

Minutes
Boston Continuum of Care
Consolidated Application Information Session
December 18th, 2013
Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, MA

(Minutes taken by Lori Fanara and Jennifer Flynn).

Attendees signed in and were given a handout including the Agenda, Elements of the Methodology to Rate and Rank Projects, and Components of Continuum of Care Score.

The session started at 11:07 A.M.

1. *Welcome and introductions* – all attendees and speakers introduced themselves

- Jim Greene of the Emergency Shelter Commission thanked everyone who participated in the homeless count, an important census that took place on a very cold night. There were over 300 volunteers, and it will provide rich data. The survey results are due on 1/3/14.
- Melanie, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), asked for referrals of clients whose DTA benefits on EBT cards are being negatively impacted by glitches in the system caused by the new requirement for photo ID's.

2. *Changes and Highlights to the FY 2013 and FY 2014 CoC Competitions*: Presented by Elizabeth Doyle

- DND had to submit Registration and a GIW (Grant Inventory Worksheet). That has been done.
- One change is that applications are now good for two years; 2013 and 2014. While it is a good thing that they don't need to be submitted twice, it also means that the score can't be improved in the second year.
- The better score we achieve, the more projects we will be able to fund.
- HUD doesn't know the 2014 amount.
- Due to sequestration, HUD is reverting back to Tier 1 and Tier 2.
- ARD = \$23,074,112 in Tier 1. 5% cut required for Tier 2, which equals \$1,024,427. Math won't work out perfectly, so there may lead to partial funding for some.
- Last year there was concern but it turned out that all of the Tier 2's were funded. That is unlikely to happen this time. The higher we score, the more Tier 2's we can fund.
- DND will rank all of the projects, from 1 to 65.
- We encourage each agency to have a point person to carefully read and understand the NOFA.
- Agencies should consider HUD's priorities; both homeless priorities and local priorities. This will affect the ranking.
- HUD notification; Tier 1 – 45 days from application. Tier 2 – Early summer. We know this will cause some hardship, especially regarding expenditures.
- There is no new \$ available this year, but reallocation is allowed. Money could be taken out of a current project and reallocated to permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless, or to rapid rehousing for families.
- The NOFA is sending strong signals that HUD is not happy with TH (transitional housing) or SSO.
- HUD gives 2 extra points if application doesn't include an SSO.

- HUD wants TH to reallocate to rapid rehousing. If an agency wants to reallocate, they should talk to DND about this ASAP. We are not sure whether they will be in Tier 1, though, as the program will be new & they need a score.

Q: from Jim Max, Elizabeth Stone House: Can we split a project and reallocate just a portion of the \$ to rapid rehousing, keeping some of the \$ in the old project?

A: Yes

- If a rapid rehousing for families project is not leasing, only a PHA (public housing authority) can administer the grant. Need to ask PHA to be a partner. Both the BHA & DHCD are willing to do this.

Jim Greene, Emergency Shelter Commission: Can use MHSA RRH program as a guide. Look up US Conference for Mayors for info if going in this direction.

Q: from Carol Fabian, Please explain more about individual programs for transitional assistance.

A: You can apply as you are, or you can reallocate to permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless.

- If shelter plus care or leasing program, HUD wants turnover to be prioritized for the chronically homeless, with a minimum standard.
- DND was required to submit a Point in Time Count, (PIT) which was the result of census. We submitted that in April.
- We also submitted the required Housing Inventory Chart (HIC), with the number of beds in the system, which info was also gleaned from the PIT.
- The NOFA has the concept of transparency. There needs to be an internal deadline, and we have to notify about Tiers by January 17th.
- Also, coordination with Emergency Solutions Grant is required, which is not a problem for us.

3. Timing, Application Deadlines and Logistics for the 2013 CoC Application and Project Applications: Presented by Katie Cahill.

- Application deadline: by January 3rd, and we will respond by January 17th.
- As was discussed in a TAC training session, cash match and leverage info must be submitted at the same time as the application.
- Cash match has changed and is now simplified. It applies to all line items except leasing. Agencies must demonstrate a 25% cash match for eligible CoC expenses for the component type.
- They can submit a letter on letterhead with unrestricted sources traceable through a general ledger.
- Leverage does not have to be eligible under a component. Can be documented in a letter.

4. CoC Application; Scoring of the Application, and information and data needed from the CoC agencies: Presented by Elizabeth Doyle, referring to the handout.

- Agencies can self-score to try to predict how well they will do. DND has done this successfully in the past.
- Overview of the CoC scoring and points.

- Data from the APR's inform our Performance Score. We will need to get some of the information from individual agencies, so they need to respond if we ask questions. We need a better understanding of what agencies are doing all the time.

Q: from Melanie, GBLS. Does it help if we point out everything our agency does, even if some of those things are not part of the particular program?

A: Yes, that could be very helpful.

Jim Greene: Re: CoC coordination; HUD needs to know all of the activity in the whole system. It is relevant to painting the whole picture and could help with our score.

5. *Rating and Ranking Criteria of Project Applications for the CoC Competition:* Presented by Elizabeth Doyle, referring to handout:

- Elizabeth discussed the initial proposal of ranking criteria that was originally presented to the CoC membership at the CoC Planning meeting on 10/16/2013 and met with approval by the membership. The ranking criteria was then presented to the Leadership Council on 10/23/2013 and approved by the Board with the caveat that DND can shift project ranking if the project fills an identified gap in the CoC.
- HUD strategic objectives. When reading NOFA, concentrate on HUD's homeless policy and program priorities.
- Discussion of definition of "Housing First" from NOFA. They don't want barriers for these applicants to get into housing.

Q: from Suzanne Kenney, Project Place: Barriers such as CORI

A: The agency should not be establishing barriers for supportive housing leasing programs.

- The assessment system is to be centralized and coordinated. We do this well on the individual side, but on the family side it is less clear.
- HUD feels that transitional housing is not the most efficient model. This doesn't mean that we won't fund them, though.

Jim Greene: HUD criterion for "Housing First" is to remove barriers, e.g., get people into housing first and work on their sobriety afterwards.

- HUD is very prescriptive this year with their expectations.
- Programs should maximize use of mainstream benefits for clients and build partnerships. Philanthropy impacts the system.
- Re: financial management, we will look at data quality on HMIS, audits, etc. Biggest item: Are you spending all of your \$? (discounting the first year)
- CoC participation counts – points for coming to meetings, task forces, etc.

Q: from Jamie Rhibany: (Baycove -Kit Clark Senior Services) Re: leaving \$ on the table; If you are spending less, can you ask for a lower level on NOFA?

A: Excess is usually due to vacancies or calculation on rent level. Agencies need to monitor their spending on a monthly basis and call us about how they can move \$ around to make sure they spend it all.

Q: from Lori Cain (Homestart) If strategic objective is working with chronically homeless, many of whom have serious health issues, how can we show that the program did well and not have it held against us in our scoring if a client dies.

A: If it is a small program, this is a big concern as it could affect its scoring. Let us know if this happens as you shouldn't be penalized.

Jim Greene: HUD should allow for that. We can submit this Q to them.

The Proposed Final Rating and Ranking Criteria was adopted by the CoC for the 2013-2014 competition.

6. Review of Required Information for Project Applications; HUD application requirements and Boston CoC application requirements: Presented by Adelina Correia, who did an application walk-through. Copies of the application were handed out to those attendees who didn't bring them.

- HUD portion: some info has been pre-populated by DND.
- We copied application from E-Snaps and reformatted it.
- Part 1 is all set. Part 2 remains the same.
- Part 3 on page 26 regarding project descriptions has three new questions calling for yes or no answers. These were explained.

Q: from Lori Cain: Housing First an all or nothing question or can we say yes if it is partial?

A: It is all or nothing.

Q: from Jim May: We don't use HMIS. Can we still say yes to that question?

A: You are still collecting data, so yes.

Q: from Jack Ward: For transitional project SSO- it is pre-checked "no".

A: Do you plan on serving the homeless as defined in other federal statutes? No one is doing that, so the answer is no.

- Part 4, regarding services, has a new question and chart. They are asking about 16 key services.

Q: from Andrea Ryan, St. Francis House: Asking about definition of sub-recipient versus partner for question 4A in the Project Application?

A: The presenter read the answer from the application.

Q: Maria Davis, Pine Street Inn: Are agencies the applicant?

A: No, DND is the applicant. You are sub-recipients.

- Part 4B- regarding housing type. New question about chronic homelessness.
- HUD wants programs to prioritize beds for the chronically homeless upon turnover.

Jim Greene: HUD is hinting at what the policy is.

- Part 2B of part 4, regarding HMIS, has a typo. Time frame should be 2012. This will be corrected.

- Part 5B – HUD added 3 more categories of sub-populations. If you are reporting on other categories, a narrative section will appear.
- Part 5C – outreach. HUD slightly tweaked language on page 46 regarding people at risk of losing nighttime residences to add 14 days and no other options.
- Part 6 – Performance measures. Said for all projects except SSO & HMIS but now they do want it for SSO projects according to guide HUD just released. Instructions have been released piecemeal.
- Part 7 – budget info and funding request, page 54. There is a new question regarding proposing indirect cost. If yes, must be submitted previously these were to be submitted at the conditional award, it must now be submitted with your renewal application on 1/3/2014.

Q: from James Rhibany: If indirect rate is higher than allowed, should we say yes or no?

Q: from Jack Ward: And what if approved by other Federal Agency but not HUD?

A: There is no guidance on this. Probably the answer is no. We'll submit that question to HUD. We are waiting for a FAQ.

- Last piece that is new, on page 65 – there are now 2 charts, a leveraging chart and a match chart.
- If you have questions about anything, talk to your DND project manager.
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Final Section– presented by Katie Cahill:

- The final section of the application has more system questions.
- It is largely narrative.
- It asks about initiatives for veterans.'
- It goes into questions specific to component type.
- We want an estimate of turnover of units and beds dedicated to the chronically homeless.
- We are following the Housing First model.
- Asks for a description of how they plan to improve housing stability.
- TH – Evaluation per HUD – conversion
- What are barriers specific to Boston?
- APR goals – how to increase incomes for participants as they exit.
- Transitional housing projects; evaluate feasibility of converting to rapid re-housing for families model.

Q: from Maria Davis: There appears to be no question about maintaining benefits.

A: That is true. We do want to see that, but the NOFA is focused on obtaining, not maintaining.

- You should be familiar with the 7 areas of Bringing Boston Home.
- There are general assessment questions regarding client-staff ratio, annual cost per client, etc.

Closing remarks – by Elizabeth Doyle

This is the most prescriptive application from HUD that we have seen.

Asked for any more questions, but there were none.

Meeting ended at 12:36 P.M.