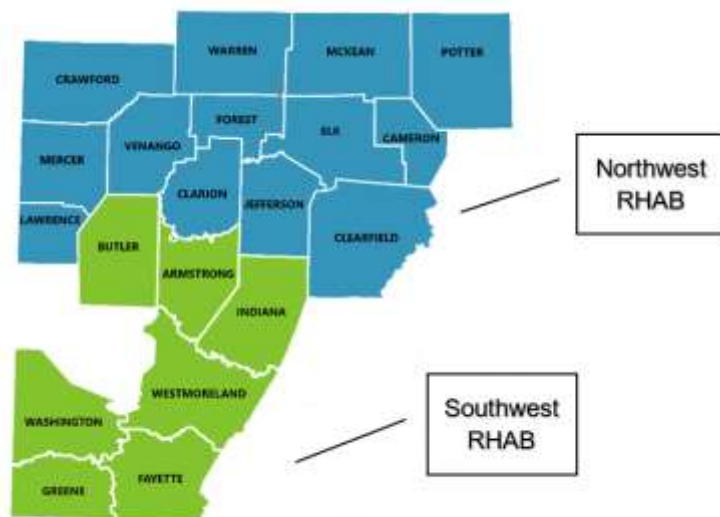


# Western PA Continuum of Care (CoC) FY2021 Request for Proposals DV Bonus for Rapid Re-Housing

**Preliminary Application due by Close of Business on October 13, 2021**

The Western PA CoC submits an annual application to HUD in order to secure federal funding for new and existing projects that work to reduce and end homelessness throughout the CoC's 20-county geographic area. This year, HUD has made an additional \$102M available nationally to specifically fund Domestic Violence projects, through a "DV Bonus". The CoC is eligible to apply for up to \$1,708,642 under the DV Bonus.

Through HUD's 2019 CoC Competition, the CoC was awarded DV Bonus funding to provide DV Rapid Re-Housing assistance throughout the CoC. Through the 2021 CoC Competition, the Western PA CoC is looking to expand Rapid Re-Housing to **unserved/ underserved counties** throughout the CoC. In addition, the CoC is seeking opportunities to **serve all households that qualify for Rapid Re-Housing under HUD's Category 4 definition of homelessness**, which includes households fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking<sup>1</sup>.



The Western PA CoC includes 20 counties located in two regions, represented by Regional Housing Advisory Boards (RHABs):

- Southwest – Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, Westmoreland
- Northwest – Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren

**Please note: This RFP is limited to Victim Services Providers.**

- Applicants are encouraged to provide services in multiple counties.
- Victim Service Providers who lack experience providing rental assistance, conducting inspections to ensure units meet Housing Quality Standards and/or operating HUD CoC grants are encouraged to pursue local partnerships with organizations that provide housing

<sup>1</sup> [https://nnev.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Library\\_Policy\\_HEARTH\\_Creating\\_Access\\_for\\_Survivors.pdf](https://nnev.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Library_Policy_HEARTH_Creating_Access_for_Survivors.pdf)

and/or homeless assistance.

- Organizations that are not Victim Services Providers are encouraged to discuss this funding opportunity with the Victim Services Provider in their community to determine if a local partnership would enhance the competitiveness of the application and the RRH services to provided through the grant.

Funding is not guaranteed to the organization(s) selected through this RFP. Funding will be made available by HUD based on the performance of the Western PA CoC in the 2021 Continuum of Care national competition. If funded by HUD, the project will initially be awarded a 1-year grant, which will be eligible for annual renewal, dependent on the availability of ongoing funding from HUD and project performance. To indicate your interest in a new project, please submit a Preliminary Application by close of business on **October 13, 2021**.

- The Preliminary Application must be submitted via Alchemer at the following link: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6548922/Western-PA-CoC-FY2021-Preliminary-App-DV-RRH>
- You will also be asked to attach a budget using the Excel template provided (can be downloaded here: [https://mcusercontent.com/e1a442ef49ad7761f7575387a/files/5504094f-db62-eca1-8e14-a5ca0875e6f2/Western\\_PA\\_CoC\\_DV\\_Bonus\\_RRH\\_Project\\_Budget\\_Form.xlsx](https://mcusercontent.com/e1a442ef49ad7761f7575387a/files/5504094f-db62-eca1-8e14-a5ca0875e6f2/Western_PA_CoC_DV_Bonus_RRH_Project_Budget_Form.xlsx)), which you can attach/upload in Alchemer.
- A copy of the Preliminary Application is available at [https://mcusercontent.com/e1a442ef49ad7761f7575387a/files/5063ed39-9601-8c74-1146-5554f9e26963/FY2021\\_Western\\_PA\\_CoC\\_DV\\_Bonus\\_RRH\\_Preliminary\\_Application\\_FOR\\_REFERENCE.01.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/e1a442ef49ad7761f7575387a/files/5063ed39-9601-8c74-1146-5554f9e26963/FY2021_Western_PA_CoC_DV_Bonus_RRH_Preliminary_Application_FOR_REFERENCE.01.pdf), so the questions can be reviewed prior to beginning the application in Alchemer.

**Please review the information provided below regarding project type, eligible participants, eligible activities, expectations and requirements of the project recipient, and selection/scoring criteria to be used in the selection of new project applicants.**

**Who is eligible for assistance through the DV RRH project?** Project participants are limited to individuals, families and youth who meet category 4 of the [HUD Homeless Definition](#). Category 4 includes persons fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This also includes persons who are fleeing or attempting to flee human trafficking, including sex trafficking. Additional eligibility information can be found in the [FY2021 HUD CoC NOFA](#).

**What is Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)?** Rapid Re-Housing is a model of housing assistance that is designed to assist people to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, lack of contact with an abusive partner or a PFA, absence of a criminal record or sobriety). Resources and services are provided and tailored to the unique needs of the household. The core components of Rapid Re-Housing include: housing identification, rental assistance and case management/services.

**Is Rapid Re-Housing for DV Survivors a model that is proven to be safe and successful?** Yes! If you are not familiar with this model, the National Alliance for Safe Housing (NASH) has resources on their website that might be beneficial to you at <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/>

**What will the HUD CoC grant pay for?** The HUD grant can be used towards:

- Rental Assistance to assist households with paying their rent.
- Supportive Services Costs: Case management to assist households in obtaining and maintaining their housing. Where possible, applicants are encouraged to leverage existing services provided through your own organization and/or community partners to provide supportive services. In addition, connecting program participants to mainstream benefits is expected. Per 24 CFR § 578.53 Supportive services, eligible supportive service costs include:
  - Annual Assessment of Service Needs
  - Assistance with moving costs
  - Case management
  - Child care
  - Education services
  - Employment assistance and job training
  - Food
  - Housing search and counseling services
  - Legal services
  - Life skills training
  - Mental health services
  - Outpatient health services
  - Outreach services
  - Substance abuse treatment services
  - Transportation
  - Utility deposits
  - Direct provision of services
- HMIS: While Victim Service Providers are not permitted to enter into HMIS, data must be entered into a HMIS comparable database. If your organization has not added the HMIS Program enhancements to your ETO site, this cost can be included under the HMIS Budget Line Item.
- Administrative Costs: Eligible administrative costs are limited to: the general management, oversight and coordination of the grant; training on CoC requirements; and environmental review. Admin costs do not include staff and overhead costs directly related to carrying out eligible activities, as these are eligible under the corresponding Budget Line Items. Please review 24 CFR § 578.59 for more information about eligible administrative costs.

**Are there match requirements?** The grantee must provide a 25% match – either cash or in-

kind. In-kind match, for example, can be any of the eligible services listed above. Match commitments require an MOU and documentation.

### **Are there any special considerations that I need to be aware of?**

- Housing First in a DV Context (or DV Housing First). All projects funded through the CoC are expected to operate in accordance with a Housing First approach, which includes:
  - Participants are not screened out based on the following:
    - Having too little or no income
    - Active or history of substance use
    - Having a criminal record with exceptions for state-mandated restrictions
    - History of domestic violence
  - Participants are not terminated from the program based on the following:
    - Failure to participate in supportive services
    - Failure to make progress on a service plan
    - Loss of income or failure to improve income
    - Being a victim of domestic violence
    - Any other activity not covered in a lease agreement typically found in the project's geographic area
  - The National Alliance for Safe Housing has materials available on their website that further explain Housing First in a DV context. Two specific examples include:
    - Webinar recorded on June 27, 2018 - <https://youtu.be/kFB1TBYij8g>
    - Domestic Violence Housing First Toolkit - <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/node/344>
- All providers are expected to provide tailored services to each project participant, based on the survivor's individual needs, using a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach.
  - Trauma-informed: This includes approaches delivered with an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in staff, clients, and others and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings. Trauma-informed approaches place priority on restoring the survivor's feelings of safety, choice, and control.
  - Victim-centered: Placing the crime victim's priorities, needs, and interests at the center of the work with the victim; providing nonjudgmental assistance, with an emphasis on client self-determination, where appropriate, and assisting victims in making informed choices; ensuring that restoring victims' feelings of safety and security are a priority and safeguarding against policies and practices that may inadvertently re-traumatize victims; ensuring that victims' rights, voices, and perspectives are incorporated when developing and implementing system- and community-based efforts that impact crime victims.
- Per HUD CoC regulation, a minimum of monthly case management is required for

participants in Rapid Re-Housing projects.

- Applicants must follow the [Western PA CoC's Written Standards for providing assistance](#).
- All project participants enrolled must come from the CoC's Coordinated Entry By Name List, a prioritized waiting list.
- Data entry into a HMIS comparable database, including adherence to the data quality and data timeliness expectations outlined within the HMIS User Agreement.
- Applicants will be expected to participate in the monthly meetings of the local Southwest Regional Homeless Advisory Board (RHAB) or Northwest Providers Group. In addition, all applicants must be or must become a member of the Western PA CoC, attend semi-annual meetings of the full CoC, and attend trainings provided through the CoC.
- Programs serving youth and young adults will be expected to coordinate with Advocates for Change, the CoC's Youth Action Board (YAB), in order to provide high quality services to youth and young adults.
- HUD grant management expectations include, but are not limited to:
  - Submission of a timely Annual Progress Report (APR)
  - Draw down funds at least quarterly
  - Expend all grant funds within each 12-month grant period

**How will projects be selected for submission to HUD?** All Preliminary Applications will be reviewed by the Western PA CoC Funding Committee based on the following criteria. Those that are selected for submission will be notified no later than October 21, 2021.

- **Threshold:** to be considered, applicants must:
  - Use a Housing First approach
  - Provide program participants with assistance to access Mainstream Benefits
  - Have experience working with the population to be served
  - A minimum of monthly case management meetings are required as part of the Rapid Re-Housing program. This can be facilitated through mobile advocacy where the advocate or counselor meets with the survivor, in person, at an agreed upon interval and location that works for both the survivor and the grantee.
  - Participate in the Western PA CoC Coordinated Entry System
  - Follow the CoC's written standards for providing assistance
  - Enter data into HMIS comparable database
  - Participate in the RHAB/CoC
  - Ensure that service delivery is trauma-informed, victim-centered and culturally competent
  - Must be in good standing with HUD and PA DCED, with no outstanding monitoring

findings or debts.

- **Selection Criteria:** Projects will be scored based on several factors, including the below listed criteria:
  - Demonstration of need, through both data and narrative.
  - Geographic area: Preference given to regional and/or multi-county projects
  - Capacity of the applicant to implement a regional project, either directly or through partnerships with other organizations throughout the region.
  - Approach to case management, including case management ratio
  - Experience with DV Housing First.
  - Approach for providing supportive services, both through the proposed CoC-funded project and leveraged services from community providers
  - Ability to provide trauma-informed, victim centered services
  - Experience providing trauma-informed, victim centered and culturally competent services to any household qualifying under Category 4 of the HUD homeless definition.
  - Experience providing community-based housing/homeless assistance, either directly or with the assistance of a community partner, including the ability to provide housing search and location services
  - Strategic partnership with community providers.
  - Organizational capacity and experience to ensure successful and inclusive program operation. Specifically, the CoC will determine if the applicant organization has experience serving and improving outcomes for communities that have been historically marginalized (e.g. people of color, LGBTQ+, people that do not speak English as their primary or first language) and experience providing culturally responsive services.
  - Organizational capacity to ensure successful program operation. This includes new organizations not currently receiving CoC-funding, as well as organizations already receiving funds.
  - For current CoC grantees, considerations will include meeting HUD's grant management requirements, implementation of HUD policy priorities such as housing first, as well as performance outcomes of current/previous grants
  - Additional consideration will be given to agencies that have not previously received CoC funding
  - Cost effectiveness of approach

**What is my project budget?** The CoC is eligible to apply for up to \$1,708,642 in DV bonus funding, however, will only apply for the amount of funding needed, based on data presented. While a budget is requested in the Preliminary Application, if your project is selected, the CoC's Funding Committee, reserves the right to approve an amount other than what was requested.

**If I have questions about this who should I contact?** Please contact the Western PA CoC's Consultant (DMA) at [westerncoc@pennsylvaniacoc.org](mailto:westerncoc@pennsylvaniacoc.org).

