



North Dakota-500 Statewide Continuum of Care Ranking and Review Policy

CoC Board Approval: June 2021

CoC Membership Approval: August 2021

Next Review: June 2022

I. Introduction

- A. The North Dakota Continuum of Care (ND CoC) requires an annual project review for all HUD Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant Projects. This policy specifically applies to projects seeking funding under the annual HUD Continuum of Care competition.
- B. These conditions are designed to inform Performance Evaluation and Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Ranking Committee deliberations and provide all new and renewal applicants with clarity regarding how ranking and prioritization occur.

II. Important Project Application Dates and Deadlines

Each year, the ND CoC will publish annual HUD CoC competition deadlines that include both local and HUD deadlines. Any agency applying for the CoC competition must comply with the published deadlines or risk point loss and possible ineligibility for the funding competition. The dates and deadlines will be published on the ND CoC website and sent out via email through the ND CoC membership email list. Projects who do not submit their project application packet by the ND CoC deadline will not be eligible to be ranked.

III. Eligibility

To be eligible for inclusion in the ND CoC Rating and Ranking process, all projects must pass all facets of the ND CoC application process including:

- A. HUD Threshold Requirements including, but not necessarily limited to (*please go to the HUD competition page for a full list of HUD Threshold requirements*):
 - 1. Applicant has a DUNS # and has current SAM registration.
 - 2. Applicant is eligible to receive HUD funding (i.e., a nonprofit organization, state or local government, instrument of a state or local government or public housing agency, as such term is defined in 24 CFR 5.100).
 - 3. Applicant enters or will enter (if a new applicant) project data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or ND CoC approved alternative database if a Victim Service Provider (VSP).
 - 4. Applicant demonstrates financial and management capacity and experience to successfully carry out project.
 - 5. Applicant submits required certifications as required in the NOFA.
 - 6. Applicant agrees to only serve persons who are eligible as defined in HEARTH Act regulations.
 - 7. Project draws down funds from LOCCS/eLOCCS at least quarterly.
- B. CoC Eligibility and Threshold Requirements
 - 1. Members of the ND CoC participates in ND CoC planning (CoC and local homeless committee meeting attendance, responds to information requests, etc.);
 - 2. Participation in or commitment (if a new project) to participate in coordinated entry;
 - 3. Assure linkage of households to mainstream services using ND CoC tools;
 - 4. Project assurance to document participant eligibility;

5. Project history and or assurance (if a new applicant) to maintain current and clean data and respond to quality and compliance issues in a timely manner;
 6. History (renewal projects only) or agreement to provide timely documentation and reports;
 7. Ability to manage funds appropriately;
 8. Ability to achieve ND CoC utilization and performance standards or if not achieved, identify a performance improvement plan approved by the ND CoC;
 9. Design of project is cost effective, population and project type appropriate, incorporates ND CoC core principles and is appropriately staffed;
 10. Compliance with or assurance to complete required ND CoC trainings; and
 11. Adherence to ND CoC policies:
 - a. Governance Charter
 - b. Emergency Transfer Plan
 - c. HMIS Data Quality Management Plan
 - d. HMIS Policies and Procedures
 - e. HMIS Privacy Plan
 - f. HMIS Security Plan
 - g. Monitoring Plan
 - h. Prioritization Policy
 - i. Written Standards for ESG and CoC Assistance
 - j. Coordinated Access, Referral, Entry, and Stabilization System (CARES) policies
- C. Project adheres to all local ND CoC competition deadlines
1. Project submits an Intent to Apply and Threshold Assessment by designated deadline; and
 2. Initial and final Project Application submitted in e-snaps and via PDF by deadline.
- D. Commitment to integrate Housing First and Low Barrier Access Principals and Policies into project
- E. Provide Annual Performance Reports to the ND CoC at least 15 days prior to submission to HUD for pre-review.

IV. Guidance on Required Ranking and Tiers

- A. The ND CoC Ranking and Review Committee will review all projects and rank in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 according to ND CoC ranking criteria including: project quality, past performance, and regional need. Tier 1 projects are more likely to be renewed by HUD. Tier 2 projects are conditional and will depend on ND CoC Score, Project Score, and Rank. HUD will award a point value to projects in Tier 2. Projects will be able to straddle Tier 1 and Tier 2, but the portion in Tier 1 must adequately fund the project in the case that funding in Tier 2 is not awarded.

- B. New or Expanded Project Ranking Priority Bonus: The ND CoC will award bonus points to projects based on project type to help prioritize new or expanded project applications that fill the gaps and needs within the ND CoC. New or expanded projects will receive bonus points based on the following criteria.

Project Type	Eligibility Type	Priority Bonus	Justification for Priority
New Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH) projects that serve youth, families, and individuals.	Bonus or Reallocation	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not sufficient shelter coverage in our rural region. • Fixed site TH, with ability to transition to RRH rapidly, helps address the need to have immediate access to housing and gain rental history necessary to find scattered site housing. • TH-RRH is more cost effective and client friendly than motel vouchers.
New Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects for the ND CoC's Coordinated Entry System.	Bonus or Reallocation	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE needs to be sufficiently funded to assure the ND CoC is compliant with HUD and to help the ND CoC operate a system that is capable of reaching our goal to end homelessness.
New or expanded Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects that serve chronically homeless individuals, unaccompanied youth, and families.	Expansion, Reallocation or Bonus	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient PSH is necessary to continue to prioritize serving the most vulnerable.
New or expanded Rapid Rehousing (RRH) projects for homeless individuals, unaccompanied youth, and families coming directly from the streets, emergency shelter, or fleeing domestic violence.	Expansion, Reallocation or Bonus	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid rehousing continues to have a high unmet need for both singles and families.

V. Scoring and Ranking Process: HMIS Projects

The ND CoC recognizes that a quality HMIS is not only required by HUD but is used as a valuable tool to operate and evaluate our regional homeless response system. However, ranking and scoring HMIS like Supportive Housing Projects is not feasible due to the unique aspects of our statewide system. Therefore, the ND CoC will rely on the ND CoC Data Committee to annually evaluate our HMIS system administrator's performance and provide the ND CoC with a letter of review and recommendation for renewed funding or reallocation. Furthermore, the ND CoC recognizes that a robust

homeless management information system needs sufficient funding and therefore will strive to renew or reallocate funding of our system by placing one or more HMIS applications for at least 2.5% of the CoC's ARD at the top of Tier 1 if the request comes from the designated state system administrator. Requests for over the ARD or 2.5%, whichever is greater, may be placed in Tier 2.

VI. Scoring and Ranking Process: Supportive Housing Projects

- A. The following describes the ND CoC process to score and rank supportive projects for CoC funding. It should be noted that the ND CoC uses “scoring”, “reallocation”, and “ranking” as three distinct steps. Scoring informs, but does not dictate, the final ranking decisions. Where ranking and scoring do not correlate, the ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee may recommend adjustments. The committee will indicate in comments why the project is ranked in their position versus directly following scoring.
- B. Scoring criteria: The ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee or other designated committee is responsible for reviewing, updating, and distributing ranking criteria to the ND CoC board for approval each year. If substantive changes occur, the policy will be taken to the ND CoC membership. The process utilizes non-biased, objective criteria based on the HUD ranking tool, established ND CoC priorities, and project performance. The ND CoC uses an objective HMIS ranking report, the project threshold assessment, and a ND CoC ranking scorecard that incorporates both an agency self-assessment and required attachments. The Rating and Ranking Committee may adjust the presented documents based on verification and review of documents presented.
- C. Specifically, ranking incorporates the following eight categories:
 1. Financial: Fiscal responsibility, draw downs, resources/leverage, and cost effectiveness of project.
 2. Regional Priorities: Regional need for project type and target population/subpopulation based on coordinated entry data and annual needs/gaps assessment.
 3. HUD Priorities: Project commitment to meeting HUD priorities.
 4. Engagement: Agency commitment to engaging in regional planning including membership/participation in the ND CoC board and committees and participation in local homeless committees/coalitions.
 5. Policy and Reporting Compliance: Adherence to funder and ND CoC policies, training, and reporting standards.
 6. Project Design and Services: Project incorporates core principals adopted by the ND CoC including: housing first, low barrier access, trauma informed, motivational interviewing, creative engagement, and client centered care. Principals must be incorporated into education/training, policies, and practices. The project must also demonstrate history or ability to link to mainstream resources and educational services (if serving youth and families).
 7. Project Performance: Performance is measured through an HMIS dashboard or duplicate dashboard (if VSP) that includes the following: HUD Annual Performance Report (APR), project utilization rate, and returns to homelessness rate. Performance review also takes into consideration acuity of households served.

8. Data Quality: HMIS and coordinated entry data quality and responsiveness to HMIS/CoC data requests.

D. Scoring & Ranking Process

1. Pre-Application

- a. The ND CoC solicits interest and designates a Rating and Ranking Committee identified through a public application process with no representatives being accepted from applicant agencies (staff, clients, or board members).
- b. The ND CoC solicits pre-application and project threshold assessments to renewal applicants and an open invite for new projects via the ND CoC email list and notice at other regional meetings or public notices.
- c. The ND CoC coordinator follows-up with agencies interested in applying for new or expanded projects.
- d. Within 10 days after the NOFA publication, application packets are posted on the ND CoC website.
- e. Ranking process, criteria, submitted pre-applications and timelines are presented at the first ND CoC meeting after the NOFA release. Any proposed updates to the policy in response to the NOFA are presented and voted upon at this time.
- f. The ND CoC promotes and hosts an application lab to assist with completing the application in e-snaps.

2. Submission: Project applicants submit application packet (scorecard, project application, and required supporting documentation) to the ND CoC by the deadline to be eligible for ranking.

3. Review and Ranking

- a. The ND CoC coordinator collects and organizes the application ranking materials and shares with the Rating and Ranking Committee.
- b. The committee reviews the application packet (scorecard, project application, and supporting documentation) and scores each application. This includes:
 - Reviewing project eligibility.
 - Validating applicant self-score, noting any discrepancies.
 - Identifying specific concerns or noting questions for the applicant.
 - Assigning a preliminary score and rank to reach project.
- c. The Rating and Ranking Committee meets to collectively review and align scores and ranking. Each project is assigned a score based on the percent of eligible points and any adjustments (note adjustments may be made for extenuating circumstances like a change in agency leadership, disaster, etc.).
- d. The ND CoC coordinator provides each project with the committee's recommended score and rank via email.
- e. Projects are given 3-5 days to respond with clarification or corrections (exact time is posted on annual competition calendar).

- f. If received, updated information is reviewed by the Rating and Ranking Committee. Scores may be adjusted if validated (supporting documentation or appropriate clarification is provided). If needed, the Rating and Ranking Committee meets to deliberate score adjustments.
 - g. The committee will recommend 1-3 ranking scenarios to the ND CoC board and membership based on project score, ND CoC priorities, and eligible funding. When ties exist, the committee shall rank the following preferences:
 - The project with higher housing stability and the project with the least returns to homelessness shall be ranked first.
 - Projects with existing clients shall also be ranked higher if scores are identical or within one point.
4. Vote on Rank
 - a. The ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee presents final applicant scores and 1-2 tiering options to the ND CoC membership. Although rare, members may reject the proposed options and identify another desired option. The membership votes on proposed rank and tier.
 - b. Projects are notified of final rank, tier, and inclusion/exclusion in the collaborative application. Projects not accepted or ranked in Tier 2, are also again notified of their ability to appeal to the ND CoC and HUD.
 5. Public Posting: The approved priority listing will be placed on the ND CoC website and mailed to the ND CoC mailing list, which includes project applicants.