

Alabama Balance of State Continuum of Care (AL-507)

FY 2026 New and Expansion Project Merit Scoring Tool

Administrative Guidance: Expansion Projects

An Expansion project shall be evaluated using this scoring tool only if it was submitted as a separate Expansion application in accordance with the published FY 2026 AL-507 Local Competition Policies and Procedures and HUD requirements. A request to increase the funding amount, number of units, households served, geographic service area, project scope, or other material aspect of a renewal project does not constitute an Expansion application unless the applicant submitted a separate local Expansion application and, where required, a separate e-snaps Expansion project application by the published local competition deadline. Requests to materially modify a renewal application after the deadline shall not be evaluated as an Expansion project.

Alabama Rural Coalition for the Homeless, Inc., Collaborative Applicant

Local application document for the FY 2026 Continuum of Care Competition and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Grants NOFO.

Threshold Eligibility Review is completed by the Collaborative Applicant; Merit Scoring is completed by the Ranking & Review Committee. For new and expansion project applications only. The Renewal Project Merit Scoring Tool follows this same structure with a different Merit Scoring section. Committee members shall evaluate only the information contained within the application materials submitted by the published local competition deadline and any information provided uniformly to all committee members by the Collaborative Applicant as part of the review process.

Applicant: _____

Project: _____

Project Type: ☐ New

☐ Expansion

Ranking & Review Committee Member: _____ Date: _____

I. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY REVIEW (PASS/FAIL)

Completed by the Collaborative Applicant prior to committee review.

Requirement	Pass	Fail	N/A
Eligible Applicant	☐	☐	☐
Complete Local Application	☐	☐	☐
Required Attachments Received	☐	☐	☐
Coordinated Entry Participation	☐	☐	☐
HMIS / Comparable Database Participation	☐	☐	☐
Threshold Certifications	☐	☐	☐
Organizational Eligibility	☐	☐	☐
Audit / Monitoring Requirements Satisfactorily Addressed	☐	☐	☐
New Project Meets Applicable Component-Specific Requirements	☐	☐	☐

Threshold Result

☐ PASS

☐ FAIL

Applications that fail Threshold Review are not advanced to merit scoring by the Ranking and Review Committee.

PART 2: MERIT SCORING, 100 POINTS (RANKING & REVIEW COMMITTEE)

II. COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT READINESS (35 POINTS)

Component-Specific Considerations: Committee members should consider whether the applicant has adequately addressed any project component-specific requirements identified in the FY 2026 Local Competition Application, including the Transitional Housing service-engagement plan, Street Outreach/law enforcement and first responder partnerships, documented community need, and other applicable HUD component requirements. These considerations should be reflected within the applicable scoring categories and should not result in additional points beyond the 100-point scale.

Expansion Project Considerations: For Expansion projects, Committee members should evaluate whether the proposed expansion is supported by demonstrated need, organizational capacity, and a feasible implementation plan. The Committee should consider only the expansion proposal submitted through the published local competition process and should not evaluate requests for expansion that were not submitted as a separate expansion application in accordance with the Local Competition Policies and Procedures. The Committee shall evaluate only the application properly submitted through the published local competition process and shall not consider information or requests submitted after the published application deadline unless expressly required by HUD or approved by the Collaborative Applicant in response to a HUD-issued directive that is applied uniformly to all similarly situated applicants.

A. Documented Community Need (10 Points)

- Addresses a documented gap identified by the CoC.
- Responds to an identified community need.
- Supports the CoC's strategic priorities.

Score _____ / 10

Comments

B. Project Design & Implementation Readiness (10 Points)

- Overall project design
- Ability to begin operations timely
- Implementation plan
- Feasibility

Score _____ / 10

Comments

C. Organizational Experience & Capacity (5 Points)

- Experience operating similar programs
- Experience managing federal funding
- Demonstrated capacity

Score _____ / 5

Comments

D. Staffing Plan (5 Points)

- Staffing structure
- Staff qualifications
- Ability to implement

Score _____ / 5

Comments

E. Partnerships & Collaboration (5 Points)

- Community partnerships
- Service coordination
- Referral network

Score _____ / 5

Comments

III. PROGRAM DESIGN & FY2026 HUD PRIORITIES (25 POINTS)

FY 2026 HUD Priorities: The FY 2026 NOFO's Goals and Objectives (Section III.B) identify six priorities for the CoC Program Competition: Improving Outcomes (reducing homelessness and increasing self-sufficiency), Creating Competition (merit-based evaluation of projects), Restoring Balance (expanding Transitional Housing and Street Outreach/SSO capacity), Prioritizing Treatment and Recovery, Promoting Economic Self-Sufficiency, and Advancing Public Safety. Committee members should score how directly the application's program design and narrative reflect these priorities.

Treatment & Recovery Connections Score _____ / 5

Employment & Self Sufficiency Score _____ / 5

Housing Stability Score _____ / 5

Overall Program Design Score _____ / 5

Narrative Quality & Alignment with FY2026 Priorities Score _____ / 5

Comments

IV. SYSTEM COORDINATION (15 POINTS)

Coordinated Entry Participation Score _____ / 5

HMIS Participation **Score** ____ / 3

Mainstream Resource Coordination **Score** ____ / 4

Community Partnerships **Score** ____ / 3

Comments

V. ORGANIZATIONAL & FISCAL CAPACITY (15 POINTS)

Federal Grant Experience **Score** ____ / 3

Financial Management Systems **Score** ____ / 3

Audit / Monitoring History **Score** ____ / 3

Staffing Capacity **Score** ____ / 3

Internal Controls **Score** ____ / 3

Comments

VI. BUDGET & COST REASONABLENESS (5 POINTS)

- Budget justification
- Cost effectiveness
- Reasonableness

Score ____ / 5

Comments

VII. EQUITY & ACCESS (5 POINTS)

- Reducing disparities
- Fair access
- Non discrimination

Score ____ / 5

Comments

TOTAL SCORE

Category	Points
Community Need & Readiness	_____ / 35
Program Design & HUD Priorities	_____ / 25
System Coordination	_____ / 15
Organizational Capacity	_____ / 15
Budget	_____ / 5
Equity	_____ / 5
TOTAL	_____ / 100

PART 3: COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (RANKING & REVIEW COMMITTEE)

Committee Recommendation

Recommendations shall be based solely on the application materials, published scoring criteria, and information provided uniformly to all Ranking & Review Committee members during the local competition process.

- ☐ Accept as Submitted
- ☐ Accept with Technical Corrections
- ☐ Reduce Budget
- ☐ Reduce Scope
- ☐ Recommend Reallocation
- ☐ Reject (Threshold)
- ☐ Reject (Merit)
- ☐ Not Recommended for Priority Listing
- ☐ Withdrawn by Applicant

Recommended Funding Amount: \$_____

Comments

PART 4: RANKING & REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBER SIGNATURE

Ranking & Review Committee Member Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: Category weighting reflects the FY 2026 Continuum of Care Competition and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Grants NOFO (CPD-2600-DC-0025), including HUD's FY2026 program priorities, and standard CoC Program local scoring practice.

Scoring Category Definitions

Plain-language explanations of each scoring category above, for Ranking & Review members scoring new and expansion projects.

I. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

Threshold Eligibility Review. A pass/fail eligibility check completed by the Collaborative Applicant before the Ranking & Review Committee scores an application on its merits. It confirms baseline requirements are met: eligible applicant, complete local application, required attachments received, Coordinated Entry and HMIS participation, threshold certifications, organizational eligibility, audit/monitoring compliance, and applicable component-specific requirements. An application that fails Threshold Eligibility Review is not advanced to merit scoring.

New Project Meets Applicable Component-Specific Requirements. Whether a new project has met any HUD or local requirements specific to its component type (for example, Transitional Housing or Street Outreach/SSO) as a condition of passing threshold, separate from how well it addresses those requirements on the merits.

II. COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT READINESS

Documented Community Need. Whether the applicant has shown, with data, that the project addresses a specific, documented gap in the CoC's homeless response system and supports AL-507's strategic priorities, rather than a general willingness to serve homeless persons.

Project Design & Implementation Readiness. Whether the project is well designed and the applicant can realistically begin operating on time, including a workable implementation plan and a feasible service model.

Organizational Experience & Capacity. Whether the applicant has a track record operating similar programs and managing federal grant funds, and has the organizational capacity to take on this project.

Staffing Plan. Whether the proposed staffing structure and staff qualifications are adequate to carry out the project as designed.

Partnerships & Collaboration. The strength of the applicant's community partnerships, service coordination arrangements, and referral relationships that support the project.

Component-Specific Considerations. For new Transitional Housing and Street Outreach/SSO projects, whether the applicant has addressed component-specific requirements from the FY 2026 Local Competition Application, such as a TH service-engagement plan or SSO law enforcement and first responder partnerships. These are reflected within the categories above and do not add points beyond the 100-point scale.

Expansion Project Considerations. For Expansion projects, whether the proposed expansion is supported by demonstrated need, organizational capacity, and a feasible implementation plan. The Committee scores only the expansion proposal submitted through the published local competition process, not any request to expand a renewal project that was not submitted as a separate Expansion application.

III. PROGRAM DESIGN & FY2026 HUD PRIORITIES

Treatment & Recovery Connections. Whether the project connects participants with substance use and mental health treatment and recovery supports, reflecting the FY 2026 NOFO's priority of prioritizing treatment and recovery.

Employment & Self Sufficiency. Whether the project helps participants increase income and move toward self-sufficiency, reflecting the FY 2026 NOFO's priority of promoting economic self-sufficiency.

Housing Stability. Whether the project design supports participants achieving and maintaining stable housing, reflecting the FY 2026 NOFO's priority of improving outcomes.

Overall Program Design. The overall strength and coherence of the proposed program model, independent of the specific priority areas scored elsewhere.

Narrative Quality & Alignment with FY2026 Priorities. How clearly the application narrative is written and how directly it connects the project to HUD's stated FY 2026 priorities.

IV. SYSTEM COORDINATION

Coordinated Entry Participation. Whether the applicant participates in AL-507's Coordinated Entry system and accepts referrals through it, rather than through a separate intake process.

HMIS Participation. Whether the applicant enters data into HMIS or, for victim service providers, a comparable database that meets HUD's data standards.

Mainstream Resource Coordination. Whether the project connects participants to mainstream benefits and services, such as SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, or VA services, rather than relying solely on CoC Program funds.

Community Partnerships. The depth of the applicant's working relationships with other homeless service and mainstream providers in the community, as it relates to system-wide coordination rather than the project's own referral network.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL & FISCAL CAPACITY

Federal Grant Experience. Whether the applicant has direct experience managing federal grant funds and complying with federal grant requirements.

Financial Management Systems. Whether the applicant's accounting and financial management systems are adequate to track and safeguard grant funds.

Audit / Monitoring History. Whether the applicant's most recent audit and any HUD monitoring findings show a clean or well-resolved compliance history.

Staffing Capacity. Whether the applicant has enough qualified staff, organization-wide, to administer this grant alongside its existing programs.

Internal Controls. Whether the applicant has written policies and procedures in place to prevent and detect financial mismanagement.

VI. BUDGET & COST REASONABLENESS

Budget & Cost Reasonableness. Whether the proposed budget is justified line by line, cost-effective relative to the outcomes proposed, and reasonable for the scope and size of the project.

VII. EQUITY & ACCESS

Equity & Access. Whether the project's design and outreach approach reduce disparities in access and outcomes, ensure fair access for all eligible populations, and reflect nondiscrimination.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS

Accept as Submitted. The Committee recommends the project for the Priority Listing exactly as applied for.

Accept with Technical Corrections. The Committee recommends the project, contingent on the applicant fixing minor, non-substantive errors before submission.

Reduce Budget. The Committee recommends the project at a lower funding amount than requested.

Reduce Scope. The Committee recommends reducing the proposed number of units, households served, geographic service area, or other eligible project activities in accordance with HUD requirements.

Recommend Reallocation. The Committee recommends the funding source this project drew on be reallocated to a different project rather than awarded as proposed.

Reject (Threshold). The application failed Threshold Review and was not scored on its merits.

Reject (Merit). The application passed Threshold Review but did not score competitively enough on its merits to recommend for the Priority Listing.

Not Recommended for Priority Listing. The Committee does not recommend including this project on the Priority Listing ARCH submits to HUD, whether for capacity, strategic, or other reasons.

Withdrawn by Applicant. The applicant voluntarily withdrew the application before scoring was completed or before the Priority Listing was finalized.

Scoring Rubric

General point-band guidance to help Ranking & Review Committee members, including first-time members, apply the scoring criteria consistently. This rubric is a scoring aid and is not a HUD requirement; the published criteria in Part 2 govern each category's specific expectations.

10-Point Categories

Points	Rating	Guidance
9-10	Outstanding	Fully addresses the criterion with strong supporting documentation.
7-8	Strong	Addresses the criterion well with only minor weaknesses.
5-6	Adequate	Meets the criterion but lacks detail or supporting evidence.
3-4	Limited	Partially addresses the criterion with significant weaknesses.
1-2	Poor	Minimally addresses the criterion.
0	No Response	Does not address the criterion.

5-Point Categories

Points	Rating	Guidance
5	Outstanding	Fully addresses the criterion with strong supporting documentation.
4	Strong	Addresses the criterion well with only minor weaknesses.
3	Adequate	Meets the criterion but lacks detail or supporting evidence.
2	Limited	Partially addresses the criterion with significant weaknesses.
1	Poor	Minimally addresses the criterion.
0	No Response	Does not address the criterion.

3-Point Categories

Points	Rating	Guidance
3	Strong	Fully addresses the criterion with clear supporting documentation.
2	Adequate	Addresses the criterion but lacks detail or supporting evidence.
1	Limited	Minimally addresses the criterion, with significant weaknesses.
0	No Response	Does not address the criterion.