

## **Continuum of Care Written Standard for Rankings and Ratings Protocol**

### **NY-505 Syracuse/Auburn, Onondaga, Oswego and Cayuga Counties**

**I. Purpose:** The Housing and Homeless Coalition of Central New York (HHC) NOFA protocols for the Continuum of Care (CoC) establishes a transparent framework for the decision-making process guiding the annual CoC NOFA scoring, ranking and approval process. In order to best serve our community members through provision of effective projects and capturing the maximum funds available, projects which most closely align with the HUD and CoC priorities will be prioritized for funding.

A preliminary, quantitative review of each local application (new/bonus and renewal) submitted will be completed by the Ranking and Ratings Committee. The Committee will be comprised of non CoC-funded members who are familiar with the CoC projects and process and are community stakeholders. These members include: Onondaga County Department of Social Services – Economic Security Deputy Executive Commissioner, City of Syracuse Neighborhood and Business Development Deputy Commissioner, City of Syracuse Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Coordinator, Onondaga County Single Point of Access (SPOA) Coordinator, Oswego County Department of Social Services, Oswego County COACH (Homeless Coalition) Board Member, CoC Immediate Past Chair, United Way of Central New York Community Impact Director, Onondaga County RHY Coordinator, City of Auburn Neighborhood and Business Development Director, Cayuga County Department of Social Services Deputy Commissioner, Volunteer Lawyers Project Executive Director, CoC Formerly Homeless Board Member, HMIS Administrator (non-voting), and the CoC Director (non-voting).

The Committee will be convened for the purpose of reviewing and ranking new bonus project proposals and renewal applications for the NOFA. This review will include:

- Confirm that application was submitted on time
- Confirm that all required attachments were submitted
- Calculate performance scores
- Confirm matching fund requirements are met

## **II. Evaluation Process for (Scoring and Ranking Overview)**

### **A. Evaluation Process**

Performance measures and relative scoring is developed annually based on HUD priorities and national and local objectives. As approved by the HHC Advisory Board and General Membership, the scoring mechanism is established.

#### **1. New projects**



On behalf of the CoC, the HHC will issue a local application for new projects soon after the NOFA is released by HUD. Each agency considering applying for a new project will be required to submit an application to the HHC Director. The timing of submitting the application will be determined by the Ranking and Ratings Committee and determined by the timing of the NOFA application, but no less than 15 days from the release of the application. The Ranking and Ratings Committee then reviews applications for adherence to the following of HUD and local threshold criteria:

- Project eligibility for the HUD bonus for permanent housing activities
- Project ability to meet basic HUD criteria (e.g. serve eligible populations, meet cash match requirements, etc.);
- Project ability to meet local priorities (populations include chronically homeless, families, and unaccompanied youth under 25) and local threshold criteria (utilization of grant funds, submitting APRs within 90 days of program year ending, quarterly drawdowns in LOCCS);
- Demonstrate that the agency is able to meet project quality threshold criteria are met within the time frame specified by HUD.

## 2. Renewal Projects

All projects requesting renewal funding will be evaluated via a local application sent to the HHC Director and reviewed by the Rating and Ranking Committee to determine their effectiveness in achieving the stated goals of the project and in addressing local and federal priorities; including meeting the HUD System Performance Measurements (noted by \*). The Ranking and Rating Committee will be reviewing the System Performance Measures when determining projects' eligibility to apply for renewal funds.

- HHC meeting participation
- Adults exiting with cash resources and entered the project without cash resources\*
- Adults exiting with non-cash benefits and entered the project without non-cash benefits\*
- Adults exiting into permanent housing\*
- Adults exiting with employment\*
- Must be involved with the CoC's Coordinated Entry System or willing to be involved. Involvement is defined by signing on to the Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedures Manual located on the [HHC website](#), accepting referrals through HMIS or otherwise by street outreach providers, shelter and transitional housing programs and attending Coordinated Entry Workgroup meetings.
- Demonstrating a plan in the renewal application for reaching homeless individuals and families (population applicant serves). Provide information that demonstrates that 100 percent of the geographic area is considered, and that describes the specific outreach procedures in place that are used by the homeless service agencies to identify and engage homeless individuals and families, including their efforts to provide meaningful outreach to persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency. Programs must describe the procedures they will use to



market their housing and supportive services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, or disability, who are least likely to apply in the absence of special outreach.

- Other general project overview
  - Project overview
  - Grant amount, uses and changes over past year
  - HUD priorities – Housing First, ending Chronic, Family and Youth homelessness; must include a chronic prioritization policy in the local application showing that projects are prioritizing the chronically homeless first when they have a turnover bed
  - Target populations: outreach, engagement, geographic coverage
  - Efforts to access mainstream resources – documenting these efforts via a policy required in the local application showing that the program will connect participants to mainstream resources and documenting ways that they are currently accomplishing this and any future efforts
  - Use of HMIS – enters all HUD Universal Data Elements (UDE) and maintains a report card grade of an A in HMIS
  - Collaboration – works with other agencies to provide services for the individuals and families receiving services in the project; participates in Coordinated Entry and collaborates with shelters and outreach providers to house the most vulnerable individuals and families.
  - Community involvement - participates in the CoC, maintains 60% HHC meeting attendance
  - Movement toward self-sufficiency – showing evidence that people in the project are exhibiting growth and able to move on from PSH resources.
  - Program participant driven services – documenting person-centered treatment in the project via the requirement of a policy attached to the local application showing that participants are actively engaged in their goals/objectives and time in the project
  - Project budget – must provide a project budget for the funding request fiscal year
  - Match (no leverage in FY2017 NOFA) – Demonstrates 25% match for all projects via match letters

The HHC's Operations Committee reviews and updates the monitoring/scoring tool used to score renewal projects on effectiveness and compliance annually. The monitoring/scoring tool is available on the [HHC website](#). The Committee is comprised of representatives from CoC and ESG-funded agencies as well as representatives from County (DSS) and City (ESG/CDBG) government. Once the tool is completed and voted on by members of the Committee, the tool is then sent to the HHC Advisory Board for review and then for final review and by the entire Coalition. The HHC Director conducts monitoring visits to



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CoC-funded programs annually. Five client files (one open and one closed) are reviewed on-site and the Coordinator also visits housing projects and reviews APR data submitted to HUD and APR data from ServicePoint (the CoC's HMIS System). Performance and HMIS data are heavily weighted measures used by HUD in determining the overall CoC Application scores of local Continuums. Data taken from our CoC (from both funded and non-funded projects such as shelters/street outreach providers) will be submitted to HUD and used to calculate the overall CoC systems performance in moving to permanent housing, housing stability, and obtaining mainstream resources and employment resources. It is important that each project is working to achieve these goals.

Additionally, performance data collected helps the CoC to better define local homelessness issues and help to achieve the goal of ending homelessness. Participation in HMIS and quality data entry is mandatory for those agencies seeking new and renewal CoC funds. System Performance Measures provide an objective evaluation of current program performance. It provides the quantitative basis for scoring the performance of renewal projects in the CoC's local application process and is used by the CoC to assess the system-wide progress of the region in meeting established benchmarks.

The HHC Director scores the projects accordingly from the monitoring/scoring tool with oversight by the Operations Committee Chair and HHC Board Chair. Total scores for each project are determined by adding up points in each section. The completed tools are provided to the programs and a score listing is generated by the Director and sent to the Advisory Board along with any issues presented. Additionally, a letter from the HHC Director is sent to the Executive Director of the agency to inform them of the scoring and any issues. All project types (i.e., PSH and RRH) are judged together in Ranking and Ratings Committee meetings, both new and renewals.

The HHC Director may include low-scoring renewal applications in the CoC HUD application so as not to create service gaps within the CoC. However, low-scoring projects (scoring below the 50% threshold) may work with HHC to develop a Project Improvement Plan. A project working under a Project Improvement Plan will need to demonstrate progress toward identified outcomes to remain competitive in future NOFA competitions.

Scores from the local application will also be factored into this process this year. This is a new requirement to document to the Ranking and Ratings Committee that projects are fully understanding of the local and HUD priorities and documenting their ability to provide the best service to the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community. This is especially helpful for projects who were newly funded and do not have funding nor participants in the projects and were not eligible for a monitoring visit this year.



### **C. Ranking protocol**

A project ranking list is then generated, in alignment with HUD and local CoC priorities and with recommendation and guidance from the HHC Director who has monitored the projects.

Projects will be recommended based upon the project application and monitoring scores that fall within the final pro rata share for the CoC, split between Tiers 1 and 2, according to HUD's NOFA. Projects 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.

Renewal projects that are recommended for funding but did not meet the 50% threshold may work with HHC to develop a Project Improvement Plan. The CoC will work with these projects to develop a plan to improve program performance and monitor the progress with these efforts. If these efforts are not successful, appropriate measures will be taken, such as a reduction in funding or reallocation of the project in future NOFA competitions.

There also may be new projects which fail to meet the requirements that will be held out of the competition. These projects may request that the CoC provide them with technical assistance to assist them in improving their interest in submitting an application for future competitions. This process ensures that organizations that may lack the current capacity to receive a federal grant, can build their capacity for a future year.

New Projects will be ranked in conjunction with Renewal Projects to ensure that the best applications are forwarded to the federal competition. The CoC HMIS grant will be placed into Tier 1. The Planning Grant will not be ranked for the FY2017 NOFA.

For the FY2017 NOFA Competition, the Ranking and Ratings Committee determined to rank and prioritize all projects in the following order, based on PIT, SysPM, APR and monitoring data to determine severity/level of need to rank projects in our CoC,: chronically homeless (CH) individuals, CH families, Veterans (one project focusing on dishonorably discharged), PSH families, RRH families, RRH Individuals, PSH youth, RRH youth, HMIS, PSH individuals only.

All projects are also reviewed based on severity/level of need including, but not limited to, CH, victims of violence (i.e. domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, etc.), Vets (particularly dishonorably discharged), reentry, seriously & persistently mentally ill, chronic health conditions, substance use disorders, LGBTQ, etc.



### **III. Appeals Process**

Once the HHC Director, in conjunction with the Ranking and Ratings Committee, have ranked applicants' renewal applicants, the preliminary ranking will be emailed to all member agencies with specific scoring forwarded to the related applicant.

The Ratings and Rankings Committee's recommendation will be presented to the HHC Advisory Board for approval. An applicant may challenge the Ranking and Ratings' recommendation to the Board by emailing the HHC Director a Notice of Appeal. The appellant must attend the HHC Advisory Board meeting. The appellant will be allowed to make a 10 minute presentation to the Board. The Board's decision on the slate is final. No Board Member with a conflict of interest may participate in the discussion or vote on the slate.

NOTE: Appeals will only be considered in cases where applicants have concerns specific to the review process and scoring of their application. Appeals specific to the ranking or funding recommendation will not be considered. 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.

Should the project decide to pursue a formal appeal to HUD, the applicant will be referred to page 58 of the FY2017 NOFA Section X to follow HUD's appeals process for submitting a solo application outside of the CoC.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 structures will be reviewed with the Ratings and Rankings Committee and HHC Advisory Board and, at the next general membership or a special meeting called to ensure voting is accomplished 15 days prior to the submission deadline for the CoC Application, approved by the HHC membership.

The recommendation of the HHC Director with General Membership approval will be final.

### **IV. Reallocation protocol:**

The CoC may use the reallocation process to shift funds in whole or part from existing renewal projects to new project applications without decreasing the CoC's annual renewal demand. HUD strongly encourages CoCs to take advantage of this option.

The funds may be reallocated to develop new permanent supportive housing projects, new rapid re-housing projects, HMIS funds, or Support Services Only (SSO) for Coordinated Assessment. The CoC has decided not to apply for the SSO for Coordinated Assessment in this fiscal year.



Upon recommendation by the HHC Director and the Ranking and Ratings Committee, agencies with the lowest performing projects will be notified of the recommendation for either reallocation or development of a Project Improvement Plan. In the event that an agency has failed to make progress on a Project Improvement Plan, the agency will be notified of the recommendation for funding reduction, or non-renewal and reallocation.

Projects may be reallocated if they no longer meet HUD and/or local priority.

### **New Project Applications from Reallocated Dollars**

When the NOFA is released, the HHC Ratings and Rankings Committee will convene to develop the local application and review the score listing from the monitoring tools along with discussing HUD priorities for the current NOFA application and deliberate whether projects should be reallocated. Once the Committee decides to reallocate the funding from the CoC-funded agency, the Advisory Board is immediately notified by the HHC Director along with the agency whose funding has been deemed as necessary to reallocate. The appeals process previously discussed will be applicable to the reallocation process. Agencies with projects that have been reallocated are highly encouraged to apply for the reallocated funds to be made available and will receive an additional 5 points on their local application for self-reallocation, however the funds will be competitive and subject to the local application process similar to the bonus funding application process. The timing of submitting the local application will be determined by the Ranking and Ratings Committee and determined by the timing of the NOFA application. The Rankings and Ratings Committee reviews applications for adherence to the following of HUD and local threshold criteria (see page 2 for more information on this criteria):

- Project eligibility for permanent housing activities (Permanent Housing for Persons with Disabilities, prioritizing chronically homeless, target populations of chronic, families and unaccompanied youth);
- Project ability to meet basic HUD criteria (e.g. serve eligible populations, meet match requirements, etc.);
- Project ability to meet local priorities and local threshold criteria;
- Demonstrate that the agency is able to meet project quality threshold criteria are meet within the time frame specified by HUD.