



Understanding Participant Eligibility Under the Special NOFO to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of participant eligibility criteria to receive assistance through a project funded through the Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside and the Rural Homelessness Set Aside, as specified under the Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (Special NOFO) to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness (FR-6500-N-25S).

Special NOFO Eligibility Criteria

The table below outlines participant eligibility criteria established by HUD for all project types funded under the Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside and the Rural Homelessness Set Aside. For PSH projects, the qualifying individual must also meet the disability eligibility requirement. Additionally, households must meet any eligibility criteria established by the CoC as part of their Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs (CoC Plan).

For more information on the four categories in the homeless definition, please review the following resources:

- [The full definition of homeless as found in the Homeless Definition Final Rule](#)
- [Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for the Definition of Homeless](#)
- [Four Categories of the Homeless Definition Virtual Binder](#)
- [Recording and Documenting Homeless Status Training](#)

1: Special NOFO Program Participant Eligibility Requirements

	Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside	Rural Homelessness Set Aside
Category 1 - Places not meant for human habitation, including unsheltered locations	✓	✓
Category 1 - Emergency shelters or safe havens	✓	✓
Category 1 - Transitional Housing	✓*	✓
Category 1 - Exiting institutions where they resided for 90 days or less and were residing on the streets, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven	✓	✓
Category 2 - Imminent Risk of Homelessness		✓
Category 4 - Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions	✓	✓

*For the Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside, persons who are coming from transitional housing must have originally come from either:

- 1) the streets, emergency shelter, or safe havens, **or**
- 2) institutions where they resided for 90 days or less **and** were residing on the streets, in an emergency shelter, or safe haven immediately prior to entering the institution.

Consistency with the CoC Plan

All projects must operate consistently with the CoC's Plan for Serving Individuals and Families with Severe Service Needs (CoC Plan), including any eligibility criterion established by the CoC for projects awarded under the Special NOFO.

For both the Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside and the Rural Homelessness Set Aside, as part of its Plan for Serving Individuals and Families with Severe Service Needs, CoCs were required to describe:

1. How the CoC will ensure that resources funded under this Special NOFO serve individuals and families who are currently unsheltered or have histories of unsheltered homelessness, and
2. How the CoC's prioritization strategies will contribute to reducing unsheltered homelessness within the CoC's geographic area.

Coordinated Entry Requirements

All housing referrals for projects funded through the Special NOFO must go through the CoC's coordinated entry process as required in HUD's [Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System](#) and based on the policies documented in the CoC's coordinated entry policies and prioritization standards established by the CoC for projects awarded under the Special NOFO.

2: Common Misconceptions

Misconception	Fact
Projects can only serve people who are living in unsheltered locations	<p>Projects funded through the Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside may serve households who meet Category 1 or 4 of the definition of homeless, and projects funded through the Rural Homelessness Set Aside could serve households who meet Category 1, 2, or 4 of the definition of homeless.</p> <p>However, all projects must contribute to the CoC's efforts to reduce unsheltered homelessness in their geographic area. Therefore, all projects must follow any eligibility criterion or prioritization standards established by the CoC for projects awarded under the Special NOFO.</p>

2.1: Common Misconceptions

Misconception	Fact
<p>All PSH projects must serve households that meet the chronically homeless definition.</p>	<p>Chronic homelessness is not an eligibility criterion established by HUD for PSH projects funded through the Special NOFO.</p> <p>However, a PSH project is required to serve those who meet the chronically homeless definition if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CoC established chronic homelessness as an eligibility criterion in its Plan for Serving Individuals and Families with Severe Service Needs; OR 2. If the recipient indicated that it would dedicate beds to chronically homeless individuals and families in its project application.
<p>Identification documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, or picture IDs are required when documenting eligibility.</p>	<p>The CoC Program interim rule does not require recipients or subrecipients to collect birth certificates, social security cards, or picture IDs to document eligibility for a project within the CoC Program. See: Recording and Documenting Homeless Status Training for more information on the documentation requirements for homeless status.</p> <p>Projects funded under the Special NOFO must adopt and follow a Housing First approach. Screening out people who do not have identification documents is not consistent with a Housing First approach.</p>

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