Sonoma County Continuum of Care (CoC)

FY2023 CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup
Agenda for April 05, 2023
10:00am-12:00pm Pacific Time

Meeting Login Information: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/continuum-of-care-competition-evaluation-workgroup-meeting-april-5-2023

	Agenda Item	Packet Item		Presenter	Time
	Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions			CDC Staff	10:00am
1.	Nominations and Approval of Chair (ACTION ITEM)			CDC Staff	10:05am
2.	Approve Agenda (ACTION ITEM)	-Agenda 4/05/2023		Chair	10:15am
3.	Continuum of Care Program Overview, evaluations schedule and process	- Continuum of Care funding overview -2023 CoC Renewal Evaluations Schedule of Events		CDC Staff	10:25am
4.	CoC Competition FY 23 Renewal Scoring (ACTION ITEM)	-Executive Summary of Project Scoring/Scoring for the 2023 CoC Competition – Renewal Projects		CDC Staff	11:00am
5.	Public Comment on Non-agendized Items			Chair	11:55pm

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public Comment may be made via email or during the live zoom meeting. To submit an emailed public comment to the Committee email Araceli.Rivera@sonoma-county.org . Please provide your name, the agenda number(s) on which you wish to speak, and your comment. These comments will be emailed to all Committee members. Public comment during the meeting can be made live by joining the Zoom meeting. Available time for comments is determined by the Chair based on agenda scheduling demands and total number of speakers.

Sonoma County CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup
Executive Summary

Item: Executive Summary of Sonoma County Continuum of Care Funding Overview
Date: March 29, 2023
Staff Contact: Karissa White, Continuum of Care Coordinator, Karissa.White@sonoma-county.org

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has given the name **Continuum of Care** (CoC) to its competitive funding targeted for services and housing serving homeless people. This funding originated in the McKinney Act of 1987, and was reauthorized as the Homeless Emergency And Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act in 2009.

Continuum of Care funding is available through a national competitive block grant process in which local communities can access a formula amount (known as pro rata need) by demonstrating an effective local, year-round planning process. Therefore, all applications are made with one umbrella Consolidated CoC Application (completed by the Continuum of Care Coordinator), and 15 current Project Applications:

- *Buckelew Programs – 2 scattered site permanent supportive housing sites serving individuals who are homeless/chronically homeless with severe mental illness*
- *Catholic Charities – 1 permanent supportive housing project including scattered sites in Santa Rosa and Guerneville and units at the Palms Inn serving 100% chronically homeless individuals.*
- *COTS – 1 permanent supportive housing scattered site project serving 100% chronically homeless individuals in Rohnert Park and Petaluma.*
- *Community Support Network – 1 site based permanent supportive housing project serving 100% chronically homeless adult individuals with mental illness in Santa Rosa & 1 site based permanent supportive housing project serving chronically homeless transition age youth ages 18-24*
- *Social Advocates for Youth - 1 Sponsor Based Rental Assistance project serving transitional age youth ages 18-24.*
- *West County Community Services – 1 site based permanent supportive housing project serving 100% chronically homeless adults in West County*
- *Sonoma County Community Development Commission Housing Authority – 2 rental assistance projects serving special populations experiencing homelessness (youth & persons with HIV)*
  - o *Note: The Rental Assistance project for youth with disabilities is currently seeking a transfer of the grant to Social Advocates for Youth. This process will not impact our evaluations of the project.*
- *YWCA of Sonoma County – 1 rapid rehousing project serving victims of domestic violence*
- *County of Sonoma Department of Health Services – Coordinated Entry and Homeless Management Information System*

- *St. Vincent de Paul Sonoma County- 1 site based permanent supportive housing project, St. Vincent de Paul Commons PSH, located in Santa Rosa. This project was newly awarded in FY 21 competition.*

HUD scores our Consolidated CoC Application in several areas of aggregate project performance; therefore, *individual* project performance is important. Also due to limited funding, HUD requires local communities to prioritize the projects we submit to them; therefore, they must be locally scored.

CoC funds can be used for acquisition, rehab or new construction of housing, leasing activities, rental assistance, housing operations, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS Lead only), or supportive services. Services can take place in any homeless setting, but housing activities (acquisition/rehab/construction, leasing/rental assistance, or housing operations) must be in **permanent housing** settings- Permanent Supportive & Rapid-rehousing Housing (unless awarded funds for Joint-Transitional/Rapid Rehousing). Projects may have been funded originally for 2-5 years; to spread the dollars as far as possible, renewals are only funded for a 1-year term. In recent years even new projects are funded for up to only 18 months, putting us in the position of renewing projects that cannot yet report much in the way of performance (like the new St. Vincent de Paul project).

All projects require a minimum 25% match (either in-kind or cash match, leasing is excluded from this calculation); and all projects are required to state what local non-McKinney-Act resources will be leveraged by the HUD award. These and other scoring elements are all derived from HUD threshold criteria, competitive objective scoring criteria such as federal System Performance Measures, or criteria based on local data and strategic priorities.

The pro rata need HUD assigns to the combined entitlement jurisdictions of Santa Rosa, Petaluma and Sonoma County (recently recalculated under the new regulations), totals about $2.2 million in FY22. For many years now, the amount needed to renewal all existing projects for 1 year (about $4.1 million in FY21) has outstripped this pro rata need figure. For communities such as ours, HUD calculates an approved amount for which we can apply, equivalent to the sum of all 1-year project budgets that are up for renewal.

Once our renewal demand outstripped the "pro rata need" formula, the only new funds we can apply for are **bonus** funds. HUD has encouraged the creation of more permanent supportive housing for disabled chronically homeless persons by allowing communities to apply for permanent supportive housing projects. In 2018 and 2019, HUD introduced Domestic Violence Bonus Projects for rapid re-housing, transitional housing/rapid rehousing, and coordinated entry projects serving victims of domestic violence. Occasionally, HUD will introduce new bonus project types in their Competition for funding.

HUD does not require us to stay with the same 15 projects if they aren't all performing well, or no longer address our needs. The local Continuum of Care is allowed to **reallocate** renewal project funding to another new project, if:

1. The project no longer serves local needs;
2. the project is unable to comply with the new regulations;
3. the project is no longer a good match for this funding stream (due to new regulations); or
4. the operator desires to decrease a request from HUD for another reason (e.g., cannot spend down all funds).

Also, while Bonus projects are very prescriptive in terms of eligible expenses, **reallocated funds can be used for any eligible kind of project**, and any eligible expense. We regularly use this feature to reallocate funding from under-performing projects and savings from other projects. Determining whether to reallocate funds is a primary purpose of the 2023 CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup.

The previous Evaluation Committee met in 2022 and provided an impartial, objective basis for prioritizing projects. One feature of the scoring system is a threshold for unconditional renewal; those projects scoring below the threshold have the option of either improving their performance or giving up their project's funding for reallocation. Formed in 2022, the CoC Competition Evaluation Committee worked closely with the CoC Coordinator and other Lead Agency staff to rate and rank renewal projects and any new projects submitted. The 2023 CoC Competition Evaluation (CCE) Workgroup will provide the same level of review new and renewal projects. New projects will not be evaluated until the FY 2023 Continuum of Care Competition opens (dates to be determined as there is no set release date for this NOFO).

The CCE Workgroup rates and ranks all renewal and new projects for the competition (including new projects from reallocated funding and/or new projects for bonus project funding), this includes projects place in tier 1 and tier 2 for funding. Projects placed into tier 2 are at risk of losing their funding from HUD. Amount to be placed at-risk in tier 2 will be announced via the 2023 CoC NOFO.

The CoC meetings for CoC project evaluations (including the CCE Workgroup, F&E Committee, and the CoC Board) are open to the public, and community feedback is welcomed. Renewal Applicants are welcome to join and provide feedback through public comment, but it is not required.

This year, there will be an extra layer of review as this working group will report and make recommendations directly to the CoC's Funding and Evaluation Committee, with the CoC Board having the final decision on recommended projects.

Recommended Action:
None, informational only.

Sonoma County Continuum of Care

c/o Sonoma County Department of Health Services, 1450 Neotomas Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95405
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2023 CoC Renewal Project Evaluations Schedule of Events

Timeframe	Tasks
Week of April 3rd	Memo and requirements for submission released
Week of April 3rd	CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup Review and Approval of Scoring
April 13th	CoC Funding & Evaluation Committee Approval of Recommended scoring
April 26th	Report to CoC Board on FY23 Process and Approval of Scoring
May 1st	Renewal documentation due
Week of May 1st	Renewal Documentation provided to CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup for review
Week of May 12th	Preliminary review of renewal documentation completed
Week of May 15th	CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup Meeting – Review of Renewal Documents and initial scoring
May 22nd – June 2nd	Site visits to all programs
Week of June 5th	CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup evaluation of renewal projects completed and any recommendations for Corrective Action Plans
June 13th	CoC Funding & Evaluation Committee Approval of Renewal Project Preliminary Scoring and Corrective Action Plans (if applicable)
June 28th	Final report to CoC Board for 2023 Preliminary Renewal Project Scoring and Corrective Action Plans (if Applicable)
June-July TBD*	Continuum of Care NOFO released
July TBD*	Local Request for Proposals for new projects released
August TBD*	Rating and Ranking of New and Renewal Projects by CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup
August TBD	Approval of Rating and Ranking of New and Renewal Projects by the Funding & Evaluation Committee
August-September TBD*	Final Rating and Ranking of New and Renewal Projects by CoC Board and Submission of CoC NOFO

HUD does not have a specific date in which the CoC Competition NOFO Is released or due for submission. The timeline above is an estimate of release and approval based on previous funding years and is subject to change.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Homelessness Services Division

Sonoma County CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup
Executive Summary

Item: 4. Executive Summary of CoC Renewal Project Scoring

Date: March 29, 2023

Staff Contact: Karissa White, Continuum of Care Coordinator, Karissa.White@sonoma-county.org

Agenda Item Overview

The attached FY 23 CoC Renewal scoring matrix is set for approval by this workgroup on Wednesday, April 5th. Renewal projects are scored first (projects already existing through this funding stream). Renewal project supplemental materials are extensively reviewed, and site visits are conducted by CoC Staff and CCE Workgroup prior to the release of the NOFO to ensure the CoC has enough time to thoroughly review all existing projects and develop Corrective Action Plans (if needed). Final ranking of renewal projects will not be completed until the Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) period opens.

Projects are scored based on system performance, adherence to HUD guidelines, and local priorities.

Scoring Sections:

- Housing Performance
- Income Performance
- Utilization
- Housing First Practices and Implementation
- Collaboration with Coordinated Entry
- Alignment with 10-year plan goals/HUD Priorities
- Financial Audits
- Contract Administration

- Spend down of funds and match
- Cultural Competency and Disability Access
- Client Lived Experience Feedback Process
- Racial Equity
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Data-informed Program Research
- Change Management & Institutionalization of Knowledge
- Data Quality and Timelessness

Sonoma County Continuum of Care is scored in the CoC Competition, nationally, on our scoring process. Scoring well, as a community, allows us the possibility of increasing our annual award amount via bonus funding. HUD has not yet released the specific scores from last year's competition. However, we can confirm in the FY 2021 Continuum of Care Program Competition Debriefing, we received a total of 27/30 points on the section for Project Capacity, Review, and Ranking section; this includes a total of 19.5/22 points total for our Project Review, Ranking, and Selection process. HUD does not provide any additional information as to which sections we lost points in this area. The following is the breakout of the sections in which HUD scored us on for 2021.

CoC Program FY 2021 Competition Debriefing Excerpt

These questions assessed whether your CoC used objective criteria and past performance to review and rank projects based on required attachments.

1. At least 33 percent of the total points were based on objective criteria for the project application (e.g., cost effectiveness, timely draws (draws meaning requesting funds from HUD for their project), utilization rate, match, leverage, performance data, type of population served (e.g., DV, youth, Veterans, chronic homelessness), or type of housing proposed (e.g., PSH, RRH).
2. At least 20 percent of the total points were based on HUD's system performance criteria for the project application (e.g., exits to permanent housing destinations, retention of permanent housing, length of time homeless, returns to homelessness).
3. Used data from a comparable database to score projects submitted by victim service providers.
4. Used objective criteria to evaluate how projects submitted by victim service providers improved safety for the population they serve.
5. Used a specific method for evaluating projects based on the CoC's analysis of rapid returns to permanent housing.
6. Specific severity of needs and vulnerabilities your CoC considered when ranking and selecting projects; and
7. Considerations your CoC gave to projects that provide housing and services to the hardest to serve populations that could result in lower performance levels but are projects your CoC needs in its geographic area.

To view HUD's break down of our CoC's scoring from the FY 2021 competition, please use the following Link: https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/kuz21HvP1x8/

Renewal Project Scoring Revisions

Over the years, there has been slight modifications of the scoring due to new scoring information included within the annual CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), adjustments to the local priorities section, and points allocated to each section.

What has changed from last year's CoC Renewal Project Scoring Tool?

Scoring questionaries have been consolidated into one document, the 2023 Renewal Evaluation Application Questionnaire, which is now in order with the scoring tool. Some questions from previous questionaries were removed for redundancy, some were revised for clarification based on feedback from last year, and some were added based on new priorities.

Based on the 2022 CoC Competition Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), we have added the following sections to the scoring tool:

1. Access to mainstream resources (e.g. Medi-cal, Calfresh, TANF, substance abuse programs, employment assistance)
2. Promotion of/supporting volunteering, community engagement, and employment services
3. Racial Equity (expanded to its own section)
4. Anti-discrimination Practices & Policies (Improving Assistance to LGBTQ+ Individuals)
5. Coordination with Housing and Healthcare

As the workgroup, you can adjust the scoring and add new sections if you see fit. The scoring sections are based on HUD priorities and some local priorities as well. It is not recommended that any of these sections be removed as they have been developed to be in line with HUD requirements.

Scoring Tool Performance Measurements 1-4 account for our required percentages of objective measurements, which data is pulled from the Annual Performance Report- APR. The workgroup can decide to adjust the points within this section, without removing any sections. As of 2022, we are required to have at least 33% objective scoring sections and we currently have 40%; 35% of which are the required HUD System Performance Measures.

Scoring Tool Performance Measurements 5-16 are local and HUD priorities. These are all listed within the 2022 NOFO to score, so removing sections is not recommended. Remember, we are scored on how we score (based on the NOFO/HUD Priorities). As the workgroup, you have the option to adjust the weight of scores in these sections, or add something else you would like to see scored. Points have been slightly adjusted in this section from last year to account for new HUD priorities in the scoring tool.

Staff request that workgroup members pay particular attention to the following sections when reviewing the score sheet to provide recommendations:

1. **Coordinated Entry** (Scoring Tool Performance Measure 6)- this section has been revised to include additional scoring factors. Previously, this section only accounted for the number of eligible accepted referrals from Coordinated Entry (CE). The purpose of this, is to not decline referrals based on perceived "fit" of the project. During last year's competition for funding, it was found that one of the projects scored had a number of enrollments outside the CE referral process. As CE referrals are a requirement to receive these federal funds, we have broken out this section to include a review of CE accepted referrals vs. project enrollments. Any project found to have had 1 or more enrollments without a CE referral attached to it will be automatically given a Corrective Action Plan to monitor future enrollments for a specific time period as recommended by the workgroup. We do believe this will ensure that projects requiring CE referrals are held accountable for using this system for referrals.

2. **Financial/Audit: Process timeliness; findings/management letter, overall fiscal health** (Scoring Tool Performance Measure 8)- Historically has only accounted for a review of the audit for scoring (if it was late/had findings). However, staff recognize agencies are required to submit additional audit documents for review in this section and provide answers to narrative questions in the Questionnaire Section 5: Financial Management. As outlined within the NOFO, HUD can reject a project for unsatisfactory/unresolved findings, history of inadequate financial management, major capacity issues, untimely expenditures on prior awards, etc. Given this information, staff request feedback from the workgroup on how we score this section. For example, should this be broken out to account for other audit materials submitted or their narrative response in the questionnaire?

3. **Contract Administration: CoC Annual Performance Report (APR) Review- accuracy and timeliness of reporting** (Scoring Tool Performance Measure 9)- In previous years, this section was scored based on staff's review in the HUD Sage reporting system to see if the provider submitted their reports on time and/or if there were any errors. Staff have the ability to login to the reporting system as the Collaborative Applicant and see this information. However, agencies do submit narrative responses to three questions related to the submission of their APR to HUD. Does the workgroup want to revise this scoring to account for the supplemental questions responses or keep this as objective scoring as it has been in the past?

Scoring Tool (Review Required)
Draft 2023 CoC Renewal Project Scoring Tool : https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/PkYeOxUhB2w/

Additional Materials (Optional Review)
In addition to the attached scoring matrix, we have provided some documents within this packet that will be sent to Renewal Applicants on April 3rd describing the process.

If you are interested in viewing all the supplemental materials and checklist of required materials sent to the Renewal Applicants for scoring, you can do so by using the following link: https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/HS5i78EX8J4/

All CoC Competition FY 2023 materials and up to date information can be located on our website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/development-services/community-development-commission/divisions/homeless-services/continuum-of-care/continuum-of-care-competition

All 2023 CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup meeting information and materials can be located on our website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/development-services/community-development-commission/divisions/homeless-services/continuum-of-care/committees/coc-competition-evaluation-workgroup

Staff Recommendation:
Approve the Scoring tool for the 2023 CoC Competition – Renewal Projects as is or as modified by the CoC Competition Evaluation Workgroup.