

**Ventura County Continuum of Care (VC CoC)
2023 Ranking and Selection Criteria
HUD Continuum of Care Program Competition**

The Ventura County Continuum of Care (VC CoC) will use the following process to rank all projects/applications in the 2023 HUD Continuum of Care Program Competition.

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Section I: HUD CoC General Requirements and Policies

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) annually for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The NOFO establishes the available level of funds, identifies HUD national priorities, and describes the criteria and data needed in the competitive application.

HUD requires CoCs to conduct a local review process and to designate a Collaborative Applicant to submit requests for funds in the CoC Competition. HUD provisionally awards funds to CoCs based on the scoring of a CoC system-level application up to a maximum allocation established by an area pro-rata need. The CoC conducts a local process to determine needs within the system and to evaluate and select and prioritize project level applications to include in the annual application for funds.

Section II: 2023 HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Detail

On July 3, 2023, HUD published the NOFO for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. Applications are due to HUD by September 28, 2023. Approximately \$3.13 billion is available for FY 2023. The VC CoC is eligible for \$3.3 million in annual renewal funding (ARD) plus and estimated \$165,299 in planning grant funds with the potential to apply for new bonus project funding.

Although the available amount of funding is expected to be sufficient to fund all eligible renewal projects in the FY 2023 funding process, HUD continues to require Collaborative Applicants to rank all projects in two tiers. **Tier 1 comprises 93% of the renewal funding available. Tier 2 is 7% of the CoC's ARD plus any amount available for bonus projects.** Additionally, there is an ongoing emphasis on project performance. 24 CFR Part 578.7 (6) requires CoCs to 'monitor recipient and subrecipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers'. HUD encourages CoCs to reallocate under-performing projects to higher performing projects or to respond to community needs. The VC CoC responds to these factors by establishing policies, procedures, and criteria for reviewing and ranking each application for funding; for reallocation, and for selection of projects for inclusion in the CoC national competition. HUD also requires the CoC to meet requirements and guidelines specific to the annual NOFO.

- A. Threshold/ Eligibility Review:** The CoC is required to review all applications to verify eligibility for federal CoC funding. Applicants must meet HUD thresholds regarding eligibility to do business with the federal government; legal status; commitment to participation in HMIS and the Coordinated Entry System (CES); and fiscal capacity. Projects from applicants not meeting these requirements are ineligible to apply for HUD CoC funding.
- B. Ranking Requirements:** The CoC must assign a unique rank to each project that it intends to submit to HUD for funding except for the CoC planning grant. Ranking of renewal projects must incorporate scoring on project performance, system performance and effectiveness. Each CoC must comprehensively review both new and renewal projects within its geographic area, using CoC-approved scoring criteria and selection priorities, to determine the extent to which each project is still necessary and addresses the listed policy priorities. Funds for projects that are determined to be underperforming, obsolete, or ineffective should be reallocated to new projects that are based on proven or promising models.

C. Reallocation & Bonus: CoCs may use funds from part or whole existing grants to create new projects through reallocation. A CoC is eligible to apply for up to 6% of its Final Pro Rata Need (FPRN) and may apply for more than one bonus project provided it has demonstrated the ability to reallocate lower performing projects to create new higher performing projects. CoCs may submit new or expansion project applications under the bonus and reallocation process for the following project types:

1. **Permanent supportive housing (PSH) projects** where all beds are dedicated for chronically homeless individuals or families as defined in 24 CFR 578.3.
2. **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) projects** for homeless individuals or families that come directly from the streets or emergency shelters, including unaccompanied youth.
3. **Joint Transitional Housing (TH) and Permanent Housing (PH)-Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) TH-RRH:** projects that will serve homeless individuals or families who meet the HUD definition of homelessness or are residing in a TH program being eliminated.
4. **New Supportive Services Only (SSO-CE)** for coordinated entry system.
5. **New dedicated HMIS projects** for costs at 24 CFR 578.37(a)(2) to be carried out by the HMIS Lead.

D. New Projects for Domestic Violence (DV) Bonus:

CoC's may create new DV projects. CoC's may apply for up to 10% of its Preliminary Pro Rata Need (PPRN) or a minimum of \$50,000 or a maximum of \$5 million. A CoC may apply for one of each of the following types of projects. Projects are limited to a 1 year funding request and must follow the Housing First approach:

1. Rapid Re-Housing (PH-RRH) projects
2. Joint Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing (TH-RRH) projects.
3. SSO projects for coordinated entry (SSO-CE) to implement policies, procedures and practices that equip the CoC's coordinated entry to better meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking (e.g. to implement policies and procedures that are trauma-informed, client-centered or to better coordinate referrals between the CoCs coordinated entry and the victim service provider system where they are different).

E. Tiers & Priority Order:

In the FY23 CoC Program Competition, Tier 1 will equal 93% of the CoC's ARD. Tier 2 is 7% of the ARD plus the amount available for the identified bonus project funding. Any new or renewal project may be placed in Tier 1. CoCs should carefully consider the priority and ranking for all projects in Tier 1 and Tier 2. Projects in Tier 1 will be conditionally selected if applications pass both HUD's eligibility and threshold review.

Projects placed in Tier 2 will be assessed for eligibility threshold and threshold requirements and funding will be determined using the CoC Applications score as well as factors listed in the NOFA. Projects in Tier 2 are evaluated on a project by project level across the CoCs nationally. As a result, selection for funding of projects in Tier 2 is more rigorous than in Tier 1.

F. CoCs should consider the policy priorities established in the NOFO in conjunction with local priorities to determine the ranking of new projects created through reallocation, CoC planning, and renewal project requests.

HUD CoC FY23 Policy and Program Priorities

- 1) **Ending homelessness for all persons** by aligning strategies with the [ALL IN: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)
- 2) **Use a Housing First approach** to help individuals and families move quickly into permanent housing. This should include landlord engagement, removing barriers to entry and adopting client-centered service.
- 3) **Reduce unsheltered homelessness** by exploring all available resources. CoCs should work with law enforcement and local governments to eliminate policies and practices that criminalize homelessness.
- 4) **Improve system performance** and use the Coordinated Entry process to make homelessness assistance open, inclusive and transparent.
- 5) **Partner with housing, health and service agencies** to improve how all available resources are utilized to end homelessness. Partnerships with public and private healthcare organizations, public housing authorities, local workforce development centers and tribal organizations to maximize the use of mainstream and other community-based resources.
- 6) **Address racial equity** to ensure successful outcomes for all persons experiencing homelessness.
- 7) **Improve assistance to LGBTQ+ individuals** by ensuring privacy, respect, safety and access regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation in projects.
- 8) **Include persons with lived expertise and experience** in the local planning and decision-making process. CoC leaders and stakeholders should prioritize hiring people who have experienced homelessness in areas where their expertise is needed.
- 9) **Increase the affordable housing supply** by communicating with jurisdiction leaders about steps such as zoning and land use reform that would increase the supply of affordable housing.

Ventura County Policy on Project Ranking and Tiering

(adopted and finalized on July 12, 2023 by VC CoC Board)

Section III: Ventura County Policy on Reallocation, Project Ranking and Tiering

A. Policy Objectives:

In developing our local policy governing project ranking, reallocation and tiering, Ventura County CoC's objectives are to align with the VC CoC mission, values and guiding principles:

- *Mission Statement:* The VC CoC Alliance is a collaborative group dedicated to promoting a safe, desirable and thriving community by ending homelessness in Ventura County.
- *Vision:* Homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring
- *Values:* We value the dignity of every human life, the well-being of the community and the power of the community to working together to solve community problems.
- *Guiding Principles:*
 - Collective Impact
 - Housing First
 - Strengths-Based and Trauma-Informed Care

- Harm reduction
- Centering Racial Equity in System Design
- Comply with HUD requirements.
- Preserve funding for high performing and effective projects.
- Fund programs that contribute positively to overall system performance.
- Shift investments from lower performing projects and ones which are at risk of losing HUD funding to new projects that help advance our community's goal of reducing homelessness and demonstrate effective approaches and best practices.

Rationale for Preliminary Rankings

- Closely followed HUD's priorities and guidelines for ranking projects.
- Positive contribution to System Level Performance will be heavily weighted when ranking projects including exits to permanent housing and housing retention.
- Examine under-performing projects and under-utilized projects and consider reallocation.
- Projects/agencies engagement in Continuum of Care efforts and participation in Coordinated Entry will be weighted when ranking projects.
- Projects that serve chronically homeless (CH) are ranked higher on the list than programs without dedicated CH beds. Programs that target chronically homeless for non-dedicated beds as they became available are ranked higher on the list.
- Projects implementing a Housing First model with policies and procedures to emphasize their practices rank higher.
- Projects serving vulnerable populations (chronically homeless, mentally ill, youth and persons fleeing domestic violence) will receive additional points when ranking projects.
- Cost efficiency and utilization will be considered when ranking projects within the project component (PH-RRH, PSH, TH-RRH).

B. Project Review and Ranking Policy:

The Ventura County CoC will invite submissions for new and renewal projects and will conduct a review and ranking following the procedures stated in Sections IV and V.

The general approach to rating and ranking will be to organize projects into groups:

- 1) renewal PH and RRH
- 2) renewal Safe Haven
- 3) new PH and RRH
- 4) new TH-RRH
- 5) new SSO CES
- 6) HMIS projects

Within each type, projects will be scored using a score system specific to that program type and placed within their ranked order, with renewal PSH and RRH in the first group (ordered by score) and the new PSH and RRH in the second group (ordered by score). Renewal projects scoring less than 70 points will be considered for reallocation. If CoC decides to rank and submit a project scoring below 70 points, it may be ranked in Tier 2. The CoC goal is to preserve funding for the entire community and will make ranking decisions to submit a competitive application and not put community-wide funding at risk.

C. Tiering Policy:

Once the rank order of projects has been determined the projects at the bottom of the list will fall into Tier 2 (7% of ARD).

As HMIS and Coordinated Entry are HUD mandated requirements in order to receive Continuum of Care funding, HUD strongly recommends that these projects remain top priorities in Tier 1 in order to secure and maintain funding for this required activity.

The CoC Planning Grant is not ranked per HUD's guidance.

Section IV: Process for Rating and Ranking Renewal Projects

A: Rating and Ranking Process:

A Letter of Intent (LOI) was issued by the VC CoC on July 20, 2023 to gather relevant performance and threshold documentation from each project identified as eligible for renewal. All LOIs are due to VC CoC staff by August 10, 2023.

All renewal projects will be ranked using an objective scoring system as recommended by the VC CoC Data and Performance Committee and approved by the VC CoC Board. VC CoC Staff will use data provided through the LOI process (for both SH and PH renewals) to calculate a score for each renewal and use the results to develop the Project Priority Listing for review and approval by the VC CoC Board as recommended through the VC CoC Data and Performance Committee.

The LOI process is intended to assess agency's capacity to administer CoC projects while complying with HUD requirements. Additionally, the LOI helps staff and the CoC Committees review the following:

1. System Performance Data (project contribution)
2. Annual Performance Report (APR) timeliness and data quality
3. Vulnerabilities of populations served by projects including filling vacancies through coordinated entry
4. Financial commitment (match)
5. Alignment with best practices: Housing First/Low Barrier/Harm Reduction
6. CoC participation/VC CoC Partner Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

VC CoC Staff and VC CoC Data and Performance Committee use data provided through the LOI process, HMIS reports (Annual Performance Reports and CoC System Performance Data) analysis to develop the Project Priority Listing for review and approval by the VC CoC Board. This process is conducted in open public meetings and all materials are posted on the VC CoC website: www.venturacoc.org

B. Scoring Criteria for Renewal Permanent Housing (PSH and RRH):

The scoring system will have a maximum of 100 points with points for project and system performance and threshold factors. Data to assess both performance and threshold criteria will be obtained from the information submitted by the applicants in their LOI response. System Performance Data will be pulled from HMIS; however, victim service providers must submit data generated from a comparable database for review.

The performance measures will be based on those established by HUD, VC CoC local performance targets and tracked through HMIS data:

- at least 85 percent of project participants either remained in permanent housing or exited to another permanent housing location.
- at least 55 percent of project participant increased their income from sources other than employment in an operating year.
- at least 90 percent of project participants obtained mainstream benefits

Some renewing projects will not have a full year of performance data to be considered in the review and rank process because they have not yet been operational for a full year. These projects will be reviewed on the data they have available but will not be penalized for not serving the full number of participants. If a new project does not have enough performance data to review, they will be reviewed for administrative and program compliance and be ranked at the bottom of Tier 1. Their overall score will place them in the bottom of the group of PSH and RRH renewals but they will be placed in Tier 1 because PH renewals as a group will be the first on the Project Priority List. If a project is poorly performing and lacks capacity, the committee may recommend the project for reallocation.

C. Scoring Criteria for Renewal Safe Haven:

The scoring system will have a maximum of 100 points with points for project and system performance and threshold factors. Data to assess both performance and threshold criteria will be obtained from the information submitted by the applicants in their LOI response. System Performance Data will be pulled from HMIS.

The performance measures will be based on those established by HUD, VC CoC local performance targets and tracked through HMIS data:

- at least 80 percent of project participants either exit to permanent housing, or a temporary placement progressing towards permanent housing.
- at least 55 percent of project participant increased their total income in an operating year.
- at least 90 percent of project participants obtained mainstream benefits, as eligible

D. HMIS Renewal:

Consistent with previous CoC applications, HMIS renewals will be exempt from the full Letter of Intent (LOI) but will be assessed for performance and spending in alignment with HUD requirements. As noted in Section II, the HMIS renewal will be placed in Tier 1.

Section V: Process and Criteria for Ranking New Projects

The VC CoC Board will examine recommendations from the VC CoC Data and Performance Committee and VC CoC staff to determine the amount of funding available for reallocation. New bonus funds and any reallocated funds will be awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for open competition for projects that provide Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to chronically homeless individuals or Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) projects that serve single adults, families or youth.

An additional RFP process will be held for VC CoC Domestic Violence Bonus funding. This funding is eligible for the following project types that serve persons fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking: 1) PH-RRH; 2) TH-RRH; 3) CE-SSO. Applications will be scored the same as other new projects with additional points for projects that have a plan for promoting safety for the population served. Victim Service Provider applicants will provide data from a comparable database to demonstrate need, capacity and performance.

The RFP will be structured to award funds to projects that 1) meet Ventura County's CoC priorities; and 2) are most competitive in evaluating project capacity and past performance. In addition, projects must meet HUD's threshold and quality requirements. The RFP will require applicants to submit project narrative, applicant capacity and financial information sufficient to assess all of these factors. To evaluate whether projects meet the HUD threshold, quality standards, and performance standards, the projects will be reviewed by the VC CoC Data and Performance Committee.

To evaluate project quality and fit with Ventura County objectives and develop a ranked order, the CoC will convene an unbiased project review meeting to review each new project. Projects will be scored based on a 100 point system (Attachment A and B). The VC CoC Staff will then hold one meeting to review and score applications and arrive at a proposed final ranking for new projects, including a recommendation of which project should be submitted as the PSH bonus. The panel may also recommend that projects should either increase or decrease their funding request to maximize the use of available reallocated or bonus funds.

The final ranking of new projects as determined will be discussed and approved by the VC CoC Board on August 30, 2023 to determine the order on the Project Priority Listing.

Section VI: Final Project Priority List and Notification to Applicants

Once the rating and ranking processes for new and renewal applicants are complete, VC CoC staff will integrate the results of the scoring/ranking processes and create the final proposed Project Priority Listing for review by the VC CoC Board. This proposed list can include recommendations to adjust the placement of projects in Tier 2 in order to maximize the total funding award for Ventura County. The proposed final list will be approved, and notice sent to the applicants of the final results no later than September 13, 2023.

Section VII: Appeal Process

Applicants may appeal any of the following decisions of the VC CoC:

- 1) Placement of project into Tier 2
- 2) Reduction in funding

3) Project not included in final FY23 VC CoC consolidated application.

Appeals must be submitted to the Ventura County Collaborative Applicant no later than September 1, 2023. Appeals will be heard by the VC Data, Performance & Evaluation Committee. The decision of the appeal panel will be submitted to the VC CoC Board to make a final determination.

Attachment A

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Performance Measures - Max. 100 Points with 40 points towards System Performance detailed below.

- at least 85 percent of project participants either remained in permanent housing or exited to another PH (up to 10 points)
- at least 55 percent of project participants increased their total income in a given operating year (up to 10 points).
- Demonstrate quickly moving persons into permanent housing from program entry to housing moving in date with goal of fewer than 30 days from program entry to move in (up to 10 points).
- fewer than 5% returns to homelessness within a year of exiting from PH/RRH program (up to 10 points).

Projects can receive an additional 10 points for maximizing utilization of their program vacancies with an average of no less than 95% utilization in the previous 4 quarters. HMIS Data Quality should reflect no more than 10% of any missing data element, as indicated in the chart below.

Underperforming projects will be discussed in detail with VC CoC Data and Performance Committee and recommendations will be made for reallocation to the VC CoC Board when appropriate.

Permanent Housing (PSH/RRH) Projects: Applicant: _____ Project: _____

Threshold Renewal Points	Source Document	Max Points	Total Scored
Compliance with Grants and Financial Management	Annual Performance Report submitted timely, HUD monitoring, eLOCCS, close-out certificates; new projects will provide relevant information on managing federal grants. 5 points for APR submittal timely; 5 points for 95% or greater expenditure of grant funds.	10	
Housing First/Low Barrier/Harm Reduction	Intake policy consistent with Housing First / Low Barrier / Harm Reduction (including the acceptance of criminal history, domestic violence history, and/or substance use disorders) = 10pts Commitment to Housing First with some exceptions, based on project type = 5pts No Housing First = 0 pts	10	
Best Practices/Supportive Services	LOI + supportive documentation (intake packets, lease agreements, service documents, staffing plan) consistent with Housing First, Low Barrier and local prioritization standards (<i>servicing the most vulnerable</i>), filling vacancies through coordinated entry = 10pts Missing document (-2pts from score)	10	

	Inconsistency with documents, services and staff plan = 5pts Not aligned with best practices = 0 pts		
CoC participation, HEARTH compliance	Attendance records or commitment for new partners to participate in CoC meetings (up to 5); compliance with CoC Partner MOU (up to 5)	10	
Project Performance	Bed Utilization (95%+) (up to 5 points), HMIS Data Quality (up to 5 points)	10	
System Level Performance	<5%Returns to Homelessness (up to 10 points), Length of time Homeless (up to 10 points), 55% of participants Increase Total Income (up to 10 points), 85% of participants with successful exits to Permanent Housing (up to 10 points)	40	
Cost Effectiveness - Successful housing outcomes	Cost per successful housing outcome – within project type (up to 10 points)	10	
TOTAL		100	

Attachment B

The following will be applied for the performance measures scored for Safe Haven (SH) Projects renewals.
SH Performance Measures - Max. 100 Points with 40 points towards System Performance

- at least 80 percent of project participants exit to a permanent housing or other positive destination (up to 10 points).
- at least 55 percent of project participants increased their total income in a given operating year (up to 5 points).
- at least 90 percent of project participants obtained or maintained mainstream benefits (up to 5 points).
- fewer than 5% returns to homelessness within a year of exiting from SH program (up to 10 points).
- Average length of stay <180 days (up to 10 points)

Projects can receive an additional 10 points for maximizing utilization of their program vacancies with an average of no less than 95% utilization in the previous 4 quarters. HMIS Data Quality should reflect no more than 10% of any missing data element.

Underperforming projects will be discussed in detail with VC CoC Data and Performance Committee and recommendations will be made for reallocation to the VC CoC Board when appropriate.

Safe Haven (SH) Projects: Applicant: _____ **Project:** _____

Threshold Renewal Points	Source Document	Max Points	Total Scored
Compliance with Grants and Financial Management	Annual Performance Report submitted timely, HUD monitoring, eLOCCS, close-out certificates; new projects will provide relevant information on managing federal grants. 5 points for APR submittal timely; 5 points for 95% or greater expenditure of grant funds.	10	
Housing First/Low Barrier/Harm Reduction	Proposal and program design consistent with Housing First / Low Barrier / Harm Reduction (including the acceptance of criminal history, domestic violence history, and/or substance use disorders) = Up to 10pts Commitment to Housing First with some exceptions, based on project type = 5pts No Housing First = 0 pts	10	
Best Practices/Supportive Services	Project design and staffing plan consistent with Housing First, Low Barrier and local prioritization standards (<i>servicing the most vulnerable</i>), filling vacancies through coordinated entry, using HMIS and housing participants as quickly as possible = Up to 10pts	10	

	Inconsistency with documents, services and staff plan = 5pts Not aligned with best practices = 0 pts		
CoC participation, HEARTH compliance	Attendance records or commitment for new partners to participate in CoC meetings (up to 5); compliance with CoC Partner MOU (up to 5)	10	
Project Performance	Bed Utilization (95%+) (up to 5 points), HMIS Data Quality (up to 5 points)	10	
System Level Performance	<5%Returns to Homelessness (up to 10 points), Length of time Homeless (up to 10 points), 55% of participants Increase Total Income (up to 10 points), 85% of participants with successful exits to Permanent Housing (up to 10 points)	40	
Cost Effectiveness - Successful housing outcomes	Cost per successful housing outcome – within project type (up to 10 points)	10	
TOTAL		100	

New Projects: Applicant: _____ **Project:** _____

Threshold Points	Source Document	Max Points	Total Scored
Compliance/Experience with Grants and Financial Management	Provide relevant information on managing federal grants and demonstrate capacity for success. Financial capacity, staffing capacity, past performance in implementing grant funded programs. Demonstrates ability to meet match requirements. (Up to 10 points)	10	
Housing First/Low Barrier/Harm Reduction	Program design (housing and support services) and staffing plan consistent with Housing First / Low Barrier / Harm Reduction (including the acceptance of criminal history, domestic violence history, and/or substance use disorders) Services sufficient to support housing participants as quickly as possible and providing adequate support services to support housing stability. Project commits to utilizing HMIS, fill vacancies through CES and participate in systemwide coordination. (Up to 20pts)	20	

Timeliness for New Project Start Up	Proposed project timeline demonstrates ability to staff up, launch program and spend funds timely. Establish benchmarks at 60, 120, & 180 days post grant award. (Up to 10 points)	10	
Serving vulnerable populations	Proposal commits to serving highly vulnerable populations. Proposal details how program will provide services to meet unique needs of participants. (Up to 10 points)	10	
CoC participation, HEARTH compliance and collaboration	Commitment for new partners to participate in CoC meetings (up to 5); compliance with CoC Partner MOU (up to 5); Collaboration with other organizations and programs to address the needs of the target population, including mainstream benefits, social services, employment programs and other mainstream programs (up to 10)	20	
Project/System Performance	Proposed program aligns and demonstrates plans to achieve HUD and CoC project and system performance benchmarks (Up to 20)	20	
Cost Efficiency	The average cost per exit to permanent housing based on the total program costs.	10	
TOTAL		100	