



2021 Policy Priorities

Each year, the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) establishes local priorities for allocating federal and state funds made available to the community for programs working to prevent and end homelessness in the region. The CoC funding process provides limited funding for specific program types and sets the expectation of strategic resource allocation, system coordination, and system-level performance. The CoC Board recognizes that many more programs contribute significantly to the work of addressing homelessness in our community and that the federal and state funding allocations through the CoC is not sufficient to meet the needs in the community.

The CoC priorities reflect local needs and are based on priorities established in the federal HEARTH Act and the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program guidelines. The 2021 policy priorities were developed to guide the grant review, selection, and ranking process. The key objectives underlying the priorities for funding include ensuring that projects are competitive for funding, meet local needs, and maximize impact.

General CoC Philosophies

- 1. Ending homelessness for all persons.** To end homelessness, the CoC will identify, engage, and effectively serve all persons experiencing homelessness. The CoC will measure their performance based on local data that take into account the challenges faced by all subpopulations experiencing homelessness in the geographic area (e.g., veterans, youth, families, or those experiencing chronic homelessness). The CoC will have a comprehensive outreach strategy in place to identify and continuously engage all unsheltered individuals and families. Additionally, the CoC will use local data to determine the characteristics of individuals and families with the highest needs and longest experiences of homelessness to develop housing and supportive services tailored to their needs. Finally, the CoC will use the reallocation process to create new projects that improve their overall performance and better respond to their needs.
- 2. Creating a systemic response to homelessness.** The CoC will be using system performance measures such as the average length of homeless episodes, rates of return to homelessness, and rates of exit to permanent housing destinations to determine how effectively they are serving people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the CoC will be using their Coordinated Entry process to promote participant choice, coordinate homeless assistance and mainstream housing and services to ensure people experiencing homelessness receive assistance quickly, and make homelessness assistance open, inclusive, and transparent.
- 3. Strategically allocating and using resources.** Using cost, performance, and outcome data, the CoC will improve how resources are utilized to end homelessness. The CoC will review project quality, performance, and cost effectiveness. The CoC will maximize the use of mainstream and other community-based resources when serving persons experiencing homelessness. Finally, the CoC will review all projects eligible for renewal to determine their effectiveness in serving people experiencing homelessness as well as their cost effectiveness.

4. Using a Housing First approach. Housing First prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing and does not have service participation requirements or preconditions. Projects will help individuals and families move quickly into permanent housing, and the CoC will measure and help projects reduce the length of time people experience homelessness. Additionally, the CoC will engage landlords and property owners, remove barriers to entry, and adopt client-centered service methods without the requirement of service participation at entry or throughout program participation.

Specifically, the CoC will focus on:

- Supporting projects providing services that are low barrier, housing first, and client centered
- Partnering with community organizations and mainstream resources to meet the needs of households at risk of homelessness
- Leveraging mainstream resources to effectively connect clients experiencing homelessness and recently rehoused receive community support once program ends
- Continuing to support housing-focused emergency shelter
- Funding permanent housing programs
- Leveraging all possible resources to increase permanent housing availability in the community
- Addressing the needs of vulnerable subpopulations experiencing homeless through community partnerships and targeted resources as available

Priority Programing for CoC Funding

- New applicants for all programs will be accepted. Applications that maximize direct client services and follow industry and locally determined standards and best practices will be prioritized.
- Maintain support for high performing projects. Reallocate funding from lower performing to high performing projects
- Support the implementation of Moving On¹ strategies to create additional system capacity to serve those experiencing homelessness
- Permanent housing programs increase staffing and support to maximize use effective housing case management to assist with housing stabilization and retention

¹ Moving On is a collection of strategies and principles promoted by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that supports tenants in transitioning out of permanent supportive housing projects if they are ready and wish to exit.