

## **Somerville-Arlington CoC (MA-517)**

### **Rating Process and Ranking Policy**

*Adopted by the CoC at the August 20, 2019, 2019 Meeting*

It is the policy of the Somerville-Arlington Continuum of Care (S-A CoC), to select annually a Review, Rating and Ranking Committee. This committee has responsibility to review the Ranking Policy annually, make recommendations to the S-A CoC regarding revisions, review the RFP on behalf of the S-A CoC, and perform the Ranking and Review of project applications in the annual HUD Notice of Funding Availability process used to fund CoC projects.

It is also the policy of the S-A CoC to use the application ranking process to achieve success in pursuit of the following S-A CoC and HUD goals and objectives:

1. End homelessness for all persons in the S-A CoC geography.
  - a. Using local data, the S-A CoC will focus on subpopulations identified including, but not limited to, individuals and families who are chronically homeless, unaccompanied youth and young adults under 25, Veterans, individuals and families of diverse races, ethnicities and cultural identities, and those who are survivors of domestic violence or currently fleeing.
  - b. The S-A CoC will support outreach strategies designed to identify and engage unsheltered individuals and families.
  - c. The S-A CoC Review, Rating and Ranking Committee will use local system performance measures data in evaluating new and renewal projects to identify those with the strongest performance and demonstrated ability to prevent homelessness, shorten the length of time program participants are homeless and demonstrate an ability to tailor services and housing to participant need.
2. Create a systemic response to homelessness.
  - a. Coordinate system planning efforts throughout the S-A CoC;
  - b. Encourage and support participation from persons with lived homeless experiences;
  - c. Ensure equal and fair access to all CoC Program-funded projects;
  - d. Promote participant choice, privacy, and dignity;
  - e. Implement and operate an effective Coordinated Entry process;
  - f. Measure system performance; and
  - g. Continue to support and encourage the delivery of homeless assistance within the CoC in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.
3. Strategically allocate resources within the S-A CoC region.
  - a. The S-A CoC will undertake comprehensive and regular reviews of CoC project quality, performance and cost-effectiveness.
  - b. The S-A CoC membership will support and encourage the achievement of self-sufficiency for households experiencing homelessness by maximizing the use of mainstream and other community-based resources (housing, employment/income, non-cash benefits), and resource- and referral-sharing among S-A CoC members.
4. Implement Low Barrier Practices (CoC Program participants will not be screened out based on

the following):

- a. Having too little or no income;
  - b. Active or history of substance use;
  - c. Having a criminal record with exceptions for state-mandated restrictions;
  - d. History of victimization (e.g. domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and/or stalking); or
  - e. Having a history of eviction from rental housing.
5. Implement a Housing First Approach (CoC Program participants will not be terminated for the following reasons):
- a. Failure to participate in supportive services;
  - b. Failure to make progress on a service plan;
  - c. Loss of income or failure to improve income; or
  - d. Any other activity not covered in a lease agreement typically found for unassisted persons in the project's geographic area.
6. Quickly house and rehouse persons experiencing homelessness.
7. Develop and maintain relationships with property owners/managers and landlords.
8. Prioritize CoC Program funds to serve populations based upon the severity of needs and vulnerability. This includes, but is not limited to:
- a. Individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness;
  - b. Persons with one or more disabling conditions of long duration;
  - c. Persons fleeing and/or with a history of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and/or stalking;
  - d. Households with children under 18 years of age;
  - e. Unaccompanied youth and young adults under 25;
  - f. Households with low or no income;
  - g. Current or past substance use; or
  - h. Criminal histories.

### **Threshold Requirements**

In order to be included, all projects, both renewal and new, must meet the threshold requirements in the FY19 CoC NOFA for project applicant eligibility, project component eligibility, project quality threshold and project renewal threshold.

In addition, applications must be submitted in esnaps no later than August 28, 2019. Applications must be consistent with the Consolidated Plan. The agency can have no outstanding HUD monitoring or OIG Audit findings that are overdue. The Project must comply with the requirements of the CoC Interim rule (24 CFR part 578), including requirements to participate in the Coordinated Entry (CE) System and the S-A CoC HMIS.

Project scoring and ranking tools for new and renewal projects will be developed in consultation with the S-A CoC membership. The Review, Rating and Ranking Committee will develop the final tool which will be presented to the full S-A CoC membership for approval. It will be made available through email distribution and on the Collaborative Applicant's (CA), (the City of Somerville) website as well as on partner websites.

## **Ranking Tool**

The following elements will be present in new and renewal project ranking tools:

- 1) Severity of needs and vulnerabilities of populations served;
- 2) Project performance results;
- 3) Housing type and cost-effectiveness;
- 4) Target population and HMIS Data Quality, or willingness to participate in HMIS for new applicants to the CoC;
- 5) Implementation of Housing First and Low Barrier Entry.

All renewal applicants will be required to submit the following for use by the Ranking Committee, no later than August 30, 2019.

- 1) The most recent APR for the renewal being requested.
- 2) A current eLOCCS report showing drawdowns for the last 12 months (August 01, 2018 through July 31, 2019).

If a new applicant has no experience with Housing First or a similar model of housing, a detailed narrative describing how the applicant will implement Housing First should be included. This should include, but not be limited to a timeline for full implementation and training plans for staff, management and agency Board of Directors.

New applicants who have not participated in HMIS must commit to using HMIS or a comparable homeless information system and must also submit a copy of their Workplace Information Security Policy.

The sources of information to complete the ranking tool may include, but are not limited to, HUD Priorities, this Ranking Policy, HMIS, Annual Performance Reports, match documentation, bed/unit utilization, HMIS Data Quality Reports, Annual CoC PIT counts and other need-based reports, CoC project applications, Request for Proposals, concept papers, and calls with project applicants during Ranking Committee meetings.

## **Ranking Process**

Project ranking will be divided into Tier 1 and Tier 2: 94% of the S-A CoC ARD plus 100% of first time renewals will be included in Tier 1, and the remaining 6% into Tier 2. The score each project receives on the ranking tool will determine the position of the project in Tiers 1 and/or 2, and in the Priority Listing which accompanies the Consolidated Application.

The S-A CoC has defined the following ranking priorities for funding under the FY19 HUD CoC NOFA:

Prioritize Coordinated Entry projects and HMIS projects in the number 1 and 2 spots respectively in Tier 1. This is being done to ensure the CoC has the infrastructure needed to preserve its focus on serving those with the most severe needs and vulnerabilities.

Upon review of S-A CoC continued need, applicant performance, project financial information, and agency compliance with S-A monitoring policies and procedures, a Coordinated Entry (CE) renewal project application will be reviewed for threshold criteria as defined in the FY19 HUD NOFA. If there are no issues, it will be placed as the first project in Tier 1.

Upon review of S-A CoC continued need, applicant performance, project financial information, and agency compliance with S-A monitoring policies and procedures, a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) renewal project application will also be reviewed for threshold criteria as defined in the FY19 HUD NOFA. If there are no issues it will be placed after any CE renewal projects in Tier 1. Renewal housing projects will be ranked by score and will be placed after CE and HMIS renewal projects. New housing projects will be ranked by score and will be placed after renewal housing projects.

In case two or more housing projects receive the same score, they will be ranked in order of preference as indicated in the S-A CoC Priority Ranking Preference project types and components listed below.

1. Permanent Housing-Rapid Rehousing with Housing First;
2. Permanent Supportive Housing with either 90% of beds dedicated to chronically homeless, or classified as Dedicated PLUS;
3. Permanent Supportive Housing renewal with Housing First and low barrier entry focus;
4. Domestic Violence housing;
5. Transitional Housing for individuals and families.

Should two or more project component types receive the same score, they will be ranked in order of their score for:

1. Housing first,
2. Low barrier entry,
3. Subpopulation, and
4. HMIS.

New Core Services, because they are not housing, will be placed in Tier 2.

The last funded project in Tier 1 may 'straddle' Tiers 1 and 2 if that project causes the amount of Tier 1 to exceed 94% of the S-A CoC ARD plus 100% of the first time renewal amount, with the portion in excess of 94% going into Tier 2.

The Review Committee reserves the right to shift a project's ranking either to break scoring ties, or to maximize the number of CoC projects that can be fully funded if placed in Tier 1.

#### Project Determinations and Appeals Process

Applications which do not meet the minimum threshold requirements will not be ranked or included in the CoC Consolidated Application submitted to HUD.

If the CoC receives more Requests for Proposals responses than can be supported with available CoC funding, the CoC Review, Rating and Ranking Committee will rank the grants in order of priority as approved by the S-A CoC.

New projects that have not yet begun or completed their grant term will be held harmless and ranked in Tier 1, unless determined otherwise by the CoC Review, Rating and Ranking Committee due to special circumstances (i.e. non-compliance of HUD regulations and/or CoC policies, violation of state/federal laws, withdrawal, etc.), or, due to their ranking with other projects, fall below the 94% cutoff.

The Collaborative Applicant (CA) will send formal notification of a preliminary determination made by the S-A CoC Review, Rating and Ranking Committee to each project applicant along with individual project ranking summary, individual project ranking number, and any potential budget reduction or increase).

The CA will provide all appeals to the S-A CoC Review, Rating and Ranking Committee to make a final determination that will be sent to the S-A CoC full membership for a review, vote (minus any and all voting members with a bias or conflict of interest) and posting to the CA and partner websites.