

# Vermont's Homeless Continua of Care System

Daniel Blankenship

Vermont State Housing Authority

November 2016



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/coc101.pdf>

---

- 1987: Congress passes first federal law to address homelessness and authorizes HUD housing programs (**Shelter Plus Care & Supportive Housing Programs**).
- 1988 to 1993: HUD held national competitions for S+C & SHP homeless assistance funds every year with **individual organizations** writing separate applications.
- 1994: HUD requires communities to collaborate on a single **comprehensive CoC application** (CoC NOFA-Notice of Funding Availability). All project applications must be approved by the HUD-approved CoC as part of a collaborative community planning process.

# Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/hearth-act/>

---

- 2009: President Obama signed the HEARTH Act to amend and reauthorize the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes:
  - Creates **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness** to establish goals & priorities
  - Increases Emphasis on **Performance** (Individual Projects and System-wide)
  - New Definition of **Chronic Homelessness** and other Homeless Definitions
  - Consolidates Shelter+Care/Supportive Housing Programs into new “**CoC Program**”
  - Publishes **regulations** on the CoC Program (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

# What is a HUD-recognized Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC)?

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramIntroductoryGuide.pdf>

---

A **geographic area** determined by stakeholders, and recognized by HUD, to:

- Facilitate discussions, develop a **community plan**, conduct a homeless count, determine services/housing needs gap, advocate, and other activities
- Participate in annual **CoC NOFA competition** (complete/submit community application and approve individual project applications for CoC Program)

HUD Continua of Care = **Burlington/Chittenden CoC & VT Balance of State CoC**

# What is a Local CoC?

---

- Local CoCs are communities comprised of a **wide variety of stakeholders**:
  - homeless/shelter providers, community action agencies, youth/family providers
  - domestic/sexual violence providers & mental health/substance treatment providers
  - public housing authorities, affordable housing providers/developers, landlords
  - Current/formerly homeless persons, advocates, town/city/state/federal agencies, businesses, law enforcement, schools/universities, faith-based entities, others
- VT Balance of State CoC = 11 local CoCs and partners
- Burlington/Chittenden CoC is both a local CoC and a HUD CoC

# CoC Governance & Operations

[https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule\\_FormattedVersion.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule_FormattedVersion.pdf)

---

In 2012, HUD created the CoC Program Interim Rule to regulate & guide the structure and operations of HUD CoCs and the CoC Program with each community required to:

- Notify and hold **public meetings** for full CoC membership with wide variety of stakeholders
- Full CoC Membership elects a **CoC Board of Directors**
- Approve a **Governance Charter**, Policies, and Committees/Workgroups
- Develop **Written Standards** for and **Monitor** all HUD CoC and ESG Programs
- Conduct/submit Point-in-Time count (**PIT**), Homeless Inventory Chart of All Homeless Beds (**HIC**), Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (**AHAR**), etc.

# Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/>

---

- Each HUD CoC must choose and oversee a Lead Agency to operate a single CoC HMIS. In June 2015, both VT CoC's selected one **HMIS software** (ServicePoint) and one **HMIS Lead** (Institute for Community Alliances) to operate a joint HMIS statewide implementation
- Direct data entry into the **single CoC HMIS** is required of all federal homeless programs: HUD Continuum of Care/Emergency Solutions Grants, SAMHSA-PATH, Veterans Affairs, HHS-Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs, HOPWA
- **Private & state-funded homeless programs** encouraged to participate in the CoCs HMIS
- HMIS helps understand **individual household/provider need** (Coordinated Entry/Program Evaluation), and **community need** (advocate, prioritize funds, develop services & housing), **statewide/U.S. need** (System Performance, Point-in-Time homeless count, ongoing funding)

# Coordinated Entry System

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3143/continuum-of-cares-coordinated-assessment-system/>  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4427/coordinated-entry-policy-brief/>

---

HUD CoC's are required to establish a formal coordinated entry system to ease access for people to homeless services & housing, identify & assesses their needs, and prioritization based upon needs.

An effective coordinated entry process has the following qualities:

- **Full CoC Coverage, Prioritize** people with greatest needs, **Use CoCs HMIS** and other systems
- **Inclusive** of All Homeless Populations, **Fair/Equal Access, Outreach, Low Barrier, Housing First, Person-Centered, Timely, Referrals** to all ESG/CoC and other programs
- **Safety planning** to ensure the safety of people fleeing domestic violence with confidential access and adherence to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)



# Collaborative Applicant

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessAssistanceActAmendedbyHEARTH.pdf>

---

**Chittenden CoC = City of Burlington/CEDO \* VT BoS CoC = VT State Housing Authority**

Each of the 400+ U.S. HUD CoC's are required to designate a Collaborative Applicant to work on its behalf (or itself if a legal entity), and provide necessary information to HUD, to:

- Design **collaborative process** for annual CoC NOFA competition to submit a **community application** and assist CoC establish **selection criteria/priorities** to submit all individual **project applications**
- Ensure the CoC meets **compliance/requirements** of the CoC Program Interim Rule; participates in the **Consolidated Plan**; evaluates program outcomes for all **HUD CoC & ESG program outcomes**
- Complete and/or ensure timely **submission of reports**: Housing Inventory Chart of All Homeless Beds, PIT/HIC, AHAR, System Performance, etc.)
- Act as **Unified Funding Agency**, if CoC is approved to submit a single CoC project application

# HUD CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

<https://www.hudexchange.info/e-snaps/fy-2016-coc-program-nofa-coc-program-competition/>

---

- Each year all HUD CoCs in U.S. compete for **CoC Program** funds (\$1.9 billion in recent FY16 NOFA)
- When HUD releases the NOFA, CoC's have 60 days to complete & submit both a **Community Application** and all individual **CoC Project Applications** (year-round planning is essential)
- The CoC NOFA is limited. An effective homeless system needs for CoCs to conduct multi-year, **comprehensive planning** efforts that encompass mainstream services and multiple funding sources:
  - Advocacy (Poverty Council, Homeless Vigils), and other efforts (2011 Governor's Homeless Summit, AHS Plan to End Family Homelessness, Winter Shelter planning), etc.
  - Consolidated Plan, technical assistance (HUD Exchange/Roadmap Committee/CoC Planning grant)
  - Local CoC assessments and VT [Interagency] Council on Homelessness

# HUD CoC NOFA: Community Application

<http://helpingtohousevt.org/initiatives/hud-hearth/>

- 
- **Engage & Coordinate:** diverse partners, open meetings & project application process, reduce criminalization
  - **Discharge Planning:** prevent homeless exits from Mental Health, Corrections, Foster Care, Health institutions
  - **Coordinated Entry System & Access Mainstream Benefits:** health insurance, SNAP, SSDI/SSI, fuel, etc.
  - **CoC Projects & Evaluation:** review, rank, selection; address project capacity (performance, monitoring, compliance), Low Barrier & Housing First, retool/reallocate TH and underperforming/low priority projects
  - **HMIS & PIT Count:** Implementation, Funding, Bed Coverage (all homeless beds in CoC), Data Quality
  - **System Performance:** reduce/first-time/returns to homelessness, PH exits & retention, jobs & income
  - **Strategic Planning Objectives & Initiatives:** End Homelessness (**Veteran** = 2016; **Chronic** = 2017; **Family** = 2020; **Youth** = 2020; engage with local **Homeless Education Liaisons** & follow Education Laws

# FY2016 CoC Program: Individual Project Applications

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-2-0-training-materials/coc-program-components-and-eligible-costs/>

---

FFY2016 HUD CoC NOFAs (submitted September 2016/awarded December 21, 2016)

VT BALANCE OF STATE COC = **\$3,335,037** \* BURLINGTON/CHITTENDEN COC = **\$1,143,175**

HMIS: only Lead can apply for funds for a CoC's implementation to support all homeless programs

- VT BoS CoC = **ICA** \* **\$59,382**
- Burlington/Chittenden CoC = **ICA** \* **\$65,000**

SERVICES ONLY-COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM:

- VT BoS CoC = **AHS-OEO** \* **\$222,472**
- Burlington/Chittenden CoC = **CVOEO** \* **\$79,999**

PLANNING:

- Not part of CoC competition/above & beyond project funding; up to 3% of CoCs Annual Renewal Demand
- Eligible Activities (Coordination, Project Evaluation & Monitoring, Participation in the Con Plan, CoC Application, Develop CoC System, HUD compliance)
- Only Collaborative Applicant can apply & receive CoC Planning grants

VT BoS CoC = **VSHA** \* **\$95,345**

Burlington/Chittenden CoC = City of Burlington/**CEDO** \* **\$30,213**

# FY2016 CoC Program: Individual Project Applications

---

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING: serves homeless households up to 24 months with services & rent subsidy in specific units

- VT BoS CoC =
    - VSHA-NEKCA**/Newport \* serving Youth (18-24) \* five households \* **\$57,005**
    - VSHA-BCCH**/Bennington \* serves families/individuals with Substance Use Disorders \* 4 units \* **\$56,064**
  - Burlington/Chittenden CoC = none
- 

RAPID REHOUSING: quick transition from *emergency shelter or street* into scattered-site permanent housing with a medium-term rent subsidy (up to 24 months) & voluntary services with low barrier/housing first practices

- VT BoS CoC = **VSHA** \* nine sponsor agencies (JGHS, BROCC, NEKCA, CVOEO, HPC, Capstone, GWC, UVH) \* Serving Families/Youth/Individuals \* 70 households/units \* **\$933,925**
- Burlington/Chittenden CoC = **AHS** \* one sponsor agency (Steps to End DV) \* Serving persons fleeing Domestic Violence \* 8 households/units \* **\$147,862**

# FY2016 CoC Program: Individual Project Applications

---

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: comprehensive supportive services & long-term rental assistance in permanent housing (tenant-based, sponsor-based or project-based) provided to persons, and their families if applicable, with a disabling condition who are Literally Homeless (emergency shelter or places not meant for human habitation), with a priority to first serve Chronically Homeless (12 months+)

VT BoS CoC =

- **VT State Housing Authority**/Shelter+Care \* 148 households/units \* **\$1,664,630** \* 16 sponsor agencies: BCCH, CSAC, CMC, HCRS, HOPE, HPC, LCMHS, NCSS, NKHS, PVT, RMHS, SHI, UCS, UVH, VTCARES, WCMHS
- **Brattleboro Housing Authority**/Shelter+Care \* 23 households/units \* 2 sponsor agencies (GWC & HCRS) \* **\$246,214**

Burlington/Chittenden CoC =

- **HowardCenter**/PSH \* “Branches” \* 7 households/units \* Chronic Homeless-only \* **\$135,255**
- **Burlington Housing Authority**/Shelter+Care “ECHO” \* 15 units \* Pathways VT & HowardCenter \* CH-only \* **\$194,840**
- **Burlington Housing HA**/Shelter+Care “New Horizons” \* 14 units \* Pathways VT & HowardCenter \* CH-only \* **\$167,891**
- **Burlington HA**/Shelter+Care “Housing First” \* CHCB-Safe Harbor \* 10 units \* CH-only \* **\$131,028**
- **Burlington HA**/Shelter+Care “Beacon Place Apartments” \* 10 units \* CHCB-Safe Harbor \* CH-only \* **\$112,320**
- **Burlington HA**/Shelter+Care “Mod SRO Housing” \* 10 units \* Spectrum & HowardCenter \* Youth & Individuals \* **\$78,767**

# Additional Homeless & Related Programs

---

## FEDERAL

- **U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs:** Health Care for Homeless Veterans (services, shelter beds, transitional housing)
- **U.S. Dept. of HUD:** Emergency Solutions Grants; Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS; VASH vouchers for homeless veterans; Housing Choice Vouchers with homeless preferences; other dedicated project-based housing
- **U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services:** PATH-outreach & services program for people with serious mental illness (SMI) experiencing homelessness; RHYP-Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs
- **U.S. Dept. of Education:** School Liaisons for Homeless Children & Youth Program
- **U.S. Dept. of Justice:** Office on Violence Against Women (Prevention, Services, Legal, Shelter Beds/Housing Assistance)

## STATE [VT Agency of Human Services]

- **DCF-GA Motel Voucher Program** (motel-based emergency shelter vouchers); **VT Rental Subsidy Program** (rapid rehousing); **VT HOP** (services, shelter, transitional housing, RRH, etc.); **GA Alternatives** (seasonal shelters, other)
- **DMH-Subsidy & Care Program** (rental subsidies)/**Medicaid** (services); **DOC-Transitional Housing** (non-homeless)



- 
- Visit the VCEH website at [www.helpingtohouse.org](http://www.helpingtohouse.org) for more info, a list of contacts, and join VCEH's email list serve
  - Attend meetings of the full CoC Membership and/or the CoC Board of Directors:  

**VT BoS CoC = Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and Chittenden Homeless Alliance**
  - Participate in Local CoC meetings, Committees & Workgroups; annual PIT count of the homeless; VT HMIS Advisory Board; Coordinated Entry; legislative priorities; NOFA committee; VT Council on Homelessness; etc.
  - Call Vermont 211 or visit their website at [www.vermont211.org](http://www.vermont211.org) for information & referrals to important community resources, like emergency food and shelter, disability services, counseling, senior services, health care, child care, drug and alcohol programs, legal assistance, transportation, educational and volunteer opportunities, and much more.
  - Volunteer at a local shelter or non-profit, Attend Annual Homeless Vigils, Donate, Advocate, etc.