KERN COUNTY HOMELESS COLLABORATIVE CoC Ranking Process Proposal
GOVERNING BOARD APPROVED 10 20 15 [COC APPROVED 10 19 15]

Ranking Panel Composition
The Ranking Panel (or *the Panel*), will consist of a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) members chosen from the community. The panel will always be an odd-numbered panel, and an alternate panelist will be on standby in case there is a last-minute absence from one of the regularly chosen panel members. The Governing Board Chair* will preside as Panel Moderator and serve as a non-voting member. The Director of Homelessness Resources or a designee assigned by the CoC Committee will be available to provide logistical support on the day of presentations to the Panel. Panel members will be nominated by the CoC Committee and approved by the Governing Board.

*Provided he/she does not have a conflict as spelled out in the Conflict of Interest Policy. In the event the Chair has a conflict of interest during the current funding cycle, the Moderator duties will fall to the next available officer, in this order: the Governing Board Vice-Chair, the Governing Board Secretary, and the CoC Committee Chair. In the event that none of the above is available, the Governing Board Chair can appoint any Standing Committee Chair that meets the above qualifications.

Ranking Panel Selection Criteria
Panel members should be knowledgeable about homelessness supportive services and housing in Kern County, should be broadly representative of the relevant sectors, subpopulations, and geographic areas and should be composed of representatives from a cross-section of groups which might include: Faith-based and non-profit providers of homeless services and housing; governmental agencies; legal services and City & County employees. Efforts should be made to recruit representatives from the education and veteran's services fields, as well as a formerly homeless individual.

Additionally, Panel members must be willing to sign a statement declaring that they have no conflict of interest (as per approved policy), must be willing to have their eligibility verified and approved by the CoC, must be able to dedicate time for application review and panel meetings as directed by the established timeline and they must be willing to attend a training session and be available on the ranking/presentation date.

Ranking Panel Training
At a minimum, Panel training should include the following: Current information regarding homeless activities, needs, services, definitions and other issues that are pertinent to the Kern County Homeless Collaborative (KCHC), including what constitutes a conflict of interest, a background review of McKinney Vento/HEARTH legislation and the local CoC funding process, the role and responsibilities of the Panel, a review of the scoring tools, project applications, and other resources, and a practice scoring session. Additionally, panelists should be trained and fully informed regarding HUD's guidance and priorities as detailed in that funding year's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and regulations. Panel training will be provided by one or more designees assigned by the CoC Committee.

Ranking Panel and Project Presentations

The Panel Moderator will be in attendance on the day of presentations to record decisions of the Panel and any comments / recommendations they have for applicants. The Moderator will also be tasked with assuring that the scoring guidelines established in the scoring tools are followed and accurately scored.

Depending on the number of presentations, project applicants can be allotted 15-30 minutes for presentations and panel questions. *The Ranking Panel presentations and discussions will be closed to current project applicants, who may attend only during their scheduled presentations.* Presenters will be asked to arrive at staggered times, one after the other, and wait in an adjacent room until they are called in.

Following an applicant presentation, Panel members can discuss the merits of each proposal, application details, and scores. Score sheets are then to be completed and turned in to the Moderator. Overall raw scores are calculated by the Moderator and double checked with assistance from one of the Panel members.

The Panel will be allowed to make recommended changes or project budget adjustments that may be required to meet community needs or HUD incentives or requirements. The Panel will determine the rank and funding levels of all projects considering all available information and create a priority list to be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.

During deliberation, the Panel Moderator will provide technical assistance by responding to questions of the Panelists, correcting technical inaccuracies if they arise in conversation, and reminding the Panelists of their responsibilities if they step outside their purview.

The Director of Homelessness Resources will be available to provide logistical support on the day of presentations but should not sit with the Panel during the ranking process, to avoid the perception of a conflict of interest, IF the Director of Homelessness Resources is employed by a competitive applicant agency. Note: Applications which do not meet the minimum threshold requirements will not be included in the Priority List in the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1), and therefore will not be forwarded to HUD for consideration. If more applications are submitted than the CoC has money to fund, the lowest-scoring applications will not be included in the Priority List in Exhibit 1, and therefore will not be forwarded to HUD for consideration.

Final Panel Ranking Approval

Because the ultimate responsibility for submitting the best Exhibit 1 possible falls to the Governing Board, the Governing Board must give final approval to the Ranking Panel recommendations. The Governing Board must give full consideration to the recommendations of the Ranking Panel. In order to allow for the best possible Exhibit 1, in limited circumstances, the Governing Board may reconsider the recommendations of the Ranking Panel.

For example, if a project applicant drops out after the Ranking Panel has made its recommendations (and the submission deadline is too close to reconvene the Ranking Panel), the Governing Board can be charged with reallocating those funds to the ranked projects so that the CoC can utilize its full Final Pro Rata Need (FPRN). Additionally, if the Governing Board determines, *based* on *the best interest of the CoC **as a whole,** or *for some other technical reason,* to make changes to the priority list or individual project rankings, the changes should be made with a separate vote for each project. For example, if two projects are affected by a proposed Governing Board change, there should be two votes to make project changes and one final vote to approve the amended priority list. In the votes impacting specific projects, any Governing Board member who is employed by the applicant agency or has another conflict of interest must abstain from the vote.

Any changes to the Ranking Panel recommendations or changes made by the Appeals Board must be approved by 3/5 of the Governing Board – who do not have a conflict of interest. The Governing Board will *not* serve as the Appeals Board.

Contacting Ranking Panel Members

To avoid any conflict of interest issues and to protect the integrity of the process, ranking panel members should not be contacted by project applicants during the LOI/NOFA/Application process, unless it is necessary to conduct or complete actual ongoing business activities.

Ranking Appeals

Eligible Appeals: The application of any applicant agency which a) receives less funding than they applied for b) placed in Tier 2 (should HUD require a similar process) may appeal. Applicants that have been found not to meet the threshold requirements are not eligible for an appeal. Appeals cannot be based solely on the judgment of the Ranking Panel.

Grounds for Appeal:
- Prove their score is not reflective of the application information provided; or
- Describe bias or unfairness in the process, which warrants the appeal

All notices of appeals must be based on the information submitted by the application due date following the current NOFA timeline requirements. No new or additional information will be considered. Omissions to the application cannot be appealed. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

The Appeals Committee:
The Appeals Committee will be made up of four (4) members: Three (3) members are Appeals Committee voting members and one (1) is a non-voting member. An alternate Appeals Committee Member will be on standby in case there is a last-minute absence from one of the regularly chosen panel members. The three voting members will be selected from Governing Board membership but must not have a conflict of interest with any of the agencies applying for CoC funding and must be willing to sign a conflict of interest statement. The one non-voting member must be a member of the original Ranking Panel. The role of the Appeals Committee is to read and review only those areas of the application that are being appealed.

The Appeals Process:
Any and all appeals must be received in writing within three (3) days of the notification of ranking to projects. All notices of appeal (one original and four copies) must be submitted to:
- KCHC Governing Board Chair
  United Way of Kern County
  5405 Stockdale 200
  Bakersfield CA 93309
- The notice of appeal must include a written statement specifying in detail the grounds asserted for the appeal, must be signed by an individual authorized to represent the sponsor agency (i.e., Executive Director)
- The notice of appeal is limited to one single spaced page in 12-point font
- The appeal must include a copy of the application and all accompanying materials submitted to the Ranking Panel; no additional information can be submitted

- All valid appeals will be read, reviewed and evaluated by the Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee will meet to deliberate.
- All applicants will be invited to attend any appeal and may make a 10-minute statement regarding the appeal
- The panel will review the rankings made by the Ranking Panel only on the basis of the submitted project application, the one page appeal, any statements made during the appeal process, and the material used by the Ranking Panel; no new information can be submitted by the applicant or reviewed by the Appeal Committee
- The decision of the Appeals Committee must be supported by a simple majority vote
- The appealing agency will receive, in writing, the decision of the Appeals Committee within two (2) business days of the Appeal Committee Meeting; the decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

Approval of the Process for Developing the Ranking Guide and Matrix
Following the release of the NOFA, the CoC Committee will be tasked with creating Ranking Guide and Review Matrix. The scoring tools should reflect HUD priorities established in the NOFA and any additional guidance leading up to the NOFA, or released after the NOFA, as well as other CoC-wide priorities established in the strategic planning process. Other factors to be considered in the development of the scoring tools should include:

- Performance results based on HUD's national objectives and the CoC-wide strategic plan (as measured by HUD APRs)
- Cost effectiveness of the project
- Provider organization experience and capacity
- HMIS participation involvement
- Project presentations
- CoC membership involvement

- Match funds and leverage letters committed to the project
- Ratio of housing to service funds requested
- CoC and HUD monitoring findings and
- Other criteria as the CoC determines
- Utilization and draw down rates
- Need for specialized population services
- Severity of needs and vulnerability participants

New and renewal applications will be ranked separately with renewal applications receiving priority for 2015.

The goal of the scoring tools should be to establish a minimum threshold for approving a project application and to create an objective rating process that allows for a fair assessment of each project. Separate scoring tools should be created for renewals and new projects. The matrix's should compare like program types (e.g. PH with PH; TH with TH; SSO with SSO). Once they have been developed by the CoC Committee the scoring tool(s) will be submitted to the Governing Board for final approval.