

SPAR Program Funding Application Scoring Rubric & Evaluation Form

For Internal Use Only — 2026-2027 Biennium Review Cycle

In the event funding requests exceed available funding, each application that otherwise meets eligibility requirements will be evaluated in the following categories. This rubric is designed to prioritize jurisdictions that demonstrate both community need and readiness to deliver high-quality, client-centered public defense services. Reviewers may award points anywhere in the max point range. Reviewers should use the total score as a guide for funding recommendations, but total scores are not determinative of a funding award. Tie-breakers and narrative portion will also be taken into consideration.

Reviewer Name: _____

Date of Review: _____

Jurisdiction Reviewed: _____

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 100

1. Community Need (0–30 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
High poverty rate, low education & employment rate compared to other applicants, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.	15		
	0 = No indicators; 5 = Some indicators; 10 = Strong economic disadvantage; 15 = Clear poverty metrics present		
High BIPOC population compared to other applicants, based on demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau.	15		
	0 = below average; 5 = average; 10 = above average; 15 = high		
Subtotal	30		

2. Capacity Gap (0–15 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
Limited growth in public defense funding over 3 years	10		
	0 = Increased funding; 5 = Flat funding; 10 = Clear documentation of funding stagnation or cuts		
Delays or limited assignment capacity for defense counsel	5		
	0 = No delays; 3 = Some delay/lag; 5 = Major delays or capacity issues		
Subtotal	15		

3. Quality and Sustainability of Public Defense Services (0–20 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
Clear investment in client-centered, multi-disciplinary defense (e.g., provides funding for experts, investigators, and access to social workers)	10		
	0 = No team roles; 3 = Ad hoc use; 6 = Limited use; 10 = Fully integrated team roles		
Competitive or improving defense attorney compensation	10		
	0 = Significantly underpaid; 3 = Somewhat underpaid; 7 = Moderate or improving rates; 10 = Competitive with prosecutors		
Subtotal	20		

4. Utilization of Alternatives to Prosecution (0–15 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
Pre- or post-charge alternatives to prosecution that emphasize support for the client, e.g. diversion to a Recovery Navigator Program, LEAD, Arrest and Jail Alternative or similar, or therapeutic courts	10		
	0 = None; 5 = Limited or new program; 10 = Multiple, well-integrated alternatives		
Defense attorneys play advisory or advocacy role in post-charge alternatives	5		
	0 = No role; 3 = Passive role; 5 = Active and consistent role		
Subtotal	15		

5. Prior Compliance and Funding History (0–10 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
No prior SPAR funding received	5		
	Yes = 5 pts; No = 0 pts		
Strong compliance or impact from prior OPD grants	5		
	Yes = 5 pts; No = 0 pts		
Subtotal	10		

6. Readiness to Deliver Impact (0–10 points)

Criteria	Max Points	Score	Comments
Clear implementation plan for anticipated use categories	5		
	0 = Vague or no plan; 3 = Partial plan; 5 = Clear, actionable strategy		
Ability to track/report data	5		
	0 = No system; 3 = Limited capacity; 5 = Reliable systems in place		
Subtotal	10		

Final Score Summary

Category	Max Points	Score
Community Need	30	
Capacity Gap	15	
Quality and Sustainability	20	
Utilization of Alternatives	15	
Readiness to Deliver Impact	10	
Prior Compliance and Funding History	10	
Total Score	100	

Tie-Breaker Considerations (Check all that apply):

- ☐ High projected qualifying case volume (AOC data)
- ☐ Gaps in multidisciplinary defense despite existing infrastructure
- ☐ Defense services demonstrates overall alignment with SPAR values

Based on this review, do you recommend funding for this jurisdiction, given limited funding? Why or why not?
