
POINTS NORTH HOUSING COALITION: 2022 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Background

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, and the planning body coordinating these services is the Points North Housing Coalition (PNHC). Working with the CoC and providing support and technical assistance is CARES of NY, Inc., the Collaborative Applicant.

In the 2021 NOFA, the Points North CoC received \$1,632,464 from HUD to support ten projects for homeless individuals and families, one coordinated entry project, one HMIS, one UFA planning project and one CoC planning project. HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition.

HUD requires that the CoC (PNHC) prioritize programs which most effectively serve the community at the local level. To reach this goal, a Rank & Review Process has been implemented for applicants who wish to renew their project/s and for new and/or bonus projects (if bonus funding is available). The process of ranking and reviewing projects is designed to help the CoC (PNHC) learn about each project's performance and effectiveness.

In the Points North Housing Coalition (PNHC), the NOFA Operations Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the PNHC Bylaws, the Operations Committee is responsible for "the design, operation, and implementation of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities, and the number and type of applications." Each year the Operations Committee reviews the Rank & Review Written Process and Application Tools and makes any changes necessary to reflect changing priorities. The Operations Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team for the Rank and Review Application. The Written Process and Application Tools (Renewal and New/Bonus) are posted for public comment and are then reviewed and approved by the Board and shared with Membership.

CoC Transparency

The CoC conducts this Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure a fair and consistent way to prioritize projects. Each year, feedback regarding the process and tools is solicited. The process is publicly announced by the CoC, distributed in writing to CoC Membership, and posted publicly on the CARES, Inc. website for all community members to review and comment.

FY 2022 Rank and Review Application

The PNHC emphasizes the importance and impact of 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 revised thoughtfully 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.

Review and Approval of the Rank and Review Renewal Application

After the annual CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the Operations Committee reviews that prior year's Rank & Review process, including reviewer feedback and PNHC member comments. The Operations Committee also develops a list of Review Team members, considering prior reviewers and potential new members.

The Operations Committee presents the Written Process, Application Tools, and list of proposed Review Team members to the PNHC Board and Membership for one-week public comment periods. The Operations Committee considers submitted comments for inclusion. The Operations Committee updates the Board on any edits, incorporates any additional changes from the Board, and secures a vote for approval. Finally, the Written Process, Application Tools, and list of Review Team members are shared with Membership.

Project Participation

Each Renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application. The 2022 Rank & Review Renewal Application process will occur in three (3) parts, with the intent to allow agencies adequate time to complete the full Rank & Review Application. Completed applications (including required attachments) for each CoC project must be submitted to CARES of NY, Inc. by the stated deadline to be considered complete and sent to the Review Team.

* Please Note: Coordinated Entry, Planning, and HMIS projects are not required to fill out a renewal application.

*Renewal projects should have one federal fiscal years' worth of data (10/1-9/30) so should be in operation for one full federal fiscal year.

- **Part 1** focuses on project and system outcomes, using project data entered in HMIS and objective questions to "rate" projects. The HMIS data used in Part 1 is from the

previous HUD Fiscal Year (Oct 1 - Sep 30). This HMIS data used in Part 1 has been cleaned and reviewed for data quality errors when submitted to HUD for the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) report. Agencies must confirm Part 1 Data Attachment accuracy within five business days of receipt. During the Part 1/Data Training Session, agencies will be instructed on how to confirm the accuracy of the Data Attachment values.

If errors are identified on the Data Attachment, the agency must submit the Data Correction Form on the CARES Website. CARES staff will review the Data Correction Form submission to determine if the requested change is a calculation error. If the request is a calculation error, CARES staff will correct the error and resubmit the Data Attachments for the agency's review. After receiving the corrected Data Attachments, agency staff will review the changes and if no additional errors are identified, then agency staff will submit the Data Confirmation Form on the CARES website. If the request for Data Correction Form is determined to not be a calculation error, CARES staff will notify the agency of the decision and request the agency to submit the Data Confirmation Form.

If no errors are identified on the Data Attachment, the agency will submit the Data Confirmation Form on the CARES website. If an agency does not submit a Data Correction Form or Data Confirmation Form after five business days following the Part 1/Data Training Session, then the data will be considered accurate and confirmed

- Part 2 focuses on qualitative project and system outcome data; allowing staff to explain unique circumstances that affect project performance and answer questions to local priorities. After submission, each agency/project is assigned an interview time with the Review Team.
- Part 3 of the Rank & Review Process includes project interviews with the Review Team. After release of the NOFA, the Operations Committee will draft questions based on specific criteria mentioned within the NOFA Application to be asked during project interviews. Projects will receive these questions prior to the interview and may provide the Review Team with written answers prior to the interview. Interviews may assist the reviewers in awarding additional points for Parts 1 and 2 up to the maximum amount of points available for each question

New Projects

New projects are created through bonus funds or reallocated funds. A separate RFP will be completed for new projects. If, additional money becomes available through reallocation after the ranking process, 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. RFPs submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects. New project applications are required to interview with the review team. Interview questions will include specific criteria included in the NOFA. New project applications will be ranked, approved by the Board and presented to Membership. 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.

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 complement and fill an unmet need. The application for a bonus project is a separate RFP. Bonus project applications are required to interview with the Review Team. Interview questions will include specific criteria included in the NOFA. The reviewers will score and rank the bonus projects. After the bonus projects are ranked, ranking is sent to the Board for approval 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 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 for reallocation consideration include those that have displayed: inadequate financial management, a history of expending funds on ineligible activities, a lack of full expenditure of funds, and consistent low scores during the Rank and Review process (under 140). 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 PNHC may be

considered for reallocation. Further, agencies may choose to reallocate their project funds. New projects developed through the reallocation of the agency's 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. Applications for new projects will be ranked separate from renewal projects, and the final ranking will be presented to the CoC Board for approval and shared with membership.

Review Team

The review team is made up of individuals from the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are objective individuals. The Collaborative Applicant or members of the Operations Committee invite prospective review team members to participate in the CoC's Rank & Review process. Once reviewers have agreed to participate, reviewers are provided a copy of project applications, project addendums and score forms. It is an expectation that all project applications will be reviewed prior to the applicant interviews. A day is scheduled for Rank & Review project interviews and scoring to take place (virtually). Each reviewer must be available for the full extent of the interview process. Once the review team convenes and conducts interviews with each project, the review team scores each application. These scores result in the ranking from highest to lowest points with New/Bonus and Reallocated projects at the bottom. The review team provides any final comments to be shared with projects. It is also expected that the Review Team will remain available after the scoring is complete in the event of an appeal.

Threshold Review

In order to ensure CoC projects are high performing, all project applications must also meet a minimum scoring threshold of 50% of total possible application points. The Threshold Review will be conducted by the Review Team after the Rank and Review process is complete and final project scores determined. If the pre-determined threshold is not met, the Review Team may recommend the PNHC Board consider the possibility of reallocation or amendments to the project application/s with said agency.

Project Ranking

Using the CoC approved Rank and Review tool, all projects seeking funding are scored and placed in numerical order, referred to as the “ranking”. Ranking places an applicant in either Tier 1 or Tier 2. 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. 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 project ranking is then shared with the Operations Committee. Afterwards, the ranking is approved by the Board and 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 its project application. If the applicant was 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.

3. Timing of an Appeal

Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project within three business days after a debriefing has been completed. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant (sbarnaby@caresny.org) who will forward them on to the Review Team. The written appeal must consist of a short statement of its appeal, no longer than one page. The written appeal can be in the form of a letter, memo or email.

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 NOFA Committee presents the tiering to the Board for a vote, and then shares it with Membership.