

# Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

## Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care Program Competition Priorities

The Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (TX BoS CoC) Priorities were developed in response to the FY2022 Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness. The CoC Program Competition priorities (listed below) represent components of a strategy to address unsheltered homelessness that are broadly applicable to a community's efforts to address unsheltered homelessness and meet the needs of people with severe service needs.

These priorities reflect essential strategies and components of projects targeted to people experiencing homelessness. Applicants to the FY2024 CoC Program NOFO must align with these priorities. For more information, please see the FY2024 Annual CoC Program NOFO Request for Proposals that is projected to be available during the summer of 2024.

1. Describe a community-wide commitment to the project. Applicants will be asked to identify partners in the development of the application, partners in the administration of the project, and partners in the oversight and evaluation of the project. These partners should include stakeholder groups such as the Local Homeless Coalition (LHC), the Coordinated Entry Planning Entity, persons with lived experience of homelessness, governmental agencies [county government or regional Councils of Governments (COGs) and other cross-sector partners such as Public Housing Authorities (PHA), Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), or Community Development Corporation (CDC). Healthcare partners may include Local Mental/Behavioral Health Authorities (LMHA/LBHA), Healthcare/Hospital Districts, Public Health Departments, or Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHC), or Healthcare for the Homeless (HCH) Recipients. As part of a community-wide commitment to the goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness, application partners must not participate in activities that criminalize homelessness.
2. Leverage additional housing resources in the operation of the project, or leverage additional healthcare resources in the operation of the project.
3. Utilize a landlord recruitment/engagement strategy.
4. Employ staff whose primary function is to assist individuals with their SSI/SSDI applications through the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) process.
5. Describe how the proposed project will implement Housing First principles and practices.
6. Target people who are unsheltered, or with histories of unsheltered homelessness, OR people with severe service needs.
7. Describe how persons with lived experience of homelessness (PWLE) meaningfully contribute to the project design and development of the project and how PWLE will participate in the implementation of projects funded under this NOFO.
8. Describe how the project will identify and serve "underserved" communities, or those communities that have not previously been served by the homeless system at the same rate that they experience homelessness in the community (that is, they are experiencing homelessness in the community, but they are not being served by the homeless services system). Applicants will be expected to follow Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in their work under this NOFO.

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## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development CoC Program Competition Priorities<sup>1</sup>

1. Ending Homelessness for All Persons- In 2022, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) presented All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness to the President and Congress. The plan is built around six pillars: three foundations—equity, data and evidence, and collaboration—and three solutions—housing and supports, crisis response, and prevention. The work funded through this NOFO will support the actions and strategies proposed within the pillars.
2. Use 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 CoCs should measure and help projects reduce the length of time people experience homelessness. Additionally, CoCs should engage landlords and property owners to identify housing units available for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing participants, remove barriers to entry, and adopt client-centered service methods
3. Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness- In recent years, the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness has risen significantly, including a rising number of encampments in many communities across the country. People living unsheltered have extremely high rates of physical and mental illness and substance use disorders. CoCs should work with law enforcement and their state and local governments to eliminate policies and practices that criminalize homelessness.
4. Improving System Performance- CoCs should be using system performance measures (e.g., average length of homeless episodes, rates of return to homelessness, rates of exit to permanent housing destinations) to determine how effectively they are serving people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, CoCs should use their Coordinated Entry process to promote participant choice, coordinate homeless assistance and mainstream housing, and services to ensure people experiencing homelessness receive assistance quickly, and make homelessness assistance open, inclusive, and transparent
5. Partnering with Housing, Health and Service Agencies- Using cost performance and outcome data, CoCs should improve how all available resources are utilized to end homelessness. Including Public/Private Healthcare Organizations, PHAs, Workforce Development and Tribal leaders
6. Racial Equity- In nearly every community, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are substantially over-represented in the homeless population. HUD is emphasizing system and program changes to address racial equity within CoCs. Responses to preventing and ending homelessness should address racial inequities to ensure successful outcomes for all persons experiencing homelessness using proven approaches, such as: developing a coordinated community response created in partnership with a racially diverse set of stakeholders and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/coc/competition](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/coc/competition)

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people experiencing homelessness and partnering with organizations with experience serving underserved populations.

7. Improving Assistance to LGBTQ+ Individuals- Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation manifests differently for different individuals and often overlaps with other forms of prohibited discrimination. CoCs should address the needs of LGBTQ+, transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary individuals and families in their planning processes. Additionally, when considering which projects to select in their local competition to be included in their application to HUD, CoCs should ensure privacy, respect, safety, and access regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation in projects
8. Persons with Lived Experience- The people who know best what solutions will effectively end homelessness are those who are experiencing homelessness. HUD expects CoCs to include people with lived homeless expertise and experience in their local planning and decision-making process
9. Increasing Affordable Housing Supply- The lack of affordable housing is the main driver of homelessness. CoCs play a critical role in educating local leaders and stakeholders about the importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing and the specific consequences of the continued lack of affordable housing. CoCs should be communicating with jurisdiction leaders, including for the development of Consolidated Plans, about the harmful effects of the lack of affordable housing, and they should engage local leaders about steps such as zoning and land use reform that would increase the supply of affordable housing

