

RHODE ISLAND CONTINUUM OF CARE

Request for Proposals for New Continuum of Care Projects to Address Unsheltered Homelessness in Rhode Island

Issued: August 5, 2022

Background

HUD has issued a Supplemental Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) specifically to reduce unsheltered homelessness. HUD is seeking projects, grounded in Housing First and public health principles, to reduce the prevalence of unsheltered homelessness, and improve services engagement, health outcomes, and housing stability among highly vulnerable unsheltered individuals and families. HUD expects communities to partner with housing and healthcare agencies to accomplish this.

HUD supports and encourages CoCs to invite a variety of stakeholders to develop and implement a CoC Plan to Serve Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs. The Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RiCoC) has started to implement a process to develop this plan and is supporting a working group of people with lived experience of homelessness to provide direction to the planning.

Consistent with HUD NOFOs, there are strict deadlines for an internal competition for funding and for submitting the required applications to HUD. Therefore, the CoC will, in parallel, be engaging in a planning effort to address the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness with severe service needs and soliciting applications to address these needs.

The Rhode Island Continuum of Care is requesting proposal(s) from qualified nonprofit organizations and/or local government agencies for new project applications for the 2022 Supplemental NOFO to Address Unsheltered Homelessness. The CoC seeks projects that can make maximum efficient, economical, and effective use of the prospective allocation of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) funds.

The RiCoC can apply for up to \$10,553,032 in Supplemental NOFO funds; each **project application must span a three (3) year project term**. These funds are highly competitive, and HUD has awarded up to 30 bonus points to CoCs with large numbers of unsheltered persons. The RiCoC does not qualify for any of these bonus points. Whether the project applications are funded will be dependent on the score the RiCoC receives on the supplemental CoC application. The highest scoring CoCs will have all of the projects on the project priority list funded. **To obtain maximum points and increase the possibility of receiving funding, project applicants are strongly encouraged to propose projects that align with the CoC Comprehensive Plan to address those with severe service needs and that can advance the goal of leveraging significant housing and healthcare resources.**

As in the 'regular' CoC NOFO, the CoC is required to rank all project applications; in this NOFO this also includes the planning application. The CoC has adopted a special scoring tool for this competition based on the NOFO; this tool is attached to this RFP. Applicants should pay close attention to the scoring criteria and make certain that all scoring factors are addressed in their application(s).

Organizations that have never received CoC funding and those located in areas of Rhode Island that have been underserved with CoC funds are strongly encouraged to apply. Organizations with no or limited experience in Federal funding are encouraged to consider applying as subrecipients to organizations that have the requisite experience.

This will be the only request for proposals issued to solicit COC project applications for the Supplemental NOFO; interested applicant agencies should respond to this issuance on or before the deadline in order to be considered for funding under this special NOFO to address unsheltered homelessness.

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Timeline

| Event | Date |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Initial Planning Group Meeting | August 2, 2022 |
| Request for Applications Issued, Supplemental NOFO | August 5, 2022 |
| Webinar for Potential Project Applicants – project requirements, priorities, application scoring | August 11, 2022 3:00-4:30 pm |
| Planning Group Working Session | August 16, 2022 |
| Webinar for Project Applicants – completing project applications in E-SNAPS | August 17, 2022 10 am - noon |
| “Office Hours” for project applicants | August 25, 2022 |
| Planning Group Working Session | August 30, 2022 |
| Submission Deadline for Projects to Address Unsheltered Homelessness Applications in E-SNAPS <u>and</u> emailed to COC planner | Sept. 9, 2022 |
| Planning Group Working Session | Sept. 13, 2022 |
| Special RCoC Board Meeting to accept/reject project applications | Sept. 21, 2022 |
| Draft of Comprehensive Plan – Severe Service Needs | Sept. 23, 2022 |
| Notification to Project Applicants whether application ranked or rejected | Sept. 23, 2022 |
| Appeal deadline | Sept. 30, 2022 |
| Revisions to Accepted Project Applications Due in E-SNAPS | October 5, 2022 |
| Supplemental CoC Application Draft Complete | October 7, 2022 |
| Public Posting of Supplemental CoC Application and Project Priority Listings | October 12, 2022 |
| Projected Submission to HUD | October 14, 2022 |
| FINAL HUD DEADLINE | Oct. 20, 2022 |

Recordings of the RFP Information Sessions and Esnaps Training webinars and Office Hours will be posted on the [RCoC Webpage](#), in the Funding section.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet the following requirements:

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

Eligible Project Types

The RICOc is requesting proposals for new projects to provide supportive housing, supportive services only, HMIS, and planning project types to address unsheltered homelessness. All projects must be for a three-year project/budget term. All housing and supportive services only projects must include trauma informed services. **Both Housing and Services are encouraged to be leveraged by mainstream resources whenever possible to maximize the RICOc’s chances to receive these project awards from HUD.**

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

| Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) | |
|---|--|
| <p>Overview : PSH is a non-time-limited, permanent housing subsidy combined with a high level of supportive services. It is a model that is most effective when combined with a Housing First approach and is typically designed for folks with the highest needs, long experiences with homelessness and a household member with a disability.</p> | <p>Key Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households would pay a percentage of their income towards rent for an indefinite period of time • Units can be site-based (e.g., lease up a bunch of units in an apartment complex) • Eligible populations: Categories 1 and 4 • Chronic homeless or dedicated PLUS definition applies |
| Rapid Rehousing (RRH) | |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>Key Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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: The Joint TH/RRH component provides both temporary housing for households without immediate access to safe, secure housing and longer-term rapid rehousing to assist households obtain and maintain permanent housing. Total assistance for both TH and RRH cannot exceed 24 months. The TH housing will be owned or leased by the project sponsor, the RRH will provide tenant based rental assistance, allowing participants to rent units of their choice in the community. Supportive Services help participants to access permanent housing through RRH, increase and stabilize income, and support independent living.

Key Elements

- HUD expects the majority of housing resources to be devoted to RRH, suggesting that there should be double the resources for RRH as for TH
- Stays in the TH component should be as brief as possible with the goal of rapid placement into RRH
- The RRH component offers the same opportunities for tenant choice as the regular RRH program.
- Eligible populations to serve are Category 1 and 4

Supportive Services Only (SSO)

For the Supplemental NOFO, HUD is permitting SSO projects in three categories:

- **SSO Coordinated Entry:** Only entities designated by the CoC to provide coordinated entry services may apply for this assistance. The CE system must be easily accessible to all people in the State of Rhode Island seeking homeless assistance. It must employ a standardized assessment, must make efforts to reach homeless people with the highest barriers, and ensure that people are directed to the appropriate housing and services to meet their needs.
- **SSO Street Outreach.** Any eligible organization may apply for SSO Street Outreach. It must be targeted to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness and must be able to connect people to coordinated entry and housing resources. For this supplemental NOFO, Street Outreach must have a strategy to provide services to those with the highest service needs, including those with histories of unsheltered homelessness who do not traditionally engage with supportive services.
- **Stand-Alone Supportive Services.** Any eligible organization may apply for a Stand-Alone supportive services project. This must also be targeted toward those with histories of unsheltered homelessness focused on those with the most severe service needs, who have not historically been engaged in supportive services. Participants must be assisted in obtaining permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs. Applicants must demonstrate that they will individually assist participants to obtain mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which they are eligible, and which meet their needs.

Homeless Management Information System

HUD will allow for HMIS funding through the Supplemental NOFO. The additional HMIS funding must be targeted to households with a history of unsheltered homelessness and with severe service needs. Only the designated HMIS lead may apply for HMIS funds.

CoC Planning Funds

HUD will allow the CoC lead agency to apply for planning funds to support the unsheltered homeless initiative. Planning funds can support the development and implementation of the Community Plan to Address Unsheltered Homelessness and the efforts of the Working Group of persons with lived experience of homelessness. Planning funds are limited to three percent of the total funding applied for through this initiative. The goal of this initiative is to develop a Comprehensive Plan to address people experiencing homelessness with severe service needs, to implement that plan and monitor the implementation of the plan and make modifications as appropriate. Planning funds are essential to this process. They allow for compensation to people with lived experience in the plan development and implementation and they allow funds for monitoring the implementation. It is essential therefore that the planning application be ranked so that it has a high probability of being funded, which will allow the entire initiative to proceed.

Threshold and Scoring Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate all threshold and scoring criteria in their proposal for it to be considered.

Threshold criteria: 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. Applicants must carefully review these criteria and make certain their application is responsive to all criteria

- 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 low barrier approach; describe this approach in narrative
- 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 compliance 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: There are special scoring criteria for this Supplemental NOFO. They are attached. Applicants must carefully review these criteria and make certain their application submitted in the e-snaps system is responsive to all criteria so it may be effectively scored by the funding committee.

Submission Instructions and Deadline

Deadline: Project Applications must be submitted in the [E-SNAPS grants management system](#) on or before **Sept. 9, 2022 at 5pm Eastern Daylight Time**. Additionally, project applications must be exported from the E-Snaps system and emailed to the COC planner, Elizabeth Bioteau (ebioteau@rihousing.com). The email must also include the performance report the applicant is submitting to respond to the system performance scoring criteria. Submissions submitted after the deadline may not be considered. A complete submission will require both of these steps:

1. Project application submitted in e-snaps grants management system
2. Email to ebioteau@rihousing.com of exported project application AND a system performance report (PDF format preferred for both attachments in the email.)

Please contact the COC planner at ebioteau@rihousing.com if you have questions about the submission process.

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 Supplemental 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 EBioteau@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](#)
 - [Budget Line-Item Eligible Costs](#) this chart show what is eligible under each of the eligible supportive service costs (case management, education services, outreach, etc.)
 - Continuum of Care Interim Rule: [eCFR :: 24 CFR Part 578 -- Continuum of Care Program](#)
 - HUD's definitions of homelessness: [At a Glance Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for Definition of Homeless \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
 - CoC Leasing and Rental Assistance Requirements Overview (HUD Virtual Binder): [CoC Leasing and Rental Assistance Requirements - Overview - HUD Exchange](#)
 - CoC Virtual Binders: [CoC and ESG Virtual Binders - HUD Exchange](#)
- These binders provide detailed information on eligible activities, environmental review, financial management, homeless eligibility, matching funding, CoC program components, and rent calculations. **These requirements should be reviewed as part of the application process to make certain that all requested funding and activities are eligible under the CoC program.**