RHODE ISLAND CONTINUUM OF CARE

Request for Proposals

2024 CoC NOFO New Projects

Background

The Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RICoC) 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. The 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, the RICoC was allowed to apply for just under $900,000 in CoC Bonus funds and over 1.1 million in DV Bonus funds. Give that the funding for the CoC program has increased, the amounts available in 2024 will likely slightly exceed those of last year. The RICoC 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 that are to be funded and selection by the CoC for inclusion in the collaborative application does not guarantee that the application will be funded by HUD.

The RICoC encourages nonprofit organizations with experience in serving people experiencing homelessness and who have not previously received CoC funds to apply. Organizations that assist BIPOC people and/or populations that have been marginalized are specifically encouraged. To assist organizations new to this process and funding, the RICoC will hold informational webinars on the schedule posted below.

Existing CoC grantees may apply through this application 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.

The RICoC is now issuing a request for proposals to be positioned to respond to HUD's annual Continuum of Care competition. HUD has not yet issued the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for its Continuum of Care funding; therefore, it is possible that some modifications to this process may be necessary when the NOFO is released. **The RICoC is anticipating 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 projects and projects to increase the efficacy of the Coordinated Entry system and Homeless Management Information System in response to this issuance.** This is expected to be the only request for proposals issued to solicit CoC new project applications; interested applicant agencies should 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 Planner will work with the selected agencies to update their budgets for the FY24 CoC Application.

Table of Contents

Timeline

May 3   CoC Releases New Supportive Housing Projects Request for Proposals (RFP)

May 15   RFP Information Session 1: **1:30 – 3:00 pm**
             Zoom Link: Join Information Session #1
             Join Zoom Meeting
             https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84119257754?pwd=cTdudlVDMUlOWmVoekNNYS9FWWJpUT09

May 20   RFP Information Session 2: **10:30am – 12:00 pm**
             Zoom Link: Join Information Session #2
             Join Zoom Meeting
             https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87119060556?pwd=d1k5clJvckpxVWlyenFGaXQrOHpLQT09
             (The same information will be covered in both sessions)

June 14   **Deadline to submit proposals to the CoC Planner for consideration**
             Applications reviewed by the CoC's Funding Committee/applicants may be requested
             to answer questions from the committee

August 2   Anticipated announcement of selected new project proposals
             Selected proposals will be responsible to submit new project applications in HUD's
             ESNAPS system in accordance with local RICoC deadlines that are to be determined,
             however they are anticipated for August 2024.

Recordings of the RFP Information Sessions and Esnaps Training webinars will be posted on the RICoC Webpage, in the Funding section.

Request for Proposals Information Sessions

The same content will be covered in each session; however, there will be Q and A in each session that may cover different topics based on attendee's interest. 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.

Information Session #1:
May 15th from 1:30 – 3:00 pm
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84119257754?pwd=cTdudlVDMUlOWmVoekNNYS9FWWJpUT09
Meeting ID: 841 1925 7754
Passcode: 762669

Information Session #2:
May 20th from 10:30am – 12:00pm
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87119060556?pwd=d1k5clJvckpxVWlyenFGaXQrOHpLQT09
Meeting ID: 871 1906 0556
Passcode: 318955

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 RICoC is prioritizing its new project funding for supportive housing project types, CES project types that enhance the Coordinated Entry System, and HMIS project types. All housing projects must include trauma-informed services.

The RICoC currently anticipates approximately $900,000 of reallocation and CoC Bonus funding and $1,200,000 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.

Supportive Housing Project Type	Funding Type	Estimated total CoC new project awards
Rapid Rehousing	DV Bonus	$1,200,000
Rapid Rehousing	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$900,000
Permanent Supportive Housing	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$900,000
Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing	DV Bonus	$1,200,000
Joint Transitional/Rapid Rehousing	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$900,000
Supportive Services Only – Coordinated Entry	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$900,000
HMIS	Reallocation and CoC Bonus	$900,000

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. There is no minimum income requirement. ● Units can be site-based (e.g., lease up a bunch of units in an apartment complex) or scattered site ● Eligible populations: Categories 1 and 4 ● Chronic homeless or Dedicated PLUS definition 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 participant 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 Projects	
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 rehousing approach. Participants in 'Joint' projects must be able to choose between short-term and permanent housing and those choosing TH should be assisted in moving to permanent housing as soon as is practicable.	**Key Elements** ● This approach is most useful where there is inadequate emergency/crisis housing for the target population ● Program must be able to offer the choice of short-term transitional housing 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
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 ● 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

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 • Project must outline how their new project fits within the RICoC's overall strategies to build HMIS capacity • Only the CoC-designated HMIS Lead may apply for HMIS expansion funds

Threshold and Scoring Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate all threshold and scoring criteria are met in their proposal for it 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 Recipient Approval and Evaluation ("Funding") Committee.

a) Certify the project will use HMIS. For DV providers, certify use of RI's comparable database for survivors of domestic violence.
b) Certify the project will follow Coordinated Entry policy and procedure
c) Certify the project will use Housing First and a low-barrier approach; describe this approach in scoring criteria part (a)
d) Certify the applicant has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government
e) Certify the applicant has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302
f) 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
g) Describe Trauma-Informed Care approach and how TIC will be demonstrated in practice in the project
h) 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.
i) Demonstrate in the project budget that no more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs

j) Demonstrate in the project budget that 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. Demonstrate clearly that all matching funds are CoC eligible expenses.

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 **(10 points)**
f) 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)**
g) 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)**
h) 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)**
i) Proposed Supportive Services are adequate to support the target population; the strategies to and level of focus on priority subpopulations is described. **(10 points)**
j) Costs are reasonable, competitive, and activities listed are eligible.
    NOTE: the Recipient Approval and Evaluation Committee may tentatively approve a project with suggested budget changes **(10 points)**
k) Letters of support from at least one collaborating agency is 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)**

l) **Healthcare/housing leverage <u>bonus points</u>. (a) 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 and/or **(b) Healthcare Leverage –** the applicant is able to demonstrate 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 for housing leverage and 10 points for healthcare leverage)**

Threshold and Criteria for New Coordinated Entry Project Applications

Threshold Criteria for Coordinated Entry Project Applications: Project must demonstrate its ability to pass **all** of the threshold criteria in order for the project to be reviewed and scored by the Recipient Approval and Evaluation ("Funding ") Committee.

a) Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project
b) Describe how the additional funding requested will result in increased efficiency in the coordinated entry process including, but not limited to:
   a. Reduction in time from referral to housing provider to placement in housing
   b. Reduction in number of referrals from coordinated entry to housing providers that do not result in a housing placement (either the referral is not accepted by the housing provider, or the provider is not able to house the referred household)
   c. Increased training or support to agencies participating in coordinated entry
   d. Increased access to the coordinated entry system throughout the RICoC
   e. How the proposed project fits within the strategies proposed by the CES Evaluation Workgroup, which were approved by the RICoC Board at their April meeting
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
e) Certify the applicant has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government
f) Certify the applicant has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302
g) Demonstrate in the project budget that no more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs
h) 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
i) Demonstrate in the project budget that 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. Demonstrate clearly that all matching funds are CoC eligible expenses

Scoring Criteria for Coordinated Entry Project Applications: 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. Only one project will be selected for new CES funding.

a) Experience and Effectiveness (50 points total, 10 bonus points):
   a. Experience in operating coordinated entry, ability to promptly make referrals to available housing interventions – 20 points
   b. CE: will the proposed project result in increased efficiency and speed in the CE process – 20 points
   c. CE: does the proposed project increase access to the CE system through the RICoC? – 10 points
   d. CE: does the proposed project align with the priority recommendation in the CE Eval Workgroup Next Steps, or "Thoughtful Regionalization of CES" – Bonus Points, 10
b) Financial (20 points total):
   a. Audit – no issues or findings with most recent audit – 5 points
   b. Match – source of match is documented and realistic – 5 points
   c. Costs requested are reasonable allocable, and allowable – 10 points
c) Timeliness (10 points total):
   a. Project plan demonstrates that project and/or expansion can be rapidly implemented - 10 points
d) Meeting Federal Requirements (20 points total):
   a. At least 95% of prior grant funds expended – 10 points
   b. No unresolved monitoring findings from HUD or the RICoC – 10 points

Threshold and Criteria for New HMIS Project Applications

Threshold Criteria for HMIS Project Applications: Project must demonstrate its ability to pass **all** of the threshold criteria in order for the project to be reviewed and scored by the Recipient Approval and Evaluation ("Funding ") Committee.

a) Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project
b) Describe how the additional funding requested will result in:
   a. Improvements in data quality
   b. Improvements in data visualization
   c. Increased training or support to agencies providing data in HMIS
   d. Increased training or support to the RICoC in utilizing data to inform decision making
   e. Increased capacity to provide reporting to system stakeholders
   f. How the proposed project fits within the strategies proposed by the CES Evaluation Workgroup, in relation to HMIS capacity building, which were approved by the RICoC Board at their April meeting
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 current funding and additional funding requested and how the total funding for the new/expanded project would be expended.

e) Certify the applicant has no outstanding delinquent federal debts; no debarments and/or suspensions from doing business with the federal government

f) Certify the applicant has an accounting system that meets federal standards as described at 2 CFR 200.302

g) Demonstrate in the project budget that no more than 10% of the total CoC program budget is for administrative costs

h) 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

i) Demonstrate in the project budget that 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. Demonstrate clearly that all matching funds are CoC eligible expenses

Scoring Criteria for HMIS Project Applications: 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. Only one project will be selected for new HMIS funding.

a) Experience and Effectiveness (50 points total, 10 bonus points):
   a. Experience in operating HMIS, ability to meet HUD deadlines – 20 points
   b. 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
   c. Chronic Homelessness data quality in HMIS (systemwide error rate of less than 10% = 10 points; less than 15% = 5 points) – up to 10 points
   d. 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
   e. Does the proposed project build HMIS reporting capacity across the system-wide agencies involved in the RICoC, specifically the HMIS Lead, the Department of Housing, and the Collaborative Applicant, in alignment with the CE Eval Workgroup system change recommendations – 10 bonus points

b) Financial (20 points total)
   a. Audit – no issues or findings with most recent audit – 5 points
   b. Match – source of match is documented and realistic – 5 points
   c. Costs requested are reasonable, allocable, and allowable – 10 points

c) Timeliness (10 points total)
   a. Project plan demonstrates that project and/or expansion can be rapidly implemented – 10 points

d) Meeting Federal Requirements (20 points total)
   a. At least 95% of prior grant funds expended – 10 points
   b. No unresolved monitoring findings from HUD or the RICoC – 10 points

Submission Instructions and Deadline

Deadline: June 14th at 3:00pm Eastern Standard Time

The proposal must be submitted electronically to the CoC Planner at BDarby@RIHousing.com 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 10 pages (does not include budget worksheets or letter(s) of support) with 1-inch margins and 12-point font and contain the four sections outlined below. Each proposal should include:

1. **Introduction page** (1 page limit)
   (a) Organization name, name and contact information with point of contact most familiar with the application
   (b) Confirmation of eligible CoC applicant type, type of project being applied for in this proposal
   (c) UEI number, and EIN Number . If the agency has an approved federal indirect cost rate, or plans to use the 10% de minimis rate that should be identified here.
   NOTE: Indirect costs are not the same as direct administrative costs charged to the Administration ("Admin") BLI in CoC projects. For more information on the differences please click here: CoC and ESG Financial Management - Direct vs. Indirect Costs - HUD Exchange
   (d) A brief introduction to the organization(s), including subrecipient(s)

2. **Demonstration of Threshold Criteria** (3-page limit)
   Applicants should **letter each Threshold criteria** in accordance with the lettering convention used in the Threshold Criteria section of this RFP.
   Additionally, for new CoC applicant agencies who are nonprofit agencies, please include documentation demonstrating 501c3 status (this documentation will not be included in the 3-page limit).

3. **Response to the Scoring Criteria** (6-page limit)
   Applicants should **letter each Scoring Criteria** in accordance with the lettering convention used in the Scoring Criteria section of this RFP.

4. **CoC Project Budget** (not included in 10-page limit for the narrative)
   A complete/total project budget with clear delineation of CoC costs and matching costs should be submitted using the CoC budget tool provided. Administrative costs are capped at 10% of total project costs; applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for the 10% admin costs although they could manually adjust the budget form to decrease that budget line item. Please submit the budget as an attachment. (Excel format preferred for this attachment only).
   NOTE: Admin Costs charged to the Administration ("Admin") BLI in CoC projects are **not** the same as indirect costs. For more information on the differences please click here: CoC and ESG Financial Management - Direct vs. Indirect Costs - HUD Exchange
   If an agency already has a federally approved indirect cost rate, please include that documentation along with the budget form. If an agency is using the 10% de minimis rate for indirect costs (NOT admin) please use the budget form with "de minimis" in the title. All other

applicants without an indirect cost rate and who are not using the "de minimis" rate should use the budget form that says "no indirect" in the title.

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 CoC's Recipient Approval and Evaluation ("Funding") Committee, the RICoC and from HUD.

Applicants with projects that are rejected for funding may appeal the decision by submitting an appeal in writing to the CoC Planner at BDarby@rihousing.com on or before the appeals deadline in the timeline. Appeals will be considered by unconflicted members of the RICoC Board of Directors. The decision of the Board is final.

Additional Resources

- The RICoC website: Continuum of Care | RIHousing

    Resources specific to FY2024 Competition will be in the Funding Section under the **FY2024 RICoC Competition** heading

- Budget Line-Item Eligible Costs this chart 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 Interim Rule: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-24/part-578