

# MA BALANCE OF STATE CoC FEDERAL GRANT PROJECT RANKING AND REVIEW POLICY

## PURPOSE

All HUD-Funded CoC Projects are reviewed, scored, and ranked to ensure the MA Balance of State Continuum of Care, MA-516 (BoS CoC) is strategically allocating HUD-funded grants across high-performing projects to meet the critical needs and highest priorities of the CoC, in alignment with Federal funding objectives for ending homelessness.

The MA BoS CoC Ranking and Review Policy for the Continuum of Care (CoC) competition establishes a transparent, objective, and unbiased framework for the decision-making process guiding annual CoC new and renewal grant applications. This document is designed to assist in the Ranking and Review of projects and is largely based on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Homeless Policy and Program Priorities as outlined in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Continuum of Care Program Competition, as well as the competition notice distributed by HUD May 1, 2026. The goal is to ensure that there are written procedures in place that provide regulations for a comprehensive Ranking and Review of all projects.

## KEY TERMS

### RANKING

The process of prioritizing projects for funding in rank order. The rating scores are generally an important input into the ranking process (e.g., projects might be ranked according to their score), but the CoC might want to add other factors to inform ranking. For instance, ranking might be prioritized based on project type, population groups served, relative levels of unmet need, or other local funding priorities.

### RANKING SCORE

A numerical value assigned to each application for funding that is derived from a number of objective criteria including Annual

Performance Report (APR) metrics, timely APR submission, expenditure ratios, vacancy reports, and level of attendance in committee meetings. Each application is ranked using a ranking tool specific to the component type and whether the application is for a new or renewal project.

### REVIEW

The process of scoring projects based on standardized criteria. Projects are generally scored relative to other projects of the same type.

### CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC)

The CoC Program is designed to assist individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families experiencing homelessness and provide the services needed to help such individuals move into transitional and permanent housing, with the goal of long-term stability. More broadly, the CoC Program is designed to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness; improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness; improve data collection and performance measurement; and allow each community to tailor its programs to the strengths and challenges in assisting homeless individuals and families within that community.

### CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAM COMPETITION

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition occurs annually. Each Fiscal Year (FY) Competition process begins with Registration of CoCs by CoC designated Collaborative Applicants, followed by the CoC's review of Grant Inventory Worksheets (GIW) and the release of the CoC Program NOFO. Documents related to each process are listed below and additional Competition related materials are posted once the process opens and as documents become available. The FY Competition ends when the final funding announcement is released by HUD.

### NOFO

Each year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issues a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for federal funding under the Continuum of Care program. As the CoC

Collaborative applicant, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts via staff in the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is responsible for the design, operation, and execution of a competitive, local project application process as well as the CoC Application.

### COLLABORATIVE APPLICANT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the Collaborative Applicant of the BoS CoC and via staff at EOHLC is responsible for submitting the CoCs application and all project applications for funding to HUD. EOHLC leads the planning and coordination efforts to develop the CoC's application and ensures that it meets HUD's requirements. EOHLC serves as the primary point of contact with HUD and is responsible for managing the CoCs grant funds.

Primary responsibilities of EOHLC include:

- Applying for CoC and/or UFA (Unified Funding Agency) Planning funds,
- Coordinating and submitting the annual application to HUD for CoC program funding, and
- Coordinating and administering the activities and responsibilities of the CoC in collaboration with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) as specified in the CoC regulations at 24 CFR 578, the BoS CoC Governance Charter, and Written Standards.

## **THE PROJECT EVALUATION COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

This Committee is responsible for implementing the mandates of this policy and oversees the development and maintenance of performance evaluation/Ranking and Review tools to ensure that projects are being measured for regulatory compliance and for outcomes that reflect the priorities of HUD and the BoS CoC. The committee meets to review the tools and Ranking and Review Policy annually, revising as needed. The Committee is made up of BoS CoC members from funded and non-funded organizations, staff members from the EOHLC Federal Grants Unit, and HMIS staff. Care is taken to ensure no project application is assigned where a member of the small group may have a conflict of interest.

The Project Evaluation (PE) Committee makes recommendations to the BoS CoC Advisory Board regarding final project ranking for Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the NOFO submission. It may make more than one recommendation. One must be solely reliant on the scores of the projects, and another based upon a review of the projects and the needs of the CoC. It may present more recommendations if it is determined there are other factors to consider.

Recommendations are determined by objective measures in the ranking tool. If there are unique circumstances the Committee should consider, they will be referenced in the note column of the tool. These may include, but are not exclusive to considerations such as, the most recent year was the first year of the project, there was a fire or other emergency that caused the project to have low utilization rates, or the project has a new subrecipient that was getting up to speed. Any considerations must have documentation to establish their validity.

## **REVIEWER/EVALUATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

As members of a Ranking and Review Team, the reviewers who are representatives of EOHLC, current subrecipients, and non-funded CoC members complete the Ranking and Review tool for each project assigned and send the results to the Ranking and Review Team Lead who will compile the results into a final decision and forward that to the PE Committee Chair. They will provide the following support:

- Complete the Ranking and Review tool.
- Verify that all required data is entered and accurate.
- Report any issues/problems to Team Lead.
- Participate in instruction meeting and any follow-up meeting needed.

### **I. REVIEWER/EVALUATOR AND TEAM LEAD STRUCTURE**

The MA BoS CoC currently manages an average of 45 projects annually. For the Rating and Ranking, the structure of the teams evaluating the project applications will be determined by the number of volunteers and the number of projects that should be reviewed. An EOHLC staff member will lead each team and every

effort will be made to ensure no team reviews more than 6 applications.

## **II. ADVISORY BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Advisory Board is the decision-making body of the MA BoS CoC. It reviews the proposed ranking options submitted by the PE Committee and by majority vote determines which will be submitted in the Priority Listing with the CoC Application. As part of its due diligence, the Advisory Board may request minutes from PE Committee meetings where ranking was determined.

## **III. CRITERIA AND EVALUATION**

There are at minimum 8 factors used to review and rank projects for the Continuum of Care Application:

1. Threshold Criteria
2. Performance Measures
3. Project Effectiveness
4. PLEE Involvement
5. Serving High Need and Priority Populations
6. CoC Project Review/Monitoring
7. Bonus
8. Penalties

## **IV. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

1. APR
2. Application
3. GIW

## **V. TIER DETERMINATION**

After completing individual project rating, the PE committee must establish a CoC Priority Listing of projects to include in the annual CoC Application to HUD. It will produce a ranked list that reflects both the ranking and review tool results and funding priorities.

## **VI. APPEAL**

Rating Scores

Providers may appeal Ranking and Review outcomes/scores. The PE Committee will accept any appeal submitted within 24hr after results are completed/submitted and must be related to the following only:

- Issues due to formulas errors (TOOL)
- Issues due to source documentation errors (APR, Monitoring Results Report, Application, and other relevant reports)

Such errors must be clearly identified and adequately documented.

If a provider wishes to appeal Ranking and Review scores, they must do the following:

- (1) Submit a notification of appeal to the group lead via email.
- (2) Clearly describe the nature of the appeal.
- (3) Provide all relevant documentation to support the appeal.

The PE Committee will decline any appeal and will maintain current scores if the appeal is not properly submitted. No delays will be allowed or accommodated in this process.

The PE Committee appeal review will be as followed:

- (1) Review and assess the appeal.
- (2) Make a decision within 24hr after receipt of the appeal and notify the provider via email with a cc: to the BoS CoC Lead.
- (3) Make any changes to the provider score accordingly.