

2016 COC NOFA POLICIES

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS/NOFA SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Housing First Solano will conduct a biannual review of all projects funded through the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) program in Solano County. This review and scoring process will be used to determine which projects are submitted by the Collaborative Applicant as part of the CoC's Consolidated Application in the CoC Program Competition. The following is an overview of the timeline of tasks for CoC Competition (NOFA) submission. The timeline is subject to change annually, depending on HUD/NOFA requirements.

- Approximately one month after each competition, the Performance and Evaluation Committee will begin the process of evaluating the previous NOFA and designing scoring tools and any corresponding local application materials to assist in the review and ranking of all renewal and new project applicants. These materials will take into consideration both local and HUD priorities.
- The scoring tools will be finalized and presented to the CoC for review and approval.
- The Collaborative Applicant will collect information from Project Applicants through Annual Performance Reports (APRs), which for the mid-year review will be generated in the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and a "Request for Information" (RFI). The contents of this RFI will be included in the Review and Rank materials as a part of the local competition.
 - As with the review process during NOFA, any late submissions received up to 48 hours after the deadline will cause the applicant to receive a three point score deduction in the local competition. Materials received between 48 hours and 7 days after the deadline will receive a 5 point score deduction. Materials received more than 7 days after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Qualified, non-conflicted Review and Rank Panel members are recruited and oriented to the local review and ranking process.
- Within 6 months after the past Review and Rank results are announced, the goal would be for the newly seated Review and Rank Panel members to receive all local application and scoring materials and preliminarily review and score each project's materials.
- The Review and Rank Panel then meets to discuss the projects' performance. Project Applicants will be available by phone to answer any questions the panelists have. Panel members individually score applications based on the scoring tools and create a ranked list.

- Project Applicants will be presented with a breakdown of their scores indicating areas for improvement. Limited technical assistance will be offered to Project Applicants to help them understand their scoring and improve as needed.
- After the mid-year review process, but prior to release of the NOFA, the Performance and Evaluation Committee will reassess the scoring tools and local application materials. If any changes are necessary due to issues that arose during the mid-year review or anticipated NOFA priorities, these will be presented to the CoC for review and approval.
- The Collaborative Applicant will generate reports based on fresh APRs and RFIs.
 - Any late submissions received up to 48 hours after the deadline will cause the applicant to receive a three point score deduction in the local competition. Materials received between 48 hours and 7 days after the deadline will receive a 5 point score deduction. Materials received more than 7 days after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Upon publication of the NOFA, the Collaborative Applicant will schedule and announce a time and date for a Technical Assistance Workshop where details about the funding opportunity and the process are provided. These details will be distributed to the entire CoC.
- All applicants/potential applicants are required to participate in the NOFA Overview Technical Assistance Workshop. At the workshop, the Collaborative Applicant will present an overview of the HUD CoC NOFA, including details about available funding and any major changes in the application from previous years. Applicants will also be oriented to the process for reviewing and ranking applications, which will cover any supplemental local application materials and the scoring tool and applicable dates. Applicants will also have a chance to ask any questions they have about both the local and HUD application processes.
- Applicants complete additional local application materials by a set date related to the NOFA deadlines.
 - Any late application received within 24 hours after the due date/time will receive a three-point score reduction. Any late application received between 24-48 hours after the due date/time will receive a five-point score reduction. Late applications received after 48 hours will received a score of 0 for the local competition.
 - Incomplete applications cannot be cured for the Review and Rank Panel scoring process but must be corrected prior to HUD submission.
- If necessary, additional qualified, non-conflicted Review and Rank Panel members are recruited and oriented to the local review and ranking process.
- The Review and Rank Panel members receive all local application and scoring materials and individually review and score each project's application.
- The Review and Rank Panel then meets to jointly interview new project applicants and review renewal project applications. Renewal project applicants will be on call for questions by phone as necessary, while new projects will

receive appointments for in-person interviews. The Review and Rank Panel will discuss each application, and comment on ways to improve individual applications. Panel members individually score applications based on the scoring tools. Panel members may consider whether a Project Applicant's scores have improved since the mid-year review.

- The ranked list is created by the following procedures:
 - One ranked list is prepared based on a compilation of Review and Rank Panel raw scores for each application.
 - New projects and lower-scoring renewal projects will be placed in Tier 2 to prioritize renewal projects with demonstrated success in serving clients.
 - Those applications that do not meet certain threshold requirements (as detailed on the scoring tool) will not be included in the ranked list.
 - The Review and Rank Panel determines if any renewal project should receive a decrease in funding due to substandard performance in outcomes or utilization of funds. Any funding captured from an existing project will be made available for reallocation to a new project that meets the requirements in the NOFA.
- Scoring results are sent to applicants with a reminder of the appeals process.
- Post-NOFA, projects will be provided feedback from the Review and Rank Panel on the quality of their application and ways they can improve overall.
- Appeals, if any, are considered.
- A final ranked project list is submitted to the CoC.
- HomeBase provides technical feedback on how to improve a project's final submission to HUD.
- The Collaborative Applicant collects all final Project Applications and submits them to HUD, along with the Priority Listing, as part of the CoC's Consolidated Application.

REVIEW AND RANK PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Collaborative Applicant recruits between three (3) and five (5) Review and Rank Panel members who are:

- Knowledgeable about homelessness and housing in the community and who are broadly representative of the relevant sectors, subpopulations, and geographic areas
- "Neutral," meaning that they are not employees, staff, or otherwise have a business/financial or specific personal conflict of interest with the applicant organizations;
- Familiar with housing and homeless needs within the CoC; and

- Willing to review projects with the best interest of homeless persons in mind.

To serve on the Review and Rank Panel, members must:

- Be able to dedicate time for application review and Review and Rank Panel meetings as scheduled by the Collaborative Applicant.
- Sign a statement declaring that they have no conflict of interest and a confidentiality agreement.

Note: If a person or an organization believes there is a conflict of interest that would exclude a Review and Rank Panel Member, it needs to be brought to the attention of HomeBase staff as soon as possible after the Panel is announced and at least 2 weeks prior to the Review and Rank meetings when a significant investment of time is made by those individuals. The concerned person/organization would need to provide specific and substantial information regarding the alleged conflict to allow the Collaborative Applicant to conduct a fair evaluation.

REALLOCATION OF FUNDS

HUD allows CoCs to reallocate funds from non- and/or under-performing projects to higher priority community needs that also align with HUD priorities and goals.

The 2015 NOFA stated that: Using performance and outcome data, CoCs should decide how to best use the resources available to end homelessness within the community. CoCs should reallocate funds to new projects whenever reallocation would reduce homelessness. Communities should use CoC approved scoring criteria and selection priorities to determine the extent to which each project is still necessary and address the policy priorities listed in this NOFA.

The Collaborative Applicant and ranking Panel lead the reallocation discussion and process, in consultation with the CoC, moving away from Transitional Housing towards other types of successful models and to meet the need in Solano for Permanent Housing, including Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing. The importance of funding coordinated entry and developing HMIS as a long-term funded, widely used tool as part of the coordinated entry system was another key goal of the process in the future.

USING ALL AVAILABLE FUNDS

The CoC will do everything possible to ensure it applies for all funds available to the community. Thus, if all timely applications have been submitted and it appears that

either: 1) the community is not requesting as much money as is available from HUD and/or there are reallocated funds available, then:

- The Collaborative Applicant will email the CoC and other interested parties (all homeless service and housing providers in the CoC area) with specifics regarding how much money is available and which type of programs qualify.
- The Collaborative Applicant will provide technical assistance and guidance, as needed, to ensure applicants understand the funding requirements.
- Any additional applications for these funds will be due as soon as possible after this email is distributed, as determined by the NOFA submission deadline.
- For this type of process, the timeline will be extremely short and may make an application burdensome; however, expanding another application, applying in collaboration, and a community consensus on how to spend the funds are all viable options.

APPEALS PROCESS

The Review and Rank Panel reviews all applications and ranks them for funding recommendations to HUD. Applicants may appeal the decision by following the process set forth below. All appeals must be based on the information submitted by the application due date. No new or additional information will be considered. Omissions to the application cannot be appealed. The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final.

1. WHO MAY APPEAL

A project may appeal if the Review and Rank panel recommends the project for full or partial reallocation, or if it is placed in Tier 2. If the project was submitted by a collaboration of agencies, only one joint appeal may be made.

2. WHAT MAY BE APPEALED

Appeals may be made on the following bases:

- Inaccuracy in information provided to the Review and Rank Panel (by entities other than the applicant) resulting in a reduced score
- Bias or unfairness in the process resulting in a reduced score

3. REQUIRED COMMUNICATION PRIOR TO INITIATING A FORMAL APPEAL

Any agency desiring to appeal must contact the Collaborative Applicant (or its designee), to state its intent to appeal the Review and Rank Panel's decision regarding their rank.

The purpose of this requirement is to provide an opportunity to resolve any concern, perhaps arising out of misinformation or misunderstanding. If there is no resolution and the applicant still contests the ranking, it may initiate a Formal Appeal as described below.

4. INITIATING THE FORMAL APPEAL

The Formal Appeal must consist of a short, clear, written statement (no longer than 2 pages) of the agency's appeal of the Review and Rank Panel's decision. The statement can be in the form of a letter, a memo, or an email transmittal.

The Formal Appeal must be transmitted to Collaborative Applicant (or its designee).

The Formal Appeal must be emailed so that it is received by the date set within the NOFA timeline.

5. THE FORMAL APPEAL PROCESS

Upon timely receipt of the Formal Appeal, the Appeal Panel will be called together. The Appeal Panel may make inquiries of the Review and Rank Panel members concerning the issues raised in the appeal. The Appeal Panel will meet with a representative(s) of the party making the appeal to discuss the appeal at an Appeal Hearing. A face-to-face Appeal Hearing is preferred, but if time conflicts require it, the hearing may occur by telephone conference taking in consideration the date the application is due to be filed with HUD.

The Appeal Panel may consider the possible effect their decision may have on other agency's rankings and contact potentially affected agencies to invite them to become involved in the appeal process and hearing.

The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final.

6. MEMBERS OF THE APPEAL PANEL

A 2-3-member Appeal Panel will be selected and can come from non-profits, foundations, consumers, government, and private agencies and similar organizations. Representatives will not have a conflict of interest with any of the agencies or parties applying for CoC Program funding as defined by the existing Review and Rank Panel conflict of interest rules.