



VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide Evaluation Report



ADVANCING SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

Prepared by Homebase



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Overview



This report provides key takeaways and recommendations from an evaluation of the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and associated trainings, Explaining the Coordinated Entry Process and Building Rapport, and Administering the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) for Families.

Project Background and Summary



In 2023, the Napa Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Evaluation was completed. The Evaluation identified a challenge in how the VI-SPDAT was administered:

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The explanation of the assessment to clients is confusing and does not give the client the information they need to understand the assessment or CE process. This can lead to VI-SPDAT scores not accurately reflecting a client’s true vulnerability, because the client does not understand what the tool is used for and/or does not feel comfortable answering the questions honestly.

- Coordinated Entry System Assessment feedback

Based on the results of the evaluation, Homebase recommended that the Napa Continuum of Care:

- Continue to streamline and standardize assessment training across agencies and programs.
- Develop a standardized script available to all providers that explains the assessment tool and Coordinated Entry System process.
- Create pre-recorded or self-guided trainings on assessment administration that are required to be taken by administering staff quarterly.
- Hold information sharing sessions with tips, tricks, and strategies with all administering agencies.

Project Background and Summary



continued

To implement these recommendations, Homebase worked with the Napa County Continuum of Care to develop a Facilitation Guide for the VI-SPDAT for Families. The purpose of the Facilitation Guide is to:

- Provide guidance and best practices for administering the VI-SPDAT.
- Document the VI-SPDAT strategies that have been successfully developed by the agencies and programs in the Napa Continuum of Care.
- Support a standardized VI-SPDAT assessment training for current and future assessors.
- Provide a consistent client experience when receiving the VI-SPDAT assessment across agencies and programs, and
- Achieve more accurate assessments of clients' vulnerabilities.

In November 2025, the Napa Continuum of Care implemented the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide. Homebase also prepared and conducted two trainings for all Access Points serving families:

- Explaining the Coordinated Entry Process and Building Rapport, and,
- Administering the VI-SPDAT for Families.



Opportunities for ongoing improvement include more communication before and after the assessment, prioritizing private spaces for assessments, among others.

Beginning in July 2026, Homebase conducted a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment in the Napa Coordinated Entry System to determine whether the Facilitation Guide and trainings have had an impact on the challenges identified in the previous Coordinated Entry System Evaluation.

As detailed in this report, the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and training has achieved positive outcomes, including streamlined training, understandably explained assessments, and preserving/creating private spaces for assessments. There are also opportunities for ongoing improvement, including more communication before and after the assessment, prioritizing private spaces for assessments, additional guidance on explaining the housing placement process, and connecting participants with resources after the assessment.

Based on these findings, Homebase is making recommendations that include: ensuring assessors continue to have access to the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and training; providing opportunities for assessors and participants to continue to give feedback; developing a post-assessment handout that explains the next steps in the housing placement process and connects participants with resources; and encouraging Access Points to prioritize communication with participants as well as conducting assessments in private locations.

Evaluation Metrics



Quantitative Program Evaluation Metrics

Homebase conducted a program evaluation by reviewing and analyzing the following quantitative metrics VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide, comparing a period of 8-months before and 8months after the Facilitation guide and training.

Assessment Data Metrics

- Number of VI-SPDAT for Families assessments conducted
- Number of first-time assessments
- Number of reassessments
- Average number of VI-SPDAT for Families questions answered
- Number of score revision requests

Access Point Metrics

- Number of Access Points for Families
- Number of assessments conducted at each access point
- Average VI-SPDAT score of households at each access point
- Number and percentage of assessors at each Access Point who have completed the VI-SPDAT for Families training



Evaluation Metrics



continued

Qualitative Program Evaluation – Access Point Assessors

Homebase conducted a program evaluation by collecting qualitative data through engagement with Access Point assessors. Homebase conducted a survey with Access Point assessors, which asked:

- Whether they were familiar with the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide,
- Whether they are familiar with the VI-SPDAT Score Revision Tools and Policy and how/when to use it,
- Whether they had received training on Explaining the Coordinated Entry Process and Building Rapport,
- Whether they have received training on delivering the VI-SPDAT for Families Assessment,
- Whether they have received sufficient training, materials/tools, and guidance about how to conduct the VI-SPDAT,
- Whether they feel comfortable developing rapport with participants to conduct the VI-SPDAT,
- Whether they feel they can create a safe space for participants to take the VI-SPDAT,
- Whether they feel they can provide an explanation of the housing process that participants understand, and ,
- Whether they can provide an explanation of the VI-SPDAT assessment and questions that their participants understand.

Assessors were also invited to share additional feedback about ways their approach to assessment have changed since the Facilitation Guide was implemented and whether there are any other resources and/or training that would help them to administer the VI-SPDAT better.

Evaluation Metrics



continued

Qualitative Program Evaluation – Participants

Homebase conducted a focus group of 5 people who have had a VI-SPDAT for Families assessment since the Facilitation Guide and training was implemented. Participants received a \$35 gift card for their participation in a one-hour focus group. Homebase coordinated with Catholic Charities to hold the focus group in-person at the Rainbow House, which was where the focus group was held to support the development of the Facilitation Guide and training. Participants were asked questions about:

- Whether they felt safe during the VI-SPDAT assessment and could answer the questions honestly,
- Whether the VI-SPDAT was explained to them,
- Whether they understood the VI-SPDAT assessment, what they were being asked, and why, and,
- Whether they understood the next steps in Coordinated Entry after the VI-SPDAT assessment.



Quantitative Program Evaluation Results



Homebase conducted a program evaluation by reviewing and analyzing the following quantitative metrics VI-SDPAT for Families Facilitation Guide, comparing a period of 8-months before and 8-months after the Facilitation guide and training.

Number of Assessments, Access Points, and Assessors

For families trying to get connected to Napa's Coordinated Entry System, there are two main access points that serve as the front door of the system, Abode outreach and Self-Sufficiency. The Access Points have their assessments tracked through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) programs: HSP (Housing Support Program), Consolidated Family Outreach, Bringing Families Home, Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Housing Navigation, North Napa Center, and CalAIM Housing Navigation. Of these, 86% of the assessments was conducted under the HSP and Consolidated Family Outreach programs.

There has not been a change in the number of assessors, but there have been staff changes. There are 4 assessors who conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment.

Only one of the current assessors began administering VI-SPDAT for Families assessments after the implementation of the Facilitation Guide and trainings.

During the full 16-month evaluation period, March 2025 to June 2026, there appear to be 98 unique households that represent 104 VI-SPDAT assessments. Overall, there were six households that had reassessments that resulted in a different score. Of these six reassessments, only one is known to be a score revision. Looking at the community queue metadata, other reasons for reassessment included change in household composition and a regular reassessment after the one-year mark.

VI-SPDAT Assessment Scores

For the 8-month period before the Facilitation Guide and training, representing March of 2025 to October of 2025, there were 51 VI-SPDAT assessments conducted with an average score of 10.9. In the 8-month period after, representing November 2025 to June 2026, there were 53 assessments conducted with an average score of 11.4. In total, this represented 98 unique households getting 104 family VI-SPDAT assessments, including what appears to be roughly 6 reassessments done for a variety of reasons.

Quantitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

Of the different HMIS programs that are used to track assessment scores, there is some variation between the average VI-SPDAT scores. This is true when looking at both a program and agency level. Looking at the programs, it appears this is mainly between the City of Napa's Consolidated Family Outreach program, and the main source of assessments, the County's HSP program. While it could be that households served through the outreach program are expected to have higher VI-SPDAT scores, it is worth investigating further if vulnerability of the households served is expected to be the same. Meaning, if the outreach program tends to work with more vulnerable households than the other programs, this is probably expected.

Like the findings of the [VI-SPDAT Facilitation Guide for Single Adults Evaluation](#), it's difficult to know exactly what to attribute the increase in VI-SPDAT to. While it could in theory mean that assessors were better able to explain questions and get more accurate answers resulting in higher scores, it's not possible to attribute the increase directly to the Facilitation Guide and training.

A breakdown of family assessments by timeframe and assessing program can be viewed below.

VI-SPDAT by Program	March 25 to Oct 25 Count	Nov 25 to June 26 Count	March 25 to Oct 25 Average	Nov 25 to June 26 Average
HSP (Housing Support Program)	34	31	10.1	10.1
Bringing Families Home	4	11	13	10.8
Consolidated Family Outreach	12	6	12.3	14.5
CalAIM Housing Navigation	1	1	12	15
BHBH Housing Navigation	0	1	N/A	16
North Napa Center	0	3	N/A	18
Grant Total	51	53	10.9	11.4

Quantitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

VI-SPDAT by Assessing Agency	March 25 to Oct 25 Count	Nov 25 to June 26 Count	March 25 to Oct 25 Average	Nov 25 to June 26 Average
City of Napa	13	11	12.3	15.6
Health and Human Services	38	42	10.4	10.3
Grant Total	51	53	10.9	11.4

Skipped Questions

As also found in the [VI-SPDAT Facilitation Guide for Single Adults Evaluation](#), it was generally rare for households to skip VI-SPDAT questions with a few small exceptions. During both the prior and post Facilitation Guide timeframes, the VI-SPDAT question, “Thinking about those last three years and the different times you and your family were homeless, if you add up all the months you were homeless, what is the total length of time your family has experienced homelessness” was the question that had the highest percentage of doesn’t know or blank responses from participants at roughly ~70%. While this may be a question only asked if certain conditions are met, it does echo some of the initial feedback received speaking towards how difficult it can be to establish participant timelines.

The questions with the next highest rates of no responses were related to participant contact information. After that, the only questions that experienced a shift of greater than 10% was the race and ethnicity, and the question relating to how long children spend helping their siblings with dinner, chores, bathing, etc. For both questions, the rate of households using the “Prefers not to Answer” dropped 6% and 15% respectively.

Quantitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

Data Quality and Reassessments

Similar to the data sets received for the [VI-SPDAT Facilitation Guide for Single Adults Evaluation](#), it appears that many reassessments are incorrectly marked as score revisions. Since this is the data element for tracking assessment location, it also makes it difficult to track the assessment locations (outdoors, offices, etc.). In terms of reassessments, there appear to be 6 resulting in an actual score change, although only one is known to be due to an actual score revision request.

Key Takeaways:

- There is some variation in VI-SPDAT scores between programs and agencies, mostly due to the outreach program having a higher VI-SPDAT score average
- Program participants rarely skip questions or use the “Client Doesn’t Know” or “Prefers not to Answer” options
- Further tips or training on capturing participant housing/homelessness timelines could be worth exploring
- Data quality issues related to tracking assessment location



Qualitative Program Evaluation Results



Access Point Changes

While conducting the evaluation, Access Points shared changes that had been made to assessment sites as the result of the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide.

There are two Access Points where families can receive a VI-SPDAT for Families assessment: Abode and Self-Sufficiency. Prior to the Facilitation Guide, Abode conducted VI-SPDAT for Families in a room where assessments would sometimes be interrupted by staff needing to pass through the space. There was also no dedicated space for children who accompanied their parents to the assessment. Self-Sufficiency conducted assessments in a private space and had a space for children while their parents were completing the assessment.



Participants said they felt comfortable with assessments when they were conducted in a private space and their children were accommodated

While preparing the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide, Homebase conducted a focus group with participants who had received an assessment. When asked whether they felt safe and could answer honestly, participants said they felt comfortable with assessments when they were conducted in a private space and their children were accommodated.

Since receiving that feedback from people with lived experience, Abode has changed the space where VI-SPDAT for Families assessments are conducted. Abode assessors now conduct assessments in a private room. Before beginning the assessment, the assessor puts a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door. The assessor shared that she puts the sign up in front of the participant so that they know they will not be interrupted. In the private room, there is a space set up for children if they have accompanied their parents. Toys are available as well as a projector with headphones. The headphones help to distract the children so they will not overhear the assessment.

With these changes, all Access Points for families now provide private spaces that accommodate children to conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment.

Qualitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

Access Point Assessors

Homebase sent a survey to the 4 assessors who conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment. The survey had a 100% response rate. Assessors were given the option to complete the survey anonymously and identifying information has been removed from the responses.

Assessors were asked about their familiarity with the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and associated trainings:

100%

are familiar with the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide

100%

have received training on Delivering the VI-SPDAT for Families Assessment

75%

have received training on Explaining the Coordinated Entry Process and Building Rapport

50%

are familiar with the VI-SPDAT Score Revision Tools and Policy and how/when to use it

Seventy-five percent (75%) of assessors said they have received sufficient training, materials/tools, and guidance about how to document the VI-SPDAT for Families. When asked about other resources or training that would help to conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families, suggestions included:

- Continuing to make the Facilitation Guide and training recordings available,
- Conducting a refresh training once per year, and
- Providing additional training on engaging with families in a sensitive way.

Qualitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

All assessors agree and most strongly agree that they:

- Feel comfortable developing rapport with participants to conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families;
- Feel they can create a safe space for participants to take the VI-SPDAT for Families; and
- Feel that they can provide an explanation of the housing placement process participants can understand.

Based on feedback, the Facilitation Guide and training have helped assessors to do so. Since the receiving the Facilitation Guide and training, assessors said that they:

- Can better explain why they are asking assessment questions,
- Can rephrase questions to make them more relatable, and
- Can identify different ways to navigate questions.



All assessors strongly agree that they can *now* provide an explanation of the VI-SPDAT assessment and its questions that participants can understand

Homebase also received a response from an assessor requesting a post-assessment handout, like what has been developed for the VI-SPDAT for Single Adults assessment.

Key Takeaways:

- Assessors strongly feel that the Facilitation Guide and trainings have had a positive impact on their abilities to conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment.
- Conducting periodic refresher trainings would benefit assessors by reminding them of core principles and the availability of resources, such as the VI-SPDAT Score Revision Tools and Policy.
- Assessors would like to receive additional training or tools that build on what they learned through the Facilitation Guide and trainings, such as a post-assessment handout to give participants after the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment.

Qualitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

Participants

When developing the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and training, Homebase conducted a focus group with families residing at the Rainbow House. The focus group's input was used to develop the Facilitation Guide and training to ensure the resources were responsive to the needs of households that receive the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment. To determine whether there has been any change in the participant experience, Homebase conducted another focus group with households that have received a VI-SDPAT for Families assessment after the Facilitation Guide and training were implemented.

Five households participated. Of the five households, three had assessments with Abode and two had assessments with Self-Sufficiency. Feedback from this small group suggests additional opportunities for communication prior to the assessment. Those who received their assessments through Self-Sufficiency were connected through their participation in CalWorks. They said they were easily connected with an assessor. Those who received their assessments through Abode contacted Abode to request an assessment. Two of the households described a struggle to get an assessment at Abode and said they had to be persistent in contacting them. The other household said a friend advised them to contact Abode for an assessment and when she did, the assessment happened very quickly.

None of the household had any concerns with the questions that they were asked. They said they understood what the assessment was, what they were being asked, and why. All households said they did not experience any barriers to receiving an assessment, such as transportation or childcare, other than the communication challenges described above.

In this small group, there were diverse assessment experiences. Those who were assessed by Self-Sufficiency described a positive experience. They said they felt safe in the office and that the assessors were kind towards them. Each of the households assessed by Abode described their assessment being conducted in a different setting: one was outside, one was in a Starbucks, and one was in the new assessment space. The participant who received the assessment at Starbucks said she felt uncomfortable during the assessment because other people were around. She felt like she had to talk quietly to avoid having private information overheard. The participant who received her assessment in the new space said it was child-friendly and had toys for her child who was with her, but it didn't feel that private.

Qualitative Program Evaluation Results



continued

After the assessment, participants were told that they would receive a score and there would be a waiting process based on the score. Participants who were told about scores were not told what their scores were and expressed confusion about what scores meant and how that would impact their access to housing. Participants were asked whether a handout after the assessment that described the next steps would be helpful; all participants agreed that is something they would have appreciated. Participants also said a post-assessment handout would create accountability because they would know what was supposed to happen and whether that was happening or not.

As with accessing the assessment, communication became the most important factor after the assessment. Participants with Self-Sufficiency were enrolled in programs like CalWorks, which provided them with clear next steps and regular communication with case workers. Participants with Self-Sufficiency also described being referred to other resources available through Napa County, including mental health and behavioral health resources. Participants with Abode said they did not have regular communication with case workers after the assessment and were unsure of what other resources were available to help resolve their housing crisis.

Participants all said regular communication made them feel seen and reassured them that they had not been forgotten. Even if there wasn't a significant update, regular communication was appreciated.



Key Takeaways:

- Communication before and after the assessment was a significant factor in the participant's assessment experience.
- Assessors are conducting assessments in a way that ensures participants understand the purpose of the assessment, what is being asked, and why.
- When assessments are conducted in a private space, participants have a more positive experience. Access points are actively making improvements to provide a private, child-friendly space that meets participants' needs.
- Mentioning scores created confusion for participants about the prioritization process.
- Participants appreciated being connected with resources that addressed their other needs to resolve their housing crisis, including mental health and behavioral health services.
- Participants want a handout or other takeaway from the assessment to help them understand the next steps and connect with resources.

Assessors are conducting assessments in a way that ensures participants understand the purpose of the assessment, what is being asked, and why.

Key Findings and Recommendations



Overall, the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and training appears to have achieved positive outcomes:



Streamlined Training

Assessors strongly feel that the Facilitation Guide and trainings have had a positive impact on their abilities to conduct the VI-SPDAT for Families assessment.



Assessment Understandably Explained

Participants understood the purpose of the assessment, what was being asked, and why.



Preserving and Creating Private Spaces for Assessments

Access Points responded to participant feedback about conducting assessments in private spaces that can accommodate a participant's children, if necessary. Access Points with existing private spaces have continued to use them for assessments. Access Points that did not previously have them created private spaces that can accommodate a participant's children.

Key Findings and Recommendations



continued

There are some opportunities for continued improvement:

1 **More Communication Before and After the Assessment**

Participants had mixed experiences with communication. Those who had regular communication before and after the assessment reported a more positive assessment experience than those who did not.

2 **Prioritize Private Spaces for Assessments**

While Access Points have been making improvements to ensure there are private spaces to conduct assessments, there is an opportunity for ongoing improvement to ensure assessments are conducted in private locations where participants are not concerned about being overheard.

3 **Guidance on Explaining the Housing Placement Process**

Both assessors and participants want additional resources for explaining the housing placement process and what happens after the assessment, such as a post-assessment handout.

4 **Connection to Resources After Assessment**

Participants who were referred or connected to resources that addressed their other needs, such as mental health and behavioral health services, had a more positive assessment experience than those who felt unsure about what resources were available.

Key Findings and Recommendations



continued

Based on these findings, Homebase makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations



- ✓ Ensure assessors continue to have access to the VI-SPDAT for Families Facilitation Guide and training, including refresher trainings as needed.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for assessors to give feedback on the Facilitation Guide and trainings, including requesting additional training as needed.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for participants to give feedback on their assessment experiences, including a link to a feedback survey in the post-assessment handout.
- ✓ Develop a post-assessment handout that explains the next steps in the housing placement process and connects participants with resources.
- ✓ Encourage Access Points to:
 - o Prioritize communication with participants before and after the VI-SPADT for Families assessment; and
 - o Prioritize conducting assessments in private locations where participants are not concerned about being overheard.