SARATOGA NORTH COUNTRY HOUSING COALITION:
2018 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Rationale

HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless assistance programs serve as a source of funding for homeless services in the Counties of Saratoga, Warren, Washington and Hamilton (collectively referred to as the Saratoga-North Country Continuum of Care). In the 2017 NOFA, the Saratoga -North Country CoC received $1,575,064 from HUD to support 13 projects for homeless individuals and families. 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 Saratoga-North Country CoC, the Rank and Review Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review Process. As described in the SNC CoC bylaws, the Continuum of Care is responsible to design, operate, and follow 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 Committee reviews the Rank and Review Process and Application and makes revisions to reflect changing priorities. The Rank and Review Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team. The written Process, the Application and the Reviewers are submitted annually for approval by the Board. Once Board approved, the Written Process and Application are posted for review and comment by full Membership.

Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Application

Once the CoC Application has been submitted, the Rank and Review 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 considers asking new members to join the Committee and participate on the review team. The Committee presents the revised draft of the application to the SNC CoC Board. Any additional changes to the application or review team suggested by the Board may be made by the Committee. Once the Rank and Review Committee has updated the Board, the application is presented to full Membership for the two-week comment period. Any comments received from Membership are then considered by the Committee for final decisions regarding further revisions. The Rank & Review Application is then finalized and shared with Membership for projects to complete.

Project Participation

Each renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application per project. The 2018 Rank and Review Application process will consist of four (4) parts.

- Rank and Review Application Part 1 focuses on project level performance. The Part 1 score will be a direct result of the agencies' performance during the annual CoC Project Monitoring. Following project submission of the CoC Self-Monitoring Forms, each project will receive a memo with a scoresheet. This scoresheet will be attached to the Rank and Review Application as Part 1.
- Rank and Review Application Part 2 focuses on System Performance data. Each project will utilize the previous Calendar Year APR to complete the Rank & Review application Part 2.
- Rank and Review Application Part 3 consists of narratives, which allow the projects to explain unique circumstances that may affect project and/or system performance. Applications must be submitted on time to the Collaborative Applicant, CARES, Inc., to be considered complete and passed on to the Review Team. Late submissions of Rank and Review Applications, including all required attachments, 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 Part 4 of the Rank and Review Process. After the NOFA is released, the Rank and Review 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. The Review Team schedules a day for Rank & Review project interviews and scoring to take place. Each reviewer is provided a copy of project applications and score forms. Once the Review Team convenes and conducts interviews with each project, the Review Team scores each application. These scores result in the ranking. The Review Team provides any final comments to be shared with projects or Membership.

Project Ranking

The NOFA requires that the CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all application 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. Project ranking is first shared with the Rank and Review Committee. The Committee reviews the process and project scores. Projects projected to fall into Tier 2 are contacted and notified of their ranking and offered the opportunity to go over the project's scores. The ranking is then presented to the Board. Afterwards, the ranking is shared with full Membership. At that time, each project receives a copy of their individual scores and is given the opportunity to meet with the Collaborative Applicant to debrief. If during this debriefing, a mathematical

error is found by the project, the error can be corrected, and notice of the correction will be provided to the Rank and Review Committee and the Board. No formal appeal is needed for a mathematical error.

Appeal Process

1. Who May Appeal?
   An agency may formally 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?
   The Appeals Process only applies to project scoring and ranking. There is no appeal for project tiering. 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 <u>only</u> to project ranking.

3. Timing of an Appeal
   Formal appeals can be submitted by a project only after a debriefing has been completed. Projects have one week from their debriefing with CARES to request an appeal in writing. Written appeals should be sent to the following entities: HSPB Co-Chairs, Continuum of Care Committee Chair, and CARES. 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. The Review Team will also serve as the Appeals Committee. Agencies will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within two (2) days of the Appeal Committee's decision. The Appeals Committee decision is final.

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 Rank and Review Committee to the Board who approves it to go to Membership for a vote. Membership votes on the tiering and approves the Project Listing and the CoC Application.

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

The availability of bonus funds are announced annually with the release of the NOFA. Eligible bonus projects must meet the annual HUD eligibility requirements. Additionally, proposed projects will be reviewed locally to ensure funds will fill an unmet need. HMIS Quarterly Reports and "Opening Doors" will be used to identify community need. Bonus funds compete nationally per the HUD scoring system set forth in the annual NOFA.

Locally, the application for a bonus projects is a separate RFP. Agencies will be given the opportunity to submit a proposal for a bonus project prior to the NOFA being released. Additional points will be granted to RFPs received prior to the release of the NOFA to encourage agencies to identify existing needs and gaps. Additionally, priority will be given according to geographic location of the project as a way to ensure equitable distribution of programs throughout the CoC.

Applications may be revised after the NOFA is released to address additional criteria. Agencies may still submit RFPs for new projects beyond the "early submission" deadline. Reviewers will score and rank the bonus projects; however, there are no interviews for bonus projects. After the bonus projects are ranked, ranking is sent to the Board and then membership. If eligible, multiple bonus projects will be chosen in order to fully utilize available funds.

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 for CoC Program funds. The CoC decides this by looking at the project listings and finding a local need that is not being filled. The CoC can decide to repurpose a project that is underperforming or may be more appropriately funded from other sources to fill that need. Reallocating funds is one of the most important tools by which communities can make strategic improvements to their homelessness system.

A project may be underperforming and potentially subject to reallocation if it does not meet a minimum threshold. A threshold review will take place after the Rank and Review process to ensure the threshold requirement has been met by each project. The minimum threshold includes: participation in Coordinated Entry, participation in Point in Time, participation within HMIS and member in good standing status. If the threshold has not been met, the Review Team can recommend to the CoC Board possible reallocation or substantial amendments to the contract. Projects that can automatically be flagged for reallocation consideration are projects with inadequate financial management and projects that have a history of expending funds on ineligible activities or not expending funds at all. For example, one factor that is reviewed is the consistent return of grant funds over multiple program years.

CoC funded agencies may voluntarily choose to reallocate CoC funds. These will be reviewed by the Review team as well. Those agencies who choose to voluntarily reallocate will receive priority in the reallocation ranking process.

CoC Transparency

The CoC conducts this Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure fairness. Each year, the process is publicly announced by the CoC, distributed in writing to the entire CoC, posted on the CARES website for the community to access, and reviewed and commented on by the entire CoC.

FY2018 Rank and Review Application

The SNC CoC 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, balancing objective performance measures with subjective narrative description of project operations.