



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

CoC Board Approval: July 2023
CoC Membership Approval: August 2023

Next Review: June 2024

I. Introduction

- A. The North Dakota Continuum of Care (ND CoC) requires an annual project review for all U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) projects. This policy specifically applies to projects seeking funding under the annual HUD CoC competition.
- B. These conditions are designed to inform performance evaluation and Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Rating and Ranking Committee deliberations and provide all new and renewal applicants with clarity regarding how ranking and prioritization occur.

II. Roles and Responsibilities, ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee

On behalf of the ND CoC Board of Directors, the ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee is charged with overseeing the rank and review process. As stated in the ND CoC Governance Charter, the committee is responsible for:

- A. Updating CoC policies for the annual HUD CoC competition and presenting them to the CoC Board and CoC Membership for vote;
- B. Conducting an annual review of all projects applying for the HUD CoC competition using established criteria; and
- C. Ranking projects according to criteria and placing them in a recommended funding order by tier and presenting ranking recommendations to the CoC Board and CoC Membership for vote.

III. 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.

IV. 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 Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) # and has current SAM registration.
 - 2. Project draws down funds from eLOCCS at least quarterly (only applicable to agencies that are currently federally funded).
 - 3. Project applicants and potential subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of the CoC program as described in the Act and the Rule (nonprofit organization, state or local government, instrument of state or local government, public housing agency, or Indian Tribe or Tribally Designated Housing Entity) and provide evidence of eligibility required in the application (e.g., nonprofit documentation).

4. Project applicants and subrecipients must demonstrate the financial and management capacity and experience to carry out the project as detailed in the project application and the capacity to administer federal funds.
 5. Project applicants must submit the required certifications as required in the NOFO.
 6. The population to be served must meet program eligibility requirements as described in the Act, the Rule, and the NOFO.
 7. Project applicants must agree to participate in the local HMIS system. Victim Service Providers (VSP) must use a comparable database that meets the needs of the local HMIS.
 8. Project applicants agree to meet the criteria set forward by HUD for project quality thresholds for their specified project. Criteria can be found in the NOFO.
- B. CoC Eligibility and Threshold Requirements
1. Project agrees to incorporate Housing First principles, including low barrier access, into agency policies and practices. Agency will be required to submit policies during the local competition.
 2. Applicant agrees to be compliant with Fair Housing, Equal Opportunity, and Equal Access including assuring adaptations to marketing, access, interpretation, and reasonable accommodations.
 3. Project will incorporate CoC housing stability best practices to assist households in achieving and maintaining independent living, adapted to their individual needs and goals.
 4. Applicant agrees to invite program participants (persons with lived experience) to participate in their board of directors, regional/local coalitions, or consumer advisory boards and any other opportunity for persons with lived experience to provide input on ND CoC or project improvement.
 5. Project has a signed CoC Membership Agreement.
 6. Project agrees to participate in local and regional planning including attending ND CoC and local homeless committee/coalition meetings.
 7. Project agrees to fill all beds using CARES prioritization process, tools, and policies (PH, including PSH and RRH, or Joint projects ONLY).
 8. Project agrees to utilize CARES Receipts and checklist to assure linkage of households to mainstream services.
 9. Project agrees to verify recipient eligibility and maintain documentation of eligibility.
 10. 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.
 11. History (renewal projects only) or agreement (new projects only) to provide timely documentation and reports.
 12. Ability to achieve ND CoC utilization and performance standards or if not achieved, identify a performance improvement plan approved by the ND CoC.

13. Project agrees to participate in all CoC required trainings . Trainings may include, but may not be limited to: Housing First, Client Centered Care, Low Barrier Access, Harm Reduction, Motivational Interviewing, Trauma Informed Care, Creative Engagement, coordinated entry, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Fair Housing and Discrimination, Equal Access, Stop Evictions, and Homelessness 101 (CoC Overview, Homeless Definitions, Self-Care, Core Principles of Ending Homelessness, Intro to Homelessness).
 14. Applicant agrees to participate in an annual performance evaluation and follow-up with any technical assistance requirements if your project has been identified as under-performing.
 15. Project agrees to follow ND CoC Policies and Written Standards.
- C. Project adheres to all local ND CoC competition deadlines.
1. Project submits an Intent to Apply and Threshold Assessment by designated deadline.
 2. Initial and final Project Application submitted in e-snaps and via PDF by deadline.
- D. Provide Annual Performance Reports to the ND CoC at least 15 days prior to submission to HUD for pre-review.

V. Guidance on Required Ranking and Tiers

- A. The ND CoC Rating and Ranking Committee will review all projects and rank in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 according to ND CoC ranking criteria including: ND CoC and HUD policies and priorities, project performance, equity, and project design. 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 may 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 Joint Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH) projects that serve youth, families, and individuals.	Bonus or Reallocation	4	<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	5	<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 can help reach 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 Re-Housing (RRH) projects for homeless individuals, unaccompanied youth, and families coming directly from the streets, emergency shelter, or fleeing domestic violence.	Expansion, Reallocation or Bonus	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid rehousing continues to have a high unmet need for both singles and families.

VI. 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 a minimum of 2.5 percent 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 percent, whichever is greater, may be placed in Tier 2.

VII. Scoring and Ranking Process: Supportive Housing and Supportive Services Only Projects

- A. The following describes the ND CoC process to score and rank supportive housing 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 and Membership for approval each year. 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 four categories:

1. ND CoC and HUD Policies and Priorities: CoC priorities (new projects only, project services, geographical location (new projects only), CoC and regional membership participation, dedication to chronic homelessness, Housing First and low barrier policies, housing stability and supportive services, safety and support to victims, use of HMIS or a comparable database (including data quality), targeting higher need populations, and including persons with lived experience on agency's board of directors.
2. Project Performance
 - a. Project performance for renewal projects will review the project's system performance measures, use of coordinated entry, grant expenditures, unit utilization rate, timely draws for grant funds, match documentation, most recent audit, and responsiveness and communication to CoC reports and audit findings
 - b. Project performance for new projects will review the projects unit utilization rate, match documentation, most recent audit, experience with federal grants, use of HMIS or comparable database, and use of coordinated entry.
3. Equity: Guidelines and rules in other languages, client-facing bilingual staff, contract with interpreter services, anti-discrimination policy, equal access hiring clause in job postings, percentage of staff and leadership reflecting race of clients, and equity training.
4. Project Design: Collaboration or plan with mainstream and key support services, client to staff ration, employment and income services, health and wellness explanation and enrollment assistance, and partnerships with healthcare organizations.
- 5.

D. Scoring & Ranking Process

1. Intent to Apply
 - 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 Intent to Apply 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 NOFO publication, application packets are posted on the ND CoC website.

- e. Ranking process, criteria, submitted Intent to Apply and timelines are presented at the first ND CoC meeting after the NOFO release. Any proposed updates to the policy in response to the NOFO are presented and voted upon at this time.
 - f. The ND CoC promotes and hosts at a minimum, two application labs to assist with completing the application in e-snaps.
2. Submission: Project applicants submit application packet in PDF format (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 each 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 notifies applicants of the inclusion/exclusion in the ND CoC Collaborative Application that will be submitted to HUD.
 - e. Projects are given 3-5 days to appeal the committee's recommendation to exclude their application from the ND CoC Collaborative Application that will be submitted to HUD.
 - f. If received, appeals are 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 will meet 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 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.