CY2026 Emergency Solutions Grant Program Funding Priorities

Purpose

The North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care (NC BoS CoC) has set funding priorities for the CY2026 Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program funding competition to help improve its homeless and housing service system and provide more robust support to people experiencing homelessness. These funding priorities aim to:

- Coordinate ESG Program funding to move the whole CoC toward common goals including implementing Housing First, improving equity, and decreasing disparities in outcomes for marginalized populations throughout the CoC.

- Establish precedents to make funding decisions consistently and fairly across each region of the NC BoS CoC.

- Help the NC BoS CoC target ESG Program funding to meet specific local needs. These priorities provide guidance to help make decisions about how to use ESG Program funding to improve the homeless and housing system, helping grantees and communities take steps toward providing access to low-barrier emergency shelter and permanent housing using a Housing First approach, rather than simply continuing ESG Program funding for previous grantees.

- Improve performance of ESG Program-funded projects. These priorities ensure publicly funded agencies implement best practices by lowering barriers to entry, incorporating Housing First approaches, and following the NC BoS CoC's Written Standards.

NC Balance of State Continuum of Care's CY2026 ESG Program Funding Priorities

Ensure people experiencing homelessness in the CoC have access to low-barrier, housing-focused shelter, rehousing assistance, and supportive services.

- The CoC should only fund projects able to operate in full compliance with relevant NC BoS CoC Written Standards.
- The CoC should fund street outreach in counties that currently have people living unsheltered as evidenced by the annual unsheltered portion of the Point-in-Time Count.
- The CoC should fund rapid rehousing (RRH) that covers every county in the region. Regions may achieve full geographic coverage by funding one or multiple projects.
- ***Steering Committee approved change as of 2/17/26*** - The CoC should recommend homelessness prevention projects as part of a full continuum of ESG Program-funded services. Homelessness prevention should be used solely for returns to homelessness.

- The CoC should promote service coverage to all 79 counties in the CoC geographic area. Agencies willing to cover gaps in coverage should be prioritized for funding. Appendix 1 highlights which counties lack services by project type.

Fund only applicants with the financial capacity to administer public dollars.

- Agencies must have the capacity to operate a reimbursement-based grant and have the administrative infrastructure to spend their dollars in a timely manner throughout the year.

Ensure the best results for people experiencing homelessness through coordination at the regional level.

- Applicant agencies must regularly participate in their Regional Committee and attend at least 75% of Regional Committee meetings within the last 12 months from the start of the competition.
- Applicant agencies must demonstrate that they fully participate, or will fully participate, in the local coordinated entry system and should attend case conferencing meetings at least 85% of the time.

Prioritize timely, accurate data collection to measure and improve performance at the agency, regional, and CoC levels.

- Utilization of HMIS (or a comparable database for Victim Service Providers) is required for all ESG Program-funded agencies.
- Applying for funding to support agencies to achieve timely, high-quality data entry should be encouraged.
- Performance should be regularly monitored through CAPER data and all HMIS reporting requirements from NCCEH Data Center and the NC ESG Office should be met in a timely manner.
- 2025 Performance Measures & Benchmarks

  - Street Outreach:
    - 50% of people served have disabling conditions
    - 20% of people served exit to permanent housing destinations
    - 20% of people served exited to shelter
    - 30% of households served are experiencing chronic homelessness

  - Emergency Shelter:
    - 50% of people served have disabling conditions (VSPs *are excluded from this measure due to serving a different target population.)*
    - 10% of adults served increased their earned cash income
    - 35% of people served exited to permanent housing destinations
    - 25% of households served are experiencing chronic homelessness (VSPs *are excluded from this measure due to serving a different target population.)*
    - Median length of project participation of leavers is 90 to 120 days

- Homelessness Prevention:
  - 38% of people served have disabling conditions
  - 13% of adults served increased their earned cash income
  - 80% of people served exited to permanent housing destinations
  - Median length of project participation of leavers is 90 days or less

- Rapid Rehousing:
  - 45% of people served have disabling conditions
  - 80% of people served exited to permanent housing destinations
  - 20% of adults increased their earned cash income
  - 16% or below of people served who exited to permanent housing returned to homelessness within 2 years
  - Median length of project participation of leavers is 180 to 270 days

Address disparities across marginalized communities.

- Prioritize funding to agencies committed to advancing equity
- Prioritize funding to agencies committed to hiring and obtaining feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness (PLE)
- Incorporate and maintain full compliance with the NC BoS CoC Anti-Discrimination Policy to remain eligible for ESG Program funding
- Incorporate and maintain the NC BoS CoC Client Bill of Rights to remain eligible for ESG Program funding

Make consistent and transparent decisions regarding funding for the ESG Program.

- **The Project Review Committee (PRC) and NCCEH staff use the following as established precedents when making funding recommendations:**
  - Any remaining funds in a regional allocation, after all project applications have been reviewed, will be allocated to rapid rehousing financial assistance of project applications that are at or above the median score in the competition. If there is more than one RRH project at or above the median in the region, the remaining funds will be allocated to the most effective RRH programs as determined by the ESG Program Scorecard project performance section score.
  - If there are no rapid rehousing project applicants in the region to consider for remaining funds, the CoC will reallocate remaining funds to RRH projects with the highest project performance scores in other regions, depending on the amount of funding available and applicant coverage area.
  - Allocate funding to agencies that submitted project applications after the established deadline only if funding remains available in the region after all other project applications have been scored and funding allocated.

- With each project application, PRC members and NCCEH staff will review funding requests in the current application compared to the awarded funding from the previous year.
- The CoC will default to funding renewal applicants in good standing with the NC ESG Office and performing well. The CoC may fund other renewal applicants with conditions.

Appendix 1: Grid of service coverage by county and ESG Program project type

This grid demonstrates which counties have service coverage using public funding through Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and highlights where regions may be experiencing a gap in coverage for a given project type. The CoC will prioritize expanding coverage to counties not currently being served.

Emergency shelter projects may include both general population shelters and domestic violence shelters. Shelters not funded by ESG Program funding do not appear on this grid.

Regional Grid of County Coverage by Project Type

ESG Program-Funded Street Outreach Projects			
Region	# of SO providers	# of Counties covered with ESG Program-funded SO	# of Counties without ESG Program-funded SO
01	2 (Blue Ridge Community Health Services & HERE in Jackson County)	4 (Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain)	4 (Cherokee, Graham, Clay, Madison)
02	1 (Blue Ridge Community Health Services)	4 (Henderson, Rutherford, Polk, Transylvania)	0
03	1 (Mission Ministries Alliance)	5 (Burke, McDowell, Catawba, Caldwell, Alexander)	0
04	1 (The Shepherd's House)	3 (Stokes, Surry, Yadkin)	2 (Iredell, Davie)
05	3 (Rowan Helping Ministries; Community Shelter of Union County; Davidson Medical Ministries)	3 (Rowan Helping Ministries serves Rowan; Community Shelter of Union County serves Union; Davidson Medical Ministries serves Davidson)	2 (Cabarrus, Stanly)
06	1 (Central Pines Regional Council)	1 (Chatham)	4 (Rockingham, Caswell, Person, Alamance)
07	0	0	9 (ALL of Region 7)

08	0	0	4 (ALL of Region 8)
09	0	0	8 (ALL of Region 9)
10	0	0	6 (ALL of Region 10)
11	0	0	10 (ALL of Region 11)
12	0	0	5 (ALL of Region 12)
13	0	0	5 (ALL of Region 13)

ESG Program-Funded Emergency Shelter and DV Shelter Projects			
Region	# of ES providers	# of Counties covered by ESG Program-funded ES	# of Counties without ESG Program-funded non-DV ES
01	2 (HERE in Jackson County, REACH of Macon County)	2 (HERE in Jackson County serves Jackson County; REACH of Macon County is a VSP serving Macon County)	7 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Cherokee, Clay, Swain, Haywood, Madison, Graham, Macon)
02	1 (The Haven of Transylvania County)	1 (The Haven of Transylvania County serves Transylvania)	3 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Rutherford, Polk, Henderson)
03	2 (Mission Ministries Alliance, Dulatown Outreach Center)	5 (Mission Ministries Alliance serves McDowell, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba; Dulatown Outreach Center serves Caldwell, Alexander, Catawba, Burke, McDowell)	0
04	3 (The Shepherd's House, Diakonos, The ARK)	5 (The Shepherd's House serves Surry, Stokes, Yadkin, Davie, Iredell; Diakonos serves Davie, Iredell, Surry, Stokes, Yadkin; The ARK serves Davie, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin, Iredell)	0
05	5 (Family Services of Davidson County, Community Shelter of Union County, Family Crisis Council of Rowan, Homes of Hope, Davidson County First Hope Ministries)	4 (Family Services of Davidson County is a VSP serving Davidson County; Community Shelter of Union County serves Union; Family Crisis Council of Rowan is a VSP serving Rowan County; Homes of Hope serves Stanly; Davidson County First Hope Ministries serves Davidson County)	1 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Cabarrus)
06	1 (Allied Churches of Alamance County)	5 (Allied Churches of Alamance County serves Person,	0

		Rockingham, Alamance, Caswell, and Chatham)	
07	3 (Friend to Friend, SAFE of Harnett County, HAVEN in Lee County)	9 (Friend to Friend is a VSP and serves Randolph, Montgomery, Anson, Richmond, Moore, Lee, Hoke, Harnett, Johnston; SAFE of Harnett County is a VSP and serves Harnett; HAVEN in Lee County is a VSP and serves Lee)	9 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (ALL Region 7 counties)
08	1 (Southeastern Family Violence Center)	4 (Southeastern Family Violence Center is a VSP and serves Robeson, Scotland, Bladen, Columbus)	4 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Robeson, Scotland, Bladen, Columbus)
09	1 (Hand Up Ministries)	2 (Nash, Edgecombe)	6 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Granville, Vance, Franklin, Warren, Halifax, Northampton)
10	0	0	6 without ESG Program-funded non-DV shelter (Sampson, Wayne, Lenoir, Greene, Wilson)
11	1 (River City Community Development Corporation)	10 (Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell)	0
12	2 (Center for Family Violence Prevention, Open Door Community Center)	5 (Center for Family Violence Prevention is a VSP and serves Pitt, Martin, Washington; Open Door Community Center serves single women and women with children in Beaufort, Martin, Washington, Pitt, Bertie)	0
13	2 (Carteret County Domestic Violence Program, Onslow Community Outreach)	3 (Carteret County Domestic Violence Program is a VSP and serves Carteret; Onslow Community Outreach serves Onslow, Jones, Carteret, Craven, Pamlico)	0

	ESG Program-Funded Rapid Rehousing Projects		
Region	# of RRH providers	Counties Covered with ESG Program-funded RRH	Counties without ESG Program-funded RRH coverage
01	1 (HERE in Jackson County)	8 (Jackson, Haywood, Macon, Swain, Clay, Graham, Cherokee, Madison)	0
02	1 (The Haven of Transylvania County)	1 (Transylvania)	3 (Rutherford, Polk, and Henderson)
03	1 (Mission Ministries Alliance)	2 (Burke, McDowell)	3 (Alexander, Caldwell, Catawba)
04	1 (Diakonos)	5 (Davie, Iredell, Surry, Stokes, Yadkin)	0
05	1 (Community Shelter of Union County)	1 (Community Shelter of Union County serves Union	4 (Davidson, Rowan, Cabarrus, Stanly)
06	0	0	5 (Rockingham, Caswell, Person, Alamance, Chatham)
07	1 (Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action)	9 (Johnston, Lee, Harnett, Anson, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Randolph)	0
08	1 (Southeastern Family Violence Center is a VSP but serves both DV and non-DV populations in their RRH program)	4 (Robeson, Scotland, Bladen, Columbus)	0
09	1 (Center for Homeownership and Economic Development)	8 (Edgecombe, Nash, Halifax, Warren, Vance, Granville, Franklin, Northampton)	0
10	2 (Hope Station, Greene Lamp)	6 (Hope Station serves Wilson; Greene Lamp serves Duplin, Greene, Lenoir, Sampson, Wayne	0
11	1 (River City Community Development Corporation)	10 (Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell)	0
12	1 (County of Pitt Planning Department)	5 (Pitt, Martin, Beaufort, Washington, Bertie)	0
13	1 (Onslow Community Outreach)	5 (Onslow)	4 (Craven, Jones, Pamlico, Carteret)

ESG Program-Funded Homelessness Prevention Projects			
Region	**# of HP providers**	**Counties Covered with ESG Program-funded HP**	**Counties without ESG Program-funded HP**
01	0	0	8
02	0	0	4
03	0	0	5
04	0	0	5
05	0	0	5
06	0	0	5
07	0	0	9
08	0	0	4
09	0	0	8
10	2 (Hope Station; Greene Lamp)	6 (Hope Station serves Wilson; Greene Lamp serves Duplin, Greene, Lenoir, Sampson, Wayne)	0
11	0	0	10
12	0	0	5
13	0	0	5