

PARTNER BRIEFING · 14 JULY 2026

The FY2026 Continuum of Care Competition

What changed, what it means for Rhode Island providers, and where a free bilingual navigation tool does — and does not — belong in the answer.

\$4.04 billion nationally · **26 August 2026** application deadline · **1 December 2026** awards

Rhode Island operates a single statewide Continuum of Care. Rhode Island Housing is the Collaborative Applicant. The local competition has closed; the consolidated

HOPE — Rhode Island Survival Guide / Guía de Supervivencia de Rhode Island
application is being assembled now.
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Prepared for RI Executive Office of Housing and CoC partner organizations. Every figure is sourced on the final page.

1 • What changed

Reported here as a matter of fact, not of opinion. HOPE takes no position on the policy.

HUD issued the FY2026 Continuum of Care and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program NOFO on **1 June 2026**, making **\$4.04 billion** available. HUD describes it as the largest amount in the program's history, and frames the competition as a deliberate move away from the Housing First orientation that has guided the CoC program for the past decade, toward treatment, recovery, employment and self-sufficiency.

The mechanics that follow from that framing are what providers need to plan around:

- **A \$1.3 billion Tier 2 set-aside for new projects**, with HUD prioritizing new **Transitional Housing (TH)** and **Supportive Services Only (SSO)** awards.
- **Renewals in Tier 2 are effectively deprioritized** — regardless of rank or component type — because that set-aside consumes the tier.
- **At least \$430 million** is reserved for permanent housing serving families with children, beginning with Tier 1 projects.
- **Projects are interdependent.** HUD scores each CoC on merit criteria, and that CoC-level score feeds back into the score of every individual project inside it. A disfavoured project can pull down the whole state's application.

CONGRESS PUSHED BACK FIRST

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75, signed 3 February 2026) provided \$77.3 billion for HUD — a \$7.2 billion increase — and wrote explicit guardrails into law: HUD *must* issue the FY26 NOFO by 1 June, deliver funds by 1 December, and allocate **at least 60% of CoC funding to Tier 1** — permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing.

So there are two forces in the same NOFO: a statutory floor protecting permanent housing, and an administrative ceiling squeezing it. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that **at least 97,000 people currently in CoC-funded permanent housing are at risk of losing it** under HUD's approach. That figure is an advocacy estimate, not a HUD projection, and should be cited as such.

2 • The Rhode Island picture

Single statewide CoC. One application. Everyone in the same boat, including the leak.

Rhode Island has a single Continuum of Care covering the whole state, with **Rhode Island Housing serving as the Collaborative Applicant** — responsible for the consolidated application, the priority listing, and the local competition. The RI Coalition to End Homelessness convenes the provider and advocacy side.

The RICO's local competition RFP was posted in May, with new project applications due **12 June 2026**. **That door has closed for this cycle.** There is no version of this brief in which HOPE, or anyone else, submits a new RI project application before 26 August. What remains open is the consolidated application's narrative, the system-performance story it tells, and the positioning for the next cycle.

Rhode Island is also the venue for the litigation. A federal judge in the District of Rhode Island struck down HUD's 2025 Housing First restrictions on **30 June 2026**, and on **9 July 2026** Rhode Island joined a further

suit over the FY26 changes — with Providence-based Crossroads Rhode Island and Youth Pride Inc. among the plaintiffs, alongside the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

THE HONEST CONSEQUENCE

Every RI provider is now planning against a NOFO that is simultaneously binding and under legal challenge, on a deadline that does not move. Contingency planning is not pessimism this year. It is the work.

3 • The calendar

Dates confirmed against primary sources on 14 July 2026. Confirm the RI-specific rows with the RCoC Coordinator before relying on them.

DATE	WHAT HAPPENS
3 Feb 2026	Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 signed. \$77.3B for HUD; 60% Tier 1 floor written into law.
21 May 2026	HUD announces \$2.4B in FY2025 CoC renewal funding for 4,241 projects expiring in Q3/ Q4 2026.
1 Jun 2026	FY2026 CoC + YHDP NOFO published. \$4.04B.
12 Jun 2026	<i>Closed.</i> RCoC local competition deadline for new project applications.
30 Jun 2026	US District Court (D.R.I.) strikes down HUD's 2025 Housing First restrictions.
9 Jul 2026	Rhode Island joins further litigation over the FY26 changes.
26 Aug 2026	National deadline. CoC consolidated applications due to HUD.
1 Dec 2026	Statutory deadline for HUD to deliver awards.

4 • Where HOPE fits

And, more usefully, where it does not.

The CoC program's own statutory purpose includes promoting *access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs* by people experiencing homelessness. That clause has been in the statute all along; this NOFO's emphasis on self-sufficiency simply raises its salience. It is also a precise description of what HOPE already does, at no cost, in English and Spanish, today.

WHAT HOPE IS

- A free bilingual navigation layer — shelter, food, healthcare, legal aid, benefits, crisis — where **no resource is listed unless a human confirmed it by phone.**
- A paperwork tool that helps people assemble the documents mainstream programs demand, in private, on their own phone.
- A deterministic safety pre-gate aligned with RI S 2195, routing crisis disclosures to 988 / BH Link before any model is called.
- Already deployed. Already free. No procurement required to try it.

WHAT HOPE IS NOT

- **Not a housing program.** It holds no beds and makes no placements.
- **Not a caseworker.** The AI explains and navigates. It never determines eligibility or allocates anything.
- **Not a bed-availability feed.** That was considered and rejected.
- **Not an HMIS input.** HOPE keeps no user records — by design. It cannot feed HMIS and will not be modified to.

That last line is stated plainly because it will otherwise be discovered in a meeting. HOPE's privacy architecture is a deliberate constraint, not a missing feature, and it is the reason people in crisis will use it without an intake form standing between them and a phone number.

5 • Four asks

Small, specific, and none of them require money to move this month.

1. A named seat in the RICOc system-performance conversation

Not a vote. A seat. The consolidated application has to describe how Rhode Island connects people to mainstream benefits. HOPE is already doing that at street level and can supply the description for free.

2. Consideration as an SSO component in the next cycle

Supportive Services Only is the component HUD is actively prioritizing, and it is the one that fits a navigation-and-benefits-access tool without distorting what HOPE is. The June door closed; the next one should not find us unprepared.

3. Adopt HOPE's verified resource feed as a shared source of truth

HOPE now publishes its phone-verified Rhode Island service data in **Open Referral HSDS 3.1** — the same machine-readable standard used by 211 networks and referral platforms. Every record carries `assured_date`: the date a human being telephoned that provider and confirmed the information. Nothing publishes without it. Any RICOc partner, or the State, can consume the feed today at no cost.

4. Clean procurement separation, agreed early

If the State ever deploys HOPE, it should be a **deployment license** — not a work-for-hire, not an assignment of deliverables. HOPE's independence is what makes the verification doctrine credible. An agency cannot certify its own directory as honest; a small nonprofit with nothing to sell but its phone log can. Worth settling on paper before there is money on the table and everyone is in a hurry.

ONE TRUE ANSWER, HONESTLY

HOPE's entire operating doctrine is that no resource is published unless a human being confirmed it by phone, and that the AI explains and navigates but never decides. Under any NOFO, of any administration, that discipline is the only thing HOPE has to offer — and the only thing worth protecting.

6 • Sources

Confirmed against primary and near-primary sources on 14 July 2026. Where a figure is an advocacy estimate rather than a government one, it is labelled above.

- **HUD** — FY2026 CoC + YHDP NOFO announcement and stakeholder memo (1 June 2026); CoC Program page; FY2025 renewal announcement (21 May 2026). hud.gov
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness** — FY2026 CoC Competition NOFO analysis (Tier 2 set-aside, family set-aside, renewal deprioritization). endhomelessness.org
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition** — FY26 NOFO analysis and the 97,000-person estimate. nlihc.org
- **NAHRO / NACo** — FY2026 NOFO summaries; 26 August deadline; Tier 1 protection. nahro.org, naco.org
- **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026** (P.L. 119-75, signed 3 February 2026) — HUD topline, NOFO timing requirements, 60% Tier 1 floor.
- **RI Continuum of Care** — local competition materials and RFP; Rhode Island Housing as Collaborative Applicant. continuumofcareri.com, rihomeless.org
- **Rhode Island Current** — RI joins litigation over HUD grant changes (9 July 2026); D.R.I. ruling on Housing First restrictions (30 June 2026). rhodeislandcurrent.com
- **Open Referral** — Human Services Data Specification 3.1. docs.openreferral.org

VERIFICATION NOTE

This brief is a summary of public reporting and federal documents, not legal or grant-writing advice. The litigation is live and the ground can move. Confirm every Rhode Island date directly with the RICoC Coordinator at Rhode Island Housing before you act on it — which is, after all, the same standard HOPE applies to every phone number it publishes.