

NV-501 Unsheltered Homelessness CoC Draft Plan

P-1. Leveraging Housing Resources.

P-1. a. Leveraging Housing Commitment Attachment.

P-1. b. Development of New Units and Creation of Housing Opportunities Attachment.

P-1. c. Landlord Recruitment.

The CoC has recently adopted a more coordinated approach for landlord recruitment in an effort to increase Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) utilization and effectively leverage the Treasury Department's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funding. Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services (WCHHS), who serves as the collaborative applicant for the CoC, has established a Housing Navigator and Tenancy Support pilot program staffed by two full time Housing Navigators. The Housing Navigators developed and continue to actively manage a comprehensive database of affordable housing and voucher/ TBRA friendly properties within the CoC's region. This is the most comprehensive strategy the CoC has used for landlord recruitment to date. Currently this database is shared with all case managers at the regional low barrier emergency shelter and with all EHV partner agencies. WCHHS manages low barrier emergency shelter programs and oversees the EHV partner agencies. The CoC Housing Navigators regularly engage landlords, serve as a centralized point-of-contact if concerns arise for these landlords, and offer tenancy supportive services for EHV holders. This coordinated strategy will continue to expand over the coming year as the Reno Housing Authority hires a landlord engagement specialist and the CoC establishes a working group of key stakeholders to develop a shared plan for landlord recruitment and engagement. The goal is to share this database with housing programs CoC wide so that they can utilize the up to date information to more effectively house participants quickly.

Since launching in early summer of 2022, the strategy above has identified 109 properties that offer affordable rents and accept tenant based rental assistance. This includes both subsidized and unsubsidized properties. Additionally, 50 property management companies that manage most of these properties have been identified and engaged. The properties are in 13 different zip codes spread throughout most of the CoC's region.

These landlord engagement efforts are still in their initial stages and have mostly identified units in areas that traditionally have a higher concentration of subsidized and/or naturally occurring affordable housing. Some subsidized units are located outside of those areas, mostly recently developed properties in Difficult to Develop Areas (DDAs), but more engagement is needed. One of the CoC's main goals moving forward is to establish and strengthen relationships with landlords and property management companies that have not historically accepted tenant based rental assistance in order to expand the areas in which voucher holders may live. Increasing access to

higher opportunity neighborhoods will increase participants' access to jobs, quality education, public transit, and other supportive services.

The CoC will be tracking exits to permanent housing, the utilization rates of Emergency Housing Vouchers, the number of total and new properties/landlords identified in the housing inventory database, and the location of properties renting to participants of tenant based rental assistance programs. These data points will be used to inform and update the landlord recruitment strategy in terms of geographic targeting, scope of work for Housing Navigators, and stakeholder engagement.

Historically, most of the CoC's landlord recruitment efforts have been led by individual organizations and case managers. The Reno Housing Authority renewed efforts to host monthly landlord information sessions in 2019 and also established a risk mitigation fund to help cover the cost of repairs and/or missed rent to landlords that actively accept vouchers.

In the past 3 years, the CoC and its members have implemented the following practices:

1. Virtual and in-person landlord information meetings
2. Risk Mitigation Fund
3. Housing Navigators/Tenancy Support Pilot Program

Key lessons learned from these practices are that the CoC needs to actively address the confusion and frustration landlords often experience during the lease up process for housing vouchers/ TBRA programs and the hesitancy to rent to "risky" tenants, especially when there are no additional supports available. The risk mitigation fund and the improved landlord engagement approach that the Reno Housing Authority and CoC Housing Navigators are leading are direct results of the lessons learned from these previous practices.

P-2. Leveraging Health Care Resources Attachment.

P-3. Current Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness.

The CoC's current strategy to identify, shelter, and house individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness is encompassed in the Coordinated Entry (CES) and Outreach Policy and Procedures. Coordinated outreach efforts begin with actively mapping the county region to identify encampments and assign outreach agencies and their workers to be deployed to the identified areas. Street outreach teams engage with individuals and families to assess their specific needs and enter them into CES. A housing assessment is completed and the information is reported in HMIS. Unsheltered individuals and families are added to the CES queue for housing and then connected to shelter, temporary housing, or permanent housing that best meets their needs and the communities' availability. If the household fits the assessing agency's eligibility criteria, they are

enrolled in the agency's outreach program and ongoing case management is provided while housing is being identified. If a household does not meet the responding outreach providers eligibility criteria the case will be reviewed during the next case conferencing meeting to discuss a housing plan for that individual or family. The CoC continuously updates encampment maps, deploys street outreach workers, and conducts outreach to unsheltered individuals and families where they reside in order to maximize the number of people connected to shelter and housing. Outreach case conferencing is held bi-weekly to coordinate shelter and housing for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

P-3. a. Current Street Outreach Strategy.

The CoC has recently streamlined its outreach strategy. In January of 2022, the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care Leadership Council approved a CoC Outreach Policy in an effort to better coordinate outreach efforts in alignment with the Built for Zero framework. The formal policy, developed by a CoC committee comprised of staff from street outreach providers, addresses the gaps in coordination, ensures that outreach teams are deployed at locations and times that are most effective, minimizes duplication of efforts, and establishes an outreach case conferencing meeting. Prior to this policy, the community had many providers conducting street outreach with limited to no structure or coordination between outreach workers. The CoC did not have outreach providers assigned to identified geographic areas, there was no information sharing, and communication between organizations was limited.

The objectives of the Outreach Policy are:

- To create an active map of the geographic region that includes all active encampments and to assign outreach agencies to specific regions
- To effectively case conference all individuals in the encampments
- To utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for collection of data and sharing of information
- To utilize the Outreach Module in HMIS to collect data on homeless encampments
- To reduce the number of unsheltered individuals in the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care
- To meet all requirement set forward by HUD

An important aspect of the outreach policy that has improved coordination is the outreach case conferencing. This meeting is open to anyone with a current HMIS license. During this bi-weekly meeting, providers discuss the specific situations of persons in the region experiencing unsheltered homelessness and develop a plan to move each individual and family from unsheltered homelessness to housing. The primary goal of the outreach case conferencing meeting is to transition individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness directly into permanent housing.

Some of the questions discussed for each case are:

1. Who is currently working with this client?

2. Is this person's unsheltered location tracked on the Outreach Module in HMIS?
3. What is the housing goal for this client?
4. Is English the client's primary language? If not, can we ensure communication barriers are addressed?
5. How can we work collaboratively with this client to accomplish the housing goal?

At each meeting the following metrics are tracked and shared with the group at the following meeting:

1. The number of people discussed
2. The number of people with an action step (toward housing) identified
3. The number of action steps completed
4. The number of move in dates identified
5. The number of people housed
6. The locations with the highest concentrations of unsheltered homelessness

These metrics allow the CoC to report on the outcomes of the strategy and adjust the process as necessary.

The outreach policy also developed a strategy for identifying individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The CoC meets with local law enforcement and entities that help remove and clean up homeless encampments to identify new encampments in the region. The CoC then maps out these encampments and includes the size of the encampment, location, timeline to be cleaned, number of transition aged youth, number of veterans, and other relevant information to target outreach efforts.

While all outreach workers ensure that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are aware of emergency shelter locations, many people are unwilling to go to a congregate emergency shelter for a variety of reasons. The CoC's low barrier emergency shelter is operated by Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services (WCHHS) and is housing focused. The shelter aims to be as low barrier as possible by accommodating partners, pets and providing storage for personal property. Despite this many people are not willing to access this resource. WCHHS also operates a non-congregate shelter, the Nevada Cares Campus Safe Camp, however the shelter has limited capacity and is currently unable to meet the communities' demand for non-congregate emergency shelter. Referrals to the non-congregate emergency shelter are initiated through the outreach case conferencing meeting in order to best identify the most vulnerable people experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are not accessing congregate shelter. As the CoC is currently unable to accommodate the demand for non-congregate shelter, other options are explored for every case reviewed during the outreach case conferencing meeting.

Outreach teams are used as one of various entry points to CES. As a result of the outreach case conferencing meeting, specialized outreach workers can meet with individuals and families to address their unique needs. For example, if it is known that the person is suffering from a serious mental illness then the CoC will deploy a VOA ReStart PATH outreach worker. If it is known that English isn't the person's primary language, then the CoC will deploy a bi-lingual outreach worker. When individuals and families experiencing homelessness engage with an outreach worker, the worker completes a housing assessment and adds them to the community queue for

housing programs. Outreach workers continue to engage unsheltered individuals and families while they are unsheltered to help them exit homelessness.

Often an action step identified during the outreach case conferencing meeting is for an outreach worker to complete a Community Housing Assessment Tool (CHAT) and make a referral to Coordinated Entry. This assessment is the common assessment used by the community to determine acuity and ensure that referrals to housing resources are made according to acuity and align with the priorities determined by the CoC. Currently, individuals who are chronically homeless or are transition age youth receive “bonus points” towards their prioritization score. The CoC frequently finds that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are chronically homeless and are less likely to access mainstream resources and homeless services such as emergency shelter.

Engaging this population requires specific skill sets such as people who have experience working with those who are severely mentally ill or have chronic substance use to be able to best make a connection with that person and connect them to appropriate available resources. Currently, a key community partner conducting street outreach to homeless encampments five days a week employs a person who was a resident at the non-congregate shelter program and successfully moved out to permanent stable housing. This outreach worker has been incredibly successful in making connections with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and coordinating successful referrals to substance use treatment and housing programs. This community partner was founded by and currently led by a person with lived homeless experience who puts a significant emphasis on hiring people with the lived experiences of unsheltered homelessness.

Outreach is conducted by CoC outreach staff at least four days a week. Most community partners conduct street outreach Monday - Friday. The CoC’s outreach staff fills gaps that are not being met by community partners due to limited geographic service areas or targeted specific subpopulations (i.e., Veterans, TAY, mentally ill, etc.). The CoC outreach workers are able to cover any location within the CoC’s geographic area and are not limited to working with a specific subpopulation. The CoC also participates in various pop up homeless connect events that are generally held in locations with higher concentrations of unsheltered homelessness.

P-3. b. Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Shelter and Temporary Housing for Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness.

The CoC’s current strategy to provide immediate access to low-barrier shelter and temporary housing for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness incorporates identification and engagement through outreach. Individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness are identified through the outreach case conferencing meeting, then outreach workers are deployed to connect them to low barrier shelter and temporary housing.

Individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness are identified and engaged by street outreach workers. As a result of the outreach case conferencing meeting, specialized outreach workers can meet with individuals and families to address their unique needs. For example, if it is known that the person is suffering from a serious mental illness then the CoC will deploy a VOA ReStart PATH outreach worker. If it is known that English isn’t the person’s

primary language, then the CoC will deploy a bi-lingual outreach worker. The outreach worker discusses the person's particular needs and enters them into the CES community queue. The outreach worker then works with the individual or family to identify shelter and/ or temporary housing options that they can utilize. During the outreach case conferencing meeting, households that remain unsheltered are targeted and then provided with a referral to the non-congregate shelter if beds are available. When a housing program has an open housing unit, they notify a CES matchmaker agency of the opening. The matchmaker then matches an individual or family to the housing unit based on their position in the queue and their individual needs. Position in the queue and the type of housing intervention the individual or family may qualify for is based on a points system with points being given based on the specific situation and needs of the person and/ or family. Unsheltered individuals and families are prioritized over sheltered in the case of a tied score.

The CoC's current strategy performs well with the inventory of low- barrier emergency and/or temporary housing in the region. This is evidenced by a high utilization rate for these low barrier temporary accommodations. The overall utilization of emergency shelter beds on the night of the 2022 Point in Time Count was 94% with 62 beds open. Transitional housing beds had a utilization rate of 55% with 148 beds open. This can partly be attributed to some temporary accommodations in our CoC not being low barrier.

In recent years, the CoC has tried working with Transitional Housing providers in the region that are not considered low-barrier to convert them into low-barrier programs or to reduce some of the barriers to entry. The CoC has attempted to meaningfully engage upper management of these programs and has coordinated with local elected officials to emphasize the importance of low barrier temporary accommodations to our community and persuade them to reduce unnecessary barriers. This practice has not been successful thus far and has led to Transitional Housing being under-utilized in the homeless system. We have learned that the CoC can utilize the case conferencing meeting to facilitate meaningful conversations and "buy in" with partners throughout the CoC. Providers can see how the data from HMIS is being used to make meaningful decisions and create a plan for each person based on their individual needs. Providers also get to see and understand the roadblocks the community has in connecting these unsheltered individuals and families to temporary accommodations due to program entry barriers or lack of availability. We will invite our Transitional Housing partners to join these case conferencing meetings in the future. The case conferencing process has also allowed the CoC to identify the gaps in our homeless system. In turn the CoC has hired additional staff and developed programs to fill in these gaps.

P-3. c. Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low Barrier Permanent Housing for Individuals and Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness.

The CoC utilizes a Housing First Approach in its current strategy to provide immediate access to low barrier permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness. While the CoC does not impose any barriers on individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness for referrals within CES, the CoC relies on housing agencies accepting referrals from the queue to be fully implementing Housing First principles. The CoC monitors CoC funded recipients to ensure they are utilizing a Housing First Approach in their programs and performs an assessment to measure a project's progress in aligning with Housing First best practice standards. CoC funded agencies participate in Housing First training on an

annual basis to ensure that they are effectively employing Housing First principles in their shelter, temporary housing, and permanent housing programs. Recorded training is also available on the CoC website for providers to view at any time.

The CoC collaborates with housing providers across the County to leverage all available housing resources available, including newly developed affordable housing units, agencies that manage permanent supportive housing and transitional housing, Public Housing Agencies, Low Income Housing Tax Credits properties, and HOME funded projects. Individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness are referred to these programs through CES or by direct referral. The most vulnerable individuals and families are prioritized and are matched with these housing resources using the Housing First approach.

The CoC's current strategy starts with the staff from street outreach programs, emergency shelters, transitional housing providers, and other homeless service providers ensuring that individuals and families identified who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness and/ or have histories of unsheltered homelessness are immediately assessed for permanent housing resources using the CoC's Coordinated Entry Assessment. The CoC developed an outreach policy in an effort to provide more coordination of street outreach services and to better identify individuals and families in communities that have been historically underserved by the homeless system, which had dramatically increased communication between agencies conducting street outreach. Previously there was no defined mechanism for information to be shared between staff conducting street outreach other than information, personal relationships. Under the current system and policy, there is a regular bi-monthly meeting to discuss current street outreach clients and a defined means of entering data into HMIS. If immediate permanent housing resources are not available the individual or family will be placed on the community queue until housing resources become available or permanent housing is achieved through another avenue. Staff administering CES assessments throughout the CoC region are trained to assess immediate needs like shelter, food, water, medical/ mental health crises, etc. If there is not an immediate placement into permanent housing the goal is to ensure the individual or family has a safe place to stay for that night. Once in emergency shelter or a transitional housing program the individual or family can be provided supportive services and work with a case manager to identify permanent housing options they may have available to them, for example: family members/ friends or other community resources for permanent housing outside of the CoC's Coordinated Entry process. All of the CoC funded housing organizations utilize a low-barrier Housing First Approach. The CoC also promotes the low-barrier Housing First Approach for all homeless assistance programs throughout the CoC, including programs that are not CoC funded.

The implementation of the CoC's outreach policy and case conferencing has improved access to low barrier permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The CoC has seen a decrease in the average length of time a household is on the queue before receiving a referral to a housing program. Case conferencing has led to a reduction in coordinated entry referrals that are denied due to no contact. Outreach workers are notified of open referrals, specifically for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and are able to connect the hardest to reach individuals to housing providers.

Through the implementation of the CoC's outreach policy and case conferencing strategy, the CoC has improved coordination among community partners. Case conferencing has improved HMIS buy-in from community partners that are not CoC funded. HMIS alerts are an effective tool to locate individuals and families that are experiencing unsheltered homelessness and have an open CES referral. Prior to case conferencing the CoC had more difficulty locating individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness, which resulted in denied housing referrals. Coordinated outreach and case conferencing have proved to be effective practices to connect individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness to housing openings and increase the number of successful housing referrals.

P-4. Updating the CoC's Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House Individuals Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness with Data and Performance.

The CoC is continuously updating its strategy to identify, shelter, and house individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness using data, performance, and best practices to improve the performance of the homeless system.

Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services (WCHHS) staff meet bi-monthly with local law enforcement and encampment clean up entities to identify new encampments in the region. Data on these encampments is shared with CoC partners, including street outreach staff. This regular sharing of information allows for continuous expansion of street outreach as additional potential unsheltered individuals and families are identified.

Likewise, CoC partner agencies that conduct street outreach participate in weekly case conferencing. In these meetings, case workers share information about clients in order to best connect them to the resources they may need. This expands the impact of street outreach by enabling these agencies to build the relationships that are required to gather more robust data.

Street Outreach agencies are connected to coordinated entry through regular case conferencing meetings which enable them to coordinate resources and support for unsheltered and sheltered individuals and families. Street outreach agencies also have access to HMIS and are responsible for gathering information from unsheltered clients. When an outreach team goes to an encampment or high-density unsheltered area, they meet with individuals and families, collect data with consent, and input that data into HMIS to eventually connect these individuals and families to housing and services that fit their needs.

The CoC currently works with key street outreach stakeholders including long standing outreach programs such as VOA's ReStart outreach program, the Veterans Administration Street Outreach and recently added ESG-CV street outreach and other locally funded new street outreach programs on street outreach planning efforts. All street outreach partners entering data into HMIS have been included in the Outreach Case Conferencing meeting and all active street outreach program enrollments are pulled and discussed. Housing every person who is currently unsheltered is the top metric by which success is measured. Other metrics are considered, such as number of people who are currently unsheltered, number of people discussed at each meeting and action steps identified and completed, but getting people housed is the top metric of success. Additionally, the number of people who are unsheltered (as indicated by an enrollment in a street outreach program type) is

reported monthly on the WCHHS website to allow for monthly tracking of trends in the number of people who are unsheltered as indicated in HMIS. The CoC will continue to incorporate new partners into its street outreach strategies as they are identified.

In January of 2021, the CoC created a Community Inventory, which involved a comprehensive analysis of the CoC's capacity of housing, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing. We analyzed 72 programs across 28 organizations and gathered data on the number and nature of beds in these three categories. The inventory showed that at the time of data collection, there were 735 available beds across the County, most of which were temporary and permanent housing. A key reason why so many beds go unused is the many barriers to entry associated with those beds which do not align with the needs of the unsheltered population.

This data indicates a crucial area for the CoC and its partners to improve access to and expand the availability of low-barrier shelter and temporary accommodations. We can use this data as leverage to convince key partners and agencies of the urgent need for lower barriers and expanded access to temporary shelter, particularly when so many beds are unused during the winter months when they are most needed.

A CoC Planning Grant award under this competition will fund activities and practices to improve the bed utilization rate of low-barrier shelter and temporary accommodations. The CoC will facilitate capacity building among emergency shelter and temporary accommodation providers with this funding by providing training to reduce barriers across their programs and fully implement Housing First practices across all programs. Additionally, the CoC will build capacity by improving regional coordination and data sharing of available beds by examining the use of HMIS to all Emergency Shelter providers and transitional housing providers. As previous community inventory efforts have shown (utilizing HIC data and expanding to all community programs as some non-HUD programs refuse to participate in the HIC or HMIS) high barrier transitional housing beds do not have high utilization rates. Given the challenges in our current rental market, developing new units will be limited and working with community agencies to lower barriers and implement housing first approaches within their programs is a strategy we will be deploying to improve utilization of existing beds, thereby reducing the strain on emergency shelters and also decreasing unsheltered homelessness. Additionally, increasing HMIS coverage will also lead to improved coordination and an organized approach will help the CoC to identify available low-barrier shelter and temporary accommodations quickly and efficiently. The CoC will routinely monitor outcomes of these activities to determine best practices and modify its strategy.

The CoC's Community Housing Inventory reported 934 permanent housing beds, which include Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing units. Permanent housing units reported having an average of more than 3 barriers to entry, including things like sobriety requirements, background checks, and not being open to couples or pets. While some of these barriers may be necessary, the data shows that there were 139 open permanent housing beds in January 2021, a concerning number of unused but still needed beds. The CoC will continue to review the Community Housing Inventory to improve and expand the CoC's ability to rapidly house individuals and families with histories of unsheltered homelessness in permanent housing. Data and performance metrics of the Coordinated Entry System as well as individual housing project performance metrics are analyzed on a regular basis to ensure the homeless system is effective. By

routinely analyzing this data, the CoC can monitor performance in barrier reductions and determine best practices to implement and expand across the CoC.

P-5. Identify and Prioritize Households Experiencing or with Histories of Unsheltered Homelessness.

Resources provided under this Special NOFO will allow the CoC and its partner agencies to prioritize unsheltered homeless individuals and families through expansion of its coordinated entry and street outreach services. Increased funding for Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing will increase participants' access in the Coordinated Entry system to permanent housing units and in turn will allow the CoC to identify and reach more unsheltered homeless individuals and families and improve access to permanent housing and supportive services. Threshold requirements for project applications applying for these funds include Low-Barrier and Housing First Implementation and participation in the Coordinated Entry System.

The CoC's current referral process prioritizes unsheltered individuals and families over those that are sheltered to address their immediate needs for shelter, housing, and supportive services. Likewise, the CoC's coordinated entry processes and staff reduce unsheltered homelessness by identifying encampments, coordinating, and deploying service providers to those encampments, and assessing the needs of the individuals, entering them into the CES community queue for the type of housing resource that most meets their needs. The CoC implemented an outreach policy that has improved coordination for connecting unsheltered individuals and families to housing resources. Unsheltered homeless individuals and families are identified by street outreach teams coordinated by the CoC through case conferencing. Street outreach case workers meet with individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness to discuss their particular needs, complete a formal assessment, and add them to the CES community queue. When a housing program has an opening, they notify a Matchmaker agency. The matchmaker matches individuals and families to housing units based on their identified needs and position in the queue. Position in the queue is based on a points system and the type of housing program that the individual or family qualifies for. Unsheltered individuals and families are prioritized over sheltered in the case of a tied score. Outreach case conferencing helps to locate individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness that get referred to the matchmaker.

Staff administering CES assessments throughout the CoC region are trained to assess immediate needs like shelter, food, water, medical/ mental health crises, etc. If an immediate placement into permanent housing is not available, the goal is to ensure the individual or family has a safe place to stay for that night. Once in emergency shelter or a transitional housing program, the individual or family works with a case manager who provides supportive services and works to identify permanent housing options they may have available to them, for example: family members/ friends or other community resources for permanent housing outside of the CoC's Coordinated Entry process. The CoC will fund agencies that provide identification access programs through partnerships with the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (NDMV). In the state of Nevada, individuals who declare themselves homeless are exempt from paying the fees associated with ID application and renewal. Organizations that work with the NDMV to assist clients apply for and renew identification cards will be prioritized. The CoC encourages partner agencies to provide direct housing search and navigation services to the participants of their programs. This includes active involvement from staff with assessing, identifying, and connecting participants to

permanent housing that meets the needs of the person. The CoC will continue to provide and expand access to funding for partner agencies that provide housing navigation services, especially those who provide housing navigation to unsheltered individuals and families through their street outreach. The CoC will continue to partner with the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations and other healthcare agencies to ensure that unsheltered individuals and families have access to essential physical and mental health care. We will also continue to coordinate with partner agencies who provide supportive services, including food and nutrition support, access to hygiene services, housing navigation services, substance use disorder treatment, rent and utility assistance, case management and other essential services.

P-6. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Meaningful Outreach.

Outreach to include individuals with lived experience of homelessness in the decision making and service delivery activities of the CoC will launch after this CoC funding competition. The CoC recently began the process of establishing a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB). A working group of CoC members, including individuals with lived experience, met over the course of 3 months to develop a proposal including purpose, Scope of Work, financial compensation, and staff support needed to launch a successful LEAB. This proposal was recently presented and approved by the CoC Leadership Council at the 7/12/22 meeting. Following the CoC NOFO Competition, an RFP will be developed for a non-profit CoC member to provide support to the LEAB to begin meaningful outreach efforts. Although the CoC has not yet established a robust structure to integrate individuals and families experiencing homelessness into the CoC decision making structure, it is a high priority. Once the LEAB is operating, it will play a key role in CoC decision making on local policy and priorities.

Employment of people with lived experience has been a key focus of the CoC through internal hires and through the formal procurement and contracting process. WCHHS includes the following clause in all formal procurement and contracts:

“CONTRACTOR agrees to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that individuals who have previously experienced homelessness are involved, through employment, provision of volunteer services, or otherwise, in [fill in appropriate statement based on services included in contract scope of work].”

Two CoC funded housing programs employ individuals with lived experience of homelessness and include them in their decision-making structure. The current WCHHS sanctioned encampment contracted operator, Karma Box Project, has several staff members, including the founder and Executive Director, who have lived experience. The current WCHHS low barrier emergency shelter operator, Volunteers of America, also employs several key staff members who have lived experience.

P-6. a. Involving Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness in Decision Making – Letter of Support from Working Group Comprised of Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness Attachment.

P-7. Supporting Underserved Communities and Supporting Equitable Community Development.

In recent months the CoC made numerous improvements in its ability to analyze demographic data in HMIS to support equitable community development. The CoC compares three subpopulations in HMIS to each other and to the Washoe County population. The three lists used include the Actively Homeless or By Name list, the Community Queue, and individuals exiting to permanent housing in the last year. County population data is provided by the United States Census Bureau Quick Facts. To analyze the data, The CoC compares pie charts by race and ethnicity of the four groups. The CoC has identified a difference in the racial composition of the county and the individuals in HMIS. Some of the largest disparities between HMIS and the County population were in the Black, African American, or African racial group. In Washoe County 2.9% of people report being Black or African American alone, but the By Name list is 15.7% Black, African American, or African. The data also showed that the Hispanic/Latino population is being underserved on all three lists. The CoC is also aware that the LGBTQ+ population is underserved. The CoC is now reviewing demographic data trends weekly to identify populations that have not been served by the homeless system at the same rate they are experiencing homelessness. The CoC will be expanding its current strategy of analyzing demographic data to identify underserved populations by including comparisons of LGBTQ+ persons and persons with disabilities.

Both primary underserved populations, persons that identify as Hispanic/Latino and LGBTQ+, are engaged in the homeless system. # homeless service providers in the CoC offer programs specifically targeted to the LGBTQ+ populations. Participants utilize the services, however the CoC knows the LGBTQ+ population experiencing unsheltered homelessness is much higher than the number of individuals accessing services. The Hispanic/Latino population is engaged by Spanish speaking outreach workers. Both populations are enrolled in CoC emergency shelter and permanent housing programs.

The CoC uses a local coordinated entry assessment tool, called the Community Housing Assessment Tool (CHAT). The CoC has analyzed the demographics of CHAT assessment participants and found 46% of CHAT assessments completed by Black, African American, or African individuals do not score high enough to be referred to the community queue for housing programs. Although this population is engaging with outreach and CES, it is not receiving housing services at the same rate that it is experiencing homelessness. The CoC will be reviewing the Community Queue to determine if there are any inequitable practices in the process.

The CoC has implemented a coordinated outreach strategy to provide outreach, engagement, and housing interventions to underserved populations. Outreach teams map the county to identify geographically underserved areas and deploy to the areas to engage homeless individuals and families. The outreach teams are an entry point to the Coordinated Entry System and can add households to the queue to connect them to shelter and housing resources. Additionally, CES can be accessed online to ensure that it is accessible to people who are least likely to apply for

assistance in the absence of special outreach. The CoC will continue to employ Spanish speaking outreach workers and hire additional outreach workers to reduce language barriers in the CoC.

The CoC has also taken steps to hold CoC programs accountable to supporting underserved communities. CoC monitoring for shelter and housing programs includes the review of compliance with the Equal Access Rule and the Fair Housing Act. The rating and ranking tool used for this Special NOFO competition includes scoring factors which highlight the use of an equity lens in the review of internal policies and procedures and the review of program participant outcomes with an equity lens.

DRAFT