

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS Continuum of Care (NWA CoC) Rank and Review Procedures

Election of Ranking and Review Committee Members

The CoC annually elects the Ranking and Review 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 Ranking and Review 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; mental health; substance abuse; veteran's services; and consumers. The members of the committee must be unbiased and not be employed by or sit on the Board of any current recipient of CoC funds or an applicant for CoC funds.

Ranking and Review Process for New and Renewal Applications

The elected and unbiased Ranking and Review Committee will meet annually to review new and renewal projects, recommend reallocations, and rank projects for inclusion in the HUD NWA CoC Application. The proposal scores and rankings will be based on the current year's notice of availability of funding and the objective scoring rubric, both of which will be widely distributed and available on the collaborative applicant's website. Renewal project outcomes for the previous full program year, as indicated by the Annual Progress Report housed in HMIS, will weigh heavily in the scoring. A new project's proposed outcomes and evidence that the outcomes are achievable through experience will be important. A project's cost effectiveness, efficiency, participation in CoC activities, participation with HMIS, and participation in coordinated entry are expected. Housing first and other evidence based practices are expected.

- Ranking and Review Committee members (3-5) are trained. The Ranking and Review Committee Training includes:
 - Information regarding homeless activities, needs, services, definitions and other issues that are pertinent to the CoC
 - A background of McKinney Vento and the local process
 - The role of the Ranking & Review Committee
 - Review of the scoring tools, applications, and resources
- Ranking and Review Committee members receive eligible applications and scoring materials
- All Ranking and Review Committee members reviews all applications using a scoring rubric
- Ranking and Review Committee meets to review and discuss each application together and to individually score them; The Collaborative Applicant Executive Director may provide an APR data summary for renewal projects to the committee for their review; The Collaborative Applicant Executive Director is not present at the meeting during deliberations. The Ranking and Review Committee then gives their total score sheet and ranking to the Collaborative Applicant Executive Director to send announcements and post on the Collaborative Applicant's website.

New Projects as a Result of Bonus, Reallocation, or Pro-Rata Availability and Renewal Projects

The Ranking and Review Committee will review and score projects equally whether they are new projects or renewal projects, per the scoring rubric published on its website. The CoC will advertise in the local newspaper, post on its website, and/or distribute to its membership a public notice requesting applications for both new and renewal projects. If a bonus project is allowed and has different scoring criteria than other projects, the information will be part of the notice. The CoC's priorities and details of eligible applications, as defined by the current year's NOFA, will be posted. The due date for submission to the CoC will be at least 30 days prior to the due date of the CoC Collaborative Application. The Ranking and Review Committee will make available, on the collaborative applicant's website, the rank order of the projects at least 15 days prior to the submission of the CoC Collaborative Application. All applicants, whether included in the submission or rejected, will be notified of the decision in writing, and outside of esnaps, at least 15 days prior to the submission of the CoC Collaborative Application.

Reviewing and Prioritizing Projects for Funding

The Ranking and Review Committee will review all new and renewal applications for CoC funds to determine eligibility, score, and rank based on the terms of the current year's NOFA.

General Procedure

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

- The Collaborative Applicant considers community priorities, then designs and presents scoring tools and materials to the NWA CoC Board of Directors for approval; the NWA CoC Board of Directors considers and approves the scoring tools and materials.
- 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 NWA CoC area) via the following open solicitation methods:
 - Letters/emails
 - Responses to public inquiries
 - Announcements at CoC and other public meetings
- Any agency interested in applying for funds will be required to complete a Letter of Intent/proposal and must be submitted by the posted due date in the notice that is posted on the collaborative applicant's website and widely distributed
- Applications and additional information are collected and reviewed according to the current year's notice
- A Ranking and Review Committee is elected annually by the CoC General Membership
- The Ranking and Review Committee reviews, scores, and ranks the projects using the approved scoring rubric that is posted on the collaborative applicant's website.

Funding Priorities and Local Need

Services and housing for persons experiencing homelessness 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, which are part of a year-long process. 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.

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 given for projects serving 1) chronically homeless, 2) youth and 3) families
- Renewals and new projects will be scored and rated and ranked by the Ranking and Review Committee. Renewals may be given preference points, as determined by the NWA CoC Board of Directors; however, they are generally scored equally with new projects
- Renewal projects may apply for only one year of funding

Procedures for Application Submissions

- Letters of Intent/ proposals must be mailed or delivered per the instructions on the posted and widely distributed notice
- Proposals must be submitted via e-snaps by the identified due date, usually 30 days prior to the submission date of the CoC Collaborative Application
- Proposals will be due by 5:00 pm on the due date

Late and Incomplete Applications Policy

- Late Letters of Intent will not be accepted
- Incomplete Applications: incomplete applications cannot be cured for Ranking and Review Committee scoring, but must be corrected prior to HUD submission; the original application (not the copies) will be examined to determine if all pieces of the application have been submitted

Using All Available Funds

The CoC will do everything possible to ensure that all funds possibly available to the community are applied for. Thus, when all on-time applications have been submitted and it appears that either 1) the community is not requesting as much money as is available from HUD or 2) no eligible bonus projects have been submitted, then:

- The CoC staff will email all CoC Board Members and other interested parties (all homeless service and housing providers in the NWA CoC area) with specifics regarding:
 - How much money is available
 - For what type of programs
- Any additional applications for these funds will be due one week after this email is distributed

Application Eligibility Threshold Review

Projects must pass a threshold review before being submitted to the Ranking & Review Committee. The collaborative applicant 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 Ranking and Review Committee for reading and scoring. Proposals not completely meeting threshold review criteria will not be Board Approved August 2, 2017

forwarded to the Ranking and Review Committee for further consideration. Proposals completely meeting eligibility threshold review criteria will be submitted to the Ranking and Review Committee and will be scored according to the scoring criteria.

Ranking and Review Committee Policies

Eligible proposals will be prioritized for inclusion in CoC's coordinated application by the Ranking & Review 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 NWA CoC Board of Directors will establish minimum requirements in order to maximize competitiveness of the CoC's application. Examples of these application minimums include, but are not limited to, housing/service funding ration requested and amount of leverage.

Scoring Tools

Scoring tools are created by the Ranking and Review Committee and approved by the NWA CoC Board of Directors. Using these scoring tools, the Ranking and Review Committee will review the following objective rating measures to assess the performance of projects seeking funding:

- Independent audits
- Site visits
- Surveys of program clients
- Project readiness
- 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
- APR data
- Program Outcomes
- Increases in Income
- Reducing Length of Time Homeless
- Exits to Permanent Housing
- Coordination with the system as a whole
- Other priorities, to be determined by the CoC (based on NOFA priorities)

Ranking of Projects for the Collaborative Application Project Listing

The Ranking and Review Committee will rank both renewal and new projects selected to be included in the CoC Collaborative Application using their total score. The Ranking and Review Committee may apply bonus points based on HUD's priorities as articulated in the NOFA and/ or local priorities. All points available, including bonus points, will be part of the notice (RFP) and posted on a scoring rubric available on the collaborative applicant's website. Projects outside of the funding line will not be included in

the CoC Collaborative Application.

Reallocation Policy:

A public request for proposals will be widely distributed as soon as possible after the annual Notification of Funding Availability is released by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The request for proposals, as approved by the CoC, will be distributed to the CoC email distribution list that includes CoC members, local jurisdictions, and the general community. In addition, the availability of the request for proposals will be advertised in the local newspaper available across the NWA area. The request for proposals will request both new and renewal proposals for inclusion in the upcoming submission of the NWA CoC application. The CoC-approved scoring rubric and the request for proposals will be posted on the agencies website.

Objective criteria for both new and renewal proposals will be considered. For renewals, Annual progress Report (APR) information, fit within the homeless services delivery system, HMIS data quality, and cost efficiency will be critical factors. For new projects, HMIS participation and data quality, proposed outcomes and evidence based practices that improve the homeless services delivery system will be critical factors. Projects that aim to end chronic homelessness by 2017, sustain an end to homelessness among veterans, end homelessness among families, including persons and families fleeing domestic violence, and end homelessness among youth by 2020, and set a course to prevent and end all homelessness in Northwest Arkansas will be given the highest consideration. All projects will be scored by an elected unbiased review committee using the posted scoring rubric. All review committee members' scores will be added together for each project and the projects, whether new or renewal, will be ranked per the scores. Any new projects that fall below the available funding line (Annual Renewal Amount plus any bonus availability) will be rejected. Any renewal that falls below the funding line will be reduced or completely reallocated in order to include higher scoring new projects in the NWA COC application.

Any renewal project may elect to voluntarily reallocate funds to create a new project that fits with the system in a better way. For example, a transitional housing project may elect to have its funds reallocated to a new rapid rehousing program or a leasing project may elect to reduce its project by moving from FMR leasing amounts to actual leasing amounts if there is a history of returning leasing funds. In the event that a program voluntarily reallocates funds, the agency will state its intentions by submitting the new project request to be reviewed, scored, and ranked by the unbiased review committee and will not submit a request for renewal.

APPEALS

Policy for Appeals

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 Ranking & Review Committee; rather, objective information presented at the time of the proposal.

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 NWA CoC: 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 Ranking & Review Committee
- The one non-voting member must be a member of the original Ranking & Review 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 of projects
- All notices of appeal (one original and four copies) must be submitted to:
NWA Continuum of Care
Fayetteville, AR 72704
- 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 Ranking & Review 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 Ranking and Review 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 Ranking & Review 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

Grantee Drops Out

If, after the Ranking and Review Committee has reviewed applications and made priority determinations, an applicant decides not to submit their application to HUD, the CoC will do everything possible to ensure that all funds possibly available to the community are applied for.

- If there were any applications/ proposals rejected due to lack of funds, the next highest scoring proposal(s) will be considered for inclusion in the NWA CoC application
- If there were no applications/ proposals that fell below the funding line, the Executive Director of the collaborative applicant may email all CoC and other interested parties all homeless service and housing providers in the NWA CoC area) with specifics regarding:
 - How much money is available;
 - For what type of programs.
- Any additional applications for these funds will be due one week after this email is distributed
- The Ranking and Review Committee will review applications that are submitted and will meet, either in- person or via conference call, to score and rank these applications.

