



ARKANSAS BALANCE OF STATE

RANK AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Background

Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) makes resources available to communities through a national competition for its Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Assistance Programs. Ouachita Children, Youth, and Family Services, Inc. is the lead agency (Collaborative Applicant) responsible for preparing a consolidated application to submit to HUD for all Arkansas Balance of State eligible projects. The community application for funding is done under the guiding framework of the federal HEARTH Act and related regulations and directives from HUD. There are 3 primary components to the application:

1. Community-wide performance;
2. Renewal grants; and
3. New projects to include bonus (*pending the availability of funding & community performance*)

Additionally, HUD strongly encourages communities to reallocate lower-performing programs to higher-performing projects.

Performance Scoring

All applications for new and renewal projects are reviewed for threshold to ensure compliance with the HEARTH Act, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the local CoC Request for Applications. Any new or renewal project not meeting the threshold requirements are not considered for funding which means they will not move forward to the scoring and ranking process.

Threshold Requirements

Eligibility Requirements: Project applicants and potential subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of the CoC Program as described in the Act and the Rule and provide evidence of eligibility required in the application.

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Financial and Management Capacity/Experience: Project applicants and subrecipients must demonstrate the financial and management capacity and experience to carry out the project as detailed in the project application and the capacity to administer federal funds.

Population Served: Population to be served must meet program eligibility standards as described in the Act, the Rule, and any further guidance from HUD.

HMIS or Comparable Database: Project applicants must agree to participate in a local HMIS system unless they are victim service providers. Victim Services Providers must use a comparable database that meets the needs of the local HMIS.

Coordinated Entry Participation: The project participated or intends to participate in coordinated entry when it is adopted by the CoC in addition to participating in workgroups and committees throughout the creation and implementation. Furthermore, the project will commit to be compliant with the CoC's Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures and HUD's Equal Access Rule.

Housing First and Low Barrier Implementation: The project is, or intends to be, designed and implemented using Housing First principles including: no preconditions or barriers to entry except as required by funding sources, and provision of necessary supports to maintain housing and prevent a return to homelessness. The project must follow the Housing First Principles set in place by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness listed as follows:

- Applicants are allowed to enter the program without income.
- Applicants are allowed to enter the program even if they aren't clean and sober or treatment compliant
- Applicants allowed to enter the program even if they have criminal justice system involvement
- Service and treatment plans are voluntary such that tenants cannot be evicted for not following through

Documented, secured minimum match: Applicant has match commitments that satisfy CoC Program Rule requirements for source and amount.

Applicant is active CoC Participant: Applicant participation in CoC Board and committee meetings meets CoC requirements for member in good standing. Applicant must present a letter of good standing from the CoC.

Application is complete and data are consistent: All required information is completed and all required attachments are provided. Data provided throughout the application is consistent.

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Acceptable organizational audit/financial review: Applicant's audit or financial review does not contain findings or other indications of financial or accounting problems, or if applicant does have a finding, they have a corrective action plan in place.

Renewal Projects Only (older than 1 Year): Renewal Project has a spending rate of 80% of their total grant award. If spending is less than 80%, the applicant may submit a justification to the rank and review committee for approval to move forward.

Projects that serve families: A project accepts all families with children 18 and under without regard to age or gender. In addition, the project has a staff person responsible for ensuring that children are enrolled in school and connected to services in the community.

Ranking Policies

If a project successfully passes the first round of review through the threshold criteria, the project will then be scored using the CoC Rating Tool and ultimately ranked in Tier 1 and/or Tier 2. The Arkansas Balance of State Continuum of Care will ensure that ranking policies are consistent with HUD's policy priorities and aligns with local priorities and needs. The CoC has put in place the following ranking policies:

1. HUD's policy priorities
 - Ending homelessness for all persons
 - Use a Housing First approach
 - Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness
 - Improving System Performance
 - Partnering with Housing, Health, and Service Agencies
 - Using a Racial Equity Lens
 - Improving Assistance to LGBTQ+ Individuals
 - Partnering with Persons with Lived Experience
 - Increasing Affordable Housing Supply
2. HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects will be listed in Tier I because they are required elements of our CoC system.
3. Renewal projects will be ranked in Tier I according to HUD priority listing of permanent housing (permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing) and transitional housing in that order, unless there are justifications for ranking the project lower, such as poor performance or a failure to meet HUD priorities or local needs.
 - a. Permanent Housing will be given priority above Transitional Housing. Furthermore, for FY 2023, the AR BoS CoC Board will make a specific request for Permanent Supportive Housing Project.
4. Renewal projects will be reviewed primarily based on performance.

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5. In the event that two or more projects of the same type received the same project score, the following tie-breaking criteria will be applied to aid in the ranking of projects when no other distinguishing data and/or information is available.
 - Renewal project will be prioritized over new project.
 - Projects located in an LHC with a clear demonstrated need and/or that does not already have a CoC funded program will be prioritized.
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Notification

The Rank and Review Committee will submit letters to all applicants as to whether they are accepted, reduced, or rejected along with their ranking on the priority listing. Any appeal will occur at this time before the final public notification is made (**see appeal process**). At the completion of rating, the committee will send final notification of their ranking and Tier placement before the overall application is submitted to HUD. Ranking will also be posted on the Arkansas Balance of State Facebook page, Arkansas Balance of State website at www.arboscoc.org, and will be emailed to all members of the Arkansas Balance of State Board to then be distributed throughout the coalitions.

Appeal Process

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of their ranking and Tier placement, they have the right to appeal the committee's decision. However, appeals are limited to the following:

- An application that was not evaluated according to the published local NOFO process AND/OR
 - Evaluated in a way that violates federal regulations AND
 - The adjustment of scores has the possibility of changing in which Tier an Applicant project is ranked OR whether an Applicant project is included in the package at all. Note: this includes any Project that meets Appeals Criteria #1 and/or #2, and its initial Rating and Ranking score appears very close to the end of Tier 1 and can be moved down to Tier 2 as a result of scoring post appeals.
- A project that is facing an involuntary reduction of its renewal grant amount (i.e. renewal grant partially re-allocated to a new project).

Items that are not eligible for appeals are as follows:

- Errors or omissions by project Applicants;
- Projects that do not meet threshold criteria;
- Dissatisfaction with Project's scores;
- Need for funds; and/or
- Appeals submitted after stated deadline.

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If an applicant does decide to appeal the committee's decision, they must submit their intent to appeal to the CoC board vice-chair by 12:00 pm the day after the scoring and ranking announcement has been made. The applicant has a total of two (2) days after the scoring and ranking announcement has been made to submit their written appeal which must be no more than two (2) pages.

The Vice President shall submit the appeal as received to the Executive Committee. If a board member of office is involved in the appeal due to being a project applicant, they will be excluded from the discussion and any subsequent votes. The Executive Committee will conduct all discussions and vote on the appeal. They may conduct an in person or telephone meeting with a representative or representatives of the applicant who filed the appeal if needed. They will then inform the project applicant along with Rank and Review Committee of their decision. Any further work on Rank and Review will be done at that time if needed. The Appeals Panel will inform appealing agencies of its decision by 12:00 pm no later than five (5) days from receiving the formal appeal.