



July 31, 2018

## FY 2018 CoC Competition Focus: DedicatedPLUS – Explaining the New Strategy for Ending Chronic Homelessness

In the FY 2017 Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), we introduced the concept of DedicatedPLUS Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), which allows recipients to serve some households who are highly vulnerable but not currently experiencing chronic homelessness. We have carried this concept forward into the FY 2018 CoC Program Competition NOFA and I want to take a moment to explain the development of DedicatedPlus and our thinking about how communities should be using this new strategy.

In 2014, we observed that despite significant increases in PSH over the years, the vast majority of it that was funded through the CoC Program was not being effectively targeted. Many communities and recipients of CoC Program-funded PSH weren't using a Housing First approach and were continuing to serve people on a "first-come, first-serve" basis or based on tenant selection processes that screened out those with the highest level of need. To address this, we took a number of steps that sought to ensure that CoC Program-funded PSH was serving households with the highest levels of need so that, together, we could end chronic homelessness. These steps included providing [an order of priority for dedicated and non-dedicated PSH](#), tightening the [definition of chronic homelessness](#) with new universal recordkeeping requirements, and providing incentives through the CoC Program Competition that encouraged CoCs to dedicate or prioritize more of their PSH.

As a result of these shifts, CoCs dedicated many of their PSH units to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Leading up to the FY 2017 CoC Program Competition, however, we were hearing more about challenges communities were having connecting some of their most vulnerable neighbors who either did not yet meet the definition of chronic homelessness or who likely met the definition of chronically homeless, but for whom adequate third party documentation was not available.

To end chronic homelessness, communities will have to be able to permanently house people who are highly vulnerable, even if they do not currently meet the definition of chronic homelessness. This includes, for example:

- Households who had met the definition of chronic homelessness but then resided in transitional housing because there were no other options available at the time;
- People experiencing chronic homelessness who, after finally moving into permanent housing, were not able to make an initial permanent housing situation work and ended up back on the streets but whose status of chronically homeless was affected by that break; or



- People who had been residing on the streets for years but recently had a stay in an institution that lasted more than 90 days, were discharged to the streets or shelter, and no longer meet the definition of chronically homeless.

It is with these types of households in mind—those who truly have high needs in the community but, due to eligibility requirements associated with dedicated PSH, are unable to access it—that we created DedicatedPLUS.

DedicatedPLUS is not an opportunity to back away from serving those households with the highest level of need and vulnerabilities. On the contrary, it was created to enable communities to more efficiently and effectively serve persons who are experiencing chronic homelessness, persons with the longest histories of homelessness, and those with the most severe service needs. As you are working to make progress on HUD’s system performance measures and improve the overall effectiveness of your crisis response system in your community, you will need to continue to think strategically about how you target your PSH resources. DedicatedPLUS provides a new strategy that can be used to do just that.

Thank you for all the hard work that you do to end homelessness in your community every day.

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