



TX-503 Continuum of Care Program: Review, Scoring, and Ranking Policy for FY2026 NOFO

Purpose

This Policy establishes a written, transparent, objective, competitive, and performance-based process for the solicitation, review, scoring, ranking, selection, and notification of project applications submitted to Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) for inclusion in the FY2026 CoC Consolidated Application.

Background

The Leadership Council, serving as the CoC Board or its designated representatives, is responsible for the approval of all NOFO-related policies and procedures, including this Review, Scoring, and Ranking Policy. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), as the CoC Lead Agency, is responsible for the review of all project applications in accordance with this policy. ECHO also convenes an Independent Review Team (IRT) to objectively review and score all eligible renewal and new project applications. Final ranking of projects is determined by the Leadership Council, based on the Austin/Travis County Community Priorities and this policy.

Review, Score, and Ranking Policy Scope

The Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) will competitively review, score and rank new and renewal projects in accordance with the Austin/Travis County community priorities and per the criteria mentioned in the FY2026 HUD CoC NOFO. This adopted policy supersedes any other historical TX-503 Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care Review, Scoring, and Ranking Policy.

This Policy applies to all project applications submitted for possible inclusion in the CoC Priority Listing, including, as applicable:

- CoC Renewal projects;
- New projects created through CoC Bonus or CoC Reallocation;
- DV Renewal, DV Bonus, and DV Reallocation projects;



- YHDP Renewal, YHDP Replacement, and YHDP Reallocation projects;
- Expansion projects;
- Transition grants

CoC Planning project application is **not ranked**, but it will still be reviewed for eligibility and completeness.

New PSH or New RRH will not be accepted in this year's competition. The only New RRH project type that can be accepted is through the DV Bonus

Review

To ensure all projects submitted to HUD for funding consideration are of a high quality, ECHO staff will complete a Project Eligibility Threshold and Project Quality Threshold review of all new and renewal project applications.

1. Project Eligibility Threshold Review

ECHO staff will review submitted applications to ensure all applications meet the requirements of 24 CFR 578.15 and any additional threshold requirements outlined in the FY2026 CoC NOFO. Renewal projects are expected to pass threshold criteria as evidenced by their previous contracted award.

To meet threshold all projects, including renewal projects must

- a) Affirmatively attest they will not engage in racial preferences or other forms of illegal discrimination and will not operate drug injection sites or "safe consumption sites," knowingly distribute drug paraphernalia on or off of property under their control, permit the use or distribution of illicit drugs on property under their control, or conduct any of these activities under the pretext of "harm reduction." Failing to attest to these affirmatively will result in a rejected application.
- b) All housing specific projects must require engagement in services for participants to remain housed in the program.

2. Project Quality Threshold Review

ECHO staff will review submitted applications to confirm all projects to ensure:

- a) All proposed program participants will be eligible for the program component type selected;



- b) The information provided in the project application and proposed activities are eligible and consistent with program requirements at 24 CFR part 578;
- c) Each project narrative is fully responsive to the question being asked, and it meets all criteria outlined in the FY2026 CoC NOFO;
- d) The data provided in various parts of the project application are consistent;
- e) All required attachments correspond to the list of attachments in E-SNAPS and contain accurate and complete information;

3. Deficiencies

Applicants may correct a curable deficiency with timely action. To be curable, the deficiency must:

- a) Not be a threshold requirement, except for documentation of applicant eligibility;
- b) Not influence how an applicant is ranked or scored versus other applicants; and,
- c) Be remedied within the time frame specified in the notice of deficiency.

All applicants whose projects have identified curable deficiencies must be given 2 business days from the notification date to address and adequately resolve any deficiencies. If deficiencies cannot be sufficiently addressed, the applicant cannot move forward in the process.

Scoring

All project applications that have passed the review stage will be scored using a written scoring tool designed by ECHO for the Austin/Travis County CoC and published in advance of the local competition. The scoring methodology shall ensure that:

- i. objective, documented factors account for at least 50% of the total score;
- ii. system performance measures account for at least 25% of the total score;
- iii. projects are evaluated on cost-effectiveness, outcomes, capacity, and strategic contribution to the CoC system.

Independent Review Team

Scoring is conducted by the Independent Review Team (IRT) after the Project Applications have been reviewed for Project Eligibility Threshold and Project Quality Threshold by ECHO staff. All projects except the CoC Planning Grant will be scored and



ranked. ECHO appoints the IRT team to conduct the scoring process with the below understanding:

- a) IRT members must disclose any conflicts of interest prior to joining the IRT. Individuals who are employees, contractors, or board members of service providers that receive or are applying for HUD funding are not eligible to serve on the IRT.
- b) Members of the CoC Lead Agency are eligible to serve on the IRT so long as:
 - i. The CoC Lead Agency does not submit any applications that are competitively scored and ranked.
 - ii. Members of the CoC Lead Agency do not make up more than fifty percent of the total IRT membership.
- c) Each Project Application will be reviewed and scored by at least three (3) separate IRT members, and the final score for the application will be the average of the scores.
- d) IRT members who have lived experience of homelessness will be compensated at a rate of \$50 per application scored.

1. Renewal Projects Scoring

Objective Criteria will make up at least 50% of the renewal score, at least 25% of those points will include:

- a) Returns to Homelessness
- b) Employment Income Performance Measure
- c) Supportive Service Participation Requirement

2. Scoring for New Project Applications

New Projects including projects created through CoC Bonus, DV Bonus, or Reallocation including Expansion and Transition Projects, will be scored based on alignment with the FY2026 CoC NOFO.

Ranking

After threshold review and scoring are completed, the CoC will rank all scored project applications on the CoC Priority Listing in order of score and strategic priority. All ranked projects will receive a unique rank number.

The CoC will rank:



- a) Renewal projects
- b) Transition grants considered new projects
- c) New CoC Bonus and Reallocation projects;
- d) DV Renewal, DV Bonus, and DV Reallocation projects;
- e) YHDP Renewal and YHDP Replacement/Reallocation projects;
- f) Expansion projects, each with its own unique rank, separate from the renewal it expands.

ECHO will present multiple ranking scenarios to the Leadership Council that is based on the scoring results, and the Leadership Council will list the projects in rank order. Higher ranked and prioritized projects will fall into Tier 1, and lower ranked projects into Tier 2, consistent with the NOFO.

Ranking Principles

- a) Tier 1 limited to 60% of Annual Renewal Demand (ARD)
- b) All permanent housing renewal projects not prioritized for Tier 1 in this policy will be required to reallocate to Transitional Housing or SSO (or return their funding to the CoC)
- c) New project applications will be ranked based not only on eligibility and project quality threshold, but also on the extent to which they strengthen the CoC's system performance, address identified gaps, and advance NOFO priorities.
- d) RRH renewals are required to reallocate to Transitional Housing or YHDP Supportive Services Only for support of FYI vouchers project type or reallocate their funding back to the CoC.
- e) PSH renewal projects serving youth or young adults must transition to a Transitional Housing or Supportive Service Only YHDP supporting FYI vouchers project type or reallocate their funding back to the CoC.

Ranking Priorities

All projects will be ranked according to their score, as outlined in this policy. The following types of projects, however, will be prioritized for Tier 1. All projects may not fit into Tier one.

- a) PSH renewals targeted to Elderly
- b) PSH renewals that are site-based with a loan requirement that the housing remain permanent housing
- c) HMIS
- d) Coordinated Entry Renewal Projects



- e) Renewing transitional housing projects
- f) PSH renewals serving people primarily with serious mental illness

If additional funding is available in Tier 1 after a-f have been ranked, the following will be prioritized for Tier 1.

- g) PSH renewals serving people with no specific subpopulation

Renewal projects who reallocate to a different project type will be prioritized above new projects.

Final ranking decisions will be based on the CoC's published scoring methodology, including objective criteria and system performance measures, and will not rely solely on discretionary or subjective judgment.

Projects placed near or below the Tier 1 cutoff may be subject to partial or competitive funding outcomes, and the CoC may consider project feasibility in establishing final rank order.

CoC Bonus and DV Bonus

All project types allowable in the FY 2026 CoC NOFO for the CoC Bonus funding will be accepted except PH-PSH and PH-RRH.

New TH, new RRH, and new SSO-CE projects only will be considered for DV Bonus funds per the FY 2026 CoC NOFO.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Considerations

The FY2026 NOFO sets Tier 1 at 60 percent of Annual Renewal Demand (ARD), the CoC will use ranking within Tier 1 strategically to protect the projects critical to infrastructure of the Homeless Response System and projects with high performance but deprioritized under this NOFO to the greatest extent possible. Projects ranked in Tier 2 may face greater competitive risk.

In establishing final rank order, the CoC may consider whether a project is feasible if funded only partially or if placed in a more competitive funding position. Projects near the Tier 1/Tier 2 boundary may be reviewed carefully for strategic placement, feasibility, and overall funding risk.



Project Ranking Appeals

An appeal can only be made by an applicant regarding the scoring of their own application. Any discrepancies or errors found by applicants must be reported to ECHO at NOFO@austinecho.org and such corrections will not constitute an appeal, unless the discrepancy or error is deemed an incurable deficiency resulting in exclusion of the project application from consideration.

1. Eligible Appeals

Appeals can be requested by any agency which has a project submitted for participation in the FY2026 CoC Program NOFO in the Austin/Travis County CoC geographic area if they are not funded or receive less funding than the amount in the application.

2. Appeals Procedure

Applicants must follow the following process to submit appeals:

- a) Applicants will have two business days to appeal after being notified by email of the ranking results approved Leadership Council, or its appointed representative.
- b) An appeal must be sent to the NOFO@austinecho.org in the form of a letter on the applicant agency's letterhead and must clearly state the reasons for the appeal and specify all issues being contested. The appealing agency must specify facts and evidence sufficient for the CoC Board, or its representative, to determine the validity of the appeal. The CoC Board, or its representative, will review and adjudicate all appeals.
- c) Agencies will receive, in writing, the appeal decision before the CoC Collaborative Application submission deadline. ECHO will be responsible for ensuring that projects have received proper notice of all final funding decisions.
- d) As prescribed by HUD in the CoC NOFO, applicants may appeal the local CoC competition decision to HUD if the project applicant would like to further appeal the CoC Board's decision.
- e) Applicants may ask ECHO for summary scoring information prior to the submission of the appeal letter. Individual IRT member scores or comments will not be released to applicants.