


<p><i>HUD Continuum of Care # and Name:</i> VT 500 - Vermont Balance of State CoC</p>	
<p><i>VT BoS CoC Primary Decision-Making Body:</i> Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH)</p>	
<p><i>Policy/Procedure:</i> CoC Program Project Ranking</p>	
<p><i>VT BoS CoC approved/revised:</i> 12/20/13; 10/20/2015; 7/19/16, 7/28/17, 7/18/18, 7/22/2019, 7/17/21)</p>	

Purpose:

Policy and procedure to guide the CoC Project Ranking Committee 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 Committee:

A CoC Project Ranking Committee will be developed and maintained to review renewal and new CoC Program project applications. The CoC Project Ranking Committee 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 Committee 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 Committee membership approved by the VCEH CoC Board:

- **Good Samaritan Haven** (Rob Farrell)
- **U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs-WRJ** (Jason Brill or Designee)
- **United Ways of Vermont** (MaryEllen Mendl or Designee)
- **VT Dept. of Housing & Community Development** (Shaun Gilpin or Designee)
- **VT Housing and Conservation Board** (Jen Hollar or Designee)
- **VT Housing and Finance Agency** (Andrea Tieso 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 Committee will meet to review each CoC Program project application against the approved scoring criteria established in the CoC Project Rating Tool(s) 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 Committee in the determination of a CoC project ranking list and, if applicable, any necessary funding reductions to one or more projects.

The CoC Project Ranking Committee 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, etc. The CoC Project Ranking Committee determines the rank and funding levels of all CoC projects considering all available and objective information.

Minimum Threshold Requirements: eligible population for project type, eligible costs for project type, eligible applicant, minimum match; utilization of the VT BoS CoC HMIS implementation (VTHMIS) or comparable system for victim service providers; all project referrals must come from the CoC Coordinated Entry; and Housing First practices.

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:

- Severity of Needs and Vulnerability of Populations Served
- Project Performance and Monitoring Results
- Housing Type and Cost Effectiveness
- Target Population and HMIS Data Quality

The sources of information to complete the ranking tool may include but are not limited to: HUD Priorities; Vermont HMIS (WellSky-ServicePoint); Comparable Databases for victim service providers (e.g. Osniium); Project Monitoring Results; Annual Performance Reports (APR); Project Participant Performance; Match Documentation; Bed/Unit Utilization; HMIS Data Quality reports; LOCCS drawdown reports/Expenditure of Funds; Annual CoC PIT counts and other needs-based reports; HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) amounts; HUD Preliminary Pro Rata Need (PPRN); CoC Project Applications; Request for Proposals (RFP); and local/regional CoC priorities.

Project Ranking Order for FFY 2021 projects:

- Upon review of CoC continued need and Applicant performance, **Homeless Management Information System** (HMIS) renewal project applications will be reviewed for threshold criteria and will be placed as the second to last full project in Tier 1. New HMIS project applications will be ranked in order of need as determined by the CoC.
- Upon review of CoC continued need and Applicant performance, **Supportive Services Only Coordinated Entry** (SSO-CE) renewal project applications will be reviewed for threshold criteria and will be placed as the last full project in Tier 1. New SSO-CE project applications will be ranked in order of need as determined by the CoC.
- New project applications for reallocation, expansion and Bonus funds will be placed in Tier 2, unless a renewal project is ranked low enough to be placed into Tier 2 due to poor performance.*
- New DV Bonus applications will be placed after new reallocation/expansion and Bonus projects.

Reallocation Process: See VCEH/VT BoS “Reallocating CoC Projects Policy” for both voluntary and involuntary reallocation.

VCEH/VT BoS CoC and HUD Policy Priorities

1. Create a Systemic Homeless Response
 - a. Coordinate System Planning
 - b. Encourage and support participation from persons with lived homeless experiences
 - c. Ensure equal and fair access to all CoC Program-funded projects
 - d. Promote participant choice, privacy and dignity
 - e. Implement and operate an effective Coordinated Entry process
 - f. Measure System Performance
 - g. Develop and operate the delivery of homeless assistance in an open, inclusive and transparent manner
2. Strategic Allocation of Resources
 - a. Comprehensive and regular reviews of CoC project quality, performance and cost effectiveness
 - b. Integration of persons with disabilities
 - c. Optimize self-sufficiency of households experiencing homelessness by maximizing the use of mainstream and other community-based resources (housing, employment/income, non-cash benefits)
3. Ending Chronic Homelessness
4. Ending Family & Youth Homelessness
5. Ending Veteran Homelessness
6. Implement Low Barrier Practices (CoC Program participants will not be screened out based on the following):
 - a. Having too little or no income
 - b. Active or history of substance use (illegal substances are prohibited in all federally assisted units)
 - c. Having a criminal record with exceptions for state-mandated restrictions
 - d. History of victimization (e.g. domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault,

human trafficking and/or stalking)

7. Implement a Housing First Approach (CoC Program participants will not be terminated for the following reasons):
 - a. Failure to participate in supportive services
 - b. Failure to make progress on a service plan
 - c. Loss of income or failure to improve income
 - d. Any other activity not covered in a lease agreement typically found for unassisted persons in the project's geographic area
8. Quickly house and rehouse persons experiencing homelessness
9. Develop and maintain relationships with property owners/managers and landlords
10. Prioritize CoC Program funds to serve populations based upon severity of needs and vulnerability
 - a. Individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness
 - b. Persons with one or more disabling conditions of long duration
 - c. Persons fleeing and/or with a history of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and/or stalking
 - d. Households with children under 18 years of age
 - e. Unaccompanied youth and young adults
 - f. Households with low or no income
 - g. Current or past substance use
 - h. Criminal histories

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 the CoC receives more Requests for Proposals than can be supported with available CoC funding, the CoC Ranking Committee will rank the grants in order of an agreed upon priority as approved by VCEH.

New projects that have not yet begun or completed their grant term will be held harmless and ranked in Tier 1, unless determined otherwise by the CoC Ranking Committee due to special circumstances (i.e. non-compliance of HUD regulations and/or CoC policies, violation of state/federal laws, withdrawal, etc.).

The Collaborative Applicant will send formal notification of a preliminary determination made by the CoC Project Ranking Committee to each project applicant along with: individual project ranking summary, individual project ranking number, and any potential budget reduction or increase).

The Collaborative Applicant will provide all appeals to the CoC Project Ranking Committee 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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<p>VT BoS CoC approved/revised: 9/9/16, 7/28/17, 9/17/2019</p>	

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.