

Albuquerque Independent Review Committee (IRC)
Friday, July 9, 2021

Present: Hana Gossett (NM Coalition to End Homelessness), Laura Combs (Family Promise of Albuquerque), Elizabeth Elia (UNM Law) Ellen Braden (City of Albuquerque) Ilse Beal (Tiny Home Village) Kate Cleaver (NM Coalition to End Homelessness) Nathan Fuhr (NM Coalition to End Homelessness) Felicia Vargas (NM Coalition to End Homelessness)

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 9:05 am

Meeting Summary

The IRC committee met to orient new committee members on the upcoming competition. The objective is for committee members to familiarize themselves with procedures and protocols that align to decision making of the 2021 competition.

1. Orientation to IRC Process

The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness (NMCEH) staff are here to support this committee, and not provide opinion or suggestion. NMCEH receives grants for Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry System (CES), these are operated by staff that are not present for this process, though there would be a conflict otherwise if NMCEH were to provide opinion or suggestion. Kate provides programmatic support, Felicia administrative and Nathan compliance.

Hana explained the very first step is to decide what the evaluations will look like this year. Once established, NMCEH will request all necessary documents from the providers and compile it to a readable format for committee members with emphasis on critical points. Once this is complete, the committee will reconvene to assess the providers based on the threshold and scoring criteria. The end result will be the priority listing of projects that will be given to HUD as part of the CoC Consolidated Application for funding.

The exact timeline for the funding competition is unknown. When the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the CoC funding is released by HUD, that is when the timeline will be more clear. Historically, 3 months has been the timeline for this work to be done once the NOFA is released. We don't expect the NOFA will be released no later than August due to the need to get the funding information to Congress in time for their annual budget determinations.

2. Discussion of 2019/2020 Criteria

The documents start with an overview of CoC competition along with the program types that are funded. Hana explained the different types of program types on page 1. HUD also funds the supportive services through these grants. HMIS and CES are systems required by HUD through this program. The CoC also funds a planning grant that goes to the Collaborative Applicant, IRC isn't involved in this grant because it isn't competitive. The planning grant is based on a percentage of the total funding that comes into the CoC.

Threshold Criteria:

Hana explained that these are the minimum requirements to keep funding a CoC provider/project. There are 3 stages of the rubric matrix

1. Pass
2. Pass w/ comment
 - a. minor compliance issues, where HUD allows to resubmit with corrections
3. Fail - HUD doesn't want to fund the project
 - a. If project(s) fail they cannot apply for funding.
 - b. The reason the IRC moved with this expectation is because it is competitive and funding can be competitive

Hana went into detail of the different components on the project's evaluation using the rubric matrix (Appendix A) for 2019 and 2020.

Hana moved on to the renewal ranking criteria process. She continued to explain, once the project has been approved through the threshold process, they move on to scoring and ranking. Providers then have to provide an APR (the same report they use to provide data to HUD) from HMIS so CoC staff can pull data points to the scoring criteria. This is important because it's consistent data and the providers have easy access to it on their own to keep up with how they are performing.

In 2019 had the ability to put them in Tier 1 which was more of a guarantee of funding for projects. Tier 2 is at higher risk - funding could be cut through HUD. New project applications were placed at the bottom of tier 2.

Hana moved onto Appendix B rubric matrix. Looking at 4 groups of data.

1. Data quality - timelessness, success and accuracy
2. Universal data elements - required data elements hmis
3. Income
4. Housing

Hana read and went through each component on Appendix B for 2019 and 2020.

Hana moved on to discuss the process for evaluation of CES and HMIS

The Special Review Committee that evaluates CES and HMIS should be composed of people who are using this system but do not receive funding for it. This provides IRC recommendations on funding or defunding these grants. IRC will take back the feedback and provide final ranking and/or funding decisions based on those recommendations.

Hana moved on to Reallocation of Existing Project Funds, while the 4 members followed along on their screen Hana moved on to the Appeals section, she explained how it's developed by the CoC membership, if a project is ranked inaccurately, the project could make an appeal to a special appeals committee and they decide from there on next steps.

Hana opened the meeting for questions and suggested a 2 minute movement and stretch break.

Members asked for more clarification on differentiating between the two tiers. How big are the tiers and have there historically been cuts in tier 2?

Hana answered - HUD does prioritize other housing projects over transitional housing. HUD shows a preference PSH and RRH, because it aligns HUDs goals for the CoC. TH doesn't fully recognize that and is no longer one of the project types that can be funded with new CoC funding.

Hana provided an example Tier 1 could have 85% of funds we can apply for, including renewal and new project funding, and Tier 2 would have the remaining percent that would be distributed between lower scoring renewal projects and new projects that are prioritized, using the rubric matrix.

Hana noted that there hasn't been a cut since she has been involved in CoC.

3. Setting the 2021 Criteria

It was asked, if providers do fail, does the IRC have the opportunity to ask questions where the provider(s) must explain and provide rationale on why they were not in compliance? Yes, with how this was set in the 2020 version, the IRC can request an explanation for Pass with Comment or Fail.

The IRC determined that they would prefer to go with the 2020 version for it's clarity with some amendments to the threshold criteria and the scoring criteria.

In the appeals process on page 5, the document states "see Appendix C; there's no Appendix C. Hana responded, it needs to be updated by the CoC and it will be emailed as a resource for the IRC team to use, but it was not put in this document since the IRC does not set it. The language will be updated to reflect that it is a separate document.

#10 of the Threshold criteria chart for 2020, looking at the prior years' evaluation, would be looking at 2 year old data. Questions to ponder - Does IRC proceed? Any suggestions? Maybe we don't include #10 this year?

Hana clarified for the IRC that many projects had to submit responses in 2019, but that the status quo in 2019 was very different than it is now after the pandemic has gone on for a year.

IRC members decided to remove the number 10 on the evaluation form. Hana will remove number 10 and ensure the language is amended in other references in the document.

The date range for data has historically been March to March (this would be 3/1/2020 - 2/28/2021). Everyone should be performing comparably since all were affected by the pandemic at the same time in the community. It was agreed by the IRC to proceed with the same date range methodology as previous years.

The IRC discussed the bottom 3 scoring criteria from the 2020 evaluation as they were different from 2019. This included scoring based on programmatic performance in monitoring or other reports, removing points for

late submission of documents and responses, and no score but looking at length of time to housing. The IRC determined to remove the look at programmatic performance this year since last year has been inconsistent. The IRC determined that the submission of documents should be bonus points for submitting them on time again this year (as was in 2019) due to the nature of the circumstances right now. The IRC also determined to keep Length of Time to Housing for data collection not for scoring.

Discussion moved from how to keep agencies accountable and not have agencies respond inappropriately to increase scoring. A member suggested boosting numbers 2 and 4 points to 30 each since there were available points from removing programmatic performance. Project policies - adding how agencies handle people not finding a unit into the threshold for next year. IRC does not want to see that people are being terminated for not finding a unit in a timeframe without cause unless HUD says otherwise.

CoC can start the work and suggestions that have been made by the IRC. CoC will craft the 2021 Tentative document based on the information in this meeting and start collecting the threshold materials.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 am

Minutes compiled by Felicia Vargas, CoC Administrative Specialist