

Collaborative Applicants

Collaborative Applicants (CAs)

Definition

S.1801 would establish new entity called a “Collaborative Applicant” (CA), that is:

- a representative community homeless assistance planning body;
- which serves as the applicant for project sponsors who jointly submit a single application for a grant under the Homeless Assistance Program, in accordance with a collaborative process;
- and if the CA is a legal entity and is awarded such grant, the CA may receive such grant directly from Secretary;
- Notwithstanding requirements above, a CA may be a State or local government, or a consortium of State or local governments, engaged in activities to end homelessness.

Establishment or Designation

CA’s would be established to lead a collaborative planning process to design and evaluate programs, policies and practices to prevent and end homelessness by:

- 1) the relevant parties within a given geographic area, *or*
- 2) the Secretary of HUD could *designate* a CA for a particular geographic area, if, prior to enactment of this Act, the entity had engaged in coordinated, comprehensive local homeless housing and services planning and had applied for Federal funding to provide homeless assistance.

Membership

Each CA must include the following persons:

- At least 2 persons who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness,
- Persons who act as advocates for the diverse subpopulations of persons experiencing homelessness, persons or representatives of organizations who provide assistance to the variety of individuals and families experiencing homelessness,
- Relatives of individuals experiencing homelessness,
- Government agency officials, particularly those that are responsible for administering funding under programs targeted for persons experiencing homelessness, and other programs for which persons experiencing homelessness are eligible, including mainstream programs identified in 2 previously cited GAO reports,
- 1 or more local educational agency liaisons or their designees,
- members of the business community,
- members of neighborhood advocacy organizations,

- members of philanthropic organizations that contribute to preventing and ending homelessness in the geographic area of the collaborative applicant.

The representatives of groups described above should rotate.

Responsibilities

1. to design a collaborative process for evaluating, reviewing, prioritizing, awarding, monitoring projects and applications under Homeless Assistance Program, and for evaluating the outcomes of projects funded under ESG Program;
2. a) to review relevant policies and practices of private and public entities served by the CA, including priority review of:
 - discharge planning and service termination policies and practices of publicly funded facilities or institutions or other entities to ensure that such discharge or termination does not result in immediate homelessness,
 - mainstream access and utilization by homeless people,
 - local practices and policies on zoning and enforcement policies and practices to allow reasonable inclusion and distribution in the geographic area of special needs populations and of families,
 - policies and practices relating to the school selection and enrollment of homeless children and youth,
 - local policies and practices relating to placement of children and youth in emergency or transitional shelters as close to their school of origin as possible;
 b) to correct policies and practices, as necessary; and,
 c) report to Secretary at least once every 3 years through an Exhibit entitled, “Assessment of Relevant Policies and Practices, and Needed Corrective Actions to End and Prevent Homelessness.”
3. to design and carry out projects (if the CA runs projects);
4. to require outcome-based evaluation of grantees under the Homeless Assistance Program;
5. to request that state and local governments who distribute ESG funds to submit information and comments on administration of those activities to the CA;
6. to require outcome-based evaluation of the CA’s homeless assistance planning process;
7. to participate in the Consolidated Plan for the geographic areas served by the CA;
8. to require project sponsors to establish fiscal control and fund accounting procedures to ensure proper disbursement of Federal funds, including the conducting of annual reviews;
9. Conflict of Interest: No member of a CA may participate in decisions of the CA concerning the award of a grant, or provision of other financial benefits, to such member or the organization that such member represents;
10. to ensure that project sponsors funded under the ESG and Homeless Assistance Programs participate in a Homeless Management Information System.

Secretary may take remedial action against the CA if it is not meeting the requirements set forth. Remedial measures may include designating another body as CA, or permitting other eligible entities to apply directly for grants.

Performance Reporting and Monitoring

CA's will submit an annual performance report regarding activities carried out with grant amounts received under ESG and Homeless Assistance Programs. These reports would include a number of specific outcome measures of numbers served and housed, numbers not served or housed, the accomplishments of the past year, strategies for the coming year, consistency and coordination between programs funded and with the Consolidated Plan, a performance evaluation of each funded project sponsor funded through the Homeless Assistance Program, and a report of sponsor's recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

Secretary may provide a waiver to any CA unable to provide information with plan to submit information in future. Ongoing monitoring responsibility lies with CA for all sponsors.

Based on information obtained, Secretary may adjust, reduce, or withdraw amounts made available (or that would otherwise be made available) to collaborative applicants, or take other action as appropriate.

Collaborative Application

CA's apply through a "collaborative application" for grants under the Homeless Assistance Program. The NOFA for these grants would be released not later than 3 months after enactment of the HUD appropriations bill for the coming fiscal year.

The collaborative application would be submitted to the Secretary, and would include the following elements:

- establishment or designation of the CA, including the nomination and selection process, all names of members, all meetings held in preparing the application, all meetings between representatives of the CA and persons responsible for the Consolidated Plan;
- outline range of housing and services available and unmet needs in areas of prevention, outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, supportive services;
- prioritization of projects for which the CA seeks funding according to unmet needs described;
- identify funds from private and public sources, including mainstream sources, other than those received under Subtitles B and C that will be integrated with assistance provided under both ESG and Homeless Assistance Program;
- explain how CA will meet the needs of homeless people, and will integrate new projects into existing State, local, and private strategies in the geographic area over the next 5 years;
- report on outcome-based performance of homeless programs funded the previous year;
- include certification of consistency with Consolidated Plan (with new appeals process for such certifications that are unreasonably withheld from applicant)
- include certification that all project sponsors are in accordance with laws relating to provision of educational and related services to individuals who are homeless;

- will have taken into account most recently completed annual assessments of VA medical centers or regional benefits offices in the geographic area.

Agreements required of CA for all grants to be awarded:

- ensure operation of project in accordance with provisions;
- conduct ongoing assessment of access to mainstream programs;
- monitor and report to Secretary the progress of project;
- develop and implement procedures to ensure:
 - confidentiality of records pertaining to any individual provided family violence prevention or treatment services through the project,
 - that the address or location of any family violence shelter project will not be made public;
- ensure, to maximum extent practicable, that homeless people are involved, through employment, provision of volunteer services, or otherwise, in constructing, rehabilitating, maintaining, and operating facilities for the project and in providing supportive services for the project;
- if a CA is distributing administrative funds to sponsors, CA must establish fiscal control and fund accounting procedures for such funds;
- comply with other terms as determined by Secretary.

Grants would be awarded to CA's, either directly or by awarding funds to project sponsors to carry out the projects. Awards would be announced within 4 months of the submission of the applications.

Secretary may renew funding for not more than one year for previously funded project that is "worthy," included as part of a total application, even if the application was not selected to receive assistance.

Within 3 months of enacting this Act, the Secretary shall establish a timely appeals procedure for grant amounts awarded or denied.

Requirements After Award Announcement

Within 9 months of award announcement, all projects (except for those with funds obligated for acquisition, construction, rehabilitation) will have met all requirements for obligation of funds, including site control, matching funds, and environmental review requirements. Within 15 months of award announcement, all projects with funds obligated for acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation will have met all requirements for obligation of funds, including site control, matching funds, and environmental review requirements. Extensions may be granted.

Within 45 days after meeting above requirements, the funds shall be obligated to the grant recipient. Recipients shall distribute appropriate portion of funds to project sponsors within 45 days after receiving request from project sponsor.

Funds must be expended by a date set by the Secretary, after which the Secretary may recapture unexpended funds. Recaptured funds will be reallocated to another project in the same geographic area.

National Competition

Funding Available

Upon release of NOFA, pro rata need estimate will be made available to each CA for the geographic area represented by the CA. Estimates will be based on a percentage of the total funds available, or estimated to be available, for coming fiscal year. Formula for calculating the estimates is the same as the current one used for formulating pro rata need estimates for each HUD-defined geographic area. As it is now with CoC's, CA's that represent a combination of geographic areas would be eligible to apply for the sum of those areas' need estimates.

Further, the Secretary may increase the estimated need amount for a geographic area if necessary in order to provide 1 year of renewal funding for all expiring contracts entered into under the Homeless Assistance Program.

Selection Criteria

1. Capacity of applicant based on past performance and management of applicant;
2. If applicable, previous performance regarding homelessness prevention, housing, and services programs funding in any prior fiscal year;
3. Plan by which:
 - Access to permanent housing will be secured if proposed project does not include permanent housing,
 - Access to outcome-effective supportive services will be secured for residents or consumers involved in project who are willing to use the services;
4. if applicable, extent to which an evaluation for the project will:
 - use periodically collected information and analysis to determine whether project has resulted in enhanced stability and well-being of residents or consumers served by project,
 - include evaluations obtained directly from individuals or families served,
 - be submitted by project sponsors for the grant, to the CA, for review and use in assessments, conducted by CA, consistent with duty of CA;
5. need for type of project proposed in geographic area to be served and extent to which prioritized programs meet unmet needs;
6. extent to which project is supplemented with resources from other public and private sources, including mainstream programs;
7. demonstrated coordination with other Federal, state, local, private, and other entities serving homeless people in the planning and operation of projects;
8. extent to which membership of CA has a representative composition, and extent of membership involvement in application process;
9. other factors as determined by Secretary.