
POINTS NORTH HOUSING COALITION: 2018 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless assistance programs serve as a source of funding for homeless services in the Counties of Jefferson, St. Lawrence, and Lewis. In the 2017 NOFA, the Points North CoC received \$1,290,975 from HUD to support 8 projects for homeless individuals and families, 1 HMIS project, and 1 CoC planning project. HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition.

In order for the CoC to gain insight into programs that are best serving the community at the local level the community has implemented a Rank and Review Process for new and renewal projects. This process will help the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.

In the Points North Housing Coalition, the NOFA Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the PNHC bylaws, the NOFA Committee is responsible to prepare and carry out plans related to the design, operation, and following of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities and the number and type 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 once the Collaborative Applicant submits the Grant Inventory Worksheet. Once submitted, the NOFA Committee meets to discuss the previous year's Rank & Review application, process, and feedback from reviewers and projects. The committee considers information gained on behalf of the CoC over the past year and makes revisions to the application. The committee also suggests possible review team members, considering the previous reviewers and potential new members. The committee presents the revised draft of the application and the potential reviewers to the Board of Directors. Any additional changes to the application or review team suggested by the Board of Directors may be made by the committee. Once the NOFA committee has updated the Board of Directors, the R&E team are presented to full Membership for the comment period. Any comments received from Membership are then considered by the committee for final decisions regarding further revisions. The Rank & Review Application and review team are then finalized and shared with Membership for projects to complete.

Project Participation

Each renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application per project. The 2017 Rank and Review Application process will take place in three (3) phases. The intention behind breaking down the Rank and Review process into 3 phases is to allow agencies adequate time to complete the full Rank and Review application at their convenience.

- Rank and Review Application Phase 1 focuses on project and system outcomes, using a project APR and HMIS System Performance data to “rate” projects. Each project will utilize the previous Calendar Year APR to complete the Rank & Review application Part 1. Each application must be completed, including all required attachments. Late submissions of Rank and Review Applications will automatically have a 5-point penalty.
- Rank and Review Application Phase 2 of the Application consists of narratives, which allow the projects to explain unique circumstances that may affect project performance. Part 2 Applications must be submitted on time to CARES, Inc. to be considered complete and passed on to the Review Committee. Late submissions of Application will automatically have a 5-point penalty. At the time of submission each agency/project is assigned an interview time with the review team.
- Project interviews will be the last phase, Phase 3, of the Rank and Review Process. After the NOFA is released, the NOFA Committee will draft questions based on the specific criteria mentioned within the application. These questions will be part of the project interview. Projects will receive these questions in advance of the interview and will supply the Review Team with written answers prior to the interview. Interviews may assist the reviewers in awarding additional points.

Reviewers

Members of the review team are individuals from the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are non-funded and objective individuals. Review team members are approached by either the Collaborative Applicant or members of the NOFA Committee and asked to participate in the CoC’s Rank & Review process. Once reviewers have agreed 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 and scores each application. These scores result in the ranking. The review team provides any final comments to be shared with projects or the NOFA Committee.

Project Ranking

The NOFA requires that the CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all applications for renewal of existing projects and applications for new projects. Using a CoC-approved Rank and Review tool, all projects seeking funding are scored and placed in numerical order based on scores. All projects will receive their scores and will be offered the opportunity to debrief and review their project scores with the Collaborative Applicant. Projects will have the ability to submit an appeal, within the allotted time frame, regarding their score following their debriefing (See the **Appeals Process**

outlined below). Following any debriefings and appeals, the project ranking is then shared with the NOFA committee. The committee reviews the process and all project scores. The ranking is then presented to the Board for review. The ranking is then shared with Membership.

Appeal Process

1. Who May Appeal?

An agency may appeal a decision concerning a project application submitted by that agency. If a project was submitted by a collaboration of agencies, only one joint appeal may be made.

2. What May Be Appealed?

An appeal may not be submitted if the basis of the appeal is one of the following: the applicant did not answer all the questions on the application, the applicant did not submit the application with all required attachments, or the applicant did not submit by the required deadline. The appeals process applies only to project ranking. There is no appeal for project tiering. If a mathematical error is found by the project, the error can be corrected, and notice of the correction will be provided to the NOFA Committee and the Board.

3. Timing of an Appeal

Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project 3 business days after a debriefing has been completed. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant who will forward them on to the Review Team. The written appeal must consist of a short statement, no longer than 1 page, of the agency's appeal. The written appeal can be in the form of a letter, memo or email. Any appeal via email must be sent to samantha@behaviorhealthnet.org, and cc the Points North NOFA Chair.

New Projects

New projects are created through bonus funds or reallocated funds. A separate RFP will be completed for new projects. If, after the ranking process, additional money becomes available through reallocation, and if all new projects have been approved and there is additional money, the new project RFP will re-open for submission in an effort to use all available funds. RFP's submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects.

Bonus Projects

Each year, HUD may offer bonus funding, and guidance is provided within the NOFA as to how the funds must be spent. Bonus projects compete nationally against other bonus projects.

A separate application is required for bonus project proposals, and the proposals must fill an unmet need, as noted within the Strategic Plan. Applications for bonus projects are accepted at the same time that renewal applications are submitted for rank and review. Agencies interested in applying for bonus funding will be given the opportunity to present their proposals to the CoC membership as well as meet

with the Review Team for an interview. Bonus applications will be ranked, and the final ranking will be presented, within the full ranking, to CoC membership for approval. When the NOFA is released, the Review Team will decide which, if any, proposals fit the criteria outlined within, and agencies will have the opportunity to resubmit their proposals to meet HUD's criteria for bonus funding. The community's goal is to apply for the maximum amount of available funds. The same appeals process that applies to renewal applications also applies to bonus project applications.

Project Tiering

When the NOFA is released, the priorities and tiering outlined in the application are strategically applied by the CoC to the project ranking. Reallocation, new projects, and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions. The tiering is presented by the NOFA Committee to the Board of Directors who approves it to go to Membership for a vote. Membership votes on the tiering and approves the Project Listing and the CoC Application.

Reallocation

Reallocation is the process by which the CoC shifts funds, in whole or in part, from existing eligible renewal grants to create new projects that fill an unmet need within the community, as noted within the Albany Strategic Plan and the HMIS Quarterly Report. Reallocation is one of the most important tools by which communities can make strategic improvements to their homeless services system.

Projects that can be flagged for reallocation consideration include those who have displayed inadequate financial management, a history of expending funds on ineligible activities, a lack of full expenditure of funds, and those which have consistently scored low during the Rank and Review process. Additionally, funds from any project not participating in Coordinated Entry, not participating in the Point-In-Time, not participating in HMIS, or operated by an agency that is not a member in good standing of the ACCH may be considered for reallocation. Further, agencies may voluntarily choose to reallocate funds from their projects. New projects developed by agencies through the reallocation of their own funds will be prioritized during the ranking process. This prioritization allows that agency to apply for a new project with those reallocated funds. All other proposed projects using reallocated funds will be ranked according to general ranking procedures.

A separate application is required for projects being developed with reallocated funds, and the proposed projects must fill an unmet need, as noted above. Applications for these projects are accepted at the same time that renewal applications are submitted for rank and review. Agencies interested in applying for reallocated funds will be given the opportunity to present their proposals to the CoC membership as well as meet with the Review Team for an interview. Applications for new projects will be ranked, separate from renewal projects, and the final ranking will be presented to CoC membership for approval. Projects being created from reallocated funds are ranked independent of bonus projects since they are funding sources.

CoC Transparency

The Rank and Review process is conducted by the CoC in a transparent manner in order to ensure a fair and consistent process for prioritizing projects. Each year, feedback on the process is solicited. The process is publicly announced by the CoC, distributed in writing to the full CoC membership, and posted publicly on the CARES website for all community members to review and comment.

FY2018 Rank and Review Application

The PNHC 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, incorporate both national and local priorities, and balance objective performance measures with subjective narrative description of project operations.