

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) holds a national competition for Continuum of Care (CoC) Program funds. This competition brings funds into Kern County to provide housing and services to individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness.

Bakersfield Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative(BKRHC), the collaborative applicant (CA) for CA-604 is the lead agency responsible for completing and submitting the Consolidated Application for funding on behalf of the CoC. The Consolidated Application consists of a CoC Application, Priority Listing, and Project Applications.

HUD will continue the Tier 1 and 2 funding selection process. Higher ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 1 and lower ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 2. The purpose of this two tiered approach is for CoCs to notify HUD which projects are prioritized for funding based on local needs and gaps. Project scores will be used to rank projects that are submitted to HUD.

Project applications in Tier 1 will be conditionally selected by HUD for funding from the highest scoring CoC to the lowest scoring CoC provided the project applications pass both project eligibility and project quality threshold review, and if applicable, project renewal threshold.

HUD then awards projects in Tier 2 based on points received using a 100-point scale; points are awarded based upon the CoC Application score, CoC project ranking, project type, and commitment to policy priorities.

Tier 1 is a percentage of the CoC's Annual Renewal Demand as set by HUD.

Tier 2 is the difference between Tier 1 and the maximum amount of CoC Renewal (including Domestic Violence (DV) Renewal), CoC Reallocation, DV Bonus, DV Reallocation, and CoC Bonus funds that a CoC applies for.

Process for Developing the Letter of Intent and Ranking Packets

Following the release of the Notice of funding Opportunity (NOFO) from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or CoC Program Registration Notice, the Planning and Performance Subcommittee will be tasked with creating the Letter of Intent Notice and Ranking Packets.

The Ranking Packets will reflect HUD priorities established in the NOFO or CoC Program Registration Notice and any additional guidance leading up to the NOFO, or released after the NOFO, as well as other CoC-wide priorities established in the strategic planning process. Other factors to be considered in the development of the Ranking Packets should include:

- Performance results based on HUD's national objectives and the CoC-wide strategic plan (as measured by HUD Annual Performance Measures).
- Cost effectiveness of the project.
- High need populations served by the project.
- Participation in the Coordinated Entry System.
- Homeless Management Information System involvement.
- CoC membership participation.
- CoC and HUD monitoring findings.
- Other criteria as the CoC determines or is required by the HUD NOFO.

Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI)

All applicants will be required to complete and submit a CoC approved LOI by the deadline established by the Planning and Performance Subcommittee and approved by the Governing Board. LOIs WILL NOT be accepted after the

established deadline for any reason.

Submission of Ranking Packets

After the CA reviews and approves all LOIs submitted by applicants, the CA will distribute the Governing Board approved Ranking Packet to all applicants on the same day. The Ranking Packets must be submitted by Applicants by the deadline established in the Governing Board approved timeline. Ranking Packets WILL NOT be accepted after the established deadline for any reason.

Threshold Criteria

The following criteria are required by HUD for both renewal/expansion and new projects. All projects must provide reasonable assurances the project will meet the threshold requirements or be given an exception by the CoC. For renewal/expansion projects prior performance measures must demonstrate compliance with these requirements and community standards.

- Coordinated Entry Participation
- Documented and secured minimum match
- Project has reasonable cost per permanent housing exit, as defined by the CoC
- Project is financially feasible
- Applicant is an active CoC participant
- Application is complete and data are consistent
- Data quality at community standards
- Bed/unit utilization rate at or above or above community standards
- Acceptable organizational audit/financial review

CoC funded projects that are found to be performing significantly below community standards will have their CoC funding be reallocated. New applications (including bonus projects) will be ranked alongside renewals, if the new project meets a community priority, as determined by the CoC. The goal of the scoring tools is to establish an objective rating process that allows for a fair assessment of each project. For a project to be ranked it must meet threshold requirements.

Scoring Tools

The matrixes should compare like program types (e.g. PH with PH; TH with TH; SSO with SSO). Once they have been developed by the Planning and Performance Subcommittee the scoring tool(s) will be submitted to the Governing Board for final approval.

Projects funded by HUD that have not yet started will automatically be ranked in Tier 1. Any ties in scoring will be determined by project component type based on HUD or community priorities. Projects will be ranked according to the CoC's priority list as noted in the Governing Board minutes.)

The CoC has established a method for evaluating projects submitted by victim service providers. Projects that meet the requirements of this method will be ranked alongside like project types. This method requires that projects:

- Client data is stored in Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) compliant database;
- Ensure the safety needs of persons fleeing domestic violence;
- Staff receive ongoing best-practice training on safety protocols and trauma informed care;
- Provide secured, 24-hour monitored facility.

Ranking Panel Composition

The Ranking Panel will consist of a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) members chosen from the community. The panel will always be an odd-numbered panel, and an alternate panelist will be on standby in case there is a last-minute absence from one of the regularly chosen panel members. An independent consultant* will preside as Panel Moderator and serve as a non-voting member. BKRHC staff will be available to provide logistical support on the day of ranking to the Panel and will serve as alternate Panel Moderator if the independent consultant is not available. Panel members will be nominated by the Planning and Performance Subcommittee and approved by the Governing Board.

**Provided he/she does not have a conflict as spelled out in the Conflict of Interest Policy.*

Ranking Panel Selection Criteria

Panel members should be knowledgeable about homelessness supportive services and housing in Kern County, should be broadly representative of the relevant sectors, subpopulations, and geographic areas and should be composed of representatives from a cross-section of groups which might include: Faith-based and non-profit providers of homeless services and housing; governmental agencies; legal services and city and county employees. Efforts should be made to recruit representatives from the education and veteran's services fields, as well as a formerly homeless individual.

Panel members must be willing to sign a formal statement attesting that they do not have a conflict of interest, in accordance with the approved policy. A conflict of interest includes any personal, financial, or organizational interest that could compromise—or appear to compromise—a member's objectivity and impartiality in reviewing applications. Members must not have any current or potential affiliations (examples: will be a subcontractor or benefit from the applicant being awarded) with applicants that would interfere with fair and unbiased decision-making. In addition, panel members must be willing to have their eligibility verified and approved by the CoC, must be able to dedicate the necessary time for application review and panel meetings as outlined in the established timeline, and must attend a training session. Members are also required to be available on the designated ranking date.

Ranking Panel Training

At a minimum, Panel training should include the following: Current information regarding homeless activities, needs, services, definitions and other issues that are pertinent to the Bakersfield Kern Homeless Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC), including what constitutes a conflict of interest, a background review of McKinney-Vento/HEARTH act legislation, the local CoC funding process, the role and responsibilities of the panel, a review of the scoring tools, project applications, and other resources, and a practice scoring session. Additionally, panelists should be trained and fully informed regarding HUD's guidance and priorities as detailed in that funding year NOFO and regulations. Panel training will be provided by one or more designees assigned by the Planning and Performance Subcommittee.

Project Ranking

The Panel Moderator will be in attendance on the day of ranking to record decisions of the Panel and any comments / recommendations they have for applicants. The Moderator will also be tasked with assuring that the scoring guidelines established in the scoring tools are followed and accurately scored.

Following review of all ranking packets, Panel members can discuss the merits of each project, application details, and scores. Score sheets are then to be completed and turned in to the Moderator. Overall raw scores are calculated by the Moderator and double checked with assistance from one of the panel members.

The panel will determine the rank of all projects considering all available information and create a priority list to be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

During deliberation, the Panel Moderator will provide technical assistance by responding to questions of the panelists, correcting technical inaccuracies if they arise in conversation, and reminding the panelists of the responsibilities within their purview.

Note: Applications which do not meet the minimum threshold requirements in the LOI will not be included in the Priority List.

in the Consolidated Application and therefore will not be forwarded to HUD for consideration. If more applications are submitted than the CoC has money to fund, the lowest-scoring applications will be rejected in the Priority List in the Consolidated Application.

Final Panel Ranking Approval

Because the ultimate responsibility for submitting the best possible application falls to the Governing Board, the Governing Board must give final approval to the Ranking Panel recommendations. The Governing Board must give full consideration to the recommendations of the Ranking Panel. In order to allow for the best possible Consolidated Application, in limited circumstances, the Governing Board may reconsider the recommendations of the Ranking Panel.

For example, if a project applicant drops out after the Ranking Panel has made its recommendations, and the submission deadline is too close to reconvene the Ranking Panel, the Governing Board can be charged with reallocating those funds to the ranked projects so that the CoC can utilize its full Final Pro Rata Need (FPRN). Additionally, if the Governing Board determines, *based on the best interest of the CoC as a whole, or for some other technical reason*, to make changes to the priority list or individual project rankings, the changes should be made with a separate vote for each project. For example, if two projects are affected by a proposed Governing Board change, there should be two votes to make project changes and one final vote to approve the amended priority list. In the votes impacting specific projects, any Governing Board member who is employed by the applicant agency or has another conflict of interest must abstain from the vote.

Any changes to the Ranking Panel recommendations or changes made by the Appeals Board must be approved by 3/5 of the Governing Board – who do not have a conflict of interest. The Governing Board will *not* serve as the Appeals Board.

Contacting Ranking Panel Members

To avoid any conflict of interest issues and to protect the integrity of the process, Ranking Panel members will not have contact with the project applicants during the LOI/NOFO/Application process, unless it is necessary to conduct or complete actual ongoing business activities.

If contact is necessary to conduct ongoing business activities, such contact must be disclosed to the CoC to ensure there is no relation to the application or ranking process. If contact is made in conflict the panel member will be disqualified, and an alternate will be assigned.

Dissemination of Results

Each individual CoC project will receive a report of the project's score and a supplemental document showing the formulas for each of the performance measures. Agencies will then have an opportunity following the release of individual project scores to recreate calculations and associated scoring using the formulas provided. After the appeals process is complete the final results of this evaluation will be released in the following manner:

- Each applicant who met threshold will receive their final individual score report; and
- A complete listing of detailed project scores and recommendations will be presented to the governing board.

Ranking Appeals

Eligible Appeals: The application of any applicant agency which a) receives less funding than they applied for or b) is placed in Tier 2 (should HUD require a similar process) may appeal. Applicants that have been found not to meet the threshold requirements are not eligible for an appeal. Grounds for an appeal are to:

- Prove their score is not reflective of the application information provided; or
- Describe bias or unfairness in the process, which warrants the appeal.

All notices of appeals must be based on the information submitted by the application due date following the current NOFO timeline requirements. No new or additional information will be considered. Omissions to the application cannot be appealed. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

The Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee will be made up of four (4) members: Three (3) members are Appeals Committee voting members and one (1) is a non-voting member. An alternate Appeals Committee Member will be on standby in case there is a last-minute absence from one of the regularly chosen panel members. The three voting members will be selected from Governing Board membership but must not have a conflict of interest with any of the agencies applying for CoC funding and must be willing to sign a conflict of interest statement. The one non-voting member must be a member of the original Ranking Panel. The role of the Appeals Committee is to read and review only those areas of the application that are being appealed.

The Appeals Process

Any and all appeals must be received in writing within three **business** (3) days of the notification of ranking to projects. All notices of appeal (one original and four copies) must be submitted to:

- The Governing Board Chair, Name, Address, City, State, Zip.
- The notice of appeal must include a written statement specifying in detail the grounds asserted for the appeal, and must be signed by an individual authorized to represent the sponsor agency (i.e., Executive Director).
- The notice of appeal is limited to one single spaced page in 12-point font.
- The appeal must include a copy of the application and all accompanying materials submitted to the Ranking Panel; no additional information can be submitted.
- All valid appeals will be read, reviewed and evaluated by the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee will meet to deliberate.

- All applicants will be invited to attend any appeal and may make a 5-minute statement regarding the appeal.
- The Appeals Committee may ask follow up questions to clarify any points made during the presentation.
- The panel will review the rankings made by the Ranking Panel only on the basis of the submitted project application, the one page appeal, any statements made during the appeal process, and the material used by the Ranking Panel; no new information can be submitted by the applicant or reviewed by the Appeal Committee.
- The decision of the Appeals Committee must be supported by a simple majority vote.
- The appealing agency will receive, in writing, the decision of the Appeals Committee within two (2) business days of the Appeal Committee Meeting; the decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.