

FY 2020/2021 Community Compass Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program NOFA Supplemental Frequently Asked Questions

Is my organization eligible to apply?

Eligible Applicants are listed in Section III.A. on page 19. You may also want to review the Eligibility Requirements for Applicants of HUD's Grants Programs, linked on page 20.

I was able to download the application package on grants.gov but am unable to access the application instructions that includes the Applicant Summary, Interest, Capacity & Experience Workbook and Application Organization template. How do I locate the instruction package with these attachments on grants.gov?

On the announcement page on grants.gov, go to the Package tab, click on Preview, and then click Download Instructions. Then the .zip file will download to your computer.

If we select McKinney-Vento Act under the dropdown in the "List the Focus Areas/Topic Represented in Application," does that include CoC and ESG activities funded under all sources including Department TA and CARES Act TA?

To qualify for CDBG- and/or ESG-CARES Act TA, applicants must: (1) Complete and submit the Capacity & Interest form (unscored but used to inform award decisions); (2) Submit a scored narrative response to ESG and/or CDBG that meets the specialized experience for CARES Act TA detailed in the Appendix III: Program-Specific Minimum Experience Requirements Table; and (3) Complete and submit the scored Experience of Staff, Contractors and Consultants form.

Page 38 of the NOFA describes the opportunity for additional unscored responses to Factor 1.A. Program Knowledge. It does not state a limit on the number of additional responses, however. In "List the Focus Areas/Topic Represented in Application," of the Applicant Summary Excel form, there are only lines for 2 additional responses. Can the Applicant Summary Excel form be amended to allow for more than 2 additional responses?

Complete the form according to instructions and do not truncate, remove, or alter field restrictions in any way. Any other versions will not be considered, the applicant will receive a subfactor score of "0" for improper completion and/or manipulation of the PRA-approved form. Clearly label any additional unscored topics/programs in the narrative response and HUD will identify any topics beyond the two during the Review Process.

My organization applied to a previous competition for this program. Are there any debrief or scoring materials available from that application that can be shared?

The Technical Assistance Division has concluded debriefings for all previous Community Compass NOFAs.

Please see Section VI.D. Debriefing. For a period of at least 120 days, beginning 30 days after the public announcement of awards under this NOFA, HUD will provide a debriefing related to their application to requesting applicants. A request for debriefing must be made in writing or by email by the authorized official whose signature appears on the SF424 or by his or her successor in office, and be submitted to the point of contact in Section VII Agency Contact(s), below. Information provided during a debriefing may include the final score the applicant received for each rating factor, final evaluator comments for each rating factor, and the final assessment indicating the basis upon which funding was approved or denied.

Can you assist with filling out the SF424?

Please visit the following link for instructions on completing the SF424:

https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/instructions/SF424_2_1-V2.1-Instructions.pdf .

You should also review page 25 of the FY2020-2021 Community Compass TA NOFA. *Box 18.a. of the SF424 must contain your total combined FY 2020 and FY 2021 funding request, which must not exceed \$40,000,000. This total funding request amount must be the same as the total funding request amount included in your application summary. The funding request in box 18.a. will serve as the maximum level of funding we may award to you.*

How many engagements can we include for Rating Factor 2? What about subfactors 3.A and 3.B?

For Rating Factor 2, you must describe four engagements completed within the last five years of the publication date of this NOFA. Each engagement must align with the four scored programs or cross-cutting topics you described in subfactors 1.A. and 1.B.

To be clear, the four programs selected for subfactor 1.A. must be the same four programs selected for subfactor 1.B.; the four past engagements described in Rating Factor 2 must align with the four scored programs described in subfactors 1.A. and 1.B.; and the four Rating Factor 3 responses must align with the four scored programs described in subfactors 1.A. and 1.B and may, but are not required to align with the four past engagements described in Rating Factor 2.

You have options when choosing how to respond to Rating Factor 3: (1) you can tell us a full story from top to bottom building upon the engagements you covered in the previous rating factor; (2) you can use this opportunity to unveil 4 additional engagements, solely focusing on the criteria in Rating Factor 3; or (3) you can choose a combination of options 1 and 2 for your four scored topics in Rating Factor 3. It is

up to you; one option is not better than the other. The only requirement is that the responses align with the programs or cross-cutting topics selected for subfactors 1.A. and 1.B.

In short, you are describing four separate engagements centered around four topics/programs for subfactor 1.A, 1.B and rating Factors 2 and 3. We also recommend referencing 2020-2021 Community Compass Application Organization Template to assist you with organizing your application. Please also review the Hypothetical Scoring Example on page 48 of the NOFA to better understand how the application will be assessed.

If submitting a response to “Disaster, emergency, or infectious disease response for HUD customers” as an optional, unscored response to subfactors 1.A. and 1.B., does this narrative count toward the 50 page limit?

The optional, unscored response to subfactors 1.A. and 1.B. does count toward the 50 page limit. See the overview of Subfactors 1.A. and 1.B. and Rating Factors 2 and 3, starting on page 36 of the NOFA.

Does HUD currently fund any TA providers in [X area]? Does HUD have its TA providers focus on specific geographic locations? Primarily I would like clarification on if HUD’s TA providers assist only those in the region where they are located, or if they are just sent wherever and whenever needed by HUD as deemed necessary in the “demand-response system”.

If you receive an award, you must operate within the structure of the "demand-response system" when applicable (see the definition below or NOFA section I.A.4. "Program Definitions" for a definition of "demand-response system"). Under the demand-response system, applicants will be tasked to deliver TA in geographic areas outside of where their organization may be based. When considering your capacity to deliver TA under the Community Compass program, you should also consider your organization’s capacity to travel to various locations to address the TA needs of HUD’s customers (e.g. Public Housing Authorities, Continuums of Care, etc.).

Demand-Response System: The means by which HUD, its customers, and/or its partners identify TA and capacity building needs. HUD prioritizes the identified needs based on Departmental, programmatic, and jurisdictional priorities. Successful applicants are then tasked with responding to identified needs. Successful applicants may not respond to direct requests for TA from HUD customers. HUD is solely responsible for authorizing the entities to be assisted, the location, and the nature of the assistance to be provided, including a specific scope of work, which must be part of a HUD-approved work plan for each engagement. **See page 14 of the FY2020/2021 Community Compass NOFA.**

The instructions state, “You must describe four engagements completed within the last five years of the publication date of this NOFA.” Is ongoing work that started in the last 5 years excluded (assuming all tasks have yet to be completed)? Does a HUD work plan need to be closed to fit the description of “completed”?

The NOFA is asking for you to give examples of TA engagements that were completed in the last five years, with the understanding that TA is often multi-phased with very distinct tasks. Given that, the completion of one or more TA delivery tasks included in a multi-task work plan may qualify. Work plans do not have to be formally closed in DRGR for the engagement to be considered complete.

The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MKV) is identified as a program area in Appendix I and Appendix III of the NOFA and on the Applicant Summary Form in the “List the TA Focus Area...” section as a drop-down (i.e., CPD-SN: MKV). We assume that by selecting MKV as one of our four programs that we can speak to our experience and expertise with all programs and regulations that fall under MKV, including CoC and ESG (even though each of these programs are also listed separately). Is this accurate?

Yes, you can MKV as the overarching program/topic and discuss CoC and ESG work. Please see the definition for MKV TA on page 13 of the FY2020-2021 Community Compass NOFA.

On Experience Form on column AF, was it your intention to list the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act as a program associated with HOPWA-related work?

No. This is an error in the TA Focus Areas Table and subsequent form. HOPWA is not covered under McKinney Vento, so it should not appear under the HOPWA program column as an option for TA Focus Areas.

On page 34, number 3, can you clarify the compensation restrictions with regards to the \$170,800 per year? Will Community Compass only pay up to this amount per year for any individual that makes more than this? Is this based on a calendar year?

This is an annual compensation restriction for base salary only, not including benefits. This is an effort to disclose and codify policies early in the NOFA process, but this is not a new requirement—former HUD appropriations language and HUD General Sections previously included this same restriction and it has been part of past Community Compass practices and procedures. The Technical Assistance Division will continue to determine reasonableness of hourly rates through its Wage Rate Review process. The annual restriction does not determine the hourly rate that the Technical Assistance Division (TAD) will approve for an individual, but the annual salary restriction inherently limits the number of reimbursable hours allowed annually for an individual under the Community Compass Program. TAD may approve hourly rates in excess of the calculated hourly rate for a salary of \$170,800/year; however, it will not pay more than \$170,800 annually to an individual under the Community Compass Program.

This restriction is based on a calendar year.

For the Program Area, *Future of Public Housing--Repositioning efforts to move to a stable PH platform*, can you clarify what you are looking for under this area? As RAD is generally an option to be assessed under a PH repositioning analysis would it be appropriate to address our RAD experience and engagements under this program rather than a separate submission?

Repositioning focuses on HUD's priority goal to ensure decent, safe and affordable housing including moving public housing units to a more stable funding platform, removing obsolete properties or those beyond their useful life, rebuilding affordable units, or transitioning affordable units to an entity with the capacity to administer the programs. To assist with these efforts will require capacity, knowledge and experience in finance options; lender or investment experience with tax credits; sale, acquisition, new construction and rehab; working with affordable housing providers, section 8 requirements; and repositioning programs like RAD, PBRA and PBV.

If you are interested in demonstrating experience under the program area you indicated, you may address repositioning options including RAD. If you want that same experience considered for other program topics, however, you should consider your framing and not limit it to the PIH program topic title.

The NOFA states, "You must describe four engagements completed within the last five years of the publication date of this NOFA." Is ongoing work that started in the last 5 years excluded (assuming all tasks have yet to be completed)? Does a HUD work plan need to be closed to fit the description of "completed"?

The NOFA is asking for you to give examples of TA engagements that were completed in the last five years, with the understanding that TA is often multi-phased with very distinct tasks. Given that, the completion of one or more TA delivery tasks included in a multi-task work plan may qualify. Work plans do not have to be formally closed in DRGR for the engagement to be considered complete.

The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MKV) is identified as a program area in Appendix I and Appendix III of the NOFA and on the Applicant Summary Form in the "List the TA Focus Area..." section as a drop-down (i.e., CPD-SN: McKinney-Vento Act). We assume that by selecting MKV as one of our four programs that we can speak to our experience and expertise with all programs and regulations that fall under MKV, including CoC and ESG (even though each of these programs are also listed separately). Is this accurate?

Yes, you can choose McKinney Vento as the overarching program/topic and discuss CoC and ESG work. Please see the definition for MKV TA on page 13 of the FY2020-2021 Community Compass NOFA.

On Experience Form on column AF, was it your intention to list the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act as a program associated with HOPWA-related work?

This is an error in the TA Focus Areas Table and subsequent form. HOPWA is not covered under MKV, so it should not appear under the HOPWA program column as an option for TA Focus Areas.

If CDBG is not one of our four scored narrative responses, but our unscored narrative response details our specialized experience for CARES Act TA as required in Appendix III, may we be considered for CDBG-CARES Act TA funding?

No. If applying for CDBG-CARES Act TA funding, applicants must submit a scored narrative response to ESG and/or CDBG that meets the specialized experience for CARES Act TA detailed in Appendix III.

Is it possible to receive funding for program/cross-cutting topic that is listed in Appendix III that has Subfactor 1.B. requirements that we haven't included in our scored or unscored narrative?

Per page 39 of the FY2020/2021 Community Compass NOFA, "Program-Specific Minimum Experience Requirements: When responding to subfactors 1.B and 1.C., you must consider the program-specific experience requirements in Appendix III. You will not be eligible to receive funding to provide TA in a program if you do not meet the relevant requirements." This applies to the narrative responses you select for 1.B. You are not required to provide additional narrative for topics not selected as one of your four scored (optional unscored) narrative responses to document that you meet the requirements for 1.B. In Appendix III, you will find complementary program-specific requirements for 1.C., these will also be used to verify minimum experience for all programs/topics.

In Appendix III, Public Housing is listed as a program, and yet in Appendix I, there is no stand-alone public housing program. And, the requirement for Appendix III for Public Housing Factor 1b does not identify the exact program(s) as defined in Appendix I, but rather provides a list of items that are inclusive in more than one of programs as defined in Appendix I. Can you please clarify what program, or programs, one writes to for App III, Factor 1b "Public Housing" requirements?

The Public Housing category covers the following programs/topics in the TA Focus Areas Table (Appendix I) under Public and Indian Housing:

- Public Housing Capital Fund
- Public Housing Operating Fund
- Rental Assistance Demonstration(RAD)
- Resident Opportunities and Self Sufficiency (ROSS)
- Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration

- Choice Neighborhoods
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Project-Based Vouchers
- ConnectHome
- Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS)
- Jobs Plus

If you select one of the programs/topics listed, you must make sure your narrative response demonstrates experience with the program-specific requirement.

Page 8 of the NOFA states that “applicants will submit up to four scored narrative responses...” and page 9 states that “responses to subfactors 1.A. and 1.B are limited to four scored responses...” Are applicants required to submit four narrative responses? If not, would an applicant automatically score lower by submitting two responses rather than four?

The first “up to” in the last paragraph on page 8 of the NOFA is an error. The “up to” is true for the number of programs/topics, but not for the scored responses.

Because program knowledge and experience are gained in a multitude of ways, HUD requests that applicants submit four scored narrative responses, even if those responses are for the same program/topic. If you submit fewer than four scored responses, the score will be lower. In the NOFA, please refer to the **Review Criteria** section beginning on page 36 and the **Review and Selection Process** section beginning on page 46, especially the **Hypothetical Scoring Example** on page 48.