Eastern PA Continuum of Care (CoC)
FY2021 Request for Proposals
# NEW Permanent Housing Project

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

The Eastern PA CoC is soliciting Preliminary Applications from agencies interested in applying for new projects to be submitted as part of the FY2021 Continuum of Care (CoC) Application this fall. At this time, the CoC is eligible to apply for up to $784,137 in CoC Bonus funding to create new projects. Additional funding may be available through the CoC's reallocation process.

In the Eastern PA CoC, the eligible program types under the CoC Bonus are limited to:

- **Permanent Supportive Housing Projects serving Chronically Homeless Individuals and/or Families**
- **Rapid Re-Housing projects**
- **Joint Transitional Housing – Rapid Re-Housing Component**
- **Expansion of existing projects**
- **Transition Grants**

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 Eastern PA CoC in the 2021 Continuum of Care national competition. Projects funded by HUD will initially be 1-year grants and will be eligible for annual renewal, dependent on the availability of funding from HUD and program performance.
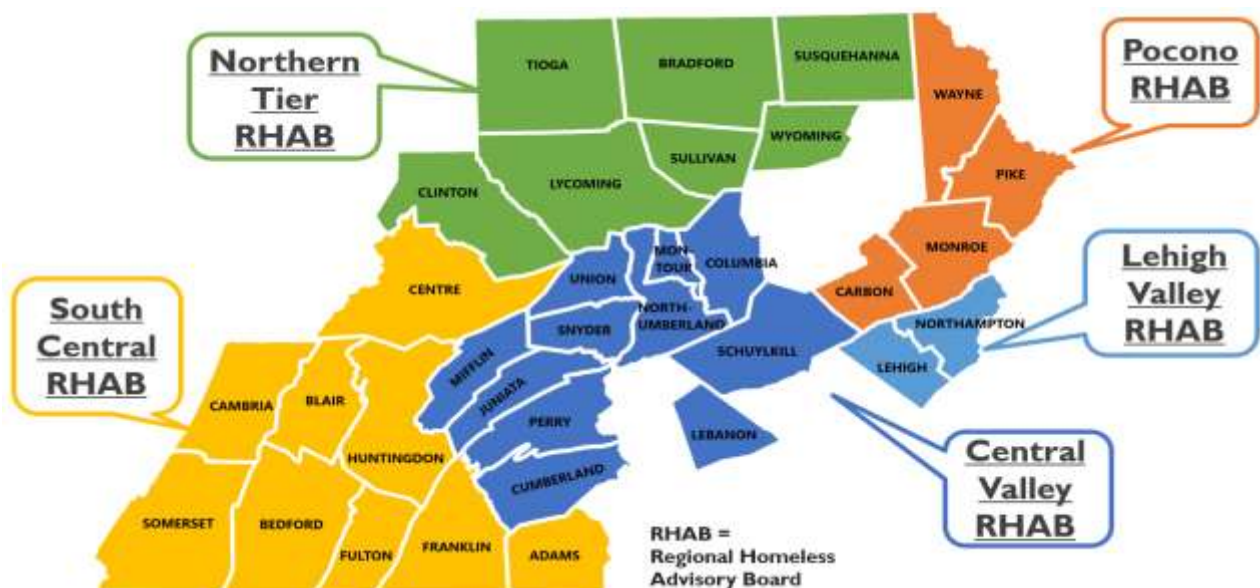
The Eastern PA CoC includes 33 counties located in five regions, represented by Regional Housing Advisory Boards (RHABs):

- Central Valley – Columbia, Cumberland, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Schuylkill, Snyder, Union
- Lehigh Valley – Lehigh, Northampton
- Northern Tier – Bradford, Clinton, Lycoming, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wyoming
- Pocono – Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Wayne
- South Central – Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset

- The CoC is seeking applicants with the capacity and interest in serving multiple counties.
    - Additional points will be awarded to new projects that serve multiple counties. This may include surrounding counties, counties within your Coordinated Entry Referral Zone, or counties throughout the entire RHAB. If applicable, capacity of the applicant to implement a regional project, either directly or through partnerships with other organizations throughout the region
    - New projects seeking to operate solely within their own county must provide clear data to demonstrate the need for a single county project.

> Where can I find more information about how to operate a regional project? The Western PA CoC has developed a frequently asked questions document, which provides input from a provider operating a regional rapid re-housing project. In addition, this provider can provide peer assistance to any new regional projects awarded funding. The FAQ document can be accessed at:
> https://www.dropbox.com/s/jz5qiw2fswqxd4a/Regional%20Projects%20FAQ.docx?dl=0

To apply for a new project, please submit a Preliminary Application by close of business on Wednesday, October 13.

- The Preliminary Application will be submitted via Alchemer (online survey system) at the following link: http://s.alchemer.com/s3/FY2021-New-Project-Application-Eastern-PA-CoC
- You will also be asked to attach a budget using an Excel template provided (also can be found at): https://mcusercontent.com/691833f4d20a0417787b47dbe/files/e98423ae-61f0-a2c5-5e5d-7d54c0c917a9/Eastern_PA_CoC_New_Permanent_Housing_Project_Budget_Form.xlsx, which you can attach/upload in Alchemer.
- A copy of the Preliminary Application is available at https://mcusercontent.com/691833f4d20a0417787b47dbe/files/ec8daf2d-1b62-b3ef-6004-411055d3aaa3/FY2021_Eastern_PA_CoC_New_Permanent_Housing_Projects_Application_FOR_REFERENCE.pdf, so the questions can be reviewed prior to beginning the application in Alchemer.

Additional Information to review prior to submitting a Preliminary Application

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.

What are the goals and priorities of the CoC? As articulated in the CoC's Strategic Plan, we are seeking to reduce homelessness by 50% by 2022. This includes effectively eliminating chronic homelessness and Veterans homelessness, as well as reducing family and youth homelessness by no less than 50% during this timeframe. As such, these are priority populations for the Eastern PA CoC.

In addition, the 2021 Gaps Analysis Webinar included data to demonstrate where the CoC has made investments to address homelessness, where there are needs that exceed the existing inventory, and the types of resources needed to address these unmet needs. Projects that are responsive to these unmet needs will be given priority consideration, in comparison to projects submitted within the same community that are not aimed at addressing these unmet needs. The Gaps Analysis webinar can be accessed at https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/resources/eastern-pa-coc-2021-gaps-analysis.

Who is eligible for homeless assistance under the CoC? Project participants are limited to the categories 1 and 4 of the HUD Homeless Definition. Category 1 includes individuals and families experiencing literal homeless in an emergency shelter or in a location not appropriate for sleeping (e.g. street, tent, car, etc.). Category 4 includes persons fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Under certain circumstances, Category 4 may also include 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.

Eligible Project Types through this RFP:

- Permanent Supportive Housing Projects serving Chronically Homeless Households: Units must be dedicated specifically to individuals and families who meet the chronically homeless definition. When a program participant exits the project, the bed must be filled by another household that meets the definition unless there are no chronically homeless persons located in or seeking assistance within the CoC's geographic area.

    o How is chronic homelessness defined? An individual or family head of household has a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.
        AND
        – Is currently living in a place not meant for human habitation, or in an emergency shelter.
        AND
        – Has been homeless for at least 12 months. This includes:
            ▪ 12 Months Continuous: At least 12 months of continuous

homelessness living in a place not meant for human habitation, or in an emergency shelter;

OR

- 12 Months Cumulative: Has experienced homelessness during at least 4 separate occasions in the last three years, where these 4+ occasions equal a total of at least 12 months.

- Rapid Re-Housing: Rapid Re-Housing is a model of housing assistance that is designed to assist those experiencing homelessness, with or without disabilities, move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Rapid Re-Housing assistance is time-limited, individualized, and flexible.
    o Eligibility for Rapid Re-Housing in the Eastern PA CoC is limited to households qualified under Categories 1 and 4 of the HUD Homeless Definition. This includes those who are:
        – Residing in a place not meant for human habitation;
        – Residing in an emergency shelter or coming directly from the streets;
        – Persons who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking situations.

- Expansion Project: A renewal project applicant may submit a new project application to expand current operations **by adding units/beds, increasing the number of persons served, increasing the intensity or type of services provided** to existing program participants. If both the renewal project and new expansion project are funded by HUD, the FY2021 grant agreement will include the existing and expansion activities, and the combined budget.

- Transition Grant: A renewal project applicant may apply for a Transition grant in order to change the project type, for example from Permanent Supportive Housing to Rapid Re-Housing. This should be considered if the needs within your community have changed and/or if you believe that a different project type would increase the project and system performance outcomes.
    o To create a Transition Grant, the CoC must wholly eliminate one or more projects (through reallocation) and use those funds to create the single, new transition grant.
    o The project applicant will have one year to fully transition from the current project type to the new project type.
    o No more than 50 percent of each transition grant may be used for costs attributed to the current (original) project.
    o Transition grants funded through the FY21 NOFO Competition are eligible for renewal in subsequent fiscal years for activities eligible under the new project type.
    o To be eligible to receive a transition grant, the renewal project applicant must have the consent of its Continuum of Care and meet the standards.

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

- Housing Costs:
  - **Operating funds** to operate a site owned or leased by your agency
  - **Rental Assistance** to assist a household pay their rent;
    - Note: If applying for Rapid Rehousing, Rental Assistance is the only eligible housing cost. It cannot be combined with Operating.
    - Under a Rental Assistance model, the program participant enters into the lease with the landlord and pays 30% of their income to the landlord with the provider paying the balance of rent owed.
  - **Leasing** of a single site or scattered site housing units;
    - Under a Leasing model, the provider enters into the lease with the landlord and has a sublease or rental agreement with the program participant. The provider pays 100% of the rent (up to Fair Market Rent) and the program participant pays 30% of household income to the provider.
  - **Note regarding eligible housing costs:**
    - Permanent Supportive Housing projects may request operating funds, rental assistance, or leasing dollars, depending on the structure of the project. Total housing cost per unit cannot exceed Fair Market Rent.
    - Rapid Re-Housing projects may only request rental assistance. Operating and leasing are not eligible costs under this component type.
  - **Leveraging housing costs:** HUD is providing CoCs with 5 bonus points for submitting Rapid Re-Housing and/or Permanent Supportive Housing project applications that utilize non-CoC resources to cover housing and healthcare costs. Specifically, to receive points for leveraging housing costs in the Eastern PA CoC's new project scoring process:
    - PSH projects need to provide housing subsidies or subsidized housing units for at least 25% of the units included in the project.
    - RRH projects must provide housing subsidies or subsidized housing units to serve at least 25% of the participants in the project.

    These housing resources may come from private organizations, state/local government, Public Housing Agencies, including use of a set aside or limited preference, Faith-Based organizations, and/or Federal programs other than the CoC or ESG Programs. Examples of leveraging housing resources may include: an allocation of Section 8/ Housing Choice Vouchers from your local Public Housing Authority, versus utilizing CoC funding to provide Rental Assistance; an allocation of units at a Low Income Housing Tax Credit building that provides subsidized housing; among other opportunities. See the FY2021 NOFO for more information or reach out to DMA with specific questions.

- Supportive Services Costs: Case management to assist households in obtaining and maintaining their housing.
  - **Leveraging healthcare costs:** HUD is providing CoCs with 5 bonus points for submitting Rapid Re-Housing and/or Permanent Supportive Housing applications that that utilize non-CoC resources to cover housing and healthcare related costs.

Specifically, to receive points for leveraging healthcare costs in the Eastern PA CoC's new project scoring process, applicants must demonstrate that they are housing healthcare resources that are direct contributions from a public or private health insurance provider to the project, or provision of health care services by a private or public organization tailored to the program participants of the project. Note: Eligibility for the project must be based on HUD CoC Program fair housing requirements and cannot be restricted by the health care service provider. As such, the Eastern PA CoC is interested in partnering with organizations that can leverage 25% or more of the project's healthcare/ service needs through community partnerships. Examples of leveraging healthcare services may include: in the case of a substance abuse treatment or recovery provider, it will provide access to treatment or recovery services for all program participants who qualify and choose those programs. Services may also be mental/behavioral health or other types of services. See the FY2021 NOFO for more information or reach out to DMA with specific questions.

- Administrative Costs: To provide funding for your agency to manage the grant including drawing down funds and reporting to HUD.

- More details regarding eligible costs for HUD CoC Program activities can be found in the "Subpart D—Program Components and Eligible Costs" section of the HUD CoC Program Interim Rule: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2033/hearth-coc-program-interim-rule/

What is my project budget? The total amount of new project funding available is not yet known. The CoC has CoC Bonus funding ($784,137) and may have additional funding available through reallocation available to fund new projects. This amount will be reduced to support the need for additional HMIS staffing. 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 the amount requested.

Are there match requirements? CoC funding requires a 25% match – either cash or in-kind. The only exception is that leasing costs do not require a match.

Are there any special considerations that I need to be aware of?
- The Eastern PA CoC's Written Standards include Case Management Standards for all project types. The frequency of case management services should depend on the unique needs and situation of every program participant. Case Managers should be in direct contact with their clients at least once a month. The frequency of direct contact may increase due to the household's homeless status, acute needs, and overall lack of housing stability.

- All CoC-funded projects are required to operate in accordance with a **Housing First approach**: Housing First prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing

and does not have service participation requirements or preconditions. CoC Program funded projects should help individuals and families move quickly into permanent housing, and the CoC should measure and help projects reduce the length of time people experience homelessness. Additionally, CoCs should engage landlords and property owners to identify an inventory of housing available for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing participants, remove barriers to entry, and adopt client-centered service methods. Specifically, this includes

- o This implies that project participants cannot be screened out or terminated from the project, as described below.
    - – 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 project 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

- All project participants enrolled must come from the CoC's Coordinated Entry (Connect to Home) Community Queue.
    - o To learn more about the Eastern PA CoC's Coordinated Entry System (Connect to Home), visit https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/connecttohome/

- All CoC Program funded projects must enter complete, accurate, and timely data into the PA Homeless Management Information System (PA-HMIS). This will include adhering to the data quality and data timeliness expectations outlined within the [PA HMIS User Agreement](). Victim services organizations must enter data into a DV comparable database.

- Applicants will be expected to participate in the meetings of the local Regional Homeless Advisory Board (RHAB) and Coordinated Entry By Name List (BNL) meetings. In addition, all applicants must be or must become a member of the Eastern PA CoC, attend semi-annual meetings of the full CoC, and attend trainings provided through the CoC.

- Applicants will be expected to have the capacity to operate this program in accordance with HUD requirements including:
    - o Submitting an Annual Progress Report (APR) to HUD on time/ no more than 90 days after the end of the grant period

- o Drawing down funds at least quarterly
- o Expending all of grant funds within the 12-month grant period

- Agencies will be expected to comply with the CoC Program Interim Rule. Those unfamiliar with the CoC Program Interim Rule are advised to carefully review "Subpart F—Program Requirements" of the HUD CoC Program Interim Rule: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2033/hearth-coc-program-interim-rule/

Application Review & Selection Information
All Preliminary Applications will be reviewed by the Eastern PA CoC Funding Committee based on the following criteria.

- Threshold: to be considered, applicants must:
  - o Use a Housing First approach
  - o Provide program participants with assistance securing Mainstream Benefits and health insurance
  - o Have experience working with the population to be served
  - o Conduct at least monthly face-to-face case management appointments in the program participant's home or in a mutually agreed-upon community setting. (The CoC recognizes that until the COVID-19 public health crisis abates, applicants will conduct case management appointments according to CDC and local public health guidance.)
  - o Participate in the Eastern PA CoC Coordinated Entry System (Connect to Home)
  - o Follow the CoC's written standards for prioritizing and providing assistance
  - o Enter data into PA-HMIS or DV comparable database
  - o Participate in the RHAB/CoC
  - o Ensure that service delivery is client-centered and culturally competent

- Selection Criteria/Scoring Factors: Projects will be scored based on several factors, including the below listed criteria:
  - o Geographic area: Preference given to regional and/or multi-county projects, unless data is provided to clearly support the need for a single-county project.
  - o Preference will be given to projects located in and/or covering communities that have lost funding due to underperformance and/or underutilization. In the FY2021 new project competition, this includes Lycoming and Monroe counties.
  - o Demonstration of need, through both data and narrative.
  - o Being able to serve all household types (households with children, households without children, and couples)
    - – Note: While single individuals are not a population specifically highlighted within the CoC's strategic plan, data collected through the coordinated entry system has shown a significant demand for homeless assistance among this population. The CoC is interested in funding programs that have the capacity and expertise to serve all household types, including single individuals

(households without children). See data presented on the CoC's 2021 Gaps Analysis webinar.
- o **Strategic partnerships with community providers, including:**
    - – **the ability to document leveraged housing cost (maximum points awarded for 25% or more of your housing costs from community housing partners)**
    - – **the ability to document leveraged healthcare/services cost (maximum points awarded for 25% or more of your budget leveraged from community service partners)**
- o Approach to case management, including case management ratio
- o Approach for providing supportive services, both through the proposed CoC-funded project and leveraged services from community providers
- o Strategy for providing housing search and location services, using either staff funded through the proposed CoC-funded project or services leveraged through other resources or community partners
- o Cost effectiveness of approach, as compared to similar projects within the CoC
- o Experience operating programs with using a Housing First approach
- o Experience providing homeless assistance to all household types
- o Experience providing client-centered and culturally competent services
- o If applicable, capacity of the applicant to implement a regional project, either directly or through partnerships with other organizations throughout the region
- o 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, LBGTQ+, people that do not speak English as their primary or first language) and experience providing culturally responsive services.
- o For current and previous CoC/ESG project providers, considerations will include meeting HUD/DCED's grant management requirements, implementation of HUD policy priorities such as housing first, as well as performance outcomes of current/previous grants
- o Applicant's documented strong performance outcomes with other projects (those who are not current/former CoC/ESG grantees or for whom there is no data in HMIS)
- o Additional consideration will be given to agencies that have not previously received CoC funding

Next Steps if Selected
You will be notified if your project has been selected and your final budget amount no later than October 21. At that time, you will receive instructions for submitting the new project application in [e-snaps, HUD's CoC Program Applications and Grants Management System](). This process will require your organization to have a [DUNS number]() and to be registered with [System for Award Management (SAM).]()

If I have questions about this who should I contact? Send an e-mail to easterncoc@pennsylvaniacoc.org and DMA will get back to you as quickly as possible.