

FRAMEWORK
Comprehensive CoC Plan to Serve
Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness
with Severe Service Needs
8/11/22

BACKGROUND

HUD is making \$322 million in competitive funding (\$1.1 million over three years for the Marion-Polk region) available to communities to address unsheltered homelessness through a special Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). To apply, Continuums of Care (CoCs) need to demonstrate a comprehensive community approach to reduce homelessness among people experiencing homelessness with severe service needs, especially those with histories of unsheltered homelessness. The NOFO includes HUD policy statements around unsheltered homelessness, assistance on tribal lands, advancing equity, and using a Housing First approach. HUD is further requiring that CoCs develop a comprehensive plan as part of the application, emphasizing partnerships with housing authorities and healthcare organizations, and involving participation by people with lived experience.

Because the Special NOFO overlaps with the CoC Program NOFO, the local competitions will be merged. Special NOFO funding is available for permanent housing, street outreach efforts and other supportive services.

HUD SEVERE SERVICE NEEDS DEFINITION

Severe Service Needs means any combination of the following factors: facing significant challenges or functional impairments, including any physical, mental, developmental or behavioral health disabilities regardless of the type of disability, which require a significant level of support in order to maintain permanent housing (this factor focuses on the level of support needed and is not based on disability type); high utilization of crisis or emergency services to meet basic needs, including but not limited to emergency rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities; currently living in an unsheltered situation or having a history of living in an unsheltered situation; experiencing a vulnerability to illness or death; having a risk of continued or repeated homelessness; and having a vulnerability to victimization, including physical assault, trafficking or sex work.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

The CoC has until October 20 to submit the special NOFO application and will convene stakeholders, including people with lived experience, to develop the final plan, which will be presented to the board in October. To release the local RFP, the following parameters are recommended.

1. **Geographic area.** The local RFP will be open to project applications focused on geographic areas within the Marion-Polk region that have high levels of homelessness, housing distress, or poverty. The CoC will accept applications for services on tribal lands.
2. **Subpopulation and Outreach Strategy.** The local RFP will prioritize people with severe service needs experiencing chronic homelessness and mental health concerns. Individuals and families may be identified through street outreach and coordinated transition planning with healthcare and homeless service providers.
3. **Healthcare Connections.** Applicants shall identify health care resources equivalent to at least 50% of the grant request through formal letter(s) of commitment.
4. **Housing Connections.** Applicants will use the CoC's Coordinated Entry system to connect people with severe service needs to housing resources, designating staff to coordinate initial placements. Applicants must use a Housing First approach.
5. **Housing Leverage.** Applicants will leverage mainstream housing vouchers to support individuals and families with severe service needs, designating staff to assist with housing navigation and work with landlords and property owners to identify permanent housing opportunities.
6. **Employment Leverage.** Applicants will provide individualized assistance to advance employment or secure non-employment benefits to support financial stability.
7. **HMIS.** The local RFP will prioritize HMIS strategies that: (a) Identify individuals and families with severe service needs through a rubric associated with the Coordinated Entry assessments; and (b) Improve the collection of demographic information for use in disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.
8. **Equity.** The local RFP will prioritize strategies that advance equity, through identifying and addressing the needs of subpopulations that are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness.
9. **Compliance with Policies and Procedures.** Projects funded through this NOFO must comply with the HUD policies outlined in the Special NOFO (see below) and with the CoC's policies and procedures for providing housing assistance, including being responsive to the preferences and needs of individuals and families.

HUD POLICIES

- A. **Unsheltered Homelessness.** This NOFO supports this highly vulnerable population by supporting CoCs in their efforts to identify people living in unsheltered situations, including encampments, and connects them with health and housing resources. It also supports CoCs in their efforts to enhance their HMIS to collect more comprehensive data on people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in their geographic area.
- B. **Providing Assistance on Tribal Lands.** This NOFO provides additional incentives for creating projects that serve individuals and families in geographic areas that have high levels of homelessness, housing distress, or poverty, and are located where CoC services have until now been entirely unavailable, such as, for example, Tribal Lands.
- C. **Advancing Equity.** Black, Indigenous, and other people of color as well as individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ and individuals with disabilities are substantially overrepresented in the homeless population. CoCs should be reviewing their strategies to support and serve underserved communities, identify barriers that led to any disparities, and take steps to eliminate these barriers. This includes, in conjunction with people experiencing homelessness, reviewing local policies, procedures, and processes to determine where and how to address disparities affecting underserved communities experiencing homelessness.
- D. **Use a Housing First Approach.** Projects should help people move quickly into permanent housing, and the CoC should measure and help projects reduce the length of time people experience homelessness as well as ensure projects are correctly implementing a Housing First approach. Additionally, CoCs should engage landlords and property owners to identify an inventory of housing available for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing participants, remove barriers to entry, and adopt service delivery methods that respond to the preferences and needs of the individual or family presenting for assistance.
- E. **Comprehensive CoC Plan to Service Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs.** As part of this NOFO, CoCs are being required to develop a plan for serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness with Severe Service Needs.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

- A. Describe current strategies for conducting coordinated and comprehensive outreach, providing access to low-barrier shelter and other temporary accommodations, and providing immediate access to low-barrier permanent housing.
- B. Demonstrate how the CoC will leverage both mainstream housing and healthcare resources to assist in our efforts to end unsheltered homelessness and stabilize individuals and their families in housing and increase access to employment opportunities for those experiencing homelessness.
- C. Demonstrate how the CoC will support underserved communities, identify barriers that led to any disparities in communities being served, and support equitable community development by taking steps to address such barriers when using these funds and how the CoC will involve individuals with lived experience in the decision-making process of the CoC.
- D. Demonstrate how the CoC will ensure resources funded under this Special NOFO will contribute to reducing unsheltered homelessness in our geographic area.