

## Continuum of Care: Indianapolis

### Improving the scoring of the HUD application

February 5, 2016

Mary Francis: Louisville lost \$3 of its \$5million dollars some years ago, and the silver lining was that the providers pulled together and recognized they needed each other.

#### General tips:

- Everyone needs to read the NOFA (it contains hints as to where HUD is going)
- The Interim Final Rule trumps EVERYTHING that came before, and will govern everything about future applications for a number of years. FIND A LOCAL EXPERT – there must be someone who completely understands the Final Rule issued by HUD.
- The 2015 scoring will likely be out 2-3 months later than the award announcement from HUD. The CoC has the right to see the scores – ask for it!
- Preparing a quality application is a year-long process; don't wait for the NOFA. Listen to webinars, read the NOFA, "read the tea leaves." The CoC should be editing the application, not writing it, after the NOFA drops. Base all edits on a complete understanding of the scoring criteria.
- NOFA ranking will need to happen later in the year – much closer to the NOFA dropping.
- Recommend taking a day with Courtney and grantees to review each of the Indy projects and determining funding restrictions for each based on the year they were originally funded. (Ask Mary for the years and restrictions for each – were they SHP, Samaritan, PSH programs? Any others?) Ask your local HUD staff if old SPC grants can be converted to PSH.

#### Scoring Categories – Suggestions:

##### Leverage & Match

- All match IS leverage, but all leverage IS NOT match!
- All match must be for eligible HUD expenses (note: furniture is a hot button issue – not certain it qualifies at Match). Match = CASH or In-kind resources.
- DO NOT OVERMATCH: provide only the required match.
- Leverage CAN include expenses that are not HUD-eligible.
- Check on Indiana – If Medicaid pays for case management services, this could count as leverage or match. Recommend asking Michelle at local HUD office to explain what level of documentation would be required.
- The ranking process should include a score for amount of leverage each project brings to the table. For example, Project A has 150% leverage = scores x points; Project B has > 150% leverage scores x+x points.
- An alternative to ranking individual projects on leverage is to aggregate leverage for the entire CoC project and submit one letter. Mary does NOT recommend this approach. She does not favor letting any project "off the hook" in terms of contributing to overall leverage requirement.
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## Recipient Performance

- In 2015, HUD was very clear about outcomes they are seeking. Do NOT give them more than they want. *“Don’t polish the brass too much – you might make a hole in it.”*
- HUD is pushing for Housing First, but they are accepting low barrier housing projects.
- Housing First can have expectations of tenants as long as all tenants are held to the same standard for admission and eviction. (i.e. eviction for nonpayment of rent, property destruction).
- HUD is very clear about Transitional Housing: clients must have choices (i.e. TH clients must be aware and given the choice to move to PSH if an opening becomes available and the client wants to move.) Programs cannot hold a client back if they want to move on from TH, even with priority populations (DV, SA, Youth). If there is a path for clients to get PSH, they must be allowed to choose.
- HUD’s priorities are for Housing First / low barrier housing. HUD will rank projects based on these priorities.
  - In Louisville, for families that are “poor” and cannot access other housing, the Louisville CoC keeps Transitional Housing and operates it as a long term shelter. All barriers to housing for these clients/families MUST be on the case plan and being addressed.
  - Safe Haven (2 year max) is for people who “can’t make it anywhere else.” Per Mary, if you want it, don’t give it up, but clients need to be asked if they are ready/want to leave. It’s their life.
- The City is the recipient of the Indianapolis CoC HUD funds and can get findings/pay backs. The City can “kick projects out.”
- In Louisville, Mary Francis prepares NOFA notes to assist in editing the application. Our CoC is encouraged to share this responsibility with Courtney.
- In Louisville, the CoC Report Card is very objective. The Report Card can include anything; Mary Francis recommends that it include ALL scoring items defined by HUD.
- SOAR – agencies can do this! When clients receive SSA it adds money to the local economy and creates more CoC funding to house more people since 30% of client income will be paid toward rent.

## HMIS

- The Collaborative Applicant (City of Indianapolis) and CHIP (HMIS) need to work extremely closely – should be “attached at the hip” per Mary Francis.
- In Louisville, the Point-in-Time Count includes PSH, shelters, etc. (it is not limited to a street count). The Count is not intended to penalize or be punitive toward any program/provider – the goal is to try to help all the programs)
- The PIT happens 4x per year – to clean up the data.

- PATA should require all agencies to get HMIS Report Training.
- General suggestion – get our HMIS vendor to come into the community to help where possible.
- HUD budgets are getting fewer cuts than other federal departments because of HMIS (HUD received increases of \$80million and \$30million, respectively from 2014 to 2015 and from 2015 to 2016 budget years).

### NOFA and Ranking

- HUD/CoC Bonus Money – not sure this is still available?
- Once a community gets bonus money, it becomes part of the ARD (Annual Renewal Demand) for the following year.
- The ARD dictates the Community's bonus allocation and the community's planning grant \$\$.
- Apply for ALL ONE YEAR BONUS PROJECTS I F POSSIBLE.
- Indy CoC needs to RAISE OUR ARD.
- When ranking our projects, it is imperative to know the current guidance regarding projects that are “straddling” between Tier 1 and Tier 2. Under some circumstances, the CoC may decide to re-order projects to increase funding. Use the NOFA to complete final rankings strategically to help the entire CoC.

(Note: In 2015 in Louisville, an algebraic equation caused the CoC to alter their rankings to avoid losing points)

- Funds that have been returned to the CoC by projects should ALWAYS be spent first.
- Ask HUD to spend some money on services – Louisville is a precedent for this!
- HUD will be looking at which clients start in which programs (i.e. shelter, outreach, HUD-VASH, Section 8, etc.) and end up in PSH. Critical to have shelter data in HMIS.
- Notes on Louisville's Ranking Sheet:
  - Include all HUD benchmarks/outcomes
  - For return of funds: Look at last 3 years (any project can have a bad year.)  
Look at amounts and ask why? (some funds may be returned because the project is having success!)
  - 9 Scoring categories (Housing Goal, Capacity, Funds Returned, etc.) – Indy CoC may want to use these but adjust the weighting of each one.

### Afternoon:

#### Bonus & Reallocation Funds

- Bonus could only be used for PSH or RRH this past year
- Reallocation funds could be used for HMIS; RRH; PSH; Coordinated Assessment
- We had \$154,000 in reallocation funds
  - We requested HMIS expansion in the amount of \$62,809 with these funds
  - We lost the difference of \$91,000 to our community. This money went to other communities in the form of their bonus dollars

#### Recommendation:

- Always spend reallocation funds 1<sup>st</sup> – before bonus because we also lost \$91,000 to ARD. So we lowered our ARD by \$91,000 and we will never get that back

#### Final Ranking Process

- Will take strategizing by a group that gets the whole picture and can figure out a best situation by how projects are placed/ranked
- There is a formula in the NOFA that corresponds to the ranking – it is complicated – those that understand it need to be on the final strategizing committee
- We need to decide who will make those decisions
- Will we allow those with a project in the mix or only those that don't have a project in the mix

#### Planning Grant

- Always apply for a planning grant!
- The only org that can apply for a planning grant is the collaborative applicant

#### Louisville's Single Point of Entry

- Paid for by an HMIS grant
- Call Center:
  - Hours:
    - Sun through Sat 10a – 2p

- Walk-in Mon through Fri 10a – 130p
  - Only call-in on weekends no walk-in hours
  - Staffed 2.5 FTEs
- This organization are the only folks that enter people into HMIS
- They give ID cards with name; birthdate; HMIS barcode; HMIS client ID & picture
- This makes for easy way to enter emergency shelters
- They manage beds like a national hotel chain – reserve rooms through HMIS with a check-in time
- Returning clients reserve bed every morning so single point of entry knows what is available
- Keep a waiting list for family b/c they don't have enough capacity
  - List is kept by VI – it is a VI Light
    - Shelters have access to VI list in order to use after Single Point of Entry closes
  - Contact is made when bed available
  - Families must call-in at least 1 time every 4 days to stay on list
  - Can get back on list easily if don't call in
- After hours of Single Point of Entry they need to fill the bed and shelter fills out an HMIS contact sheet and send it to single point of entry to put into HMIS
- If they come in after hours and have an ID card then they just swipe and go in
- At start they put one shelter “on line” at a time – this allowed for proving it works and working through kinks
- They use reservation process for Winter Contingency with one shelter that can take everyone

#### Louisville's Common Assessment

- Use VI SPDAT
- Done after individual or family is in shelter for 2 weeks
- They do it on the street as well
- Control for conflict of interest so the folks responsible for doing the SPDAT don't operate a shelter or PSH project
- They use Peer Support staff
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