VERMONT BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Request for Proposals

2024 CoC NOFO New Projects

Background

The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (VT BoS CoC) is requesting proposal(s) from qualified non-profit organizations and/or local government agencies for new project applications for the 2024 Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition. VT BoS CoC seeks projects that can make effective use of the prospective allocation of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funds. HUD's budget for 2024 has been approved; the CoC program received an increase in funding of 14.2%. HUD has not yet provided an estimate of the funds that CoCs will be able to apply for as CoC Bonus or DV Bonus. In the 2023 competition, VT BoS CoC was allowed to apply for just over $345,000 in CoC Bonus funds and just under $232,000 in DV Bonus funds. Since funding for the CoC program increased, the amounts available in 2024 will likely slightly exceed those of last year. VT BoS CoC will provide our best estimate of potential funds, but the actual amounts will be determined and announced by HUD at the start of the NOFO competition. HUD will ultimately select the projects to be funded. CoC selection for inclusion in the collaborative application does not guarantee HUD funding.

VT BoS CoC encourages nonprofit organizations with experience in serving people experiencing homelessness and who have not previously received CoC funds to apply. Organizations that assist Black, Indigenous, or Latinx identifying people, or that assist other populations that historically have been marginalized, are specifically encouraged to apply. **To assist organizations new to this process and funding, VT BoS CoC will hold informational webinars on the schedule posted below.**

Existing CoC grantees may apply through this process for new projects or to 'expand' a current CoC project. An 'expansion' grant provides additional housing units and services and/or increases services to current participants. Expansion grants must be the same program component (e.g., RRH, PSH) and must identify the currently funded grant that is being expanded and the reasons why the expansion is needed.

HUD has not yet issued the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for its Continuum of Care funding, so it is possible that some modifications to this process may be necessary when the NOFO is released. **VT BoS CoC anticipates selecting more than one new project proposal across multiple Reallocation, CoC Bonus and DV Bonus projects for supportive housing component projects, specifically Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing, Supportive Services Only - Coordinated Entry, and HMIS projects.** This is expected to be the only request for proposals issued to solicit CoC new project applications. Interested agencies must respond to this issuance on or before the deadline to be considered for new CoC funding.

Based on the recently enacted HUD funding legislation for FY2024, HUD has been authorized to switch the CoC competition from annual to biennial (every two years). There will be a competition in 2024.

Current indications are that there will not be a competition in 2025 and that funded grants in 2024 will be funded for two years. For submissions to this RFP, the process will be, as in years past, to submit your project with a 1-year budget. If a project is selected through this RFP process to be included in the FY24 CoC Application and HUD decides to run a competition in 2024 but not 2025, the CoC Program Director will work with the selected agencies to update their budgets for the FY24 CoC Application.

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Timeline

May 21   VT BoS CoC Releases 2024 New Project Request for Proposals (RFP)

June 3   New Project RFP Information Session 1 (same info as Session 2): 2p - 3:30p

June 12   New Project RFP Information Session 2 (same info as Session 1): 2p - 3:30p

July 12   **Deadline to submit proposals to the CoC Program Director for consideration**
               Applications reviewed by the CoC's Scoring and Ranking Committee. Applicants may be requested to answer questions from the Committee

Aug 7   Anticipated announcement of selected new project proposals*

Aug 9   Appeals are due by 4:00p within two business days from the date of announcement, e.g. if announcements are made on August 1, appeals would be due August 5 by 4:00p.

Selected proposals will be responsible to submit new project applications in HUD's ESNAPS system in accordance with local VT BoS CoC deadlines that are to be determined but anticipated to be in August 2024.

Request for Proposals Information Sessions

The same content will be covered in each session; however, there will be Q & A in each session that may cover different topics based on attendees' interests. Any staff responsible for program oversight and proposal submission are strongly encouraged to attend at least one session and are welcome to attend both. Below are links to join the **remote** information sessions. Recordings of the RFP Information Sessions will be posted on the [VT BoS CoC Funding Webpage](#).

Information Session #1:
June 3: 2-3:30p
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88304376183?pwd=L0xMdWFKZWFtK3NzN1FCYkdSbElVQT09

Information Session #2:
June 12: 2-3:30p
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89727212649?pwd=MDVrV1E5VncvRVVWRFdCOWtPUzlkQT09

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Be a non-profit organization, a unit of local government, or a PHA
- Have capacity to administer federal funding and secure required matching funds
- Have experience administering programs and services that assist people experiencing homelessness and/or housing crises

Eligible Project Types

The VT BoS CoC is prioritizing its new project funding for supportive housing project types, including Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and CES project types that enhance the Coordinated Entry System. All housing projects must include trauma-informed services

The VT BoS CoC currently anticipates approximately $741,000 of reallocation and CoC bonus funding and $265,000 in DV bonus funding may be available to apply for in the local CoC competition, which is anticipated this summer. The CoC intends to allocate this funding to multiple projects, noting that the CoC's ranking policy will dictate further CoC policies and priorities related to reallocated dollars.

Supportive Housing Project Type	Funding Type	Estimated total CoC new project awards (FY23 + 14.2%)*
Rapid Rehousing	DV Bonus	$265,000
Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing	DV Bonus	$265,000
SSO-CE	DV Bonus	$265,000

Permanent Supportive Housing	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$741,000
Rapid Rehousing	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$741,000
SSO-CE	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$741,000
HMIS	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$741,000

Available funding amounts are subject to change based on HUD publications and project decisions

The following chart provides additional information on these eligible project types:

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Overview

PSH is a non-time-limited, permanent housing subsidy combined with a high level of supportive services. It is a model that is Housing First and is typically designed for folks with the highest needs, long experiences with homelessness, and headed by a household member with a disability.

Key Elements

- Households pay a percentage of their income towards rent for an indefinite period. No minimum income requirement.
- Units can be site-based (e.g. lease up block of units in an apartment complex) or scattered site
- Eligible populations: Categories 1 and 4
- Chronic homeless or Dedicated PLUS applies

Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

Overview

RRH is a supportive housing program where a household may receive up to 24 months of rental assistance and supportive services, with up to six months of aftercare once the rental assistance ends. Supportive services often focus on income maximization and stability planning. The participant enters into a lease directly with the landlord.

Key Elements

- Rental assistance models are flexible, should align with CoC's written standards for administering RRH
- Households can choose their own units in the community/private market. Funded agencies must assist participants in locating and securing housing.
- Eligible populations: Categories 1 and 4
- While it is a time-limited resource, there are no indicators for who will succeed in RRH - it is a resource that can work for anyone

Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH)

Overview

Joint TH/RRH projects can provide participants with access to short-term crisis housing for those who would otherwise be literally homeless along with the option of moving to permanent housing using the rapid

Key Elements

- This approach is most useful where there is inadequate emergency/crisis housing for the target population

rehousing approach. Participants in 'Joint' projects must be able to choose between short-term and permanent housing and those choosing TH are assisted in moving to permanent housing as soon as is practicable.	● Program must be able to offer the choice of short-term transitional housing and/or rapid rehousing to all participants ● Participants should transition to RRH as soon as practicable ● TH housing can only be funded with leasing or operations costs; RRH component can only be funded with tenant-based rental assistance ● Total assistance under either or both components cannot exceed 24 months ● Eligible populations: Categories 1 and 4
HMIS Expansion	
Overview HMIS presents a critical opportunity to coordinate and track resources invested in ending homelessness, and to help the wider community of stakeholders working to end homelessness make critical decisions	**Key elements** ● Projects must add capacity, including improvement in data quality, data visualization, increased training for agencies using HMIS, increased training for those using data for system-wide decision making, and increased reporting capacity ● Only the CoC-designated HMIS Lead may apply for HMIS expansion funds
Supportive Services Only/Coordinated Entry	
Overview Coordinated access/assessment must be easily accessible for all persons within the CoC encompassing a standardized assessment, access for people with disabilities, and direct participants to the appropriate housing and services	**Key elements** ● Accessible to all persons needing homeless assistance in the CoC (or specific to DV) ● Designed to reach those with greatest barriers to accessing services ● Accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency ● Only the CoC-designated CE Lead may apply for CE expansion funds ● If applying under DV Bonus, must be dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who qualify as homeless under Category 1 or 4

Threshold and Scoring Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate all threshold and scoring criteria are met for a proposal to be considered.

Threshold Criteria for Permanent Housing Projects

Project must demonstrate its ability to pass **all** of the threshold criteria in order for the project to be reviewed and scored by the Scoring and Ranking Committee.

a) Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.
b) Certify that the project:
   - Will use HMIS. For DV providers, certify use of VT BoS CoC's comparable database for survivors of domestic violence
   - Will follow Coordinated Entry policies and procedures
   - Will use Housing First and a low-barrier approach; describe this approach in scoring criteria part (a)
   - Has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government
   - Has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302
   - Will comply with HUD's Equal Access and Fair Housing Rules and commit to ongoing training on both regulations that include implementation strategies
c) Demonstrate in the project budget that:
   - No more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs
   - All CoC funds requested are matched with an amount that is at least 25% of the CoC funds requested (excluding any amount in the leasing budget line item) with cash or in-kind resources
   - All matching funds are CoC eligible expenses
d) Target population must meet HUD homeless definition of Category 1 or 4. Identify which target and priority population(s) will be served by the project
e) Describe Trauma-Informed Care approach and how TIC will be demonstrated in practice in the project

Scoring Criteria for Permanent Housing Projects

A project will be awarded points up to the maximum amount listed below for its ability to demonstrate the expectations of the scoring criteria. There are a total of 100 points plus bonus points available. Projects with higher scores relative to other project proposals of the same type will be prioritized for CoC funding.

a) Applicant understands the Housing First Philosophy and its low barrier approach; describes a solid plan to implement this philosophy and approach within the project **(10 points)**

b) Experience with proposed project type and homeless population or other relevant/related supportive service expertise, especially with housing insecure or homeless households **(10 points)**

c) Demonstrate the capacity to appropriately manage state/federal funds and to leverage other funding **(5 points)**

d) Demonstrate that applicant has the organizational infrastructure and administrative/financial capacity to deliver the project as proposed **(5 points)**

e) Describe collaboration with other community partners to expand resources available to clients within the program. **(5 points)**

f) Describe the applicant's commitment to equity by demonstrating in one of the following ways: a) community partnerships with organizations led by and/or explicitly serving historically marginalized racial, ethnic, or LGBTQ communities; b) agency led by persons identifying with one or more historically marginalized racial, ethnic, or LGBTQ communities; or c) agency explicitly serves historically marginalized racial, ethnic, or LGBTQ communities. **(5 points)**

g) Program design includes provision of appropriate housing, and the type, scale, and location of the housing are adequate to meet the needs of the program participants described to be served. Includes meaningful evaluation, mention of whether or not housing units are already secured, and cultural/linguistic competency. Program design is fully described, accessible, and appropriate to the project proposed and fits the needs of the target population. Core outcomes are discussed (examples: stable housing, education, employment and social-emotional wellbeing/community connections). **(10 points + an additional 5 bonus points for Supportive Housing projects if the units are demonstrated within this section to already be secured)**

h) Describe how the project will incorporate lived experience of homelessness in organizational governance, as well as in program design, implementation (including staffing) and evaluation/improvement. Includes discussion of compensation for expertise if that is applicable within the program. **(10 points)**

i) There is a reasonable timeframe to plan and implement the project and a quality staffing plan sufficient to implement proposed activities; includes justification of caseload range for each direct services position and description of strategies to ensure staff have lived experience of homelessness and/or reflect the identities of prioritized populations **(10 points)**

j) Proposed Supportive Services are adequate to support the target population; the strategies to serve priority subpopulations are described. **(10 points)**

k) Costs are reasonable, competitive, and activities listed are eligible. **NOTE:** the Scoring and Ranking Committee may tentatively approve a project with suggested budget changes **(10 points)**

l) Letters of support from at least one collaborating agency are submitted at the time of proposal submission (these letters are excluded from page count requirements and should be attachments separate from the proposal). No letters will be accepted after the proposal deadline. **(10 points)**

m) **Bonus points:**

- o **Housing leverage –** the applicant demonstrates that it has leveraged housing assistance from sources other than CoC or ESG to include at least 25% of the units included in the project for PSH or at least 25% of the projected participants for RRH **(10 points)**

- o **Healthcare Leverage –** the applicant demonstrates that it has a commitment from a substance use treatment provider to provide access to care for all program participants who qualify and choose those services <u>or</u> a healthcare organization will commit to funding at least 25% of the funds requested through mainstream healthcare resources **(10 points)**

- o **Aging focus** – the applicant commits to serving persons who are 55+ and experiencing homelessness AND demonstrates that it has a commitment from at least one Vermont organization primarily serving persons age 55+, to provide access to care for all program participants who qualify and choose those services (https://asd.vermont.gov/services/aaa-oaa-services) **(10 points)**

Threshold Criteria for SSO-CE Projects

Project must demonstrate its ability to pass **all** of the threshold criteria in order for the project to be reviewed and scored by the Scoring and Ranking Committee. Applicants applying under DV Bonus must focus on equipping the CoC's coordinated entry to better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness who are survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (e.g., to implement policies and procedures that are trauma-informed, client-centered or to better coordinate referrals between the CoC's coordinated entry and the victim service providers coordinated entry system where they are different). Only the CoC-designated CE Lead may apply for CE expansion funds under the CoC Bonus or reallocation funds.

a) Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.
b) **If applying under the DV Bonus**, provide a description of the need for a coordinated entry system that better meets the needs of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and how the project will fill this need.
c) **If applying under CoC Bonus or reallocation**, provide a description of how the additional funding requested will result in increased efficiency in the coordinated entry process including, but not limited to:
   - o Reduction in time from referral to housing provider to placement in housing
   - o Reduction in number of referrals from coordinated entry to housing providers that do not result in a housing placement (either referral not accepted by housing provider, or provider not able to house the referred household)
   - o Increased training or support to agencies participating in coordinated entry
   - o Improved access to the coordinated entry system throughout the VT BoS CoC. If project will explicitly address access for historically marginalized racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ communities, describe this.
d) Certify commitment to comply with HUD's Equal Access and Fair Housing Rules and commitment to ongoing training on both regulations that include implementation strategies
e) Describe what the additional funding requested will be used for and why you believe it will result in the improvements identified above

f) Provide a detailed budget showing both current funding and additional funding requested and how the total funding for the new/expanded project would be expended. Demonstrate in the project budget that:
- o No more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs
- o All CoC funds requested are matched with an amount that is at least 25% of the CoC funds requested (excluding any amount in the leasing budget line item) with cash or in-kind resources
- o All matching funds are CoC eligible expenses

g) Certify that the applicant:
- o Has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government
- o Has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302

Scoring Criteria for SSO-CE Projects

A project will be awarded points up to the maximum listed below for its ability to demonstrate the expectations of the scoring criteria. There are a total of 100 points plus bonus points available. Projects with higher scores relative to other project proposals of the same type will be prioritized for CoC funding.

a) Coordinated Entry Effectiveness (**50 points total**):
- i) Experience operating coordinated entry, ability to promptly make referrals to available housing interventions – **20 points**
- ii) Proposed project results in reduction in time from referral to housing provider to placement in housing – **10 points**
- iii) Proposed project results in increased CE system access – **10 points** (**5 bonus points** for projects that explicitly increase CE access for historically marginalized racial, ethnic, or LGBTQ communities)
- iv) Proposed project results in fewer referrals from coordinated entry to housing providers that do not result in a housing placement (either referral not accepted by housing provider, or provider not able to house the referred household) - **10 points**

b) Financial (**20 points total**):
- i) Audit – no issues or findings with most recent audit – **5 points**
- ii) Match – source of match is documented and realistic – **5 points**
- iii) Costs requested are reasonable allocable, and allowable – **10 points**

c) Timeliness (10 points total):
- i) Project plan demonstrates that project can be rapidly implemented - **10 points**

d) Meeting Federal Requirements (**20 points total**):
- i) At least 95% of prior grant funds expended – **10 points**
- ii) No unresolved monitoring findings from HUD or VT BOS CoC – **10 points**

Threshold Criteria for HMIS Projects

Project must demonstrate its ability to pass all of the threshold criteria in order for the project to be reviewed and scored by the Scoring and Ranking Committee.

a) Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.
b) Describe how the additional funding requested will result in:
   o Improvements in data quality
   o Improvements in data visualization
   o Increased training or support to agencies providing data in HMIS
   o Increased training or support to VT BoS CoC in utilizing data to inform decision making
   o Increased capacity to provide reporting to system stakeholders
c) Describe what the additional funding requested will be used for and why you believe it will result in the improvements identified above
d) Provide a detailed budget showing both current funding and additional funding requested and how the total funding for the new/expanded project would be expended. Demonstrate in the project budget that:
   o No more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs
   o All CoC funds requested are matched with an amount that is at least 25% of the CoC funds requested (excluding any amount in the leasing budget line item) with cash or in-kind resources
   o All matching funds are CoC eligible expenses
e) Certify that the applicant:
   o Has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government
   o Has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302

Scoring Criteria for HMIS Projects

A project will be awarded points up to the maximum listed below for its ability to demonstrate the expectations of the scoring criteria. There are a total of 100 points available. Projects with higher scores relative to other project proposals of the same type will be prioritized for CoC funding. Only one project will be selected for new HMIS funding.

a) HMIS Effectiveness (**50 points total**):
   i) Proposed project results in improvements in data quality, training and support to agencies providing data in HMIS, enhanced data visualization, and reporting to system stakeholders - **20 points**
   ii) HMIS Universal Data quality in HMIS (systemwide UDEs null/unknown error rate of less than 10% (systemwide UDEs null/unknown error rate of less than 10% = 10 points; less than 15% = 5 points) – up to **10 points**
   iii) HMIS score on HMIS related factors in 2023 CoC Application (85%-100% of possible HMIS points = 10 points, 60-84% = 5 points, less than 60% = 0 points) – up to **10 points**
   iv) Proposed project results in regular reporting to VT BoS CoC on disaggregated outcomes data (by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and age) to inform decision making - **10 points**
   v)
b) Financial (**20 points total**):
   i) Audit – no issues or findings with most recent audit – **5 points**
   ii) Match – source of match is documented and realistic – **5 points**

      iii)   Costs requested are reasonable allocable, and allowable – **10 points**
c) Timeliness (10 points total):
      i)   Project plan demonstrates that project can be rapidly implemented - **10 points**
d) Meeting Federal Requirements (**20 points total**):
      i)   At least 95% of prior grant funds expended – **10 points**
      ii)   No unresolved monitoring findings from HUD or VT BOS CoC – **10 points**

Submission Instructions and Deadline

Deadline: July 12 at 3:00pm Eastern Standard Time

The proposal must be submitted electronically to Molly Shimko at mshimko@helpingtohousevt.org on or before **3pm** Eastern Daylight Time. PDF format is preferred. Please take note of page limits listed below.

Instructions: A successful proposal will not exceed 12 pages (does not include budget worksheets or letter(s) of support) with 1-inch margins and 11-point font, using the application template to assist applicants in ensuring all elements of the application are present.

Award Notifications and Appeal Process

All applicants will be informed via email if their project was selected to be submitted as part of Rhode Island's Collaborative Application for CoC funding or rejected in accordance with the project timeline. Accepted/selected email notifications will include a total approved project budget authority. All project selections are pending final approval from HUD and may be amended per feedback from the Scoring and Ranking Committee, VT BoS CoC Board, HHAV, and HUD.

Applicants with projects that are rejected for funding may appeal the decision by submitting an appeal in writing to mshimko@helpingtohousevt.org on or before the appeals deadline in the timeline. Appeals will be considered by unconflicted members of the VT BoS CoC Board of Directors. The decision of the Board is final.

Any applicant whose project is rejected by the VT BoS CoC may appeal the decision by submitting a Solo Application in e-snaps directly to HUD prior to the application deadline, which will be announced in the FFY2024 CoC NOFO.

Additional Resources

- The VT BoS CoC website: VT BoS CoC Funding Webpage. Resources specific to FY2024 Competition will be added to this page as they become available
- Budget Line-Item Eligible Costs: This HUD CoC virtual binder shows what is eligible under each of the eligible supportive service costs (case management, education services, outreach, etc.)
- HUD's definitions of homelessness At a Glance Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for Definition of Homeless (hudexchange.info)
- Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-24/part-578