

HOME-ARP Webinar Series: Homeless System Overview Transcript (7/1/21)

Speaker 1:

Welcome. Thank you for joining today's conference, Home ARP Planning Webinar Series, Homeless System Overview. Before we begin, please ensure that you have opened the WebEx Chat panel by using the associated icon that's located at the bottom of your screen. Please note that all audio connections are muted at this time. You may submit a written question throughout the presentation, and these will be addressed during the Q&A.

To submit a written question, select everyone from the drop-down menu that's in your chat panel. Enter your question that's in the message box provided and then send. If you require any technical assistance, please send a chat to the event producer. With that, I'll turn the conference over to Ginny Sardone. Please go ahead.

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Ginny, you're on mute. I'm sorry, but we can't hear you.

Ginny Sardone:

Oh, I'm so sorry. I did hit the mute button.

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Now, we can.

Ginny Sardone:

Not an auspicious beginning. Can you hear me now?

Speaker 1:

We can hear you now.

Ginny Sardone:

Great, thank you. Okay, let me try this again. Good afternoon, everyone or if you're out west good morning. Welcome to the first in a series of four webinars to help prepare HOME participating jurisdictions, continuum of care and other housing and homeless providers to the launch of the Home American Rescue Plan Program later this year. My name is Ginny Sardone. I'm the director of HUD's Office of Affordable Housing Programs.

For the past three months OAHP has been working diligently to develop the policy and the technical assistance necessary to launch this important new program. Along the way, we've been working very closely with HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs or SNAPs, which provided us with invaluable advice and guidance. Slides please. Thanks. Okay. OAHP worked closely as well with Abt Associates, a technical assistance provider in HUD's community compass TA program to develop this webinar. Our presenters from Abt today are Joyce Proof McAlpine, Principal Associate and Dusty Olson Associates, in addition, HUD staff from my office, the Office of Affordable Housing Programs, and Brent

Edser from the Special Needs Assistance Programs Office are joining us to answer questions in the chat. Slide please. Thanks.

The American Rescue Plan provided \$5 billion to be administered through HUD's HOME program to assist individuals and households in several qualifying populations that include homeless, at risk of homelessness and other vulnerable populations. HOME was chosen as the vehicle for this funding, because it's primarily a construction program and that was the main intent of appropriating the HOME-ARP funds. HOME-ARP authorizes for eligible activities, development of housing, provision of tenant-based rental assistance, provision of supportive services, and acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter in order to equitably reduce homelessness and increase housing stability nationwide.

HOME-ARP is not the HOME program, the ARP statute gave HUD authority to suspend many home statutory provisions and establish alternative requirements necessary to expedite the use of funds.

HOME-ARP includes two activities from the regular HOME program and two activities that are brand new. As a result, HUD is exercising significant discretion in designing the HOME-ARP program that will be implemented via a notice later this year. While this discretionary authority is a positive thing for the program, it may prove frustrating to our participants today because it means we're very limited in terms of the questions that we can answer about the HOME-ARP program. So, while we will attempt to answer questions in the chat, it is likely that we will not be able to address many of the questions you submit. We're prohibited from disclosing any pre-decisional information. In other words, we cannot address any policy that involves the use of HUD's discretionary authority. Nevertheless, please feel free to ask questions in the chat as this will help us prepare FAQs and design technical assistance once the notice is published. Slide please. Thank you.

Before we begin, let me say a few words about this webinar series. This is the first of a series of four pre-notice webinars. While HUD cannot disclose much of what will be contained in the notice, we can help HOME participating jurisdictions, continuums of care (CoCs) and other state and local HUD grantees and interested parties to begin thinking strategically about the best use of HOME-ARP funds being made available in their communities. A key to this is getting the right people in the room to identify unmet housing needs and needs for services for the qualifying populations, developing relationships where they may not have existed before, and making decisions about using this one-time funding source in a way that makes permanent improvements in your community and in the lives of these vulnerable populations. PJs and their partners, our intended audience today. If you are an individual experiencing homelessness and need assistance, you can find a local contact for assistance at the link on the screen. Slide please. Thank you.

The agenda for today's webinar is showing on the screen. In just a moment, I'll turn the webinar over to Joyce and Dusty to review the nature and extent of the homeless problem in the United States, to provide an overview of the continuum of care and the structure of governance functions and responsibilities of the CoC. We will have time for questions at the end of the webinar. Our focus today will be on the material covered in the webinar. Again, because the HOME-ARP notice is in development, we may not be able to respond to questions that are about specific HOME-ARP policy use or activities. Slide please.

The three remaining webinars in the series have been scheduled and the opening of registration will be announced on the new HOME-ARP listserv. So if you haven't signed up for that listserv, please do so. In

the second webinar, we will provide a very brief overview of HOME-ARP and talk about the need to plan with equity in the forefront and discuss the initial steps in a community planning process. The third webinar will outline the remaining steps in the community planning process. The fourth webinar will highlight some successful projects and approaches that HOME PJs could consider replicating with their HOME-ARP funds. Together these webinars will help PJs get ready to develop and submit the substantial amendments to their action plans for HOME-ARP funds once the notice is released. Slide please.

So today we're going to be taking several polls. For our first poll, we'd like to know who's with us on the webinar today. Please take a moment to answer this poll while I move onto a few housekeeping items. Slide please. Thank you.

Today's webinar is being recorded and it will be posted on the HUD exchange for later viewing. We have a very large group with us today. All participants will be muted throughout the session. If you need to call into the session, the information is on the slides, the phone number, and the access code. Please submit questions about session materials or ask for help with technical issues in the chat. Now I'm going to turn it over to I believe Joyce is going to start who will share the poll results. Thank you. Joyce?

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Thanks, Ginny. Hi. I'm Joyce Probst McAlpine from Abt associates. I'm glad to be with you today to talk about continuums of care as partners in the HOME-ARP planning process. We're going to let this poll go for about 10 more seconds. So, if you haven't told us who you're representing on the call today, please go ahead and indicate that and submit your answer. I think we're ready to publish it. Is that right?

Speaker 1:

We're still waiting on a few more people to submit, we got about 15 seconds.

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Great. I see that somebody said they actually are representing more than one of these different activities. So that's great. It's so good to see so many HOME participating jurisdictions on the call with us today. We really are looking forward to talking with you about continuums and people experiencing homelessness and the kind of planning process you can get started with these new funds. Next slide please.

So, we're going to start out by just a couple of slides about the number of people experiencing homelessness. Every January continuums are required to conduct a point in time count to capture, to account the number of people experiencing homelessness in one night in their communities. The data from their January 22, 2020 point in time count is the most recent data you have. Of course, this is before the pandemic and the economic downturn, which is still ongoing, and we don't have an understanding yet of what the impacts of homelessness will be.

This data is the best data we have. For now, it's not perfect, because counts always miss people. But it gives us an idea of the scope and scale of the problem. As you can see on that night in January, there was more than half a million people who are homeless. The largest group of those people were single adults, about 70% of the people counted and families were about 30% of the people. So, people and families were about 30% of the people counted, and unaccompanied minors were less than 1%. Next slide please.

As we look at this national data, your local continuum of care has this data and much richer data as well for your local community. So, as you start your planning process, looking at data is a great place to start to understand the nature of the problem in your community. So, this is trends and point in time count data going back to 2007. You can see that, in the early 20 teams, we were going down with 2016 at the lowest point, where about 550,000 people experienced were counted as experiencing homelessness on that night. But since then, we've had an increase in the number of people counted in January. That increase has really been in unsheltered homelessness. So sheltered homelessness has declined over that period of time. But unsheltered homelessness, as we probably all know from your communities in the news has gone up 50,000 in the last four years. Next slide please.

So now that we've looked at the overall number of people experiencing homelessness, let's look at the characteristics of that group. If we look at age, about 20% were under 18. These are almost all people in families, children and families as we saw in the earlier slides Then we have a small group about 8%, who are what are considered transition age students, between the ages of 18 and 24. Many communities are developing specific programs for this group.

Then the largest group are people over the age of 24. When we look at gender, the largest group is males, who are about 60, 61% of the total. This is really reflects that single individual dominance of homeless people, many of those people are single men. So, when we look at the race and ethnicity of people experiencing homelessness, there are several groups that are disproportionately impacted by housing instability and homelessness, particularly black and indigenous people. Here, we can see that where the rate of or the proportion of people who are black in January 2020 were a 39%, compared to black people who make up 13% of the American population. So, a very disproportionate representation for black people, indigenous people, also are overrepresented in people experiencing homelessness. Sorry. I'm just making the chat go away.

So, cities in the last few years have been looking at these disparities and adjusting their system and trying to increase equity in their system. We will talk about this a little bit more on this webinar and more in the following webinar about ensuring that your planning process is addressing the disparities in the homeless system wherever you are, and that the projects that are developed increased equity in both who's being served and the outcome. So CoCs collect a lot more data than what we're looking at here, data on characteristics and circumstances of people experiencing homelessness. Some of those groups include youths, veterans, people fleeing domestic violence and sexual assault, and people who are chronically homeless. Many continuums have programs and systems and programs that are addressing the needs of those particular group, which may be something that will be an important part of your discussion about the priorities for HOME-ARP funding. So, with this, I'm going to turn it over to destiny to talk about continuums of care.

Dusty Olson:

Hello, thank you so much, everybody being on today. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the continuum of care, which is the primary focus of today's webinar, the first of our series of four. We really want to introduce community partners that HOME participating jurisdictions may just be already working with. We know that a lot of communities, the HOME participating jurisdiction and the CoC are already engaged in very comprehensive planning. Hopefully that this information in the webinar today helps to strengthen your existing relationship and prepare your community to plan together for the release of the HOME-ARP funding. So, the focus of what we're going to talk about today is a really

around what generally a continuum care looks like. But these are somewhat unique from community to community. So, everything will be general guidelines, but there may be things that are unique to your community.

A continuum of care is the planning body made up of stakeholders, with the interest in preventing and ending homelessness across a defined geographic region, the planning bodies responsible for establishing an operating system to provide crisis housing and services to people experiencing homelessness. The components and activities of the continuum of care are defined by HUD as a requirement to receive multiple types of federal funding to address homelessness. They are tasked with ensuring that a system can respond to homelessness by housing the most vulnerable people in the community. This includes people that have significant barriers to housing, such as behavioral health, limited or no income and long histories of homelessness. So there is some overlap between those people that continuum of care is designed to serve and that people that home participating jurisdictions serve. But they're not a direct correlation. So we're going to talk a lot about that today.

This system is also responsible for supporting people to prevent a return to homelessness by offering a network of supportive services and available to people once they've been housed to just case management, crisis intervention and connection to mainstream services. So, we really are looking at both housing people quickly and maintaining housing through assistance.

The term continuum of care is often used or CoC as you'll hear it abbreviated, and we'll abbreviate it throughout this presentation, has a specific meaning, but it's also used in the homelessness response context, things like the CoC governing board, maybe just defined as the MOC sometimes. The collaborative applicant may be defined as the CoC, the geographic area that the CoC serves may be defined as the CoC and a specific program. So, all of these terms are somewhat used interchangeably.

So, we are going to be talking about the technical pieces of the CoC. But as you're engaging in your community there may be other terms that you hear that CoC is synonymous with. The primary purpose of a continuum of care is to operate the CoC and maintain that system to designate and operate the HMI system which is the homeless management information system, and to plan. That planning really includes promoting a community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness through engaging diverse stakeholders and collaborative decision-making. Most continuums conduct regular strategic planning and make recommendations about how to allocate resources.

So, we're going to talk about some guiding principles that CoCs use and to plan their work and to move forward the response to homelessness within their community. We're going to talk about each of these individually. The CoC must be housing focused, an effective homeless system has to focus on housing. Homelessness is solved by housing. It's true that crisis intervention has a visible impact. So, it's often what people first think of when they think of responding to homelessness, but without housing to create flow out of your system, out of their shelter and other crisis interventions, it's expensive, inefficient, and most importantly, prolongs people's dramatic experience of homelessness.

So CoCs have to be focused on what are all of the needs to be met in the system including housing. Continuums are encouraged to adopt the housing first approach, which means that people can access housing without any prerequisites such as sobriety, income requirements, or mandatory services. The philosophy is that people's needs are best addressed once someone has stabilized in housing rather than as prerequisites prior to earning the right to be housed. People are most effectively engaged in

services when the services are voluntary. They can choose to participate or not, rather than being mandated as a condition of their housing.

Black, indigenous and people of color communities are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in every community across our country. It is essential that CoCs understand who is becoming homeless and how they're being served by the system that they're creating. Often, we think that that is about analyzing mostly exits to permanent housing and other destinations. But it's important to look at performance metrics across the system in conjunction with each other such as length of time homeless and returns to homelessness all by race and ethnicity.

Because even if an ethnic group or a BIPOC community is exiting to permanent housing at a rate that is equitable, when you look at that, in the intersection of length of time homeless or returns to homeless, you may see significant disparities in there that are not available only if you look at exits. The CoC must be doing system planning to address those disparities by adjusting their policies and procedures. So, the data analysis has to contribute to effective system planning. In order to do this effectively, BIPOC representatives, both from the community and people with lived expertise of homelessness must be included in system planning and program design so that they are able to help inform the solutions to meet the needs of this issue impacting their community.

Another value of CoCs is ensuring access for the most vulnerable. Most CoCs, and I would probably venture to say all CoCs, don't have enough resources to house everyone that is experiencing homelessness within their community. Unfortunately, that means that there has to be a way to determine who gets those scarce resources. For CoCs, that's become the coordinated entry process that can help communities prioritize the most vulnerable for the available resources. Vulnerability is often defined by disability, length of time homeless, other individual characteristics. But each community can develop a local definition of vulnerability when they design their coordinated entry system and there to ensure that their community's most vulnerable are housed.

Many CoCs are working to ensure that their coordinated entry process results in an equitable access to housing. Coordinated entry does not automatically ensure equitable access. Equity needs to be intentionally designed into the system. CoCs need to understand how their community, their BIPOC community particularly, what their experience of housing instability and homelessness is, and how that varies across racial groups. They need to explore the information about how the interventions are serving individual communities and develop a strategy to increase equity through their planning process. CoCs are charged with developing a community wide strategy. They're responsible for coordinating community funding and services to assist people experiencing homelessness.

In addition to the allocation of the HUD funding that the CoC is directly responsible for, CoC should advocate for alignment of all regional investments to strategically, it's such a hard word for me, strategically respond to homelessness, such as city and county general funds, state resources that may be dedicated to homelessness, philanthropic dollars, and other federal funding that comes from HUD, the VA, the Department of Justice, and other federal departments. By effectively coordinating these resources and aligning them to a strategic vision, you are more likely to have each individual source be impactful as a whole than each individual entity.

Effective CoCs also developed targeted partnerships with providers of housing, employment, healthcare, public benefits and other services to ensure that the homeless response is aligned with the other social

welfare responses and other systems of care within a community because there's often a lot of overlap between the people that are served by the continuum of care and the people that are served by these other systems.

The last value is about using data to improve system performance. HUD expects continuums to understand who's experiencing homelessness in their community and how the homeless system is meeting their needs, and to improve their system using data and performance improvement strategies. CoCs are expected to establish project level performance targets to allocate CoC funding. Those can be specific to each community. So those might be different across continuums. They're expected to develop and monitor community performance metrics. Most continuums have dashboards available too so that the community can review those metrics. They're expected to conduct and analyze any annual gaps assessment to guide the investments in the system. They're expected to analyze performance disaggregated by race and ethnicity to identify any disparities in their system and respond to them accordingly. I'm going to turn it back over to Joyce.

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Thanks, Dusty. So now that we've talked about the purpose of continuums of care, let's talk more about the structure, staffing and governance. Next slide please. So, continuum for not all organized the same way, their geography and structure varies widely, and it can be just a single county or a city. It could be statewide. It could be all of the portions of the state that don't have a designated CoC. Those would be balanced of state CoCs. So, it varies a great deal. We've posted in the chat a link to the CoC context chart on the HUD exchange. So, if you're not sure who your CoC is, you can go ahead and look that up on HUD exchange.

In many cases, the HOME PJ's geography is not going to match the CoC's geography. This will you know be a many to one or one to many situations where in some cases, there'll be multiple PJs for one CoC. I know that's true in LA. In other cases, there'll be more than one CoC in a PJ's geography.

The PJ is going to need to work with their local CoC to identify community priorities for HOME-ARP. That may involve either coordinating with PJ's because you are in geography where there's one CoC, and they're helping you understand the priorities. But there's multiple HOME PJs with HOME-ARP funding. Or you may be in a situation where the HOME today has a larger geography, there's multiple CoCs. In that case, determining how to strategically allocate projects across the various CoCs to respond to the local needs. So being in touch with your local continuum is the first step so you get a better understanding of community needs. Next slide, please.

So, this is an example of the geographies of these two programs from the state of Ohio, which is my state. So, I took this from their draft program year 21 annual action plan. Really on the left, what we're looking at is the distribution of home entitlement jurisdictions compared to the gray areas where the state is receiving the home funds for counties who are not in themselves entitlement jurisdictions, all the orange are entitlement jurisdictions and a couple of the cities with the black dots.

On the right is the continuums of care in the state. The state has 88 counties. Eight of the counties have a CoC. In some cases, like the case of Cleveland, which is up in the Northeast crosshatched, there is both a HOME participating jurisdiction in Cuyahoga County and the CoC. But if you look on the eastern edge of the state, Trumbull County is a HOME entitlement community, but they are part of the balance of

state CoC. We're not here to really talk about the state of Ohio, but just wanted to give you a visual of some of the complexity of mapping geographies between these two programs. Next slide please.

So now, just wanted to take a moment and find out how closely you're coordinating with your local CoC. So we're going to post the poll in the chat panel. Just let us know, if you're not the CoC yourself, how closely you're coordinating with your local CoC. We'll go ahead once this poll gets started. Next slide please.

Talk about continuum of care governance. Dusty already talked about the continuum of care, one meaning of that word or that phrase is the planning body of stakeholders in a community that are working to establish a system with a vision of preventing and ending homelessness. But the requirement is that large planning body which is really too big to make decisions with is that they have to establish a continuum of care board and a practice to elect board members that represent the different stakeholders who are engaged in creating the continuum of care.

So, each CoC is going to have a continuum of care board and then they're going to have committees work groups, however they've structured themselves. There's a lot of flexibility on exactly how they are set up. But almost every continuum is going to have some group who's responsible for developing partnerships, making funding decisions, approving system policies, entering into MOUs. This might be an executive committee; this might be a policy committee. It'll be different in every community. But as all of your stakeholders, and this is not just about HOME PJs, but also the housing authorities and the ESG recipients, all of the different funders who need to coordinate to figure out the strategic investment of these resources can work together to kind of who the right planning entity is from the continuum to be working on developing community priorities for HOME-ARP.

One additional note is that the continuum of care is a standalone decision-making body. Local elected officials may be participating on the board or the executive committee at various roles, representing the needs of their jurisdiction. But they don't have the ability to override the decision of the continuum. Particularly in submitting funding to HUD in the application for the continuum of care program funds, local officials do not have an approval process that overrides the continuum of care board's decision. So we have published the poll. We have some people who are close, some people who are aware, lots of opportunities to develop stronger relationships that do start talking about the needs of the community. So, thanks for responding to that poll. Next slide, please.

So, we've talked about governance and who ultimately makes decisions within the continuum of care. But the question of who's doing the day-to-day operations will vary again from community to community. But usually there's some sort of lead organization who is taking on the operating responsibilities on a day-to-day basis. This might be a nonprofit, a coalition, a quasi-governmental agency, or a unit of city or county government. So usually, their staff who are paid and dedicated, sometimes these are volunteers. They are really probably your first point of contact in that link to the CoC contacts on the HUD exchange. This is probably the person that you're going to connect with initially, if you don't already have a relationship.

So, once you've connected with them and talk to them about the CoC decision-making process, you'll have a better understanding of who it is, who can provide you with data about the needs of people experiencing homelessness and help you coordinate the planning process. Once you've identified projects that will be funded with HOME-ARP, these staff members will also be probably the people you'll

work with or on a referral process, eligibility documentation, program policies, data collection, evaluation, all of the aspects of implementation of HOME-ARP project which is really down the line, but these staff people will be valuable resources in connecting to the continuum of care program. So, I think now we're going to turn it back to Dusty.

Dusty Olson:

We're going to talk some about the functions and responsibilities under the continuum of care. The key functions and responsibilities include the implementation of the housing and service system, engaging stakeholders, understanding the nature of homelessness and designing and implementing a coordinated entry system. This list is by no means exhaustive. These are the ones that are just most critical and relevant to the work of coordinating between the continuum of care and the participating jurisdictions through the development of the HOME-ARP planning.

So the first is to coordinate and implement housing and services to respond to the needs of all persons experiencing homelessness. This includes a variety of service components that are designed to meet any of the unique ease of individuals experiencing homelessness. Access and engagement includes outreach day centers and hotlines, which are most often used to connect people who are living unsheltered with services through the rest of the system. These programs connect people to crisis centers or sometime, hopefully, ideally straight to housing.

Crisis response includes domestic violence shelters and emergency shelters. How coordinated or integrated domestic violence shelters are into the continuum of care varies greatly from community to community. So that'll be particularly important as you begin planning your interventions. Permanent housing options range from time limited rental subsidies, often referred to as rapid rehousing to permanent supportive housing which can be facility based where subsidy is paired with an intensive service package. Homelessness Prevention Program, programming and diversion are one time or very short-term financial assistance to keep people from becoming or staying homeless, and how integrated they are into the homeless system varies from community to community.

This is a very simplified version of what the components of the homeless system are. Not all communities will have these components or will have the same flow. But ideally, all of these pieces are working together to move somebody from homelessness to housing. So, people on the left side of your screen are people experiencing homelessness or people at risk of homelessness. People experiencing homelessness in your system may be sheltered or unsheltered. They may be living in a car, a park, abandoned building or some other place not meant for human habitation. CoCs need to have outreach and services to connect all of these individuals into the system. Then they move into a coordinated entry process which determines the appropriate housing and service intervention for their unique needs.

Coordinated entry may send people to crisis housing such as emergency shelter or domestic violence shelters, some CoC's coordinated entry is used for this and some, this is external to the coordinated entry process. They may go to transitional housing. They may go directly to permanent housing, or they may be referred to homelessness prevention, diversion or other community supports. Ultimately the goal is regardless of how they follow that path, that people make their way to permanent housing options. So, we want to talk briefly about non congregate shelter. Non congregate shelter generally includes, it's a shelter program that generally includes an individual bedroom and bathroom or it may

have shared bathrooms. During the coronavirus pandemic, many communities put congregate shelter in place at a scale that they had never done before in order to reduce the risk of COVID transmission.

This intervention has been shown to have a particularly significant beneficial impact on health and other housing outcomes compared to other types of emergency shelter. But it is newer at a large scale for most continuums. Most all continuums are in a position now to begin planning what their system is going to look like post pandemic. Re-imagining their shelter system based on this information that that they received about how people are being better served in non-congregate shelter and may be interested in having a non-congregate shelter option or more non congregate shelter options available for the very vulnerable people who are experiencing homelessness in the community.

Non congregate shelter is much easier to convert to permanent housing because of the nature of the private spaces once shelter capacity is no longer needed. Rapid Rehousing. Oop. There we go. Rapid Rehousing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Except for an addition of case management, rapid Rehousing is very similar to home TBRA. This is a very similar program where a short-term rental assistance is paired with housing search and case management. Rapid rehousing programs serve all homeless populations, including veterans and people fleeing domestic violence. Permanent supportive housing is permanent housing with rental assistance paired with supportive services to help homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability receive housing stability.

CoC providers develop and operate multiple different types of permanent supportive housing in partnership with for-profit or nonprofit housing providers. Permanent supportive housing can be site based in a single building. It can be scattered site in multiple types of housing scenarios, or it can also be sponsored based. So CoC providers provide rental assistance and services to people who are being served in tenant base PSH programs, where the units are usually owned by private landlords, that is a scattered site model. So, all of these permanent supportive housing options should be familiar to you because HOME dollars are used to fund PSH in many communities.

Compared with housing, most CoCs offer assistance in obtaining permanent housing and supportive services to help maintain housing. Housing-focused services can include housing search, payment of deposits, education about tenancy rights and responsibilities and other supportive services can include case management, assistance obtaining public benefits referral to meeting participants' individual needs, that may be that outside of the homeless system such as health care, education and employment services. Providers are expected to connect people experiencing homelessness to mainstream providers to the greatest extent possible so that we're not recreating other existing systems within the continuum of care.

As I mentioned earlier, under the housing first model, supportive services for all programs should be voluntary. That people are not mandated to participate as a result of receiving housing. Often what programs people are eligible for within the homeless system is defined by the definitions of homelessness from HUD. So we have category one, which is people who are literally homeless, an individual or a family who lacks suffice regular and adequate nighttime residence. So these are individuals who are living unsheltered or living in some other place not fit for human habitation or they're living sheltered in a temporary crisis housing situation.

Category two is imminent risk of homelessness, which is an individual or family who will lose their primary nighttime residents within 14 days. Category three is homeless other under federal statutes such as unaccompanied youth or children and youth who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under another definition. Importantly, category four is persons fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. But the definition for category four under homelessness is not the same as the definition for domestic violence and sexual assault qualifying populations for HOME-ARP. I'm going to turn it back over to Joyce.

Joyce Probst MacAlpine:

Thanks, Dusty. So, we're going to go through a few other CoC functions now and talk about that before we get to the end of our session. Well, there will be some time to answer questions that you're submitting in the chat verbally. So, another key function and responsibilities to engage key stakeholders and partners to inform system and investment planning. Next slide please.

We've already talked about the goal of ensuring a community wide strategy to address homelessness. This function really is about ensuring that as they're doing that planning process, that they're engaging all of the stakeholders, which includes both the providers of housing, homeless services, healthcare, employment, mental health, healthcare, all of the services that people experiencing homelessness need to access, and to engage people with lived expertise in homelessness.

This addresses both making sure that the programs and the system policies meet the needs of people who are homeless and that the systems become more equitable as the people who are homeless, particularly people who are disproportionately impacted by homeless, black, indigenous and people of color, groups that we've talked about before, have a voice in decisions about funding, program policies that will help them exit homelessness successfully.

So, HUD requires the people with lived expertise of homelessness have a seat on the CoC board, often the CoC board also has multiple ways of engaging people with this experience to get feedback on planned programs or policies. HUD also requires that any providers that is receiving funding from the CoC program has people with lived experience of homelessness on the providers' board. So that kind of range of input is really important in developing a strong plan that will equitably address homelessness in the community. So CoCs, as a planning partner, can bring these groups to a table to talk about the HOME-ARP planning process, identifying community priorities and supporting PJs as the recipient of the HOME funds. Next slide.

So we're going to spend the next two webinars really talking about a community planning process and the things that should be considered. But as we have a month before our next webinar, we really wanted to have some initial thoughts about what you can be doing in the next month to get your planning process started. I think we've talked a lot about who should be involved. Then the next question is, what is the initial discussions? Some of the HMIS data that we've talked about today about who is homeless and how the system is serving them, including understanding any disparities in the system that might be addressed with new programs or projects funded through HOME-ARP and other funding in the community will be a good foundation for starting to identify community priorities.

CoCs often have plans that they've developed through multiple planning processes like system modeling, that can help identify the types of projects that are needed in the system, gaps analysis can it also do that. There may also be other funding, either federal funding or state funding that the

community is in a planning process about right now. Of course, emergency housing vouchers is one important resource that many communities are working on right now and that you might want to bring into this discussion, thinking about the needs that those vouchers could fill and what needs HOME-ARP could fill that aren't the same needs as what the vouchers can do. So just a couple of initial planning steps as you get started talking with your partners in the next month or so. So, we're going to quickly review some other functions. Next slide.

We've already talked about, next slide, understanding the nature and extensive homelessness. As we've said, the CoC has to operate a homeless management information system, which is a web-based tool to collect at least the required data elements that HUD has defined that can be used to generate a standard set of reports that are submitted to HUD as documentation of CoC program funded projects but are also used by the CoC to look at projects and system level performance to make decisions about projects and funding.

The HMIS is provided by about 30 different vendors. So, it isn't the same, that input fields, the way it looks isn't the same. Communities can customize the data that's collected. So, when you're talking to your community, and it's particularly if you're a HOME PJ with multiple CoCs in your geography, the reports that you get might look slightly different from each other, but they should contain the same information and be a good starting point for a planning process. As we mentioned before, this data is collected at the client level, but the reports that can be generated are aggregates for projects, so communities and are meant to not expose private client data.

There are some projects that don't enter data into HMIS. In some communities, this may be a large shelter maybe or a safe space shelter who is not publicly funded. So, it doesn't have the requirement to enter data into HMIS. As you're looking at that data, we should think about what's missing? What do we not know because there are projects that aren't in your data or maybe there's a large unsheltered population? HMIS doesn't have complete information on unsheltered homelessness in your community. So, it's a good starting place. But a good discussion point with the CoC is understanding what else do we need to know that we can't know from this data? Next slide.

So the point in time count, which we already looked at the data from January 2020, is a way to collect that additional information. It's one day, so it's not complete, and it is just a count. So we don't get all of the data elements for people who are not in the program entering data into HMIS. But it still complements the CHMIS data to get an idea of the extent of homelessness in the community, the scale, and can help point out gaps in the HMIS data. So as you're talking with your partners and thinking about what you need to know to help identify priorities for HOME-ARP, the data is a good starting point. Next slide.

So the last function I want to talk about is a newer responsibility for continuums of care. That's designing and implementing a coordinated entry system. Next slide. So I'm going to actually read this, which I don't usually do in these kind of webinars. But a coordinated entry is an approach to management of a homeless systems resources that allows the community to make consistent decisions from available information to efficiently and effectively connect people to interventions that will rapidly end their homelessness.

So if we take this apart, it is a process that recognizes that there are not enough interventions or resources to address everybody's needs. So it manages the resources by using a standardized

assessment tool to help make consistent decisions about people in different situations or kind of intervention that they'll receive. Frequently, that means that they're targeting housing resources, the people who the community has decided most vulnerable. Each community has their own definition of vulnerability that they have implemented in the coordinated entry process. They have prioritized housing resources based on that vulnerability definition and processes that they've implemented.

This is a fairly new process. It was implemented because previously, housing resources were allocated on a first come, first served basis or based on the relationships the case manager might have with other program staff. They weren't always going to people who were homeless the longest or maybe considered harder to serve or who had mental health symptoms that will be difficult or perceived as difficult to work with people in housing. So coordinated entry really takes a network of providers and makes them a system by having this standardized process for determining who gets referred to what kind of intervention. Next slide.

The reason why we're talking about this is that the qualifying populations for HOME-ARP which I noticed Ginny put in the chat, many of the categories of the different populations that are named in the statute are people who are going to be known to the homeless system and have been assessed through coordinated entry. So, the CoC knows the needs of some of the groups that are named as qualifying populations in the statute. The question in your community is, who is it known through coordinated entry? Usually coordinated entry data is in HMS. So, we're talking about the data base where you understand who's homeless, and what their needs are in coordinated entry gives you additional information about people's needs.

But if there is a group of people in that qualifying populations who are not included in coordinated entry, then the question is working with the CoC is how do we learn about the needs of that group? There is one group that will not be in HMIs and that is people fleeing domestic violence or sexual assault under that category four definition that Dusty talked about.

So, this, again, is not the exact same definition as in HOME-ARP. But though domestic violence providers are prohibited from entering information in HMIS and if a community's using HMIS for coordinated entry, then their data is not going to be in coordinated entry. So part of your planning process is to reach out to those providers, victim services providers, to find out the needs of that population because they are one of the qualifying populations and figure out how to put the needs and the data that that group into the planning process. Then talk with the CoC and the other partners about as HOME-ARP priorities are identified, what's the role of coordinated entry in identifying qualifying populations or are there other relationships that are needed to reach qualified populations who are not in coordinated entry.

I'm sure it came up in the chat. We are talking about a process, it's available in the community, not something that's required for HOME-ARP. I hope that's okay to say, Ginny. But we're just talking about information that CoCs have about people who are also in the qualifying populations and how the CoC's knowledge of those people can help both plan HOME-ARP and when you get to a project that's actually up and running, identify people for HOME-ARP projects. Okay, next slide.

So we're really at the end of our presentation, we just have a couple of more slides. We want to thank you for joining us today. In a minute, we're going to ask you what other trainings you would like to have. I see that we're already talking in the chat about the webinars we had planned, but we have a chance for you to provide us information about other webinars you would like to see. Next slide.

So, this slide is really aimed at the HOME participating jurisdictions. But as I was reading it again, I was thinking this applies to all of us. This last 15 months has been really hard. Of course, we have a public health emergency that has affected all of us and has affected the people that you're serving. You've also had a tremendous amount of new money with not necessarily having new staff to figure out how to plan and implement the new money. So, as we think about how stretched CoC staffs are, I also think that applies to HOME PJs probably. I know in the community that I live in, there's been a hiring freeze so that really has stretched people's abilities.

Also, public housing authorities, ESG recipients, everybody has just been so stretched responding to the needs of the health crisis and to the all of the new resources that have come in. So just keep that in mind and be understanding of each other. CoC often have very few staff with a lot of responsibilities as all of you do. They are set up very differently in every community. So, you may find that they really can bring everything that you would want to the table or they may struggle to produce some of the data that you would wish you would have for the planning process. But we are hoping that this opportunity to bring together affordable housing funders and probably some developers that you've already worked with, with homeless systems to address the needs of people who need housing the most is not a one-time thing because we have this pot of money from the American Rescue Plan but becomes a longer relationship so that housing and homeless providers are planning together to meet the needs of people experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Next slide please.

So I think we've already gotten to what our next webinar is in the chat. But our next webinar will be August 5th from 2:00 to 3:30, so the same timeframe as this webinar. It will be about the planning process, we're going to provide an overview of HOME-ARP as much as the Office of Affordable Housing Program can talk about it. We're going to talk about what planning with equity means and then starting the planning process.

But please in the months between now and then, reach out to your local stakeholders and start talking about what in your community needs and what priorities can be met with HOME-ARP. Anybody can reach out, right? All of you are stakeholders in this process. So please figure out who your partners are and start that conversation.

So our next slide is the poll about what training topics, and we will launch it again in that chat window area. If these topics aren't the right ones for you, then please just type ideas for other trainings in the chat. We'll take that into account both in what's pre-notice, right, the timeframe we are in now until the notice is released, and then post notice TA which will also cover a lot of other topics. Now I think, Dusty, you're going to go ahead and ask some questions, I believe.

Dusty Olson:

Yes, I am. As Ginny mentioned, we're not going to be able to answer all of the questions that have come in. But I'm going to pull out some that we are able to answer at this point. Ginny can you start us off with when will the guidance about HOME-ARP be published?

Ginny Sardone:

Sure, I would love to answer that question. But I think even before I do that, I'd like to take a step back because there were some definite themes running through the questions in the chat. And so hopefully I can address some of that. So, we have some folks who seem to be a little confused about why we're

doing a webinar about CoCs. So, the one thing that I would recommend that every participating jurisdiction on the line do is to go onto the HUD exchange page for HOME-ARP and take a look at the statute. It is really very short. But folks will notice that the title of the section of the American Rescue Plan that authorized these funds is homeless assistance as opposed to services.

When I say that this is not HOME, it's true. It's not HOME. In certain ways, you'll see that it will be somewhat similar to HOME. But please do take a look at the qualifying populations and the eligible activities. As I posted into the chat, there are four eligible or excuse me, qualifying populations that the statute identifies. That homeless as it is defined in McKinney Act, at risk of homelessness, also the definition from the McKinney Act, a domestic violence definition that is broader than what is currently used. Then a fourth population called other populations that would know better at risk of homelessness or the greatest risk of housing instability.

That fourth population is not something that HUD can talk about right now. As I mentioned, we cannot talk about anything that's pre-decisional. But you can certainly see from the other three qualifying populations, the eligible beneficiaries of the funding. So, the purpose of this webinar was to get participating jurisdictions in particular more familiar with how CoCs work on the ground because these populations are, as I believe it was Dusty, or maybe it was Joyce who said, they're already known to the CoC. They're already probably have been a part of that homeless system. So please take a look. It will take you five minutes at that statute. You'll have a better understanding of what the structure of the program is.

You've heard me say this isn't HOME. So although it is, that's a great, amorphous place to be. But if you look at the statute, it gives us the authority to waive or to suspend statutory provisions of the HOME program or the McKinney Act to sort of to expedite the use of the funds. Although there are certain things that we are prohibited from suspending, by the way, there was one question in the chat about will environmental review be waived. No, it won't. The statute says specifically that we can't. So what we're doing what HUD is doing right now is developing and implementing notice that basically is based upon all of the statutory suspensions or regulatory waivers of the act of the rental housing activity, and the TBRA activity because those are existing home activities under the regular HOME programs. So those are covered by the National Affordable Housing Act, which is our authorizing statute.

So what HUD is doing is either suspending or altering those requirements. We're establishing alternative requirements for those activities, which are using other activities and making them more appropriate for the qualifying populations listed in the statute, which are really a different population typically than is typically targeted under HOME, which are low and very low-income households. So hopefully, that gives you a little bit of a sense. Then we have two other eligible activities, which are supportive services and acquisition or development of non-congregate shelter.

Obviously, these are two activities that do not exist in the HOME statute. What we're doing right now in the notice is establishing requirements that will apply to those activities. So when I speak of an implementing notice, that implementing notice will tell you what you need to do about your CONPLAN, what we're calling a HOME-ARP Allocation Plan. That is going to be attached to your 2021 annual action plan. So it will be a substantial amendment. We do not expect this notice to be issued until the fall. So by that point in time, all of the deadline for submission of annual action plans which is August 16th, will be passed. So this will be a substantial amendment for everyone.

There won't be anyone who has not already had to submit an action plan at the time that the notice comes out. So I think if you ... We will try in the next webinar, we're going to try and tell you as much as we can about what the HOME-ARP program will look like. We do have those restrictions on us. But a good look that the statute will tell you a lot about what you will and will not be able to do in this program. We will definitely cover that on August 5th. But in the meantime, please take a look at the statute. I think it will help some of some folks really think through or have a better understanding of what is coming their way. Thanks, Dusty.

Dusty Olson:

Great. You caught a fair amount of them that are on my list. Can you discuss MATCH, Ginny, will HOME or ARP require MATCH?

Ginny Sardone:

So great. That's an excellent Next question. If you look at the statute, you will see that there are certain specific things that are already waived in the statutes. There's no CHDO set aside. There's no commitments that are buy-in. There is no MATCH requirement for HOME-ARP funds. The cost limits, the per unit cost limits. So, for folks who run HOME we all know those as the 221D3 limits that are the maximum per unit subsidy limit, that was also waived by the statute.

Dusty Olson:

Thank you. I think you touched on this, but just want to make sure, when are funds available, as opposed to when is the notice going to be available.

Ginny Sardone:

Right. So, what will happen is when the notice is issued, folks will start working on those action plan amendments. Hopefully, you'll have enough information, have gotten started over on that over the summer and early into the fall. We're hoping that the notice will be out sometime in October. However, this is a brand new program. This is required to go through departmental clearance process and over to OMB. So it's really hard to fix a specific date because there's a lot of variables. But you should expect that in the last quarter of the year, you'll be working on that Allocation Plan Amendments and then submitting it to HUD. HUD will review and approve it. Or if there are deficiencies in some way, we'll return it to you. Then just as with your regular HOME funds, after the plan is approved, we will then obligate your grant. So most folks can probably anticipate having funds in their account in early calendar 2022.

Dusty Olson:

Ginny you had a slight little hiccup in your connection for just a second, but it was exactly when you said that you expect the notice to come out. So, we got a couple of questions in the chat.

Ginny Sardone:

Oh, you thought that was that was a hiccup, huh? Okay. At this point in time, we're targeting sometime in October. But as I said, and I don't know if this came through, there are a lot of steps that this has to go through, departmental clearance and also approval over at OMB. So, we can't fix a particular date, but we're hoping the early part of the fall, the notice will be out. At which point in time everyone can expect

a very substantial webinar or set of webinars, first of all, to review the notice in total and then to take a deeper dive into individual activities or requirements.

Dusty Olson:

While we have addressed a very small percentage of the questions that came in, we have gotten through the ones that we are able to address at this point. We have collected all of the questions that you put in the chat, and we will be using those to inform future trainings, both pre and post the notice. Ginny, do you want to close us out?

Ginny Sardone:

Certainly. I want to really thank everybody for their time and attention today. This funding is a really important opportunity to make a substantial investment, if only on this one-time basis in your community. So, whether it's addressing a shortage of rental housing, upgrading your shelters from congregate to non-congregate or providing rental assistance or filling in gaps on supportive services in your community, this is a great opportunity. For most local jurisdictions, their HOME-ARP allocation is nearly four times the size of their regular home allocation.

So it's quite a bit of money to absorb on top of sort of a lot of other sources of extra money that you have been putting to use over the last year or so. So we look forward to working with you and giving you as much information as we possibly can about the program as we get closer to implementation. But in the meantime, we ask you to start thinking as much as you can about what would be the best uses of these funds in your community and to bear with us until we can give you more information. So really appreciate everybody's time today. Thank you.

Speaker 1:

That concludes our event. Thank you for using Event Services. You may now disconnect.