

Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) Orientation

Common Terms and Acronyms

Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) - Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness – Agency that provides system coordination and evaluation to Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness and coordinates the Chicago Continuum of Care application for HUD funding to all homeless service providers in Chicago.

Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF) – The Trust Fund was created by City Council ordinance in 1989 and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1990. The Trust Fund assists residents living in poverty, with incomes not exceeding 30 percent of area median income, by providing secure, safe, sound and affordable housing through three programs, including the Rental Housing Support Program (RHSP).

Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness (Planning Council) - The Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness, Chicago's Continuum of Care governing body, has a mission to understand the progress being made in Chicago toward preventing and ending homelessness and its main responsibility is to oversee the HUD funding process. The Planning Council is comprised of 23 members representing the following groups: members of the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness (including consumers, providers and members of the Alliance Board of Directors), members designated by government entities, and members representing private funders.

Chronically Homeless Person – HUD defines a chronically homeless person as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – HUD (see below) introduced the CoC concept to encourage and support local organizations in coordinating their efforts to address housing and homeless issues. CoC committees at the city, county and state level coordinate their efforts to produce plans that identify the needs of local homeless populations, the resources that are currently available in the community to address those needs, and additional resources needed to fill identified gaps. The CoC process is a community-based approach that encourages the creation of collaborative, comprehensive systems to meet the diverse of needs of local homeless populations. HUD also refers to the group of service providers involved in the decision making processes as the “Continuum of Care.”

Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) – A national organization that advocates for and supports development and operation of supportive housing through financing, technical assistance, and training.

Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) – City of Chicago department that supports a continuum of coordinated services to enhance the lives of Chicago residents, particularly those most in need, from birth through the senior years. This City department is responsible for funding homeless programs.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – Federal housing department which funds over \$50 million in homeless assistance funding to Chicago each year.

Disabling Condition – A disabling condition is defined by HUD as (1) A disability as defined in section 223 of the Social Security Act; (2) a physical, mental, or emotional impairment which is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration, substantially impedes an individual's ability to live independently, and of such a nature that the disability could be improved by more suitable conditions; (3) a developmental disability as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act; (4) the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or any conditions arising from the etiological agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; or (5) a diagnosable substance abuse disorder.

Evaluation Instrument (also known as the “Tool”) – Prior to the release of the Continuum of Care NOFA by HUD, Chicago performs its own evaluation of renewal projects. The Evaluation Instrument, or Tool, is Chicago’s local application used to evaluate all HUD renewal projects.

Exhibit 1 – The city’s application to HUD as part of the NOFA. HUD scores each locale on their Exhibit 1 application.

Exhibit 2 – Each agency applying for HUD funding completes an Exhibit 2 application which includes project data, project budget information, and a series of forms about the agency applying for funding.

Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act) – On May 20, 2009, President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. The HEARTH Act amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with some substantial changes.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) - Computerized client tracking system mandated by HUD & DFSS.

Homeless Person – As defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C 11302), according to HUD, a homeless person is a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter; and a person in transitional housing for homeless persons who originally came from the street or an emergency shelter.

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) – State of Illinois department that funds prevention activities and services for supportive housing.

Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) – State of Illinois department that finances the creation and preservation of affordable housing throughout the state and increases the supply of decent and safe places for people of low or moderate means to live. IHDA also monitors low income housing tax credit and HOME fund projects.

McKinney-Vento Act - The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was the first major federal legislative response to homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act provides federal money for homeless assistance grants programs.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) – A lengthy document released each year announcing the annual application process for HUD funding. The NOFA is published online in the Federal Register.

Program Models Chart – Chicago’s Program Models Chart is a document that lists all the approved models for Chicago’s homeless system (including models for prevention, interim housing, permanent housing, wraparound services, etc). Each applicant for HUD funding must follow an approved program model; HUD projects are scored in the Evaluation Instrument against projects of the same model.

Shelter Plus Care Program (S+C) – The Shelter Plus Care Program is a HUD Continuum of Care program designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless persons with disabilities, (primarily those with serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or related diseases) and their families who are living in places not intended for human habitation (e.g., streets) or in emergency shelters.

Supportive Housing Program (SHP) – The Supportive Housing Program is a HUD Continuum of Care program designed to develop supportive housing and services that will allow homeless persons to live as independently as possible. Eligible applicants are States, units of local government, other governmental entities such as PHAs, and private nonprofits.

Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) – Statewide advocacy agency for Illinois’ supportive housing providers.