CORES 2.0

What's changing in the CORES certification in 2027

What is CORES 2.0?

Since the CORES program launched in 2018, the resident services field has grown and evolved significantly, responding to pressures and new business models born out of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising operating costs, and heightened resident needs. CORES staff have spent the last year and a half engaging practitioners and industry partners to inform and vet the changes in CORES 2.0, which launches in January 2027.

CORES 2.0 is not a complete overhaul of the program. CORES 2.0 includes updated application questions to better recognize evolving staffing models, systems, tools and enhancements adopted by the resident services field. This includes some changes to CORES requirements and application questions, which are further outlined below.

Also Coming Soon – CORES Property Registration Tool

An optional, CORES-aligned property registration tool to highlight property-level resident services commitments with partners, investors, and funders will be launched in early 2027.

More details to come.

New or Refined CORES Requirements

Commitment to track resident experience and/or satisfaction. Understanding resident experience helps place resident voices at the center to further shape resident services, and is consistent with broader shifts in the field.

Commitment to track resident outcomes, in addition to outputs. Outcomes show the impact of resident services and inform needed changes to services. Organizations must track 2+ resident outcomes measures in 2+ impact areas, or demonstrate a robust set of outcomes measures if only measuring in one impact area.

Privacy protocols for access to and storage of resident information. Organizations handling resident data should have basic protocols in place to protect it. CORES has always asked applicants if they have protocols in place but now requires it for certification.

A desired resident services staffing model that considers factors beyond budget. Certified organizations must articulate a desired staffing model that considers other factors such as resident population, priorities, and community resources, in addition to funding.

A refined definition of "onsite" services and a minimum staffing standard. CORES has always required onsite service coordination, but had not previously defined a minimum requirement. CORES 2.0 articulates several tiers of resident services staffing commitments and defines onsite as a minimum of 20 min / unit / month. As organizations demonstrating robust commitments, certified organizations must go further to provide 48 min / unit / month of staff support in at least 2 properties. **An easy-to-use staffing auto-calculator will accompany the portfolio profile to calculate this for your portfolio.*

Reduced CORES Requirements

Two years of experience, down from three. Organizations must have two years of resident services experience. For the Direct/Hybrid models, organizations must also have two years of multifamily affordable rental housing experience, opening doors for organizations that have built resident services systems more recently.

Outcomes tracking at least once every two years, instead of annually. This adjustment reduces the burden on residents and staff and aligns to shifting practices elsewhere in the field.

Community data no longer required in Community Scan. While strongly encouraged, many organizations do not look at broader community data regularly to inform services, so we have made this adjustment. Community Scans must still assess local community resources.

No example partnership agreements. While partnerships and tools to support them are critical, organizations no longer need to provide an executed MOU/service agreement with an external provider to demonstrate program partnerships. Organizations are asked about elements included in service agreements and best practices when vetting potential partners.

Additional Updates to Questions & Scoring

These changes may affect scoring but are not themselves eligibility requirements.

Staffing models. New questions on staffing ratios, virtual/remote layering, and permanent supportive housing staffing have been added to reflect their increased presence and shifting staffing practices.

Theory of change and logic models. Additional guidance on the elements an organization should include in their resident services framework have been provided in the application.

Resident Opportunities & Priorities Assessment. This assessment must include aggregated resident demographics and resident feedback to provide a holistic picture of the resident population and priorities that help to inform services and programs.

Streamlined questions and updated application portal. Updated questions improve the applicant experience while addressing CORES competencies. An updated portal allows for further collaboration on applications.

Funding and sustainability. Updated questions on funding sources and fundraising give a better picture of service commitments, as organizations face continued budget constraints for resident services.

Summary of CORES Threshold Requirements:
Current vs. CORES 2.0

Current Requirement		CORES 2.0 Updated Requirement
For Direct or Hybrid models: 3+ years of experience as a multifamily housing provider	⊖	**2+ years** of experience as a multifamily housing provider
3+ years of experience with resident services coordination	⊖	**2+ years** of experience with resident services coordination
Onsite resident services coordination at more than one property	⚑	New Definition: At least **48 minutes/unit/month** of onsite resident services staff support at **2 or more properties**
Uses property-level tools: Community Scan (every 6 years), Resident Opportunities & Priorities Assessment (every 3 years), Property Services Plan (every 3 years), and Resident Indicators & Analysis Report (annually)	⊖	Same tools and cycles, except the Resident Indicators & Analysis Report should be updated at least **every two years instead of annually**
At recertification, must track property-level resident outcomes to understand impact	⊕	At **initial** certification, **track 2+ resident outcomes measures** at property-level across multiple impact areas (or several robust outcomes measures if only one impact area)
At recertification, must use MOUs/service agreements with external service providers for program partnerships	⊖	**No longer required to use MOUs/service agreements** with external service providers for program partnerships
Scored Question, but not a requirement	⊕	Has a desired staffing model that includes **factors other than or in addition to available funding / budget**
Scored Question, but not a requirement	⊕	Uses **privacy protocols** for storage of and access to resident information
Often included in property level tools, but not a requirement	⊕	Tracks and measures **resident experience and/or satisfaction**
Must fit one or more resident services models: Hybrid, Direct, and/or Third Party	⇆	*Same as before*
For Third Party models: service agreement must be in place with owner-partners	⇆	*Same as before*
Corporate/organizational-level support for resident services and frontline resident services coordination staff functions	⇆	*Same as before*
Strategies for addressing low participation in resident services	⇆	*Same as before*

Chart Key:
⊖ Reduced requirement ⚑ Refined requirement ⊕ Added requirement ⇆ No changes to requirement