



North Carolina Coalition

securing resources ■ encouraging public dialogue ■ advocating for public policy change

to End Homelessness

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Request for Proposals Supportive Services Only-Coordinated Entry Regional Grants

1. Executive Summary

This request for proposals describes the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness' (NCCEH) process for selecting grantees for its supportive services only-coordinated entry (SSO-CE) grant in the North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care (NC BoS CoC). NCCEH is the designated collaborative applicant for the NC BoS CoC and submits the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program application. The SSO-CE grant is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's CoC Program. NCCEH is the grantee and will be sub-granting most of its SSO-CE grant through this RFP process.

NCCEH will fund one agency per Regional Committee. One agency may submit multiple applications to cover multiple Regional Committees. These grants are intended to help to fund the work of the Coordinated Entry Lead position and improve the Regional Committee's CE system. Only current or past Coordinated Entry Leads may apply.

The number of agencies that receive funding will depend on the number and quality of applications received and the funding needs of applicants and Regional Committees. Grantees may apply for between \$15,000 and \$40,000 per Regional Committee they plan to cover. The agency that receives funding will be designated as the Regional Committee's Coordinated Entry Lead and will assume all responsibilities of that role.

Any questions about this RFP or the SSO-CE grant application should be sent to bos@ncceh.org.

2. Timeline

Applications and supplementary documentation are due by Thursday August 1, 2019. Late applications will not be accepted. NCCEH intends to announce awards in August 2019 and begin grants on September 1, 2019. All dates are subject to change.

3. Background

The NC BoS CoC covers 79 counties, which are split into 13 Regional Committees. Each Regional Committee operates its own coordinated entry process which HUD permits under section II.B.1 in CPD Notice 2017-1 to help serve people over a large geographic area. Each Regional Committee sets its own access points, tracks its own prioritization waiting list, holds regular case conferencing meetings, and coordinates referrals to temporary shelter and permanent housing. All Regional Committees must follow NC BoS CoC policies and procedures for CE, set by the NC BoS CoC's Coordinated Entry Written Standards.

CoCs are responsible for building and maintaining a fully functioning coordinated entry system, subject to all requirements outlined in HUD CPD Notice 2017-1. CE system requirements include:

- The system covers the entire geographic area of the CoC.
- The system is easily accessible by individuals and families seeking housing or services, especially people who may have difficulty accessing the system, including people with disabilities.
- The system is well-advertised.

- All people experiencing homelessness in the CoC are assessed using the same assessment tool(s).
- The system meets the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking whether or not they are seeking shelter and services at a victim-specific service provider.
- The CoC regularly evaluates its coordinated entry system.
- The CoC's CE system has a process for clients to file grievances and non-discrimination complaints.
- The CoC's CE system complies with all applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and requirements.

NC BoS CoC staff, the Coordinated Entry Council, the NC BoS CoC Steering Committee, and Coordinated Entry Leads work together to make sure the CE system is effective and meets all HUD requirements.

The Coordinated Entry Council (CEC) is responsible for setting CoC-wide policies, monitoring for compliance with CoC and HUD standards, evaluating CE outcomes, and helping Regional Committees improve their CE systems. The CEC is made up of Coordinated Entry Leads and state-wide partners.

Coordinated Entry Leads are responsible for implementing the NC BoS CoC's coordinated entry system in their Regional Committees. Coordinated entry, at its core, is a community process that requires commitment and participation from all homeless service providers, so CE Leads are not responsible for personally doing all aspects of CE. CE Leads are responsible for organizing, implementing, and overseeing a system that meets all HUD and CoC requirements. CE Leads maintain prioritization waiting lists in HMIS; organize local case conferencing, trainings, and other CE-related meetings; report data to NCCEH and the CEC; and participate in CoC-workgroups and subcommittees, including the CEC. CE Leads also help to increase access to the CE system. Many CE leads conduct street outreach, VI-SPDATs in shelters, and other activities to make sure everyone in their community has access to coordinated entry.

4. Purpose

The purpose of NCCEH's SSO-CE grant is to improve the effectiveness of the NC BoS CoC's coordinated entry system so more people have access to homeless services, the system is easy to navigate, and households move quickly from homelessness to permanent housing.

NCCEH's SSO-CE grants are not intended to fully fund every coordinated entry activity. Instead, these grants will fund the basic infrastructure of the CE system, including much of the work required of CE Leads and other gaps in the system that prevent Regional Committees from fully implementing CE. Other community partners will be expected to maintain their commitment to CE, and SSO-CE grantees will be expected to continue to build support from additional community partners for CE activities. SSO-CE funds must be used to implement the CE system, they cannot be used for community planning activities.

Grantees will assume the role of Coordinated Entry Lead in their region. With this funding SSO-CE grantees will be expected to maintain a well-run coordinated entry system and to improve their systems beyond what was possible without SSO-CE funding. Regional Committees with SSO-CE funding should have CE processes that provide better coverage and access to CE, quicker referrals, higher quality data, and more in-depth evaluation than the CE system before receiving funding.

5. Program Design

NCCEH's SSO-CE grant will help to fund the Coordinated Entry Lead position and fill gaps in the CE system in Regional Committees. Only one agency per Regional Committee will receive funding. One agency may receive multiple grants to cover multiple Regional Committees, but they must demonstrate they have the staff capacity to assume the role of CE Lead in each Regional Committee in which they receive a grant. NCCEH will assist grantees to implement and improve CE in their regions and to comply with all grant requirements.

SSO-CE grantees will assume all responsibilities of the CE Lead role, including responsibilities that may not be eligible activities under the SSO-CE grant. All grantees will be responsible for a basic set of activities that support the infrastructure of the CE system and will identify other activities that will fill specific gaps in their region. All grantees will be required to carry out the following list of activities, or show they are fully implemented in another way in their region:

- Maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive prioritization waiting list in HMIS;
- Hold regular case conferencing meetings, not less often than once every 2 weeks (unless a different schedule is approved in writing by NCCEH);
- Ensure all agencies participating in the coordinated entry process are following the Regional Committee's Coordinated Entry Plan and the CoC's CE Written Standards;
- Oversee a local process for clients to file grievances and non-discrimination complaints;
- Help the region to administer the Prevention and Diversion Screen and/or the VI-SDPAT, as applicable, to all people experiencing homelessness (see the NC BoS CoC's [Coordinated Entry Written Standards](#) for guidance on when to administer these screening tools);
- Collect and submit CE system data to NCCEH and the Coordinated Entry Council;
- Help NCCEH staff to evaluate the region's coordinated entry system; and
- Help to evaluate their CE system's compliance with CoC standards and HUD regulations.

Once the basic set of activities above are implemented, grantees may use SSO-CE funding to fill gaps in or otherwise improve their region's CE system. For instance, grantees may conduct VI-SPDATs on unsheltered people if no street outreach exists in the region or use SSO-CE funding to advertise how to access the CE system if other sources of funding for advertisement are not available. All eligible activities are listed in Section 6 below.

Grantees may use SSO-CE funding to fund multiple staff members' time, although grantees must designate one staff member to be the CE Lead and act as the main point of contact for the Regional Committee and NCCEH staff. Other staff members may assist with the activities funded under the SSO-CE grant, such as data entry or outreach. Grantees may not re-grant SSO-CE funding to other agencies.

One of the goals of the SSO-CE grant is to develop systems to track high-quality CE data so the whole CoC can evaluate and learn from grantee regions. Grantees will work closely with NCCEH staff to develop sophisticated data-tracking and evaluation systems mainly using HMIS. Grantees and NCCEH staff will work together to use CE data to evaluate and improve the CoC's CE System.

Grantees should also use the SSO-CE funding to help leverage additional funding for CE in their Regional Committees. NCCEH anticipates renewing its SSO-CE grant, but SSO-CE funding may not always be available and is not enough to fund all CE activities in every region, so Regional Committees should develop a plan to secure local sources of funding to supplement and potentially replace SSO-CE funding.

6. Funding Categories and Eligible Activities

Applicants may apply for funding to provide supportive services in three categories:

- Annual Assessment of Service Needs
- Case Management
- Outreach

Definitions of each category and eligible activities are defined below. All activities must be directly related to carrying out the coordinated entry process and must directly benefit clients. NCCEH will not allow grant funds to be used for operating expenses, rehabilitation, acquisition, new construction, maintenance, or other costs that do not directly benefit clients.

Costs that are not directly related to coordinated entry are not eligible. Costs that do not fall under Annual Assessment of Service Needs, Case Management, or Outreach are not eligible, even if they are eligible under the CoC program or related to coordinated entry.

Agencies may use other expenses directly related to carrying out coordinated entry as match if they are otherwise eligible SSO costs under the CoC Interim Rule (24 CFR § 578.53). For more information about match requirements, see Section 9.

SSO-CE grantees must accurately track staff time to ensure that all activities carried out under the SSO-CE project are eligible activities.

Annual Assessment of Service Needs

Any costs and staff time associated with an annual assessment of service needs, as defined by 24 CFR § 578.53(a)(2) and § 578.53(e)(1), and directly related to coordinated entry are eligible costs for SSO-CE grantees.

According to 24 CFR § 578.53(a)(2) and § 578.53(e)(1), the costs associated with an annual assessment of the service needs of program participants to better meet their needs are eligible costs for SSO funding.

Activities associated with annual assessments of service needs and coordinated entry may include:

- Assessing client service needs using the Prevention and Diversion Screen or the VI-SPDAT;
- Tracking client service needs by maintaining a community prioritization waiting list;
- Evaluating the service needs of clients in the coordinated entry system and adjusting the system accordingly; and
- Assessing the needs of victims of domestic violence in the coordinated entry system and adjusting the system accordingly.

Case Management

Any costs and staff time associated with case management, as defined by 24 CFR § 578.53(e)(3), and directly related to coordinated entry, are eligible costs for SSO-CE grantees.

24 CFR § 578.53(e)(3) defines case management costs as the costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant(s). Eligible services under this definition include:

- Counseling;
- Developing, securing, and coordinating services;
- Using the centralized or coordinated entry system as required under § 578.23(c)(9);
- Obtaining federal, state, and local benefits;
- Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress;
- Providing information and referrals to other providers;
- Providing ongoing risk assessment and safety planning with victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and
- Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.

Case management activities that are directly related to coordinated entry may include:

- Leading and participating in case conferencing meetings to coordinate services for clients and to create individualized housing and service plans and to monitor and evaluate participant progress;
- Helping clients to use the coordinated entry system by making referrals to emergency services after conducting a Prevention and Diversion Screen;
- Helping a client who otherwise does not have a case manager to navigate the system; and

- Helping to resolve grievances, if clients' needs are not met.

Outreach

Any costs associated with outreach, as defined by 24 CFR § 578.53(e)(13), and directly related to coordinated entry are eligible costs for SSO-CE grantees.

Outreach services, according to 24 CFR § 578.53(e)(13), are activities that engage households for the purpose of providing immediate support and intervention, as well as identifying potential program participants. Eligible services under this definition include:

- Initial assessment;
- Crisis counseling;
- Addressing urgent physical needs, such as providing meals, blankets, clothes, or toiletries;
- Actively connecting and providing people with information and referrals to homeless and mainstream programs; and
- Publicizing the availability of the housing and/or services provided within the geographic area covered by the Continuum of Care.

Outreach activities that are directly related to coordinated entry may include:

- Helping to connect people with significant barriers to the CE system, such as people living in unsheltered situations;
- Assessing people living in shelters or areas that do not participate in coordinated entry; and
- Advertising the CE system to the community to help people to access homeless services.

7. Grant Amounts

Applicants may request between \$15,000 and \$40,000 per Regional Committee they plan to serve for the 2019-2020 grant operating year, which is September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. That means that an applicant applying to service two Regional Committees with this grant may apply for up to \$80,000 (up to \$40,000 per Regional Committee).

Applicants must have a detailed plan to spend all the funding within the grant year. Applicants must demonstrate:

- Their agency has the capacity to manage the grants on a reimbursement basis.
- Their agency has the capacity to expend the funds in a timely manner and has demonstrated history of strong grant management.
- The amount requested matches the current needs of the CE system. Higher requests must show that SSO-CE funds will significantly improve the CE system or that the CE system has unique needs such as high numbers of participating agencies or clients.

Requests should be justified by gaps in the current CE system, and requests should ensure that the basic infrastructure of CE, including prioritization waiting lists and case conferencing, will be in place.

NCCEH reserves the right to adjust any applicant's funding from their original request.

8. Renewal Applications

Organizations that received SSO-CE funding during the 2018-2019 operating year are invited to reapply. Renewal applicants only need to complete the renewal application form and budget. Renewal applicants may change the budget categories and amounts of their grant in their request.

9. Grant Requirements and Monitoring

Funding notifications will be made in August 2019. NCCEH intends to start regional grants on September 1, 2019 and all grants will expire one year from their start date. NCCEH will not grant extensions. Grantees will be expected to carry out all activities outlined in their application within one year of the grant start date..

Grantees will sign a contract with NCCEH that outlines all requirements. NCCEH may rescind any funds that are spent out of compliance with the contract and may choose to terminate a grantee's funding for breach of contract.

All subrecipients will be subject to regular monitoring by NCCEH. In addition, NCCEH will provide technical assistance to grantees as outlined in Section 5.

10. Match Requirements

Grantees will be required to provide a 25% match to all funds received through NCCEH's SSO-CE grant. Match funds may be both cash match and in-kind supports, including staff time. Match must only be used for activities that are eligible supportive services costs as defined by 24 CFR § 578.53 in the CoC Interim Rule and directly related to coordinated entry. Match funds do not need to fall exclusively under annual assessment of service needs, case management, or outreach as long as the activity they fund is an eligible SSO-CE cost. Grantees will be responsible for collecting the documentation of the match and sending this documentation to NCCEH in a timely manner and on a regular basis.

10. Fundraising

The SSO-CE grant will not fund all aspects of coordinated entry in the Balance of State CoC. The CoC needs more assistance coordinating care, providing outreach, training and recruiting new providers, and engaging communities in the work of ending homelessness. SSO-CE grantees will be expected to help their communities build additional support and raise additional funding for coordinated entry activities.

11. Spending and Reimbursements

Grantees will be expected to spend all their funding within one year of the grant start date. All grants will expire within one year of the grant start date, and NCCEH will not grant extensions. Any grantee who fails to spend at least 90% of their funding by the end of the grant term may not be funded in the following year.

Funded agencies will be expected to submit reimbursement requests every other month with complete reimbursement documentation, as outlined in the grantee's contract.

Grantees will be expected to spend only the amount requested for each of the three eligible categories (annual assessment of service needs, case management, and outreach). Grantees will have to submit a budget amendment to NCCEH to move funding between budget categories and NCCEH reserves the right to reject budget amendment requests. Grantees do not have to submit budget amendments if they change the amount of funding dedicated to different activities within each budget category.

12. Requirements for New Applicants

The full application for NCCEH's SSO-CE grants and all other grant documents are available at www.ncceh.org/bos/coordinatedassessment/.

Successful applicants must demonstrate their agency can manage the requirements of a federal grant and spend funding in a timely manner, has a thorough understanding of coordinated entry, and maintains high data quality. Successful applicants must also demonstrate a need for this funding in their community and the support of their Regional Committee(s).

Applications will be evaluated on two sets of criteria: threshold eligibility requirements and application standards. Applicants that do not meet all threshold eligibility requirements will not be considered for funding. Applications that meet all standards will be more likely to receive funds.

Threshold eligibility requirements

Agencies must meet all the following requirements to be eligible to receive SSO-CE funding. Applicants that do not meet all the following requirements will not be considered.

- Applicant agencies must be non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status or units of local government, including public housing authorities.
- Applicant agencies must currently be federal grantees or have been a federal grantee in the last two years (including subrecipients of federal funding that passes other agencies, such as Emergency Solutions Grants).
- Applicant agencies must currently participate in the NC BoS CoC's HMIS.
- Applicant agencies must secure a letter of support from the Regional Committee(s) in which they are applying, stating that the Regional Committee will elect the applicant agency to be Coordinated Entry Lead if they are awarded funds. See below for more information about Regional Committee letters of support.

Application standards

Strong applications will demonstrate:

- A track record of good grant management, including high rates of spending and no monitoring findings;
- The ability to administer a reimbursement-based grant;
- A clear understanding of coordinated entry, including HUD and NC BoS CoC requirements;
- Experience implementing coordinated entry in a NC BoS CoC community. Agencies must have been the Coordinated Entry Lead or document a strong leadership role in the coordinated entry process. Agencies must also regularly complete VI-SPDATs, Prevention and Diversion Screens, or both;
- A track record of high data quality in all current HMIS projects;
- A coordinated entry system that meets the basic HUD and CoC requirements in the Regional Committee in which they are applying. Activities related to planning a coordinated entry system are not eligible under this grant, so any Regional Committee that will require significant planning for coordinated entry is not eligible; and
- A plan to use the funding to improve the current CE system. Applicants should demonstrate a plan to build on the work already in place and leverage existing funding and staff time dedicated for CE.

Regional Committee letters of support

SSO-CE grantees will assume the Coordinated Entry Lead role and all applicants must secure a letter of support from their Regional Committee to become the CE Lead, if they receive funding. Regional Committees may provide multiple letters of support if multiple qualified agencies apply, but Regional Committees should thoroughly vet all applicants. Regional Committees should consider each applicant's knowledge of coordinated entry, ability to implement a strong coordinated entry process, and, importantly, ability to organize multiple partners toward a common goal. Regional Committees may withhold letters of support if applicants do not meet these and other standards set by the Regional Committee.

13. Renewal

SSO-CE grants are renewable, subject to funding availability and Regional Committee support. NCCEH reserves the right to refuse renewal to any grantee due to inadequate performance, low spending, other problems, or changes in CoC priorities.

14. Amendments

NCCEH has the right to amend this RFP and any requirements or policies laid out herein.

15. Regulations and other documents

NCCEH's SSO-CE grant and all activities funded by the grant are subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. For more information about the expectations of this grant see the following:

[The CoC Program Interim Rule](#)

[The NC Balance of State CoC's Coordinated Assessment Written Standards](#)

[HUD Notice CPD 2017-1](#)

[FY 2018 CoC Competition NOFA](#)