
SARATOGA NORTH COUNTRY

CONTINUUM OF CARE

2023 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Background

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). 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 & 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 Data and Goals Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank & 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 Data and Goals Committee reviews the Rank & Review Process and Application and makes revisions to reflect changing priorities. The Data and Goals Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team. The Written Process, 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.

CoC Transparency

The annual Rank & Review process is conducted 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.

FY2023 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 & 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 descriptions of project operations.

Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Renewal Application

After the CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the Data and Goals Committee reviews that prior year's Rank & Review process, including reviewer feedback and SNC member comments. 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.

In phases, the Data & Goals Committee presents the Written Process and Application Tools to the SNC Board and Membership for one-week public comment periods. The Data & Goals Committee considers submitted comments for inclusion. The Data & Goals Committee updates the Board on any edits, incorporates any additional changes from the Board, and secures a vote for approval. Finally, the Written Process and Application Tools are shared with Membership.

Project Participation

Each Renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application. The 2023 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 Renewal 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** includes narratives allowing agencies to explain unique circumstances which may affect project performance. 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 NOFO, the Data and Goals Committee will draft questions based on specific criteria included in the NOFO to be asked during project interviews. Projects will receive these questions prior to the interview. Interviews may assist the reviewers in awarding additional points to previously scored questions in Part 1 and/or 2 up to the maximum number of points available for each question.

At the end of each part, renewal projects will have an opportunity to request a debriefing of their scores with the Collaborative Applicant.

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, the new project RFP will re-open. RFPs submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects. 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 applies to New/Bonus project applications.

Bonus Projects

Each year, HUD *may* offer bonus funding and the NOFO outlines how the funds may be spent. Bonus project proposals must fill an unmet need as noted within the CoC's Strategic Plan or locally determined priorities. Bonus applications will be ranked and 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 applies to New/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 to fill an unmet need within the community, as noted within the SNC Strategic Plan. Reallocating funds is one of the most important tools by which communities can make strategic improvements to their homeless service system.

Projects that can be flagged for reallocation consideration include those which have demonstrated inadequate financial management, a history of expending funds on ineligible activities, a lack of full expenditure of funds, and those which consistently score low on the Rank & Review. Reallocation is recommended for any project *not* participating in Coordinated Entry, HMIS or the annual Point-in-Time. The Board may determine reallocation of a particular project as in the best interest of the CoC and essential to maintaining full funding. Further, agencies may voluntarily choose to reallocate funds from their own projects. New project proposals developed by agencies through reallocation of their own funds will be prioritized during the ranking process. All other proposed projects using reallocated funds will be ranked according to general ranking procedures.

Project proposals developed with reallocated funds must fill an unmet need and submit a New/Bonus application. Agencies interested in applying for reallocated funds are required to interview with the Review Team. Applications for New/Bonus projects will be ranked separately from Renewal projects, and the final ranking will be approved by the Board presented to CoC Membership.

Review Team

Reviewers must be individuals from the community who are not CoC-funded or from neighboring communities and knowledgeable about the CoC process, services and providers. Review Team members are considered by the Data & Goals Committee and invited by the Collaborative Applicant (CARES) to participate. After reviewers agree to participate, one to two days are scheduled to conduct project interviews and for scoring to take place. Interviews will be scheduled for a date after the NOFO is released to allow for any HUD-specific criteria to be incorporated into the interview process.

Reviewers are provided a copy of each project's full application for review and score forms to complete. The Review Team has the authority to 1) allot additional points to questions in Part 1 and Part 2 based on responses given by agencies during the interview; and 2) allot points based on responses given by agencies to Part 3 interview questions. After conducting interviews with each agency, the Review Team discusses and finalizes scores for each project application. In the event project applications initially receive the same score, it is the responsibility of the Review Team to reconsider scoring in order to break the tie. The Review Team also considers any submitted appeals (see **Appeals Process** outlined below) and provides any final comments to be shared with agencies. Final scores result in the project ranking.

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 SNC Board consider the possibility of reallocation or amendments to the project application/s with said agency.

Project Ranking

The NOFO 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/bonus projects. Using a CoC approved Rank & Review tool, all projects seeking funding are scored and placed in numerical order. The Committee reviews the process and project scores. Projects projected to fall into Tier 2 will be contacted and notified of their ranking and offered the opportunity to go over the project's scores. HMIS and CE projects do not fill out a renewal application but are ranked at the bottom of Tier 1. Project ranking is shared with the Data & Goals Committee, then presented to the Board for their consideration to either finalize the ranking or adjust in order to continue meeting current community needs and resources. The board may change the ranking at their discretion before finalizing. 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 Data and Goals Committee and the Board. No formal appeal is needed for a mathematical error.

Appeals Process

1. Who May Appeal?

Agencies may formally appeal a decision concerning a Renewal or New/Bonus 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 applies to project scoring and ranking ***only***. *There is no appeal for project tiering.* An appeal may ***not*** be based on the following:

- Failure to answer any question/s on the application
- Failure to submit required attachments to the application
- Failure to submit the application by the required deadline

Any mathematical errors found by an applicant will be corrected by the Collaborative Applicant.

3. Timing of an Appeal

Formal appeals may be submitted by a project within **three (3) business days** of debriefing. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant (mvandeusen@caresny.org), who will then forward to the Review Team. The written appeal must consist of a brief statement no longer than one page, and can be in the form of a letter, memo or email.

Appeals Decisions

The Review Team for the Rank & Review process will also serve as the Appeals Review Team. Appeals are decided by majority vote of the Review/Appeals Team, and once decided, are final and may not be overturned by the Data & Goals Committee, Board or Membership.

Project Tiering

When the NOFO 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 Data and Goals Committee to the Board who approves then presented to Membership. Membership votes on the tiering and approves the Project Listing and the CoC Application.

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