

Background for Proposed 2011 Ranking Policies

Developed by Chicago Alliance Staff

Ranking Policies History

In order to receive McKinney-Vento HUD funding, every applicant must work through a local Continuum of Care (CoC). Established by HUD in the early 1990s, the CoC serves as a planning body for equitable distribution of funding across a specified area. In Chicago, the CoC is led by the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness (Planning Council), a group that is charged with setting priorities and need for the community. **The Planning Council annually appoints the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness as the CoC Lead Agency, to carry out the activities of the CoC application to HUD for Homeless Assistance Funds, which includes conducting an independent evaluation of each HUD Supportive Housing Program (SHP) renewal application for funding through the Evaluation Instrument Process. The Planning Council then uses the Evaluation Instrument scores to rank order applications based on the priorities and needs of the community.**

Prior to 2008, HUD required the CoC to submit the rank-ordered priority list to HUD for funding consideration. Now, CoCs are *not* required to rank renewal projects during the NOFA competition; instead, CoCs are only required to confirm or reject each renewal project application. Therefore, **the Ranking Policies Task Group (RPTG) developed policies this year that will be used to determine whether to confirm or reject each renewal project. Further ranking (ordered 1, 2, 3, etc) of renewal projects will be for local purposes only; ranking allows projects to see how they scored in comparison to their peers, and hopefully encourages agencies to continually seek to improve their project operations, service delivery, and outcomes.**

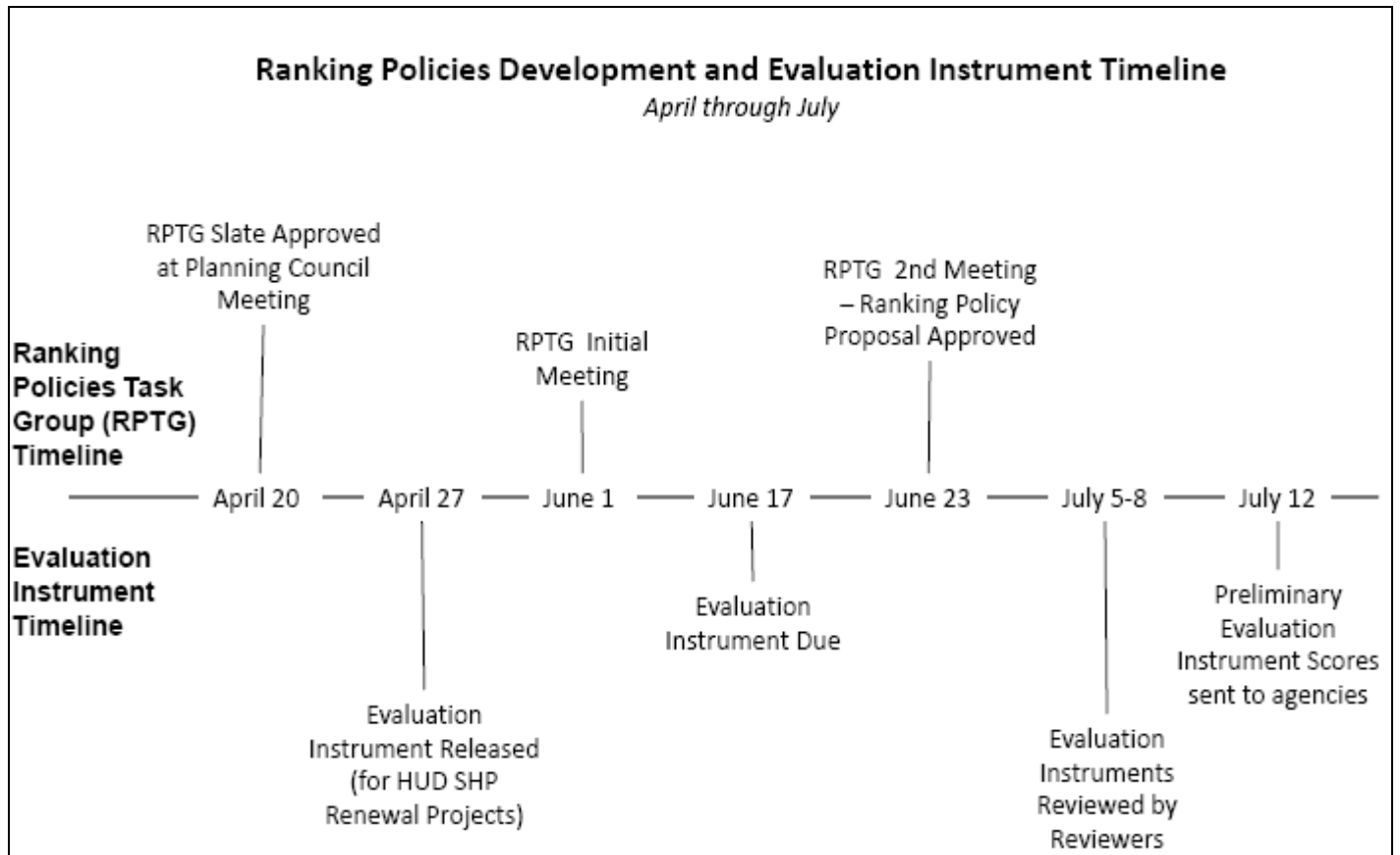
2011 Ranking Policies Task Group Makeup

The Ranking Policies Task Group was appointed by the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness at the April 20, 2011 meeting. As in previous years, this panel is made up of ten (10) members of the Chicago Planning Council on Homelessness: five (5) Executive Committee members* and five (5) other members. **The panel is responsible for developing Chicago CoC's ranking policies for the local HUD NOFA process, to be submitted to the Planning Council for final approval.** The task group slate is listed below.

Representative	Affiliation/Representation
John Egan	Illinois Department of Children and Family
Fred Friedman	Consumers Commission, Next Steps NFP
Mary Howard	Chicago Housing Authority
Maura McCauley	SPC, Heartland Human Care Services
Angie Miller	SPC, AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Susan Reyna-Guerrero*	SPC, Beacon Therapeutic and Diagnostic
Debbie Reznick*	Polk Bros. Foundation
Britt Shawver*	SPC, Housing Opportunities for Women
Dorothy Yancy*	Consumers Commission
Jennifer Welch*/John Pfeiffer	Department of Family and Support Services

2011 Ranking Policies Process

The Ranking Policies Task Group (RPTG) developed the proposed ranking policies based on 2008-2010 Evaluation Instrument data, Chicago's Exhibit 1 scores from previous years, and policies and notices published by HUD. The RPTG did not have access to 2011 Evaluation Instrument scores, and were not given score information based on program type or specific agency/project name. Therefore, **the proposed ranking policies were made as a policy decision not intended to directly impact any particular program type or project.** The diagram below demonstrates the timelines for developing the ranking policies along with the Evaluation Instrument process.



Additionally, the Task Group reviewed Chicago's past ranking policies*, and attempted to build upon policies approved in previous years, which include the following underlying principles:

- **Under-performing projects can best be identified by examining scores from more than one year. This gives agencies time to improve their performance without being immediately at-risk of losing funding due to one poor application year.**
- Low-scoring projects should receive technical assistance to improve their project operations and services. This ensures agencies receive assistance in improving performance for future years, which in turn leads to better programming for consumers, and has the potential to improve Chicago's continuum of care national score as a whole.

*For a copy of any previous year's ranking policies, please contact Nicole Bahena at the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness: nbahena@thechicagoalliance.org or (312) 223-9870 x 17.

While policies in the previous two years set the score at which projects would be considered very low scoring projects at a fixed number of 50 (which was determined by consulting previous year data and standard deviation calculations), **the 2011 RPTG felt that using standard deviation to determine the very low performing score in 2011 will more accurately identify the most poorly scoring projects in any given year, providing them the opportunity to receive technical assistance.** This is because by using standard deviation, there will *always* be a small number of projects that fall below two standard deviations (please refer to the supplemental document entitled, “What is Standard Deviation,” for detailed information about standard deviation and how it is calculated). In other words, **using such a calculation to identify very low scoring agencies standardizes the process so that it could continue to be used despite an overall increase or decrease in Evaluation Instrument scores.**

Ensuring that very low performing projects are identified every year enforces the principle above that low-scoring projects should receive technical assistance to improve their programming, service delivery and outcomes. Better programming and outcomes at the agency level are even more important in light of the HEARTH act, and remain a critical piece to ending homelessness in Chicago; they positively impact Chicago’s CoC score in the national competition, which helps bring an additional \$4.4 million to Chicago for permanent supportive housing.

Ranking Policies Beyond 2011

While the proposed policies only apply to the 2011 Evaluation Instrument Process and the 2011 HUD NOFA Submission, the group also recommends that in the future, scores should be reviewed for more than one year to identify consistently low-scoring projects that have received technical assistance but continue to be low-scoring projects. This recommendation seeks to endorse the continuation of the two underlying principles mentioned above. The RPTG also recommended that the Planning Council review these policies and principles in 2011 during its strategic planning process.