



HOPE Connections CoC Local Project Application Ranking Policy

Specific to the 2021 HUD CoC Program Competition

Background

Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) releases the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition (Competition) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). This Competition brings over \$4 million dollars in annually renewable funds into Shreveport/Bossier/Northwest Louisiana to provide housing and services to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Specifically, the CoC Interim Rule provides that CoC funds may be used for permanent housing (Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing), Coordinated Entry (SSO), and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The NOFO submission consists of three parts:

- CoC Application – This is the CoC’s overall application, and primarily focuses on the CoC’s progress on ending homelessness, strategic initiatives, and adoption of HUD’s funding and policy priorities.
- Project Ranking — This is an ordered ranking of all renewal and new projects the CoC is submitting in the application for funding. The project ranking should account for local needs, local performance, and local strategic priorities (24 CFR part 578). Local priorities are expected to align with the overall priorities as determined by HUD and by Congress through the HEARTH Act.
- Project Applications – Each project approved for inclusion in the local project ranking is included in the CoC’s submission to HUD.

In the Fiscal Year 2021 CoC Program Competition, the HOPE CoC may apply for up to an estimated \$4,570,414 for renewal and new projects.

Estimated Annual Renewal Demand	\$3,999,826
Reallocated Funds for New Projects within the ARD	\$0
CoC Bonus Funding (potential)	\$199,991
DV Bonus Funding (potential)	\$370,597
TOTAL INCLUDING POTENTIAL BONUS:	\$4,570,414

HUD Priorities (from the 2021 NOFA)

HUD has identified the following policy priorities in the 2021 NOFA (page 9):

- Ending homelessness for all persons
- Use a Housing First Approach
- Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness
- Improving System Performance
- Partnering with Housing, Health, and Service Agencies
- Racial Equity
- Persons with Lived Experience

Local Priorities for the 2021 Competition

The HOPE Connections CoC has identified the following local priorities that best meet the needs of the community:

- High performing projects that improve the CoC's outcomes and effectively reduce homelessness
- Projects that utilize HUD funding in a timely way
- Project models that meet the needs of and appeal to people experiencing homelessness
- Projects that enable and assist with the essential functions of the CoC; including participation in HMIS data collection, coordinated entry, CoC general membership and CoC Board.

Renewal and new projects are scored using the Local CoC Scoring Tool and then ranked numerically in order from top local priority to last local priority. The Local Scoring Tool, scoring process, and ranking process is described below.

Local CoC Scoring Tool

Renewal and new projects are scored according to an objective tool based on their individual project performance, alignment with HUD and CoC policy priorities, and compliance. This tool is researched, established, and recommended by the HOPE CoC Scoring & Ranking Committee.

The Local Scoring Tool is meant to direct HUD CoC funding toward projects that meet the above identified priorities, and that have the proven capacity and experience to effectively, efficiently, and quickly stand up projects in order to most successfully serve households experiencing homelessness within the eligible expenses outlined by the HEARTH Act. It emphasizes project performance and capacity, including HUD-determined and locally approved System-wide Performance Measures.

Threshold Review

All eligible applicants will undergo a threshold review to ensure compliance with the HEARTH Act, the Continuum of Care Program NOFO, and the local HOPE CoC Letter of Intent. Any new or renewal project not meeting the threshold requirements will not be scored, ranked or considered for funding.

Applications will be rejected and not considered for review for any of the following reasons:

- new/Bonus applicant has not submitted a Letter of Intent by the posted deadline;
- the applicant of a new project has not attended the required informational session;
- the applicant does not agree to, is not prepared to, or fails to complete the project application in eSNAPS as outlined in the Letter of Intent;
- application materials are not received by the deadline;
- the agency has outstanding HUD monitoring or Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit finding(s) that are overdue or unsatisfactory;
- the project does not comply with the requirements of the CoC interim rule (24 CFR part 578), including requirements to participate in the Coordinated Entry (CE) System and the statewide LSNDC HMIS;
- the application does not demonstrate required match and/or leverage dollars;
- the project is a permanent housing project and does not require participating households to sign rental or lease agreements that give those households rights to tenancy (specific to projects that use CoC Program dollars to support units of permanent housing through rent assistance, leasing, acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation);
- the application inaccurately portrays or inaccurately describes the proposed project (for example, a proposed permanent supportive housing application is determined by scorers to actually be a transitional housing project).

Renewal Project Scoring

Renewal projects that meet the threshold review criteria will be scored using the Local Scoring Tool for Renewal Projects across three categories: Applicant and Project Capacity, Project Design, and Project Performance. Performance is heavily weighted by the HOPE CoC as part of the effort to ensure high-performing projects are prioritized for funding. Data used in the scoring tool comes largely from projects' most recently submitted Annual Performance Report (APR).

First-time renewals have not yet completed their first operating year, and thus, cannot be scored for their performance due to not having a completed Annual Performance Report (APR) or accumulated a meaningful data sample size. However, the Committee will evaluate each first-time renewal to ensure that each project is achieving satisfactory progress.

New Project Scoring, Including Bonus Funds

Funding for new projects through the Competition is only available if low-performing projects have their funding reallocated, if bonus funding is made available by HUD, or if other new funding is made available by HUD.

New projects that meet the threshold review criteria will be scored using the Local Scoring Tool for New Projects.

Scoring & Ranking Committee

The CoC Board will establish a Scoring and Ranking Committee for each annual Competition. The Committee will update the local scoring tool to reflect current priorities, review/revise this document as needed, and conduct the renewal and new project scoring and ranking process using the Local Scoring Tool. To maintain impartiality, individuals from agencies that are submitting a renewal or new project application are ineligible to participate in the Committee.

Rank Ordering

In accordance with the CoC Governance Charter, the CoC process for ranking applicants seeking Competition funds is designed to be objective, fair, transparent, and impartial. The local rank process prioritizes projects that efficiently and effectively house homeless households within the eligible uses of Competition funds and provides an opportunity to fund new projects when funds are available. The local scoring and ranking process is designed to reflect HUD priorities, as well as local priorities as determined by the CoC.

The Scoring and Ranking Committee is responsible for preparing the final ranked ordering of renewal and new projects, as described above. The Committee will publish ranking results in email form to all applicants and results will be published on the CoC website.

Reallocation

The Reallocation Policy included in the CoC Governance Charter allows for cases where a project clings to an outdated project model, cannot meet HUD performance standards/priorities, or the housing type/population served is not shown as “high need”; the ~~Planning Advisory~~ Scoring and Ranking Committee may vote to reallocate funding to a new project.

Renewal projects may choose to reallocate funding to projects that are more responsive to HUD and local priorities, or a CoC may reallocate part or all of a renewal project’s funding to create one or more new projects that meet both HUD priorities and local needs by improving the CoC’s outcomes and reducing homelessness more effectively than the reallocated renewal project.

Reallocation could be related to the following issues:

- projects that do not meet HUD performance standards
- projects that are underspending
- projects that no longer meet CoC needs

- projects that no longer meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness

Generally, the reallocation of funds and/or project(s) may occur in the following process:

- The project applicant makes the determination to reallocate all or part of their own project in order to better meet HUD and local priorities.
- The Committee recommends that all or part of a renewal project is not submitted to HUD in the annual Competition. At that time, the funding could be utilized to expand a high performing project, expand several high performing projects, or create a new project.

Appeals Process

Applicants may submit a written appeal if they can describe bias or unfairness in the process that warrants the appeal (i.e. nonconformance with the Competition process).

Note: Project Applicants that have been found to not meet the threshold requirements are not eligible for an appeal.

A committee appointed by the CoC Board will review appeal letters. No member of the Appeals Committee may have a conflict of interest with any of the agencies applying for CoC Program funding. If a project applicant seeking an appeal is a member of the HOPE CoC Board of Directors, that member shall recuse themselves in a voting capacity as part of the appeal but may represent the project applicant as part of the HOPE CoC Board discussion. The Appeals Committee will include at least one member of the Scoring and Ranking Committee to attend the meeting in a non-voting, advisory capacity.

The appeal letter must specify what process was violated and must be mailed, hand delivered, or e-mailed, to:

HOPE Connection CoC
Attn: Christa Pazzaglia
2350 Levy Street
Shreveport, LA 71103
christa@nwlahope.org

All appeal letters regarding the RFP process must be received before close of business on the fifth business day following the announcement/publication of the project rankings.

After hearing any appeals, the HOPE CoC Board will make the final determination of local rankings. This determination is considered final and no further appeals will be heard.