

## Welcome and thank you for choosing to read the introduction to the CoC Program Series for Tribal Communities and Organizations New to the CoC Program.

We hope to provide you with the information you need to decide if the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program may help you meet the needs of your community. Before you begin reviewing this series, let us provide some context for why the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed these resources and the timing of their release.

In 1996 Congress passed the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act ([NAHASDA](#)). This Act was designed to provide Federal assistance for Indian Tribes in a manner that recognized Tribal sovereignty; it eliminated several housing assistance programs and replaced them with a single block grant program ([Indian Housing Block Grant](#) or IHBG) that allocated funding directly to Tribes. When this occurred, it removed "Indian Tribes" as eligible applicants for funds made available under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, effectively leaving Tribes to rely solely on IHBG dollars to address homelessness among Native people.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 included language allowing the participation of Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) in the CoC Program, which is one of two primary funding programs to address homelessness. Given that Tribes have not had access to this funding source, HUD acknowledged a need to provide information and offer guidance to Tribes and TDHEs about the CoC Program. The intended purpose of this series is to inform Tribes and TDHEs about the CoC Program so they may choose whether to participate in the program now or at some point in the future.

This series is written using the laws and regulations as they exist in 2022, specifically the [CoC Program Interim Rule](#), which is the guiding document for the program, HUD's [definition of homelessness](#), and the ongoing guidance provided through HUD products and policy. These regulations and definitions may not align completely with how Tribes and TDHEs address homelessness within their communities; however, policy and guidance may change in the future. Tribes and TDHEs may choose to continue serving vulnerable people such as those who are houseless using their IHBG allocation or other funding, but they may also choose to seek additional funding through the CoC Program.

The CoC Program is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to prevent and end homelessness and supports this commitment through funding housing and supportive services for people who are experiencing homelessness. It is a competitive program, so organizations that wish to apply for funding will compete with organizations across the U.S.

HUD defines homelessness as a person who does not have a stable place to live, which means they are living in the following types of situations: living in a place not meant for human beings to live (on the street, in an abandoned building, or in a vehicle); going to lose their housing within 14 days; and fleeing a domestic or sexual violence situation or are a victim of human trafficking. The CoC Program

funds projects that support people in these types of situations to secure a stable place to live. Projects can provide, for example:

- Permanent housing through acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of a building; by supporting the operation of a building or set of units that house households enrolled in the program; or through rent subsidies
- Supportive Services through case management, legal support, mental health treatment, life skills training, and other services like these

Almost all CoC Program funds must be matched at 25%, meaning to receive this funding, an organization must guarantee that 25% of a project's budget includes other sources of cash, the value of donated goods, or the value of donated services that benefit the project and people enrolled in it. In addition to match, there are multiple other activities that are required when an organization receives CoC funding—these will be explained in more detail in this series.

Tribes and TDHEs may be interested in this funding source because it would expand the dollar amount available to serve those who need permanent places to live on or off reservation. When deciding whether to pursue this funding source, some considerations include requirements and steps to apply and receive CoC Program funds.

If you are interested in learning more about the CoC Program and whether this is a funding source your Tribe or TDHE wants to pursue, please read the resources included in this series. They were designed so that each one builds upon and references the previous document, although the reader is welcome to review them in whatever order they choose.

Should you have additional questions about the CoC Program that are not answered in these resources, please do not hesitate to reach out. If you would like to ask a question, please submit your question through the [Ask-a-Question portal](#), selecting "CoC Program" at step 2. If you would like more in-depth assistance about the CoC Program, please request [technical assistance](#) through HUD's online portal.