

FY23 Delaware Continuum of Care Priorities



The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires Continuums of Care (CoC) to evaluate programs in alignment with the selection criteria and policy priorities found in the annual [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) Policy Priorities](#), to remain competitive for funding at the project and community level. HUD strongly encourages CoCs to develop local priorities, in addition to HUD priorities, to help inform their project review and ranking processes.

This document outlines the CoC's priorities to help guide CoC initiatives and funding work. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all tasks and activities that the CoC will do.

These priorities will be used to:

- a. Help inform decisions about how to strategically optimize and prioritize CoC funding in Delaware
- b. Evaluate the performance of CoC-funded projects to determine which are best helping achieve CoC goals
- c. Guide the work of the Lead Agency, CoC Board, and CoC committees
- d. Engage with and educate the community about the priorities of the DE CoC

FY23 Priorities:

1. Increasing Affordable Housing Supply and Opportunities:

The lack of affordable housing is the main driver of homelessness nationally and had been identified as a critical issue by local homeless assistance and housing providers. The shortage of units impairs our ability to place clients into permanent housing, even when we have the funds to do so. CoCs play a critical role in educating local leaders and stakeholders about the importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing and the specific consequences of the continued lack of affordable housing.

The CoC will prioritize increasing the local affordable housing supply by:

- Prioritizing projects for CoC funding that create new/additional permanent housing units for people experiencing homelessness
- Working with PHAs to increase access to PHA vouchers/subsidies for people experiencing homelessness and to develop [move-on strategies](#) to increase the number of PSH units available for the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness,
- Advocating for increased affordable housing funding, and
- Engaging local leaders around zoning and land use reform to increase the affordable housing supply.

2. Improving System Performance:

[System performance measures](#) are generated from CMIS (Community Management Information System) data, and include statewide metrics like: the number of people experiencing homelessness for first time, the number of people that moved from homelessness to permanent housing, and the average length of time people are homeless before they move into housing. SPMs help us understand how well we are responding to and solving homelessness in Delaware, at the community level. SPMs are used by HUD each

year to evaluate our CoC's progress and performance. Our performance on SPMs directly impacts our CoC funding award.

The DE CoC will prioritize improving system performance by:

- Prioritizing projects for CoC funding that perform well on system performance metrics, and/or would improve system performance if funded,
- Working to increase CMIS system coverage and continuously monitoring/improving CMIS data quality, and
- Providing training and learning opportunities to community members and service providers on SPMs and strategies to improve outcomes.

For more information about DE CoC System Performance outcomes and improvement recommendations, please review the [FY21 DE CoC System Performance Report](#).

3. Using a Housing First Approach:

[Housing First](#) is an [evidence-based](#) model that prioritizes moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing quickly by removing barriers to housing and providing appropriate community-based supports and services that are tailored to the needs of household.

The CoC will prioritize Housing First by:

- Prioritizing projects for CoC funding that operate in alignment with the housing first model, and
- Providing training, technical assistance, and resources to programs on Housing First implementation.

4. Incorporating Persons with Lived Experience:

HUD encourages CoCs to include people who are currently experiencing or have formerly experienced homelessness in the local planning process. People with lived experience should participate in determining how local policies may need to be revised and updated to improve the effectiveness of homelessness assistance programs, including participating in planning and oversight activities and developing local competition processes. CoC leaders and stakeholders should also prioritize hiring people who have experienced homelessness in areas where their expertise is needed (e.g. peer outreach and support).

The CoC will prioritize incorporating persons with lived experience of homelessness by:

- Recruiting and inviting people with lived experience to participate in the CoC and on the Board,
- Providing training and technical assistance to service providers about how to incorporate the voices and expertise of the people they serve into their program design,
- Elevate the voices and perspectives of people with lived experience in our advocacy work, and
- Consider the extent to which agencies incorporate people with lived experience into their decision-making processes when evaluating CoC projects for funding consideration.

5. Racial Justice and Equity:

In nearly every community, Black and Indigenous people of color are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. In Delaware, Black/African Americans represent 60% of the population experiencing homelessness but only 22% of the state's total population. Responses to preventing and ending homelessness should address racial inequities to ensure successful outcomes for all persons experiencing homelessness using proven approaches.

The CoC will prioritize racial justice and equity by:

- Working to ensure representation in places where decisions are being made,
- Advancing racial justice and equity work through the RJE committee of the CoC,
- Considering the extent to which CoC-funded projects are working to advance racial equity in CoC project evaluation,
- Providing education to the community on racial justice issues in housing/homelessness,
- Performing an analysis of outcomes by race to identify disparities at the system level, and
- Regularly assessing coordinated entry to ensure equitable outcomes by racial group.

6. Disability Rights

People living with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Yet many services intended to serve people experiencing homelessness are unable to meet the needs of this population. Additionally, many housing providers do not comply with their legal obligations to provide suitable housing and/or reasonable accommodations for people living with disabilities.

The CoC will prioritize disability rights by:

- Prioritizing CoC funding for projects that create new housing units dedicated to people with disabilities,
- Providing training and education for housing and shelter program staff on the rights of people with disabilities and how to make reasonable accommodations, and
- Developing a strategy to ensure that people with disabilities are included in decision-making processes and advocacy for solutions to homelessness.