City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County

Continuum of Care - Rating and Ranking Process

The HUD released the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the 2015 Continuum of Care Program (CoC) Competition on September 18, 2015. The purpose of the funding is to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless; and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

HUD expects that there is sufficient funding for all renewal projects but encourages CoC's to evaluate all programs eligible for renewal and to re-allocate funds to better meet the goals of the program. Also, funds can be re-allocated to a Dedicated HMIS project. Projects will need to be rated and ranked within two tiers. Tier 1 projects are guaranteed funding. Tier 1 is equal to 85% of the CoC's final pro rata need amount (FPRN). Tier 2 is equal to the difference between FPRN-the total in Tier 1 plus 15% of FPRN for a bonus project. Coc's are also eligible to apply for a planning grant which is not ranked in either Tier 1 or 2.

Final Pro Rata Need Amount $1,593,622

Planning Grant available $47,809

Tier 1 = $1,354,579

Tier 2 = $239,043

$239,043 in bonus funds

CoCs may create new projects through the permanent housing bonus up to 15 percent of the CoC's FPRN for the following types of new projects:

a.   New permanent supportive housing projects that will serve 100 percent chronically homeless families and individuals, and

b.   New rapid re-housing projects that will serve homeless individuals and families coming directly from the streets or emergency shelters, and includes persons fleeing domestic violence situations and other persons meeting the criteria of paragraph (4) of the definition of homeless.

Reallocation Projects

The CoC has determined that when feasible and appropriate, the CoC shall re-direct funding towards projects that:

a.   Serve the highest need individuals or families;

b.   Help project participants obtain permanent housing as rapidly and directly from homelessness as possible;

c.   Ensure long-term housing stability; and

d.   Ensure the best and most cost-effective fit given a community's needs.

It was determined that funding a dedicated HMIS was the best and most cost-effective fit for the CoC.

The CoC priority for reallocation of funds is to establish a new dedicated HMIS project. To prepare for reallocation, the CoC engaged in the following activities:

Investments Inventory

The CoC surveyed existing providers in the HIC and conducted a public search for 990s to identify how much the CoC HIC programs are spending to end homelessness. The Investments Inventory accounts for every public and private capital, operating, and service dollar on a per-project basis to establish system-wide totals and per-unit averages. The Investments Inventory showed that the system has a substantial total investment in ending homelessness which, if used more strategically, could serve more chronically homeless individuals and families and could target youth up to age 24.

Project-level Analysis

A number of PSH projects were not fully utilizing HUD funding. The amount recaptured by HUD was calculated, spending during 2014-15 was analyzed, and the CoC worked with existing grantees to identify the number of dollars that could be recaptured, without a reduction in numbers served.

Current CoC HMIS Costs =

NN COC	Estimated HMIS cost
Restart Anchor	$55,430.03
Restart Vets	$9,092.11
NNAMHS SPC 1	$30,803.68
NNAMHS SPC 2	$4,895.25
WCSS CoC	$7,832.38
WCSS PSH	$2,238.55
Total	**$110,292.00**

On September 25, Social Entrepreneurs, Inc., the CoC Coordinator, posted the NOFA on its website and hosted a mandatory meeting for potential new and renewal applications. The CoC has determined that it will re-allocate funds to establish a new Dedicated HMIS Project. In addition to the new HMIS Dedicated Project, the CoC has requested new applications that meet the criteria for a bonus project.

It is estimated that the preliminary analysis of projects indicate sufficient funds shall be recaptured and reallocated during the 2015 CoC competition to fund a Dedicated HMIS Project. If additional funds are available for reallocation, they will be made available for a project that meets the Bonus Project criteria in the 2015 NOFA.

Local Competition Deadlines

1.   Project Applications. All project applications are required to be submitted to the CoC no later than 30 days before the application deadline of November 20, 2015.

2.   CoC Notification to Project Applicants.   The CoC will notify all project applicants no later than 15

days before the 2015 application deadline regarding whether their project applications would be included as part of the CoC Consolidated Application submission.

Review and Oversight

HUD expects each CoC to implement a thorough review and oversight process at the local level for both new and renewal project applications submitted to HUD in the FY 2015 CoC Program Competition. To meet this expectation, the CoCs closely reviewed information provided in each project application in order to ensure that:

1.   all proposed program participants will be eligible for the program component type selected;

2.   the proposed activities are eligible under the 24 CFR part 578;

3.   each project narrative is fully responsive to the question being asked and that it meets all of the criteria for that question as required by this NOFA and included in the detailed instructions provided in e-snaps;

4.   the data provided in various parts of the project application are consistent; and

5.   all required attachments correspond to the attachments list in e-snaps and the attachments contain accurate and complete information, and are dated between July 1, 2015 and November 20, 2015.

All renewal and new projects were required to submit a supplemental application along with their project application. The CoC supplemental application components and narratives served to: (1) confirm the capacity of agencies to provide CoC funded programs; (2) provide information on program delivery in order to evaluate performance and meeting HUD priorities for scoring and ranking of projects by the Rating and Ranking Committee (RRC); and, (3) provide project level narrative to be utilized in the CoC Program application (former 'Exhibit 1').

Projects must meet minimum project eligibility, capacity, timeliness, and performance standards. The CoC will review information in the Line of Credit Control System (LOCCS); Annual Performance Reports (APRs); and information derived from desktop and on-site monitoring, including monitoring reports and A-133 audit reports as applicable, as well as performance standards on prior grants, and assess a project on the following criteria using a pass/fail basis:

•   applicant's performance against plans and goals;
•   timeliness standards;
•   applicant's performance in assisting program participants to achieve and maintain independent living and record of success;
•   financial management accounting practices;
•   timely expenditures;
•   capacity;
•   leveraging and match;
•   outreach strategies; and
•   eligible activities

Elements of the rating and ranking process will include:

•   All renewal and new applications will be reviewed and ranked by an unbiased review panel

composed of representatives from neutral (non-applicant) organizations. The CoC's homeless assistance programs are being measured in FY 2015 by the objective to "end chronic homelessness and to move the homeless to permanent housing." HUD has chosen six indicators which directly relate to the CoC Program. These six indicators, as described below, will be collected in the FY 2015 CoC Application. Each project applicant will also be asked to report on the following indicators:

- The creation of new PSH beds for chronically homeless individuals and families;

- The decrease in the number of chronically homeless individuals and families in the CoC's geography;

- The increase of employment of the homeless residing in or exiting HUD homeless assistance projects;

- The increase of the use of mainstream resources for the homeless residing or exiting from HUD homeless assistance projects;

- The percentage of turnover in CoC Program-funded PSH not dedicated to chronically homeless that will be prioritized to serve chronically homeless individuals and families; and

- The percentage of individuals and households with children that are served in rapid re-housing that came from unsheltered locations.

- The review panel members will review the Project Applications and Supplemental Application, monitoring results, data from the Project Application Annual Performance Reports for renewal projects, as well as overall performance and adherence to HUD performance outcomes, goals and priorities to determine a ranked ordering.

- The rating and ranking will also take into consideration the CoCs Tiering strategy to determine what projects will be placed into Tier 2.

- The rankings will be presented to the Continuum of Care Leadership Council for approval and a formal vote on November 5, 2015 and presented to the CoC general meeting for approval on November 12, 2015.

- The ranking process used locally will align with HUD's process as described in the 2015 NOFA (pages 35-49). Points will be assigned to projects in accordance to corresponding criteria assigned by HUD.

- New PSH or RRH projects created through reallocation will be ranked based on the performance criteria listed in this policy.

- Projects will be ranked in accordance with HUD's priority order by project type (e.g. PH, TH, SSO, etc.) applying the methodology described above. Any remaining projects not fitting in the amount allocated under Tier 1 are placed in Tier 2. **The following is a matrix of ranking criteria and points.**

The projects will be evaluated on a 100 point basis. For each section of the application, the RRC members will be asked to assign a score that is based on information in the application, the quantitative review, and the site visit (if applicable) for each project.

Total scores for each project are determined by adding up points in each section and then adding any bonus points if applicable. HMIS, new bonus projects and renewal projects will be scored using its applicable score sheet. The scores from each Rating and Ranking committee member is computed and averaged for each project. A project rating list is then generated from highest to lowest average score. Projects scoring highest will be ranked and placed into Tier 1 until all Tier 1 funds are allocated. The remaining projects selected for funding will be ranked and placed into Tier 2 until all Tier 2 funds are allocated. Projects that scored well but fell outside the pro rata share are encouraged to re-submit in a future competition.

Tiering and Ranking:

The CoC must assign a unique rank to each project that it intends to submit to HUD for FY 2015 funding. HUD strongly advises CoCs to rank higher those project applications that the CoC determines are high priority, high performing, and meet the needs and gaps as identified in the CoC.

Tiers:

To ensure that CoCs have the opportunity to prioritize their projects locally in the event that HUD is not able to fund all renewals, HUD requires that CoCs rank projects in 2 tiers. The tiers are financial thresholds. This year Tier 1 is equal to the CoC's FPRN less 15%. Tier 2 is the amount between the CoCs Tier 1 and the CoCs Final Annual Renewal Demand (ARD), and 15% of the FPRN for eligible bonus projects.

The CoC's homeless assistance programs are being measured in FY 2015 by the objective to "end chronic homelessness and to move the homeless to permanent housing."

HUD Priority Order:

Consistent with the FY 2015 HUD CoC Program Competition NOFA, projects will be ranked according to HUD's priority order listed below. Within the rank order established by the CoC on the Priority Listings, HUD will first select projects from Tier 1 in the following order by CoC score:

(1) New dedicated HMIS projects;
(2) Renewal permanent housing projects, RRH and PSH;
(3) New rapid re-housing projects for individuals;
(4) SSO projects for centralized or coordinated assessment system;

*The HMIS Project must be ranked in Tier I to ensure funding.

Rating and Ranking Members:

The Rating and Ranking Committee (RRC) is comprised of RAAH members who are knowledgeable about homelessness and housing in our CoC and who are broadly representative of the relevant sectors,

subpopulations, and geographic areas. The RRC is comprised of representatives from a cross-section of groups in RAAH including; faith based providers, private sector, non-profit providers of homeless services and housing; and jurisdiction staff. The RRC is also comprised of members that have no financial or interest in a CoC funded program.

The RRC will establish a Chair who will lead the Rating and Ranking process. The Rating and Ranking process will take place on October 21, 2015 at 10 am. RRC members will be oriented to the NOFA, the CoC competition, the Rating and Ranking tools and the CoC's priorities. They will rate each application independently. Rating scores will be averaged to achieve a preliminary Rank. The RRC will then discuss and finalize the Ranking to best meet the priorities of the CoC. The final ranking will include a motion, a second and a majority of the RRC voting in favor of the final ranking for it to pass as a recommendation to the Steering Committee.

Appeals Process:

Project applicants whose project was rejected may appeal the local CoC competition decision to HUD if the project applicant believes it was denied the opportunity to participate in the local CoC planning process in a reasonable manner by submitting a Solo Application in e-snaps directly to HUD prior to the application deadline of 7:59:59 p.m. eastern time on November 20, 2015. The CoC's notification of rejection of the project in the local competition must be attached to the Solo Application. If the CoC fails to provide written notification outside of e-snaps, the Solo Applicant must attach evidence that it attempted to participate in the local CoC planning process and submitted a project application that met the local deadlines, along with a statement that the CoC did not provide the Solo Applicant written notification of the CoC rejecting the project in the local CoC competition.