SARATOGA NORTH COUNTRY
CONTINUUM OF CARE
2026 RANK AND REVIEW PROCESS

Background

HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless assistance programs serve as a source of funding for homeless services in the Counties of Saratoga, Warren, Washington and Hamilton (collectively referred to as the Saratoga-North Country Continuum of Care). HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition.

In order for the CoC to gain insight into programs that are best serving the community at the local level, the community has implemented a Rank & Review Process for new and renewal projects. This process will help the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.
In the Saratoga-North Country CoC, the Data and Goals Committee is charged with overseeing the Rank & Review Process. As described in the SNC CoC Bylaws, the Continuum of Care is responsible to design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities and the number and type of applications. Each year the Data and Goals Committee reviews the Rank & Review Process and Application and makes revisions to reflect changing priorities. The Data and Goals Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team. The Written Process, Application and the reviewers are submitted annually for approval by the Board. Once Board approved, the Written Process and Application are posted for review and comment by full Membership.

CoC Transparency

The annual Rank & Review process is conducted 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.

FY2026 Rank and Review Application

The SNC CoC 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 & 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 descriptions of project operations.

Review and Approval of the Rank & Review Renewal Application

After the CoC Consolidated Application is submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant, the Data and Goals Committee reviews that prior year's Rank & Review process, including reviewer feedback and SNC member comments. The Committee considers information gained on behalf of the CoC over the past year and makes revisions to the application. The Committee also considers asking new members to join the Committee and participate on the Review Team.

In phases, the Data & Goals Committee presents the Written Process and Application Tools to the SNC Board and Membership for one-week public comment periods. The Data & Goals Committee considers submitted comments for inclusion. The Data & Goals Committee updates the Board on any edits, incorporates any additional changes from the Board, and secures a vote for approval. Finally, the Written Process and Application Tools 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 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 the FY25 LSA submitted in the beginning of 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 Data & Goals 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 will 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. The CoC has identified prioritizing projects that support the Elderly and Youth populations in part 3. 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.

At the end of each part, renewal projects will have an opportunity to request a debriefing of their scores with the Collaborative Applicant.

New/Bonus 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, the new project RFP will re-open. RFPs submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects at the bottom of tier 2. The review team reviews add scores all New/Bonus project applications submitted. New project applications will be integrated into the ranking prioritizing Youth and Elderly projects then, according to project type, the PH-TH-SSO sequence (described below) starting with renewal projects. 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 New/Bonus project applications. New applicants (not currently CoC funded) will be invited to a recommended info session to discuss CoC funding requirements and program administration logistics before final scores are tallied.

Bonus Projects

Each year, HUD *may* offer bonus funding and the NOFO outlines how the funds may be spent. Bonus project proposals must fill an unmet need as noted within the CoC's Strategic Plan or locally determined priorities. Bonus applications will be ranked and 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 New/Bonus project applications.

Reallocation

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

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. All other proposed projects using reallocated funds will be ranked according to general ranking procedures.

Project proposals developed with reallocated funds must fill an unmet need and submit a New/Bonus application. Reallocated and Bonus project 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 starting with renewal applications. . Reallocated projects will receive additional points to support HUD's intent to incentivize reallocation.

Review Team

Reviewers must be individuals from the community who are not CoC-funded or from neighboring communities and knowledgeable about the CoC process, services, and providers. Review Team members are considered by the Data & Goals Committee and invited by the Collaborative Applicant (CARES) to participate. After reviewers agree to participate, they are given project applications and scorecards and instructed to score applications with an objective lens. Three reviewers are recruited each year to score the narrative portions of each application.

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 SNC 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 applications for renewal of existing projects and applications for new/bonus projects. Using the CoC approved Rank & 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- 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 starting with renewal projects, prioritizing Youth and Elderly projects. Project ranking is shared with the Data & Goals Committee, then presented to the Board for their consideration to either finalize the ranking or adjust in order to continue meeting current community needs and resources. Afterwards, the ranking is shared with full Membership. 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, and notice of the correction will be provided to the Data and Goals Committee and the Board. No formal appeal is needed for a mathematical error.

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 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 NOFA. 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 are strategically applied by the CoC to the project ranking. Reallocation, new projects, and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions. The tiering is presented by the Data and Goals Committee to the Board who approves then presented to Membership. Membership votes on the tiering and approves of the Project Listing and the CoC Application.

Appeals Process

1. **Who May Appeal?**
   Agencies may formally appeal a decision concerning a Renewal or New/Bonus 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 applies to project scoring and ranking ***only***. *There is no appeal for project tiering.*
   An appeal may ***not*** be based on the following:
   - Failure to answer any question/s on the application
   - Failure to submit required attachments to the application
   - Failure to submit the application by the required deadline

   Any mathematical errors found by an applicant will be corrected by the Collaborative Applicant.

3. **Timing of an Appeal**

Formal appeals may be submitted by a project within **three (3) business days** of debriefing. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant (sross@caresny.org) who will then forward to the Review Team. The written appeal must consist of a brief statement no longer than one page, and can be in the form of a letter, memo or email.

Appeals Decisions

The Review Team for the Rank & Review process will also serve 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 Data & Goals Committee, Board or Membership.