

Connecting Community Activities and CoC Program Activities

One consideration when deciding whether to participate in the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program—regardless of whether you are thinking of joining an existing CoC or establishing a new CoC—is to determine what housing and homeless service activities are needed within your community and identify which ones can be funded by the CoC Program.

The worksheets in this resource can help Tribal and other communities do the following:

- Identify people experiencing homelessness and their specific homeless situations
- Prioritize the homeless situations present in your community
- Identify what housing and homeless services activities will serve the prioritized homeless situations best
- Prioritize the housing and homeless service activities you want to pursue

When thinking about who your community could assist through the CoC Program and how your community could serve them, it helps to understand what housing and homeless service programs already exist in your area. CoC Program funds can assist with the creation of new projects or expand the capacity of already existing housing and homeless services.

Once you finish the worksheets, your community may determine that the CoC Program does not fit with your desired activities. In that case, the assessments, discussions, and decisions that you have made can help you move forward with strategic discussions and planning activities in your community to pursue other sources of funding.





Worksheet 1: Determine Individual and Family Homeless Situations

CoC Program funds can be used to assist people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity who meet HUD's homeless definition. By answering the questions in Worksheet 1, you can determine whether there might be individuals or families who need housing and homeless services that can be funded by the CoC Program.

These descriptions are intended to be a starting point for identifying homeless situations that exist in your community (*this worksheet is not a tool for determining eligibility for the CoC Program*). Once an organization has CoC Program funds and is operating a project, staff will need to ask people living in homeless situations questions and document whether the eligibility criteria has been met.

Instructions:

- Identify whether individuals or families within your community live in homeless situations A through E. You can select "yes" or "no." "Unknown" is an option as well if you need to gather additional information to be sure.
- Identify the type of project that would help address the homeless situation—a "new" project or a project that would "expand" an existing one.
 - You can also select "either" if you think one or both types of projects would be beneficial and/or viable.
 - "Unsure" is an option if you want to consider the question further before deciding.
 - If the homeless situation does not exist in your community, leave the project type field blank.

Are individuals and families within my community:

Select a
response:

What project
would be best:

A. Living in an unsheltered situation?

This means that someone is staying at night in a place not meant for living such as a car or abandoned building or camping outside because they have no place to go.

B. Living in a shelter that provides temporary living arrangements?

These types of places include emergency shelters and hotels and motels paid for by an organization or government and not the person.



Are individuals and families within my community:

Select a
response:

What project
would be best:

C. Exiting an institution where they lived for up to 90 days?

In this case, before the person entered the institution, they lived in an emergency shelter or an unsheltered situation. An institution is a prison or a place of care like a hospital or inpatient treatment center.

D. Losing their residence within 2 weeks?

In this situation, the person does not have another place to live, and they do not have the resources or support networks to obtain another stable housing destination for a meaningful amount of time.

E. Leaving or trying to leave where they live due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening situation?

This means they cannot or should not return to their residence, and they do not have the resources or support networks to obtain another stable housing destination for a meaningful amount of time.

► After reviewing your responses, continue to [Worksheet 2: Prioritize Homeless Situations](#).



Worksheet 2: Assess and Prioritize Homeless Situations

If you indicated there are individuals and families within your community experiencing the homeless situations described in Worksheet 1, then it is very likely there are people eligible to receive housing and homeless services funded by the CoC Program.

Now that you have identified situations that reflect homelessness in your community, you can use Worksheet 2A to consider how prevalent and severe the situations are and prioritize who needs assistance.

Worksheet 2A: Assess Prevalence and Severity of Homeless Situations

- **Prevalence.** One way to think of prevalence is in terms of how many people live in those situations. When you think of how many people:
 - You can think of it as an absolute number. (e.g., 100)
 - You can think of it as an estimate. (e.g., many)
 - You can think of it in relation to the other people who are in the other homeless situations. (e.g., comparing the number of people living in overcrowded homes to the number of people living unsheltered)
- **Severity.** This term is intended to refer to how dire the situation is for people in a particular homeless situation; the severity is defined by your community. These types of situations include when someone is at high risk of a negative health outcome (such as untreated diabetes) unless they can stabilize in housing and receive medical support, or unchecked mental illness that keeps a person from being able to live independently. Many communities consider severity as the most vulnerable individuals who are likely to die due to being homeless.

Instructions

Rank both Prevalence and Severity using your best data and knowledge of your homeless situations.

- In the column "Prevalent," rank the homeless situations from 0-5.
 - 0 = none
 - 1 = most prevalent
 - 5 = least prevalent
- In the column "Severity," rank the homeless situations from 0-5.
 - 0 = none
 - 1 = most severe
 - 5 = least severe

Note: This exercise is not intended to be exact; please complete this chart to the best of your ability and prioritize the homeless situations that are most prevalent and severe in your community.



HUD Homeless Situation	Prevalence	Severity
A. Living in an unsheltered situation		
B. Living in a shelter that provides temporary living arrangements		
C. Exiting an institution where they lived for up to 90 days		
D. Losing their residence within 2 weeks		
E. Leaving or trying to leave where they live due to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening situation within the primary nighttime residence		

Worksheet 2B: Prioritize Homeless Situations

Prioritizing is difficult. For example, the community could have a situation where there is a larger group of people in a particular homeless situation, most of whom have at least a temporary safety net, as well as a smaller group of people in a different homeless situation, most of whom have no resources and quickly end up in dire circumstances. In these communities, with limited resources, which group is the priority? Which group should be prioritized for housing and homeless services?

Instructions

List the homeless situations that exist in your community in order of priority based on the prevalence and severity rankings in Worksheet 2A.

1 = the most prioritized homeless situation

5 = the least prioritized homeless situation

Insert your prioritized homeless situations.

1

2

3

4

5

▶ After reviewing your responses, continue to [Worksheet 3: Identify Activities that Need Funding](#).



Worksheet 3: Identify Activities that Need Funding

Use Worksheet 3 to prioritize the housing and homeless services needs of your community, better understand how those needs could be addressed via eligible uses of CoC Program funding and specify whether you wish to expand an existing program or launch a new program to address the needs identified.

Instructions:

- Read the question and the related examples of CoC-funded activities.
- Rate the need from 0-5.
0 = none
1 = lowest need
5 = greatest need
- Identify the type of project that would enable you to pursue the activity—a “new” project or a project that would “expand” an existing one. You can also select “either” if you think one or both types of projects would be beneficial and/or viable. “Unsure” is an option if you want to consider the question further before deciding.

Question:	Select a response:	What project would be best:
<p>A. Does your community need more places for people to live? Examples of CoC-funded activities to increase housing options: Purchasing structures, rehabilitation of existing structures, building new structures.</p>		
<p>B. Does your community need funding to assist people with their rent payments? Examples of CoC-funded activities for rental subsidies: Paying a portion of rent for residents who live in different types of housing situations. Paying for a portion of a structure where residents can live and pay a reduced rent.</p> <p>Note: The housing options being discussed do not include emergency shelter; the CoC Program funds housing options with a lease.</p>		



Question:	Select a response:	What project would be best:
<p>C. Does your Tribal community need funding to pay for services that support individuals and families?</p> <p>There are many types of services that can be funded by the CoC Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outpatient health, mental health, and/or substance treatment services that will help someone maintain their housing Examples of CoC-funded activities that will pay for services: Crisis interventions; counseling; individual, family, or group therapy sessions; the prescription of psychotropic medications or explanations about the use and management of medications; and combinations of therapeutic approaches to address multiple problems. ▪ Utility deposits for participants to attain housing Examples of CoC-funded activities that will pay for services: Assistance consists of paying for utility deposits. Utility deposits must be a one-time fee, paid to utility companies. ▪ Other types of supportive services that would help participants maintain their housing Examples of CoC-funded activities that will pay for services: Childcare services, job training programs, employment and education assistance, life skills training, and legal services. ▪ Housing search and counseling services for participants to attain housing Examples of CoC-funded activities that will pay for services: Assisting eligible program participants to locate, obtain, and retain stable housing. <p>D. Does your Tribal community need funding to operate, repair, and/or maintain existing housing structures?</p> <p>Examples of CoC-funded activities that support housing: Paying for maintenance and repairs of housing structures; paying staff (e.g., property management).</p>		



Question:

Select a
response:

What project
would be best:

- E. Does your Tribal community need funding to develop and maintain a database that measures the use of homeless and housing services?

Examples of CoC-funded activities that supports a database:
Paying for the hosting and maintenance of software, software customization, and enhancements; hardware for data entry, paying staff to operate the database or to enter data.

- F. Does your Tribal community need funding to conduct administrative tasks related to any new or expanded housing projects?

Examples of CoC-funded administrative services that support a housing project: Paying for coordination and oversight, training for staff for the new or expanded CoC-funded project.

▶ After reviewing your responses, continue to [Worksheet 4: Prioritize Funding Activities](#).



Worksheet 4: Identify a Funding Priority

Use Worksheet 4 to prioritize the activities that could be funded by the CoC Program.

While reviewing the questions, refer to Worksheets 1, 2A, 2B, and 3. In Worksheet 1, 2A, and 2B, you considered the homeless situations in your community and prioritized them. In Worksheet 3, you considered the activities you want to undertake and determined how urgently those activities are needed.

Worksheet 4 continues assessing the activities eligible for CoC Program funding that your community might want to apply for. At the end, you will be closer to deciding whether to participate in the CoC Program and, if so, whether to expand an existing project or start a new project.

Instructions:

Review and complete the questions under the three Worksheets:

- Worksheet 4A: Prioritize Activities that Need Funding
- Worksheet 4B: Assess Prioritized Activities and the Homeless Situations They Address
- Worksheet 4C: Prioritize the Funding Need



Worksheet 4A: Prioritize Activities that Need Funding

What are the three housing and homeless services activities that your community identified in Worksheet 3 as needing the most? (Consider focusing on the activities that you rated in the 3-5 range for exploration in this worksheet)

Select from:

- A. Housing units (apartments or a house with multiple bedrooms that could serve multiple people)
- B. Rental subsidies
- C. Supportive services
- D. Operating housing

Note that database funding and project administrative funding can be added into any housing or homeless services project.

Priority ①

Priority ②

Priority ③

For **Priority 1** above, what funding do you currently have to address these activities?

What additional funding do you need to implement these activities?

For **Priority 2** above, what funding do you currently have to address these activities?

What additional funding do you need to implement these activities?

For **Priority 3** above, what funding do you currently have to address these activities?

What additional funding do you need to implement these activities?



Worksheet 4B: Assess Prioritized Activities and the Homeless Situations They Address

Do the activities you want to pursue align with the homeless situations that you prioritized?

To reflect on this question:

- The three activities that you prioritized in Worksheet 4A will automatically appear in the “Prioritized Activity” column.
- For the “Homeless Situation(s) Addressed” column, refer to Worksheet 1 in which you identified the homeless situations that appear in your community. For each activity in the table, identify which homeless situations will benefit from the activities you are interested in pursuing.
- Once you have each activity and corresponding homeless situation identified, assess the homeless situations your activities will address with the homeless situations that you prioritized in Worksheet 2B. In Worksheet 2B, you listed the homeless situations in order of priority based on the prevalence and severity rankings in Worksheet 2A.

Prioritized Activity (Worksheet 4A)	Homeless Situation(s) Addressed (Worksheet 1)
1.	
2.	
3.	

If the prioritized activities do not support the homeless situations that you prioritized earlier, there could be a clear reason. For example:

- You may have enough existing projects to serve the needs of the individuals and families experiencing one of the prioritized homeless situations.
- You may have a prioritized homeless situation for which you need funding, but the CoC Program does not provide funding for the activities that would address those needs.

Having the information in this worksheet could provide you with an opportunity to further discuss whether the CoC Program is the right program to support community needs and the activities you wish to pursue. If you would like to record notes for later review or follow-up discussions, the box below is available for your notes.



Worksheet 4C: Prioritize the Funding Need

Do you think the prioritized activities assessed in Worksheet 4B would be better served by expanding an existing project or starting a new project? Is there a need for both? (Select the best answer from each dropdown menu.)

Priority 1

Priority 2

Priority 3

Which is the final priority that you will pursue for CoC Program funding? In other words, which combination of homeless situation and activity that can be funded by the CoC Program is your community going to pursue?



Reviewing Your Decision

Rarely is there enough funding in any community to address all homeless situations. Each community decides which homeless situation it wants to focus its efforts on and how it wants to provide housing and homeless services.

At this point, you may have reached one of several possible decisions:

- **Not participate in the CoC Program:** You may have determined there are no activities that can be funded by the CoC Program that fit your community's needs. Instead of the types of housing and homeless services funded by the CoC Program, you may instead need emergency shelter or services the CoC Program does not support. You can build on the conversations you have had while completing the worksheets to pursue other funding sources.
- **Prioritize increasing housing units available for people experiencing homeless situations:** The CoC Program has several activities that are eligible but are not often funded. These include acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of apartments and multifamily housing. While you can discuss options for applying for this type of funding with an existing CoC, it is likely you will need to pursue other funding sources.
- **Prioritize rental subsidies:** The CoC Program subsidizes rent multiple ways. If you pursue this activity, you will have the option to 1) pay a portion of a tenant's rent, 2) lease a unit and then sublease to a tenant, or 3) lease a structure and then sublease to several tenants. Additionally, rent subsidies can be used for different types of housing—permanent and temporary. When HUD provides rental subsidy funds, it prefers projects that use those funds in permanent housing rather than temporary housing. In the CoC Program, temporary housing is referred to as "transitional housing (TH)."
- **Prioritize supportive services:** The CoC Program funds a variety of supportive services. If one of the activities your community needs most is outreach services, you should note that the CoC Program allows supportive services to be used for outreach, but it is unlikely that HUD will award funds to a project that primarily focuses on outreach. You would need the project to offer some of the other eligible services identified in Worksheet 3.
- **Prioritize housing operations:** The CoC Program funds certain types of operations costs for units or structures that an organization is leasing.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published for each annual competition cycle identifies the types of activities—both housing and homeless services—that HUD prioritizes during a particular year so reading the NOFO each year is critical to understanding HUD's priorities and aligning projects to those priorities.



Next Steps

Now that you have explored the activities that CoC Program funding can support in your community, you may already know whether you want to participate in the CoC Program. If you have decided not to participate, we thank you for considering the CoC Program and welcome you to review these resources again in the future if you are interested.

If you are still considering participating, the [CoC Program Series for Tribal Communities and Organizations New to the CoC Program](#) has been designed first to describe a [CoC Program Participation Decision-Making Approach](#) centered around the program's activities, roles, and potential funding. Then, it offers resources about those specific topics, with information and worksheets that lay the foundation for using the [CoC Program Participation Decision and Assessment](#) resource to decide whether you will be [Continuing the CoC Program Paths](#).

If you are already familiar with the [CoC Program Participation Decision-Making Approach](#), we recommend you continue with the next resource, [CoC Program Recipient and CoC Roles](#), describing the responsibilities the [CoC Program Interim Rule](#) requires participating organizations to fulfill.



**CoC Program Recipient
and CoC Roles**



Tribes and TDHEs can review the responsibilities of organizations that apply for CoC Program funding as part of any CoC and the responsibilities of a CoC.



**Determining the
Amount of Available
CoC Program Funds**



Tribes and TDHEs can identify the potential amount of funding available for projects and CoC Planning grants.



**Participation Decision
and Assessment**



Tribes and TDHEs can discuss questions focused on participating in the CoC Program and choosing a path to join an existing CoC or establish a new CoC.

Ask-a-Question



If you would like to ask a question, please submit your question through the above portal.

Request Assistance



If you would like more in-depth assistance about the CoC Program, please request technical assistance through the above portal.



If you would like to connect with HUD staff, contact information is here:
[HUD's 10 Field Offices](#) and [HUD's 6 ONAP Area Offices](#)

This material is based upon work supported, in whole or in part, by Federal award number C-20-TA-VA-0011 awarded to ICF by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. Neither the United States Government, nor any of its employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed or represents that its use would not infringe privately-owned rights. Reference herein to any individuals, agencies, companies, products, process, services, service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not constitute or imply an endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the author(s), contributor(s), the U.S. Government or any agency thereof. Opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, HUD or any Federal agency.

