POINTS NORTH HOUSING COALITION:
2026 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Background

HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless assistance programs serve as a source of funding for homeless services in the Counties of Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis, and the planning body coordinating these services is the Points North Housing Coalition (PNHC). Working with the CoC and providing support and technical assistance is CARES of NY, Inc., the Collaborative Applicant.

HUD requires that the CoC (PNHC) prioritize programs which most effectively serve the community at the local level. To reach this goal, a Rank & Review Process has been implemented for applicants who wish to renew their project/s and for new and/or bonus projects (if bonus funding is available). The process of ranking and reviewing projects is designed to help the CoC (PNHC) learn about each project's performance and effectiveness.

In the Points North Housing Coalition (PNHC), the Operations Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the PNHC Bylaws, the Operations Committee is responsible for "the design, operation, and implementation of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities, and the number and type of applications." Each year the Operations Committee reviews the Rank & Review Written Process and Application Tools and makes any changes necessary to reflect changing priorities. The Operations Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team for the Rank and Review Application. The Written Process and Application Tools (Renewal and New/Bonus) are posted for public comment and are then reviewed and approved by the Board and shared with Membership.

CoC Transparency

The CoC conducts this Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure a fair and consistent way to prioritize projects. Each year, feedback regarding the process and tools is solicited. The process is publicly announced by the CoC, distributed in writing to CoC Membership, and posted publicly on the CARES, Inc. website for all community members to review and comment.

FY 2026 Rank and Review Application

The PNHC emphasizes the importance and impact of 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 revised thoughtfully 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 and Review Renewal Application

After the annual CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the Operations Committee reviews that prior year's Rank & Review process, including reviewer feedback and PNHC member comments. The Operations Committee also develops a list of Review Team members, considering prior reviewers and potential new members.

The Operations Committee presents the Written Process, Application Tools, and list of proposed Review Team members to the PNHC Board and Membership for one-week public comment periods. The Operations Committee considers submitted comments for inclusion. The Operations Committee updates the Board on any edits, incorporates any additional changes from the Board, and secures a vote for approval. Finally, the Written Process, Application Tools, and list of Review Team members are shared with Membership.

Project Participation

Renewal Projects

Each Renewal project completes a Rank & Review Application. The 2026 Rank & Review Renewal Application process will occur in two parts, with the intent to allow agencies adequate time to complete the full Rank & Review Application. *Completed applications (including required attachments) for each CoC project must be submitted to CARES of NY, Inc. by the stated deadline to be considered complete and sent to the Review Team.*

Applications that are submitted after the deadline and/or submitted incomplete will automatically receive a 5-point deduction on their overall score.

* Please Note: Coordinated Entry, Planning, and HMIS projects, and projects without one federal fiscal year's worth of data (10/1-9/30) are not required to fill out a renewal application.

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. Note that scores for Part 1 are done by the agency completing the tool and verified by CARES staff.

Part 2 includes narrative questions to further evaluate the efficacy of each renewal project. Questions are derived from the NOFO committee based on HUD priorities. Questions on 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 Projects

New projects are created through bonus funds or reallocated funds. A separate RFP will be completed for new projects. If additional money becomes available through reallocation after the ranking process, and if all new projects have been approved, a new project RFP may re-open for submission in an effort to use all available funds, including reallocated funds. RFP's submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round one projects on the bottom of tier 2, unless otherwise determined by the Board. New project applications will be integrated into the ranking according to project type and the PH-TH-SSO rotational sequence (described below in project ranking) starting with renewal projects then 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 also applies to bonus project applications. Note that the board has final approval on the ranking and tiering of projects and may choose to make changes to the ranking & tiering based on CoC priorities, regardless of project scores.

Bonus Projects

Each year, there may be bonus funds available. The CoC is permitted to apply for bonus projects, which will compete nationally against other bonus projects on a HUD scoring system set forth in the NOFO. HUD will notify the Continuums regarding the criteria for bonus funds. The bonus project will complement and fill an unmet need. The reviewers will score and rank the bonus projects. After the

bonus projects are ranked, ranking is sent to the Board for approval and shared with membership. Bonus projects will be ranked at the bottom of tier 2 and chosen with the goal of applying for all available funds. The same appeals process that applies to renewal applications also applies to bonus project applications.

**Note that "Bonus Projects" encompasses all projects applied for with new funds, including DV Bonus and regular CoC n=bonus funding.

Reallocation

Reallocation is the process by which the CoC shifts funds, in whole or in part, from existing eligible renewal grants to new projects that fill an unmet need within the community such as balancing the types of projects available throughout the continuum. Reallocation is one of the most important tools by which communities can make strategic improvements to their homeless services system.

The CoC determines candidates for reallocation due to low performance or less needed projects as a tool to make strategic improvements to the homeless system. The reallocation process starts with UFA Fiscal monitoring, as mandated by the UFA Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The Fiscal Committee regularly reviews expenditure percentages & SOP benchmarks to ensure all funds will be spent, identifies projects that have a history of inadequate financial mgmt. or recaptured funds, & recommends reallocation of poor performing projects to the Board. The Review Team flags projects that a) demonstrate ongoing poor project performance outcomes and/or b) consistently score low on the Rank & Review tool. The Board makes the final decision to reallocate funding to create a new high performing project by reviewing the project's performance outcomes, populations served and the need for the project and shares its decision with CoC Membership. If a project is considered needed in the community (i.e. uniquely serves a hard-to-serve population), the Board works with the Collaborative Applicant to provide TA to address underperformance. If it is decided reallocation would be a better use of CoC funds to best serve homeless clients, funding is made available through the new project Rank & Review process. A separate application is required for projects being developed with reallocated funds, and the proposed projects must fill an unmet need, as noted above. Applications for these projects are accepted while renewal applications are submitted for rank and review.

Project proposals developed with reallocated funds must fill an unmet need and submit a New/Bonus application. 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. The final ranking will be approved by the Board and presented to CoC Membership.

Review Team

The review team is made up of individuals from the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC and its providers. Reviewers are objective individuals. The Collaborative Applicant or members of the Operations Committee invite prospective review team members to participate in the CoC's Rank & Review process. Once reviewers have agreed to participate, reviewers are provided a copy of project applications, project addendums and score forms. Three reviewers are recruited each year to score the narrative portions of each application. The CoC will prioritize recruiting a person with lived experience of homelessness to serve as a reviewer.

Reviewers are provided a copy of each project's full application for review and score forms to complete. Scores for each application are averaged between the 3 reviewer scores to create the final score.

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. The Review Team also considers any submitted appeals (see Appeals Process outlined below) and provides any final comments to be shared with agencies. Final scores result in the project ranking.

Threshold Review

In order to ensure CoC projects are high performing, all project applications must also meet a minimum scoring threshold of 50% 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 PNHC Board consider the possibility of reallocation or amendments to the project application/s with said agency.

Project Ranking

The NOFO requires that the CoC conduct a transparent and objective process to review and rank all Renewal and New/Bonus projects. Using the CoC-approved Rank & Review Tool, all projects; Renewal, Reallocated, and Bonus, will be scored using 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) starting with renewal projects. These ranked lists will then be combined into the final ranking using a rotational sequence (PH - TH - SSO - Infrastructure) 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. 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, the project ranking is presented to the Board for review/approval then shared with Membership. 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.

Project Tiering

HUD requires that the CoC ranks projects into two tiers based on the funding allocation released in the NOFO. 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.

When the NOFO is released, the priorities and tiering outlined in the application may be strategically applied by the CoC to the project tiering. Final tiering results are presented to the Board for approval and membership is informed of the results. Reallocation, new projects, and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions.

Debriefings

At the end of each phase renewal projects will receive a scorecard from the collaborative applicant and will have an opportunity to request a debriefing of their scores with the collaborative applicant.

Appeal Process

1. **Who May Appeal?**
   An agency may appeal a decision concerning its project application. If the applicant was a collaboration of agencies, only one joint appeal may be made.

2. **What May Be Appealed?**
   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. There is no appeal for project tiering.

3. **Timing of an Appeal**

Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project within three business days after a debriefing has been completed. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant (jspector@caresny.org) who will forward them on to the Review Team. The written appeal must consist of a short statement of its appeal, no longer than one page. The written appeal can be in the form of a letter, memo, or email. Applicants may request the opportunity to interview with the review team regarding their appeal. An interview is optional.

4. **Appeals Decisions**

The Review Team for the Rank & Review also serves as the Appeals Review Team. Appeals are decided by majority vote of the Review/Appeals Team, and once decided, are final and may not be overturned by the Operations Committee, Board or Membership.