

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) REGARDING THE CONTINUUM OF CARE**

### **What is the Continuum of Care?**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a Continuum of Care as a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless<sup>1</sup> as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness. In addition to a strategic plan, the term “Continuum of Care” can also refer to the group that develops and implements such a plan, and to the annual process by which this group applies to HUD for funding to provide housing and supportive services for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in the area they serve.

### **What is the Continuum of Care structure in Maine?**

The state of Maine has three continuums of care: Greater Penobscot (serving Penobscot County), Portland (serving the City of Portland), and the Maine Balance of State (serving all areas of the state with the exception of the City of Portland and Penobscot County). Each of the three continuums develops its own community plan to collect information on the needs of homeless individuals and families, to inventory the existing capacity dedicated to serving individuals and families who are homeless, to determine and prioritize gaps in the current continuum of care systems, to develop short- and long-term strategies with an action plan, and to establish criteria for project selection.

### **Who participates in the Continuum of Care?**

Stakeholders involved in the Continuum of Care include, but are not limited to: homeless/formerly homeless individuals, local homeless coalitions and networks; homeless service providers and agencies; federal, state and local government representatives; public housing authorities; non-profit organizations; hospitals/health care centers; concerned citizens; and businesses/ business associations.

### **How are funds made available through the Continuum of Care Process?**

HUD, through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, provides each Continuum of Care the opportunity to apply for homeless assistance funds through a competitive application process following an annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Agencies who wish to access these funds must apply through and have their application approved by their local Continuum of Care.

### **How much money is available to each Continuum of Care?**

Each Continuum of Care is made up of one or more counties and/or Metropolitan Statistical Areas. HUD assigns a dollar amount to each county or Metropolitan Statistical Area in every state (determined by census). This dollar amount is called the “Pro Rata Need” (PRN). This pro rata need is an estimate of the funds that can be received by a Continuum of Care depending upon how well it completes the Continuum of Care Application in the competitive NOFA. In 2008, the pro-rata need for the City of Portland was calculated to be \$727,723; for Greater Penobscot it was \$339,114; and for the Balance of State it was calculated at \$1,897,193. The actual amount of funds a Continuum of Care plan receives may be more or less based upon several factors including: the amount of renewal funding requested as part of the application; the amount of homeless assistance funding requested nationally; how well HUD scores the application; and any bonus money that might be available during that year. Bonus money is usually targeted to develop a specific type of project or to serve a particular category of people who are homeless.

<sup>1</sup>The definition of ‘homeless’ for the McKinney-Vento programs is someone who is: living in places not meant for human habitation; living in an emergency shelter; living in transitional or supportive housing but originally from the streets or shelter; living in any of the above but spending up to 30 days in an institution; being evicted within a week and has no subsequent residence; being discharged within a week from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 30 consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing; or fleeing a domestic situation and no subsequent residence has been identified.

## What types of programs are funded through the Continuum of Care?

Name of Program	Description of Program	Eligible Activities	Eligible Applicants
Supportive Housing Program (SHP)— Transitional Housing	Temporary housing with supportive services for persons and/or families with very low incomes experiencing homelessness. Programs are intended to facilitate movement to permanent housing within 24 months. Temporary housing may be located in one structure or scattered sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of existing structures</li> <li>• New Construction</li> <li>• Leasing</li> <li>• Operating costs</li> <li>• Supportive Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Units of local government (city or county)</li> <li>• Public Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Private, non-profit organizations</li> </ul>
Supportive Housing Program (SHP)— Permanent Housing for Persons with Disabilities	Long-term housing for individuals and/or families who are experiencing homelessness with very low income who have an adult household member who is disabled <sup>2</sup> . Permanent housing may be provided in one structure, several structures at one site, or at scattered sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of existing structures</li> <li>• New Construction</li> <li>• Leasing</li> <li>• Operating costs</li> <li>• Supportive Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Units of local government (city or county)</li> <li>• Public Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Private, non-profit organizations</li> </ul>
Supportive Housing Program (SHP)— Supportive Services Only	These projects provide services designed to address the special needs of individuals and/or families who are experiencing homelessness. Projects are classified as Supportive Services Only if the project sponsor is not also providing housing to the same persons receiving the services. Supportive Services Only projects may deliver services at a central site, or at scattered sites where people live, or delivered independently of a structure (street outreach).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of existing structures</li> <li>• Leasing</li> <li>• Supportive Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Units of local government (city or county)</li> <li>• Public Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Private, non-profit organizations</li> </ul>

Name of Program	Description of Program	Eligible Activities	Eligible Applicants
Supportive Housing Program— Safe Havens	A form of supportive housing in which a structure, or a clearly identifiable portion of a structure, meets the following criteria: 1) serves hard-to-reach people who are experiencing Homelessness with serious mental illnesses, are on the streets, and have been unable or unwilling to participate in supportive services; 2) provides 24-hour residence for an unspecified duration; 3) provides private or semi-private accommodations; and 4) has overnight occupancy limited to 25 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of existing structures</li> <li>• New Construction</li> <li>• Leasing</li> <li>• Operating costs</li> <li>• Supportive Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Units of local government (city or county)</li> <li>• Public Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Private, non-profit organizations</li> </ul>

Shelter + Care Programs	A permanent supportive housing program that provides rental assistance to people with disabilities, primarily those with serious mental illnesses, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and AIDS or related diseases. The funds provided for rental assistance must be matched dollar-for-dollar with funding for supportive services to help participants maintain their housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant-based rental assistance</li> <li>• Project-based rental assistance</li> <li>• Sponsor-based rental assistance</li> <li>• Single Room Occupancy-based rental assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Units of local government (city or county)</li> <li>• Public Housing Agencies</li> </ul>
Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program	A program that provides Section 8 project-based rental assistance vouchers for up to 10 years in connection with the moderate rehabilitation of Single Room Occupancy dwellings. Selected tenants must qualify as homeless under HUD rules and have very low-income. Services are encouraged but not mandated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project-based rental assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Housing Agencies</li> <li>• Non-profit organizations who contract with Public Housing Agencies</li> </ul>

Each of these programs has varying requirements regarding matched and/or leveraged funds. For further information regarding components within each of these programs, please refer to [www.HUDHRE.info](http://www.HUDHRE.info) or to the appropriate NOFA in the Federal Register.

<sup>2</sup> Disability is defined as an individual who is: considered disabled under Section 223 of the Social Security Act; or who is determined to have a physical, mental, or emotional impairment of long-continued duration, impeding the ability to live independently, and of a nature that could be improved by more suitable housing; or is an individual with a developmental disability; or is an individual with AIDS or conditions arising from its etiological effects.

**What are some other considerations an agency must take into account with regards to submitting a project application?**

- Ability to comply with all applicable federal requirements
- Organizational capacity to develop the project
- Organizational support to maintain the project
- Ability to obtain additional funding for matching requirements, gap financing, etc.

**What is the application process?**

- Inquire with your local Continuum of Care regarding potential availability of funds
- Notify the Continuum of your intent to apply and meet with them to discuss how your proposal would meet a need within the community
- Complete Exhibit 2 application as detailed in NOFA
- Submit application to the Continuum for initial screening
- The Continuum selection process may include an oral presentation
- If your application is selected for inclusion in the Continuum’s application package, it will be forwarded to HUD.
- Await HUD decision to fund continuum requests

### **Are there any post-award activities?**

All successful applicants may be subject to annual review by the Continuum while the project is receiving continuum of care funding to ensure that the grantee is complying with the funding terms.

### **What technical assistance is available to me throughout the process?**

Organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Up to the point that the NOFA is released, HUD field office staff can assist in answering any questions regarding the process
- Coastal Enterprises, Inc. ([www.ceimaine.org](http://www.ceimaine.org) 882-7552)
- Genesis Community Loan Fund ([www.genesisfund.org](http://www.genesisfund.org) 563-6073)
- Technical Assistance Collaborative ([www.tacinc.org](http://www.tacinc.org) )
- Policy Research Associates, Inc. ([www.nrchmi.com](http://www.nrchmi.com) )
- Interagency Council on the Homeless (202-708-1590)
- Corporation for Supportive Housing ([www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org) )

### **What financial resources may be available in conjunction with the Continuum of Care?**

Organizations include, but are not limited to:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov))
- Maine State Housing Authority-Development Division ([www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org) )
  - Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
  - Section 8
  - General Obligation Bond- Various RFPs
  - Federal HOME money
- Municipalities/Department of Economic and Community Development
  - Community Development Block Grants
- Maine Realtors Foundation ([www.marfoundation.org](http://www.marfoundation.org) , 622-7501)
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston ([www.fhlbboston.com](http://www.fhlbboston.com))
- Community Reinvestment Officers at local banks
- Maine Community Reinvestment Corp. (contact Cindy Stewart, CEI, 772-5356)
- Rural Development ([www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov) )
- Wells Fargo Housing Foundation ( [www.wellsfargo.com/about/wfhf/about\\_wfhf](http://www.wellsfargo.com/about/wfhf/about_wfhf))
- Maine Association of Non-profits
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov))