

**VERMONT COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS (VCEH - VT BOS COC – VT-501)**

**BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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| *HUD Continuum of Care # and Name*:  **VT 501 - Vermont Balance of State CoC** |  |
| *VT BoS CoC Primary Decision-Making Body*:  **Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH)** |
| *Policy/Procedure*: CoC Program Project Ranking |
| *VT BoS CoC approved/revised*: **12/20/13; 10/20/2015; 7/19/16** |

Purpose:

Policy and procedure to guide the CoC Project Ranking Team and Collaborative Applicant in activities required to review and prioritize CoC Program applications submitted in response to the annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Program (CoC). This process defines methods to ensure the scoring and ranking of CoC Program applications are conducted in a fair, transparent, and unbiased manner.

Ranking Team:

A CoC Project Ranking Team will be developed and maintained to review renewal and new CoC Program project applications. The CoC Project Ranking Team membership will include a person familiar with CoC Program requirements and the community’s homeless system who are not competing for funding or affiliated with an organization who is competing for funding (i.e., Provider Agency Board Member). Each year the CoC Project Ranking Team members will sign a statement of confidentiality and certify they have no conflict of interest in the regard to any discussions or determinations of specific project applications and/or applicants. Members will be recruited annually and approved by the VCEH Board after their eligibility is verified by the CoC.

The following list is the current Team membership approved by the VCEH CoC Board:

* **Good Samaritan Haven** (Brooke Jenkins)
* **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs-WRJ** (Jim Bastien or Designee)
* **VT Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence** (Kara Casey or Designee)
* **VT Agency of Human Services** (Angus Chaney or Designee)
* **VT Housing and Finance Agency** (Designee)
* **VT Housing and Conservation Board** (Jen Hollar or Designee)
* **VT Dept. of Housing & Community Development** (Shaun Gilpin or Designee)

Ranking Process:

The CoC will implement goals for each HUD CoC NOFA application cycle which maximize competitiveness of the CoCs Consolidated Application in consideration of local CoC priorities. Local CoCs will be included in making initial funding priorities recommendations. Prior to each year’s project ranking meeting the full CoC or its designee will review, approved and publish the current CoC priorities and scoring criteria.

The CoC Project Ranking Team will meet to review each CoC project application against the approved scoring criteria established in the CoC Project Rating Tool and Policy which will include: minimum grant threshold requirements, objective scoring criteria, performance data and established CoC priorities. These combined factors will inform the CoC Project Ranking Team in the determination of a CoC project ranking list and, if applicable, any necessary funding reductions to one or more projects.

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The CoC Project Ranking Team may consider application adjustments and propose changes to project scope or budget for such issues as HUD incentives, bonus funding, program requirements, geographic distribution, identified community needs. The CoC Project Ranking Team determines the rank and funding levels of all CoC projects considering all available and objective information.

If deemed necessary by the CoC Project Ranking Team, VT BoS CoC approves the use of a “Hybrid Approach” to conduct strategic funding allocation if selective cuts are needed for lower ranking projects. Example: [*https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3401/fy2013-coc-program-nofa-and-application-webcast/*](https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3401/fy2013-coc-program-nofa-and-application-webcast/)*.*

Project Scoring Tool:

Each year the CoC Project Scoring Tool will be reviewed and any proposed edits will be presented to the CoC Board or its designee for approval. The final tool will be posted to the CoC website for public access. The tool will also be distributed to all members and stakeholders via the CoC’s listserv which is open to the public.

The following elements will be present in all project ranking tools for applications proposing to serve participants: Housing Type, HMIS Data Quality, Project Performance, Target Population, and Monitoring Results

*The sources of information to complete the ranking tool may include but are not limited to: Project Monitoring Results, Annual Performance Report (APR); HMIS Data Quality reports, LOCCS drawdown reports, Annual CoC PIT counts; HUD Preliminary Pro Rata Need (PPRN), CoC Project Application; and as applicable Letter of Intent (LOI) and local CoC priorities.*

Project Ranking Order for FY 2017 projects:

* Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) grants will be reviewed for threshold criteria and will be placed as the second to last full project in Tier 1.
* Coordinated Entry System applications will be reviewed for threshold criteria and will be placed as the last full project in Tier 1.
* New project applications of all types will be placed in Tier 2

Project Determinations and Appeals Process:

Applications which do not meet the minimum threshold requirements will not be included in the CoC Consolidated Application submitted to HUD. If more applications are submitted than the CoC has money to fund, the CoC Ranking Team will rank the grants in order of an agreed upon priority as approved by VCEH.

The Collaborative Applicant will send formal notification of a preliminary determination made by the CoC Project Ranking Team to each project applicant along with: individual project ranking summary report, individual project ranking number, and any potential budget reduction. The Collaborative Applicant will provide all appeals to the CoC Project Ranking Team to make a final determination that will be sent to the CoC for a review, vote (minus any and all voting members with a bias or conflict of interest) and posting to CoC website.

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| *HUD Continuum of Care # and Name*:  **VT 501 - Vermont Balance of State CoC** |  |
| *VT BoS CoC Primary Decision-Making Body*:  **Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH)** |
| Policy/Procedure: Code of Conduct |
| *VT BoS CoC approved/revised*: *1/15/13, 1/21/14 and 10/20/15* |

The following Code of Conduct has been adopted in order to provide a foundation of ethics for the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH), the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care.

The VCEH prohibits the solicitation and acceptance of gifts, gratuities or any item of monetary value by any of its officers, voting members or employees, hereinafter referred to as Agents, for their personal benefit. Any gift offered as a result of the intended recipient’s position with the VCEH shall be declined.

The VCEH requires impartiality in the performance of official duties, and prohibits any activity representing a conflict of interest. Agents shall not act on a matter if a reasonable person who knew the circumstances of the situation could legitimately question the impartiality of such action. In such an event of a conflict of interest, a CoC voting member will recuse themselves.

The VCEH prohibits the misuse of position. Agents shall not use their position with the VCEH for their own personal gain or for the benefit of family or friends or their specific agency.

Agents shall put forth honest and diligent effort in the performance of their duties.

Agents shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Continuum without prior approval of the VCEH Steering Committee.

Agents shall disclose any violation of this Code, or any other waste, fraud, abuse, or corruption related to the VCEH, to the Steering Committee and to any other appropriate authority.

Agents shall at all times act in a manner which promotes adherence to all laws and regulations that provide equal opportunity for all persons, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or disability.

Violation of any portion of this code will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include immediate termination of an agent’s position with the VCEH.

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| *Policy/Procedure*: Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Policy |
| *VT BoS CoC approved/revised*: **10/20/15** |

In compliance with federal law, it is the policy of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH), acting as the primary decision-making group of the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care, to support all homeless children & youth, as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, in accessing free, appropriate education.

The educational needs of homeless children and youth, and their families, will be supported within the VT BoS CoC through the development of community collaborations between homeless providers and local homeless education liaisons that address the following:

* Identification
* Enrollment
* Transportation
* Trainings conducted by to homeless providers and others
* Coordination
* Student Rights
* Parent Rights
* Dispute Resolution

The Vermont's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program and local homeless education liaisons will support the VT BoS CoC, local CoCs, and all HUD CoC Program recipients, subrecipients and related service providers to:

1. Each agency will designate a staff person(s) to ensure that the children are enrolled in school and receive educational services, as appropriate to their individual needs.
2. Each agency will maintain policies and practices that are consistent with the laws related to providing education services to individuals and families.

**Definitions**

* School of origin ‐ The school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
* Enrollment ‐ Attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

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**Definition of the Term “Homeless Children and Youth”**

The term “homeless children and youth” is defined by the McKinney‐Vento Homeless Assistance Act as:

* Children who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.
* Children and youth who are sharing the housing of others, with or without their parents, due to loss of housing (doubled up).
* Children living in motels or hotels or trailer home due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
* Children living in emergency or transitional shelters.
* Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
* Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
* Unaccompanied youth includes youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
* Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.
* Children awaiting foster care placement.

**Vermont's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

Contact VEHCYP to find out more about education laws and resources to ensure homeless children and youth are connected to schools at the following website: <http://education.vermont.gov/homeless-children-and-youth>

* Vermont Homeless Education Liaison Contact List
* Vermont Homeless Education Liaison Toolbox
* McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act
* National Resources

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| *Policy/Procedure*: Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Monitoring |
| Memorandum of Agreement Excerpt  *(Signed by VT BoS CoC/ESG Recipient/Collaborative Applicant: December 2013)* |

VCEH will “participate in the development of performance standards for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) projects and evaluate overall ESG program outcomes.” (Page 2)

VCEH will “consult with the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), Emergency Solutions (ESG) grantee, on: the plan for allocating ESG program funds; ESG performance standards; and overall outcomes of ESG-funded activities.” (Page 3)

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| *Policy/Procedure*: Reallocating CoC Projects Policy |
| *VT BoS CoC approved/revised: 9/9/16* |

The VT Balance of State CoC (VT BoS CoC/VT500) embarks on an annual proactive plan to assess all CoC Program-funded projects within the portfolio to strengthen our CoC’s effectiveness at ending homelessness and to increase our national competitiveness. This process includes identifying projects for reallocation. The CoC has reallocated funds from projects that were under performing, using outdated program models, under spending and/or had high costs.

Local CoCs and the CoC Board are provided information on CoC priorities, best practices, review criteria, reallocation opportunities and requirements. The local CoCs make the initial recommendations of projects that might be reallocated.

As part of this process and education about best practices and CoC priorities, projects are offered a chance to voluntarily reallocate CoC Program funding in part or whole to support creation of new projects to achieve our goals to end homelessness. The CoC offers providers education and technical assistance regarding successful reallocation strategies.

Funding from projects that voluntarily reallocated are first offered to the current recipient or subrecipient to design another project to meet local goals to end homelessness as long as annual funding is available to fund all existing renewals and the project appears viable.

Funding from projects that are involuntarily reallocated are put up from public competition and announced through the CoC’s listserv and website. The call for new projects for reallocated funds utilizes the same priorities and process in place for any available bonus funding.

*Note: As of FY16, all reallocations of CoC Program projects within the VT BoS CoC have occurred as the result of voluntary non-renewal by each CoC Program Recipient/Subrecipient/Partner.*



**VERMONT COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS (VCEH - VT BOS COC)**

### Additional Policy, Procedure, and Memorandum of Agreements

#### [Housing Opportunity Grant Program [Emergency Solutions Grant Program] Standards of Provision of Assistance SFY18](http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/OEO/Docs/HOP-AppendixE.pdf)

#### [Memorandum of Agreement between AHS –VCEH – VSHA](http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Memorandum-of-Agreement-AHS-VCEH-VSHA-12.18.2012.pdf) (December 2013)

#### CoC Written Standards (under development)

#### [HMIS Policy and Procedure](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54ca7491e4b000c4d5583d9c/t/586e6d8a893fc02bb99e7676/1483632014734/Watermarked+VT+HMIS+Policies+and+Procedures+-+Final.pdf) (January 2017)

#### [HMIS Governance Charter](http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/HMIS-Governance-Charter.pdf) (June 1, 2015)

#### Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedures

#### [Coordinated Entry – Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Policy](http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Coordinated-Entry-Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Policy.pdf) (April 2017)

#### [Coordinated Entry Local Partnership Agreement](http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CE-Local-Partnership-Agreement-2016-ver-4-17.pdf) (April 2017)



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### Expired or Replaced Policy

* Chronic Homeless Priority of All CoC-PSH Policy 10/20/2015 (replace in 2017 by CES standards and CoC Written Standards)
* Standards for Administering Assistance Policy – 10/20/15 (replace by full CoC Written Standards in July 2017)
* McKinney-Vento Homeless EDUCATION ASSURANCES Policy – (replaced by CoC Written Standards and “Education of Homeless Children and Youth Policy” - 10/20/15