

**Appeals Committee Report
April 8, 2015**

The 2015 Appeals Committee consisted of the following members: Randall Doubet King (Chair), Tami Cole, Becki Martello, Tahtia Smalling, and Mindy Taylor.

The Appeals Committee served as the final decision-making entity for all 2015 Evaluation Instrument appeals submitted by agencies in response to preliminary Evaluation Instrument scores. The Appeals Committee met March 23 and March 25, 2015 to complete the review of the appeals and threshold waiver requests. Similar to last year, appeals were not collected or reviewed for non-scored questions in the Evaluation Instrument. Agencies are able to provide feedback to non-scored questions in an Evaluation Instrument survey that was distributed at the beginning of April.

The Committee reviewed a total of 135 individual appeals, as represented in the 2014/2015 comparison table below:

Number of Appeals Reviewed		
	2015	2014
Total Submitted Agency Appeals	18	32
Agency Threshold	0	11
Total Submitted Project Appeals	117	223
Project Threshold	26	39
Total Appeals	135	255

The table shown below represents the approved and denied appeals for 2015:

	Agency - Threshold	Agency- Scored Questions	Project - Threshold	Project- Scored Questions
Approved Appeals/Waiver	0	0	26	22
Unapproved Appeals/Waiver	0	18	0	69
Total	0	18	26	91

There were 120 (47%) less appeals submitted in 2015 compared to 2014. This is likely due to participants' familiarity with SurveyGizmo and submitting the Evaluation Instrument online. Since there were no major changes in the Evaluation Instrument from last year, many users felt comfortable with the format of questions and requested attachments. Additionally, appeals decreased due to agencies having a better understanding of percentiles and the re-introduction of the Technical Deficiencies Policy, which was removed during the previous year. Per the Appeal Committee's recommendation in 2014, the Chicago Alliance further developed detailed online submission directions for all Evaluation Instrument trainings that stressed the importance of checking all final submissions for accuracy.

New Appeals Process

In 2015, the appeals process had a new structure in SurveyGizmo. Last year, an agency was required to upload their appeal(s) on official letterhead that explained their position on a given question. Many agencies combined multiple questions in their appeals and provided pages worth of accompanying narrative. This proved difficult to sort in preparation for the Appeals Committee, and took approximately ten hours for the group to review and comment. In an effort to streamline this practice, the appeals process did not allow any uploads of documents; instead, agencies were asked to indicate each scored question being appealed, then submit a 3,000 character maximum typed response for each in separate text boxes.

Alliance staff was able to export all appeals and responses into a clean spreadsheet to provide to the Appeals Committee for tracking approvals and denials. Not only did this help improve organization and productivity, but it took the Appeals Committee half the time (five hours) to complete this task.

Technical Deficiency Notice

The HUD McKinney-Vento Committee voted to reintroduce the Technical Deficiency Notice, which was outlined in the 2015 Evaluation Instrument Instruction Manual:

Projects that had missing or incomplete answers or attachments on Threshold Questions were issued a Technical Deficiencies Notice by Alliance staff and given three business days to acknowledge receipt of the Notice and begin working on a response. The Alliance and agency then established a reasonable response time for the agency to complete the question or submit the attachment.

Projects that had missing attachments on Non-Threshold Questions were issued a Technical Deficiencies Notice by Alliance staff and given three business days to acknowledge receipt of the Notice and begin working on a response. The Alliance and agency established a reasonable response time for the agency to complete the question or submit the attachment. While the agency was able to resubmit the attachment, the project lost a half (.5) point per attachment not included with the original submission.

Failure to submit the correct attachment in response to Threshold and Non-Threshold Questions issued Technical Deficiencies Notices resulted in a loss of all points for any associated question. If the agency submits an Evaluation with missing or incomplete attachments for two or more consecutive years, even if the agency responds to a Technical Deficiencies Notice, their funding may be reallocated by the Chicago CoC Board of Directors.

Recommendations of Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee worked under similar parameters as practiced in previous years. No new documentation or attachments (example: revised APR reports) were permitted. The appeals process was an opportunity to make a challenge if submitted information or data was denied points during the initial scoring process. Decisions by the Appeals Committee could only add points to scores rather than reduce; if the appeals process changed any of the percentiles used on the initial scorecards, points would not be taken away from agencies to reflect the new percentile ranges.

In the spirit of forwarding CoC Charter implementation, the Appeals Committee incorporated these directives and previous practices to inform decision making. Alliance staff reviewed all appeals to address any internal scoring or calculation errors. If the appeal was an error, staff commented that this was uncontested in the appeals spreadsheet. If Alliance staff indicated that an appeal was accepted, the Appeals Committee did not review that response and points were awarded.

The Appeals Committee recommends that the future committee follows outlined rules and language outlined in the CoC Charter. The Governance and Structure Committee may help guide questions to ensure this compliance. It is also recommended that the HUD McKinney-Vento Committee provide guidance surrounding the appeals process for the collaborative applicant's initial review to assist with scoring. Additionally, the CoC Board of Directors should create guidance for the future Appeals Committee to follow when reviewing agency and project appeals. This added direction would help maintain continuity, consistency, and objectivity for the process.