



# North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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## **NC Balance of State CoC Project Review Committee Meeting 8.22.17**

**Project Review Committee Members Present:** Alyce Knaflich, Ken Becker, Barrett Kahl, Destri Leger, Jennifer Manley, Chanda Hurms, Nicole Boone

**NCCEH Staff Present:** Brian Alexander, Emily Carmody, Ehren Dohler, Nancy Holochwost

### **Overview of CoC Application Process**

- The Balance of State is one of twelve Continuums of Care (CoCs) in North Carolina. CoCs are regional or local planning bodies that coordinate housing and services funding for homeless programs.
- The Balance of State covers 79 counties. Because it is so large, it is split into 13 Regional Committees that coordinate local-level planning and work.
- CoCs promote a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness, prioritizing getting homeless people back into housing as quickly as possible.
- CoCs are tasked by HUD with organizing two funding processes: CoC funding (which is the process we are discussing today) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funding.
  - In the CoC funding process, agencies applying for funding submit their applications to their CoC, which is responsible for reviewing these applications and prioritizing the applications that will be submitted to HUD for funding consideration. The Project Review Committee is part of this CoC-level review and prioritization process.
- The Project Review Committee is composed of one representative from each Regional Committee that nominates a representative. To avoid conflict of interest, people from agencies applying for CoC funding may not serve on the committee.
- The Project Review Committee uses new and renewal scorecards, which were created by the Scorecard Committee, to review and score all project applications from agencies. Once scoring is complete, the Project Review Committee has a final meeting to create a ranked list of applications in order of priority for funding. This list is presented to the BoS Steering Committee for approval. The approved applications are then submitted to HUD for funding consideration.
- Scoring and ranking applications allows CoCs to prioritize limited CoC funds for projects that meet the CoC's priorities and needs, are performing well, and are managing the funds effectively. The scoring and ranking process is also required by HUD for all CoCs.

- In the 2017 CoC competition, the BoS CoC is eligible to apply for \$9 million in project applications. The CoC's Annual Renewal Demand (ARD), which is the amount needed to renew all existing projects, is \$8,267,704. The CoC may also apply for up to \$654,769 in Permanent Housing Bonus funds, which may be used to create new projects.
- Project applications must be placed into two tiers:
  - Tier 1: 94% of ARD amount (\$7,771,642)
  - Tier 2: 6% of ARD amount + Permanent Housing Bonus amount (\$1,150,831)
  - HUD has indicated that Tier 1 is the relatively "safe" tier, and projects placed in Tier 1 are likely to receive funding from HUD. Tier 2 is the riskier tier, and projects placed in Tier 2 may or may not receive funding. In the past, the Balance of State CoC has had projects placed in Tier 2 that did not receive funding from HUD.

### **Overview of Scoring and Ranking**

- The Project Review Committee will score all new and renewal project applications submitted to the NC BoS CoC. After the scoring is complete, the Project Review Committee will recommend a ranked list of project applications for the Steering Committee's approval.
- The Scorecard Committee met earlier this year and created one scorecard for new projects and one scorecard for renewal projects. The scorecards have four goals:
  - to fund organizations that have the capacity to run effective programs
  - to fund projects that reflect the NC BoS CoC's priorities and HUD's priorities (providing permanent supportive housing, serving chronically homeless people and Veterans)
  - to incentivize agencies to be good partners with the CoC, Regional Committee, and other local programs
  - to ensure that funded agencies are being good stewards of CoC funding and performing to NC BoS CoC standards
- The scorecards have two parts: a Combined Scoring section and a Staff Scoring section.
  - The Combined Scoring section is scored by both a Project Review Committee member and a NCCEH staff person. Each Project Review Committee member will be assigned a particular number of applications to score. Each Project Review Committee member will also be paired with a member of NCCEH's staff. Both the committee member and the NCCEH staff member score the same questions, and then the two scores are averaged to create the final score. The committee member and NCCEH staff member may have different scores.
  - The Staff Scoring section of the scorecard is scored only by NCCEH staff. This portion of the scorecard contains questions based on objective and technical information.
- Once all applications have been scored, the Project Review Committee will meet a final time on September 8 at 10:00 a.m. During this meeting, the full committee will review the final scores for all applications, discuss any special considerations, and create the proposed ranked list of applications.
- NCCEH expects to receive a total of 43 project applications to score and rank. There are two additional project applications that are not scored:

- HMIS renewal grant: This grant provides support for the HMIS that serves the entire NC BoS CoC. It is not scored because it is not a housing program and the scorecard is not designed to assess it. This grant has historically been ranked first because HMIS is a requirement for all grantees, and without it, no other applications would receive funding.
- CoC planning grant: This grant provides funding for CoC-wide coordination, administration, and training. The funds for planning grants are outside of the tiers, so it is not required to be ranked or scored.
- The proposed ranked list of projects will be presented to the NC BoS CoC Steering Committee for approval at its meeting on Tuesday, September 12, at 10:30.
- The Project Review Committee has options for creating the ranked list and fitting projects into the available funding amounts.
  - HUD allows CoCs to reallocate part or all of the budget amounts from renewal grants to create new projects.
  - The budgets for new grants can be reduced to fit into the available amount of funding, as long as the program would still be able to run effectively on the reduced budget.
  - The Project Review Committee can choose to recommend some of the new project applications for funding and not recommend others.
- For the first time, the CoC has set funding priorities for the CoC competition. These priorities were created by a workgroup and approved by the Steering Committee in July. They are intended to provide some guidance to the Project Review Committee when they are ranking project applications.
  - The funding priorities document sets overall priorities for the NC BoS CoC:
    - Ensuring essential infrastructure elements are in place, including HMIS and coordinated assessment systems
    - Ensuring adequate coverage of permanent supportive housing across the CoC
    - Increasing the availability of rapid re-housing
    - Ensuring CoC funding is being used well. Renewal projects that have patterns of low spending or poor performance may have some or all of their funds reallocated to create new projects.
  - The funding priorities document also sets regional priorities. For each of the 13 Regional Committees in the CoC, the document assigns a priority of 1, 2, 3, or no priority for both rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing projects. These priorities are based on the current resources and unmet need in the Regional Committees.
- The Project Review Committee may take several factors into account when ranking projects, including:
  - Numerical scores on the scorecard
  - Whether project met standards and minimums on the scorecard
  - Funding priorities

## 2017 Scorecard Review and Discussion

- All project applications will be scored on the application materials that are submitted by the deadline. NCCEH staff will send Project Review Committee members the materials for the applications they have been assigned to score. Project Review Committee members will then complete a scorecard for each application they have been assigned.
- Some questions on the scorecard are worth numerical points. Other questions are “standards” or “thresholds.” Standards are benchmarks that applicants are expected to meet, so the Scorecard Committee chose not to award these numerical points. Threshold questions are requirements that applicants are required to meet.
- Project Review Committee members will complete one scorecard per application. At the top of the scorecard, there is a section to indicate the agency, project name, and project type, as well as the reviewer’s name and signature.
- The scorecard is broken into sections, each of which has a minimum score. Projects that do not meet minimums will trigger further review by the Project Review Committee, which has the option of determining how this will affect the projects’ ranking or recommendation for funding.
- Staff reviewed the Combined Scoring section of the renewal scorecard.
  - Section I pertains to general completeness and accuracy of the project application.
  - Section II pertains to program design, including program type, Housing First program models, and key elements/program standards for permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing programs. Some of these questions will be scored on the project application and some will be scored on other documentation submitted by the agency. Staff reviewed the specific information that should be used to answer these questions.
  - For questions that are standards, there are four options for answers:
    - standard is met
    - standard is unmet (the applicant submitted materials for scoring, but the materials did not meet standard)
    - standard is unmet – documentation not provided (the applicant did not submit materials for scoring even though question pertains to their application)
    - n/a (question does not pertain to the application)
- Staff reviewed the Combined Scoring section of the new scorecard.
  - Section I pertains to general completeness and accuracy of the project application as well as the project’s consistency with the agency’s mission.
  - Section II asks about program design. It contains the same questions as Section II on the renewal scorecard, plus some additional questions.
    - One question pertains to a statement of need in which the applicant demonstrates how this project will meet an existing need in the community.
    - Other questions ask how the project will target certain subpopulations, prioritize households with the longest histories of homelessness, and quickly move households into housing.
    - One question asks what priority this project type is in its region (based on the funding priorities document).

- One question asks if permanent supportive housing projects are dedicated to serving chronically homeless households.
- Projects applying for leasing instead of rental assistance funds must submit an explanatory statement.
- New rapid re-housing projects must already be operating an existing rapid re-housing project with other funds, unless the agency is a public housing authority.
- One question asks if supportive services only (SSO) projects are coordinated assessment projects serving the entire CoC.
- One question asks what percentage of the project's budget is for housing activities.
- Section III pertains to services that the project will provide.

### **Next Steps for Project Review Committee Members**

- NCCEH staff are anticipating 42 applications to score: 33 renewal applications and 9 new applications. Each Project Review Committee member will likely have 3 or 4 applications to score.
- This week, each Project Review Committee member will receive emails from NCCEH including the following information:
  - blank scorecard links, the applications they are assigned, and instructions for filling the scorecards out
  - attachments from Smartsheet (these are the materials that need to be scored)
  - the name of their NCCEH staff partner
  - instructions on how to schedule a follow-up call with their NCCEH staff partner
    - these calls will be held from August 28 to September 1
    - calls will take about 30 minutes
- After receiving these emails, Project Review Committee members can begin scoring their applications. The scoring must be completed prior to the follow-up phone call. During these phone calls, the Project Review Committee member and NCCEH staff partner will review the scores they each gave to the applications.
- After holding the phone call with their NCCEH staff partner, Project Review Committee members must scan and email the Combined Scoring pages of their scorecards to NCCEH by September 1.
  - email: [bos@ncceh.org](mailto:bos@ncceh.org)
- The Project Review Committee will convene for a final meeting on September 8 to create the ranked list of projects. NCCEH staff will send a reminder email with call-in information prior to the meeting.
- Project Review Committee members who have questions can contact NCCEH staff at 919-755-4393 or [bos@ncceh.org](mailto:bos@ncceh.org).