



**OAKLAND/BERKELEY/ALAMEDA COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC)  
2023 CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)<sup>1</sup> LOCAL COMPETITION  
REVIEW AND RANKING PROCESS  
Finalized July 21, 2023**

## **OVERVIEW**

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides almost \$3 billion a year in funding for homeless housing and services. This funding is distributed through Continuums of Care (CoCs) which are regional organizations that meet regularly to improve project performance and build community support for responding to homelessness.

Each year, HUD requires each CoC to review the performance of homelessness projects within that CoC's region, and to use their performance to rank those projects in order of their funding priority. Projects that are eligible for funding and that rank highest (known as Tier 1) will receive federal funding, while those at bottom of the list (Tier 2) may or may not receive funding, depending on how the CoC as a whole performs relative to other CoCs in the national competition and the project's placement on the list. Projects that are excluded from the list altogether will not receive federal funding.

### **A. ROLES OF THE HUD CoC AND NOFO COMMITTEES, THE APPEALS PANEL, AND CONTINUUM OF CARE OPERATIONS SUPPORT PROVIDER**

#### **1. Leadership Board**

In the Oakland/Berkeley/Alameda County CoC, the Leadership Board functions as the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board required by the CoC Interim Rule to act on behalf of the membership to ensure CoC responsibilities are fulfilled, including preparing the application for Continuum of Care funds. Under its Roles and Responsibilities, the Leadership Board:

- Recommends guiding principles and strategic direction to the NOFO Committee based on HUD NOFO guidelines.
- Designs, operates and follows a collaborative process for submitting the CoC NOFO application to HUD.
- Delegates responsibilities to Committees and Workgroups as specified in the 2022 Alameda County Continuum of Care/EveryOne Home Governance Charter, including delegating to the NOFO Committee the role of evaluating projects' performance as an independent rating and

ranking panel.

## **2. NOFO Committee**

The CoC Operations Support Provider (Homebase) will recruit NOFO Committee members and propose a NOFO Committee Roster for HUD CoC Committee's approval. NOFO Committee members will be unbiased and non-conflicted and represent neutral organizations, stakeholders and individuals with lived experience. "Non-conflicted" and neutral organizations are those that are not currently applying for and/or receiving CoC funding distributed by the Alameda County CoC. They will sign a form verifying they do not have a conflict of interest.

The NOFO Committee conducts the annual HUD Competition's local rating and ranking process for projects seeking Continuum of Care funds, reviews applications submitted, and prepares ranked recommendations for funding.

Specifically, the NOFO Committee:

- Integrates funding priorities and strategic direction from the Leadership Board.
- Develops local applications for existing and new projects.
- Develops scoring criteria in compliance with the requirements of the annual NOFO.
- Reviews and scores proposals.
- Conducts the Rating and Ranking process and makes final recommendations of the Priority List of Projects (Rating and Ranking List) which are approved by non- conflicted members of the Leadership Board to be included in the CoC Consolidated application package.

## **3. Appeals Panel**

If an applicant contests their rating or ranking, they may appeal. The Appeals Panel, comprised of non-conflicted members seated for each NOFO round, reviews any appeals made by CoC Project Applicants to the local competition's Rating and Ranking list, as governed by the Alameda County HUD CoC Appeals Process established in 2017 and revised in 2022 (detailed in Section C of this process document). Appeal Panel decisions are final.

## **4. Continuum of Care Operations Support Provider**

In 2022, the Alameda County Department of Housing and Community Development (the CoC Collaborative Applicant) designated Homebase to serve as the CoC Operations Support Provider. With a portion of the federal CoC planning grant, Homebase, with support from a NOFO Consultant, as needed, conducts activities related to the annual Local HUD Continuum of Care Program Competition (NOFO), including providing analysis, scoring feedback, and other guidance on HUD priorities; supporting the development of the HUD CoC Committee strategic direction to the NOFO Committee; and scoring objective elements of the application and convening and providing support to the NOFO Committee and Appeals Panel, among other duties.

All decisions regarding the Local HUD Continuum of Care Program Competition are subject to

review and approval by the Leadership Board and NOFO Committees. In addition, Homebase, values community input and discussion and will create opportunities for grantees to provide feedback on changes to process and tools. There will also be an effort to ensure any changes, including new requirements or policies in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), are communicated to ensure a transparent process.

## **5. Collaborative Applicant**

As reflected in the Alameda County Continuum of Care/EveryOne Home Governance Charter, adopted in February 2022, Alameda County Housing and Community Development (HCD) agency serves as the Collaborative Applicant for the Continuum of Care pursuant to 24 CFR 578.3. As the Collaborative Applicant, HCD will review the budgets and narratives of all Project Applications and facilitate the submission of all Project Applications after they have been rated, ranked and approved by the NOFO Committee and work with Homebase, and consultants, to complete and submit the Continuum of Care's Consolidated Application.

## **B. 2023 NOFO REVIEW AND RANKING PROCESS**

Homebase and the NOFO consultant will develop a proposed Review and Ranking process. The Leadership Board will provide input into the process through strategic direction. The NOFO Committee will provide input on the proposed process and approve it.

### **1. Development and Release of the Local Competition**

- Homebase, with support from a consultant, as needed, will conduct annually a Project Performance Evaluation using APRs, HMIS and other comparable data sources, and relevant documentation to score objective criteria. Providers will be notified of the date that APRs will be pulled so that projects can clean-up data in advance. Data will be collected from the same period for all projects.
- Applicants that are victim services organizations and therefore do not participate in HMIS must provide an APR from their HUD-mandated compatible database by the published local deadline.
- The Local HUD Continuum of Care Program Competition (NOFO) will be launched after HUD releases the Notice of Funding Opportunity and a timeline will be developed by Homebase and consultants to adhere to mandated deadlines.
- The Leadership Board will determine the strategic direction to provide to the NOFO committee and community.
- The NOFO committee will provide final approval of all tools and criteria.
- Homebase will release an announcement of available funding for both new and renewal grantees. Funding announcements will be broadly distributed via email to the provider community and posted on the EveryOne Home website.
- Applicants, both renewing and prospective, will be invited to attend a Bidder's Conference, receive application materials, and have adequate time to complete and submit their Local

Application within HUD's deadlines.

- Homebase and the NOFO Consultant will offer a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) period, which will be updated in writing each week, in consultation with the NOFO Committee, as needed. The FAQ period will end two days prior to the local application deadline. Agency specific questions will be responded to directly. Questions that may impact several applicants will be responded to directly and will be published with FAQs.

## **2. Ranking Policy**

- All projects will be scored and ranked in accordance with the criteria and process approved by the NOFO Committee, published on the EveryOne Home website, and explained at the applicant bidder's conference.
- Renewing HMIS and Coordinated Entry (CE) Projects will not receive scores. As critical infrastructure for the CoC, HMIS and CE projects will be placed automatically at the bottom of Tier 1.
- Projects renewing for the first time that do not have one year of data will be automatically placed at the bottom of Tier 1, immediately above the HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects. The relative ranking of these projects will be alphabetical. Given that the amount in Tier 1 is fixed, if the ranking results in a project straddling tiers, the NOFO Committee will make a strategic decision on whether the project will straddle or will be placed completely in Tier 2. They will determine this according to what is best for the overall package.
- Recently awarded projects that are not making enough progress toward becoming operational and/or no longer meet thresholds may be placed in Tier 2.
- Transition grants must apply as new projects and have approval from the Leadership Board, as per HUD requirements.
- Applicants proposing to consolidate two or more grants must submit each grant as a separate local application for scoring and ranking, as per HUD requirements.
- Grants that were previously consolidated and for which one or more of the constituent grants does not have a year of performance data (due to being new) will be evaluated based only on the performance of the grant that has data.

## **3. Reallocation Policy**

Any projects that have underspending of their grant funds will be encouraged to voluntarily offer to reduce their grant award to support other projects in our Continuum of Care.

## **4. Review and Scoring of Applications**

- Project applicants must submit the local application and required attachments by the published deadline.
- Homebase and the NOFO consultant will review applications for completeness and will offer applicants an opportunity to cure technical deficiencies by submitting missing items. Applicants may not submit any additional information after the published deadline unless specifically requested by Homebase to cure a technical deficiency or by the NOFO

committee as part of its application review and scoring process. The NOFO committee shall have discretion as to whether to consider any materials submitted by the applicant after the local competition deadline.

- Homebase and the NOFO Consultant will provide training to the NOFO Committee on how to review and score both new and renewal applications according to the approved scoring criteria and process. Objective factors (such as project performance drawn from HMIS data) will be calculated by Homebase and provided to the NOFO committee for review and to ask questions. The NOFO Committee will review and score any supplemental narratives for specific criteria. NOFO Committee members will finalize individual scores for each project prior to the Rating and Ranking session.
- Grantees must also complete an application in *e-snaps* by the date determined by the local process.
- At the Rating and Ranking session, scores will be tabulated, and Project Applications will be ranked and placed in either Tier 1 or Tier 2. To improve the competitiveness of the overall application, the NOFO Committee may reorder individual projects within the parameters set by the Leadership Board's Strategic Direction. The NOFO committee will not be bound to the points awarded to applications. In addition, the NOFO Committee has the authority to decide on all straddling situations.
- If there are not enough new applications submitted by the local competition deadline to request the maximum amount of funding allocated by HUD, Homebase and the NOFO committee have the discretion to solicit additional projects. Any additional project submitted after the local deadline will automatically be placed at the bottom of Tier 2.
- The NOFO committee may request that new projects adjust their budgets (either increasing or decreasing) to align to available funding for new projects.
- At the conclusion of the Rating and Ranking session, the NOFO Committee will finalize the Project Priority List for approval by the Leadership Board.
- Homebase will bring the NOFO Committee's final CoC Rating and Ranking List to the non-conflicted members of the Leadership Board for review and approval.
- The Leadership Board will approve the Consolidated Application prior submittal to HUD, minus the final Rating and Ranking List.

## **5. Communicating the Results of the Local Competition**

- Final scoring results will be delivered to applicants via email, along with next steps and information on the Appeals Process.
- All applicants that are eligible for an appeal will have 2 business days to submit the Appeal. Appeals will be reviewed by non-conflicted members of the Appeals Panel, seated by the Leadership Board. Applicants who submit an appeal may also request an interview with the Appeals Panel as part of the CoC's Appeals process.
- Homebase will generate the final Rating and Raking List as approved by the non-conflicted members of the of the Leadership Board, to be posted on the EveryOne Home website and announced on the EveryOne Home mailing list and social media accounts.

- The Local Applications and Rating and Ranking list (Priority List of Projects) will be submitted to HUD along with the County-wide Consolidated Application by HUD's NOFO deadline, and all project applicants will be invited to attend the NOFO debrief.

### C. APPEALS PROCESS

The NOFO Committee developed a formal appeals process for the HUD CoC NOFA local competition in 2017, which was amended and approved by the HUD CoC Committee on 7/16/2019. Clarifying updates to the policy were made in 2022. The Appeals Panel, which is seated by the CoC Standards, Compliance and Funding Committee, consists of three non-conflicted individuals.

#### 1) Appeals are limited to the following:

The Applicant believes that one or more of the following has taken place:

- a. An application was not evaluated according to the published local NOFO process.
- b. There was a scoring error in the evaluation of the project
- c. An application was evaluated in a way that violates federal regulations.
- d. The adjustment of scores has the possibility of changing in which Tier an Applicant project is ranked OR whether an Applicant project is included in the package at all. Note: this includes any Project that with an initial Rating and Ranking score that appears very close to the end of Tier 1 and can be moved down to Tier 2 as a result of scoring post appeals.

#### 2) What is not eligible for appeal:

- a. Errors or omissions by project Applicants.
- b. Projects that do not meet threshold criteria.
- c. Dissatisfaction with Project's scores.
- d. Need for funds.

Appeals submitted after the appeal deadline will not be accepted.

#### 3) Process:

- a. The NOFO Committee will release the first Rating and Ranking List, including dollar amounts and point scores.
- b. In the unlikely event of a mathematical error, Applicants must report the issue to Everyone Home within 24 hours of release of the Rating and Ranking List for the error to be corrected. The Rating and Ranking List and scores will be reissued with the appropriate corrections at the time of the release of the final Rating and Ranking List.
- c. Applicant projects have 2 business days to register any appeals via email. Appeals and any supporting documentation should be emailed to [info@everyonehome.org](mailto:info@everyonehome.org).
- d. All appeal requests will be confirmed via email within one (1) business day of submission. All appeals submitted before the deadline will be posted to the Everyone Home website

within 24 working hours of the deadline. All Applicant projects who wish to submit appeals will be subject to this deadline. There will not be a second round of appeals.

- e. Agencies will need to provide, in writing and with supporting examples/backup documentation, specific sections of the Application on which the appeal is based, and/or sections or examples where local guidelines or regulations were violated.
- f. The appeal request must specify facts and evidence sufficient for the Appeals Panel to determine the validity of the appeal.
- g. Appealing projects will be limited to the grounds they raise when registering the appeal, and appeal grounds may only be on items/attachments that were included in the initial project's Application.
- h. Applicants will be notified of the date and time of the Appeal Panel meeting and will be invited to attend a portion of the discussion.
- i. The Panel will review all submitted appeals and back up documentation and will meet to discuss, make final recommendations, and provide responses to each appellant. The Panel will allocate up to 30 minutes for the discussion with the applicant.
- j. The Leadership Board will complete its recommendations on the final Rating and Ranking List, including results of any appeal.
- k. If the result of any appeals requires a re-ordering of the Project Priority List, the NOFO Committee will meet to approve the revised list.
- l. A final Rating and Ranking List reflective of any changes generated by appealing projects will be issued by Homebase and published on the EveryOne Home website.
- m. The Leadership Board will approve the Consolidated Application prior submittal to HUD, minus the final Rating and Ranking List.