ELMIRA, STEUBEN, ALLEGANY, LIVINGSTON, CHEMUNG, SCHUYLER COUNTIES COC: 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 City of Elmira, and Counties of Steuben, Allegany, Livingston, Chemung, and Schuyler, which together form NY-501. HUD awards homeless assistance grants through an annual application process known as the CoC Program Competition in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

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 members of the CoC gain knowledge of project performance and effectiveness within the full CoC system.

Southern Tier Entry to Programs and Services (STEPS) has charged the Rank and Review Committee with overseeing the Rank and Review process. As described in the Continuum's bylaws, the Rank and Review Committee is responsible for "the design, operation, and following of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities. Each year the Rank and Review Committee reviews the Rank and Review Process and Application and makes revisions to reflect changing priorities. The Rank and Review Committee is also responsible for establishing a Review Team. The Written Process, the Application and the Review Committee 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 CoC conducts the Rank and Review Process in a transparent manner to ensure fairness. Each year, the process is officially announced to the public by the CoC, shared in writing with the full CoC membership, and posted publicly on the CARES website for all community members to review and comment.

FY2026 Rank and Review Application

NY-501 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, and 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 Rank and Review Committee:

1. Reviews the previous year's Rank & Review Application, Written Process, and feedback.
2. Considers information gained on behalf of the CoC over the past year and, if necessary, revises the application.
3. Suggests possible review team members, with consideration to previous reviewers and potential new members. The review team is then presented to the Board for approval.
4. Presents the application to the Board and membership for public comment.
5. Considers submitted comments for inclusion.
6. Rank and Review Committee shares the final application with Membership for projects to complete.

Renewal Projects: Each agency applying for a renewal project completes one Rank & Review Application per project. An application must include responses to all questions as well as required data and/or attachments from the most recent project application and Calendar Year Annual Performance Report (APR) to be considered complete. All completed applications will be shared with and reviewed by the Review Team.

The 2026 Rank and Review Renewal Application process will take place in two (2) parts. Parts 1 and 2 are distributed at the same time as one tool. The intention behind breaking down the Rank and Review process into 2 parts is to allow agencies adequate time to complete the full Rank and Review application.

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

* Please Note: Coordinated Entry, Planning, and HMIS projects are not required to fill out a renewal application. Projects that do not have one federal fiscal year's (Oct 1- Sept 30) worth of data are not required to submit a renewal application.

- **Part 1** focuses on project and system outcomes measured by data from the HMIS, using a project APR run by the HMIS Administrator (Catholic Charities) to "rate" projects. Agencies serving victims of domestic violence will provide the APR from the comparable database to the HMIS Administrator. The 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 FY25 LSAs submitted at 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 the scores for part 1 are done by the agency completing the tool and verified by CARES staff.

- **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 Rank and Review Committee based on HUD and local priorities.

- **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.

Late submission, including incomplete submissions, of Rank & Review Applications will automatically have a 5-point penalty.

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, the new project RFP will re-open for submission. RFPs submitted during the second application process will automatically be ranked below the round 1 projects in 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, then presented to the Board for approval. 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.

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.

Bonus Projects

Each year, HUD *may* offer bonus funding, and guidance is provided within the NOFO as to how the funds must be spent. Bonus projects compete nationally against other bonus projects. Bonus project proposals must fill an unmet need as noted within the CoC's Strategic Plan or locally determined priorities.

A new project application is required for bonus project proposals. The reviewers will score and rank the bonus projects; however, there are no interviews for bonus projects. Scores will be

determined by averaging the scores provided by all the reviewers. Once ranked, the final ranking will be presented to the Board then CoC membership for approval. 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.

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 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 an important tool to make strategic improvements to the homeless system. The reallocation process is outlined in the Rank & Review Written Process, which is reviewed, updated, posted for public comment, and approved by the NOFO Committee and CoC Membership on an annual basis. The NOFO Committee and project review team flags projects that demonstrate inadequate financial management, a history of expending funds on ineligible activities, a history of returning funds that could have been utilized, ongoing poor project performance outcomes, and consistently low scores on the Rank & Review tool. From Rank & Review and monitoring, recommendations are made regarding reallocation to the Board. 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 Planning Lead to provide TA to the agency 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 new project application is required for projects being developed with reallocated funds, and the proposed projects must fill an unmet need. 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 presented to the CoC board for approval. The CoC Board reserves the right to adjust the final ranking and tiering to meet community needs.

Review Team

Reviewers must be individuals from the community or neighboring communities who are knowledgeable about the CoC process, services, and its providers. Individuals on the Review Team must not be CoC-funded within NY-501. Review Team members are considered by the Rank and Review Committee and invited by the Collaborative Applicant (CARES) to participate. Suggested Review Team members are approved by the Rank & Review Committee and the NY-501 Board.

Each reviewer is provided with a copy of each project's full application and score forms to complete. Scores for each application are averaged between the Review Team member's scores to create the final score. These scores result in the project ranking. 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. The Review Team provides any final comments to be shared with projects or the Rank and Review committee.

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 Board consider reallocation or amendments to the project application/s with said agency.

Project Ranking

HUD requires that the CoC ranks projects into two tiers based on the funding allocation released in the NOFO. HUD also 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 projects. Using a 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, **starting with Renewals** 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). **With the exception that Renewal Projects without a year's worth of data, are ranked at the bottom of Tier 1**. 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 projects will receive their scores and will be offered the opportunity to debrief and review their project scores with the Collaborative Applicant. Projects will have the ability to submit an appeal within the allotted time frame regarding their score following their debriefing (See the **Appeals Process** outlined below). Following any debriefings and appeals, the project ranking is shared with the Rank and Review Committee. The Committee reviews the scoring in order to adopt the ranking. Projects projected to fall into Tier 2 are contacted and notified of their ranking and offered the opportunity to go over the project's scores (see Project Tiering section on page 5 for further information.) The ranking is presented to

the Board for review and final approval. 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. The ranking is then shared with Membership.

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, according to 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.

Higher ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 1 and lower ranked projects will be assigned to Tier 2. The purpose of this two-tiered approach is for CoCs to indicate which projects are prioritized for funding. The Collaborative Applicant uses the project ranking to tier the projects and presents the tiering to the Rank and Review Committee. Reallocation, new projects, and other CoC priorities are considered through CoC discussions. Tiering results are then presented to the Board for a vote and then shared with membership. When the NOFO is released, priorities outlined in the application may be strategically applied by the CoC to project tiering. Final tiering results are presented to the Board for approval and membership is informed of the results.

Debriefings

Renewal projects will receive a completed 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 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?**
   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 scoring and ranking. There is no appeal for project tiering. If a mathematical error is found by the project, the error can be corrected and notice of the correction will be provided to the Rank and Review Committee and the Board.

3. **Timing of an Appeal**
   Formal appeals can only be submitted by a project **5 business days** after a debriefing has been completed. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Collaborative Applicant who will forward them on to the Review Team. 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. Any appeal via email must be sent to the Collaborative Applicant, CARES of NY, (agraves@caresny.org) and cc the NY-501 Rank and Review Committee chair.

4. **Appeals Decisions**
   The Review Team also serves as the Appeal Team. Appeals are decided by majority vote of the Appeal Team. Once decided, all appeals are final and may not be overturned by the Rank and Review Committee, Board or Membership.