

## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

The goal of the homeless response system is to have all interventions and resources aligned to safely divert people from homelessness and/or help people exit homelessness into permanent housing. Systems should strive to ensure that a household's experience of homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time. The Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) competition is a key opportunity to improve your homeless response system to be more effective, efficient, and equitable.

### **Measuring system efficacy**

Measure your system's performance by establishing equitable system performance measures with the goal of reducing inflow, increasing exits to permanent housing, decreasing lengths of stay, and decreasing returns to homelessness.

### **Ensuring universal system standards**

Preparing for the NOFO is an opportunity to ensure all programs in your system: operate equitably; embrace and implement a Housing First approach; incorporate diversion, rapidly engage and identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness; demonstrate low-barrier paths to shelter and other programming; and make rapid connections to permanent housing.

### **Improving system flow**

Utilize the NOFO to improve your system's outcomes and flow. To build a better system, you must "right-size" your system. Align all resources with the goal of improving outcomes and flow, and use your data to analyze your system and build capacity where needed.

### **Utilizing the past NOFO to create a better system for the future**

To effectively utilize the NOFO, communities must understand that preparation is key. A critical part of preparation is reviewing the past year's CoC application and score debrief. Use these to create a list of activities that the CoC stated it would accomplish, and assess progress. Identify and list areas that did not garner the maximum amount of points. Use these lists to prioritize and develop a plan to address these for your future NOFO application. Use the [2022 CoC NOFO checklist](#) as a helpful guide.

### **Identifying NOFO values and goals**

The values and goals that should guide the NOFO decision making process are: reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness; creating solid partnerships; reducing racial disproportionalities; serving the highest-need individuals; and acting with urgency and care.

### **Building effective partnerships and community**

When planning for the NOFO, it is important that you do not do this alone and understand that it takes community and partnerships. Communities should build these relationships intentionally by ensuring they promote racial equity, elevate people with lived expertise, integrate housing and healthcare, and include other key stakeholders.

The CoC NOFO competition is an opportunity to highlight your community's impact on homelessness over the past year, as well as demonstrate the impact that ongoing strategic planning will have. Utilize this opportunity to build the system that optimally meets the needs of the most vulnerable in your community.