
ELMIRA, STEUBEN, ALLEGANY, LIVINGSTON, CHEMUNG, SCHUYLER COUNTIES COC: 2021 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 City of Elmira, and Counties of Steuben, Allegany, Livingston, Chemung, and Schuyler which together form NY - 501. In the 2020 NOFA, NY-501 received \$1,839,614 from HUD to support 11 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 which most effectively serve the community at the local level, the community has implemented a Rank and Review Process for renewal and new projects. This process helps the members of the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.

Southern Tier Entry to Programs and Services (STEPS) has charged the Rank and Review Committee with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the Continuum's bylaws, the Rank and Review Committee is responsible for "the design, operation, and following of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities. 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 Review Committee 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.

CoC Transparency

The CoC conducts the Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure fairness. Each year, the process is publicly announced by the CoC, shared in writing with the full CoC membership, and posted on the CARES website for all community members to review and comment.

FY2020 Rank and Review Application

NY-501 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.

Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Application

After the annual CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the Rank and Review Committee:

1. Reviews the previous year's Rank & Review Application, Written Process, and feedback.
2. Considers information gained on behalf of the CoC over the past year and, if necessary, revises the application.
3. Suggests possible review team members, with consideration to previous reviewers and potential new members.
4. Presents the application and review team to the Board and membership for public comment.
5. Considers submitted comments for inclusion
6. Updates the Board on application and review team edits and secures a vote of approval.
7. Application and review team shares final with Membership for projects to complete.

Project Participation

Each agency submitting an application for a renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application per project. An application must include responses to all questions as well as required data and/or attachments from the most recent project application and Calendar Year Annual Performance Report (APR) in order to be considered complete. All completed applications will be shared with and reviewed by the Review Team.

The 2021 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.

- Phase 1 focuses on project and system outcomes measured by data from the HMIS, using a project APR run by the HMIS Administrator to "rate" projects. Agencies serving victims of domestic violence will provide the APR from the comparable database to the HMIS Administrator. The HMIS Administrator will prepare a completed draft "Phase 1" application using each project's previous Federal Fiscal Year APR and send the draft to the agency applying for the project. The agency will complete and submit the application, including all required attachments. Late submission, including incomplete submissions, of Rank & Review Applications will automatically have a 5-point penalty. Projects will have 2 weeks from the date the data is presented during the Part 1/Data Training Session to review and sign off on their project data. If the sign off is not received the data will be considered final. No changes to data will be made after the 2-week review period.
- Phase 2 focuses on qualitative project and system outcome data, which allows the projects to explain unique circumstances that may affect project performance and answer questions on local priorities. Late submissions, including incomplete 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 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. (Interviews may assist the reviewers in awarding additional points for Phases 1 and 2).

The following renewal project types are exempt from the requirement to complete the Rank and Review Renewal Application: projects which fund only HMIS, Coordinated Entry, or Planning activities; as well as any newly created project which was not operational on January 1, 2020. See Project Ranking below for more information on how these projects are included in the final 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, 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 new project application is required for bonus project proposals, and the proposals must fill an unmet need, as noted within the Strategic Plan. The reviewers will score and rank the bonus projects; however, there are no interviews for bonus projects. Once ranked, the final ranking will be presented, to the Board then CoC membership for approval. 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.

Review Team

Reviewers must be individuals from the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC process, and its providers. Individuals on the Review Team must not be CoC-funded within NY-501. Suggested Review Team members are approached by the Collaborative Applicant and asked to participate and approved by the Board. Once reviewers have agreed to participate, one to two days are scheduled to conduct Rank & Review project interviews and for 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 with a copy of each project's full application and score forms. Prior to the interview each reviewer will score each application. Once the Review Team convenes and conducts interviews with

each project, the Review Team finalizes scores for each application. These scores result in the project ranking. The Review Team provides any final comments to be shared with projects or the Rank and Review 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 shared with the Rank and Review Committee. The Committee reviews the 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's scores (see Project Tiering section on page 5 for further information.) The ranking is presented to the Board for review. The ranking is then shared with Membership.

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.

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 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 Rank and Review Committee and the Board.

3. Timing of an Appeal

Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project **5-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 ncassaro@caresny.org and cc the NY-501 Rank and Review 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 Rank and Review 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. Higher ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 1 and lower ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 2. The purpose of this two-tiered approach is for CoCs to indicate which projects are prioritized for funding. The Collaborative Applicant uses the project ranking to tier the projects and presents the tiering to the Rank and Review Committee. Reallocation, new projects, and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions. Tiering results are then presented to the Board and, with Board approval, to Membership for a vote. Membership votes on the full application, including the tiering.

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.

Projects that can be flagged by the review committee 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 the implementation of 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 in NY-501 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 new project application is required for projects being developed with reallocated funds, and the proposed projects must fill an unmet need. Applications for new projects will be ranked, separate from renewal projects, and the final ranking will be presented to CoC membership for approval.