

**San Mateo County Continuum of Care**  
**2015 CoC Competition**  
**PROJECT REVIEW AND RANKING PROCESS**

Updated Oct. 9, 2015

**I. Background on 2015 NOFA and Ranking Requirements**

On September 18, 2015 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the *Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program*.

This year, funding is available for eligible renewal projects. Our CoC may also apply for up to \$1,122,790 in new “bonus” permanent housing projects in the following categories:

- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) serving chronically homeless people;
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) serving homeless single adults or families with children coming from streets or shelters (not transitional housing)

San Mateo County may also create new PSH or RRH projects through the re-allocation of funds from lower performing existing grants. These re-allocated funds may also be used by the CoC Lead Agency (San Mateo County Human Services Agency) for dedicated HMIS projects or Coordinated Entry projects.

The NOFA requires that each CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all applications for renewal of existing projects and creation of new projects. Ranking of renewal projects must incorporate regularly collected data on project performance and effectiveness. Additionally, the CoC must place projects into Tier 1 and Tier 2, with projects in Tier 2 having to compete nationally for funding.

This document describes the San Mateo County CoC policies and process governing the review and ranking of projects in the 2015 competition, as well as the adopted policy for determining which projects are placed into Tier 2.

**II. Rating and Ranking Process and Criteria**

**a. Adoption of Performance Standards**

On July 12, 2013, the CoC Steering Committee adopted objective Project Performance Standards for all program types within the continuum (emergency shelter, short and long term transitional housing, permanent housing, rapid re-housing, services only with housing focus, services only with employment focus). These standards were developed by the Project Performance Subcommittee based on analysis of HMIS data and guided by HUD’s standards as set forth in HEARTH and the CoC Interim Regulation.

The Performance Standards are attached as **Attachment A**.

b. Solicitation of CoC Applications

On September 18, 2015, the CoC Lead Agency (Human Services Agency Center on Homelessness) released an announcement of available funding for both new and renewal CoC projects. These were distributed broadly via email to the provider community. The announcement for new projects was also posted to the H.S.A. website. The announcements explain the process for submitting application, as well as the review criteria and process.

c. Application Process

- No later than October 12, 2015 renewal applicants will receive a Project Performance Report from the Center on Homelessness summarizing their progress in meeting the established performance standards as documented in their APR. This report provides each renewal project applicant the opportunity to provide any narrative explanation or clarification regarding why they did not meet any of the standards. This document also includes supplemental narrative questions.
- By October 20, 2015, all applicants (new and renewal) must complete and submit their Project Application(s) (Exhibit 2) in e-snaps. Renewal applicants must also submit their completed Project Performance Reports including any clarifications and responses to the supplemental narrative.

d. Review, Ranking and Tiering Process

- The Center on Homelessness will convene an unbiased and non-conflicted Review Panel composed of representatives from neutral (non-applicant) organizations. The Panel may include staff from the County of San Mateo, San Mateo cities and towns, funders and non-profit housing and social services organizations.
- The Review Panel will meet on October 28, 2015 to determine final ranking of the projects.
- Prior to the meeting, the Center on Homelessness staff will calculate the preliminary score for all renewal applicants using the objective Scoring Factors in **Attachment B**. The preliminary scores will be distributed to the Review Panel prior to the meeting.
- Prior to the meeting, the Panel will receive copies of all new project applications for review and scoring. New project applications will be scored using the scoring factors in **Attachment C**.
- At the meeting, the Review Panel will determine the final order of ranking of projects in accordance with the Ranking and Tiering Policy in **Attachment D**.
- The rankings will be brought to the Continuum of Care Steering Committee for approval on October 30, 2015.

- All applicants will be notified no later than October 30, 2015 whether their project is being included in the application as well as their rank on the Project Priority listing.
- Applicants may appeal any of the following decisions of the CoC Steering Committee:
  - Placement of project into Tier 2
  - Reduction of renewal grant amount (i.e. renewal grant partially re-allocated to a new project)
  - Elimination of renewal grant (i.e. entire grant re-allocated to a new project)

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Center on Homelessness no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 3, 2015. Appeals will be heard by a panel of three non-conflicted members of the CoC Steering Committee who did not serve on the review panel. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Performance Standards as Adopted July 12, 2013**

<b>Measures</b>		<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	<b>Short-Term TH</b>	<b>Long-Term TH</b>	<b>Permanent Supportive Housing</b>	<b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>	<b>Services Only - Housing Related</b>	<b>Services Only – Employment</b>
1	<b>Exit to Permanent Housing</b> Percent of all leavers who exited to a permanent destination	20%	40%	65%	NA	80%	65%	40%
2	<b>Maintain PH &gt; 6 Months</b> Percent of all participants who stayed more than 6 months	NA	NA	NA	95%	60%	NA	NA
3	<b>Exit with Employment Income</b> Percent of adult leavers who exited with employment income	10%	20%	20%	NA	20%	20%	20%
4	<b>Exit with Increased Income</b> Percent of adult leavers who exited with increased income from all sources	10%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
5	<b>Occupancy</b> Average daily bed/unit/ or program slot utilization	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
6	<b>CoC Grant Spending</b> Percentage of CoC award spent in most recently completed yr	95%	95%	95%	90%	95%	95%	95%
7	<b>HMIS Data Quality</b> Percentage of null/missing and don't know/refused values	Less than 10%	Less than 10%	Less than 10%	Less than 10%	Less than 10%	Less than 10%	Less than 10%

**ATTACHMENT B  
SCORING FACTORS FOR RENEWAL PROJECTS**

The scoring system for renewal projects is based on objective criteria, including a consideration of past performance as demonstrated by APR and HMIS data. The scoring system also takes into consideration the severity of needs and vulnerabilities experienced by program participants, and the extent to which projects are aligned with Housing First principals (low barriers to participation, no service participation requirements or preconditions).

Scoring Factor		Maximum and Minimum Scores	
		TH and SS0	PSH
1	Exits to Permanent Housing	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 11 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points	Not Applicable
2	Maintain Housing > 6 Months	Not Applicable	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 11 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points
3	Exit With Employment Income	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 11 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points	Not Applicable
4	Exit With Increased Income	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 11 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points	
5	Occupancy	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 11 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points	
6.	CoC Grant Spending	Exceeds Standard by more than 50% = 10 points Meets Standard or Exceeds by 50% = 5 points Within 50% of Standard = 3 points Below 50% of Standard = 0 points	
7.	HMIS Data Quality	All Data Elements Less Than 10% Missing/Don't Now = 11 points 1-2 Data Elements More Than 10% Missing/Don't Know = 5 points More Than 2 Data Elements More Than 10% Missing/Don't Know = 0 points	
8.	Leverage	At least 150% of HUD CoC request = 3 points 100-149% of HUD CoC request = 1 point Less than 100% of HUD CoC request = 0 points	

Scoring Factor		Maximum and Minimum Scores	
		TH and SS0	PSH
9.	Cost Effectiveness	Cost per unit/person served is reasonable for project type = 5 points Cost per unit/person served is not reasonable for project type = 2 points	
10.	Housing First (Project Application, Section 3B)	Items checked on Question 3B.4 – Housing First Checked 6 out of 8 items = 10 points Checked 3 to 5 out of 8 items = 5 points Checked 2 or fewer items = 0 point	
11.	Prioritizing Highest Need Households	Entries from literally homeless situations; with zero income; with disabling conditions, narrative on how project prioritizes high need clients: Strongly prioritizes high needs= 5 points Does not strongly prioritize high needs= 2 points	
12.	Grants Management (Project App. 2B)	Project has no outstanding or unresolved HUD monitoring findings, APR was submitted on time, and drawdowns completed quarterly = 5 points If not = 0 points	
13.	HUD Policy Priorities	Not Applicable	Permanent Housing or Rapid Re-Housing = 11 points
		Targets a Priority Population: Chronically Homeless Individuals, Veterans = 7 points	
Maximum Score		100	100

**Methodology for Renewal Scoring Factors:**

Factor 1 through 7 (Project Performance): Data will be extracted from APR for each project to calculate these performance measures.

Factor 8 (Leverage): This information will be taken from the 2015 Project Application.

Factor 9: (Cost Effectiveness): This will be calculated by dividing total CoC funds requested by the number of beds in the project to arrive at an average cost per bed.

Factor 10: (Housing First): This will be based on how the applicant responds to the Questions on Section 3B of the Project Application relating to Housing First, entry barriers and service participation requirements. Those with lower barriers and fewer service participation requirements will receive higher scores.

Factor 11: (Prioritizing Highest Need Households): This factor considers whether the project is serving a high need population and is based on the following considerations: extent to which the project serves individuals entering from literal homelessness (streets or shelters), have zero income at entry, or have a disability. This information will be drawn from the most recent APR. In addition, applicants will be asked to provide a brief narrative describing how they target and prioritize high need households.

Factor 12: (Grants Management): Applicants will be scored based on their responses to the questions in Section 2B of the Project Application, including whether they have unresolved HUD findings, whether the APR was completed on time, and whether they have made drawdowns at least quarterly. Having unspent grant funds returned to HUD is incorporated into Factor 6.

Factor 13: (HUD Policy Priorities): This factor provides additional points for permanent housing projects (both PSH and RRH) as well as projects targeting chronically homeless people and homeless veterans, in alignment with HUD's priorities for ending chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness by 2017.

**ATTACHMENT C**  
**SCORING FACTORS FOR NEW PROJECTS**

Rating Factor	Maximum Score
<p>1. HEARTH and Opening Doors Objectives. The project articulates how it will advance the goals set forth in HEARTH and Opening Doors (the federal strategic plan to end homelessness):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce new entries into homelessness</li> <li>• Reduce the length of time people are homeless</li> <li>• Reduce returns to homelessness</li> <li>• Increase participant income</li> </ul>	5
<p>2. Targeting and Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project targets an eligible population</li> <li>• Project targets participants who are coming from the street or other locations not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters, safe havens, or fleeing domestic violence</li> <li>• There is a strong outreach plan specifically designed to identify and engage people in the target population and ensure they are able to access the program</li> </ul>	10
<p>3. Appropriateness of Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type, scale, and location of the housing fit the needs of the program participants</li> <li>• Participants are assisted to secure housing as quickly as possible</li> <li>• Programs and activities are offered in a setting that enables homeless people with disabilities to interact with others without disabilities to the fullest extent possible</li> </ul>	10
<p>4. Housing First Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project will have low barriers to entry and does not screen out applicants based on having no or low income, active or history of substance use, criminal record (except for State mandated requirements), history of domestic violence) or lack of willingness to participate in services</li> <li>• Project services are client-centered</li> <li>• Project will not terminate participation for: failure to participate in services, failure to make progress on service plan, loss of income or failure to improve income; being a victim of domestic violence, or other activities not covered in the lease agreement</li> </ul>	15
<p>5. Service Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type, scale, location of the supportive services fit the needs of the program participants and are readily accessible. This includes services funded by the CoC grant and other project funding sources</li> <li>• There is a specific plan to ensure participants are individually assisted to obtain the benefits of the mainstream health, social, and employment programs for which they are eligible</li> <li>• There is a specific plan to ensure participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs</li> </ul>	20



<b>Rating Factor</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a specific plan to ensure participants are assisted to increase their incomes and live independently</li> </ul>	
6. Timing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant has a clear plan to begin operations within one year of award</li> </ul>	10
7. Applicant Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent relevant experience in providing housing to homeless people</li> <li>• Relevant experience in operation of housing projects or programs, administering leasing or rental assistance funds, delivering services and entering HMIS data</li> <li>• If application has sub recipients, applicant organizations have experience working together</li> <li>• Any outstanding monitoring or audit issues or issues are explained</li> </ul>	20
8. Financial Feasibility and Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs appear reasonable and adequate to support proposed program</li> <li>• Match requirement is met</li> <li>• Additional resources leveraged</li> </ul>	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**ATTACHMENT D  
RANKING AND TIERING POLICIES**

**1. Ranking Policy**

In determining the rank order of projects, the Review Panel will adhere to the following policies:

- a. Projects will be ordered in accordance with their scores as set forth in Attachment B (for renewal projects) and Attachment C (for new projects).
- b. Projects falling into Tier 1 will be submitted on the Project Priority list in the order in which they are ranked
- c. Projects falling into Tier 2 will be ranked according to the policies set forth in below in Section 3 and 4.
- d. The following project types will not receive scores:
  - Renewal projects that do not have any performance data (because they were only recently awarded) will be placed at the bottom of Tier 1 or into Tier 2, at the discretion of the Review Panel.
  - Any new dedicated HMIS or Coordinated Entry projects created through re-allocation will not receive scores. As critical infrastructure for the CoC, new dedicated HMIS and/or Coordinated Entry projects will be placed at the bottom of Tier 1 or into Tier 2 at the discretion of the Review Panel.

**2. Tier Two Project Scoring as Established in the HUD NOFA**

In this year's NOFA, HUD has set forth a scoring system for Tier 2 Projects:

- a. CoC Score – 60 points
- b. CoC Project Ranking – Up to 20 points based on how each project is ranked within Tier 2, with those closer to the top of the list receiving more points
- c. Project Type – Permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects receive 10 points; transitional housing 3 points and support services only projects 1 point.
- d. Housing First – projects that demonstrate low barriers to entry, prioritize rapid placement into housing, and that do not have service participation requirements receive up to 10 points.

All projects in Tier 2 will compete nationally for funding based on this scoring system. Projects lower on the list are less likely to be funded, as are transitional housing and services only projects, which are eligible for fewer points under item c.

### 3. San Mateo County Tier 2 Policy

**Once the rank order of projects has been determined (see Section 1), any TH or SSO projects falling into Tier 2 will be candidates for possible re-allocation to create new permanent housing, rapid-re-housing, dedicated HMIS or Coordinated Entry projects.** The Review Panel will make a recommendation as to whether to re-allocate Tier 2 projects or leave them in their rank order.

### 4. Re-Allocation Policy

In addition to the above, the Review Panel will examine the spending history of ALL renewal projects to determine if any grants should be reduced. Any grants that have significant under spending will be candidates to have their grant amount reduced. Funds captured from grants that are reduced will be used to fund new permanent housing or rapid-re-housing project(s), HMIS, or Coordinated Entry projects, which can be placed either in Tier 1 or Tier 2.

Renewal applicants may request to voluntarily re-allocate one or more of their grants, either in whole or in part. If re-allocating in part, the applicant's grant will be reduced by the amount requested and re-allocated to a new PH or RRH project. If an applicant wishes to voluntarily re-allocate in whole, with the purpose of replacing their existing project with a new PH or RRH project, the new project will be ranked and scored according to the policies outlined in this document. There is no guarantee that voluntarily re-allocated projects will be placed in Tier 1.

### 5. Final Project Priority List

After following the process described above, the Review Panel may elect to make adjustments to the order of projects if doing so will advance the goals of ensuring a more competitive overall funding application and maximizing our CoC's ability to fund eligible renewals and new projects. Adjustments may also be made to address any issues that arise from projects straddling the Tier 1 and Tier 2 line, in accordance with the policy outlined in the HUD NOFA.