Housing Expansion Initiative Application Instructions

About the Housing Expansion Initiative

The goal of the Housing Expansion Initiative (HEI) is to identify, coordinate, support, and track housing projects as they move from concept to completion to meet the Continuum of Care's housing system goals by population and type of housing intervention. All new Supportive Housing (Scattered-site, rehab and new developments), Rapid Re-housing, and Prevention/Diversion (that include rental assistance) proposals will be reviewed and tracked through this process. The HEI was formed by the Continuum of Care (CoC) Action Agenda's Pipeline Expansion Workgroup. The Action Agenda is an initiative of the CoC, All Chicago, and Department of Family and Support Services to be more responsive, collaborative, and action-oriented in the community's work to end homelessness. You can read more about the Action Agenda and Pipeline Expansion Workgroup [here](#).

Through the Housing Expansion Initiative application, the Pipeline Expansion Workgroup will track and monitor the following benchmark criteria:

- The commitment of projects to help meet system goals as tracked through HMIS and Coordinated Entry
- The commitment of projects to creating housing that adopts Housing First strategies and align with CSH Quality Standards in project design ad administration, supportive services, property and housing management, and community input
- Population focus is in line with unmet needs as evidenced by community data
- Costs are in alignment with general understanding of financial modeling
- Timelines are managed and projects have additional access to technical assistance and funding coordination

Application Instructions

The Housing Expansion Initiative uses SurveyGizmo to collect and review applications. You can access the pre-application [here](#). You can also download a PDF of the application [here](#) to preview the questions before starting a SurveyGizmo submission.

Please note that you do not need to complete the application in one sitting. In the top right hand corner of every page there is a 'Save and continue later' button. Click this button and provide your email address to receive an email with a link to return back to that point in your submission. Please check your Spam or Junk email folder if you do not receive the emailed link.

If you have any technical issues with submitting the application, reach out to Brett Penner at brett.penner@csh.org for support.

Housing Expansion Initiative Application

https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4713308/CoCPreApplication

Housing Expansion Initiative Application – Preview PDF

//surveygizmolibrary.s3.amazonaws.com/library/647153/CoC_PreApplication.pdf

Preview of Application Sections

The Housing Expansion Initiative application contains five sections that detail the proposed project. The application will not be considered complete until you reach the Thank you and Next Steps page. You will also have the option to download a PDF of your submission for your records. An overview of each section is below, including a few helpful points to consider.

Project Contact Information

Please provide the contact information for the project sponsor and up to three project partners, such as property management, developer, services provider, etc. The project sponsor is the contact who will receive follow-up information after the application is submitted, and may be contacted throughout the application process to provide further information.

Project Overview and Sponsor Capacity

In this section, provide a general overview of your project including:

- Program model (Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Youth-specific Transitional Housing/ Rapid Re-Housing)
- Links to existing project descriptions or links to development portfolios from sponsor or partners
- Identified areas of technical assistance that would be relevant to your project or sponsors

In this section, you can also upload up to 10 relevant documents to support your application. This can include copies of submitted funding applications, budgets, development/funding schedules etc. The maximum file size that SurveyGizmo will support is 500KB. **If your attachments are larger than this size, please email them to brett.penner@csh.org. In the body of the email, list the project sponsor's first name, last name, and organization exactly as they appear in the project contact section of the SurveyGizmo application.**

Project Details

In this section, applicants will provide more detailed information on the proposed project to understand how the project fits within CoC need. Information requested includes:

- Populations served
- Site information (community areas for scattered-site, potential development sites)
- Project timeline (funding schedule for securing resources, when application is expected to begin operating)
- Sources of capital, rental assistance and services funding. Included here are funding sources already secured and those in process of application, as well as those of interest

Alignment with Chicago Continuum of Care

This section seeks to understand areas of project alignment with Continuum of Care priorities. Priorities of the CoC include a commitment to Housing First and use of the Coordinated Entry System, both of which are a requirement of HUD. Please be as detailed as possible to indicate how the project will reduce barriers to entry and conditions on tenancy.

To help inform alignment and consistency with the CoC, HMIS IDs for existing CoC projects are also requested in this section. IDs will be used to verify if current projects meet CoC requirements, including past project performance, use of coordinated entry, and adherence to Housing First principles.

Commitment to Quality

This section asks questions to understand alignment with industry standards for supportive housing, based on CSH's Dimensions of Quality in Supportive Housing. Included in this section is a checklist for projects to ensure that quality standards are embedded into all aspects of planning and project design. Please note there are only yes or no answers. If an element you feel is "not applicable" please choose "no." These questions are to help sponsors consider how to move responses to yes, even when components may not feel relevant. This section is largely for technical assistance support.

Review Process and Next Steps

The Housing Expansion Initiative Review Committee meets monthly to review project applications. During review, the project sponsor may be contacted to answer questions or provide further information. The Review Committee will aim to determine consistency with the HEI and CoC within the month of submission. However, submissions will be prioritized based on the sponsor's need for a Letter of Consistency to accompany funding applications that are time sensitive. For this reason, projects needing a letter of consistency are asked to submit within two-months of funding application.

Applications that do not meet benchmark criteria

If the project does not meet the Housing Expansion Initiative's benchmark criteria, the project sponsor will receive a

letter that details issues and identifies opportunities for technical assistance to strengthen the submission. Projects are invited to make adjustments to strengthen the project and update their application for consideration during future cycles.

Application meets benchmark criteria

For projects that meet the Housing Expansion Initiative's benchmark criteria and meets quality supportive housing standards, consistency will be documented in two parts:

1. **Letter of Consistency**   Projects will be provided with a letter of consistency that should be included as an attachment with funding applications. The letter will certify that the proposed project aligns with CoC system needs and adheres to standards and best practices in supportive housing. **For the Continuum of Care New Project application process, the HEI Committee will provide the CoC New Project Review Panel with the completed applications of projects that have been approved for a Letter of Consistency. The New Project Review Panel will reach out to projects with instructions for step two in the new project process.**

2. **Letter of Agreement**   If the project is selected for funding, the Housing Expansion Initiative will provide the project with a Letter of Agreement, signed by the HEI and the project. This letter will represent a commitment on behalf of the project to continue alignment with quality standards and CoC priorities.

Further Assistance

If you have any questions throughout the Housing Expansion Initiative application process or to check on the status of your application, please reach out to Brett Penner (brett.penner@csh.org).