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# RENSSELAER COUNTY HOMELESS SERVICES COLLABORATIVE: 2018 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

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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 both the Board and full Membership.

The RCHSC emphasizes the importance and impact of using the Rank & Review Application as the primary basis for determining the ranking within the Project Listing submitted as part of the CoC Consolidated Application. The Rank & 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 somewhat subjective narrative descriptions of project operations.

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

After the CoC Application is submitted by the Collaborative Applicant, the NOFA Committee begins discussing the prior year’s Rank and Review Process document and Application, based on feedback from reviewers and applicants. The NOFA Committee:

1. Establishes a tentative timeline annually for the Rank and Review Process, working around the NOFA release.
2. Discusses the prior year’s Rank & Review Application, Process, and feedback from reviewers and applicants.
3. Revises the Application based on information gained on behalf of the CoC in the past year.
4. Elicits feedback on Rank and Review tool from neighboring Continuum of Care NOFA Committees.
5. Recommends 3-5 Review Team members, considering previous and potential new reviewers.
6. Presents the revised draft of the Process, Reviewers and Applications (renewal, reallocated and bonus) to the RCHSC Board. Any subsequent recommendations for changing the Process, Reviewer and/or Applications from the Board (majority vote) will be made by the Committee.
7. Presents the revised Process, Applications and Review Team to full Membership for review during the one-week comment period. Any comments from Membership are considered by the Committee and any further revisions are determined and accepted by the Board.
8. Finalizes and distributes the Rank & Review Application with Membership for agencies to complete.
9. Reviews the priorities outlined in the NOFA and strategically applies them to the CoC project ranking.
10. Opportunities for Reallocated and Bonus Projects are discussed with CoC Membership.

### *Project Participation*

- **Renewal Projects** (with exception of HMIS, Coordinated Entry and Planning Projects) are required to complete a Rank & Review Renewal Application (using the most recent project application and Calendar Year APR) and submit with all required attachments by the stated deadline in order to be

shared with and reviewed by the Review Team. Projects without a full year of data will be placed at the bottom of Tier 1 with the HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects.

- **Reallocated Projects:** Reallocation is the process by which the CoC shifts funds, in whole or in part, from existing eligible renewal grant(s) in order to create new projects which will meet unmet local need/s. CoC agencies which voluntarily choose to reallocate funds will receive priority in the Ranking Process (also overseen by the Review Team). Project types that can be developed through reallocation are decided annually by HUD.
- **Bonus Projects:** Bonus funds may be available each year. The CoC is permitted to apply for Bonus Projects which will compete nationally against other Bonus Project Applications based on a HUD scoring system set forth in the NOFA. HUD notifies the CoCs if Bonus Funds are available annually and what they may be used for. Proposed Bonus Projects must complement and fulfill unmet need/s in the community. The Bonus Project requires a separate application (separate RFP) to be scored and ranked. The CoC will accept Bonus Project proposals during the same time frame as Rank and Review Applications. Bonus Projects will be selected in order to apply for all available funds.

### *Review Team*

Members of the Review Team include individuals from the continuum or neighboring communities knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are non-funded, objective individuals who may be members and nonmembers of the CoC. The Collaborative Applicant invites potential Review Team members to participate in the CoC's Rank & Review process. Each reviewer is provided a copy of project applications and score forms. The Review Team convenes to score each application which results in the CoC ranking from highest to lowest points. The Review Team provides any final comments to CARES to be shared with projects or the NOFA Committee, and will also serve as the Appeals Committee if an appeal is submitted by a project.

### *Project Ranking*

Project scores and ranking are first shared with the NOFA Committee, then each agency receives a copy of their individual project score/s and are offered the opportunity to debrief with the Collaborative Applicant (within two days of notification). If a mathematical error is found during the review or debriefing, the score will be corrected and shared with the NOFA Committee. After any appeals are processed (see below) the NOFA Committee will adjust scores and ranking per Reviewer Team determinations. The final ranking is first shared with the Board, then agencies with project/s falling into Tier 2 are contacted/notified of their ranking by the Collaborative Applicant, and finally shared with full Membership.

### *Appeals Process*

Formal appeals can be submitted by a project only after debriefings occur (within two days after debriefing). Appeals must be submitted to CARES within two business days after debriefing. The appeals process applies only to project scoring and ranking; there is no appeal for project tiering. An appeal may not be based on the following: 1) failure to answer required question/s; 2) failure to submit the application with all required attachments, or 3) failure to submit by the required deadline. The Review Team also serves as the Appeals Committee. Representatives from each project have 15 minutes to present their appeal

either via written materials and/or oral argument. After presentations, the Appeals Committee determines if project/s will receive any additional points and projects will be notified within 24 hours.

### ***Threshold Review***

In addition to scoring criteria, all projects must meet a minimum threshold of 60 points. A Threshold Review will occur after the Rank and Review process is complete. 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 may 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

### ***Project Tiering***

When the NOFA is released, the national priorities and tiering outlined are strategically applied to project ranking by the CoC. Due to the essential nature of HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects, these projects are automatically placed at the bottom of Tier 1. Projects without a full year of data will be placed at the bottom of Tier 1 with the HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects. Reallocated and New projects are placed below all renewal projects, HMIS projects, projects that have been awarded funds but not yet begun, and Coordinated Entry projects. Planning Projects do not appear in the Tiering. The NOFA Committee presents the strategically applied tiering to the Board, which after approving is returned to Membership for a vote. Membership votes on the tiering, which is submitted as the Project Listing in the CoC Application.