



NY-508 Buffalo, Niagara Falls/ Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming Counties CoC FY2022 Request for Proposal for Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program Funding

Introduction

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Continuum of Care fund is a nationwide competition for homeless funding. This competition is usually a two-step process. First, a local application has to be submitted in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) released by the Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY), the CoC lead agency of NY-508 Buffalo, Niagara Falls/ Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties. Second, projects that make the selection list will advance to the federal application process through HUD's electronic program application and grants management system called *e-snaps*. Applicants are responsible for the preparation of both the local application and, if approved, the eventual electronic submission of their project application in *e-snaps*.

This document is a RFP in preparation of the local application process. It only applies to new project applications. Projects that are funded by the CoC in FY2021 and would like to expand the existing CoC projects will be considered as a new expansion project in this RFP. **HAWNY must receive applications on or before the deadline September 2, 2022 unless otherwise notified. Notification will be posted on the HAWNY website at wny.homeless.org. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered for funding.**

All projects past the thresholds will be scored based on Appendix III New Project Scoring Criteria in this document by a non-bias Project Review Committee. All scored projects will be ranked. Based on funding availability, HAWNY will announce projects who are highly ranked to advance into the National competition.

Funding Types

There are four funding opportunities included in this RFP: **(1)** Reallocation dollar **(2)** New or expansion CoC Bonus projects, **(3)** New or expansion DV Bonus Projects and **(4)** Rural Bonus. The amount of funding opportunities listed below are the maximum amount a CoC/region can apply through the federal competition. **HUD will conditionally select new project applications created through these funds. It is a highly competitive grant. It is unlikely that HUD fund all projects that are submitted from each CoC. HUD may reduce the award amount based on funding availability.**

1. Reallocation Dollars

A maximum of \$68,639 is made available to this competition by reallocating funding from existing projects. Reallocation dollars shall not be merged with other funding types. Reallocation dollars can be used in the following proposals: **1.** Increase project capacity/increase salary on an existing project. Projects must not have unspent funds exceeding the amount they are applying for. For an expansion grant, it must increase an existing project's current capacity. Either increase the number of units, persons served, or services provided to

participants. **2.** Support the continued implementation and expansion of the Coordinated Entry system and its current capacity, focusing on the four core elements of: Access, Assessment, Prioritization, and Referral. Prioritizing geographic areas that have no dedicated Coordinated Entry staff.

2. CoC Bonus

Each application/project shall not to exceed \$500,000. Eligible project types include: Rapid rehousing (RRH), Joint Transitional-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Supportive Service Only Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE). The proposed project could be a new project or an expansion project. It is unlikely we will receive the full bonus amount. The amount we will possibly receive depends on CoC's performance as well as the proposed project ranking. The Project Review Committee reserves the right to reduce a funding request from the project applicant in order to better fit in our competition. Clients served must meet category 1 of the homeless definition.

3. DV Bonus

Each application/project shall not to exceed \$500,000. This proposal must serve survivors of or those attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. Eligible project types include: Rapid rehousing (RRH), Joint Transitional-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH), and Supportive Service Only Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE). Any proposal applying for this funding **MUST** utilize the coordinated entry system and use a housing first approach. Projects must use a comparable database to HMIS to record all required data elements.

4. Rural Bonus

The rural bonus can **only be used** to serve clients within **Genesee and Wyoming Counties**. Unlike the other bonus, this bonus's grant term is three years. Maximum amount for the whole CoC for **three year** is \$752,600. Eligible project types Rapid rehousing (RRH), Joint Transitional-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and Supportive Service Only projects. If awarded, these project types could be renewed under regular CoC funding process. With this bonus, HUD allows additional activities that are not allowed under regular CoC, please refer to Appendix II.

Eligible Project Components

Below are definitions of all eligible project types in this RFP:

1. Joint Transitional Housing (TH) and Permanent Housing-Rapid Rehousing(PH-RRH) The proposed project will provide enough rapid rehousing assistance to ensure that at any given time a program participant may move from TH to RRH. This may be demonstrated by identifying a budget that has twice as many resources for the rapid rehousing portion of the project than the TH portion, by having twice as many PH RRH units at a point in time as TH units, or by demonstrating that the budget and units are appropriate for the population being served by the project.

Projects will be required to adopt a Housing First Approach and commit to housing people as soon as possible without pre-conditions.

2. Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) is a program that intends to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing by providing housing search, ongoing case management, and short- to medium term rental assistance. This program can serve individuals and families, including youth coming directly from the streets, emergency shelters, or fleeing domestic violence situations and other persons meeting the criteria of category (4) of the definition of homelessness. Individuals who are about to become homeless and living with family or friends will not be eligible.

Project preference will be given to projects that will strictly take clients from coordinated entry without any preference subpopulation. Recommended caseload per caseworker is 25-30 in this project type or 10-15 for the youth population.

3. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) (CoC Bonus only. Not eligible for DV Bonus) CoC will only accept PSH applications dedicated to chronically homeless individuals and those who fit the [DedicatedPlus definition](#). However, if there are no chronically homeless persons found at any point in time when a bed is available, the PSH program will take clients based on Order of Priority stated in the Coordinated Entry Policy and Procedure. Project preference will be given to Project-based (site based) projects or leasing projects.

4. Supportive Service Only Coordinated Entry Project (SSO-CE)

To operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system to assess and prioritize based on the client's need and make referral to other housing programs.

Application Requirements/Thresholds

- Applicants must be a nonprofit organization, local/state government, Indian Tribe and Tribally Designated Housing Entity, or public housing agency. For profit entities are ineligible to apply or to be subrecipients of the grant funds.
- Grant term for CoC and DV bonus will be 1 year. Rural Bonus will be 3 year.
- Projects must agree to use Housing First Approach
- Projects must agree to use Coordinated Entry
- Projects must agree to use HMIS or comparable database
- Project must demonstrate to have 25% match in cash or in-kind
- Admin request cannot exceed 10% of the total request

Submission Requirements

Completed new project applications should be sent as a Word document. No scanned file or hard copy will be accepted.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION BY E-MAIL IS REQUIRED. Please submit the completed application form, 501c3 status, audit report, commitment letter by email to: Ashley Matrassi, CoC Program Manager at matrassi@wnyhomeless.org. If you have any questions regarding this RFP, please email both Kexin Ma (kexinma@wnyhomeless.org), Executive Director and Ashley Matrassi.

Appendix I: Definitions

HOMELESS DEFINITION

Category 1 –Literally Homeless: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- (ii) Is living in a 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 and local government programs); or

- (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has 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

Category 2 – Imminent Risk of homelessness 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

Category 3 – Homeless under other federal status: 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:

- (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
- (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
- (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
- (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers

Category 4 – Fleeing Domestic Violence: Any individual or family who:

- (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
- (ii) Has no other residence; and
- (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS:

An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition, or an adult member of a homeless family who has a disabling condition, who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR has had at least four (4) occasions of homelessness in the past 3 years, where all combined occasions has to total a length of time of at least 12 months. Each period separating the occasions must include at least 7 nights of living in a situation other than a place not meant for human habitation in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven. The term “homeless,” in this case, means a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets), in an emergency homeless shelter, or in a Safe Haven as defined by HUD.

DISABLING CONDITION:

A disabling condition is defined as: (1) a disability as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act; (2) a physical, mental, or emotional impairment which is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, substantially impedes an individual’s ability to live independently, and of such a nature that the disability could be improved by more suitable conditions; (3) a developmental disability as defined in Section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act; (4) the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or any conditions arising from the etiological agent for acquired immune deficiency syndrome; or (5) a diagnosable substance abuse disorder. A disabling condition limits an individual’s ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.

HOUSING FIRST AND LOW BARRIER APPROACH:

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.

The Housing First Approach offers individuals and families experiencing homelessness immediate access to permanent supportive housing without unnecessary prerequisites. For example: a. Admission/tenant screening and selection practices do not require abstinence from substances, completion of or compliance with treatment, or participation in services. b. Applicants are not rejected on the basis of poor or lack of credit or income, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or other factors that might indicate a lack of “housing readiness.” c. Blanket exclusionary criteria based on more serious criminal convictions are not applied, though programs may consider such convictions on a case by case basis as necessary to ensure the safety of other residents and staff. d. Generally, only those admission criteria that are required by funders are applied, though programs may also consider additional criteria on a case by case basis as necessary to ensure the safety of tenants and staff. Application of such additional criteria should be rare, and may include, for example, denial of an applicant who is a high risk registered sex offender by a project serving children, or denial of an applicant who has a history of domestic violence involving a current participant.

COORDINATED ENTRY:

The primary goals for coordinated entry processes are that assistance be allocated as effectively as possible and that it be easily accessible no matter where or how people present. Most communities lack the resources needed to meet all of the needs of people experiencing homelessness. This combined with the lack of well-developed coordinated entry processes can result in severe hardships for people experiencing homelessness. They often face long waiting times to receive assistance or are screened out of needed assistance. Coordinated entry processes help communities prioritize assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Coordinated entry processes also provide information about service needs and gaps to help communities plan their assistance and identify needed resources. More information can be found on our website: <https://wnyhomeless.org/continuum-of-care/coordinated-entry/>

Comparable database

Victim Services Providers (VSP) that are recipients or subrecipients under HUD’s Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Programs are required to collect client-level data consistent with [Homeless Management Information Systems \(HMIS\)](#) data collection requirements. The [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#) and the [Family Violence Prevention and Services Act \(FVPSA\)](#) contain strong, legally codified confidentiality provisions that limit Victim Service Providers from sharing, disclosing, or revealing victims’ personally identifying information (PII), including entering information into shared databases like HMIS. To protect clients, VSPs must enter required client-level data into a comparable database that is comparable to and complies with all HMIS requirements.

Additional information, please refer to here:

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Comparable-Database-Manual.pdf>

Victim Service Providers

HUD defines a victim service provider to mean a private nonprofit organization whose **primary** mission is to provide direct services to victims of domestic violence.

Appendix II Eligible Cost

Eligible cost includes:

Leasing, Rental assistance, Supportive Services, Operating Costs, Admin Cost. Detail of each eligible cost, please refer to CoC Interim rules:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2017-title24-vol3/xml/CFR-2017-title24-vol3-part578.xml>

Additional eligible activities under Rural Bonus:

(i) Rent or utility assistance after 2 months of nonpayment of rent or utilities to prevent eviction or loss of utility service. Funds may be used to pay rent or utility arrear payments up to 6 months on behalf of program participants residing in permanent housing.

(ii) Short-term emergency lodging in motels or shelters, either directly or through vouchers. Eligible costs include lodging costs in motels or hotels for program participants; pro-rata share of sheltering program participants in existing shelters so long as the costs are actual costs of creating new and temporary beds in emergency shelters and not to permanently increase the capacity of the shelter.

No funds may be used to shelter program participants in existing shelter beds.

(iii) Repairs, (such as insulation, window repair, door repair, roof repair, and repairs) that are necessary to make housing habitable to be used for transitional or permanent housing by people experiencing homelessness. The total cost of repairs may not exceed \$10,000 per structure.

(iv) Capacity building activities. Capacity building activities are those activities that maintain or improve the skills of recipients. Eligible capacity building activities include employee education, job training, staff retention activities such as financial incentives to staff, paying for continuing education opportunities, cross training within an organization, staff training and professional licensing or certification, and other professional development activities. An applicant may apply for up to 20% of funds requested as part of the project, including project administrative costs, for capacity building activities.

(v) Emergency food and clothing assistance. The cost of providing meals or groceries and clothing to program participants are eligible costs.

Appendix III New Project Scoring Criteria

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| Threshold Criteria (all thresholds must be met.) |
| Commitment to only take referrals from CoC Coordinated Entry |
| Using a Housing First and low barrier approach |
| Matching funds equal or over 25% of the total request |
| No more than 10% of the program expense budget can be for the administrative cost |

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| For RRH, project must meet category 1 or 4 in the homeless definition ¹ | |
| Must use HMIS. For Victim Service Providers, must use a comparable database. | |
| New project scoring | |
| Clearly demonstrate the unmet need for the proposed population using local data | 5 |
| Demonstrate program design meets the needs of the targeted population | 5 |
| Project proposed outcomes align with CoC system and project outcome | 5 |
| Provide sufficient supports to ensure clients obtain and remain in housing | 10 |
| Assist participants to obtain mainstream benefits(Health, social, employment, childcare) | 10 |
| Experience with proposed homeless population and previous performance | 15 |
| Experience with grant management | 10 |
| Cost are reasonable and feasible | 5 |
| No findings in audited financial statement | 5 |
| Racial Equity | 10 |
| Leveraging Housing Resources | 10 |
| Leveraging Healthcare Resources | 10 |
| bonus:Community Need/Priority | 10 |
| Total Points | 100+10 bonus |

¹https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf