Rensselaer County Homeless Services Collaborative:

Rank and Review Process

The Rensselaer County Homeless Services Collaborative (RCHSC) NOFA Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As stated in the RCHSC Governance Charter, the NOFA Committee is responsible for “assisting the Collaborative Applicant in preparing and submitting the Continuum of Care application” including the design and operation of a collaborative process for developing and approving the submission of applications. Each year the Rank and Review Application and a Review Team is established by the Committee which is then reviewed and approved by full Membership.

**Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Application**

The Rank and Review process begins after the Collaborative Applicant submits the Grant Inventory Worksheet. Once submitted, the NOFA Committee:

1. Meets to discuss the prior year’s Rank & Review application, process, and feedback from reviewers and applicants.
2. Makes revisions to the application based on information gained on behalf of the CoC during the past year.
3. Recommends possible Review Team members, considering previous reviewers and potential new members.
4. Presents the revised draft of the application and potential reviewers to the RCHSC Board. Any additional changes to the application or review team suggested by the Board may be made by the Committee.
5. After updating the Board, the revised application and review team are presented to full Membership before the comment period. Any comments received from Membership are then considered by the Committee for final decisions regarding further revisions.
6. The Rank & Review Application and Review Team are then finalized and shared with Membership for projects to complete.

Project Participation

Each renewal project (with the exception of HMIS, Coordinated Entry or planning projects) is required to complete a Rank & Review Application. The most recent project application and APR are generally used to complete the application, which must be submitted with all required attachments by the stated deadline in order to be considered complete and shared with the Review Team. At the time of submission, each project/agency is assigned an interview time with the Review Team. Each agency is expected to meet with the Review Team.

Reviewers

Members of the Review Team include individuals from the continuum or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are non-funded and objective individuals who are members, as well as nonmembers, of the CoC. Either the Collaborative Applicant or members of the NOFA Committee invite potential Review Team members to participate in the CoC’s Rank & Review process. When reviewers commit to participate, a day is scheduled for Rank & Review project interviews and scoring to take place. Each reviewer is provided a copy of project applications and score forms. The Review Team convenes, conducts interviews with each agency, then scores each application which result in the ranking, arranged highest to lowest. The Review Team provides any final comments to be shared with projects or the NOFA Committee.

Project Ranking

The project ranking is first shared with the NOFA Committee. The Committee reviews the process and all scoring in order to adopt the ranking. Projects projected to fall into Tier 2 are contacted and notified of their ranking and offered the opportunity to go over the project scores. The ranking is then shared with Membership, and each project receives a copy of their individual scores and offered the opportunity to meet/debrief with the Collaborative Applicant. If during the debriefing a mathematical error is found, the score can be corrected and shared the NOFA Committee and the Board are notified. Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project after debriefings occur.

*Appeals Process*

The appeals process applies only to project ranking; there is no appeal for project tiering. An appeal may be submitted only if the applicant: 1) answered all questions on the application, 2) submitted application with all required attachments, and 3) submitted by the required deadline. The Review Team also acts as the Appeals Committee. Representatives from each program have 30 minutes to present their appeal, either via written materials and/or oral argument. After all presentations, there is a discussion among Appeals Committee members. Decisions will be made quickly and all projects will be notified within 48 hours.

Project Tiering

When the NOFA is released, the priorities and tiering outlined are strategically applied by the CoC to project ranking. Reallocation, new projects and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions. The NOFA Committee present tiering to the Board, which after approving is returned to Membership for a vote. Membership votes on the tiering, and approves the Project Listing and CoC Application.

*Reallocation*

In addition to the scoring criteria, all projects must meet a minimum threshold of 60 points. A threshold review will take place after the Rank and Review process is completed, to ensure each project meets the threshold determined. If the threshold is not met, the Rank and Review Team may recommend possible reallocation/s or significant amendments to the contract/s to the CoC Board.

Projects that can be automatically flagged for reallocation consideration:

* Projects with inadequate financial management
* Projects with a history of expending funds on ineligible activities or not expending funds at all

CoC agencies voluntarily choosing to reallocate CoC funds will receive priority in the reallocation ranking process, which is also overseen by the Rank and Review Team.

Attachment B: FY2015 Rank and Review Application

The RCHSC emphasizes the importance and impact of using the Rank & Review Application as the primary basis for determining the Project Listing submitted as part of the CoC Consolidated Application. The Rank and Review Application is thoughtfully revised each year to include both HUD and CoC standards, incorporating both national and local priorities, and balancing objective performance measures with subjective narrative description of project operations.