SCHENECTADY HOMELESS SERVICES PLANNING BOARD:

2026 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Rationale

HUD's CoC (CoC) homeless assistance programs serve as a source of funding for homeless services in the County and City of Schenectady. HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition.

In order for the CoC to prioritize programs which most effectively serve the community at the local level, the community has implemented a Rank and Review Process for renewal and new projects. This process helps the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.

The Schenectady Homeless Services Planning Board (HSPB) has charged the CoC Committee with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the HSPB Bylaws, the CoC Committee has the responsibility to prepare and carry out plans related to the design, operation, and implementation of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities. Each year the Rank and Review Written Process, Application and a Review Team are established by the CoC Committee, submitted to the Membership for public comment and then Board for approval.

CoC Transparency

The CoC conducts this Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure fairness. Each year, the process is publicly announced by the CoC Committee, shared in writing with the Board and Membership, and posted on the CARES website for the community to access, review and comment.

Rank and Review Application

The HSPB emphasizes the importance and impact of using the Rank & Review Application as the primary basis for determining the Project Listing submitted as part of the CoC Consolidated Application. The Rank and Review Application is thoughtfully revised each year to include both HUD and CoC standards, incorporating both national and local priorities, balancing objective performance measures with subjective narrative description of project operations.

Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Renewal Application

After the annual CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the CoC Committee reviews that prior year's Rank & Review Application, Written Process, and

feedback from reviewers and full Membership. With this feedback, the Committee proposes revisions to the Rank and Review Application and Written Process. In addition, the committee develops a list of Review Team members, considering the previous reviewers and potential new members. The CoC Committee presents the Written Process, Application Tools, and list of proposed Review Team members to the HSPB Board and Membership for one-week public comment periods. Any comments received from Membership are then considered by the committee. The Rank & Review Application and review team are then finalized by the Board and shared with Membership for projects to complete.

Project Participation

Renewal Projects are required to complete a Rank & Review Renewal Application. An application must include responses to all questions as well as required data and/or attachments from the most recent project application and FY25 APR in order to be considered complete. All completed applications will be shared with and reviewed by the Review Team. Late submissions, including incomplete submissions, will receive a 5-point penalty.

* Please Note: Coordinated Entry, Planning, and HMIS projects are not required to fill out a renewal application.

*Renewal projects should have one federal fiscal years' worth of data (10/1-9/30) so should be in operation for one full federal fiscal year.

The 2026 Renewal Rank & Review Application process will occur in 2 parts. Parts 1 & 2 are distributed at the same time as one tool.

- **Part 1** focuses on project and system outcomes, using project data entered in HMIS and objective questions to "rate" projects. The HMIS data used in Part 1 is from the previous HUD Fiscal Year (Oct 1 - Sep 30). This HMIS data used in Part 1 has been cleaned and reviewed for data quality errors when submitted to HUD for the Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) report. The tool will indicate where agencies can find data for relevant questions. Agencies will also receive a data attachment to assist in completing their application. Data on this attachment will be based on APRs submitted by agencies earlier in the year.
  If errors are identified on the Data Attachment, the agency must contact CARES by the deadline noted when the data attachment is released. If the request is a calculation error, CARES staff will correct the error and resubmit the Data Attachments for the agency's review.
- **Part 2** focuses on qualitative project and system outcome data, which allows the project to explain unique circumstances that may affect project performance. Part 2 includes narrative questions to further evaluate the efficacy of each renewal project. Questions are derived from the CoC committee based on HUD priorities. Questions in part 2 are scored by the external review team. Scores will be determined by averaging the scores provided by all of the reviewers.

- **An optional Part 3 form** may be released following the release of the annual NOFO for the CoC to demonstrate the incorporation of HUD priorities into our annual Rank & Review process. If there are no significant HUD priorities identified or all major priorities are addressed in Part 1 and Part 2, this form will not be released.

New & Bonus Projects

New Projects: New projects are created through bonus funds or reallocated funds. A separate RFP will be completed for new projects. If, after the ranking process, additional money becomes available through reallocation, and if all new projects have been approved and there is additional money, the new project RFP will re-open for submission in an effort to use all available funds. RFPs submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects in Tier 2. The Review Team reviews and scores all new project applications submitted. New project applications will be integrated into the ranking according to project type and the PH-TH-SSO rotational sequence (described below), then approved by the Board, and presented to Membership. The same appeals process that applies to Renewal applications applies to new project applications.

In the event project applications initially receive the same score, it is the responsibility of the Review Team to reconsider scoring to break the tie.

Bonus Projects: Bonus funds may be available each year. The CoC is permitted to apply for Bonus Projects which will compete nationally against other Bonus Project Applications based on a HUD scoring system set forth in the NOFO. HUD notifies the CoC's if Bonus Funds are available annually and what they may be used for. Proposed Bonus Projects must complement and fulfill unmet need/s in the community. The CoC will create a separate application for new projects proposals (separate RFP), and new proposals will be scored and ranked against other new project proposals. The CoC will issue public notification of the amount of Bonus funding available, if any, along with a deadline to respond to the Request for Proposals. . Bonus applications will be ranked by the review team, approved by the Board, and presented to Membership. The community's goal is to apply for the maximum amount of available funds. The same appeals process that applies to Renewal applications applies to Bonus project applications.

Reallocated Projects: Reallocation is the process by which the CoC shifts funds, in whole or in part, from existing eligible renewal grant(s) in order to create new projects which will meet unmet local need/s, such as balancing the types of projects available throughout the continuum. Project types that can be developed through reallocation are decided annually by HUD. The CoC will create a separate application for new projects proposals (separate RFP), and new proposals will be scored and ranked against each other.

Projects that can be flagged for reallocation consideration include those which have demonstrated inadequate financial management, a history of expending funds on ineligible activities, a lack of full expenditure of funds, and those which consistently score low on the Rank & Review. Reallocation is recommended for any project *not* participating in Coordinated Entry, HMIS or the annual Point-in-Time. The Board may determine reallocation of a particular project as in the best interest of the CoC and essential to maintaining full funding. Further, agencies may voluntarily choose to reallocate funds from their own projects. New project proposals developed by agencies through reallocation of their own funds will be prioritized during the ranking process. Reallocated and Bonus applications will be evaluated alongside Renewal Projects within a unified competitive ranking process. Each project will be scored using the appropriate tool and placed in the overall PH–TH–SSO rotational sequence. Reallocated projects will receive additional points to support HUD's intent to incentivize reallocation.

Review Team

Members of the review team are individuals from non-CoC funded agencies in the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Review team members are approached by either the Collaborative Applicant or members of the CoC Committee and asked to participate in the CoC's Rank & Review process. Once reviewers have agreed to participate and are approved by the Board, reviewers are provided a copy of project applications, project addendums and score forms. The review team provides any final comments to be shared with projects. It is also expected that the Review Team will remain available after the scoring is complete in the event of an appeal.

Project Ranking

Using the CoC approved Rank and Review tool, all projects: Renewal, Reallocated, and Bonus, will be scored within a unified competitive ranking process, using tools with the same total possible points. After scoring, projects will be grouped and ranked within their project type (PH, TH, SSO). These ranked lists will then be combined into the final ranking using a rotational sequence (PH – TH – SSO – Infrastructure) starting with renewal projects. Infrastructure grants – Coordinated Entry, HMIS and DV Coordinated Entry projects will be placed into the overall ranking (in that order) according to the rotational sequence, following each PH, TH, and SSO grouping. This is referred to as the "ranking". Ranking places an applicant in either Tier 1 or Tier 2. At that time, each project receives a copy of their individual scores and is given the opportunity to meet with the Collaborative Applicant to debrief. If during this debriefing, a mathematical error is found by the project, the error can be corrected. Projects that fall into the bottom of the ranking, Tier 2, are contacted and notified of their ranking and offered the opportunity to go over the project's scores. The project ranking is then shared with the CoC Committee. Afterwards, the ranking is approved by the Board and shared with Membership.

When the NOFO is released, priorities outlined in the application may be strategically applied by the CoC to project tiering. Final tiring results are presented to the Board for approval, and membership is informed of the results. If the Board determines that changes to project ranking should be made on behalf of the CoC, the board must make those determinations unanimously and inform all agencies whose ranking may be impacted by the changes.

Threshold Review

In order to ensure CoC projects are high performing, all project applications must also meet a minimum scoring threshold of 33% of total possible application points. The Threshold Review will be conducted by the Review Team after the Rank and Review process is complete and final project scores determined. If the pre-determined threshold is not met, the Review Team may recommend the HSPB Board consider the possibility of reallocation or amendments to the project application/s with said agency.

Project Tiering

The NOFO requires that the CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all Renewal and New/Bonus projects. Tiering prioritizes projects for funding. Tier 1 is considered "safe" for continued funding, and HUD specifies the percentage of the ARD amount that will make up Tier 1 each year when the NOFO is released. Tier 2 is the percentage of CoC funding that is at risk each year, per HUD's announcement in the NOFO. Being in Tier 2 does not guarantee that funding will be lost, but it does place projects at risk if the CoC is low performing in the national competition. HMIS and CE projects are placed at the bottom of Tier 1.

Debriefings

All agencies receive their project scores and are offered the opportunity to debrief with the Collaborative Applicant. Debriefing allows agencies the opportunity to request clarification regarding how/why Application question/s received certain scores. Debriefings are required if agencies are considering an appeal. Agencies may choose to appeal project score/s within the allotted time frame (see the **Appeals Process** outlined below). After all debriefings with the Collaborative Applicant are completed and appeals considered by the Review Team, renewal project applicants that fall into Tier 2 will be notified and then the project ranking is presented to the Board for review/approval and final Tier 1 and Tier 2 project ranking, then shared with Membership.

Appeal Process

1. Who May Appeal?
   An agency may formally appeal a decision concerning a project application submitted by that agency. If a project was submitted by a collaboration of agencies, only one joint appeal may be made.

2. What May Be Appealed?
   The Appeals Process only applies to project scoring and ranking. There is no appeal for project tiering. An appeal may NOT be submitted if the basis of the appeal is one of the following: the applicant did not answer all the questions on the application, the applicant did not submit the application with all required attachments, or the applicant did not submit by the required deadline. The appeals process applies only to project ranking. Any mathematical errors found by an applicant will be corrected by the Collaborative Applicant.

3. Timing of an Appeal
   Formal appeals can be submitted by a project only after a debriefing has been completed. Projects have one week from their debriefing with the Collaborative Applicant to request an appeal in writing. Written appeals should be sent to the following entities: HSPB Co-Chairs, CoC Committee Chair, and Collaborative Applicant. The written appeal must consist of a short statement, no longer than 1 page, of the agency's appeal. The written appeal can be in the form of a letter, memo or email. The Review Team will also serve as the Appeals Committee. Agencies will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within two (2) days of the Appeal Committee's decision. The Appeals Committee decision is final.