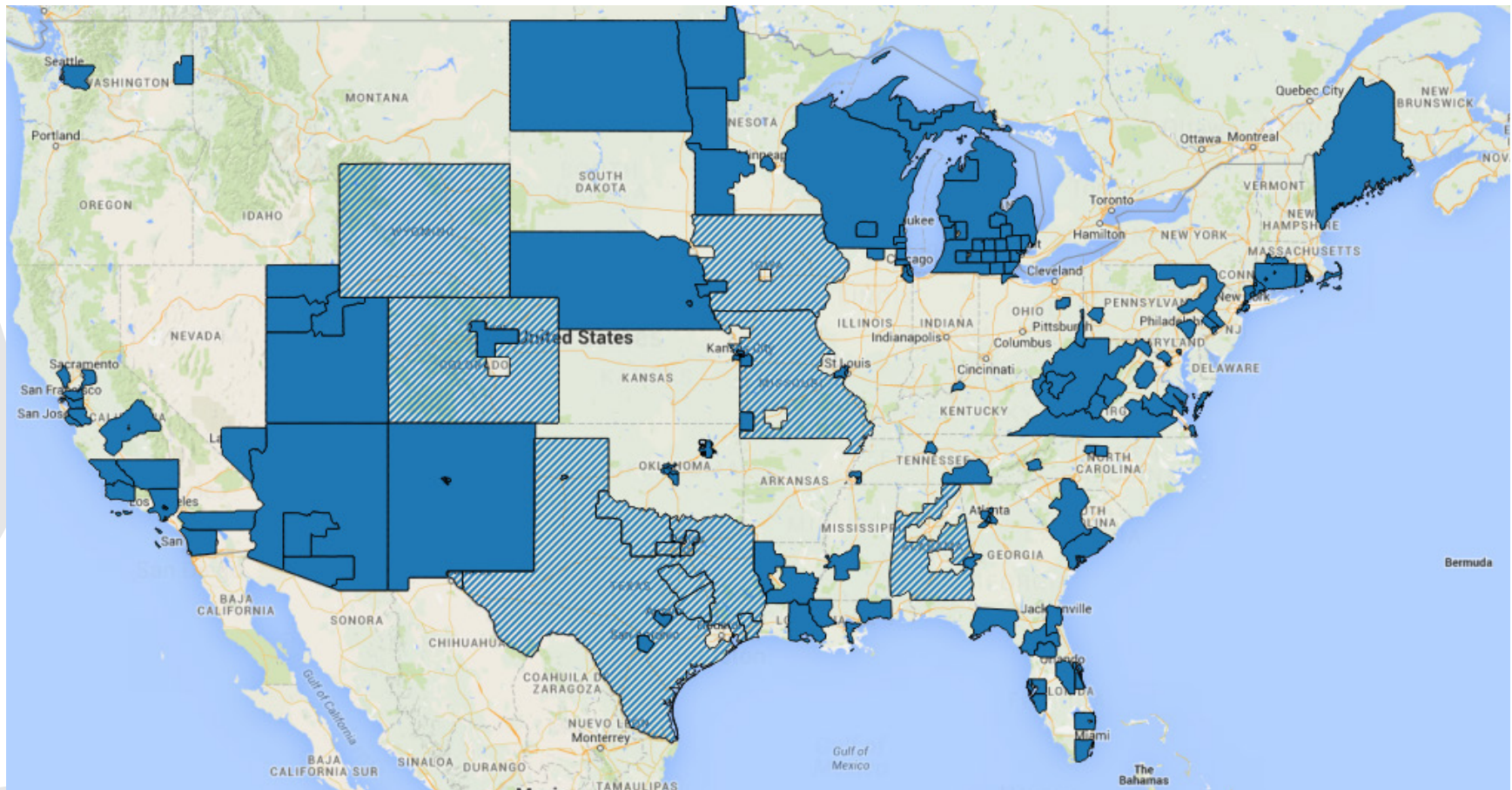
One piece of feedback was the growing concern that youth tended to score lower on the VI-SPDAT, since the Vulnerability Index assesses risk of mortality which is less prevalent among younger populations. So, in version 2 of the VI-SPDAT, OrgCode Consulting, Inc. and Community Solutions joined forces with CSH to combine the best parts of the TAY, the VI, and the SPDAT to create one streamlined triage tool designed specifically for youth aged 24 or younger.

If you are familiar with the VI-SPDAT, you will notice some differences in the TAY-VI-SPDAT compared to VI-SPDAT version 1. Namely:

- it is shorter, usually taking less than 7 minutes to complete;
- subjective elements through observation are now gone, which means the exact same instrument can be used over the phone or in-person;
- medical, substance use, and mental health questions are all refined;
- you can now explicitly see which component of the full SPDAT each VI-SPDAT question links to; and,
- the scoring range is slightly different (Don't worry, we can provide instructions on how these relate to results from Version 1).

## Appendix B: Where the VI-SPDAT is being used in the United States

Since the VI-SPDAT is provided completely free of charge, and no training is required, any community is able to use the VI-SPDAT without the explicit permission of Community Solutions or OrgCode Consulting, Inc. As a result, the VI-SPDAT is being used in more communities than we know of. It is also being used in Canada and Australia.



A partial list of continua of care (CoCs) in the US where we know the VI-SPDAT is being used includes:

**Alabama**

- Parts of Alabama Balance of State

**Arizona**

- Statewide

**California**

- San Jose/Santa Clara City & County
- San Francisco
- Oakland/Alameda County
- Sacramento City & County
- Richmond/Contra Costa County
- Watsonville/Santa Cruz City & County
- Fresno/Madera County
- Napa City & County
- Los Angeles City & County
- San Diego
- Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County
- Bakersfield/Kern County
- Pasadena
- Riverside City & County
- Glendale
- San Luis Obispo County

**Colorado**

- Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative
- Parts of Colorado Balance of State

**Connecticut**

- Hartford
- Bridgeport/Stratford/Fairfield
- Connecticut Balance of State
- Norwalk/Fairfield County
- Stamford/Greenwich
- City of Waterbury

**District of Columbia**

- District of Columbia

**Florida**

- Sarasota/Bradenton/Manatee, Sarasota Counties
- Tampa/Hillsborough County
- St. Petersburg/Clearwater/Largo/Pinellas County
- Tallahassee/Leon County
- Orlando/Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties
- Gainesville/Alachua, Putnam Counties
- Jacksonville-Duval, Clay Counties
- Palm Bay/Melbourne/Brevard County
- Ocala/Marion County
- Miami/Dade County
- West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County

**Georgia**

- Atlanta County
- Fulton County
- Columbus-Muscogee/Russell County
- Marietta/Cobb County
- DeKalb County

**Hawaii**

- Honolulu

**Illinois**

- Rockford/Winnebago, Boone Counties
- Waukegan/North Chicago/Lake County
- Chicago
- Cook County

**Iowa**

- Parts of Iowa Balance of State

**Kansas**

- Kansas City/Wyandotte County

**Kentucky**

- Louisville/Jefferson County

**Louisiana**

- Lafayette/Acadiana
- Shreveport/Bossier/Northwest
- New Orleans/Jefferson Parish
- Baton Rouge
- Alexandria/Central Louisiana CoC

**Massachusetts**

- Cape Cod Islands
- Springfield/Holyoke/Chicopee/Westfield/Hampden County

**Maryland**

- Baltimore City
- Montgomery County

**Maine**

- Statewide

**Michigan**

- Statewide

**Minnesota**

- Minneapolis/Hennepin County
- Northwest Minnesota
- Moorhead/West Central Minnesota
- Southwest Minnesota

**Missouri**

- St. Louis County
- St. Louis City
- Joplin/Jasper, Newton Counties
- Kansas City/Independence/Lee's Summit/Jackson County
- Parts of Missouri Balance of State

**Mississippi**

- Jackson/Rankin, Madison Counties
- Gulf Port/Gulf Coast Regional

**North Carolina**

- Winston Salem/Forsyth County
- Asheville/Buncombe County
- Greensboro/High Point

**North Dakota**

- Statewide

**Nebraska**

- Statewide

**New Mexico**

- Statewide

**Nevada**

- Las Vegas/Clark County

**New York**

- New York City
- Yonkers/Mount Vernon/New Rochelle/Westchester County

**Ohio**

- Toledo/Lucas County
- Canton/Massillon/Alliance/Stark County

**Oklahoma**

- Tulsa City & County/Broken Arrow
- Oklahoma City
- Norman/Cleveland County

**Pennsylvania**

- Philadelphia
- Lower Marion/Norristown/Abington/Montgomery County
- Allentown/Northeast Pennsylvania
- Lancaster City & County
- Bristol/Bensalem/Bucks County
- Pittsburgh/McKeesport/Penn Hills/Allegheny County

**Rhode Island**

- Statewide

**South Carolina**

- Charleston/Low Country
- Columbia/Midlands

**Tennessee**

- Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee
- Memphis/Shelby County
- Nashville/Davidson County

**Texas**

- San Antonio/Bexar County
- Austin/Travis County
- Dallas City & County/Irving
- Fort Worth/Arlington/Tarrant County
- El Paso City and County
- Waco/McLennan County
- Texas Balance of State
- Amarillo
- Wichita Falls/Wise, Palo Pinto, Wichita, Archer Counties
- Bryan/College Station/Brazos Valley
- Beaumont/Port Arthur/South East Texas

**Utah**

- Statewide

**Virginia**

- Richmond/Henrico, Chesterfield, Hanover Counties
- Roanoke City & County/Salem
- Virginia Beach
- Portsmouth
- Virginia Balance of State
- Arlington County

**Washington**

- Seattle/King County
- Spokane City & County

**Wisconsin**

- Statewide

**West Virginia**

- Statewide

**Wyoming**

- Wyoming Statewide is in the process of implementing