

TN-500 CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs

Statement of Need

TN-500 has seen a historic rise in homelessness since 2019. The annual Point in Time Count conducted in 2019 found 191 unsheltered homeless persons throughout the CoC's coverage area while the 2022 Point in Time Count found 3,172 unsheltered homeless persons. This is a 1,560% increase is beyond a crisis, it is a state of emergency. Beginning in 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, this state of emergency quickly grew to the level it is as of the writing of this plan. As a result of this historic rise, TN-500 has been putting in place several measures throughout the past 2 years to assist in this state of emergency.

Vision

This plan is the start of the TN-500 Continuum of Care's (Chattanooga/Southeast TN) dedicated efforts to reduce the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness or with histories of unsheltered homelessness who have severe service needs throughout the CoC's geographic coverage area that includes rural and non-rural areas. The array of answers to the plan development during numerous open CoC Planning Meetings and the broad geographic participation, point to the uniqueness of each geographic area in the CoC and also to the complexity of addressing homelessness both urban and rural areas throughout the 11 county, 6,000 square mile coverage area of TN-500. This plan is intended to be structured enough to provide consistency and a minimum standard of shelter, housing, and services across the CoC, yet flexible enough to allow local areas to tailor interventions that will meet their specific needs. The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for the CoC to implement strategies to reduce unsheltered and rural homelessness and to target resources to people with severe service needs.

Participative Planning Process

Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition (CRHC), as the lead agency for the TN-500 Continuum of Care is drafted this *CoC Plan for Serving Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness with Severe Service Needs*. In order to facilitate a participative planning process, CRHC took several steps.

- Held weekly open planning meetings from 7/15/22 to 10/15/22. Total participants throughout: 87
- Conducted direct provider interviews throughout the CoC's entire coverage area to assess capacity and receive input of needs; agencies interviewed: 25
- TN-500 held 3 multiday community wide planning meetings earlier this year in the development of our Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness, during those community planning sessions many of the needs of all persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness were identified as well as strategies to address those needs. While those planning meetings preceded the release of the Special NOFO the communities input was crucial for TN-500 to be ready to develop this current plan. Attendees: 106
- Distributed the Plan to full CoC Membership on 10/14/22; 3 respondents

All those planning opportunities were publicized on the CoC's website, on social media, by email to the CoC's Membership email list, direct appointment with member agencies, and by email to various groups of CoC interested parties. Communications on the accessible website were provided in a manner that is effective for persons with hearing, visual, and other communication-related disabilities.

CoC's Priorities in the Plan

This plan was written in response to the Special Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), but the priorities represent components of a strategy that are broadly applicable to a community's efforts to address unsheltered homelessness, rural homelessness, and meet the needs of people with severe service needs. These priorities reflect the most important components of the plan at this time and are woven throughout the sections of the plan. Applicants to the Special NOFO must align with these priorities.

- All Applicants must describe a community-wide commitment to the project. Applicants will be asked to identify partners in the development of the application and in the administration, oversight, and evaluation of the project. These partners should include stakeholder groups such as TN-500's Lead Agency CRHC, the Coordinated Entry Committee, the Project Admin Committee, persons with lived experience of homelessness (PWLE), including the Young Adult Action Board (YAAB), governmental agencies, and other cross-sector partners. As part of a commitment to reducing unsheltered and rural homelessness, partners must not participate in activities that criminalize homelessness.
- Applicants for Rural Set-Aside funds may request the maximum 20% of funds requested as part of the project for capacity building activities. Also, if awarded funds, grantees may use 50% or more of those capacity building funds to implement this CoC Plan at the project level.
- All applicants applying for the rural set aside must leverage a minimum of 50% of additional housing resources and/or healthcare resources in the operation of the project.
- All applicants applying for the unsheltered set aside must leverage a minimum of 100% of additional housing resources and/or healthcare resources in the operation of the project.
- All applicants whose projects are funded under this SNOFO should implement a landlord recruitment/engagement strategy, if they do not currently have one in place.
- All applicants for Projects with a housing component must employ staff who assist individuals with their SSI/SSDI applications through the SSI/SSDI Outreach Assessment and Referral (SOAR) process.
- All Applicants must clearly describe how their project will implement Housing First principles and practices.
- Project-level Street Outreach activities [Street Outreach that is part of a Housing Project–Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) or Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) or Joint Transitional Housing/Rapid Re-Housing (TH/RRH)] must connect participants to immediate access to low-barrier shelter or housing.
- Street Outreach should be strategic, culturally appropriate, coordinated, and predictable, and it should prioritize identification of the most vulnerable people. It should also strive to immediately resolve their housing crisis as part of a larger, community-wide housing strategy, with access to housing resources.
- Street Outreach projects funded under the Rural Set-Aside must ensure that emergency housing is short-term and that participants are quickly moved to permanent housing.
- All Applicants must target people who are unsheltered, or with histories of unsheltered homelessness, and people with severe service needs.

P-1. Leveraging Housing Resources

P-1a. Development of new units and creation of housing opportunities

Homelessness is a housing crisis first and foremost, as such the development of new units and creation of new housing opportunities is an extreme priority of TN-500 to meet the state of emergency we find ourselves in due to the 1,560% increase in unsheltered persons between the 2019 Point in Time Count and the 2022 Point in Time count (2019-191 persons: 2022-3,172 persons). The CoC Lead Agency, CRHC, may attain agreements with Public Housing Authorities or other applicable partners but it is the primary responsibility of each applicant to successfully leverage housing resources in accordance to which set aside they are pursuing (unsheltered/rural).

P-1a. Attachment (P-1. in e-snaps)–Leveraging Housing Commitment

See the letters leveraging housing commitments attached in the e-snaps application on Screen 4A.

P-1b. Attachment (P-1.a. in e-snaps)–PHA Commitment

See the PHA commitment letters attached in the e-snaps application on Screen 4A for details.

P-1c. Landlord Recruitment

P-1c.1. Current Strategy

The CoC employs numerous tactics to recruit new landlords. Throughout the past three years the CoC has hosted

8 separate landlord summits in which various programs that support the needs of landlords and the retention and improvement of their properties presented along with presenters from all funded housing programs to discuss the abilities of each program to inform the landlords. MITIGATION/FLEX FUND/LANDLORD INCENTIVES/VOLUNTEERS LARDLORD INFORMATIONAL SHEET/ DRAMTIC INCREASE IN HOUSING NAVIGATORS/nOTHER IDEAS.

P-1c.1.a. That strategy has worked to house X,XXX persons over the past 3 years, in units across the CoC's area.

P-1c.1.b. ANSWER

P-1c.2. Throughout the past 3 years TN-500 has stood up a locally funded Landlord Mitigation Fund to assist with alleviating some of the concerns that landlords may have prior to leasing to persons experiencing homelessness. This initiative has directly resulted in the recruitment of additional landlords. Lesson learned: the landlords love the simplicity of the process and the quick turnaround time for payment since the CoC Lead hosts the program and can usually process checks within one week of invoicing. The CoC Lead has also implemented a Flexible Housing Fund using local funding sources. This has been instrumental in securing numerous units for persons experiencing homelessness and meeting the needs of landlords. Most funding sources that partner agencies access to make successful placements into housing are limited in their ability to pay for certain expenses. The Flexible Housing Fund is able to pay for past debt to allow persons experiencing homelessness to enter public housing units and private market units with Housing Choice Voucher Program assistance as well as paying for pet deposits and identification for those that need identification to apply for housing. A unique feature of the Flexible Housing Fund and Landlord Mitigation Fund is that ALL housing providers that follow the Housing First Model are able to access these funds. The launch of these initiatives coincided with the CoC's partnership with agencies serving under documented and undocumented households within the service region. Prior to these initiatives the local HMIS had less than 1% entries of persons that would identify as under documented or undocumented and yet currently there is 18% representation within the local HMIS. Additionally, these funds have elicited local utility companies and foundations to partner with the CoC to expand the ability and funding of each program. Lessons Learned: build all systems and programs to meet the actual need of our community, include those who have been underserved in the response, celebrate successes, have public facing dashboards that show the work being done, continuously evolve to meet the need of those experiencing homeless in our community, landlords are a fundamental part of ending homelessness and should be engaged as a valuable partner, and explore all funding options available to expand the ability of the CoC.

P-1c.3. TN-500 is already using data to update our landlord recruitment strategy. Systemically we are using the System Performance Measures to identify persons within the system that have been positively housed and unfortunately returned to homelessness at 6 months, 12 months, and 24 month intervals. This data point allows the CoC to directly engage with the service provider that assisted the participant and assess the provider's training needs or other needs in regards to the possible cause of the participant reentering homelessness. At times this has led the CoC to having direct conversations with the landlord that had the unit in which the participant vacated for whatever reason to return to homelessness. WORDING? This has worked to inform the CoC of any needs landlords may have to continue leasing to persons experiencing homelessness. The CoC plans to develop a landlord satisfaction survey which will allow for feedback about the programs that work with the landlord. These responses will assist the CoC in further update our landlord recruitment strategy.

P-2. Leveraging Healthcare Resources

Another goal of this plan is to increase access to healthcare resources for those with severe needs. Successful applicants will leverage healthcare resources in their program applications.

P-2. Attachment (P-3. in e-snaps)–Healthcare Leveraging Commitment

See the letters leveraging healthcare commitments attached in the e-snaps application on Screen 4A.

P3. Current Strategy to Identify, Shelter, and House People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

P-3.a. Current Street Outreach Strategy

In 2020 TN-500 saw a large increase in funding through the ESG-CV funds. This increased our Outreach capacity but the CoC quickly realized that there was duplication of services through concentration of various outreach providers in certain areas while also not serving the full region. The CoC convened all Outreach providers to develop a strategic partnership based on evidence-based practices. The Outreach providers that participated in the strategic partnership represent a wide range of programs including PATH (mental health), Victim Service Providers, HIV/AIDS providers, ESG-CV providers, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the local Homeless Health Care Center, 2 separate hospitals, the Salvation Army, private citizens, local governments, Youth and Young adult serving agencies, and the CoC Lead. To ensure that all efforts were conducted equitably to all persons in need and incorporated evidence-based approaches such as trauma-informed care and Housing First the CoC created an MOU that was signed by each participating agency adhering to these practices. The CoC also created a Code of Conduct that all participating outreach workers must adhere to in their daily practices. This strategic effort was named the Regional Outreach Cooperative (ROC) and has had tremendous success in ensuring outreach efforts are strategic and not duplicated throughout the region. The goal of outreach is to engage persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness towards housing. The ROC connects persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness to the CoC's coordinated entry system and where available refers people to shelter options. Data is collected in real time in the field by outreach workers. Additionally, the ROC members participate in case conferencing with the CES and work to locate persons that are actively receiving a referral from CES to a housing provider. This has worked to reduce the amount of time the housing provider would spend in trying to locate the person and has reduced overall length of time homeless across the system. GIS mapping software was used during the Point in Time Count by the ROC and CoC to ensure that all areas of the CoC were canvassed. This was paramount to documenting the need in our CoC and realizing that there had been a 1,560% increase in unsheltered persons between the 2019 Point in Time Count and the 2022 Point in Time count (2019-191 persons; 2022-3,172 persons).

P-3.a.1. Ensure that outreach teams are coordinated

The framework of the Regional Outreach Cooperative (ROC) is structured to maximize coordination, reduce duplication of services, and ensure all geographic areas are covered. The CoC Lead Agency leases spaces for the ROC members to use to coordinate efforts, share resources and supplies, and works as a staging point prior to ROC members conducting their routes. This space is available to all outreach providers and workers at no cost as long as the provider has signed the ROC MOU and the individual outreach worker has signed and agreed to the Code of Conduct established by the CoC. Additionally, the CoC keeps inventory of all outreach supplies such as tents, water, nonperishable food, first aid kits, sleeping bags and lifesaving naloxone and replenishes supplies as needed. In 2022 alone the CoC was able to supply the ROC with over \$50,000 worth of life-saving naloxone which led to ROC members saving more than 10 persons experiencing homelessness from overdosing and dying in unsheltered situations.

P-3.a.2. Ensure that outreach is frequent

The bulk of outreach is conducted Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM EST. However, several times throughout the month ROC members stagger their outreach times to reach persons who may not have been present during the day time or weekday. This has been particularly successful in locating persons for housing offers that may have been at their place of employment during the day and unaware that the ROC was attempting to locate them for connection to a housing resource.

P-3.a.3. Help people exit homelessness and unsheltered homelessness

The primary goal of all outreach efforts conducted by the Regional Outreach Cooperative is to engage persons

experiencing homelessness towards housing. While the length of time to reach the point of engagement may vary person to person, ROC members are continuously working on trust and relationship building by conducted all outreach efforts in accordance with the ROC Code of Conduct. Distributing lifesaving supplies such as tents, water, nonperishable food, first aid kits, sleeping bags and lifesaving naloxone works to build trust with persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. At the point of engagement ROC members conduct housing assessments to connect persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness with the Coordinated Entry System. ROC members then participate in regular case conferencing with CES to advocate for the needs of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness and connect them to housing opportunities when available. Medical ROC teams connect persons in health crisis to applicable health care systems. Due to the extremely low inventory of emergency shelter inventory referrals to shelter by ROC members is limited.

P-3a.4. Engage individuals and families with the highest vulnerabilities and use culturally appropriate strategies

TN-500's Regional Outreach Cooperative (ROC) is composed of a very wide range of service providers including: PATH (mental health), Victim Service Providers, HIV/AIDS providers, ESG-CV providers, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the local Homeless Health Care Center, 2 separate hospitals, the Salvation Army, private citizens, local governments, Youth and Young adult serving agencies, and the CoC Lead. Outreach routes are conducted by pairs of outreach workers from different providers to be able to offer a diversity of ability to engage persons. If at any time during outreach efforts ROC members encounter persons that may be in need of services other ROC members may be uniquely able to provide the ROC members communicate to ensure those efforts are coordinated to meet the need of the individual. For example, if during the course of a route ROC members encounter and youth or young adult experiencing homelessness they contact the ROC members that represent a youth or young adult service provider who attempts to engage with the person. This particular example has occurred many times and by connecting ROC members that have lived experience of homelessness as a youth to the youth or young adult experiencing homelessness has improved the time to engagement and subsequently lessened the overall length of time spent by the person experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

P-3a.5. Use outreach teams to connect people to permanent housing

The primary goal of all outreach efforts conducted by the ROC is to connect persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness to permanent housing. Due to the extremely limited stock of emergency and transitional housing beds within the CoC's geographic coverage area persons are more often than not connect to permanent housing from unsheltered situations. The ROC plays a crucial role in this by conducting housing assessments at the time of engagement to connect persons with Coordinated Entry, participating in case conferencing, and locating persons to receive a housing offer at the time of referral to a housing provider from coordinated entry.

P-3a.6. Hire people with lived expertise of unsheltered homelessness to conduct street outreach

TN-500 has been working with providers over the past 3 years to change job descriptions and hiring practices for all positions in the CoC's homeless response system to equitably weigh lived experience of homelessness by applicants along with other experience and degrees. This has been crucial in revitalizing TN-500's approach to ending homelessness. Roughly half of all members of the Regional Outreach Cooperative that conduct street outreach within the CoC have lived experience of homelessness.

P-3.b. Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Shelter and Temporary Housing

P-3.b.1. Current strategy

TN-500 currently has an extremely low inventory of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds which greatly inhibits our ability to provide immediate access to low barrier shelter and temporary housing. To remedy this the CoC advocated that a local government designate \$2.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds for

the creation of a 24-hour low barrier shelter. The local governmental body has done so and is currently working to secure a service provider to operate the program. The CoC does receive some funding from local sources to offer hotel/ motel vouchers to highly vulnerable persons when other resources are unavailable but does not have enough capacity to offer this to all persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the CoC's geographic area due to there being a 1,560% increase in unsheltered persons between the 2019 Point in Time Count and the 2022 Point in Time count (2019-191 persons: 2022-3,172 persons). The CoC Lead Agency partners with a local government to fund a cold weather warming shelter that is low barrier and operates when weather conditions become life threateningly cold. The CoC Lead agency subcontracts with a service provider to deliver this service.

P-3.b.2. How well the CoC performs at providing low-barrier culturally appropriate access to temporary accommodations to all individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness

TN-500's extremely low inventory of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds requires that the CoC offer what resources available to those with the highest service needs. The CoC's cold weather warming shelter has been hugely successful since its creation in reducing the number of persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness that perish from life threatening inclement weather.

P-3.b.3. New practices implemented over the past three years and lessons learned

Utilizing large amounts of ESG-CV and SSVF funds during the pandemic to offer hotel/motel vouchers to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness was hugely successful however these funding streams have largely dried up. The success of these interventions has shown the CoC the need for ongoing options to offer these interventions and as such the CoC has secured some local funding to offer these resources at times. Lessons learned include how useful having access to hotel/ motel vouchers are for all areas of the CoC but most importantly rural areas. Yet while these interventions are needed another lesson learned in the implementation is that it is not enough to simply offer a hotel/motel voucher to those in need. Robust support services must be couple with the sheltering options to increase positive placements into housing at the time of exit from the intervention.

P-3.c. Current Strategy to Provide Immediate Access to Low-Barrier Permanent Housing

P-3.c.1.a. Current strategy, including the use of a Housing First Approach

TN-500 is fully committed to practicing Housing First throughout the entire homeless response system and works with all service providers to continuously train all staff on how to successfully follow the model. Annual conferences and quarterly trainings are offered to increase knowledge and ability of service providers. A core component of the Housing First model is that low barrier permanent housing be offered immediately, upon availability, to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The CoC closely monitors all housing projects to ensure that no prerequisites or requirements are placed on program participants prior to being offered housing and also throughout the course of their participation. The CoC also developed a Uniform Monitoring Protocol (UMP) in partnership with persons with lived experience of homelessness to use during program monitoring. The UMP interacts with front line staff and supervision separate from each other to ensure that there is full compliance to the Housing First Model in all aspects of service delivery.

The CoC has numerous efforts in place to increase access to low barrier permanent housing including working with a local governmental body that has purchased a hotel to be converted into permanent supportive housing which will increase PSH inventory by 70 units. The CoC also partners with 2 local housing authorities, one of which has a homeless preference set aside that offers access to Housing Choice Vouchers through the CoC's Coordinated Entry System. The CoC Lead Agency administers a Flexible Housing Fund that allows service providers working with participants very rapid access to funds in which to secure housing. The turnaround time for Flex Fund disbursement in less than one week.

P-3.c.1.b. How the strategy is connected to permanent housing in "Leveraging Housing Resources"

HAVE TO PULL FROM LEVERAGING COMMITMENTS FROM APPLICANTS

P-3.c.2. How well the CoC's strategy performs at providing low-barrier and culturally appropriate access

TN-500's strategy for low-barrier culturally appropriate access to permanent housing has been performing exceptionally well. Despite a 1,560% increase in unsheltered persons between the 2019 Point in Time Count and the 2022 Point in Time count (2019-191 persons: 2022-3,172 persons) the CoC is performing at a high rate of housing placements in one of the worst rental markets in recent history. In the past year the CoC has shown a 97% positive housing placement and retention rate. Using this metric, the CoC is able to see that low barrier and culturally appropriate access has been granted to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with severe service needs. The CoC also maintains a public facing dashboard that is refreshed twice per week to monitor progress of all programs as well as identification of trends so the system can adjust accordingly.

P-3.c.3. Evidence that supports the use of the CoC's current strategy

The evidence to support the CoC's current strategy is in the current System Performance Measures. We have seen a 12% reduction in the length of time homelessness in the past year as well as 97% positive housing placement and retention rate. While the overall percentage of returns to homelessness over a 24-month timeframe has remained fairly the same for housing projects, the sheer volume of positive housing placements within the CoC is evidence that the CoC's strategy is effective and performing well.

P-3.c.4. New practices implemented over the past three years and lessons learned

The implementation of the Flexible Housing Fund by the CoC Lead Agency has been instrumental in allowing non ESG or CoC funded agencies access to funding that can quickly be utilized to make positive housing placements for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The intentional recruitment by the CoC Lead Agency of providers that primarily serve communities that have been historically underserved has been instrumental in assuring that TN-500 has an equitable response for all persons. Lessons learned: minimizing the amount of paperwork and data entry to exclude any unnecessary work by service providers that are not used to more rigorous grant requirements allows for more providers to participate and access funds for housing placements, including persons with lived experience of homelessness in policy and procedure development ensures that the implementation of the project is structurally geared to meet the needs of the participant, clearly communicating successes and the work the project does for the community will result in additional funding for the project from a myriad of sources that may have never been explored.

The implementation of the Emergency Housing Vouchers was slow to start and the CoC overall did not receive many vouchers yet the flexibility of the vouchers was crucial for housing some persons experiencing homelessness that may not have otherwise qualified for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Lesson learned: authentic partnership with the local public housing authorities is a two-way street and as such the CoC should regularly check with the PHAs to see if there are any needs they have or struggles they may be encountering. Communication is key to strong partnerships and TN-500 is blessed to have strong partnerships with several of our PHAs.

P-4. Updating the CoC's Strategy with Data and Performance

P-4.1. Street outreach

P-4.1.a CoC's Strategy with Data and Performance and Best Practices

TN-500 created a unified strategic outreach effort composed of a very wide range of service providers including: PATH (mental health), Victim Service Providers, HIV/AIDS providers, ESG-CV providers, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the local Homeless Health Care Center, 2 separate hospitals, the Salvation Army, private citizens,

local governments, Youth and Young adult serving agencies, and the CoC Lead in 2020. This unified effort is known locally as the Regional Outreach Cooperative or ROC since everyone loves a good acronym. Participating agencies signed an MOU with the CoC that stated there would be adherence to best practices. Additionally, each outreach worker assigned to participate in the ROC effort is required to commit to a shared Code of Conduct that ensures services are delivered equitably to all persons in need with no requirements to receiving services. The CoC offers continuous training opportunities to all ROC members to increase performance and delivery of services.

Data is a driving force of why the ROC is in existence. Data was utilized to show the need for a unified strategic effort by showing duplication of services, concentration of services in specific areas, and lack of engagement in other areas. Data will continuously be reviewed by the CoC and ROC to ensure all persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness are being served by the effort.

Performance is evaluated continuously by CoC and ROC leadership to identify any additional needs of the ROC to successfully carry out the core duties of outreach within TN-500. If performance wanes the CoC can quickly respond with additional resources or training to bring the effort more in alignment with the needs of the community.

Best practices are continuously shared with ROC membership through training opportunities that the CoC provides to all members. ROC outreach workers have been able to participate in numerous conferences and trainings with other outreach workers from across the state and nation.

TN-500 feels that the ROC is a best practice and encourages other communities to replicate our efforts.

P-4.1.b. Street Outreach Activities are connected to Coordinated Entry or HMIS

TN-500's ROC conducts street outreach throughout the CoC's geographic area to engage persons experiencing unsheltered homeless towards housing. As such the ROC conducts housing assessments at the point of engagement to enroll the person into Coordinated Entry for connection with potential housing opportunities. The ROC records contacts and other data in the local HMIS which is an open system within TN-500.

P-4.1.c. How your CoC will incorporate new partners into Street Outreach

TN-500's ROC is continuously working to recruit new membership. Currently the ROC is composed of representatives from PATH (mental health), Victim Service Providers, HIV/AIDS providers, ESG-CV providers, the Department of Veteran Affairs, the local Homeless Health Care Center, 2 separate hospitals, the Salvation Army, private citizens, local governments, Youth and Young adult serving agencies, and the CoC Lead. Law enforcement engages the ROC at times when they have been notified that an encampment will be removed. Local law enforcement works to offer the encampment as ROC with as much notification as possible to reduce the negative impacts of encampments being disbursed. Recruitment strategies are ongoing and continuously bringing in new ROC membership as long as they agree to the shared MOU and Code of Conduct.

P-4.2.a CoC's Strategy with Data and Performance and Best Practices Improving Access (Low Barrier and Temporary Accommodations)

TN-500 has been using data, performance, and best practices to advocate locally for the creation of a low barrier 24-hour shelter. These advocacy efforts have resulted in a local governmental body designating \$2.8 million for the creation of such a shelter. While still in the development phase this has been a huge win for TN-500. In the meantime, the CoC has been using system level data, system level performance, and nationally accepted best practices to stand up a Flexible Housing Funds to allow non ESG or COC funded agencies to access fund that result in positive housing placements for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The CoC has committed to Continuous Quality Improvement strategies that will promote increased opportunities for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness with sever service needs access to low barrier shelter and temporary accommodations.

P-4.2.b. Providing access to low-barrier shelter and temporary accommodations

TN-500 IS THIS NOT JUST THE SAME QUESTION THAT WAS ANSWERED? Pull the pervious answer apart

P-4.2.c. Any new practices and activities that will be funded through and award under this competition

PULL FROM THE APPLICANTS. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO SETHRA SINCE THEY MAY INCORPORATE HOTEL VOUCHERS.

P-4.3.a. CoC's Strategy with Data and Performance and Best Practices

Local data from multiple sources including HMIS was instrumental in the CoC creating the Flexible Housing Fund which has been instrumental in including agencies that had not previously partnered with the CoC. The Flexible Housing Fund is targeted at those experiencing unsheltered homelessness due to the fact that there has been a 1,560% increase in unsheltered persons between the 2019 Point in Time Count and the 2022 Point in Time count (2019-191 persons: 2022-3,172 persons). Performance data is continuously evaluated by the CoC when deciding funding. The CoC has reallocated funding in previous years from underperforming programs to new programs that show evidence based approaches including Housing First. The CoC will continue to use performance metrics to implement training needs to increase provider's abilities to rapidly house persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness into permanent housing. Best practices are routinely shared with all permanent housing providers within TN-500 through open training opportunities as well as our annual conference. The CoC Lead Agency hosts monthly training opportunities for CoC membership to access best practices in service delivery. These efforts will continue in perpetuity until homelessness has effectively ended in Southeast TN.

P-4.3.b. Expansion of the CoC's ability to rapidly house people who have histories of unsheltered homelessness in permanent housing

TN-500

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

P-5.1. Strategy for ensuring resources provided under this NOFO will reduce unsheltered homelessness

TN-500 will evaluate the trends of unsheltered homelessness at the CoC level, the county level, and for the specific households that are served with projects funded under this NOFO. Using System Performance Data, STELLA-P, and Longitudinal Statistical Analysis (LSA), HMIS Reports, TN-500 will review and monitor programs. TN-500 will ensure the resources awarded under this Special NOFO are reducing the number of unsheltered homelessness and will adjust enrollment targets, prioritization factors, and performance benchmarks, as needed. Monitoring of project data and on-site monitoring of projects, at least quarterly, will enable TN-500's Collaborative Applicant to assure compliance and accountability that the programs funded under this Special NOFO are providing the needed resources to reduce unsheltered homeless in our community.

TN-500 will conduct Special NOFO program meetings with the funded projects as well as provide in-depth trainings on topics, such as effective street outreach, Coordinated Entry, case conferencing, eligibility verifications, HUD compliance, policy and procedure workshops, best practices, and other technical assistance. Program Meetings will provide an overview of TN-500's Strategy, the goals set by each project, and evaluation of each project to determine if the project is on target to meet their goals. Adjustments can be made, if needed, to align the practices of each project to meet the goals and objectives and ensure the Strategy to reduce unsheltered homelessness is met.

P-5.2.a. How the CoC will adopt program eligibility processes that reduce unsheltered homelessness

TN-500 will adopt a program eligibility plan that targets unsheltered homelessness at the applicant level. Applicants

that commit to serving people living unsheltered as a primary focus (at least 90% of participants) will score higher in the application process. Domestic Violence projects, including human trafficking will not have to meet this program eligibility process and the projects will be scored with a weighted average to allow for this. That goal will also become the performance expectation for the project and will be evaluated regularly. Only projects with low barriers to entry will be included in this CoC Plan.

P-5.2.b. How the CoC will adopt Coordinated Entry processes that reduce unsheltered homelessness

TN-500

P-5.3. How the CoC will use street outreach to connect unsheltered people with housing resources

TN-500

P-5.4. Additional steps the CoC is taking to ensure access to housing and other community resources

P-5.4.a. Steps to increase access to identification

TN-500

P-5.4.b. Providing housing navigation services

TN-500 currently provides Housing Navigation in all 11-county coverage areas. TN-500 will provide training to service providers in the CoC on how TN-500 CoC is using housing navigation services to assist participants to locate housing that meets their needs and prioritizes client choice and provide information on other resources in our community. TN-500 has YHDP funded Navigators to provide Housing Navigation to homeless youth and provides peer support.

P-5.4.c. Providing access to health care and other supportive services

TN-500

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

P-6.1. Meaningful outreach efforts to engage people with lived experience to develop a working group

TN-500 is very intentional in developing a work group that includes PWLE and is two-fold. To accomplish this, first, TN-500 invited the Youth Action Board to take the lead. They were more than happy to participate in the process and have been instrumental in conducting the Community Plan meetings in all our regions. The Chair of our work group is also the Chair of the YAAB. This opportunity has allowed the YAAB to gain leadership experience, meet more people in our community, and help formulate our CoC plan.

Second, TN-500 publicized the opportunity for PWLE to serve on the workgroup on the TN-500 CoC s website, sent to CoC's email list, on social media, through staff contacts with providers, and by asking service providers and CoC general members to invite PWLE. Also, staff worked with the Youth Action Board.

P-6.2. PWLE are meaningfully and intentionally integrated into the CoC decision-making structure

TN-500 has intentionally engaged PWLE in the decision-making structure. CoC Board voted to add two seats to the board to be filled by a Youth Action Board (YAAB) member, reinforcing the importance of intentionally integrating youth PWLE. The YAAB also has two members that sit on the Steering Committee that scores project applications in the competitive process for CoC Program funding. In addition to the one CoC Board seat that must be filled by a PWLE, the CoC has filled other seats with PWLE every year. Those seats on the CoC's main decision-making body—that acts on behalf of the CoC and holds the authority to vote on policies—is a direct way that PWLE are integrated into decision making. A strategy that the CoC has followed is to involve more PWLE in CoC activities, including decision making. TN-500 CoC staff met with the YAAB to establish the Community

Planning Meeting Workgroup that began meeting in July 2022.

CoC lead agency staff envision that the Community Planning Meeting Workgroup will play these roles, among others that members may identify as their priorities:

- The group will guide staff on revising the CoC Strategic Plan, which has goals related to CE, HMIS, data, funding, improving access to housing and services, educating the community, and influencing policymakers.
- Like other CoC committees, the group has the authority to recommend policies to the CoC Board
- Staff will seek input and recommendations from the committee about CoC activities, such as CE processes, CE prioritization, HMIS, RRH, PSH, and how the CoC can better support local communities.
- Members will tell staff what they want to address, then work with staff to plan and evaluate changes.

Three PWLE that sit on the CoC Community Planning Workgroup as members, currently sit on the Board of Directors, which provides voting power and a voice for PWLE. PWLE Workgroup had the opportunity to sign a letter of support for the priorities in the CoC Plan. Members will also be invited to co-develop the CE prioritization standards for projects funded under this NOFO and in other ways to participate in their implementation and evaluation. The CoC lead agency employs PWLE, who routinely give input from their experience and expertise.

P-6.A.3. CoC encourages projects to involve PLE of unsheltered homelessness in the delivery of services

TN-500 incentivizes projects to engage PWLE by awarding points in the Ranking and Rating scoring for CoC Program funding.

- The organization solicits feedback through satisfaction surveys.
- The organization has PWLE in Managerial Roles.
- A current or former participant(s), or someone with current or past lived experience of homelessness, sits on the Board of Directors or other equivalent policymaking entity.
- The organization employs current or former participants in the project.

Staff also regularly ask about PWLE involvement when discussing ongoing project development and performance improvement. And staff encourage providers to hire PWLE— to take advantage of their expertise from going through the HCRS and their valuable role as peer support. On the CoC level, the lead agency models involving persons with lived experience of unsheltered homelessness as agency employees and on the agency’s board, the CoC Board, and CoC committees. The CoC lead agency employs PWLE, who routinely give input from their experience and expertise.

P-6a.Attachment (P-9c. in e-snaps) Lived Experience Support Letter

See the letter signed by CoC Community Planning Workgroup members that is attached in the e-snaps application on Screen 4A.

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

P-7.1. Current strategy to identify populations

TN-500’s strategy to identify populations in the CoC’s geographic area that have not been served by the homeless system at the same rate they are experiencing homelessness revolves around assessment and planning.

- TN-500’s updated the information on the CoC Racial Equity Tool. This information was gathered in 2021 and updated in 2022 to present at all the community meetings for this CoC Community Plan. The data revealed important information on racial groups disproportionately represented in the homeless population. There were two groups that were identified as disproportionately represented. African American Homeless Youth were overrepresented and African American Homeless Veterans.
- Demographics in HMIS were gathered in a report and it showed that the LGBTQ+ community is underrepresented in seeking services.

- Stellowise has been used to gather more information on the underserved communities such as persons with disabilities and persons living in rural areas.

P-7.2. How underserved communities in their geographic area interact with the homeless system

Description: In the TN-500, underserved populations vary from community to community. Surveys and Community Planning Meetings discussed how the underserved interact in the community: youth ages 18 to 24; Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC); people who identify as LGBTQ; people with dual diagnoses (mental health diagnosis and substance use disorder diagnosis); people living in poverty; people living with disabilities; formerly incarcerated people; migrant farm workers; people living in tent cities; people who cannot access primary health care; people who earn low wages; and people without access to transportation. It was discussed that Homeless Youth don't typically report as homeless because they do not see themselves as homeless. However, when they do seek services, African American youth are twice as likely to be homeless. Another discussion was in regards to LGBTQ+ population, they are less likely to seek services when they become homeless. Factors may be perception in rural areas and feelings that they may be discriminated against.

P-7.3. Current strategy to provide outreach, engagement, and housing interventions

Underserved groups have different strengths, needs, and barriers across various communities, strategies to provide outreach, engagement, housing interventions, and supportive services to assist them, but one overarching strategy is to lead with Equity. Understanding who is accessing the system and who has been underrepresented, can lead to changing Policies and/or Procedures to create equitable access to the system. Inclusive, active participation of underserved communities has had transformative results. The YAAB has taken an active role in homeless youth outreach with peer support to provide outreach, engagement, and housing interventions.

Next Steps: Once this plan is approved by the CoC Planning Workgroup, CoC Membership, and CoC Board, the next steps are to incorporate it into the CoC Strategic Plan and 2011 Action Plan. The Strategic Plan and Action Plans are developed by TN-500 staff with input from CoC general members and are overseen by the Strategic Planning Committee and CoC Planning Workgroup. Implementation of this plan will begin with the Notice of Conditional Award by HUD, and projects awarded under this NOFO should plan to start operations in 2011.