

San Mateo County Continuum of Care

2022 Special NOFO CoC Competition PROJECT REVIEW AND RANKING PROCESS

Approved July 28, 2022

I. Background on the 2022 Unsheltered NOFO and Ranking Requirements

On June 22, 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the *Continuum of Care Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness*, referred to here as the Special NOFO. Funding is available through an unsheltered homelessness set aside and a rural set aside. San Mateo County Continuum of Care (CoC) is only eligible to receive funding through the unsheltered homelessness set aside.

- San Mateo County CoC is eligible to apply for up to \$3,533,868 for a three-year grant term. Projects will be renewable after the initial 3-year term; it is anticipated, but not confirmed, that projects funded through the Special NOFO will roll into the Annual NOFO competition.
- Eligible project types include permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid re-housing (RRH), joint transitional housing and rapid re-housing (TH-RRH), and supportive service only (SSO). As the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead, the County of San Mateo can also apply for CoC Planning and HMIS projects.
 - \$106,016 (\$35,339 annually) is available for CoC Planning expenses.
 - \$3,427,852 (\$1,142,617 annually) is available for project applications.
- Projects funded through the Special NOFO must serve people who meet the federal definition of homelessness outlined in 24 CFR 578.3 paragraphs 1 or 4. These definitions are included as **Attachment D**.
- All projects must participate in coordinated entry and all projects must operate consistently with the CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs submitted with the CoC application.
- HUD will award points to CoCs that propose to develop housing projects (e.g., PSH or RRH) that utilize healthcare resources to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness. On behalf of the Continuum of Care, the Lead Agency (HSA) is working with healthcare agencies to identify opportunities to leverage healthcare services and resources. Accepted project applicants are expected to coordinate closely with HSA and healthcare partners to incorporate identified healthcare leverage into the project application and to utilize available healthcare resources or services when the project is operating, for project participants who are eligible for identified healthcare services. This will include ongoing close collaboration between the agency operating the project

and the healthcare partner(s) identified, related to both service provision, service coordination, and also grant and financial tracking. For example, healthcare resources specifically designed to serve people with behavioral health disorders or serve aging adults may be leveraged. As the project provider, you would be expected to assist any project participants who may be eligible for those healthcare services to connect with the healthcare provider.

II. Eligible Project Types and Project Costs

As the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead, the County of San Mateo can apply for CoC Planning and HMIS projects through the Special NOFO.

Other eligible project types include permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid re-housing (RRH), joint transitional housing and rapid re-housing (TH-RRH), and supportive service only (SSO) projects. In addition to the eligible project costs outlined below, all projects can use funds to support the costs associated with contributing data to HMIS and administrative costs.

Note: This section describes the eligible project types, however it should be noted that the scoring includes different points for the different project types. For information about the scores based for each project type, please see Attachment A: Scoring Factors for Projects, Rating Factor #9, Project Type Prioritization.

Permanent supportive housing (PSH):

- Grant funds may be used for leasing, rental assistance, operating costs, and/or supportive services.
- Funds from this Special NOFO may not be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction.
- Project applications are not required to include all eligible project components in their funding request. For two examples, a PSH project could apply for funds only to fund supportive services if operating costs and leasing/rental assistance is provided through other means; or a project could apply for funds to provide rental assistance and support operating costs (with supportive services provided through other funding or partnerships).

Rapid Re-housing (RRH):

- Grant funds may provide supportive services, short-term (up to 3 months), and/or medium-term (3 – 24 months) rental assistance.

Joint Transitional and Rapid Re-housing (TH/RRH):

- Projects must include both transitional and rapid re-housing components and be able to provide both components to all project participants.

- Grant funds may be used for leasing of a structure or units and operating costs to provide transitional housing, short- or medium-term rental assistance on behalf of program participants to pay for the rapid rehousing portion of the project, and supportive services.

Supportive Services Only:

- Supportive services only (SSO) projects provide supportive services to people experiencing homelessness. For SSO projects, the project does not provide housing.
- Grant funds may be used for leasing a facility from which supportive services will be provided and supportive services.
- Examples of SSO projects include street outreach, housing navigation, or resource navigation.
- All SSO projects applying for funding must demonstrate how they work to quickly move people into permanent housing.

For more information about eligible project types and project costs, project applicants can refer to the Special NOFO and to [eCFR :: 24 CFR 578.37 -- Program components and uses of assistance.](#)

III. Rating and Ranking Process and Criteria

The Special NOFO requires that each CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all applications, including consideration of how projects respond to unsheltered homelessness, how they promote racial equity, and how they use a Housing First approach. Ranking of projects must demonstrate the use of established objective criteria to review project applications.

This document describes the San Mateo County CoC policies and process governing the review and ranking of projects in the 2022 Special NOFO competition.

a. Solicitation of CoC Applications

On July 19, 2022 the CoC Lead Agency (HSA) released an announcement of available funding for CoC projects under this Special NOFO. An informational meeting for potential applicants is set to be convened on or about August 15, 2022. Funding announcements were distributed broadly via email to the provider community and were also posted to the HSA website. The announcements explain the process for submitting application, as well as the review criteria and process.

b. Application Process

- On or about August 3, 2022, HSA will post the project application and instructions on

the CoC website and will email application materials to organizations that attended the informational meeting.

- By the date listed in the NOFO timeline (estimated to be around September 2, 2022), all applicants must complete their Project Application(s) in e-snaps and submit their supplemental narrative via email to HSA_Homeless_Programs@smcgov.org. **A NOFO timeline will be published online** including the due date for Project Applications.

Additional details and instructions about the application process are posted on the 2022 Special NOFO website at <https://www.smcgov.org/hsa/continuum-care-special-nofo>.

c. Review, Ranking and Tiering Process

- HSA will convene an unbiased and non-conflicted Review Panel composed of representatives from neutral (non-applicant) organizations. The Panel may include staff from the County of San Mateo, cities and towns within the County, CoC Steering Committee members, funders and non-profit housing and social services organizations.
- The Review Panel will meet on or about September 28, 2022, to determine final ranking of the projects.
- Prior to the meeting, the Review Panel will receive copies of all project applications for review and scoring. Project applications will be scored using the scoring factors in **Attachment A**. The Review Panel may request amendments to a project application including a reduction or expansion of funding requested. The panel may also request that a project adjust their service model or otherwise change their proposal in order to make it more competitive or to secure points for the overall CoC application.
- HSA or the Review Panel may request additional information or clarifications from project applicants if the information is necessary to score and rank the project fairly and accurately.
- In the absence of applications, or if applications are deemed materially deficient or non-competitive, the Review Panel reserves the right to invite a project application from an existing CoC grantee.
- At the meeting, the Review Panel will determine the final order of ranking of projects in accordance with the Ranking Policy in **Attachment B**.
- All applicants will be notified outside of e-snaps on or about September 30, 2022, whether their project is being included in the application as well as their order on the Priority Listing.
- Applicants may appeal decisions of the Steering Committee in accordance with the policy outlined in **Attachment C**. Appeal request must be submitted in writing to HSA by emailing HSA_Homeless_Programs@smcgov.org by October 5, 2022.

- The final project rankings, including results of any appeals (see below), will be brought to the Continuum of Care Steering Committee for approval on or about October 10, 2022.
- After submission of the CoC Application to HUD, any applicant may submit a written request to HSA for technical feedback as it relates to the strength of the proposal. Feedback requests may be submitted through December 31, 2022.

ATTACHMENT A
SCORING FACTORS FOR PROJECTS:
2022 Special NOFO

The review panel may reject an application if threshold criteria are not met, including the following:

- Applicant is not eligible to apply for CoC funds
- Applicant is applying for an ineligible project type
- Project does not serve an eligible population
- Project is not willing to participate in coordinated entry
- Project is not willing to use HMIS (or, for domestic violence [DV] survivor providers, a comparable data system)
- Project is not willing to incorporate identified healthcare leverage into project application or utilize healthcare services or resources once operational

Rating Factor	Score Range
<p>1. HUD System Performance Objectives and Strategies to Advance System Performance</p> <p>a. The project identifies performance targets that contribute to advancing system performance measures.</p> <p>b. The project articulates how it will advance the system performance objectives set forth by HUD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce new entries into homelessness • Reduce the length of time people are homeless • Reduce returns to homelessness • Increase participant income <p>c. Type, scale, location of the supportive services fit the needs of the program participants, are readily accessible, and advance system performance objectives. This includes services funded by the CoC grant and other project funding sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For SSO projects, project describes how they will connect people to permanent housing and the coordinated entry system • For RRH projects, project meets National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) RRH standards as outlined in Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards.pdf (endhomelessness.org) • For PSH projects, there are sufficient services to ensure participants are successfully supported to access and sustain housing • There is a specific plan to ensure participants are individually assisted to obtain the benefits of the mainstream health, social, and employment programs for which they are eligible • There is a specific plan to ensure participants are assisted to secure services from the healthcare system. • There is a specific plan to ensure participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs • There is a specific plan to ensure participants are assisted to increase their incomes and live independently 	0-25
2. Program Planning	0 - 10

Rating Factor	Score Range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has demonstrated how they will conduct ongoing assessment to ensure the project is promoting racial equity and described how they will take steps to address any identified disparities in how people of different races and ethnicities access the program, experience the program once enrolled, and the outcomes of the program • There is a specific plan to ensure there are no barriers to participation faced by persons of different races and ethnicities, particularly those over-represented in the local homelessness population • Applicant has described how the project will involve people with lived experience of homelessness in providing input on program planning and evaluation, development of policies and procedures, and decision-making structures and processes • For applicable housing programs (scattered site PSH, RRH, or TH-RRH), the applicant has described how they recruit and work with landlords 	
<p>3. Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project contributes to the CoC’s efforts to reduce rates of unsheltered homelessness • Project targets participants who are coming from the street or other locations not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters, safe havens, or fleeing domestic violence • Project has a plan to engage with people in the target population to access the program 	0-5
<p>4. Appropriateness of Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type, scale, and location of the housing fit the needs of the program participants • Participants are assisted to secure housing as quickly as possible • Programs and activities are offered in a setting that enables homeless people with disabilities to fully interact with others without disabilities possible 	0-5
<p>5. Housing First Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project will have low barriers to entry and does not screen out applicants based on having no or low income, active or history of substance use, criminal record (except for State mandated requirements), history of domestic violence) or lack of willingness to participate in services • Project prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing • Project will not terminate participation for: failure to participate in services, failure to make progress on service plan, loss of income or failure to improve income; being a victim of domestic violence, or other activities not covered in the lease agreement 	0-15
<p>6. Timing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has a clear plan to begin operations when the contract is executed. Within six months of contract execution may be awarded up to 10 points and within one year of contract execution may be awarded up to 5 points 	0-10
<p>7. Applicant Capacity</p>	0-10

Rating Factor	Score Range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent relevant experience in providing housing to people experiencing homelessness • Recent data submitted demonstrates strong performance for relevant services and/or housing provided • Relevant experience in operation of housing projects or programs, administering leasing or rental assistance funds, delivering services and entering data and ensuring high-quality data in a system (HMIS or a similar data system) • Organization has track record of involving people with lived experience of homelessness • Experience administering Continuum of Care or other similar federal funding • Organizational and finance capacity to track funds and meet all HUD reporting and fiscal requirements • If application has sub recipients, applicant organizations have experience working together • Any outstanding monitoring or audit issues or issues are explained 	
<p>8. Financial Feasibility and Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs appear reasonable and adequate to support proposed program • Match requirement is met • Additional resources leveraged 	0-10
<p>9. Project Type Prioritization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSH – 20 points • RRH – 10 points • TH/RRH – 0 points • SSO – 0 points 	0-20
TOTAL	110
BONUS POINTS	
<p>In the Special NOFO, HUD will provide additional points in the overall CoC application for communities that include one or more permanent housing projects (PSH or RRH) on the Project Priority List demonstrating coordination with housing providers organizations. To align with this HUD priority, bonus points will be awarded to new PSH or RRH projects with the following feature:</p>	
<p><u>Bonus:</u> Project utilizes housing subsidies or subsidized housing units not funded through the CoC or ESG program, such as through private organizations, State or local government (including HOME funds from the American Rescue Plan), Public Housing Agencies, faith-based organizations or federal programs other than CoC or ESG.</p>	10
<p>To receive bonus points, applications must provide written documentation of commitment of resources from the housing provider.</p>	
Maximum Total Bonus Points	10
Maximum Application Total	120

ATTACHMENT B RANKING POLICIES

1. Ranking Policy

In determining the rank order of projects, the Review Panel will adhere to the following policies:

- a. As they provide critical infrastructure to the CoC, submitted CoC Planning and HMIS grants will be ranked first and second on the Project Priority List, respectively.
- b. Each member of the Review Panel will review and score all project applications, in accordance with the Scoring Factors identified in Attachment A. Scoring forms from each Review Panel member will be reviewed by HSA and Focus Strategies for completeness and to identify any potential errors in tabulating project scores.
- c. Project scores from all Review Panel members will be summed to develop an aggregate project score.
- d. Projects will be ordered in accordance with their aggregate project scores.
- e. Any ties in aggregate project scores will be broken based on two factors:
 - First, PSH projects will be ranked above other project types (with the exception of the CoC Planning and HMIS projects)
 - Any remaining ties in aggregate project scores will be broken based on which projects will have the greatest impact on reducing unsheltered homelessness, as evaluated by the Review Panel members
 - The Review Panel may request project applicants reduce their funding request to enable multiple high-scoring projects to be included in the consolidated application

2. Policy on Adjustments to Projects

The Review Panel may request amendments to a project application including a reduction or expansion of funding requested to ensure the CoC is submitting as competitive of an application as possible and is maximizing the total amount of funds for which the CoC applies.

This may include requesting project applicants reduce the total amount of funding applied for to enable the CoC to submit multiple project applications. Projects unwilling to amend their requested funding amounts may be excluded from the competition. The Review Panel will determine the funding amounts and number of projects to include in the CoC application based on which configuration of projects is anticipated to have the greatest impact on reducing rates of unsheltered homelessness.

In the absence of applications, or if applications are deemed materially deficient or non-competitive, the Review Panel reserves the right to invite an application from an existing CoC grantee.

ATTACHMENT C
LOCAL APPEALS PROCESS AND APPEALS FORM

Local Appeals Process

The opportunity to appeal an adverse decision is considered an integral part of a transparent and standardized process. The San Mateo County CoC provides applicants seeking HUD CoC funding an appeal opportunity, through a review conducted by an independent committee, with the intention of ensuring the fairness of Rating and Ranking determinations.

Entities Eligible to Appeal

Appeals are available to any projects in San Mateo County that submitted an application to the local CoC Special NOFO competition.

Grounds for Appeal

Appeals to the Project Priority listing are limited to misapplication of local published rating and ranking policies or HUD policies. Appeals based on disagreements with the correct application of the process will not be considered. Specific grounds for appeal are limited to:

1. Verifiable conflicts of interests seen during the rating and ranking process
2. Misapplication of published rating and ranking rules and policies by HSA staff, CoC Review Panel, or CoC Steering Committee
3. Violation of rating and ranking policies put forth by HUD
4. Technical error in calculation of score

Errors made by the project applicant will not qualify or be considered in the appeals process. Appeals will only be based on information submitted by the original application due date. New or additional information not included in the original application will not be considered as part of the appeals process. A project may not appeal based on omitted information that was not included as part of their submitted application. Appeals to contest the ranked order of projects on the Project Priority List, when all rating and ranking rules and policies were followed, will not be considered.

Process and Deadline to Appeal

Projects must submit their appeal in writing no later than October 5, 2022. The appeals process entails:

1. Project to complete and sign an appeal form, attached at the end of this document, and return the signed form to [HSA Homeless Programs@smcgov.org](mailto:HSA_Homeless_Programs@smcgov.org). Appellants may attach supplemental documents to the form.
2. The form shall be reviewed by HSA and Focus Strategies staff to ensure valid grounds for appeals.

3. The Appeals will be heard by a panel of three non-conflicted members of the CoC Steering Committee, a CoC subcommittee, staff from an organization involved with the community's homelessness response system, or a community member. Appeals Panel members must be individuals who did not serve on the Review Panel.
4. Appellants will not be invited to the panel meeting, all information pertaining to an appeal should be communicated via the appeal form in step 1.
5. The Appeal Panel will deliberate, and a decision will be made based on a simple majority.
6. All decisions made the Appeals Panel will be final.
7. If the appeal is successful, the finding of the Appeal Panel will go back to the Review Panel to make needed changes or adjustments to the Project Priority List.
8. The appellant will be notified by HSA staff of the result of their appeal (either successful or unsuccessful) and if any changes to the Project Priority List were made.
 - a. If a successful appeal impacts other projects on the Project Priority List, all re-ordered projects under the project in question will be notified of their impacted ranking as well.

All agencies/applicants who wish to appeal further to HUD must utilize the process listed within section X of the 2022 CoC Special NOFO and described at 24 CFR 578.35.

2022 San Mateo County CoC Special NOFO Local Process: Appeals Form

Instructions:

Please complete all sections of the form. You may attach supplemental materials as relevant to support your appeal. You may use as much space as needed for the narrative portions of the form.

Name of Agency: _____

Name of Project: _____

Program/Project Address: _____

Program/Project Contact Email: _____

1. Grounds for Appeal

- Verifiable conflicts of interests seen during the rating and ranking process
- Misapplication of published rating and ranking rules and policies by HSA staff, CoC Review Panel, or CoC Steering Committee
- Violation of rating and ranking policies put forth by HUD
- Technical error in calculation of score
- Other (specify):

Explanation:

2. Grounds for Appeal

- Verifiable conflicts of interests seen during the rating and ranking process
- Misapplication of published rating and ranking rules and policies by HSA staff, CoC Review Panel, or CoC Steering Committee
- Violation of rating and ranking policies put forth by HUD
- Technical error in calculation of score
- Other (specify):

Explanation:

Name of Person Authorized to Appeal on Behalf of Project: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT D
DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Projects funded through the Special NOFO must serve households who are homeless, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of 24 CFR 578, below. The following definitions of homelessness are provided in 24 CFR 578¹:

Homeless means:

(1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

(i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

(ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or

(iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;

(2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

(i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;

(ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and

(iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;

(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

¹ Accessible at [eCFR :: 24 CFR Part 578 -- Continuum of Care Program](#)

(i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act ([42 U.S.C. 5732a](#)), section 637 of the Head Start Act ([42 U.S.C. 9832](#)), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 ([42 U.S.C. 14043e-2](#)), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act ([42 U.S.C. 254b\(h\)](#)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 ([7 U.S.C. 2012](#)), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 ([42 U.S.C. 1786\(b\)](#)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. 11434a](#));

(ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;

(iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and

(iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or

(4) Any individual or family who:

(i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;

(ii) Has no other residence; and

(iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.