NAPA COUNTY CONTINUUM of CARE (CoC) MEETING
General Meeting Minutes

Queen of the Valley Community Outreach Conference Room

3448 Villa Lane, Suite 102, Napa, CA 94558

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2020 **Time:** 2:30-4:00pm

Agenda Item	Activity/Outcome
Introductions	*Call to order. Quorum achieved.*
Agenda Review	*Any addition/changes to the agenda* One addition to the agenda is discussion of the CoC waiver. Homebase will also be discussing both Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the upcoming Continuum of Care (CoC) funding competition.
Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Update	Brandee Freitas reported that there are three weekly calls for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from 10-11am and on Facebook live. If people have questions or need resources on anything specific related to COVID, please let Pablo Zatarain and Lark Ferrell know. Brandee asked that if people have questions about the EOC please attend the phone calls.
March Meeting Minutes	Minutes are approved, with several abstentions.
Homeless Veterans Working Group	No update right now. There has not been a recent meeting due to COVID-19.
ESG Updates	**ESG Processes:** Homebase will discuss two things today: 1) Annual Balance of State (BoS) ESG NOFA, which has been opened for competition with a May deadline. Community needs to approve the process and scoring tool in preparation for the competition; 2) Discussions about the CoC NOFA competition in preparation for that competition. Understanding that in light of the COVID-19 emergency, which is moving quickly, these funding streams may seem ponderous and slow. Nonetheless, they are an important part of the community's funding portfolio. And, as we are seeing, there are efforts to make these funds more flexible through some waivers, which makes them more flexible and easier to use. Homebase has a resource website where we are

	compiling COVID resources and report outs from webinars. We will send out the link for the CoC.
	ESG Competition: The Funding Committee met on March 23, 2020. The committee recommended no changes to the ESG scoring process for this year. In response to a question, Homebase noted that the Funding Committee was open to all and announced on the CoC listserv. There was good representation at the meeting from most ESG and CoC recipients. Homebase sent to the Napa listserv an ESG summary, which contains a summary of the amounts available, and eligible uses, and other important information; a proposed timeline and process for determining which programs should be recommended for ESG funding; the ESG scoring tool; and the noncompetitive supplemental application (the competitive application is available online at the HCD website). A point of clarification: This pool of ESG funding is different from the emergency funding available from the federal CARES Act, which is emergency funding in response to the COVID-19 emergency. This is annual Balance of State ESG funding given to the state of California for distribution to CoCs. This ESG BoS funding is comprised of: • A non-competitive grant for Rapid Rehousing, for approximately $50,000 (one-half of Napa's Balance of State Allocation); and • In addition, the community can submit competitive applications that will then compete in a pool against other Bay Area communities. The applications must be from $75,000 to $200,000. In last year's funding cycle, Napa received only its noncompetitive grant; we don't know why Napa did not score high enough on the competitive application to win an award, but in the past HCD has provided scoring information to the county, and we will share as they are available. HCD requires CoCs to select local ESG applications using a fair and competitive process. Today the CoC will be reviewing and potentially authorizing that process, as well as a timeline for doing so and submitting the final application. *Overview of Timeline:* • April 1, 2020, Letters of Intent are due. We received two letters of intent to apply for noncompetitive funds (Veterans Resource Center and Napa County HHP) and one letter of intent to apply for competitive funds (Napa County HHP).

- Homebase will be hold a Technical Assistance workshop on Friday, April 3.
- Organizations have until April 24 to submit applications for the local review process. We will be recruiting volunteers for the rank and review panel – thank you to those who have served in the past, and for those who volunteer this year.

- On April 29 – May 1, rank and review panel will meet remotely. On May 1, Applicants will be notified of rank and review decision.
- On May 7, the CoC will approve the decision. Applications due to the state on May 28, 2020.

Scoring process: The Funding Committee reviewed the scoring tools and processes and is not recommending changes from last year. Napa's scoring tools mirror HCD's scoring system, awarding points for Applicant Experience, Program Design, Need for Funds, Impact and Effectiveness, and Cost Efficiency. HCD made only one change to the scoring this year: awarding points for some system performance data (not project-level data). The committee agreed that the change did not merit change to the local scoring tool.

Vote: Move to carry over scoring tool and criteria for this year for ESG BoS. **All vote yes, no abstentions. Motion carries.**

CoC NOFA Process:
The Funding Committee also discussed the CoC NOFA scoring process. Homebased drafted and distributed to the Napa CoC listserv a CoC NOFA memo about the scoring tools and processes. This memo, and the Funding Committee discussion, centered around feedback from CoC-funded programs, review and rank panelists, Board members, and members of the community.

These issues are worth discussing even if there are significant changes to the CoC NOFA Competition this year.

Questions: Will the fact that this viral crisis will affect some of the programs being able to actively house individuals affect the next year's performance? Do we have a strategy to mitigate the low numbers?

Homebase responded: The CoC should discuss strategies around this. HUD is providing waivers and more flexibility. It seems likely that this crisis will create more homelessness; but also may create more housing opportunities and homelessness prevention funds.

Homebase made some changes to scoring tool and process two years ago. Last year we did not make any changes. Through community feedback, HB identified four areas where changes could be made.

1. **Streamline Scoring:** Feedback from review and rank panelists indicated was that it was taking too long to score projects. Homebase came up with a way to streamline scoring for panelists so it will minimize time spent on some of the scoring

items and maximize their ability to raise and discuss important issues.

2. **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry (CE) Placement into Ranked Priority List**: CE and HMIS are essential functions, but there is difficulty in terms of ranking and reviewing them against housing projects. HMIS/CE Projects have typically scored at the top of Tier 1, which pushes some housing projects into Tier 2, meaning they are in danger of losing funding. In 2019, however, the CoC Board voted to automatically place renewal HMIS and Coordinated Entry projects at the top of Tier 2, or underneath housing project applicants. This vote came at the request of the HMIS and CE applicant, Napa County HHP, in order to better preserve the community's funding for permanent housing and services, and is a practice followed in other communities because of the difficulty of adequately ranking such different types projects.

   Question: Is County prepared to take on supporting cost of HMIS and CE. Group wants to hold this issue for later discussion.
   Answer: Right now, the County does not have that information to share out.

3. **Grant Spend Down of Federal Funds:** It is difficult for programs to spend down their entire grant especially for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). We have projects that are only spending down 50% of grant, and that money will be taken back by the federal government. This issue has persisted through the years and should be discussed openly so we can figure out how to better address it. A related issue is making sure that programs are serving the number of people identified in grant applications.

   The Funding Committee felt strongly that one of the things they wanted to do was to engage CoC-funded projects and collaborate as a community on how to get the grant drawdown numbers and unit utilization (or persons served) numbers in good shape. The Funding Committee recommendation is to use the CES Workgroup as a venue for that discussion.

   In terms of other remedies: One of the things that communities do is increase the number of points on the CoC scoring tool for effective spend down. Napa could increase that factor from 5 to 10 points, and lower the points for compliance for housing first or CoC participation from 10 to 5 points.

   Another or additional option is reallocation. There are two main types of reallocation, which is the term for taking all or part of a project's funding and putting it back into the community competition. One is voluntary reallocation (where the project decides to apply for less money), or reallocation by the review and rank panel/CoC Board.

	The current policy only has a provision for reallocation by the review and rank panel: "The Review and Rank Panel determines any renewal project should be considered for a decrease in funding due to substandard performance. Any funding captured from an existing project will be made available for reallocation to a new project that meets the requirements in the NOFA application." In order for reallocation to occur, you have to have another project that can take on the funding.
	The community could also add a voluntary reallocation policy, and add incentives in the scoring process for projects who choose partial reallocation.
	Discussion: Community member says this is a very important issue. It might be good to put the CoC in a position where you have as much flexibility as possible to fund services that can be funded. The CoC should position itself so it can fund what it can fund since things will change rapidly due to COVID-19. Could the funding be applied to programs in Tier 2 who did not get funded? Homebase responded: In the past Napa has only had enough applicants to fill out the need for funding available. The existing governance charter says that it is the policy for Napa to apply for all available funds. If there is a reallocation, the Collaborative Applicant can then email the entire CoC with specifics about how much money is available for which type of program. Any existing program could also apply for expansion of its funds. But if there were no applicants for that funding, the community might have to have a discussion about what to do with that funding.
	A Board member noted he is concerned with the points that will be given or taken based on how many people are housed. It is difficult in Napa and that might put extra pressure on people out there doing housing. He thinks there should be more focus on putting funding in correct places and supporting people. Homebase responded: The Funding Committee also emphasized wanting to support providers with grant spend down.
	A housing provider noted: It is very difficult to get people housed and get landlords to respond especially right now because of COVID. Another community member stated that she would love to have Fresh Start become a permanent housing program, but would need someone to operate it. She noted that they would need to work on how that could switch over to another operator, and hoped that HUD loosening restrictions will help with some of this.
	Homebase responded: During the next CES meeting we can really talk about how to support housing providers with spend down. CES usually happens every five weeks or so. In next few weeks Brandee Freitas will get that meeting scheduled.

	4. **Annual Performance Review Data:** This data, submitted to HUD and used for the CoC NOFA Competition, has come in thanks to Alejandra's HMIS team and we will be following up with providers with review and correction.
	CoC Waivers:
	HUD has issued a document outlining waivers for some existing rules pertaining to housing programs. It applies to CoC, ESG, and HOPWA and loosens restrictions on how you can use these funds. They are NOT changing eligibility requirements. Each program must notify CPD director at least two days before you implement waiver. Email is preferred.
	• **FMR Waiver:** For CoC units, the FMR restriction is waived for leasing projects. Leasing programs may now pay up to rent reasonableness with this waiver. There is a six-month period beginning the date of the memo. It was asked on a call what happens at the end of six months; HUD was not able to answer but they will follow up. Every Friday HUD has question and answer sessions, which are very helpful. Providers can ask real-life questions and get detailed answers.
	• **Disability Documentation for PSH:** Recipients can rely on intake staff-recorded observations; self-certification is permissible until public health determines that additional special measures to prevent COVID are no longer necessary.
	• **Limit on Eligible Housing Search and Counseling Services:** Programs can now use that funding for utility and rent arrears, in effect for one year starting yesterday.
	• **Rapid Rehousing Monthly Case Management:** These required check ins are waived for two months.
	• **Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Waiver:** Physical inspection is waived if you are able to view with video and you put in place written policy to inspect within three months. If there is an identified issue that the landlord can fix, can talk to landlord and say here is the list of things we can look for in three months. Projects can ask landlords to show apartment using phone etc. Please share any processes you develop as providers with the rest of your community.
	• **One-Year Initial Lease Requirement:** One-year lease initial requirement is absolved for six months, does not apply to prior shorter-term leases that were out of compliance.
	• **Similar Waivers for ESG:** Not as applicable to Napa. Recipients of ESG can use funds for HMIS, revaluations can be less frequent, monthly case management is waived but still a good best practice if you can do remotely or by phone.
	Lark Ferrell noted: Housing Authority is still waiting on Section 8 voucher side to get some similar relief. The state has clarified where FEMA and emergency funds are being used. There are some protocols working with local and state emergency services for reimbursement.
	Abode asked: Will Brandee Freitas be submitting these waivers on behalf of Abode?

	Brandee Freitas responded: The HHP team are going to discuss tomorrow and include Abode in the conversation. If they have any clients who are facing a timeout on RRH, they plan to reach out to HUD and ask if that person can be extended.
Community Announcements	• Tracy Lamb gave an update on HDA Family Foundation funds which donates $10,000 a month to community. This money usually pays for deposits or one-time support for clients. It had been administered to CANV in the past. CANV had been doing direct housing, but because of changes in their organization it does not make sense for them to administer the program anymore. NEWS will now administer the funds. Last month NEWS received the funds, and they are getting internal process completed. They spent down $10,000 this last month. For right now NEWS just wants to get it done internally so it is not risk for getting taken out of the community. After a month or two NEWS will open up to other community members to apply. Just need a little leeway to apply and get internal process in order before opening it up. NEWS had 40 requests and about half of the applicants are undocumented and will not be receiving CARE dollars so they are really concerned about that. Going to serve current clients, past clients, then new clients. All of services at NEWS are still operating but a little slowed down due to COVID. • Brandon Gardner reported that he is still in the office and there is a pretty good ramp up of homeless prevention. Anyone that has homeless prevention should be aware that there will be more money coming and community may need to pool or coordinate resources. • The Housing Authority was planning to open Section 8 list to partner with community partners to distribute, but it is not really practical to have community partners going out to locate housing units at this time. The Housing Authority is working on limited special preference to people who are impacted by the COVID-19 crises. The Housing Authority is working with HUD on that and working on a waiver with HUD. Hopefully HUD is working to get that approved shortly. The Housing Authority hopes to do 65 to 100 vouchers through that program.
Additional Agenda Items for Next Meeting	• None mentioned.

- The next **CoC Board Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, May 7, 2020.** CoC Board meetings are open to the public and provide information on issues of broad interest to the community, such as national best practices for addressing homelessness.

- The next **CoC General Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, June 4, 2020**. CoC general meetings are open to the public, and focus on the CoC Board determining strategies, making decisions, and implementing action steps.
- For meeting questions/agenda items or to receive CoC updates by joining the Napa CoC Google Group please email brandee.freitas@countyofnapa.org

NAPA COUNTY CONTINUUM of CARE (CoC) MEETING

COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
AHAR	Annual Homeless Assessment Report
APR	Annual Performance Report (for HUD homeless programs)
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (CPD program – federal)
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant
Continuum of Care	Continuum of Care approach to assistance to the homeless
CoC	Federal grant program stressing permanent solutions to homelessness
Con Plan	Consolidated Plan, a locally developed plan for housing assistance and urban development under CDBG and other CPD programs
CPD	Community Planning and Development (HUD Office)
ESG	Emergency Solutions Grant (CPD – federal program)
FMR	Fair Market Rent (maximum rent for Section 8 rental assistance/CoC grants)
HCD	Housing and Community Development (State office)
HEARTH	Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009
HIC	Housing Inventory Count
HPRP	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HOME	Home Investment Partnerships (CPD program)
HOPWA	Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (CPD program)
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (federal)

MHSA	Mental Health Services Act
NOFA	Notice of Funding Availability
PHA	Public Housing Authority
PIT Count	Point in Time Count
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
SNAPS	Office of Special Needs Assistance Program (HUD office overseeing CoC)
SOAR	SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SSI/SSDI Application program)
SRO	Single-Room Occupancy housing units
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TA	Technical Assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
TAY	Transition Age Youth (usually ages 16-24)
VA	Veterans Affairs (U.S. Department of)
VASH	Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing
VI-SPDT	Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool