

Chris Pitcher: Continuum of Care Competition Debrief, the HUD region six and nine. My name is Chris Pitcher, I'm a HUD TA provider and the regional coordinator for region nine. Please know you can be on mute. However, should you wish to submit a question you can do so in the question pane. Now we'll turn it over to Ebony Rankin from HUD, who will be facilitating today's call. Ebony?

Ebony Rankin: Thank you, Chris. I'm Ebony Rankin, a desk officer at the Office of Special Needs Assistants program at HUD. Thank you for joining us on this call today. In advance of this call, HUD has provided CoC's with some information about the FY2015 competition. We sent out a focus message, which was the FY2015 CoC competition recap that was sent via the HUD Exchange list serve, over last week. And then we also sent the CoC debriefing summary that CoC should have received earlier this week. We will be answering questions at the end of this presentation, as time allows. Please feel free to type your questions in during the presentation. You do not have to wait until the call ends to send in your questions. So, at any time please type in your questions and send them in. We will pick some questions to answer but we'll not identify the person who asked it. We may not get to all the questions, so participants are encouraged to go to the AQ desk at the HUD Exchange website. I will now turn this over to Norm Suchar, director of the Office of Special Needs Assistance Program.

Norm Suchar: Thank you very much, Ebony. So, I want to reiterate again that we'll actually have a fair amount of time for questions. We'll do about 25 to 30 minutes of presentation and then we'll have about 25 to 30 minutes remaining for questions. And again, you can type in your questions in the question box at any time. If you type in a question that we cover later in the process, we'll know that we've covered it and we can skip over it. So, don't be ashamed to go ahead and ask your questions whenever you have them ready.

So, I want to start where we always start with these things which is, the main purpose of the CoC program and why we make the decisions we do, and how we structure the competition. We really focus on trying to meet our goals and Opening Doors of ending homelessness. I think most people are aware by now that there are four major homelessness goals in Opening Doors. Ending chronic homelessness, ending veteran homelessness, ending family and youth homelessness, and setting a path to ending all types of homelessness. And I think this is the key to how we make decisions to how the competition is structured, how we develop our competitive structure, how we develop our regulations, and policies, how we make resource allocation decisions. All of that is really an attempt to try and meet those goals and end homelessness in the fairly ambitious time frames we've set up. And so, I think most people recognize that this year's competition was a lot more competitive than in past years. There were some fairly dramatic changes and that's a reflection of many things that I'll talk about over the next 25 minutes. But mainly, it's a reflection of the urgency of trying to meet our goal of ending homelessness.

I want to do a quick overview of what we've funded in the competition. We awarded a total of \$1.94 billion. It was about 7,600 projects overall. That's actually fewer projects than we've funded in the previous years. But more funding than we've provided in previous years. So, we're funding fewer projects but they're bigger overall. That's I think a result partly of consolidating projects, and also partly, it seems that many communities took this opportunity to reallocate projects from several smaller projects, to create fewer, bigger projects. We awarded about \$260 million for new permanent housing projects, both via reallocation and through the permanent housing bonus. I should say, \$260 million in increased funding for permanent housing projects, but \$160 million of

that was increases in permanent housing and about \$100 million of that was increases in rapid re-housing.

So, we've done some estimates of how many people will be served by all our funding and our estimates are that we will provide housing, including transition housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing to 25,000 more households than we did in 2014. Some of that is because we had increased funding but the majority of that is because we funded projects that tend to be a little more cost-effective and serve more households for the same amount of money.

I think that one of the important ways to understand how we do our competition and the motivations, and sort of the thinking behind the competition is in our policy priorities. So, in the fiscal year 2015, competition, the one that just finished - we had a set of policy priorities that were in our registration notice and we had essentially, the same policy priorities that were reflected in the NOFA. And that really is sort of a way to understand how all the pieces of the NOFA fit together, and the kinds of policy change that the NOFA is trying to drive. So, we...these were the six policy priorities in the registration notice and the NOFA. Resource allocation, meeting the goals of Opening Doors using a housing first approach, and these were reflected throughout the competition, throughout the Continuum of Care application, and the project scoring process.

So, we also in the fiscal year 2015 registration process, we also have our policy priorities listed and if you really want a sense of what's going on with the competition, what are the things your CoC needs to be working on, what will help you advance as a Continuum of care...the policy priorities are the best place to start. We have also been providing in-focus messages that sort of provide support for the policy priorities and so, those are certainly important to read as well.

I want to start by talking about tier one - not start, but start digging into the process by talking about how we approach tier one and tier two projects throughout this process. So, hopefully this is just a refresher for everyone but tier one, we set tier one at 85% of a CoC's annual renewal demand or ARD. So, the starting point for the ARD, the annual renewal demand, the cost of renewing all these existing projects for one year...And tier one was an amount 85% of that. Tier one projects meant that they were safe. So, as long as the project passed threshold requirements and the vast majority of projects did pass threshold requirements - as long as they passed the threshold requirements, the project would be conditionally awarded. So, that's obviously a lower amount than we had been using tier one for in past years, in past years it had been anywhere from 95% to 98%, but this year obviously it was much lower.

So, tier two we treated a little differently than in past years. Tier two projects competed for funding and they competed with all the other tier two projects around the country. So, a CoC could put - for the most part, for most CoC's they could put about 30% of their ARD in tier two. 15% of that is the rest of their actual annual renewal demand and there was an additional 15% available for bonus projects. Now some CoCs that are under their preliminary provided need were actually eligible for a little more bonus funding than that. But for the most part, CoCs could apply for 30% in that tier two. CoCs could put any kind of project in tier one or tier two. Bonus projects could go in either one, different types of projects, where it was placed, whether it was tier one or tier two was entirely up to the CoC and whatever process they used to prioritize projects. And I'll talk a little more about the CoC project level scoring in a couple minutes.

Projects that straddled tier one and tier two, which means part of the project was in tier one and part was in tier two...this year we made an effort to try to create a process where there was no incentive

to sort of, shift projects around to make them fit into a tier. Or to organize them in a special way so that they didn't cross over. We tried to make it so that the CoC's incentive was really to rank the project in order. So, the way we treated tier...projects that straddled, was that we would review the project to make sure it met threshold requirements. And again, the vast majority did. And the tier one portion of the project was automatically going to get a conditional award if it met the threshold requirements. So, tier one was funded.

And then tier two would be reviewed just like any other tier two project. Same scoring criteria, same factor, same everything. If the tier two portions got funded or was selected through the process, then we'd award the whole grant - the tier one and tier two portions. If on the other hand, the tier two portion did not get selected, then we would only award the tier one portion of the project and that assumes that the tier one project would have been feasible. There were a few cases where the tier one amount was so small, a few hundred dollars or something, that it wasn't a feasible project. So, that's how we handled straddled projects -which is a little different than in prior years. We made all the announcements regarding straddle projects with the tier two awards.

So, I'm going to talk a bit about the selection and ranking process for tier two projects. So, the way we scored and selected tier two projects was that we assigned a point value to each tier two project application. And the point value was based on 100 point scale. So, of those 100 points, 60 points were awarded based on the CoC score. And this was just a very straight, proportional scoring. So, you actually just take your CoC score, you multiply it by 0.3 and that give you the amount of points that we applied to your project score. So, if you're CoC score was 100 points then you would get 30 points on every project that was in the tier two of that CoC. So, that was by far the biggest factor. The most important factor in determining whether tier two projects were funded or not. The next factor was how the CoC ranked the project. So, this was a factor worth up to 20 points and the way this worked was the higher a project was ranked in tier two, the more points it would receive. So, if you have a CoC with a lot of projects in tier two, the one at the very top was likely going to get a lot of points, 18 or 19 points depending on how big the project was. The ones at the bottom were going to get only a few points, two or three points. What this did is this ensured that even if a CoC didn't score that great, they could still get some of their higher ranked tier two projects. And even if the CoC did really well they wouldn't necessarily get all of their tier two projects. Very, very few CoC's ended up getting all the tier two projects they could get.

Then we had a score for the type of project and this was worth up to ten points. Several project types received all ten points. If it was a permanent housing project, a safe haven, an HMS project, a transitional housing project that was dedicated to serving youth or a supportive services only project that was dedicated to coordinated entry, then those projects received all ten points. If it was a transitional housing project that was not dedicated to use, the project received three points and if it was a supportive services only project that way not for coordinated entry, then the project received one point. Then the last factor was the commitment to housing first, using housing first practices. This was worth up to ten points and it was based on several factors, including the barriers to entering the project - so if the project had no barriers to entering, then that added to some points. If the project was focused on helping people move into permanent housing as quickly as possible, that was worth some points. If the project used client centered services, practices, including voluntary service models and such, then that helped as well. If a project did all of those things it would get ten points.

Although you don't typically think of a transitional housing or a supportive services only project necessarily as the housing first project, we did apply the scoring to transitional housing and

supportive services only projects as well. So, they were eligible to get these points as well. I want to discuss a little of the factors that led to some CoCs doing very well because there were in fact many CoCs that did very well in the process and as a result, got more funding. So, CoCs that scored well and received increased funding, they did several things. One is that they did a lot of reallocation. They reallocated their lower performing projects and especially transitional housing and supportive services only project. They reallocated those to create new permanent housing or HMIS for coordinated entry projects. So, that was a big factor. The way that CoCs ranked and rated their projects was important to the process and the CoCs that did well really focused on performance criteria to do those ratings and rankings, and use objective criteria. In fact, this was one of the most important scoring elements in the CoC application.

CoCs that did well used housing first practices throughout their project. This was important for project level scoring that effected tier two projects. But it was also really important for the CoC application. The CoCs that did well used housing first throughout their types of project. And then lastly, reducing homelessness was a really important factor throughout the application. So, reducing homelessness is certainly a way that you can score better and really improve your ability to get funding. The CoCs that did well had managed to reduce homelessness.

One of the questions we get a lot and I really wanted to spend some time on this call focusing on, is why certain projects weren't funded. So, there were actually several reasons that projects didn't get funding. There's basically two major categories though. One is the score wasn't very good and the other is that there were certain characteristics of the project that led it to not be funded. So, I'm going to start by talking about some of the CoC things that resulted in poor scores, which led to projects not getting funded. An increase in homelessness is certainly one of the things that led to lower CoC scores and led to projects not being funded. So, again, reducing homelessness is certainly something we're really focused on and something that's really important in the whole process. Some CoCs couldn't describe or didn't have strategies to reduce the length of time individuals experienced homelessness in the community. So, that was a big factor. They didn't have strategies that reduced returns to homelessness and they didn't have strategies to prevent and end homelessness, or those strategies were inadequate in their applications. So, we had a lot of questions related to those things and that affected a lot of CoC scores.

Then now using evidence based practices was another big factor. So, again, there were incentives to increase the amount of supportive housing in the community, to dedicate more units of permanent score housing to chronic homelessness, and to prioritize for chronic homelessness...to increase rapid re-housing, to use housing first practices, to adopt the prioritization notice. There were a lot of incentives in different places to really focus on best practices in the application. And when CoCs didn't do that they tended to score low and it led to a lot of projects not being funded. There were also several project level factors that led to projects not being funded. So, one is that - and this is an obvious one - I was describing earlier the point value for project types. So, clearly, transitional housing projects accepted those dedicated youth and supported services only projects, except for coordinated entry. Those were less competitive. And it turns out that CoCs would have received a lot more funding if they had done more reallocation of those types of projects. That was probably the biggest project level factor that resulted in CoCs losing funding. A lot of projects lost points for not using housing first practices. We estimate that about 80 projects worth about \$9 million overall, would have been funded if they had received the highest housing first score or received maximum points for their housing first score. But because they didn't, they ended up falling below the line.

Then projects that were at the bottom of their CoCs tier two were just unlikely to be funded. Those 20 points for the ranking mattered quite a bit and if a project was at the very bottom of tier two, it was just very unlikely to be funded. We had about 2,300 projects that were submitted as part of tier two and we funded approximately half of those projects. So, there were about a little over 1,100 projects that were submitted and did not receive funding. So, that's a lot of projects.

I want to talk briefly about reallocation because that was a very important part of the application process, to focus on reallocation and do reallocation. This is also, I will say, a focus that is reflected in our appropriation. The congress gives us money every year and they describe what kinds of things we need to be doing with that funding. For the past several years they have been increasingly focusing on us encouraging reallocation, it's also something we support. There's just a lot of incentive to do reallocation. So, reallocation can both allow CoC's to lower performing projects; to create new HIMS coordinated entry projects. It can also eliminate lower performing types of projects. We asked CoCs to really look at both of those factors. On average, CoCs reallocated about 6.7% of their renewals that came in. You can probably compare your CoC to that average to get a sense of whether you were reallocating more or less than other CoCs. But most of the higher performing, higher scoring, and the CoCs that got more money, were above that 6.7% threshold.

CoCs to reallocation created about \$116 million in new projects, including nearly \$50 million for supportive housing, nearly \$50 million for rapid re-housing, nearly \$20 million for coordinated entry, and about \$4 million for HMIS projects. I also want to talk about transitional housing projects. To give you a sense of the change in funding for transitional funding projects, in 2014 we funded about \$325 million in transitional housing. In 2015, we funded a little over \$170 million in transitional housing. So, we're funding slightly over half of what we funded last year. That's obviously a big shift. Of that \$155 million reduction, almost half was reallocated by CoCs. So, they weren't even included in the application. They reallocated those to other activities. And about half were just not selected as part of the funding process.

I will say a quick note about youth transitional housing projects. We did an extra level of analysis on these. There were very few cuts to youth transitional housing projects and actually, we this year, funded more youth transitional housing programs than we did last year. Some CoCs actually took existing transitional housing projects and really refocused them to serve youth instead of other populations. So, clearly we are - we had our encouraging CoCs to reduce transitional housing, but there are some important considerations that I want to talk through. So, we also recognize that there are times or certain transitional housing projects that are operating really well, getting very good outcomes, and I just want to talk through these specific circumstances.

One is that there are a lot of transitional housing projects that are doing recovery activities. And we've reviewed - we've had a chance to look at a lot of these kinds of transitional housing projects that we fund across the country. And I can say that there are some that are just outstanding projects, that are really high quality, getting good outcomes...and there are some that are very poor. They don't get good outcomes and honestly, they're just not good projects and they're not projects that we're super proud to be funding. So, what distinguishes those projects that are really effective from those that aren't? Well, there's several factors and I just want to point everyone to the recovery housing brief. A few months ago we published this brief to really give CoCs a sense of what are the qualities of recovery programs that are really effective?

Now obviously, you should read the brief in its entirety, but there are certain practices like, having extremely low barriers to entry, like people rarely being evicted from those projects, ensuring that

people move to permanent housing when they exit those projects, and that they have really high success rates with permanent housing. Those are all really important factors for those recovery housing programs and it's just hard to say that you should be funding or not funding recovery programs...you should really be looking at each program individually, looking at its outcomes, are the people exiting those programs, exiting to permanent housing, are there a lot of people exiting involuntarily? Which we shouldn't be seeing. Are there barriers to entry if it requires three months of sobriety prior to going into the project? Those aren't the kinds of projects that we should be supporting. So, that's one instance. Those recovery programs...and again, I really encourage you to read the recovery brief. And I believe Ebony has helpfully placed a link to that brief in the chat box.

We also know that CoCs are being very creative, and strategic with their transitional housing programs...and in many cases, using them as short-term crisis programs. So, for example, communities that have a lot of people with experiencing unsheltered homelessness. They're using transitional housing as short-term housing, very low barrier, people are moving quickly into permanent housing from those crisis housing programs. Or they're using them to provide safety to those between domestic violence for as long as they need a safe, secure location. But also when those individuals want to move on and want to move to permanent housing either in that same community or a different community...they are able to provide that. So, we really want CoCs to do this sort of analysis and make sure - again, is it a TH or not a TH program? Is really the first question. It's important to ask those follow-up questions. Is this really serving a need, is it getting positive outcomes, is it helping people move quickly into permanent housing?

Lastly, we are really looking at all types of projects. Here on the slide it says transitional housing programs, but we're looking at all types of projects that are serving youth. Both underage and transition aged youth. So, we're constantly learning, we're reviewing all kinds of research, and you're going to continue to see an evolution in our approach to these programs...so, that's something we're paying a lot of attention to. So, I know there were a lot of projects that weren't funded. We have started providing some information to our field offices about certain topics that will help manage that process. So, for example, if a project was not selected or was reallocated, and funds remaining...those grants can be extended to expand the remaining funds or we can work with your field office to create a more rational spending process. So, instead of the project ending all at once you can more slowly wind it down.

We've provided some information about how the close out process works. We've provided some information about helping people who are being served by those projects, move into other types of projects in the community. And we've also provided some information about restrictive covenants or use agreements, where a project that had previously received funds for acquiring and rehab, or new construction, and so there's the use agreement for 15 or 20 years. We've provided some information about what you do in those circumstances. What I will say is that every project has unique factors, it has these unique characteristics, and the CoC has unique characterizes. So, it's really important that you work with your field office to identify the specific issues you're going to struggle with and need help with. We are working here; we are looking at our other resources as well. Not just the Continuum of Care resources but other resources we have available that can help get through this process. We know that the guidance and information isn't going to cover every situation, but we really want all the projects that didn't get renewed, to make the grant wind down in the smartest way possible.

So, we're going to stop presenting for a while and we're going to open things up for questions. Ebony, I assume some questions have come in already. Let's go ahead and start with the first question.

Ebony Rankin: Yes, we do have some questions that have come in already. The first question is about the FY2016 competition. Can you give us a timeline or a preview of that competition?

Norm Suchar: Sure. That's a very good question. One of the things that I think everyone can agree on is that the 15 awards were later than they really needed to be and we have to accelerate the process significantly. We are going to start this competition earlier than last year. We expect to have the NOFA published in June. I realize June starts next week and the NOFA will not be published next week, but we do expect it to be coming out in the month of June... So, if you have started planning already that's great. If you haven't started having meetings and thinking about how you're going to rank projects and those things, it is absolutely worth starting right away because the NOFA will come much sooner than everyone expects. The timeline is significantly accelerated from last year and that's so we can get the awards out earlier, so we can avoid some of the problems we have because the awards are late.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you. And I just want to let everyone know that the slides would be available on the HUD Exchange. We have a couple questions about scoring. The first one is, are debriefed documents limited information about broad categories? Can HUD provide scoring information for all questions?

Norm Suchar: Thanks. That's a very good question. At this time we don't plan on doing a sort of point by point, summary of the CoC scores. We're working on some additional information. What we've provided so far is we provided some narrative descriptions about some of the general trends we've saw, the CoC scores. We provided a sheet that provided the overall scores in major categories and also individual scores in ten of the high priority questions that we looked at. So, we tried to pick out questions that were sort of - there was a lot of variation in scores, so CoCs could see where they gained and lost. And also, things that are going to be a high priority going forward. We are working on some additional information but we won't be providing that question by question scoring.

Ebony Rankin: And a follow-up to that is, can we request a HUD TA to have a more specific debrief than our FY2015 application?

Norm Suchar: So, that's another good question. The simple answer is obviously everyone can request whatever they'd like and we try to meet every request we can. So, if you have a request like that...you can obviously submit it in the AAQ. We don't plan on doing really super thorough debriefings for this competition. Partly because we are moving very quickly into the next competitor and we recognize the importance of getting this competition on a more rational cycle, and making awards earlier in the year. That limits our time to do some of that debriefing work. Again, we will try to provide more information but if you have specific questions that encourage you to submit them in the AAQ.

Ebony Rankin: We have a question about TH, transitional housing. Are TH projects an important part of the crisis response system? They have a limited number of remaining TH projects in the CoC; however, the CoC prioritizes POH projects in the rating and ranking process. So, what advice can HUD give about how to protect this important part of our system in the future?

Norm Suchar: So, I would frame it slightly differently. The way I think - and the way we've structured the competition, the NOFA, and the incentives in the competition, is really to incentives, prioritizing your best projects in your application. We have tried to create a system and I think in most cases it actually works out this way. Certainly over the long-term it works out this way. That the way to rank projects is to rank your best, highest performing, most important projects at the top and go down from there. So, I understand that there are a lot of important priorities. At the same time, there's just a limited amount of funding and so, CoCs have to make decisions even among very high performing, high scoring, and effective projects. And they have to prioritize among those things. If you're a project applicant and you're trying to figure out, how can I have my project be prioritized...the thing to think about is, am I adding the most, the maximum level of value, am I performing well, am I helping meet the goal of ending homelessness in the community? Those are the kinds of things you should be looking at. Every CoC has an opportunity to sort of rate and rank projects in the manner they choose. We incentivize and encourage looking at things like performance, looking at things like serving the people with the highest needs, and just overall contributions to the outcome of ending homelessness in the community. We recognize that there are a lot of CoCs where there are a lot of high performing projects and they couldn't fit them all in tier one and some of them ended up in tier two. I think this is the challenge of the fact that we have so much more need than we have resources for. We have to prioritize and we're prioritizing the highest performing project. So again, if you're looking at how do I protect this project...really the best answer I can give is that it's just the more you're contributing to the goal of ending homelessness in your community, the more you're serving people with the highest needs, the more you're getting positive outcomes...which means helping people move into permanent housing as quickly as possible...those are the kinds of things that are going to get you a good ranking.

Ebony Rankin: Okay. We have a question about planning projects. Why did HUD decide to fund planning projects at 3% when some CoCs would lose funding for renewal projects?

Norm Suchar: So, that is a great question and so, here was the sort of...the various factors that we considered and worked through. One of the things we have learned over the past several years of running the competition and just in our work with communities is that there are a lot of communities who lack the capacity to do some of the things that going forward, we're going to need to be able to do to end homelessness. For example, they lack the capacity to really do good performance based analysis of their project. They lack the ability to good planning of and organization of their resources...for example; I think a lot of CoCs have struggled to put together coordinated entry processes. A lot of CoCs, in fact, most CoCs I would say are struggling to get useable data out of their HMIS that they analyze and use to actively manage their system of homelessness in their communities.

So, those are things that are vital in moving forward and ending homelessness. When we look at communities that are exceeding, that are reducing their numbers...they all are - they have really robust systems of analysis, of data, coordination, of really organization their homeless assistance, of managing performance, managing individual projects. Those activities are very robust. And you actually see that I think, in the CoC scores that a lot of the ones at the top actually have a lot of investment in that infrastructure. I think that's reflected a lot in the communities that are successfully reducing homelessness. We felt it was crucial to fund that activity. And one of the things we've noticed in prior years when communities have had to make the choice of whether to fund that kind of infrastructure or just provide as much for existing projects as they possibly could...that they chose the latter. Even though if we're going to make long-term progress on ending homelessness...we need that investment in that infrastructure. So, that was sort of the motivation

behind that. I think again, this was really motivated by what we've witnessed in communities that are succeeding, what we think it's going to take to end homelessness in this country.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you. And we have a question about HMIS. Are CoC losses some of this funding in the FY2015 competition...what information can HUD provide to assist our CoC to maintain its HMIS capacity?

Norm Suchar: So, that's a very good question and unfortunately, it's not one that there's a one answer to. The answer's going to be different in every community. This is something where you should work with your field office. You can also request some technical assistance from us. This is an area where we're very interested in helping those CoCs that lost HMIS grants, and we'd like to be able to help with that. Unfortunately, it's hard to give an answer because the circumstances are different and unique in every community. But we really strongly suggest that you request some help and we're ready and happy to help you work through that.

Ebony Rankin: Okay, so we'll switch to domestic violence. We have a question that says, we have received conflicting messages about effective strategies to address domestic violence. What evidence does HUD have about what models are most effective to serve survivors of domestic violence?

Norm Suchar: That's a fantastic question. So, I wouldn't claim that we have all the answers but a few things are becoming very clear. One is that people in domestic violence need a safe place to go. But that's...I think we too often just stop there and that becomes the answer. And what we've witnessed is that a lot of survivors, a lot of people flee domestic violence. They get trapped in programs because there's no help to help them move to permanent housing, either in a different community or in their own community to help them work on safety issues, those kinds of things. We have noticed there's a lack of that kind of assistance, some people move out of domestic violence shelters and as a result, we have domestic violence shelters and domestic transitional housing programs. Where people are staying longer than they want to and I think this was something we were very sensitive too. I know we have been looking at some of the research on the value of things like graphic re-housing and housing subsidies for people fleeing domestic violence, it's very compelling. There's some research in the northwest. There's a study that was done by numerous entities including the Centers for Disease Control on the value of housing stability after domestic violence. It's very compelling. So again, like most populations there isn't one answer. There's certainly a need for safe and confidential locations for people fleeing domestic violence to stay. There's also a need to help people move to permanent housing and as quickly as possible, helping them integrate into those new communities they're moving into. So, we I think funded some very exciting rapid refunding projects that are going to serve domestic violence victims, and in support of projects as well.

Ebony Rankin: And as a follow-up to the domestic violence question, how has HUD worked with other federal partners to help combat homelessness amongst domestic violence victims?

Norm Suchar: So, that's another great question. So, we actually have - we've entered into an interesting partnership with some of our other federal partners to provide some technical assistance related to domestic violence. I don't have all the details here at my fingertips but you should be seeing some more materials from this domestic violence technical assistance contortion, and some more activities. On the technical assistance side, we have some collaborations going. We also have numerous working groups within the federal infrastructure to end homelessness on for example, on

[inaudible 00:45:22] is a big part of that and some of our other working groups. And so, there's actually a lot of stuff going on at the federal level. I know it's sometimes hard to see that at the local level. Hopefully this work will start becoming more and more noticeable as we go forward but we do have a lot of stuff going on in the interagency space.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you. We have a question about reallocated grants. A project in our CoC was reallocated from TH to rapid re-housing. Can the current TH clients be moved to rapid re-housing directly or do we have to exit them to the streets?

Norm Suchar: That's a good question. The obvious answer here is that there's a third choice - which is the TH programs were designed to help people move into permanent housing. Obviously that would be the ideal situation. In general, TH participants are not eligible for rapid re-housing. There are some exceptions to that and they are too numerous and complicated to go through on this call. I'd strongly encourage you to work with your field office on this because there are certain scenarios. We actually have an FAQ related to this topic and we'll try to get that out to everyone, that will sort of help you understand some of the scenarios where people will be eligible. It's a little too complicated to talk about on the call but please work with your field office and there's a lot of flexibility. Hopefully there's also the opportunity to help people move to permanent housing straight from the transitional housing program.

The other thing I would say is we are looking at a lot of our other programs. One specific one is the home program. This is a program run by our Office of Affordable Housing programs here at HUD and one of the things it can do is provide rental assistance for people. Home is a program that's operated; it's one of the consolidated plan programs. It's by a city or state, although it varies from place to place. So, helping people exit transitional housing to permanent housing using home resources is also something you can potentially look at as an option. Work with your field office and I think you can do much more problem solving at that level.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you. And a question about a 20 year use requirement. If we have a tier two project that had a 20 year youth requirement but was not funded, what obligations do we have to fulfill the youth requirement?

Norm Suchar: So, that's a good question. You still do have an obligation to fill the youth requirement but we have a lot of flexibility that we're trying to offer people. I would suggest that you work with your field office on that because there are a lot of different options. We can look at other ways to use the property to provide assistance to people with homelessness. In most communities there's a lot of different needs. There's hopefully an opportunity to use that in another way but we have other options as well. The key here is to work with your field office and start problem solving, and I think they can offer some options, and hopefully one of them will work.

Ebony Rankin: Okay, we have a question about HIMS. Another question about HIMS. Given that a CoC's capacity to effectively address homelessness includes a functional HIMS, why isn't there a similar set aside given to HIMS like CoC planning?

Norm Suchar: So, that's a good question. The challenge with HIMS is that different communities have such different approaches to supporting their HIMS. In some communities there are local resources that can cover it and they don't want to or need to use their CoC funds for that purpose. In some places, there are statewide HIMS programs, so it's not just one CoC but there's a statewide infrastructure. In some places they use portions of each grant and recipients are each contributing in

it. In some places they're taking advantage of dedicated grants. So, as we've been looking into this we can't sort of see a natural way and a way that wouldn't have these ramifications and all these other problems. We couldn't find a natural way to really approach that in the same way. I will however say that we think HIMS is massively important and we strongly encourage CoCs to prioritize HIMS and make sure they have a strong, healthy HIMS that is providing good data, and that they have the capacity to do a lot of the analysis that it takes to really manage the homelessness assistance programs in the community using HIMS data. So, again, we have looked at different options for creating a special set aside. It's tough given that there are so many different ways that CoCs approach HIMS. But we absolutely think it's an incredibly important priority.

Ebony Rankin: We have a housing question. Does HUD plan on using the same housing first criteria that it used for projects in 2015?

Norm Suchar: So, until the NOFA is out we can't really talk about the specific things in the NOFA. I will say the registration notice has the description of our overall policy priorities. I would point out that Housing First is one of those priorities in the registration notice. I'd encourage everyone to go ahead and read that. I really can't talk about the specific point structure of the NOFA until we publish it.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you. I have a question about rating and ranking. Will HUD be providing guidance on how CoCs can conduct effective evidence based efforts, to conduct ratings and rankings?

Norm Suchar: That's also a great question. This is a very good series of questions here. I think either you're just picking the good ones or we have a lot of insightful people on the car today. But we are actually working on a document that will try to pull out some of the more effective ranking tools that we saw in the last competition. We are trying to get that done as quickly as we can. So, we are trying to provide guidance on that. I will say a few things though. I think there are certain things that you can just assume are part of a good process. Does our project serving people with the highest needs? So, if projects are screening out people because they have long histories of homelessness, they can't screen out people because of disability... Or if they are screening out people because they don't have enough income or don't have a good enough employment history or things like that...those are problems. And hopefully those are reflected in CoCs ranking processes. We also expect to see good outcomes on people exiting to permanent housing and exiting as quickly as possible. Looking at those permanent housing outcomes is really, really important. Looking at the cost effectiveness of programs is also really important. Whereas one project could be re-housing people for an average of \$10,000 a household. Another could be doing it for \$5,000 a household and they're serving the same types of households, that's something you may want to take into consideration in your ranking process. So, those are some of the factors that I think are really important to consider. But again, we are also working on a document looking at the existing ranking tools and pointing out some of the features of the more effective ranking tools. And we'll try to get that out as quickly as we can.

Ebony Rankin: Okay, we have an affordable housing question. Given the markets across the country, how can CoCs with limited affordable housing and tight rental markets, expect to decrease homelessness?

Norm Suchar: Well, that's a great question. It is I will say, very challenging. And we know it's very challenging. So, this is something we are spending a lot of time on. We're working with some

communities with exceptionally high customer markets. We're doing a lot of work inside the department on the affordable housing problems. And solutions to affordable housing problems. So, part of the answer is that HUD is more than just the homeless assistance programs. Part of the answer is really working with your PHAs. I think people probably noticed that there were some more robust questions related to PHA partnerships, and the PHA engagements in the applications. So, that's certainly part of the answer. Part of it is working with your localities on fixing things like investing more in affordable housing, fixing zoning problems that prevent affordable housing from being created, things like that. There's a lot of stuff to do but I don't want to overlook the fact that this is extremely challenging and we know that it's really challenging. We know that we'd be making a lot more progress on homelessness if we didn't have all - essentially, a massive affordable housing headwind that is making it hard to do what we need to do. So, we certainly recognize that. We're hoping to work with communities to make as much progress on that as we can.

Ebony Rankin: Thank you and we have another question. Do you have any further guidance on how to incorporate DV victims into coordinated entry while still maintaining client confidentiality and safety?

Norm Suchar: So, that's a great topic and I think that's something people have been working on for a while. There are actually some good solutions out there. I will point to, I know the National Alliance on Homelessness has done some materials on this topic and we're working on some technical assistance materials related to this topic. I think the answer is that you have to be a little creative about how people are...how you keep track of people on your coordinated entry list, or however you're keeping track. For example, one of the things I've seen communities do is really, they'll have an assessment process, it's often conducted by a DV provider and they don't send any identifying information to the coordinated entry prioritization. Either people or process, however that process works. They're sending unidentified information and in batches such that it's not going to identify individuals. But they are keeping track, there's an identifier and only the DV provider knows the identifier. The identifier is just linked to the DV provider and when that person's prioritized for something, the coordinated entry process will notify the DV provider and then they work together to make that connection. You don't ever need to exchange identifying information. I know that was a very quick summary of that but I think there are some other materials out there and we're working on some materials as well to help solve that. But certainly really an important topic.

So, I want to close by saying a few things about moving forward. But before I do, I want to thank everyone for going through this process with us. I know that this competition was a really tough one. CoCs had to make very challenging decisions and a lot of providers had to make very tough decisions. And clearly, a lot of providers are having projects that they've operated for a long time, just not get funded. We know that it's very disruptive in communities. At the same time, I don't want to overlook the fact that we saw some CoCs that did amazing things. They really stepped up to the challenge of this process. They did amazing work reallocating resources. They did amazing work on reorganizing their assistance to better end homelessness. We saw a lot of increased focus on housing first processes. We saw some really incredible applications and there's some incredible things being done. I know that this doesn't just happen or it isn't just about good writers, but there are people working hard every day to do this. I just wanted to express the degree to which we - it was very apparent to us that a lot of work went into these and a lot of positive change is happening in communities. In these kinds of things we often focus on the problems but I want to recognize that there is a lot of good stuff happening and I'm very excited about seeing progress in a lot of communities that we've been following.

So, I also want to say a word about the work our field offices have been doing. This has been a really, an increase in their workload and they have really been working hard to work with individual projects, work with CoCs to make...to either wind down projects, or come up with creative solutions to the projects people are having and I just want to recognize how well they've done and how important they are to this whole process. Lastly, I just want to talk about moving forward and the things to focus on moving forward. Again, this competition is really about how do we get closer to ending homelessness? And so, our hope is that the things a community needs to do to end homelessness are the same things that they need to do to score well in our application and to get resources through our application. Those things that CoCs really need to work on going forward... Reducing homelessness is just the most important thing. So, if you're focused on strategies that are working to reduce homelessness that is incredibly important going forward. Looking at the performance of individual projects and your system as a whole is extremely important moving forward. In the next competition, CoCs will be sending out system performance measures for the first time. So, being able to look at that system performance and improve that system performance is really important. Then looking at project by project, how well people are performing and contributing to your goals, is really important. Taking advantage of reallocation, again...very, very important going forward. Certainly a big focus of the competition. We know there was a lot of focus on reallocation. We still think there's more to do but also, it's just...something that CoCs should always have ready to use. Even when you have a lot of high-performing projects in your CoC, we're always learning more and always looking for opportunities to make those great portfolios and projects even better.

Always looking at reducing barriers to make sure we are serving people with the most significant needs, the most significant barriers to exiting homelessness, and really targeting our resources to people who need help the most. So, again I want to thank everyone for joining the call. I want to thank our field offices, our CoCs, our recipients, all our other partners. I want to especially thank our staff here at the office, and thank you for joining the call today. I hope everyone has a great day and that concludes the call