



MISSISSIPPI
BALANCE OF STATE
CONTINUUM OF CARE

CONTINUUM OF CARE COMPETITION PROCESS REVISED AUGUST 2017

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Mississippi Balance of State Continuum of Care

The Mississippi Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS) is comprised of the 71 rural counties in Mississippi and represents diverse populations, needs, and capabilities. The 71 counties within the Mississippi BoS are further organized into 6 Regional Coalitions that engage in collaborative planning around homeless programming. A map of the Mississippi BoS Regional Coalitions can be found at: <https://msbos.org/coverage-area/>.

The CoC Governing Council, which is comprised in part of one representative from each Regional Coalition is the primary decision-making body of the CoC Membership. The CoC Governing Council has designated Mississippi United to End Homeless (MUTEH) as the Collaborative Applicant for the Mississippi BoS. In this role, MUTEH is responsible for submitting the annual consolidated application for CoC Program funding on behalf of the CoC. In turn, MUTEH has contracted with the CoC to provide primary staff support to the daily activities of the CoC.

HUD's Continuum of Care Program and the Annual Continuum of Care Competition

Every year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) makes available federal resources for homeless programming to communities around the country through its Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and its annual CoC Competition. Continuums access these funds by completing consolidated applications on behalf of the federally funded homeless programs in their CoC. For the BoS, the Collaborative Applicant facilitates this process and submits the consolidated application. Any organization located within the 71 counties of the that wishes to access CoC Program funds must participate in local homeless planning efforts and the annual BoS CoC Competition to do so.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This 2017 CoC competition process is only applicable to HUD CoC-funded projects renewing or reallocating their CoC project funding in 2017, or those organizations approved to apply for funding for a new CoC- funded project.

PURPOSE

This document is intended to provide CoC membership with basic information about the BoS 2017 CoC Competition, priorities for projects, and the process for completion of the 2017 MS BoS consolidated application.

GOALS & PRIORITIES FOR 2016 COC COMPETITION

The Governing Council has identified the following priorities for the 2017 BoS CoC Competition:

- Permanent housing projects whether renewal or reallocated will be protected from cuts
- Target population as identified by unmet need analysis.
- Project Type as outlined by HUD
- Reduction of renewals by money sent back to HUD from most recent APR available.
- Ranked by performance within project type based on CoC adopted standards from most recent APR available and MPRs generated by HMIS

HUD NOFA Policy Priorities

The FY 2017 CoC Program NOFA can be seen here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/FY-2017-CoC-Program-Competition-NOFA.pdf> (The Policy Priorities are detailed on pp.8-9)

Policy Priorities include:

- Create a Systemic Response to Homelessness
- Strategic Resource Allocation
- Ending Chronic Homelessness
- Ending Family Homelessness
- Ending Youth Homelessness
- Ending Veteran Homelessness
- Using a Housing-First Approach

FUNDING AVAILABILITY FOR 2016 BOS COC PROJECTS

Approximately, \$2 billion is available nationally in the FY 2017 CoC Program Competition. The Mississippi Balance of State CoC has access to \$2.8 million in renewal project funding (our Annual Renewal Demand amount), and up to \$307,140 in Permanent Housing (PH) Bonus Funding for new projects.

ELIGIBLE COC PROJECT SUBMISSIONS

In 2017, current Transitional Housing (TH) projects have the opportunity to apply for CoC funding for project conversions. Project conversion would involve terminating a current grant and applying for funding for a new Rapid Re-housing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) project.

Eligible Project Conversion Projects and Applicants

Current CoC-funded TH projects eligible to renew CoC funding in 2017 are eligible to apply for project conversion funding. Only conversion to Rapid Re-housing for families or individuals or Permanent Supportive Housing dedicated to chronically homeless will be permitted.

Eligible Activities and Funding Requests

Applicants should only request funding for activities (leasing, rental assistance, etc.) that are eligible for that particular component type. For example, if an applicant wants to convert to a Rapid Re-housing project component, they can only request funding for rental assistance and supportive services; they cannot request funding for leasing or operations. Applicants should review the CoC Program Interim Final Rule, which can be found at https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule_FormattedVersion.pdf, to make sure they understand all program regulations and eligible costs and activities.

Applicants should strive to ensure that their proposed project conversions will serve at least as many households annually as their current CoC project.

Applicants applying for funds for a project conversion *may request no more in funding than they currently receive for their CoC project*. For example, if an applicant's current TH project receives \$100,000 in CoC Program funding annually, then they can request no more than \$100,000 in funding for their project conversion. However, project conversions that are included in the CoC consolidated application may be awarded more funding than requested if any renewal projects fail to renew or if some renewal funds are reallocated.

Not all CoC-funded TH projects will be able to convert to RRH or PSH. Grantees should carefully analyze their project to determine if a project conversion makes sense based on their current target population, the project's physical configuration, and community need.

Project conversions funded through the 2017 CoC Competition will be funded as new projects. This means that if the project conversion is awarded funding the current CoC project's funding will be terminated at the end of the 2017 operating year. The project conversion's funding will become available once a grant agreement between the recipient and HUD has been executed. It is likely that there will be some gap between the end of the current CoC project and the beginning of the project conversion; this gap could be weeks or several months. Applicants should prepare in advance.

New CoC Project Applications

In 2017, the CoC will consider project proposals/applications for new Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects dedicated to chronically homeless and Rapid Re-Housing projects for families or individuals.

Eligible New CoC Project Applicants

Non-profit organizations, either currently funded grantees or not, are eligible to apply for funding for new PSH projects in 2017.

PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING COC PROJECT APPLICATIONS

All projects (new, renewal, reallocations) must submit an application with all required attachments. Application (and instructions) can be found here: <https://msboscoc.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/msbos-project-application-2018-2019-coc-competition-editable.docx> . **Separate applications must be filed for individual projects.**

Applications must be received the announced due date.

Project Application Technical Assistance

In addition to reading BoS CoC guidance documents related to the 2017 CoC Competition and participating in any available webinars or trainings, CoC grantees are encouraged to read all relevant guidance materials available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/e-snaps/guides/coc-program-competition-resources/>. HUD has created numerous documents to help grantees learn about e-snaps and how to successfully submit project applications.

CoC grantees can contact Reginald Glenn, CoC Coordinator (rglenn@msbos.org), with any questions about project applications or the 2017 CoC Competition Process.

COC PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

The CoC Governing Council charged a Project Evaluation Workgroup with developing the annual CoC project evaluation process and developing a preliminary project ranking approach. The evaluation process and related project ranking helps the CoC fully maximize CoC Program funds, make informed funding decisions, and continue to move the CoC towards our goal of ending homelessness. The evaluation is divided into 2 sections: Project Threshold Review and Project Evaluation Scoring.

Threshold Review for Project Applications

The purpose of the threshold review is to determine whether an applicant meets basic eligibility requirements for funding. Projects that do not meet all of the threshold criteria outlined below will not be further reviewed by the CoC.

Threshold review criteria includes the following:

- Eligible projects/populations for the Reallocation Funds
 - All projects must be for new Permanent Supportive Housing serving exclusively chronically homeless singles and/or families OR new rapid re-housing serving exclusively homeless individuals or households with children living on the streets or in emergency shelter.
 - Projects must be for 1 to 3 year terms and can request funds for capital costs, operating, leasing, rental assistance, HMIS and/or supportive services.
 - No more than 10% of the program expense budget can be for administrative costs
 - All projects must be able to meet the following threshold requirements as:
 - Project applicants and subrecipients must meet eligibility requirements as described in the CoC program interim rule (i.e., only nonprofit organizations, States, local governments, and instrumentalities of State or local governments are eligible to apply) and be able to provide evidence of eligibility (e.g., nonprofit documentation)
 - Project applicants and subrecipients must demonstrate the financial and management capacity and experience to carry out the project and administer federal funds (e.g., by demonstrating experience with similar projects and with successful administration of other federal funds.)
 - The population served must meet program eligibility requirements, including:
 - For PSH projects, all households must have a qualifying HUD disability and be chronically homeless
 - For RRH projects, all participants must be individuals or families with children living on the streets or in emergency shelter
 - Projects must be cost effective (i.e., not deviating substantially from the norm in that locale for the type of structure or kind of activity).
 - Project applicants must agree to participate in HMIS or be excluded from participation under domestic violence provisions.

- Projects must administer their programs in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified homeless people with disabilities (i.e., enabling participants to interact with others without disabilities to the fullest extent possible).
- Eligible localities: Projects must be located within the CoCs geographic area.
- Match and Leveraging: Applications must meet HUD's cash match requirements as defined in the CoC Program Interim Rule (i.e., the recipient or subrecipient must match all grant funds, except for leasing funds, with no less than 25% of funds or in-kind contributions from other sources). In addition, applications must have leveraging.
- CoC Participation: Projects must participate in MS Balance of State Regional Coalition and Membership meetings.
- PIT Count: Projects must have provided leadership in their community during the Point in Time count.

If the project fails to meet all the given criteria, then the review committee will not review the project any further and will send feedback to the applicant concerning the failure to meet threshold. If the project meet requirements, it will then be subject to the quality threshold requirements.

Quality Threshold Requirements

If the project meets all of the criteria, then the project is then subjected to a second tier of quality threshold questions. **Each question is worth 1 point each**. The questions are as follows:

- Does the type, scale, and location of the housing fit the needs of the program participants?
- Does the type, scale, and location of the supportive services and mode of transportation to those services fit the needs of the program participants?
- Does the specific plan for ensuring program participants will be individually assisted to obtain benefits of the mainstream health, social, and employment programs for which they are eligible meet the needs of the program participants?
- Does the application indicate that program participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs?

- Do at least 75% of proposed program participants come from the street or other location not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters, or safe havens?
- Are amenities (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) accessible in the community?
- Does the applicant have at least one year of data in AWARDS?

If the application obtains 5 out of 7 points the project application will then be considered for project ranking via the project evaluation tool. If not, the project will no longer be reviewed for the competition.

Project Evaluation Tool

The areas evaluated as part of the project evaluation process are considered as part of a ranking tool (see tool here:

<https://docs.google.com/a/muteh.org/spreadsheets/d/18Yj4G6NmeCns8VNe3daWmulxQDLt12HrFMI68GtS5t4/edit?usp=sharing>) as follows:

- **Population Served**
 - Targeting services towards homeless populations identified in the Federal Strategic Plan
- **Coordination of Services**
 - Regional Coalition Participation
 - Coordination with other agencies (VA, DMH, DOL, etc.) for wraparound services
- **HMIS**
 - Usage of HMIS
 - Grades on Monthly Progress Reports (Data Quality)
 - Performance on Quarterly Report Cards (Performance Measures)
- **Performance Measures**
 - Ability to increase earned income
 - Ability to move TH clients to PH within 12 months
 - Clients remain in PH for 6 months
 - Clients were connected to mainstream benefits
- **Expenditure Rates**
 - Ability to spend grant funds in the time allotted

- **Programmatic Strategies**
 - Using Housing First Model
 - Are applicants using VI-SPDAT screening tool?

Scoring

Each element question is given a 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) ranking. If an element is not consistent with the project type, the question is not used in the weight of the score. The total amount of points earned is divided by the amount of total points possible and a percentage score is calculated. The percentage score is then used to rank the projects in satisfactory order.

Evaluating Cost Effectiveness

Renewal CoC projects are evaluated on cost effectiveness - namely, the annual cost to retain or move someone into permanent housing. In order to evaluate cost effectiveness, all renewal CoC projects must submit annual project budget information (for their last grant period) to CoC staff. Budget information should include CoC funds and all other cash match associated with the CoC project.

Project budget information is due to the CoC Coordinator (rglenn@msbos.org) by August 18, 2017.

COC PROJECT RANKING

After completing all project evaluations, CoC Ranking Committee, in conjunction with the Project Evaluation Workgroup and the CoC Coordinator, will preliminarily rank all renewal projects according to their evaluation score – e.g., projects with higher scores will be ranked higher in the project listing.

CoC Project Evaluation

The CoC Ranking and Review Committee evaluated all renewal CoC projects in summer 2017 and the results of the evaluation informed the CoC Project ranking. Results of the project rankings were released in August 2017 and posted on the CoC's website at <https://msbos.org/coc-app-rankings/>.

APPEALING COC PROJECT RANKING

If an applicant has a compliant, the applicant can access the Appeals Process here: <https://msboscoc.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/appeals-process-template-rev-10-2015.pdf>

FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE COC CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION

After all renewal projects, project conversion, and new CoC project applications have been received, reviewed, and ranked, the CoC Collaborative Applicant (MUTEH Inc.) will prepare the CoC Project Ranking list on behalf of the Mississippi BoS. Once the Governing Council has approved the listing, MUTEH will electronically submit the project applications and the MS BoS Consolidated CoC Application via e-snaps to HUD.

Any questions about the 2016 CoC Competition Process can be directed to Reginald Glenn, Continuum of Care Coordinator, at rglenn@msbos.org or 601.960.0557 ext. 310.

MS BALANCE OF STATE 2016 COC COMPETITION TIMELINE

The following is the timeline for the 2017 CoC Competition as of August 2017, including dates and deadlines associated with the project evaluation process.

DATE COMPLETED	ACTIVITY
6/8/17	MS BoS CoC Application Training
6/12/17	CoC Application Competition begins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application available at: https://msbos.org/coc-app/
7/14/17	FY 2017 CoC Competition Opens
7/18/17 – 8/1/17	CoC Project Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Agency Applicants Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threshold Review performed by CoC Coordinator and Collaborative Applicant If passed, then the application is submitted to Ranking and Review Committee for further review. If failed, agencies will be notified by email and mailed letter. Message also contains information about the appeals process. Corrections by New Applicants to Project Applications

7/25/17	Project Applications Available in e-snaps
7/18/17 – 8/23/17	CoC Project Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Renewal Applicants Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Threshold Review performed by CoC Coordinator and Collaborative Applicant ▪ If passed, then the application is submitted to Ranking and Review Committee for further review.
8/8/17 – 8/9/17	CoC Project Evaluation Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of the Consolidated Project Competition Worksheet • Compiling of the Agency HMIS Performance Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) ○ Quarterly Report Cards (QRCs)
8/24/17	Ranking and Review Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation, Review, and Rank all applications meeting Threshold
8/25/17	Ranking and Review Committee will communicate decisions concerning all ranked projects via email and mailed letter.
8/28/17	Final CoC Project Ranking Released <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes renewal CoC projects, project conversions, and new CoC projects • View Rankings here: https://msbos.org/coc-app-rankings/
9/7/17	Project Applications (Renewal, Converted, and New) Due in e-snaps
9/26/17	Final MS BoS Project Applications Submitted to HUD via e-snaps (Completed by the Collaborative Applicant.

9/28/17	Submission deadline for FY2016 CoC Program Competition Application
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APPENDIX A: WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST???

Housing First is a model of housing assistance that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible, and then providing services as needed. Assistance is offered without preconditions or service participation requirements.

Housing First programs share critical elements:

- A focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible without time limits □
- A variety of services delivered to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as- □needed basis
- A standard lease agreement – housing is not contingent on compliance with services

Additionally, Housing First programs should actively work to ensure there are minimum barriers to entering their programs, particularly for those most in need. For example, Housing First programs should not require sobriety as a condition of housing, they should not require drug testing, and they should not require a minimum level of income.

Additional information about Housing First practices can be found at the following links.

- http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first
- http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/housing_first
- <http://www.desc.org/housingfirst.html>