

## Greater Richmond Continuum of Care

### 2024-25 Community Priorities for Coordinated Funding

**Background:** Each year, the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) establishes local priorities for allocating federal and state funds that provide approximately nine million dollars for programs working to solve homelessness in the region. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development make this funding available to communities annually, through a data-driven, coordinated network known as the Continuum of Care. GRCoC funding priorities for these coordinated funding processes reflect local needs and are based on:

- input from people experiencing/with lived experience of homelessness in our community
- [performance measures](#) and [gaps analysis](#) based on data from the Homeward Community Information System
- priorities established in the federal [HEARTH Act](#) and the [Virginia Homeless Solutions Program guidelines](#).

Funding is allocated to communities based on past performance and factors outlined in each Notice of Funding Opportunity. Each community may submit only one application for funding which includes individual project applications. These priorities also inform the GRCoC's funding recommendations to Emergency Solutions Grant entitlement communities.

The GRCoC coordinated funding process provides limited funding for specific types of programs and sets up expectations for strategic resource allocation, system coordination, and system-level performance. The GRCoC Board recognizes that many more programs contribute significantly to the work of addressing homelessness in our community and that the federal and state funding resources allocated through the GRCoC are not sufficient to meet the needs in the community.

#### **Community-identified Priorities**

The community-identified needs listed below are based on data and input from providers, people with lived experience of homelessness, and community stakeholders. These priorities are aligned with the [Greater Richmond Continuum of Care: Local Public Sector Investment Strategy Approach](#) and reflect the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the region.

### GRCoC Investment Strategy

- Expand the capacity of existing homeless service providers by adding capacity and staffing to existing providers increases the number of exits to stable housing.
- Maximize resources available for housing-focused case management across shelter and permanent housing programs
- Housing navigation staff at GRCoC partner agencies including outreach, shelter, and housing programs
  - Housing Navigators work with clients to develop housing plans, navigate the search and application process, and overcome barriers to housing, such as income and arrears

### Additional funding strategies to support the needs of people served by coordinated homeless service providers

- Maximize all available resources to increase the availability supportive housing serving people with serve service needs (as-defined in the [GRCoC's Plan to Serve Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs](#))
  - Increase the availability of Permanent Supportive Housing. Our region has as Permanent Supportive Housing shortage of approximately 350 units.
- Focus coordinated funding resources on the development of new permanent housing projects.
  - Increase the total number of Rapid Re-housing beds
- Target community partnerships and funding opportunities to address the needs of older adults, and people with complex care needs who are experiencing homelessness.
- Maintain expanded outreach services to meet the increased in individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Support programs and staffing to facilitate coordinated services including prioritization, referrals, and case conferencing.
- Facilitate high data quality in HMIS or the comparable database used by domestic violence/ sexual assault providers

### **Funding Program-specific Priorities**

The following section develops priorities for each anticipated coordinated funding opportunity for the next 12 months. The GRCoC annually submits applications for two coordinated funding programs: The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Program ([View HUD CoC Funding Process](#)) and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Virginia Homeless Solutions Program ([View VHSP Funding Process](#)) .

Both of these grant processes include the need for a collaborative application with supporting materials that are reviewed by our [GRCoC Ranking Committee](#). The Ranking Committee uses the GRCoC Funding Priorities to guide its decisions.

In addition to community input and data, this section considers eligible activities under each coordinated funding program, and the program guidelines established by HUD and Virginia

Department of Housing and Community Development. Both HUD and Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development require applicants to implement a [Housing First](#) approach in their programs. Additionally, any agency that wishes to submit an application to the GRCoC during its local coordinated funding competition must meet [GRCoC Threshold Requirements](#) to be considered for funding.

### HUD Continuum of Care and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

HUD announces the beginning of the annual grant competition by publishing a Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). The NOFO provides detailed information about the application process including deadlines, eligible applicants, activities and costs. The HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) program aims to provide funding to quickly rehouse individuals and families who are currently experiencing homelessness. Emergency Shelter is not an eligible activity for the HUD CoC program.

During the local CoC funding competition, the GRCoC Ranking Committee is responsible for reviewing and ranking project applications. When ranking project applications, HUD requires that projects be placed in into two tiers. Projects placed in Tier 1 are more likely than to receive full funding than projects placed in Tier 2.

In 2022, the GRCoC was awarded a two-year grant of \$4.4 million dollars by HUD to address youth and young adult homelessness through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). Per HUD YHDP guidelines, the GRCoC will incorporate their YHDP funding allocation into their CoC funding competition beginning in 2024. For the first year of YHDP renewal, each project is non-competitively renewed, meaning the GRCoC is not required to rank YHDP renewal projects. While reallocation and replacement are eligible for YHDP renewal project, these local programs are in their first year of operation with limited outcomes to consider when evaluating performance.

#### HUD CoC/YHDP Funding Priorities:

- Support the expansion permanent housing resources
  - Review low-performing renewal projects for [reallocation](#) to expand permanent housing resources. This process could include reallocating funding for an expansion of existing Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing, or to support a new permanent housing project.
  - Bonus project for Permanent Housing (Rapid Re-housing, Permanent Supportive Housing), especially expansion projects for high-performing renewals
- Federally-required system components (Homeless Management Information System, Coordinated Entry, Emergency Transfer Plan)
- Funding for all renewal YHDP projects

### **Virginia Homeless Solutions Program**

The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) is a program funded through both state and federal funds to support CoC strategies and homeless services. This program aims to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness and shorten the length of time individuals and families spend experiencing homelessness. Emergency shelter and rapid rehousing are both eligible activities under this program. Unlike the CoC program emergency shelter operations is an eligible activity; however, Permanent Supportive Housing is not an eligible activity.

In 2025, VHSP is in a renewal cycle meaning only renewal projects will be part of the competition and application process.

If there additional funds are available, they should be allocated to Emergency Shelter Operations and Rapid Rehousing in alignment with the GRCoC's commit to reducing homelessness and increase access for affordable housing.