**What even is a CoC?**

If you are unsure what the term Continuum of Care (CoC) means or are just new to the process, you are not alone. We get this question a lot!

Simply put, the CoC program is a grant, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to communities throughout the United States, to prevent and end homelessness.

But there is more to the Continuum of Care program than just grant funds. The CoC program requires that communities to meet several regulations to stay in compliance with the program.

Here are a few of the basics to help better understand the Hennepin CoC.

**The Hennepin CoC region and lead agency**

HUD created Continuums of Care (CoCs) regions that span all 50 states and 6 United States territories. Minnesota is divided into 10 CoCs. The geographic boundaries of the Hennepin County CoC include the entire County, which includes the city of Minneapolis, as well sixteen additional communities within the 607 square miles of the County.

Each CoC must designate a collaborate applicant to lead their geographic region. The primary responsibility of the collaborative applicant is to submit an annual collaborative application on behalf of the CoC and promote a coordinated, communitywide response to homelessness. Hennepin County serves this role for the Hennepin CoC.

**CoC’s conduct local process for federal funds**

Hennepin County, as the Collaborative Applicant, prepares and submits an annual collaborative application to HUD on behalf of the Hennepin CoC. In addition, we submit the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Housing Inventory Count (HIC), Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, and System Performance Measurement (SPM) data. HUD makes final funding allocations, based on our collaborative application and how we are moving the gauge HUD System Performance measures.

Of the approximately $2.5 billion that was made available nationally for the FY2020 CoC Program NOFA, Hennepin County has received about $13 million. This funding supports housing and/or services for people experiencing homelessness and the operation of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). If our community scores well on the collaborative application and demonstrates improvement on the system performance measures, then bonus funding could be available, which would increase the amount of funding our community receives.

To determine who receives these funds locally, a competitive process takes place where each project is scored and ranked ([you can see the list of the 2019 project ranking here](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/your-government/projects-initiatives/coc/FY2019-coc-priority-list.pdf)) by the Hennepin CoC Funding committee.

In preparation for bonus funds being available, a pre-application for new project proposals is released each year. If bonus funding is available, the CoC Funding Committee determines which project(s) will be funded, from the applications that are received.

**Promoting communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness**

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The Hennepin CoC brings to together wide range of stakeholders to see this vision come to fruition. The stakeholders include representatives from the following areas: Nonprofit homeless assistance providers, Victim service providers, Faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve veterans, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, foundations, funders, Suburban/non-urban representatives, chemical dependency agencies, and child welfare.

To coordinate the work of these stakeholders the Hennepin CoC has established boards and committee that contribute to the governance structure. The Executive Committee is the lead decision-making body of the Hennepin CoC. There are several active and engaged CoC committees, subcommittees, and working groups that also contribute to and lead efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

Visit [www.hennepin.us/headinghomehennepin](http://www.hennepin.us/headinghomehennepin) to view the current information on the governing boards of the Hennepin CoC.

[Click here to read the full description of the CoC governance structure (DOCX)](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/your-government/projects-initiatives/documents/412019-Hennepin-County-CoCapproved-Governance-Charter.docx).

If you are interested in becoming involved in the Hennepin CoC you can contact [Endhomelessness@hennepin.us](mailto:Endhomelessness@hennepin.us) to express your interest.