



POLICY PRIORITIES

Policy Priorities: The FY2016 NOFA focuses on the Administration goals articulated in *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.

- 1. Create a systemic response to homelessness:** In addition to having the right programs to end homelessness, CoCs should be developing the systemic supports that ensure homeless assistance is well coordinated, well managed, inclusive, transparent, and achieves positive outcomes.
- 2. Strategically allocate resources:** Using cost, performance, and outcome data, CoCs should improve how resources are utilized to end homelessness, including CoC and ESG Program funds, state and local funds, public and assisted housing units, mainstream service resources. CoCs should manage the performance of all projects in the community and reallocate resources whenever doing so will better help them end homelessness. Steps to consider
- 3. End chronic homelessness:** To end chronic homelessness by 2017, HUD encourages three areas of focus:
 - *Target persons with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness for existing and new permanent supportive housing:* CoCs should prioritize chronically homeless individuals, youth, and families who have the longest histories of homelessness and the highest needs for new and turnover units by implementing Notice CPD 14-012 (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3897/notice-cpd-14-012-prioritizing-persons-experiencing-chronic-homelessness-in-psh-and-recordkeeping-requirements/>)
 - *Increase units:* CoCs should create new permanent supportive housing units that are dedicated to individuals, youth, and families experiencing chronic homelessness; and, if CoCs have not already done so, dedicate existing permanent supportive housing units to those experiencing chronic homelessness
 - *Improve Outreach:* To decrease the number of persons experiencing chronic homelessness in a community, the community must identify and continually engage all persons who are currently experiencing sheltered or unsheltered chronic homelessness and those who are in jeopardy of experiencing chronic homelessness.
- 4. End family homelessness:** Most families experiencing homelessness can be housed quickly and stably using rapid rehousing. Some will need the long-term support provided by a permanent housing subsidy or permanent supportive housing. CoCs should ensure that families can easily access housing assistance tailored to their strengths and needs and, through partnerships, increase access to mainstream affordable housing. For most CoCs this will require expanding rapid rehousing programs. HUD encourages CoCs to use reallocation to create new rapid rehousing projects and to use ESG and other funding sources to expand rapid rehousing assistance.

5. **End youth homelessness:** CoCs should understand the varied and unique needs of youth experiencing homelessness, and reach out to youth-serving systems and providers to encourage their active participation in the CoC. CoCs and youth serving organizations should work together to develop resources and programs that better end youth homelessness and meet the needs of homeless youth, including LGBTQ youth. HUD recipients must comply with HUD’s final rule, “Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Expression” (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1991/equal-access-to-housing-final-rule/>).
6. **6. End veteran homelessness.** Ending veteran homelessness is within reach for many communities, and CoCs should take specific steps to reach this goal including prioritizing veterans and their families for assistance when they cannot be effectively assisted with VA services, and coordinating closely with veteran serving organizations and VA-funded housing and services. Communities that have effectively ended veteran homelessness should continuously assess the performance of the homeless assistance system to ensure the continued achievement by periodically reviewing the criteria and benchmarks established by HUD, VA, and USICH.
7. **Use a Housing First Approach:** *Housing First* is an approach to homeless assistance that prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing and does not have service participation requirements or preconditions such as sobriety or a minimum income threshold. Projects using a Housing First approach often have supportive services; however, participation in these services is based on the needs and desires of program participants. Following are specific steps to support a Housing First approach:
 - *Use Data to quickly and stably house homeless persons:* Programs that use a Housing First approach should be moving individuals and families quickly into permanent housing.
 - *Engage landlords and property owners:* Identify and recruit landlords of units in the geographic area so that when an individual or family needs housing, potential units that those individuals or families may choose from have already been identified, speeding up the housing process.
 - *Remove barriers to entry:* CoCs should review project-level eligibility criteria for all programs and remove any barriers to accessing housing and services. Persons experiencing homelessness should not be screened out of or discouraged from participating in programs because they have poor credit history, or lack income or employment. People with addictions to alcohol or substances should not be required to cease active use before accessing housing and services.
 - *Adopt client-centered service methods:* All projects should ensure housing and service options are tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual or family presenting for services and that program participants have access to the services that they reasonably believe will help them achieve their goals. However, program participants should not be required to participate in services and cannot be required to participate in disability-related services.