

# CONTINUUMS OF CARE:

## FACT SHEET FOR ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROGRAMS

### WHAT IS A CONTINUUM OF CARE?

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to coordinate local homeless services. Continuums of Care work to reduce homelessness and promote long-term housing stability through:

- Community-wide planning;
- Coordination of resources and programs targeting people experiencing homelessness;
- Data collection and performance measurement.

### PLANNING PROCESS

Continuums are designed to facilitate collaboration between service providers and government entities to better coordinate and align services. A CoC generally has committees that work on various aspects of planning a community's response to homelessness. Currently, there are continuums with committees focused on domestic violence. Members of the continuum can suggest and create committees focused on trafficking issues.

### FUNDING

Each year, HUD issues a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and each CoC submits an application to HUD. The CoC determines its local priorities within HUD's policy priorities which include rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent housing by strategically allocating and using resources to meet the needs of all homeless individuals. Sometimes the NOFA may establish bonus funds for population-specific projects. For example, in 2018 there was a fund bonus for projects that included human trafficking and/or domestic violence programs within the continuum. You can learn more about the policy priorities at [HUD.gov](https://www.hud.gov).

### COC STRUCTURE

A CoC can involve many different types of organizations, including: nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, social services organizations, state and local governments, private businesses, law enforcement, and public housing authorities.

The type and number of organizations participating depends on the area covered by the continuum. The most common configurations are a city, a county, or the "balance of state", which is statewide for those areas not covered by a local CoC. In some states with smaller populations, there is only one continuum for the entire state. Each continuum has a lead agency which can be city government, county government or an NGO.

### BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A COC

- Establishing partnerships with shelters and housing programs that provide tailored housing services to individuals.
- An opportunity to apply for HUD grants as part of the continuum.
- Advocating for the needs of survivors in the area.
- Ensure statistical data captured by the CoC are inclusive of survivors experiencing homelessness without jeopardizing safety or confidentiality.

## ACCESSING YOUR LOCAL COC

- Service providers interested in joining a continuum can locate the CoC for their respective county and/or state on the [HUD Website](#).
- Every county in the US is assigned to a CoC. Programs who are new to continuums can identify the CoC lead and reach out to them to discuss becoming a member.

## ADVOCATING FOR THE NEEDS OF SURVIVORS

Representation is key. If anti-trafficking organizations are not involved in their local CoC, the needs of trafficking survivors may not be met by housing systems. By becoming a member of a CoC, organizations have the opportunity to advocate for survivors and assist in planning and allocating funds for referrals to anti-trafficking services.

Anti-trafficking organizations and CoC's share a common goal of addressing the housing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. Anti-trafficking organizations and continuums have a unique opportunity to collaborate and meet the needs of survivors of trafficking through housing programs and support services.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROGRAMS

### FUNDING: ONE-YEAR GRANT

All CoCs must complete a Program Competition Application every year, as the funds are only awarded for 12 months. If CoCs do not reapply, they lose their funding. Make sure your organization has the capacity to gather and maintain the required data so that you can demonstrate your need for funding, and if awarded, your program can achieve its long-term goals.

## HMIS DATA

CoC's utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a client-specific information technology system, to collect and track data and outcomes from organizations receiving CoC funds. Several CoC-funded programs input data in an HMIS system that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of survivors is a priority. VAWA and FVPSA prohibits victim service providers from entering personally identifiable data into HMIS. Victim service providers are required to maintain a comparable database with aggregate, non-personally identifying data on CoC funded projects and share this data with their CoC.