Speaker 1:	Welcome and thank you for joining today's Fiscal Year 2021 Continuum of Care Program Competition Debrief. Please note though, all audience audio connections will be muted for the duration of this conference. You are, however, welcome to submit questions using the chat. To submit questions via chat, please open the chat by using the associated icon located in the toolbar at the bottom of the webinar screen, type your message in the chat field, and send. If you do not see the toolbar, please move your cursor and the toolbar will appear. If you are on a mobile device, tap your screen to display the toolbar.
	Closed captioning is available by clicking the live caption/close captioning icon in the toolbar. Captions will appear at the bottom of your screen. You may also view the full transcript by clicking on subtitle settings from the closed captioning icon. If you need technical assistance, please send a chat and address the event services host. With that, I'll turn the conference over to Norm Suchar, Director of HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs. Please go ahead.
Norm Suchar:	Thank you so much and welcome everyone to today's session. We're very excited to be able to present this debriefing and to answer as many of your questions as we can today.
	I just wanted to jump on, say a quick welcome, and also mention that we have a lot of people from the SNAPS office who are going to be answering questions both live and in the chat window. Before then, we'll have some basic information that we'll present to you all so I just wanted to welcome everyone.
	Also, wanted to acknowledge that we very much appreciate how hard everyone's worked on COVID matters, on ending homelessness, on all number of things. It's been a really wild couple of years. And so, I wanted to thank you for all your time and dedication and also just wish everyone, well, a good webinar but that sounds funny in the context of a debriefing webinar but just wish everyone well.
	And so, I'm going to turn things over to Karen DeBlasio and she's going to start us through our debriefing conversation. Karen?
Karen DeBlasio:	Thanks Norm. Hi everybody. I'm Karen DeBlasio. I'm a division director here in the SNAPS office. Next slide please. I'm going to go over the first couple of slides. First one is just some housekeeping. You can post, as a lot of you have already started to do, we see. You can post questions during the webinar through the Q&A pane so continue to do that. We are going to try to answer as many questions as we can in the second part of the webinar and just know that all your lines are muted so that we can make sure that everybody can hear everything. Next slide please.
	So I want to just start by giving a very high-level overview of what the competition looked like. We awarded over $2.6 billion. $257 million was awarded to new permanent housing projects through reallocation, DV bonus,

and CoC bonus. So we had a $34 million increase in permanent supportive housing and an $84 million increase in rapid rehousing. Next slide.

So an overview of Tier 1 and Tier 2 and what that looks like. This year, for 2021, 100%, Tier 1 was 100% of your Continuum of Care's annual renewal demand or ARD. So projects were safe. If they passed eligibility and quality threshold review, they were safe. Tier 2, and you can see here on the slide, I'll read it to you. It's a little bit more tricky.

The difference between Tier 2 is the difference between Tier 1 and the CoC's ARD plus any bonus projects, excluding DV bonus projects and before adjustments to permanent housing, leasing, operating, rental assistance, and BLIs based on changes to the FMR so that's what Tier 2 looked like. Next slide.

We'll dive in a little bit deeper on this slide just to explain to you the selection and ranking process for Tier 2. So we awarded points to each new and renewal project application in Tier 2 using a 100 point scale. So the CoC score was worth up to 50 points, the CoC project ranking up to 40 points, and then your CoC's Commitment to Housing First. You could receive up to 10 points for that. Next slide.

So the DV Bonus selection and ranking. So CoCs were able to apply for up to 15% of their PPRN or their Preliminary Pro Rata Need or a minimum of $50,000, whichever was greater or 15% of their PPRN or maximum of $5 million, whichever was less. So we used a 100 point scale, and you can see that here on the screen, for Rapid Rehousing/Joint TH and PH-RRH projects, the CoC score was worth up to 50 points, need for the project, for a DV project was up to 50 points and the quality of project applicant was you could score up to 25 points. For the supportive services only, coordinated entry projects, CoC score up to 50 points and need for the project up to 50 points. So that was specific to DV, how we selected and ranked the DV Bonus projects. Next slide please.

So what did we award on the DV Bonus side? We awarded $4 million in SSO or supportive services only coordinated entry projects. We awarded $340 million Joint TH-RRH projects, $65 million RRH or Rapid Rehousing Projects. So 149 CoCs in 42 states with a mixture of rural, suburban, and urban CoCs were awarded DV Bonus projects. So we we're happy that we were able to do that this year.

So that's a very high-level overview. I'm going to pass it on now to William Snow, one of our senior SNAP specialists and he's going to go over a couple of more things. You can go to the next slide please. I'll let William talk about the local competition a little bit.

William Snow: All right. Welcome everyone. Thanks Karen. As we talk about the debriefing, we want to make sure we put a special emphasis on the importance of the local competition. Right? We kind of see this overall competition really as two

competitions, the federal one as well as the local one and that's something that we're happy about.

We like to have control in your hands in terms of how projects are selected, how they're ranked. Just a reminder that we certainly look at things like performance. We strongly encourage you to do that. We have questions in the NOFO, obviously, that get at whether or not you're looking at performance and objective criteria and using that locally to drive some of your decisions is going to be really important. The Tier 2, it's a good reminder that is all projects, whether new or renewal, are subject to the competitive aspect. Right? They are going to compete against other projects in Tier 2 across the country.

That competitive aspect continues to be very important and so we'll continue to put continued emphasis on that reality, that having a competition is a critical part of what we do here. It's also important for CoCs to do the work to make sure that those projects submitted on behalf of the CoC are compliant, meet threshold requirements, and otherwise competitive.

We continue to reject projects each year, not a lot, but still some that simply don't meet eligibility requirements and the project may look great for lots of reasons. But if it's not eligible, we will not be able to fund it. So we strongly encourage CoCs to look at those applications and to help make course corrections where needed. Next slide please.

All right. So who received funding? This is one of those core questions. Not surprisingly, the answers are things that we've said in the past and things did not change a lot this year. Right? Those who demonstrated that they reduce homelessness through data and their narrative typically scored better. Those who use performance criteria in their local rating and ranking process, evidence of housing-first practices, both at the project level and across the CoC, increases in rapid rehousing units, and then a reallocation to lower-performing projects.

I should note, especially on that first one, I think you're all aware this year's NOFA reduced a lot of the points associated with performance. We know the impact of COVID. We adjusted accordingly. We still have some statutory requirements in terms of looking at performance. But we did try to reduce that to minimize the impact that COVID would have in terms of numbers themselves and there's some obvious things that were going to happen based on the realities of the COVID response. Next slide please.

So we want to give you a little bit of an insight about the scoring aspect and what we do. So we don't always talk about this but it's good for you to be aware. For our review process, we have two reviewers look at every single question that gets scored. So there's no arbitrary response in that a single person can make a decision for a CoC. We always have at least two reviewers. Many times things get reviewed more than twice because we have managers that will have to do backup. We do sampling. We do a lot to try to make sure

the process of reviewing questions is consistent and again, that's to protect you guys, also to protect our process.

It's important to know that we also don't always have the same reviewer looking at every single question. Right? So we may break up, we often do break up the application into several different parts based on subjects, based on other kind of things that make sense in the review context.

So just want to let you know, some of the feedback we give here and we'll give in later slides has to do with that, how we review things, and our efforts to make sure that those reviewing are doing so consistently but also disinterested. Right? Like I have responsibility over Los Angeles. I know what's going on in Los Angeles. To some extent, it doesn't make sense for me to review the Los Angeles application because I need to look at the words on the paper, the words in the application, and to be able to assess what each CoC is telling me about what is going on in the CoC.

And so, we often have folks across the office who don't have responsibility of a given area looking at this so that we can kind of avoid any potential bias that might exist there. This is still a competition so when we finish everything, we do look at the data. We try to understand the nature of the scores and on average, about 75% of the CoC score full points for any given question. So it's good.

Again, that's about the right place. We want a competitive aspect here. If it's 100%, that tells us that we're probably either being too soft in the questions or we're not asking enough. If it's all very low, 50% or low or something like that, that also says eh, there's something else going on here. Either we're asking the wrong thing or we're not clearly asking or it's something that people just aren't doing. Maybe it's too high a bar, whatever the standard there.

So there are like two core areas that we notice every time we do our review of the scores that drive high scores or kind of whether or not you meet that average. The two core areas are the question itself may be unclear and then there also are issues with POCs simply don't meet the standard and we'll talk about each of these. So let's go to the next slide please.

So let's talk about unclear questions. So first of all, it's important to note that if it is an unclear question but it is something that's based on NOFO criteria, we're still going to have to review it and we're still going to have to score it. So sometimes we get the question of like well, if it wasn't a great question, why didn't you just throw it out? That's not how it works. Right? The NOFO actually requires us to review it so we need to.

However, we don't give different communities different access to information about the questions. So everyone has the same information and what typically happens is the scores for those questions that are poorly asked or require more clarity, the scores are in general low across the board. That's the type of thing

where we, again, we analyze the responses. We look at scores and that tells us A, should we remove the question altogether or B, should we scrap the current structure of it and rethink how we ask the question? That might be more guidance as well.

So I'll give you a few examples, things that we've heard come up. 1C-16 is the persons with lived experience question. That was a brand new question so we expected right off the bat to have probably below the threshold of that 75% zone and sure enough, that's actually how it played out. And that's partly us needing to figure out how do we ask this question in a way that you can respond? This was not a narrative. It was actually numbers-based so some of this also was new to you. So you weren't sure. You weren't aware of the criteria before and so, we kind of knew the scores would be lower. We typically adjust for that, for newer questions by keeping the score associated with the question relatively low. So that question has one point associated with it.

Associating and working hard with people with lived expertise is really important so it's something you could expect in the future. We're likely going to improve this question, maybe add more, and probably add more points to it as kind of a natural reality of how that flows. But in this year, people were not heavily impacted. If you didn't score well in that, the score was relatively low.

1B-7. I actually already saw a question in the chat about how we scored the 1B questions. I'll just respond to one. This 1B-7, for the most part, actually, the scores were really good. You guys were doing amazing things and you expressed that in your responses. 1B-7, we noticed the scores were abnormally low relative to everything else. We found that was probably a product of how we asked the question. So to the extent we choose to ask that in the future, we will not ask it in the same way. We're going to have to do more, adjust the question, provide additional guidance. But just noting that, we noticed the scores were low there. That's not too surprising and it was, again, probably tied to how it was asked.

The final example I want to give is 1E-2. This is a big one. Right? This is your local rating and ranking evaluation. Element five asked the question, essentially, what performance criteria do you use to evaluate safety for survivors of domestic violence? Well, right now, we've never published anything that says this is your performance criteria on safety. We don't have anything like that in the data that we currently ask for. So we have a lot of questions like, what does this mean? What are we looking for? Not surprisingly the scores reflected that as well.

So again, to the extent we ask this question in the future, it's something that we know we'll have to adjust so it's a question that makes more sense to all of you. So this is kind of one big category. Right? An unclear question. I could put unclear/new question in an area where we evaluate the scores to try to understand those so that we can make some changes in the future. Next slide please.

So the other category is where CoCs don't meet the criteria. Most commonly, this is going to be in the data sphere. We are already aware of this kind of reality. So I'll give you an example. HMIS bed coverage across the nation, about 55% of CoCs meet the 85% or more HMIS bed coverage threshold that we ask for in the NOFO.

We already know the score's going to be about 55% of all CoCs are going to get full points on this. Again, that's below the normal 75% range and we are aware of it. We want to continue to incentivize it. So it's something, it's kind of a known reality that not all CoCs are at that point. Same thing with like the length of time homeless, 2C-2. With COVID, we encourage folks to ensure people can stay in a safe space, stay in shelter longer to the extent needed. We expected the length of time homeless to actually increase. In over 50% of the CoCs, there was an increase.

Again, similar to the 1C-16, we kind of were aware of some of the impact that was going to flow and we reduced the point. So almost all the system performance measures, the data itself, not the narrative part but the metrics, we scored much lower just in acknowledgement of the realities of COVID and how that's going to play out in the data.

In the future, we will increase that. We can't say whether or not that's in the next competition but sometime in a future competition, we'll return to a greater emphasis on system performance measures. Those are very important and we want to continue to emphasize them but we also recognize local context.

So one other area to kind of flag in terms of reasons why we see lower scores tends to be around how folks respond to questions. Some of this is more of the like technical. When there are three elements, are you responding to three elements? So we want to get into that. I want to provide one example of this and then I'm going to turn it over to Kevin Turner and he'll be talking more about some of these other kind of broader categories of ways that you can improve your responses that will help you improve scores.

So I've gotten a lot of questions around the street outreach question. I believe that's 1C-10. So I wanted to make a comment on that. Folks wondering well, we either got no points or we got some partial points and kind of curious how that flows. That's a good example of how to understand how we score things. In the NOFO, we tell you all of the elements that we have to score on for you to get maximum points so we'll look at each element.

So in that question, there were four bullets in the NOFO and we literally laid out questions that kind of resembled that four-bullet point structure and we went down the line. Did you do this? Bullet number one? Did you describe your strategy? That's going to be one element of the score. Right? Did you talk about your complete coverage? That's going to be an element in the score. Right? So each of the four categories is something that we'll look at and often, if you don't get full points, you get something less than that, it's because you were able to

respond to at least some of the bullets there. There are a few examples where if you respond to some bullets but not others, you may still get zero points.

System performance, actually, a lot of them have strategy, a second kind of thing around, a more targeted aspect of the strategy and then responsible entities for overseeing the strategy. If you had a really bad response to number one or two, right, say your responses, our strategy is to send everyone to Disneyland. Sure. You have a strategy but you're not going to get any points for that.

You may have a great response on the third one. Right? The organization. You may say this subcommittee addresses this and is accountable. They're accountable for it. You're still probably going to get zero points for that because if you didn't do the core aspects, the core strategy pieces, we're not going to give you full points.

So this is just, again, we have no intent to hide how we score things. We try to lay out in the NOFO exactly what we're looking for in terms of maximum score and minimum score or something less than maximum is usually one of the elements that's already laid out in the NOFO.

So just wanted to walk you through that so you can kind of get a sense. And as you kind of go back and look at your scores and say well, why didn't we get full points, one suggestion we would have is start by taking the NOFO or the detailed instructions because that's actually based on the NOFO and then going element by element for any given question. Think. Did we actually respond to this? Did we talk about frequency or regularity of meetings and provide like a regular timeframe, annual or quarterly or whatever it be.

All right. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Kevin and he will provide more information along these lines.

Kevin Turner: Thank you William. Next slide please.

So these are places where we have identified where CoCs could actually improve. So the slide says review the detailed instructions carefully and I would say that the detailed instructions are your friend. So you should be referring to them as you're filling out the application. Just reviewing them in advance is not going to be as helpful as looking at them, especially when we're talking about multi-part questions, because in the detailed instructions, we give instructions that you won't otherwise see in the NOFO and it's going to be difficult for you to score higher without using the detailed instructions.

William already pointed out the fact that sometimes multiple part questions aren't answered. And so, when we are doing this review process, we're looking at everything and we're counting everything and we're looking for responses and so we're looking for complete responses so we have included the entire

response. So if you refer us to a website, if you refer us to another question, if you refer us to other resources, if you say click here for more information, none of that is part of that question. None of that is part of the application.

The HUD Reform Act prohibits us from using any outside resources to review your application. So anything that you don't include in the application, we can't consider and if it's not in that question, unless we give specific instructions allowing you to use information from other questions, then we won't consider anything else outside of that question. And so, this is the big thing is making sure that you address every element and like the slide here says, if you don't understand the question, then you could submit your request to the CoC NOFO at hud.gov for us to respond to those questions. Next slide please.

Another issue is attachments. So it's going to be important that all of the attachments that are required, that you submit them. One of the things that we've noted is that sometimes we've asked for multiple attachments. So we're trying to develop the application in such a way to make it clear and more easy for you to understand and also for us to be able to review. So we're also looking at ways to design questions, to make these things more clear.

And specific to dates, so if you give us something and you manually put a date on there, you're not going to get credit for that. Also, I would say that deadlines are important. Though the 15-day in the 1E section, the 15-day, the two-day posting of the consolidated application, the 15-day notification to the applicants. And so, when you give us the evidence for those, we're looking at all of them to determine.

So if you give us an attachment, for instance, for the 15-day notification and you've sent these on several different dates, if any of those dates are outside of the deadline, then you don't get credit for that. So it's important that your local competition is in line with the deadline requirements in the CoC application. We're pretty strict about how we review those. And so, if we don't see the specific dates, then you wouldn't get credit for that. With that being said, Karen, back to you.

Karen DeBlasio: Okay. Thank you Kevin. I think ... Next slide please.

Okay. So what do you do with grants that were not funded this year? What do you do about grants not funded? There are a couple of things. You can see on the slide here a couple things we recommend. First and foremost, I would say definitely work with your field office. Talk with your reps in your field office. You can request technical assistance. You do have the option, if your grants that was not awarded has some funds remaining, you can extend that grant. Make sure that you're working. Again, if you need technical assistance or need to work with your field office to talk about helping program participants move out of a project if it wasn't funded or transferred to another option, keep in mind that if you have a project that had restrictive covenant and it is not funded, you still have to abide by all of the requirements of the restricted covenant.

But I think the biggest two takeaways here, just definitely ask questions, ask for technical assistance, talk with your field office. Our desk officers here in SNAPS are in constant contact with their field office reps as well and we can have conversations, if need be, if you're having some challenges around dealing with folks in projects that were not funded. So next slide. I think ... Let me see. Next slide. Okay. Sorry. I forgot I had this last slide.

So this is just kind of a reminder to folks that while the application in E-SNAPs, you guys all know all too well you have to wait for it to open in order to be able to do the application but there are things that you can do in E-SNAPs now. So if you have a change to your collaborative applicant, if there's email address changes, anything like that, that information can be updated in E-SNAPs and we encourage you to update that in E-SNAPs as soon as that information changes. This will save you time later. Know that we rely on what is in E-SNAPs to get a lot of information out to you all.

So if we are relying on old emails, old names, you may be missing information because we're sending it to the wrong people or we're sending it to bad email addresses. So again, it's just important to make sure that you know that you can go in and update that sort of information at any time during the year. It does not have to be an open application period. It's also especially important now.

Starting April 4th of this year, this was a federal government-wide issue. It was not just a HUD-wide thing but we started using unique entity identifiers or UEI instead of DUN's numbers. If you have any questions about that, submit a question to the help desk or I would say ask your field office as well. We've been working with folks. Most of you all should be able to go into sam.gov and see what your UEI is. If you have a registered DUNS number, you automatically, they kind of assigned you a UEI so it's not something that you should have had to apply for. But again, just know that moving forward, we cannot process anything. We cannot do grant agreements. Everything is now going to hang on that UEI and not the DUN's number any longer. So just make sure that you're updating that number as well. So I think the next slide is just our question slide so we can open for questions.

So I am having a hard time getting into the document where we actually have all the questions cut and pasted. I have a couple of questions that I jotted down from the chat so I'm going to invite other snappers. I have a couple of questions. I'll throw those out to Norm or Kevin or William, if you guys want to take them, and then I'm going to invite other snappers as I'm going through the chat to see if you want to pose any questions to the group.

So I think the first question, and maybe Norm, this might be either you or William, but I think some folks had asked for some insight into scoring on the COVID section. I guess maybe what we were looking for, what our thinking was with the questions in that section.

Norm Suchar:	That's one that William or Kevin are probably going to be better at. I just don't remember the details on that one. So maybe ... I don't know. Do one of you guys want to give an answer?
William Snow:	Sure. I can take a stab at it and folks can add. The nature of the COVID questions, really this was an area where we assume that most people would get most points so I should start there. We wanted to understand what you were doing on a couple of very specific categories. And so when we scored it, it was, again, broad points that associated with things that we were aware most CoCs were doing. We scored it fairly conservatively with, again, the intent of if you can tell us what you're doing in this area broadly, you likely got full points and actually the scores were very high across the board, with the exception of the 1D-7 question, which, again, I mentioned was actually more of our issue. We didn't ask the question clear enough for you to provide the response of what you were doing and so that's one where the scores were low. We anticipate, again, if we ask that type of question again, we'll have to adjust it on our end.
Karen DeBlasio:	Okay. Thanks William. I think, Norm, this is one that I'll pose for you because I think it's a kind of a tricky answer. But this is a major theme you guys have probably seen throughout the chat, the questions in the chat. There's a lot of asks from folks. Can we get a more detailed debrief? People are appreciating what they received from us but also saying but we still ... I don't understand why we didn't score the full points in such and such section. I can't tell that from what you all provided me. So that's kind of an overarching theme in a lot of these questions is just can HUD provide more detail or just like a question by question breakdown of the score.
Norm Suchar:	So this is ... Thank you for that question. I did provide a quick response in the chat but I'm glad I can sort of expand on that a little bit.

This is a question we get every year but there are a couple of reasons that we don't provide like a much more detailed scoring breakdown. So one is just in recognition of the time and resources we have available. We try to provide as much information as we can with the time and resources we have available you. As everyone knows, there's a lot on our plates as well and we are trying to get NOFAs out and so that's definitely one constraint.

We are also very cognizant of the fact that I know that people want to improve their scores but the way we want people to improve the scores is by performing better and housing more people experiencing homelessness and not sort of going back and forth about the details of what's the quote right answer to the question. So that's another consideration is we don't want to sort of make this about figuring out how to answer the question correctly. We wanted to focus this on how are we doing on preventing and ending homelessness? So that's another reason.

We've also had a few questions about debriefing around the bonus projects. So I want to talk about that because I think there may be a little misunderstanding |

about how we score bonus projects versus DV bonus. So I just wanted to explain. I want to dive into that just a little deeper.

So for DV bonus projects, we have a special scoring mechanism where we provide each DV bonus project with its own score. Those factors are all spelled out in the NOFO and I think people sort of generally saw that and understood how we were scoring those and we provided debriefing information specific to each of those DV projects.

For the CoC bonus projects, we actually score those just like every other renewal or new reallocation project. There's no difference. So we do a threshold review to make sure that they pass threshold but otherwise they are ranked and scored just like every other project.

If they're in Tier 1, they will be funded, provided that they pass threshold and if they are in Tier 2, they're funded, they're scored like any other project in Tier 2 renewal reallocation or bonus project. And so, whatever score that gets through that Tier 2 process, that's what score it's going to get. So yeah. Back to you Karen.

Kevin Turner:	Hey Norm, can I do a follow-up on that?
Norm Suchar:	Please. Yes.
Kevin Turner:	What about why? So I saw this in the chat. Why would a score, why would a project that scored below another project be funded and not the one that was above it?
Norm Suchar:	So there are about three reasons that can happen. It's pretty rare. So there's a good chance that you should just reach out to us. If that's happened to you, to reach out to the CoC NOFO mailbox and we can sort of dig into your circumstance specifically but there are about three reasons that could happen.

One is that the project that was ranked higher was just ineligible for some reason, either it didn't pass threshold or I don't know, there was some major problem with it. We did have a handful of projects that were just not eligible or didn't pass threshold.

Another factor may be, there is one additional scoring factor for Tier 2 projects, which is if they use a housing-first approach. So it is possible for a lower-ranked housing-first project to leapfrog a higher-ranked non-housings-first project so that could happen in certain circumstances.

The only other example I can think of is if they ... There's a requirement that if you have an expansion project, a new expansion project, that the renewal also has to get funded in order for the new expansion to get funded. So there were a couple cases where the renewal was ranked really low and the new part of the

expansion did not get funded because the renewal did not get funded and that is something that was ranked lower than that new expansion would have jumped up.

Those are the main reasons I can think of. Again, feel free to reach out to us and we can sort of dig into your specific circumstance.

Karen DeBlasio: Thanks Norm. There were a couple of questions that, Norm, I believe you answered in the chat but just in case folks did not see this. There were a couple of folks that asked about the deadline to appeal and in the NOFO, that does say 45 days after our conditional award announcement. A couple of people, I think, did not appeal but then received their CoC debriefing, saw the scores, and are now wondering if it's too late.

And so, the message Norm had typed in the chat was to submit if you do have an appeal or questions, you can go ahead and follow the instructions in the NOFO Section 10, I believe it is, with the appeals mailbox and you can submit your questions or your appeals even though we're past the 45-day deadline.

Ebony: Karen, so just on appeals, for those who submitted appeals before the deadline, you should get a response sometime next week. So we are going through the appeals now and reviewing those. So if you have any questions on those, just send it to SNAPSAppeals@hud.gov.

And I think there are a lot of questions on who do they contact about certain things. You can always send an email to the COC, nofo@hud.gov, email box. But if you haven't gotten your debriefing yet, it would've come from your SNAPS desk officer, which is different from your field office representatives. So if the CoC has not received their debriefing, it should have come from your SNAPS desk officer. If you have not received it or your DV bonus debriefing, you can also send an email to COCNOFO@hud.gov, and we'll make sure you get it.

Karen DeBlasio: Thank you Ebony. Couple of questions about when the next NOFO will drop. Not sure how much we want to say or we're able to say at this point, Norm, on that.

Norm Suchar: Yeah. I mean we're trying to get it out as quickly as possible and it's not going to be next week. I'm sure of that but sometime in the next several weeks. But unfortunately, there are a lot of factors a little beyond our control so can't really give a precise date.

Karen DeBlasio: Thanks Norm. There's a question here I just spotted. When will grant agreements or contracts be sent out to awardees? We had a renewal project that started March 1st and do not have a contract for a grant agreement and that's something that we're also working with the field office on getting the funds available. We cannot start the grant agreement process until funds are available so we hope that will be starting very, very soon and I think there is a memo out.

	We were working with the field offices on how to work with folks who had grants that expired early this calendar year and were awaiting the grant agreements because we didn't have the funds available quite yet. I don't know if Norm or William, if you want to add anything to that.
Norm Suchar:	Nothing from me.
Karen DeBlasio:	Okay. Okay. I'm scrolling through the chat since I cannot get into the Google Talk so if anybody else sees any questions.
Norm Suchar:	Sure. So one thing I want to ... There were some questions about thresholds for like DV projects to get funded and for Tier 2 projects to get funded. So I want to reiterate, I think something that William and Karen talked about. So we structured this year's NOFO a little differently than past years in that we set Tier 1 at 100% of ARD. The consequence of setting Tier 1 at 100% of ARD is that there was very little money left over for other things.
	We awarded very few Tier 2 projects so the vast majority of Tier 2 projects did not get funded. So if you're used to getting Tier 2 projects and you didn't get it this year, that's actually a pretty common experience. So again, very few people got Tier 2 projects funded. I think in a typical year, we might award a $100 million or $200 million in Tier 2 projects, sometimes more. This year we were able to award about $20 million so much, much less.
	On the flip side, for the DV process, the DV bonus projects, we were able to fund most of the ones that came in. The score, I believe, was 75.6, the threshold score for DV bonus projects. So we had two years worth of funding so that made it much easier for us to go further down the list of DV bonus projects. We will not have two years of DV bonus funding. We'll only have one year for the next round so it'll be a little more like past years, when we get to the next NOFO process.
	And William, we had a lot of questions about rapid rehousing scoring. Do you want to talk about how we do that?
William Snow:	Yeah. That seems to be the most popular question. So a couple things to note around that. One, it is purely based on the housing inventory count. So I know there were some questions like where is this coming from? Where are the points coming from? So we look at what's submitted in the housing inventory account each year and we do that comparison. So if there was an increase, you're likely going to get some points. I'll have to look again at what the NOFO-specific language says but it gives thresholds about the increase and then if there's a decrease, you not going to get points.
	So we've noted in the past the importance of kind of understanding rapid rehousing. We also note the challenge of understanding what's going on in the

rapid rehousing space. A lot of good comments on that of like yes, we understand but either there's a tenant-based rental assistance flow aspect here.

So there's lots of factors that come along. This is an area we are interested in learning more on how best to answer the question or ask the question so we are open to suggestions around it. So far, this is the consistent database or set of data that we can use with information that can be scored across the country.

To date, we actually haven't had annual rapid rehousing data across the system so that's not actually been a possibility. We are interested in that though. So if folks have suggestions, and I should say this more broadly. Folks have said well, we want to be able to provide some feedback. We would love feedback on it. We start our CoC applications and NOFO process by taking last year and we use a lot of this. So if you have a suggestion for how things are going to change, I'm not going to commit to us saying we're going to take every suggestion. I will tell you now we will not pick every suggestion. Like that's not how that's going to play out but we're open to kind of seeing suggestions that you have and finding ways to think about how to score. Rapid rehousing is a good example but other things in a way that's consistent across the country but would recognize some uniqueness in your community.

So if you have feedback on that, please provide that to us. We have the CoC NOFO inbox and other venues. You can go through your desktop or field office rep but we are very interested in that. Again, we don't mean to hide the ball or ask the trick questions. We want to be straightforward about it but note that it is hard to ask the question nationally which is part of our job and to be able to score that in an even way across the board is a challenge. So that's something we're trying to weigh there and be fair on but also recognizing that.

There was another question I want to get to because there in the debriefing document itself, there's some unclarity around one aspect. That's the bonus point. There's an asterisk at the very end that says this excludes bonus points. It actually only excludes merger bonus points. So if you applied for the leveraging on housing or healthcare, that score actually includes that. So there's a very small handful of those who participated in the mergers. I think it was less than five. Actually, all of them got full points but because it's so few, we didn't want to weight the entire total score against that because that would just artificially decrease where everyone's scoring it. So just noting that so everyone's aware of what's in there.

Karen DeBlasio: Thanks.

Kevin Turner: Quick question about increasing multiple response questions. Interestingly enough, we did increase the character limits. I think we like doubled them. So we typically allow for like 2000 characters for narrative responses.

Norm Suchar:	There were a couple of questions that I wanted to address. One is why can HUD do this NOFO every two years instead of every year? So we are required by law to run this competition every year. We did propose to Congress that we change it to an every two-year process but we would need authority from Congress if we wanted to be able to change it to an every other year process.
	But I will say we are fully on board with going to a two-year NOFO process. It's a lot of work for us too and we know that you all, that to some degree, the CoC competition takes away from the work you're doing to end homelessness every day and we try to make the whole process as streamlined and effective as possible. But we agree that doing this every other year would be helpful.
William Snow:	Hey Norm. I thought I would answer another question around why somebody's funding may go down and I'm just going to focus on that from an FMR bump standpoint so this is at the project level as opposed to the COC level. There were a few questions about why did my project coming on the GIW at one amount came in lower.
	So per the statute, we have to apply the fair market rent change to CoCs if they get rental assistance. So whatever the change is to, whether it is up or down, we have to apply that change, again, to the rental assistance line item. So it is possible that if you had an FMR change that was down and you have a project with rental assistance, that your project will be lower this year than it was last year. We also apply FMR bump to leasing and operating but we actually only apply it in an upward direction so you won't lose funding on that. You would actually only see increases if an FMR increases there.
	We used the FMR that's effective as of the date that competition closes. So we know there were some areas where that changed this year and became effective. A new FMR became effective in April. We actually, per the NOFO, are required to use that amount that is in effect at the time that the application closes so that makes things a little complicated. Again, if there is a change to FMR, but that's kind of the date we use, whatever the effective date of the FMR is at the time the application closes.
	We've had lots of questions around well, whether we disagree with our FMR, whether there are challenges there, they're on the FMR page if you go to HUD user FMR. There is a piece at the bottom of that opening page that talks about a process for trying to update that. That's not our office. We don't actually do that but there is enough interest out there that I would say you should look at that. I believe there's a space to at least understand comments that were requested earlier and I don't know if they'll open it again. But that is something that HUD, as a department, is aware of but there's a process in place that they have to use and again, some evaluation of that is going on now.
Karen DeBlasio:	I saw at least one question, and I'm looking to see if I saw more about, and this might just be helpful for everybody. Somebody was asking about the healthcare and housing partnerships questions and that they're really ... They obviously can

see what their score was and if they receive partial points, they don't really know where they should focus. And I don't know if William or Norm or Kevin, if you guys want to give any kind of insight into part ... cause those questions were new, kind of what we were looking for or anything without delving too much into the real detailed intricacies of the scoring.

Norm Suchar: William, do you want to take that one?

William Snow: So I'm trying to think if it's going to be much different than what I said earlier. Right? So when we do the scoring, we're really looking at every element we put in the NOFO. We convert those NOFO elements into question elements and the detailed instruction hopefully lays that out clear enough for you. But the intent is that the detailed instructions will [inaudible 00:51:33] that NOFO piece. And if there's say five elements, we will try to have those as identified as five elements. Right? You'll see one through five.

And then most of the time, they each get some aspect of the point. Again, I noted earlier, there are some instances where it wouldn't make sense to get any points if like the most critical parts aren't answered or answered in a way that you wouldn't get scored but most of the time they receive some points based on that. We know long narratives are not fun and that if we ask one question that has 10 elements, that's mind boggling so we have tried to reduce that. If it looks like there's going to be more than say four elements, we try to actually just provide separate questions so that you can answer that in a way that makes more sense.

That's one way. I saw some character responses in the chat as well. We've tried, actually, in some ways to address the character piece by actually just creating new questions or breaking up the question so that you can just have the character limit for ... What was one question before is now two questions and you can answer it with that but we actually love that suggestion, not a hard thing to implement and we'll kind of look at that although we also balance ... We don't want to give a million characters because sometimes more characters just means more words and less content. We do see that.

We want to make sure your jumping at the most important part of your response as well and we've seen responses that again are long but don't have a lot of the like oh, we need these elements and they don't really address the elements. So we're trying to weigh that as well but something that's not hard for us to add, add more character limits where appropriate.

Norm Suchar: Can I also ... I think, to the spirit of the question, is also about sort of what our goal is here not just how we're scoring it specifically but what's our overall goal here. I do want to really focus on the housing leveraging question and the healthcare leveraging question because these are really, really important and going to continue to be important. We recognize that there are a lot of resources out there that could address homelessness but don't always address homelessness including things like a housing voucher.

William Snow:	Norm, we may have lost you.
Karen DeBlasio:	Can you guys hear me?
William Snow:	Yes. We can hear you. So maybe we'll come back to Norm, Karen, if you have another question?
Norm Suchar:	Bridge. Those resources with their projects. So for example, your project may provide, use housing choice vouchers, Medicaid funding, and then use CoC funding for case management or something similar to that. So it's a really important point and what we're trying to do here is to utilize more of those mainstream resources in the homelessness space in a permanent and long-term way. So that's the goal of the question and I did want to just sort of underline how important that is in our process this year and going forward.
Karen DeBlasio:	I want to go back. William, I know you talked a lot earlier and during the question and answer about RRH but there's been a couple of questions and I apologize if I just didn't catch it if you touched on this.

I mean a couple of people asked and brought up the issue that there's obviously an influx of funds during the pandemic, the ESG Cares Act funds and other funds have led to an increase in RRH units. But when that money goes away, if there is a decrease in RRH units, are people going to be dinged in the NOFO? I know we can't necessarily definitively answer but I think, in general, our intent is not to ding people when there's things happening kind of beyond their control in their community. But I don't know if Norm or William, if you guys have thoughts on that. And William, like I said, I apologize if you touched on that already. I didn't catch it but you might have already touched on that. |
| William Snow: | So I didn't touch on that although some of that was somewhat intentional. Right? There's only so much we can say about the future competition. In the future, we'll have limitations there. We're well aware of that. So we've looked at the data and kind of understand, not surprisingly, there was a little bit of a dip at first for rapid rehousing. We saw that with some of the data sets that we've been able to publish in the last year or so and we expect that to be fully changed.

So in this next year, if we score as we do now, you're likely to ... Most if not all CoCs get full points, right, or get a lot of points because rapid rehousing associated with ESGTD or CRF funds or whatever funding source has increased in almost all CoCs. But, as has been noted, we are very well aware that at some point that money's going to go away and it will transition. Right? So that money, one way or the other, your rapid rehousing units are going to be going down.

I don't have an answer for how we're going to score that. Again, part of the reason is because we're evaluating the rapid rehousing question as it is but also, that's tied to a future competition and we're searching in what we're allowed to |

say in that regard. But we're aware of it and we'll take that into account when we're looking at those questions.

Karen DeBlasio: Thanks William.

William Snow: And Karen, I see we're almost at time. We probably have time for one more burning question, if there's one that you see more commonly asked.

Karen DeBlasio: I mean this is just very minor but a lot of people did ask about the slides in this webinar. People weren't able to join right at the beginning, which is understandable. We will be posting this. It just usually takes us a couple of days but this will be on, I guess, hud.gov. So yeah. You should see this probably within a week online. That's probably about all we can do at this point. There's still a ton of questions on that. We're running out of time.

Ebony: Yeah. Karen, I just want to point out there are a lot of specific questions, a lot of questions specific to folks' situations. So please, please send an email to CoCNOFO@hud.gov and we anticipate a lot of questions through that. So just give us some time to wade through those so we'll answer those as fast as we can.

Karen DeBlasio: Thank you Ebony. That's a very good point. Yes. Please submit your questions. Norm, you want to tell everybody goodbye since we're at time.

Norm Suchar: Sure. Thanks everyone. I'm sorry we couldn't get to every single question. We did get a lot of good suggestions. We will try to incorporate those into our guidance going forward but please keep the suggestions coming. And just as importantly, again, I keep saying it but we really appreciate all the incredible work you're doing to protect people experiencing homelessness from COVID and the work you're doing to end homelessness every day. It warms our hearts to see the incredible work you're doing and your endless dedication. So thank you so much. We definitely appreciate it. With that, we'll sign off. Thanks everyone.

Speaker 1:   That concludes today's conference. Thank you for using Event Services. You may now disconnect.