

Reviewing and Prioritizing Projects for Funding

Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grants are administered by HUD under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The programs funded through the Continuum of Care Program grants include:

Supportive Housing

The Supportive Housing Program is designed to support the development of supportive housing and services to assist homeless persons in the transition from homelessness and to enable them to live as independently as possible. Funds can be used to buy, construct, rehabilitate or lease permanent or transitional housing, and for operating costs and supportive services, such as job training, child care vouchers, health, mental health and addictive illness treatment.

Shelter Plus Care

Shelter Plus Care (S+C) is a program designed to provide housing through rental assistance and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless persons with disabilities, primarily those with serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or related diseases. For each dollar of rental assistance, the grantee must provide (match) the dollar value for services. The program allows for a variety of housing choices, and a range of supportive services, in response to the needs of the homeless population with disabilities.

Single Room Occupancy

The Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Program provides rental assistance for homeless persons in connection with the moderate rehabilitation (about \$3,300 per unit) of SRO dwellings. SRO housing contains units for occupancy by one person, and these units may contain food preparation or sanitary facilities, or both.

General Procedure

HUD CoC Funds are granted based on a national competition following the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Immediately when HUD's Continuum of Care NOFA is released, the CoC coordinates the following process:

- The NOFA Committee considers community priorities, then designs and presents scoring tools and materials to the CoC for approval; the CoC considers and approves the scoring tools and materials.
 - o Community priorities have already been discussed through the CoC strategic planning, needs assessment, and gaps analysis process (please see the Gaps Analysis/ Needs Assessment Policy for more details)
- Information regarding the NOFA and the community's process and requirements are disseminated to all CoC and other interested parties (all homeless service and housing providers in the continuum of care area) via the following open solicitation methods:
 - o Letters/emails
 - o Responses to public inquiries
 - o Outreach to faith-based groups
 - o Announcements at CoC meetings
 - o Announcements at other meetings
 - o Published in newspapers

- Any agency interested in applying for funds will be required to complete a Letter of Interest and must be submitted by the posted due date

- Applications and additional information is collected and reviewed according to procedures described below
- A Rating & Ranking Committee is created according to procedures described below
- The Rating & Ranking Committee conducts an interview with each applicant where the committee will provide feedback on the application, ask questions for clarification purposes, and pinpoint any errors or omissions in the application
- Final project applications are collected and submitted to HUD

Funding Priorities and Local Need

Services and housing for homeless are needed in all aspects within our community, however, there are specific areas that are of greatest need and will be a funding priority for the CoC. Creating funding priorities is driven by the community's needs assessment and gaps analysis. All organizations in the CoC that participate in the gaps analysis process have a voice in determining the community's priorities for funding. Funding priorities are established through a fair and open process using objective criteria. (Please see the Gaps Analysis/ Needs Assessment Policy for more details.)

Through this gaps analysis process, the following areas have been identified as funding priorities:

- Permanent Supportive Housing serving all target populations
 - In the event that the applications exceed the amount available, priority will be give for projects serving 1) chronically homeless, 2) individuals, and 3) families
- Renewals of successful operating projects are a priority to remain funded if the need for the project still exists in the community
 - The CoC will review each project at the time it seeks renewal funding to determine if the project is performing satisfactorily and is meeting the needs of persons it proposed to serve or whether local needs have changed and other subpopulations or types of assistance should be given preference
- To maximize the funds available to new projects, renewal projects may apply for only one year of funding (if, after all projects have been submitted, the community has not requested the full amount available from HUD, renewal projects may be approved for multiple-year funding)
- Remaining funds (after the funding of successful one-year renewals) from the HUD designated Pro Rata amount for our CoC are available through the competitive application process.

Procedures for Project Application Submissions

- Proposals must be submitted via e-snaps by the identified due date
- A PDF version of the application and all additional requested information must be emailed to the HMIS Administrator/CoC Coordinator
- Specifics regarding due dates, submission requirements, and proposal format will be distributed and reviewed

Application Eligibility Threshold Review

Projects must pass a threshold review before being submitted to the Rating & Ranking Committee. A pre-designated representative of the CoC will complete the threshold review to verify the eligibility of:

- Applicant
- Project
- Activity
- Completeness of application

This review will take place prior to the applications submission to the Rating & Ranking Committee for reading and scoring. Proposals not completely meeting threshold review criteria will not be forwarded to the Rating & Ranking Committee for further consideration. Proposals completely meeting eligibility threshold review criteria will be submitted to the Rating & Ranking Committee and will be scored according to the scoring criteria.

Rating & Ranking Committee Policies

Eligible proposals will be prioritized for inclusion in CoC's coordinated application by the Rating & Ranking Committee. Applications not scoring high enough will not be placed on the project funding request in Exhibit 1.

Goals for each application cycle will be based on specific evaluation criteria, and the HUD Committee will establish minimum requirements in order to maximize competitiveness of the Continuum's application. Examples of these application minimums include, but are not limited to, housing/service funding ration requested and amount of leverage.

Scoring tools are created by the HUD Application Committee and approved by the Executive Committee of the CoC. Using these scoring tools, the Rating & Ranking Committee will review the following objective rating measures to assess the performance of projects seeking funding:

- CoC monitoring findings
- HUD monitoring findings
- Independent audits
- HUD APRs for performance results
- Unexecuted grants
- Site visits
- Surveys of program clients
- Project readiness
- Expenditure of grant funds (fast or slow)
- Cost effectiveness of the project
- Provider organization experience
- Provider organization capacity
- Project presentation
- CoC membership involvement
- HMIS participation involvement
- Match funds committed to project
- Leverage letters committed to project
- Percentage of housing funds requested
- Other priorities, to be determined by the CoC (based on NOFA priorities)

The CoC recruits Rating & Ranking Committee members who are knowledgeable about homelessness and housing in the area and who are broadly representative of the relevant sectors, subpopulations, and geographic areas. The Rating & Ranking Committee will be composed of representatives from a cross-section of groups which might include: Faith-based and non-profit providers of homeless services and housing; housing developers; city representatives; Kings and Tulare Counties employees; mental health; substance abuse; veteran's services; and consumers.

- Rating & Ranking Committee members must sign a statement declaring that they have no conflict of interest and a confidentiality agreement
- Members must be appointed every year, their eligibility verified, and approved by the Executive Committee

- Members must be able to dedicate time for application review and committee meetings as directed by the Executive Committee or their designee
- Rating & Ranking Committee members (3-5) are trained. The Rating & Ranking Committee Training includes:
 - o Information regarding homeless activities, needs, services, definitions and other issues that are pertinent to the CoC
 - o A background of McKinney Vento and the local process
 - o The role of the Rating & Ranking Committee
 - o Review of the scoring tools, applications, and resources
- Rating & Ranking Committee members receive eligible applications and scoring materials
- All Rating & Ranking Committee members review all applications over a one-week period
- Rating & Ranking Committee meets to review and discuss each application together and to individually score them; the CoC HUD consultant is present at the Panel meeting to record decisions of the Panel and any comments/ recommendations they have for applicants
 - o The Rating & Ranking Committee meeting includes a 15-minute interview with each project applicant
 - o After applicants leave, the Panel discusses the merits of each proposal, scores the applications, and turns in score sheets to the consultant
 - o Overall raw scores are calculated by the consultant
 - o The Committee considers adjustments for such issues HUD incentives or requirements
 - o The Committee considers proposal changes or project budget adjustments that may be required to meet community needs
 - o The Committee determines the rank and funding levels of all projects considering all available information
 - o During deliberation, the CoC consultant will provide technical assistance by responding to questions of the Panelists, correcting technical inaccuracies if they arise in conversation, and reminding the Panelists of their responsibilities if they step outside their purview
- Scoring results are delivered to applicants with a reminder about the appellate process.
 - o Applications which do not meet the threshold requirements will not be included in the Priority List in Exhibit 1, and therefore will not be forwarded to HUD for consideration
 - o If more applications are submitted than the CoC has money to fund, the lowest-scoring applications will not be included in the Priority List in Exhibit 1, and therefore will not be forwarded to HUD for consideration

Policy for Appeals of Rating/Ranking

Eligible Appeals

- The application of any applicant agency which a) is unranked, or b) receives less funding than they applied for may appeal
- Applicants that have been found not to meet the threshold requirements are not eligible for an appeal
- Appeals cannot be based upon the judgment of the Rating & Ranking Committee

Applicants may appeal if they can:

- Prove their score is not reflective of the application information provided; or
- Describe bias or unfairness in the process, which warrants the appeal

All notices of appeal must be based on the information submitted by the application due date. No new or additional information will be considered. Omissions to the application cannot be appealed.

The decision of the Appeal Committee will be final.

The Appeal Committee

- The Appeal Committee will be made up of four (4) members of the Continuum of Care: 3 members are Appeal Committee voting members and one is a non-voting member
- The three voting members will not have participated on the original Rating & Ranking Committee
- The one non-voting member must be a member of the original Rating & Ranking Committee
- No member of the Appeal Committee may have a conflict of interest with any of the agencies applying for McKinney funding and must sign a conflict of interest statement
- The role of the Appeal Committee is to read and review only those areas of the application that are being appealed

The Appeal Process

- Any and all appeals must be received in writing within three (3) business days of the notification of ranking to projects
- All notices of appeal (one original and four copies) must be submitted to:
President Of Board Of Directors
- The notice of appeal must include a written statement specifying in detail the grounds asserted for the appeal, must be signed by an individual authorized to represent the sponsor agency (i.e., Executive Director)
- The notice of appeal is limited to one single spaced page in 12-point font
- The appeal must include a copy of the application and all accompanying materials submitted to the Rating & Ranking Committee; no additional information can be submitted
- All valid appeals will be read, reviewed and evaluated by the Appeal Committee
- The Appeal Committee will meet to deliberate.
 - All applicants will be invited to attend any appeal and may make a 10-minute statement regarding the appeal
 - The panel will review the rankings made by the Rating & Ranking Committee only on the basis of the submitted project application, the one page appeal, any statements made during the appeal process, and the material used by the Rating & Ranking Committee; no new information can be submitted by the applicant or reviewed by the Appeal Committee
 - The decision of the appellate panel must be supported by a simple majority vote
- The appealing agency will receive, in writing, the decision of the Appeal Committee within 2 business days of the Appeal Committee Meeting; the decision of the Appeal Committee will be final

Final Prioritized List of Applications

The final prioritized list of proposals must be approved by the general membership of the CoC. Any COC members with a conflict of interest (e.g. employed by an applicant agency) must abstain from the vote approving the priority list. This list will be forwarded to HUD; individual applications and supporting documentation, signature pages, and required attachments must be incorporated into the final Exhibit 1 of the Continuum of Care application. Funding is typically based upon the prioritized list of applicants who were submitted, however, actual awards/award amounts are determined by HUD.