

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Ventura County Continuum of Care (CoC)
Issued September 10, 2021

INTRODUCTION

As the Collaborative Applicant for the Ventura County Continuum of Care, the County of Ventura's County Executive Office is accepting proposals for new Domestic Violence (DV) projects with Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance bonus funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Ventura County Continuum of Care is soliciting proposals that address housing and service priorities established through the Ventura County Continuum of Care, with priority for Domestic Violence projects that follow a housing first approach.

Funding available is up to \$645,440 through the Domestic Violence bonus funding.

The projects being solicited will be innovative and highly effective housing projects that will create additional housing inventory through rental assistance or leasing, as well as supportive services to better coordinate Domestic Violence referrals through coordinated entry. Projects are encouraged to show collaboration among providers and leverage mainstream resources to support highly vulnerable populations. Priority will be for projects that have a plan for securing permanent housing for the program participants.

Funding will come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2021 McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care (CoC) for the Homeless Program, as amended under the HEARTH Act and the CoC Program Interim Rule. The availability and priorities for any funding for new projects is articulated in HUD's CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/SPM/documents/FY21_Continuum_of_Care_Competition.pdf

Information on serving persons who are experiencing homelessness as a result of fleeing domestic violence is available on HUD's website: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/domestic-violence/>

More information on the HEARTH Act, the Interim Rule and the NOFO is available on the HUD CoC page: <https://www.hudexchange.info/coc>

Organizations that do not currently receive Ventura County CoC program funding are encouraged to submit proposals. Proposals are also welcome from current recipients of CoC funding, provided the proposed project creates new housing opportunities and/or supportive services for survivors of domestic violence who are experiencing homelessness.

DEADLINE

Proposals must be submitted via e-snaps and emailed to the Collaborative Applicant Office **by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 13, 2021**. Submission procedures are described below.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP: A workshop for all applicants will be held via zoom on Thursday September 16th from 1pm-3pm. More information and zoom link will be posted on the Ventura County CoC's website www.venturacoc.org

BACKGROUND

HUD publishes a CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for each funding year. This RFP is being released in support of the 2021 CoC NOFO released on August 18, 2021. A single, consolidated submission of all selected projects in Ventura County will be submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant. The Ventura County CoC goal is to submit the application no later than November 16, 2021. Funding will be derived from Federal Fiscal Year 2021 allocations of HUD funds and is subject to funding approval by HUD.

NEW PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The Ventura County Continuum of Care seeks one or more qualified applicants to administer one or more of the following project types, consistent with the guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) including, but not limited to, using a Housing First approach:

- 1) New DV* Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) project
- 2) New DV* Joint Transitional Housing and Rapid-Re-Housing (TH-RRH) project
- 3) New DV* Supportive Services Only for Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE) project (Limited to one application per CoC)

* DV projects must be dedicated to survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that meet the definition of homeless, as defined in 24 CFR 578.3. Persons who are fleeing or attempting to flee human trafficking may also qualify under this homeless definition.

Competitive Proposed Projects Will:

- Clearly meet the CoC Program funding opportunities of HUD and the Ventura County CoC;
- Have a clear plan for acquiring permanent housing for the project (RRH & TH-RRH);
- Include procedures and practices that better coordinate referrals between coordinated entry and the victim service providers (SSO-CE);
- Describe a housing first and trauma-informed service delivery approach, including low-barrier access to the housing and services that will work effectively with the Ventura County Coordinated Entry System, Pathways to Home (SSO-CE);
- Be based upon best practices and the most effective, evidence-based, culturally competent, and individualized client models possible (all project types);
- Include plans to successfully meet HUD and local performance measures (RRH & TH-RRH);
- Be administered by organizations that have demonstrated experience providing similar services and serving the proposed population (all project types).

Selection Process: Projects responding to this RFP will be reviewed and ranked by the Ventura County CoC Data, Performance & Evaluation Committee and recommendations will be forwarded to the Ventura County CoC Board for approval on October 28 2021. Projects will be reviewed in reference to

organizational capacity, project approach, past performance, design and cost effectiveness. The Ventura County CoC can only submit one project application for each project type to HUD and therefore, the review process will include the selection of up to one DV RRH, one DV TH-RRH and one SSO-CE project, depending on funding availability.

Prior to the full HUD application process, proposals will be reviewed for basic eligibility and other criteria by the Ventura County CoC Data, Performance and Evaluation Committee. The committee is comprised of formerly homeless persons, community professionals, service providers and supported by staff from the Ventura County CoC. The Data, Performance and Evaluation Committee will review applications and make recommendations to the CoC Board for final decisions.

Eligible Applicants: Applications will only be accepted from eligible nonprofit agencies, private nonprofit agencies, units of government and public housing agencies.

Match Funding Requirements: Match funds are required, as described by HUD: “Match and Leverage are two distinct categories of program funds that are acquired from other sources not associated with this grant request. Match funds must be used for program eligible costs only and must be equal or greater than 25 percent of the total grant request for all eligible costs with the exception of leasing costs.”

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The project must be dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence who are defined as homeless by HUD. The definition for persons experiencing domestic violence can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/domestic-violence/>
2. Funds cannot be used to close a funding gap or replace lost funding in an existing housing project or service program. Project applicants must demonstrate that they are not replacing other funding sources.
3. Projects must be able to meet timeliness standards. The applicant is expected to initiate approved projects promptly in accordance with the requirements that are specified in the 2021 NOFO. Grant terms and associated grant operations may not extend beyond the availability of funds. Applicants must plan accordingly and only submit applications that can achieve project goals and outcomes within the specified grant term.
4. Applicants must meet HUD recipient and/or sub-recipient eligibility requirements.
5. Participation in the [Homeless Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#) is required of all HUD grant recipients; however, victim service providers are required to use a comparable database to avoid disclosure of personally identifying data, per the requirements of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Victim service providers must collect all of the data elements

6. required by HUD and provide only aggregate data about participants to the Ventura County CoC.
7. Participation in the Coordinated Entry System, [Pathways to Home](#) in Ventura County is required including filling units with referrals from Pathways to Home and prioritizing resources for the most vulnerable persons and households. More information on victim service providers participating in coordinated entry can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-and-Victim-Service-Providers-FAQs.pdf>
8. Projects must provide 25% match of eligible funds or in-kind services.
9. Rapid Re-Housing and Transitional Housing projects must provide on-site supportive services or have an agreement in place for a partner agency to do so.

PROJECT TYPES

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

Provide permanent housing for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking who meet the definition of homeless. Program participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs. Eligible activities include: Leasing, Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Operations and HMIS.

Joint Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing (TH-RRH)

Combines two existing program components in a single project to serve homeless individuals and families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. The project must demonstrate that program participants will move from transitional housing to permanent housing by one of the following: 1) a budget with twice as many resources for the RRH portion than the TH, 2) twice as many RRH units at a point in time as TH units, or 3) the budget and units are appropriate for the population being served by the project. Program participants may only receive up to 24-months of total assistance. The project plan should include supportive services and assistance to obtain mainstream benefits. Eligible activities include: Leasing, Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Operations, HMIS and Project Administrative Costs. Those interested in applying for this type of project should review the following: <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-in-focus-the-new-joint-transitional-housing-and-rapid-re-housing-component/>

Supportive Services Only for Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE)

The VC CoC may only submit one SSO-CE project as part of the FY21 CoC NOFO. Applicants may apply to do the following: Implement policies, procedures and practices that equip the Ventura County CoC's coordinated entry to better meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence and coordinate referrals between coordinated entry and the victim service providers. The system must be easily available/reachable for all persons within the CoC's geographic area and be accessible for persons with disabilities. There must be a strategy for advertising to reach homeless persons with the highest barriers. Eligible activities include: Supportive Services, HMIS and Project Administrative Costs.

All components require a 25% match except for leasing. Leasing also requires that rent not exceed Fair Market Rent. <http://www.venturacoc.org/for-providers/coc-documents>

Information on eligible activities and expenses can be found in the Interim Rule (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2033/hearth-coc-program-interim-rule/>)

and at this link: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/program-components-and-eligible-costs/>

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To be considered as meeting project quality threshold, new project applications must meet the following criteria:

1. Whether the type, scale, and location of the housing fit the needs of the program participants;
2. Whether the type and scale of the supportive services fit the needs of the program participants—this includes all supportive services, regardless of funding source;
3. Whether the specific plan for ensuring program participants will be individually assisted to obtain the benefits of the mainstream health, social, and employment programs for which they are eligible to apply meets the needs of the program participants;
4. Whether program participants are assisted to obtain and remain in permanent housing in a manner that fits their needs;
5. Whether all of the proposed program participants are fleeing domestic violence and come from the street or other locations not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters or safe havens.

System Performance Threshold Data Requirements:

1. Housing Stability: 85% of CoC program participants exit to a permanent housing destination;
2. Jobs and Income Growth: At least 55% of CoC program adult participants gain or increase their income from employment and non-employment sources;
3. Mainstream Benefits: 56% of CoC program participants obtain or retain non-cash mainstream benefits.

EVALUATION and PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

The CoC Data, Performance and Evaluation committee will review submissions and make final determinations. Committee members will be unbiased and cannot have a personal or financial interest in final recommendations. The VC CoC Ranking and Selection Policy and scoring tool is posted at <http://www.venturacoc.org/the-alliance/funding>

The successful project(s) will be recommended for selection based on the following criteria:

1. Meets minimum requirements of HUD
2. Experience and Capacity of the Applicant
3. Project/Program Features
4. Vulnerabilities of target population
5. Past or current system performance and plans to achieve satisfactory performance
6. Applicant Readiness to Submit Full Application
7. Ventura County Continuum of Care Priorities

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS in e-SNAPS

1. SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance;
2. SF-424 Supplement, Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Application required for nonprofit applicants only where completion and submission of this survey is voluntary;
3. Documentation of Applicant and Subrecipient Eligibility. All project applicants must attach documentation of eligibility.
4. Form HUD-2880, Applicant/Recipient Disclosure/Update Report;
5. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable);
6. Form HUD-50070, Certification for Drug-Free Workplace;
7. Applicant Code of Conduct that complies with 2 CFR part 200.
8. Supplemental Questionnaire for Domestic Violence Bonus applicants (page 7 of this RFP)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The regulations for the Continuum of Care program may be found at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/coc/coc-program-law-regulations-and-notices/>

A Workshop for new and renewal applicants will be held on September 16th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm on Zoom. The meeting link will be posted on the VC CoC website calendar at <https://www.venturacoc.org/>.

All parties intending to apply for funding are strongly encouraged to review the program regulations, including those organizations that are currently or were previously funded. Proposals which do not conform to the regulations will not be considered for funding. Please contact Tara Carruth at (805) 654-3838 or tara.carruth@ventura.org with questions about HUD programs.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Please use e-snaps to prepare and submit a project proposal being certain to answer all questions and referencing the 2021 Ventura County CoC Rank and Review Policy including Attachment C for scoring of new projects.

E-snaps can be accessed at: <https://esnaps.hud.gov>

In addition, please email one PDF copy of the complete e-snaps application with a **cover letter signed by the organization's authorized representative** to tara.carruth@ventura.org.

Additional supportive documentation may be requested by staff of new applicants.

AWARD OF FUNDS

The project(s) selected by the Continuum of Care Board will be notified by November 1, 2021. Please be aware that applications need to be finalized in eSNAPS and submitted to the CoC Collaborative Applicant by 5pm October 13, 2021. If the funding is awarded by HUD, grant funds are estimated to be made available by HUD by **the first half of calendar year 2022**. The timing of awards and grant-making by

HUD is outside of the control of the County of Ventura and the VC CoC. Therefore, agencies seeking and receiving new funding must be aware of all operating year start and end dates and must make arrangements to cover any period of which a HUD funding award is pending, delayed, or not awarded.

APPLICANT WORKSHOP

The CoC will hold an Applicant Workshop via Zoom for New and Renewal Applicants on September 16th from 1-3pm to walk applicants through e-snaps and provide technical support. Announcements of meetings and additional information regarding this NOFO will be posted on www.venturacoc.org

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please attached a PDF document with answers to the following questions (1-7) in esnaps for application to be considered complete and considered for funding under this opportunity.

1. Describe how the project applicant: Limit 2,000 Characters

- a. ensured DV survivors experiencing homelessness were assisted to quickly move into safe affordable housing;
- b. prioritized survivors—you must address the process the project applicant used, e.g., Coordinated Entry, prioritization list, CoC's emergency transfer plan, etc.;
- c. connected survivors to supportive services; and
- d. moved clients from assisted housing to housing they could sustain—address housing stability after the housing subsidy ends.

2. Ensuring DV Survivor Safety—Project Applicant Experience. NOFO Section II.B.11. Limit 2,000 Characters

Describe examples of how the project applicant ensured the safety of DV survivors experiencing homelessness by:

- a. training staff on safety planning;
- b. adjusting intake space to better ensure a private conversation;
- c. conducting separate interviews/intake with each member of a couple;

- d. working with survivors to have them identify what is safe for them as it relates to scattered site units and/or rental assistance;
- e. maintaining bars on windows, fixing lights in the hallways, etc. for congregate living spaces operated by the applicant; and
- f. keeping the location confidential for dedicated units and/or congregate living spaces set aside solely for use by survivors.

3. Evaluating Ability to Ensure DV Survivor Safety—Project Applicant Experience. NOFO Section II.B.11.
 Limit 2,000 Characters

- a. Describe how the project evaluated its ability to ensure the safety of DV survivors the project served.

4. Trauma-Informed, Victim-Centered Approaches—Project Applicant Experience. NOFO Section II.B.11.
 Limit 5,000 Characters

Guidance—Though you can provide examples of experience not listed, you must address elements 1 through 7.

Describe examples of the project applicant’s **experience** in using trauma-informed, victim-centered approaches to meet needs of DV survivors in each of the following:

- a. prioritizing program participant choice and rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing consistent with participants’ preferences;
- b. establishing and maintaining an environment of agency and mutual respect, e.g., the project does not use punitive interventions, ensures program participant staff interactions are based on equality and minimize power differentials;
- c. providing program participants access to information on trauma, e.g., training staff on providing program participants with information on trauma;
- d. emphasizing program participants’ strengths, e.g., strength-based coaching, questionnaires and assessment tools include strength-based measures, case plans include assessments of program participants strengths and works towards goals and aspirations;
- e. centering on cultural responsiveness and inclusivity, e.g., training on equal access, cultural competence, nondiscrimination;
- f. providing opportunities for connection for program participants, e.g., groups, mentorships, peer-to-peer, spiritual needs; and
- g. offering support for parenting, e.g., parenting classes, childcare.

5. Meeting Service Needs of DV Survivors–Project Applicant Experience. NOFO Section II.B.11. Please list the following service provided by your agency.

Guidance–Examples–During funding year 2019, ABC Project staff provided the following supportive services to DV survivors:

- Child custody–ABC project assisted DV survivors to pursue child custody by making legal services available through its partner EFG Legal Services, provided transportation, and provided a support group for others experiencing similar challenges. ABC ensures that the survivors’ safety needs were addressed by maintaining confidentiality, using harm reduction.
- Bad Credit History–ABC project used case management to quickly assess whether survivors needed credit repair services, provided through our partner, Credit Repair, Inc., which specializes in assisting survivors to restore their credit, which is often necessary to obtain affordable housing for survivors whose credit has been damaged.
- Housing Search and Counseling–ABC project employed a housing navigator to identify local landlords and apartments. Using the housing navigator resulted in a three-week decrease in the amount of time it previously took survivors to locate units.
- Education Services–ABC partnered with a local community college to enroll 5 survivors in GED classes, a 100 percent increase from last year where we did not have the funding to provide this service. Currently there are 10 survivors on the waiting list for future GED classes.

6. Describe supportive services provided to survivors by your program/agency: Limit 5,000 Characters

- a. supportive services the project applicant provided to domestic violence survivors experiencing homelessness while quickly moving them into permanent housing and addressing their safety needs; and
- b. provide examples of how the project applicant provided the supportive services to domestic violence survivors.

7.Trauma-Informed, Victim-Centered Approaches–New Project Implementation. NOFO Section II.B.11. **Limit 5,000 Characters**

Guidance–

- A. This question requires you to provide examples of how the applicant will implement the new project, not the applicant’s experience operating an existing project.
- B. Though you can provide other examples of how the applicant will implement the new project, you must address elements 1 through 7.

Describe in the field below examples of how the new project will:

1. prioritize program participant choice and rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing consistent with participants' preferences;
2. establish and maintain an environment of agency and mutual respect, e.g., the project does not use punitive interventions, ensures program participant staff interactions are based on equality and minimize power differentials;
3. provide program participants access to information on trauma, e.g., training staff on providing program participants with information on trauma;
4. place emphasis on program participants' strengths, e.g., strength-based coaching, questionnaires and assessment tools include strength-based measures, case plans include assessments of program participants strengths and works towards goals and aspirations;
5. center on cultural responsiveness and inclusivity, e.g., training on equal access, cultural competence, nondiscrimination;
6. provide opportunities for connection for program participants, e.g., groups, mentorships, peer-to-peer, spiritual needs; and
7. offer support for parenting, e.g., parenting classes, childcare.