COLUMBIA GREENE HOUSING COALITION: 2020 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 Columbia and Greene, which together form the Columbia Greene Housing Coalition (CGHC). In the 2018 NOFA, the Columbia Greene Continuum of Care received $464,344 from HUD to support 8 projects for homeless individuals and families. HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition in response to the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

In order for the CoC to prioritize programs that are most effectively 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 members of the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.

In the CGHC, the Ranking and Monitoring Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the CGHC bylaws, the Ranking and Monitoring Committee is responsible for reviewing and scoring CoC funding applications and monitoring successful HUD funded CoC Projects through performance evaluations". The Continuum of Care follows a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities and the type of applications. Each year the Ranking and Monitoring Committee reviews the Rank and Review Process and Application and makes revisions to reflect changing priorities. The Ranking and Monitoring Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team to review the project applications. The Written Process, the Application and the Review Committee are submitted annually for membership, Board feedback, and Board approval. 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

The Rank and Review process begins once the Collaborative Applicant submits the Grant Inventory Worksheet. Once submitted, the Ranking and Monitoring 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. Once the Ranking and Monitoring Committee has updated, the application is presented to the Board and Membership for a two-week comment period. Any comments received from Membership are then considered by the committee for final decisions regarding further revisions. The committee

presents the revised draft of the application to the CGHC Board. 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 2020 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 Phase 1. Each application must be completed, including all required attachments.
- Rank and Review Application Phase 2 consists of narratives, which allow the projects to explain unique circumstances that may affect project performance and answer questions related to local priorities. Late submissions of Applications 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 Phase 3 of the Rank and Review Process. After the NOFA is released, the Ranking and Monitoring 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. Interviews may assist the reviewers in awarding additional points.

Debriefings

At the end of each phase renewal projects will receive a scorecard from the collaborative applicant and will have an opportunity to request a debriefing of their scores with the collaborative applicant.

Reviewers

Members of the review team are individuals from the continuum or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are objective individuals. Committee suggested Reviewers are approached by the Collaborative Applicant and asked to participate. The Ranking and Monitoring Committee schedules a day for Rank & Review project interviews and final scoring to take place. Interviews will be scheduled for a date after the NOFA is released to allow for any HUD specific criteria to be incorporated into the interview process, as described above. 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 collaborative applicant 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 applications for renewal of existing projects and applications for new projects. Using CoC-approved Rank and Review tools, 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 at the end of each phase. 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 Ranking and Monitoring Committee. The Committee reviews the process and all project scores. The ranking is then presented to the Board for review and vote. 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 <u>only</u> to project scoring and 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 Ranking and Monitoring 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 sbarnaby@caresny.org and cc the CGHC Ranking and Monitoring Committee chair.

4. Appeals Decisions
    The Review Team also serves as the Appeal Team. Appeals are decided by majority vote of the Appeal Team. Once decided, all appeals are final and may not be overturned by the Ranking and Monitoring Committee, Board or Membership.

Project Tiering

HUD requires that the CoC ranks projects into two tiers based on the funding allocation released in the NOFA. The Collaborative Applicant uses the project ranking to tier the projects and presents the tiering to the Ranking and Monitoring Committee. When the NOFA is released, the priorities and tiering outlined in the application are strategically applied by the CoC to the project ranking (which may also affect tiering). Tiering results are then presented to the Board and for a vote and shared with Membership. Membership votes on the full application, including the tiering.

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, there may be bonus funds available. The CoC is permitted to apply for bonus projects, which will compete nationally against other bonus projects on a HUD scoring system set forth in the NOFA. HUD will notify the Continuums regarding the criteria for bonus funds. The bonus project will fill an unmet need. The application for a bonus project is a separate RFP from the renewal applications. The 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 for a vote and shared with membership. Bonus projects will be chosen with the goal of applying for all available funds. The same appeals process that applies to renewal applications also applies to bonus project applications.

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. Reallocation is one of the most important tools by which communities can make strategic improvements to their homeless services system.

In addition to the scoring criteria, all projects must meet a minimum threshold, which includes: participation in Coordinated Entry, participation in Point in Time, and participation within HMIS. Additionally, if a project consistently demonstrates unsatisfactory project performance outcomes and fails to make significant changes to improve its performance, that project may be recommended for reallocation. A threshold review will take place after the Rank and Review process to ensure the threshold requirement has been met by each project. If the threshold has not been met, the Review Team can recommend to the CoC Board possible reallocation or substantial amendments to the contract. CoC funded agencies may voluntarily choose to reallocate CoC funds. These will be reviewed by the Rank and Review team as well. Those agencies who choose to voluntarily reallocate will receive priority in the reallocation 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.

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.

FY2020 Rank and Review Application

The CGHC 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.