



MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY
HOMELESS ALLIANCE
MOVING TO END AND
PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS PROCESS

FY 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides more than \$2 billion per year in funding for homeless housing and services. This funding is distributed through Continuums of Care (CoCs). Each year, HUD requires each CoC to review the performance of homelessness projects within that CoC's region, and to rank those projects in order of funding priority. Projects that are eligible for funding and that rank near the top of the list or in the middle of the list (known as "Tier 1") are most likely to receive federal funding. Projects that are near the bottom of the list (known as "Tier 2") are less likely to receive funding, depending on the Congressional budget and how the CoC performs relative to other CoCs in the national competition. Projects excluded from the list will not receive federal funding.

To assure impartiality, project performance and applications are evaluated by an independent Review and Recommendations (R&R) Committee, separate from CoC leadership. Using the CoC scoring tools and a variety of data, the R&R Committee reviews and ranks project applications and prepares a Preliminary Prioritized List for the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance ("Alliance") Board of Directors review and approval.

The Preliminary Prioritized List may be subject to change if a project files a successful technical appeal or if the CoC board determines changes are required due to urgent community needs. The CoC will then officially adopt the Final Prioritized List and submit to HUD as part of the CoC's Consolidated Application to HUD.

II. PURPOSE

Nationwide, HUD's CoC Program funds important housing and services programs, such as permanent housing (including permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing), transitional housing, and supportive services programs. HUD CoC Program funds are granted annually based on a national competition following the release a federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The CoC Program is designed to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to provide the services needed to help them move into housing, with the goal of long-term stability.

The primary purpose of the required local application process is to provide an in-depth review of each CoC's potential projects and recommendations for ranking of project applications during the review and recommendations process. Recommended rankings from the Review & Recommendations (R&R) Committee will be made to the Alliance Board of Directors for prioritizing both new and renewal projects in the annual HUD CoC funding competition's Tier 1 and Tier 2 divisions. The Preliminary Prioritized List created by the R&R Committee will show the scoring and recommended rank of all of the projects in the Marion-Polk region.

This document outlines key policies for application review and recommendations process for the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance ("Alliance"), the Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Marion-Polk region, as part of the CoC competition for funds. **This document aligns with the Alliance Governance Charter which defines the procedures for the review and recommendations process.**

III. PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW. The CoC's local application process begins after the HUD NOFO is released. The Review and Recommendations (R&R) Committee will review, score, and rank projects to be included in the CoC's Consolidated Application. Minutes of these meetings are available to the public. To be considered for funding, all new and renewal project applications must be submitted to CoC staff by the established deadline. The timeline is posted on the CoC's website.

Upon successful completion of the review and recommendations process, projects approved for inclusion in the CoC's Final Prioritized List will be asked to finalize their application information in e-snaps. All potential project applicants – new or existing – must be registered in HUD's e-snaps internet-based data reporting and application system with active profiles and authorized representatives to complete submission.

APPLICANT WORKSHOP. Upon publication of the CoC NOFO on the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance's website (www.mwvhomelessalliance.org), CoC staff will schedule and announce a time and date for an Applicant Workshop where details about the funding opportunity and the process are provided. These details will be distributed to the entire CoC via email, website posting, and any other method appropriate to ensure full distribution to the CoC. The workshop will orient participants to the Alliance process and will describe HUD application requirements, any supplemental local application materials, scorecards, and applicable deadlines. Applicants will also have an opportunity to ask questions. The CoC's NOFO timeline, application materials, and answers to commonly asked questions will be posted on the CoC's webpage.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. Office hours will be provided on two separate dates where details about the funding opportunity may be discussed and questions about individual project proposals answered. In addition, applicants may send questions by email to staff@mwvhomelessalliance.org, whereby responses will be posted on the Alliance website. The timeline, application materials, scoring tools, and answers to

commonly asked questions will be posted on the Alliance website.

LETTERS OF INTENT. All project applicants (interested in renewal projects and new projects) must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply that indicates the agency name, contact information, population to be served, zip code to be served, project type(s), and estimated dollar amount of the project. Projects that do not have a corresponding Letter of Intent to Apply, submitted by the due date, will not be considered.

SUBMISSION. Applications are to be submitted in e-snaps, with any required supplemental materials submitted to staff@mwvhomelessalliance.org. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

PROJECT APPLICATIONS. Applications must be submitted with all questions answered and materials complete, including a signed Local Applicant Certification of CoC minimum threshold and compliance requirements. By submitting an application, an applicant acknowledges that: the applicant and/or agency has read and understands the terms of the application and the terms of the agreement with local and federal policies, and the applicant is familiar with the conditions that will affect the applicant's performance and funding if the project is funded through HUD.

Applications shall contain sufficient information for the CoC to determine which projects will be prioritized during the review and recommendations process. The Alliance Board of Directors may waive irregularities or deficiencies in an application if the CoC determines that waiver is in the best interests of the CoC.

APPLICATION CRITERIA. All projects must meet the minimum threshold and compliance requirements posted on the CoC website and be responsive to local and federal priorities. To learn more about the HUD CoC guidelines on allowable projects, go to: [CoC Program Competition | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#).

CoC staff will screen all submissions to determine that threshold criteria have been met. Projects that meet threshold criteria will be forwarded to the R&R Committee for review and recommendations for ranking. Project applicants will be informed of the result of the threshold criteria screening and provided a written report describing any shortcomings in threshold criteria.

NEW PROJECTS. New projects will be evaluated on minimum threshold requirements and HUD application requirements, local and federal goals, and project narratives. Information about HUD scoring of threshold requirements, including project quality can be found ~~starting on page 48 of~~ in the HUD NOFO.

RENEWAL PROJECTS. To be eligible for renewal in the FY 2023 competition, projects must be expiring in CY 2024. Renewal projects will be evaluated on meeting basic threshold requirements, performance data and Annual Performance Report (APR), CoC participation (organization must be involved in at least one committee of the CoC), participation in Coordinated Entry, HMIS, and the Housing Inventory Count. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) projects which were awarded funds in CY 2022 will be reviewed and scored, but not ranked, per direction in the HUD NOFO.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DATA. Up-to-date past performance data will be used for all renewal applications **for which the data are available**. Data is pulled from a project's most recently completed program year for renewal projects. Evaluation metrics include target populations served, housing component type, and number of households served. Any findings from HUD monitoring and/or APR reports must be included in the renewal application to the CoC, along with the applicant's explanation of response to the findings.

LESS THAN A FULL YEAR OF DATA. Renewal projects that do not have a full year of operational performance data are required to submit an explanation and provide a plan for expending project funds within the HUD-mandated period. Recently funded permanent supportive housing projects without a full year of data will be scored as a renewal project and will be eligible to be prioritized above new projects based on points awarded for pro-rated occupancy and capacity measures. Renewal projects with sub-standard performance or incomplete data without a satisfactory explanation may be considered for a reduction in funding.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BONUS PROJECTS. Applicants that serve survivors of domestic violence (DV) may apply for DV Bonus funding. The R&R Committee will use a modified scoring tool for projects applying for DV Bonus funding that accounts for the project's ability to promote the safety of its residents and for the project's contribution to the Continuum of Care's analysis of local DV-specific needs and resources. The CoC will recommend the highest scoring DV Bonus project to receive bonus funding.

PROJECT SCORING. The Review and Recommendations (R&R) Committee membership is selected by the CoC Board of Directors or by delegation to the Executive Committee, depending on HUD deadlines. To engage local expertise, the committee is comprised of a minimum of six individuals with experience in local homeless services system, with at least two people from the Collaborative Committee and/or other service providers, with prioritization given to people with lived experience, including members of Backbone, the CoC's Youth Action Board.

Members of the R&R Committee may not have a conflict of interest, which prohibits being affiliated in any way with an applicant whose application will be reviewed by the committee.

Appointed members of the R&R Committee will pair up and develop a deep understanding of assigned projects. The pairs will present a summary of selected projects to the entire committee, and the projects will be scored independently once each committee member has a deep understanding of the projects.

R&R Committee members will use standardized scoring tools to score each project. Scoring tools will be posted on the CoC's website. Committee members will use information they receive from local applications to calculate a score for each project using the scoring factors listed in the scoring tools. Committee members do not need to agree on scores and are entitled to their own opinions as long as scoring is consistent individually. After individual scoring is completed, scores will be averaged to calculate the project's final score.

Unless specifically indicated, all scoring factors have a minimum of 0 points. Committee members may not assign a project a negative number of points or decimal scores (e.g., 2.5 points). Similarly, members may not

assign “extra credit” that goes above the maximum score listed for a scoring factor in the scoring tool.

INTERVIEWS. During the project application review process, applicants may be asked for an interview to discuss the project application and scoring may be impacted. The R&R Committee may request an interview with any applicant. If an application or project details are unclear, or appear inadequate, the applicant may be given an opportunity in the interview to explain and provide additional details. If the R&R Committee requests interviews, all applicants within an identified project type will be offered an interview.

The CoC reserves the right to make such investigations it deems appropriate to determine whether an applicant is qualified to provide the proposed program services. The CoC may request supplemental written information from an applicant concerning the applicant’s ability to perform services. If an applicant fails to cooperate with an investigation, fails to provide supplemental information, or provides false, misleading, or incomplete information, the CoC may reject the applicant’s proposal.

ASSIGNING PROJECT RANKS. After all projects have been scored, the R&R Committee will assemble a recommended list for how each project should be ranked in order of funding priority. This Preliminary Prioritized List will be determined by the average scores that members assigned.

TIER 1: In a typical competition, Tier 1 includes roughly 90% of the funding available to the CoC. Projects that are ranked in Tier 1 are likely to receive federal funding unless the government shuts down or the project is deemed legally ineligible by HUD.

TIER 2: Tier 2 is equal to the difference between Tier 1 and the CoC Annual Renewal Demand plus the amount available for any bonus projects (not including the DV Bonus amount). This means the community would like those projects to receive funding, but it is uncertain whether HUD will allocate enough money to fund those projects. If the CoC performs well in the national competition, or if Congressional appropriations stretch further than expected, then some Tier 2 projects may be funded. Projects ranked toward the top of Tier 2 are somewhat more likely to receive funding than projects at the bottom of Tier 2.

The R&R Committee may exercise scoring discretion in cases where community funding is at risk. Discretion may include removing prioritization of low-performing renewal projects over new projects or placing the project into Tier 2 of the priority list. Performance Improvement Agreements may be considered as part of any decision about ranking renewal projects.

The R&R Committee may choose to prioritize Permanent Supportive Housing projects with a strong track record of performance above any new projects to promote and prioritize system performance through preventing returns to homelessness and promoting housing stability and retention.

Performance requirements include:

- A. Meet HUD guidelines for Housing First, to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry;
- B. Maintain at least an 85% occupancy rate;
- C. Participate in Coordinated Entry; and
- D. Participate in HMIS, or a comparable database if a Domestic Violence (DV) provider.

The R&R Committee may also exercise scoring discretion based on factors aligned with priorities in the CoC strategic plans, such as population served, geographic distribution, and the need for rural or urban services.

COORDINATED ENTRY AND HMIS PROJECTS. Projects supporting Coordinated Entry and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) are evaluated differently than projects supporting direct client services. The R&R Committee may determine that projects that are necessary for the success of the whole continuum need to be prioritized within Tier 1. The CoC will accept only renewal projects for Coordinated Entry and HMIS for the FY 2023 local competition. If only one letter of intent is received for each of these systemwide projects, the R&R Committee may opt to not score the applications but, rather, move the projects directly to making application corrections in the e-snaps system.

NOTIFICATION OF PRELIMINARY RANKING. The CoC will endeavor to notify project applicants as to whether their project was recommended for funding on the Preliminary Prioritized Ranking List (and, if so, in which tier) within 72 hours of the R&R Committee meeting adjournment. Project applicants may also receive a more detailed report that includes a full list of project scores along with a scoring breakdown for their own /project. Depending on the pace of the competition, the more detailed report may not be immediately available.

APPEALS. The CoC Appeals Committee will review all appeals by the process set forth in the Alliance Governance Charter, Article IV(E). A Notification of Intent to Appeal and actual appeals must be received in writing with supporting documentation by the established deadlines. Appeal documentation must be based on the information submitted in the original application. No additional or new information will be considered. Eligible applicants may appeal both their scores and preliminary rankings; applicants that have not met the threshold eligibility standards are not eligible to appeal.

The Appeals Committee may make modifications to the Preliminary Prioritized List, based on the results of the appeals process. The following are the threshold eligibility standards which provide the basis for an applicant to appeal:

- a) An applicant receives less funding than applied for;
- b) An applicant is ranked below Tier 1;

- c) An applicant is ranked in the bottom third of Tier 1;
- d) An applicant believes its score is not reflective of the application information provided; or
- e) An applicant can describe bias or unfairness in the process that warrants the appeal.

SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT FUNDING. In some circumstances there may be an opportunity after the application deadline for the CoC to recommend allocating supplemental funding to projects. The CoC reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to add funds to one or more of the projects awarded through the local competition process, to recommend entering into new contracts with applicants which were not awarded through this competition process, and to issue a new opportunity to apply for funding.

IV. SCORING TOOLS

The R&R Committee will use CoC-approved scoring tools to score projects. These tools reflect local community and federal priorities. The CoC will prioritize funding to promote high-performing projects and align with implementation of local and federal priorities. To help cope with the fast pace of the competition, scoring tools are typically drafted before HUD releases the NOFO.

Upon publication of the CoC Program NOFO, the CoC will review the currently adopted scoring tools for all project types and assure they comply with the NOFO. In the event the scoring tools do not comport with the NOFO, changes will be made prior to the use of the tools in the competition. All changes will be presented to and approved or ratified by the CoC in accordance with the CoC Governance Charter. Scoring tools will be posted on the CoC's website.

LOCAL AND FEDERAL PRIORITY POPULATIONS

- Serving those experiencing chronic homelessness and using the Housing First model
- Serving Youth
- Serving those fleeing from domestic violence, sexual assault and/or human trafficking, including the utilization and coordination of a DV Coordinated Entry System
- Serving Families
- Serving Veterans
- Serving LGBTQ populations
- Serving BIPOC and other underserved populations

RESOURCES

For additional resources, go to: [Notice of Funding Opportunity – Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance \(mwvhomelessalliance.org\)](https://www.homelessalliance.org)