



TO: Iowa Council on Homeless Continuum of Care Committee

FROM: Marliegh Fisher, Supportive Housing Director
Community Housing Initiatives, Inc.

DATE: August 25, 2016

RE: APPEAL OF SCORING OF THE RRH APPLICATION

I am asking the Continuum of Care Committee rescore and re-rank the Rapid Rehousing Housing grant submitted by Community Housing Initiatives for the following reasons:

Question #9: I am asking that the one (1) point that was deducted for the project schedule be awarded. As stated in the application, if this project were funded, we would be able to begin as soon as the grant contract is signed. CHI has everything in place to provide rapid rehousing. It is hard to give an exact timeline as it is unclear as to when the grant contract would be completed by HUD. As you're aware, no services on a new project can be provided until the contract has been fully executed.

Question #10: Alignment with Housing First- I am requesting that the two (2) points that were deducted be awarded. CHI's termination policy, as submitted in the grant application, aligns with the housing first approach. Three out of the four reviewers gave it full points, indicating they acknowledged the policy met the qualifications. In addition, this same policy was reviewed as part of CHI's Permanent Housing submission and it scored full points.

Question #11: Five (5) points were lost for not identifying agencies in the response; however, the question did not require respondents to provide names of service agencies. CHI has worked with most all service agencies in the community and can provide an extensive list of potential service partners. The reason CHI chose not list specific agencies is because in some cases, more than one agency could provide a support service. Determining which agency to use for a specific service is often the choice of the participant. It was CHI's decision not to list agencies lest we become beholden to that specific agency for services. The question consisted of a drop down menu asking who would be providing the service and duration of the services to be provided to the participant. The instructions for the reviewer state "that if 10 services are listed with appropriate frequency then all 10 points should be awarded. Fewer points should be

awarded if less than 10 services are listed and/or if services seem inappropriately limited in availability.”

CHI listed more than ten (10) services. The frequencies listed were appropriate. All of these services except one are provided on an as needed basis. As a matter of fact, CHI upholds the philosophy that predetermining the support services structure/time frame could possibly hinder the participant’s successful housing plan. Each participant should be provided with the appropriate services, including the duration of the services, based on his or her specific needs.

Examples would be:

- Child care and transportation: If these services had limitations placed on them, it would definitely have a direct negative result on a person’s ability to find and keep employment. By providing these services as needed, the participant does not have to worry about using up the allocated number of times that the service can be provided.
- Case Management, Education Services, Food, Legal Services, Mental Health Services, Outpatient Health Services, and Substance Abuse Treatment Services: These are all listed as needed. It would not be beneficial to the participant if these services had limitations placed on them. CHI helps people in our programs obtain the support services they need when they need them. It is hard to speculate as to how many times a service may be needed.
- Utility deposits are listed as yearly. This is the only service that has a time limitation on it. This is because participants should only need assistance once, upon lease signing. Most leases are for one year.

Based on the instructions for the reviewer, all points should be awarded for question 11. CHI listed 16 services listed in our application; only one was limited. All other services would be provided on an as needed basis. The question does not state that the applicant has to *provide* 10 or more services. It asks for all services that will be provided to the participant. CHI cannot begin to provide all support services to everyone and therefore must depend on outside agencies to provide those needed services. We try to avoid duplication of service whenever possible. Also, this question was completed the exact same way by every other applicant that applied for funding. No one gave a more detailed response on what agency would be providing the service.

Question #19: Budget Request: I am asking that the one (1) point that was deducted be awarded. The reviewer’s comment states that a point was lost for not providing a description of administrative costs. Administrative costs have not been required in the past on HUD applications. The application did not ask for a description on how those dollars will be spent. The relevant expenses were detailed in the application and

administrative dollars were indicated as the application asked for. Also, three other reviewers felt that the question had been answered fully.

BONUS: I am asking that the bonus points be awarded. The question itself is misleading. It suggests that if there are ESG dollars or a CoC funded program in the service area that an applicant should not be eligible for the bonus points. The questions/application does not consider that ESG dollars or the CoC program may be only available to a specific population; thus rendering those funds unavailable for the general homeless population. With the recent loss of 23 transitional beds for the homeless in Black Hawk County, a gap in services does exist. CHI clearly stated in our application that there is an ESG provider in Black Hawk County; however their services are *limited* to three months of *assistance to victims of domestic violence*. In addition, those ESG funds assist clients in eight counties, essentially eliminating the likelihood that CHI rapid re-housing participants would ever access those ESG dollars. CHI does have a CoC funded program; however, it is for *homeless disabled individuals*. Again, this renders it unavailable for CHI rapid rehousing participants due to the limits of its qualification for a specific population. I am asking the Continuum of Care Committee to consider that since neither the ESG or CoC programs provide assistance to the general homeless population, there is, in essence, no CoC/ESG projects in Black Hawk County for the targeted homeless population to be served by CHI's rapid rehousing grant. To be clear, the general population homeless are those who are not fleeing domestic violence, are not disabled, and are not veterans.

Black Hawk County has a population of 133,455 people. There are 13 CoC funded beds for the homeless, disabled population for the entire county. This means that there is only one (1) CoC funded bed for every 10,265 people in Black Hawk County. Without additional funding, it is most likely that the homeless will claim they are victims of domestic violence so they can be provided services. It is understood that providers, including CHI cannot question the validity of such a statement.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.