



July 25, 2016

CoC Competition Focus: Ending Chronic Homelessness

HUD and the Administration are striving to end chronic homelessness by the end of 2017. The [FY 2016 Continuum of Care \(CoC\) Program NOFA](#) continues to emphasize the importance of implementing those [strategies](#) that will help CoCs meet this goal. Earlier this month, HUD and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) [released the criteria and benchmark](#) for what it means to end chronic homelessness, and you will hear more about these in the coming weeks. This installment of *CoC Competition Focus* provides resources on the policy priority included in the FY 2016 CoC Program NOFA for ending chronic homelessness.

This policy priority focuses on three key areas:

- Targeting persons with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness for existing and new permanent supportive housing;
- Increasing the number of dedicated permanent supportive housing units; and
- Improving outreach.

Target persons with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness for existing and new permanent supportive housing:

Earlier this week, HUD published [Notice CPD-16-11: Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing](#) which supersedes [Notice CPD-14-012](#), which was published in July 2014. In this Notice, HUD lays out recommended orders of priority for both dedicated permanent supportive housing (including permanent supportive housing not awarded as dedicated but identified as prioritized) and for non-dedicated permanent supportive housing. HUD updated the prioritization guidance to reflect [the definition of chronic homelessness included in the final rule](#). CoCs are encouraged to adopt these orders of priority and incorporate them into their written standards, however, CoCs will be eligible to receive points outlined in Section VII.A.6.(a) of the FY 2016 CoC Program NOFA for demonstrating adoption and incorporation of the orders of priority included in either Notice CPD-16-11 or Notice CPD-14-012.

To be able to achieve an end to chronic homelessness — and to sustain it — CoCs must work diligently to ensure that persons experiencing chronic homelessness are [prioritized to the maximum extent possible](#) in all available permanent supportive housing while also working to ensure that fewer and fewer people “age in” to chronic homelessness by connecting them to permanent housing sooner. Adopting a [Housing First](#) approach in as much of the available permanent housing as possible will be integral to making this happen. Those with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness will be the least likely to meet unnecessary program requirements and will benefit the most from this approach.

HUD also recognizes that when targeting those persons with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness, obtaining the documentation required in the final rule may take time. It is not HUD’s intent to delay a person experiencing chronic homelessness from being able to quickly access permanent supportive housing due to



burdensome recordkeeping requirements. Therefore, HUD has published [FAQ 2872](#), clarifying that while at least 9-months of third-party documentation is required for at least 75 percent of program participants in an operating year, recipients have up to 180 days after a program participant has been enrolled to a project to obtain that documentation.

Increase the number of dedicated permanent supportive housing units:

In addition to prioritizing people experiencing chronic homelessness in existing permanent supportive housing, most CoCs will need additional permanent housing resources to meet the goal of ending chronic homelessness. Therefore, we encourage CoCs to [continue to reallocate](#) funds from lower performing projects to create new permanent supportive housing dedicated to chronic homelessness and apply for new bonus funding for this purpose. CoCs should also consider additional ways to create more available permanent supportive housing dedicated for the chronic homelessness outside of the CoC Program Competition.

One way to do this is by partnering with a local [Public Housing Agency \(PHA\)](#) to initiate a moving-on strategy, which is where persons currently residing in permanent supportive housing but who no longer need the supportive services “move on” to housing that is supported through the PHA such as a Housing Choice Voucher or Public Housing. This essentially increases the rate of turnover in permanent supportive housing (in a positive way) which frees up more units for persons experiencing chronic homelessness.

Improve Outreach:

A CoC cannot confidently declare that they have achieved the goal of ending chronic homelessness unless they have a persistent, coordinated, and creative outreach and engagement strategy that ensures that they have, to the best of their ability, identified all persons experiencing homelessness. The outreach and engagement efforts — including in-reach to local public systems where chronically homeless persons cycle in and out of — should be connected to coordinated entry and other mainstream systems to ensure that every person is connected to assistance. CoCs should continuously engage persons experiencing chronic homelessness (and most at risk of becoming chronically homeless), even if they repeatedly decline housing and services.

Communities should share information across outreach teams and sites and engage with other systems, including law enforcement, hospitals and emergency departments, corrections, libraries, and job centers. These efforts should proactively seek all people who are unsheltered within CoC, including people living in [encampments or tent cities](#), and not be limited to serving only persons seeking assistance. All outreach should be person-centered and emphasize building rapport and trust as a means of helping people obtain housing with appropriate services.

Over the coming weeks, HUD and USICH will be providing additional resources and tools aimed at helping CoCs understand what it means to end chronic homelessness. As always, we thank you for your continued commitment to ending homelessness.

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Resources Related to Ending Chronic Homelessness:

- [10 Strategies to End Chronic Homelessness](#) (USICH)



- [Criteria and Benchmark for Ending Chronic Homelessness](#) (USICH and HUD)
- [Notice CPD-16-11: Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing](#) (HUD)
- [FAQ 2872: Are recipients of PSH required to have all third-party documentation at the point of intake and enrollment of a program participant into a project?](#) (HUD)
- [Final Rule on Defining “Chronically Homeless” and related resources](#) (HUD)
- [USICH Supportive Housing Opportunities Planner \(SHOP\) Tool](#) (USICH)
- [Housing First Checklist: Tool for Assessing Housing First in Practice](#) (USICH)
- [Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing Brief](#) (HUD)
- [Creating Effective Systems to End Homelessness: A Guide to Reallocating Funds in the CoC Program](#) (USICH)
- [Resources for CoC and PHA Collaboration to End Homelessness](#) (HUD)
- [Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments: Advancing the Dialogue](#) (USICH)