



North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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2018 Emergency Solutions Grant Tips Document

Overview

In the North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care (NC BoS CoC), each Regional Committee oversees the process for soliciting, reviewing, and selecting project applications for the annual Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) competition. The Regional Committee's elected Funding Process Lead plays a crucial role by running an effective funding process, serving as the primary contact to NC BoS CoC staff, organizing the annual ESG competition, and facilitating the formation of a funding committee to manage and provide recommendations to the Regional Committee. To meet the state ESG office and NC BoS CoC's priorities and goals, the Regional Committee process should be competitive, transparent, avoid conflicts of interest, promote funding to the highest quality projects, and reflect local community need.

In this year's ESG competition, the NC BoS CoC staff will provide additional support and oversight to ensure that Regional Committees prepare and submit better applications, maximizing local community chances of increasing the amount of ESG funding. This document serves as one way to assist local leaders as they begin designing their processes, setting local funding priorities, and choosing which projects to include in their final application to the state ESG office. These tips are meant to keep local Regional Committees on track with specific benchmarks to meet submission deadlines and helpful hints to put together an effective application.

Benchmarks

Regional Funding Process Leads and Committees should pay special attention to the following suggested benchmarks and their respective deadlines. These dates are meant to help Regional Committees stay on track with all required activities and ensure a fair and effective process. Staff will ask for updates from Regional Funding Process Leads on the scheduled status calls, set to begin on June 27, corresponding with the dates below (see the NCCEH website for dates and times of these calls).

Benchmark	Recommended Date
Develop a Funding Process Committee	June 27*
Designate an ESG Lead Agency	July 13*

Create a timeline for activities	July 13*
Determine who will write the regional application	July 13*
ESG Funding Priorities worksheet due to NCCEH	August 1
Determine how applications will be scored	August 1
Develop a plan to outreach and engage potential applicants and advertise the availability of ESG funds	August 3*
Set grantee expectations (what the grantee will need to do once awarded funds to inform the RC about project status – written report, monthly presentation at the RC meeting, spending status, etc.)	August 3*
Regional applications should be in process	August 17*
Project application review and selection process is defined	August 24*
Initial draft of regional application is complete	August 31*
Project applications are due to Funding Process Committee for review	September 7*
Funding Process Committee has begun review of project applications	September 14*
Regional Committees have approved project applicant recommendations from Funding Process Committee	September 21*
Regional application draft is complete with project applicant budgets included	September 21*
Begin review and editing of the full application package, gathering necessary attachments	September 21*
Full application package due to NCCEH staff by 5 PM	September 28*
Staff calls with Funding Process Leads with feedback and recommendations	October 1-12



Funding Process Committee finalizes application package	October 1-12
Full application due to the ESG office	October 26

*Status call dates

Tips

Every Regional Committee wants to put together an excellent application package to submit to the state ESG office. The following tips should help Funding Process Leads and Committees ensure that they write an effective application and submit the items needed for the ESG office to award the maximum amount of funding to programs in the community.

Regional Funding Process Tips

- Start the process early. Create a Funding Process Committee and set a timeline of activities, including how and when the full Regional Committee will review and approve funding decisions.
- Ensure that the Funding Process Committee includes people willing to make difficult decisions with extensive knowledge of the region and best practices. Volunteers on the committee should not have a conflict of interest, meaning they are not applying for ESG funds in the 2018 competition.
- Choose someone with grant writing experience and knowledge of the region to write the regional application. This should also put together the entire draft application, including regional application, project applications, budgets, and attachments for final review.
- Develop the Regional Committee's ESG Funding Priorities, using the ESG Funding Priorities Worksheet and commit to using these when choosing project applicants. Get buy-in from the full Regional Committee.
- Advertise the availability of ESG funds widely and educate potential agencies about the process, timelines, and priorities. Have one-on-one conversations with agencies that might be on the fence about applying or that need extra support.
- Set expectations for potential grantees. Tell them what they will need to do to inform the Regional Committee about ongoing status, including reporting outcomes, spending, challenges, etc.
- Understand the "LPA's Fair Share" and the limits per activity type. Use these limits as guidelines but choose applicants and funding amounts based on the needs and priorities in the community.
- Do one last check of the entire application package before submitting to the ESG office to ensure that all applications, budgets, and attachments are included. Submit the application on time.
- Ask NC BoS CoC staff questions when necessary. Don't assume you know the answer. Email bos@ncceh.org with questions.



Regional Application Tips

- Read the instructions fully.
- Answer the question being asked, and when applicable, use the answer to draw the conclusion how ESG funding will assist the Regional Committee to end homelessness.
- Designate a Local Planning Area Lead Agency that is willing to be the conduit of information to the Regional Committee. The state ESG office will communicate all pertinent information for the Regional Committee and its grantees to the LPA Lead Agency representative.
- If the Regional Committee is not using a Fiscal Sponsor, do not fill out this section. Select 'no' and write NA in the boxes for the other questions. If the Regional Committee is using a Fiscal Sponsor, ensure that the agency is in good standing with the ESG office and has the financial capacity to serve in this role.
- Fill out tables regarding coverage completely and accurately. Coverage is very important, so when full coverage is not currently available, reflect the Regional Committee's specific plans and dates of when full coverage will be available.
- For the Coordinated Entry section, read the questions carefully. Some questions apply to the full NC BoS CoC and some to the local coordinated assessment system. When unsure, please reach out to staff to assist.
- The Written Standards section applies to the NC BoS CoC written standards. Attach the written standards posted on the NCEH website.
- In the Application and Selection Process section, ensure that the answers clearly identify which agencies applied for ESG funds and which agencies were approved. When possible, show the transparency of the process, the prioritization of best practice projects, and the details of the decision-making process.
- Sign and date the application (by the LPA Lead Agency representative identified at the beginning of the application).
- Complete the regional budget to include information from the approved project applicants. Ensure that the budget matches the overall total and totals from the individual activity types from the project applications. Ensure that the total in the application is no more than the total "LPA Fair Share" and that the budget meets the maximums and minimums set by the state ESG office.
- The Regional Funding Committee should review and provide edits to the regional application, ensuring that all questions are answered, answers match the questions asked, all attachments are included, and project applications included in the final application are consistent and match the answers in the regional application.



Project Application Tips

- Sign and date the application.
- Answer the question being asked, and when applicable, use the answer to draw the conclusion how ESG funding will assist the Regional Committee to end homelessness.
- When designating the area served, choose the counties that ESG funding will serve. Do not include counties unless the project has a plan in place to adequately serve all residents of those counties. For shelters, this means the project has the ability (or partners who can) to transport individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the shelter. For rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention programs, this means that the project can house people in those counties and provide both housing location and supportive services to households.
- Funding Process Committees should confirm spending amounts in project applications. If the applicant agency falls into Tier 3 for 2018 (per the state ESG office), committees should review 2017 ESG spending. If the project had Tier 3 spending in 2017 and continue to be a Tier 3 agency in 2018, the project should not be funded. Ask any current Tier 3 agency to provide a detailed explanation of underspending and make decisions (no funding, reduced funding) based on the agency's ability to spend all ESG funding in the operating year.
- Ensure that the experience of the agency corresponds to the funding for which the agency is applying.
- Do not answer 'yes' to adherence to the NC BoS CoC's written standards for the applicable activity if the project does not meet all standards. Funding Process Committees should ask agencies not meeting the requirements of the CoC's written standards to provide an explanation and plan, including where the program does not meet the standards and a timeline of adherence, to help decide whether to include the project in the final application.
- Fill out all corresponding activity sections (street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention, HMIS) for which the agency is applying. Ensure that policies and procedures for the project are up-to-date and match the answers per corresponding activity type.
- Check required HMIS reports for data quality and correct any data errors before entering HMIS data into the activity performance areas of the application. Reach out to the NCCEH Data Center, hmis@ncceh.org, for assistance early.
- Ensure that the budget includes funding information for all activity types included in the project application, and budget information seems reasonable for the number of people the project expects to serve.
- Review and edit the project application. Have someone else in your agency read the application for clarity, accuracy, and inclusion of all elements required. Ensure that the project application and budget is consistent with Regional Committee and NC BoS CoC requirements and priorities.

