

2024

# HENNEPIN COUNTY'S HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM & CoC GOVERNANCE CHARTER

Hennepin County Continuum of Care structure,  
charter, by-laws and working committees

Approved on 9/19/2024

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## **1. Overview and Purpose**

The requirements of the CoC are established by HUD in § 578.7 of its [CoC Program interim rule](#), as well as the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 and [HUD’s Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System](#). The purpose of this charter is to outline define and describe the roles and responsibilities of the following key stakeholder groups and to outline the roles of each specific to falling into one of the three categories: committees that make decisions, committees that advise, and working

groups. The charter also defines roles of the Continuum of Care (CoC) general membership, CoC Governing board, and other committees that have been appointed to carry out the regulatory requirements for CoC decision making in Hennepin CoC. In doing so, this charter will detail the governance structure of the Hennepin County CoC, and identify the tasks and the objectives of each stakeholder group that is central to the operations of the CoC. In addition to these federal requirements, this charter also integrates state and locally established goals for efforts to prevent and end homelessness in the community, as defined primarily in the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County community's plan to end homelessness. The work of the CoC will be to ensure that the community's vision and the federal, state and local requirements are fully implemented and serve as the guide for local work to prevent and end homelessness.

## **2. Mission and Vision of the CoC**

The mission of the Hennepin County CoC is to facilitate a community-wide process for the implementation of efforts to prevent and end homelessness in the geographic area of the Hennepin County. The primary vision for these efforts is that no person will experience homelessness in the community and that in instances where homelessness does occur it is rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.

## **3. Collaborative Applicant**

The Hennepin County CoC selects Hennepin County Housing Stability as the Collaborative Applicant for the community. In this capacity, Hennepin County will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the CoC's annual Collaborative Applications to HUD. In addition to the completion of the Collaborative Applications, the CoC also places the following responsibilities:

- a. Convene the CoC Board, Decision making, and Advisory committees, as outlined in this charter
- b. Provide staff support for CoC Board, Decision making, and Advisory committees
- c. Submit to HUD of the CoC's Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Housing Inventory Count (HIC), Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, and System Performance Measurement (SPM) data
- d. Serve as the applicant for any HUD CoC Program Planning grants, and complete all related CoC planning activities
- e. Develop and maintain a website for the CoC, which will serve as the primary portal for communications with the membership of the CoC
- f. Develop and maintain a listserv for the CoC membership
- g. Staff and participate in meetings of the CoC membership, CoC Executive Board, and decision making and advisory committees and subcommittees
- h. Facilitate wide understanding and acceptance of national best practices, and communicate goal, barriers and progress to community stakeholders
- i. Produce regular updates for the CoC membership on the operations and decisions of the CoC board, decision & advisory committees
- j. Report to HUD the results of CoC and ESG recipients and subrecipients performance and outcomes
- k. Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s)
- l. Consult with state and local ESG recipients in the geographic area of the CoC on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting/evaluating the performance of ESG programs

- m. Design, operate and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve submissions of applications in response to a CoC Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP).
- n. Establish an appeals and grievance process to consider and resolve conflicts arising from the CoC Program allocation decisions
- o. Convene the full CoC membership at least annually
- p. Apply for, administer and report to HUD for the CoC Planning grant with adherence to the requirements established in the CoC Program Interim Rule – see Attachment A - Planning grant policies/procedures

#### **4. HMIS Lead Agency**

The Hennepin County CoC selects the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) to serve as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agency for their community. ICA is responsible for the strategic development and day-to-day operations of the local HMIS, and ICA works in partnership with other CoCs in Minnesota to implement and govern statewide HMIS implementation. As the HMIS Lead Agency, ICA is responsible for:

- 1. Development of HMIS Policies and Procedures, as well as any annual updates
- 2. Draft of a Data Quality Plan, a Security Plan and a Privacy Plan
- 3. Generation of the CoC’s AHAR, HIC, PIT, and SPM data
- 4. Application of HUD CoC Program HMIS dedicated grant funds
- 5. Annual monitoring of Contributory HMIS Organizations (CHOs) to ensure compliance with all HMIS Policies and Procedures, as well as with HUD regulations

Additional roles and responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency are clarified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that ICA has with the CoC.

#### **5. HMIS Software**

The Hennepin County CoC, in agreement with all other CoCs in the state of Minnesota, selects WellSky as the HMIS software for the CoC. Hennepin County Housing Stability as the Collaborative Applicant will attend the statewide HMIS Governance Board, which is responsible for making the selection of HMIS software and HMIS Lead Agency for the state. The Hennepin County representatives that attend the HMIS Governance Committee will bring relevant decisions to the CoC board.

#### **6. Geographic Boundaries of CoC**

The geographic boundaries of the Hennepin County CoC include the entire County, which includes the city of Minneapolis, as well sixteen additional communities within the 607 square miles of the County.

#### **7. Emergency Solutions Grant Entitlement Areas**

The City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) and the Hennepin County Community Planning and Development (CPD) are the recipients of local Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding from HUD. In accordance with the ESG Program Interim Rule and the requirements

of the CoC Program Interim Rule, CPED and the Hennepin County CoC will collaborate together in the development and implementation of:

- a. A Coordinated Entry system that covers the geographic area of the CoC and meets the requirements of HUD's Coordinated Entry Notice (January 2017)
- b. Written Standards for ESG and CoC Program funded projects
- c. Performance and evaluation standards for ESG and CoC Program funded projects

## 8. Duration of Charter

This Charter shall be adopted on the day it is approved by the Hennepin County CoC general membership. If necessary, the Hennepin County CoC Charter shall be updated and affirmed annually by the CoC Executive Committee in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant (Housing Stability) and the HMIS Lead Agency (ICA). The Charter and the CoC's governance structure shall be reviewed and approved in full every five years by the full Hennepin County CoC general membership.

## 9. CoC General Membership

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the CoC general membership is to represent the diverse perspectives, populations and needs of the community of persons experiencing and working to end homelessness in the CoC. CoC general members will approve the governance charter every 5 years and will participate in an at least annual meeting of the CoC membership, as convened by their Collaborative Applicant (Housing Stability).

### **Group Roles and Responsibilities:**

The *roles and responsibilities* of the CoC **voting** membership will be focused on *providing feedback and input* to help guide the CoC/ESG regulatory required activities in our efforts to end homelessness in the following areas:

1. **Vote** to approve the CoC Governance Charter, no less frequently than every five years
2. **Participate** in CoC Committees and Subcommittees
3. **Review** and provide feedback on community data and analysis related to efforts to prevent and end homelessness
4. **Review** and provide feedback on priorities for funding projects
5. **Review** and provide feedback on the establishment and operations of a centralized or coordinated entry system (CES) in consultation with recipients of ESG funds

### **General Membership Stakeholders:**

Shall be open all persons interested in working to prevent and end homelessness in the Hennepin County CoC. General membership in the CoC ensures community-wide commitment to preventing and ending homelessness and must represent a diverse body of stakeholders from throughout the entire geographic area of the Hennepin County CoC. The intent of the CoC is to be as inclusive as possible to include opinions and insights of various stakeholders.

The Hennepin County CoC general membership may include the following types of stakeholders:

1. Nonprofit homeless assistance providers
2. Victim service providers
3. Faith-based organizations
4. Governments
5. Businesses
6. Advocates
7. Public housing agencies
8. School districts
9. Social service providers
10. Mental health agencies
11. Hospitals
12. Universities
13. Affordable housing developers
14. Law enforcement
15. Organizations that serve veterans
16. Homeless and formerly homeless individuals
17. Foundations, funders
18. Suburban/non-urban representatives
19. Chemical dependency agencies
20. Child welfare

### **Joining the CoC General Voting Membership**

The Hennepin County CoC invites new members to join the CoC on an ongoing basis. Hennepin CoC communicates by public notice and other appropriate media, which may include website announcements and email list serv messages distributed to a wide range of stakeholders and members.

The CoC general membership will include both voting and non-voting members.

- Attend annual stakeholder meetings organized by Hennepin County.
- Support the efforts of individuals appointed to serve on CoC decision making or advisory committees listed in this charter.

Hennepin County Housing Stability in its capacity as the Collaborative Applicant, will be responsible for CoC membership communications and meetings, and will report back through the CoC website and/or CoC newsletter/listserv.

### **Meeting Frequency:**

To fulfill these responsibilities, the full CoC membership will be **convened at least annually** by the collaborative Applicant (Housing Stability). Hennepin County will make a public invitation to all CoC membership meetings, and the agendas and materials of each meeting will be published.

## **10. CoC Governing Board**

## **Purpose:**

The Heading Home Hennepin Executive Committee will serve as the CoC Governing Board. For the purposes of the operations of the CoC, the committee is only charged with the responsibilities that are outlined within this governance charter.

## **Membership:**

The **membership** of the Heading Home Hennepin Executive Committee shall consist of the following types of stakeholders:

1. Elected officials that serve the Hennepin County CoC's geographic area, including the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis, two members of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and two Council Members of the City of Minneapolis
2. Government officials that serve the Hennepin County CoC's geographic area
3. Local community leaders from the Hennepin County CoC's geographic area, including leaders of in the faith, business and philanthropic communities
4. At least two homeless or formerly homeless individuals

## **Membership Selection:**

In addition to the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis, both the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and the Council of the City of Minneapolis appoint two members each to serve on the Executive Committee as 'Standing Members.' In addition, Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis each appoints one lead official to represent their Housing Development departments and Hennepin County appoints one staff representative for the Human Services department.

Agencies that represent key stakeholders in the homeless response system – faith, philanthropy, business, healthcare, public housing, advocacy groups – are identified by the existing membership and invited to nominate representatives to the Executive Committee. Pursuant to §578.95 of the [CoC Program Interim Rule](#), all members of the CoC Executive Board must sign a conflict of interest statement. The conflict of interest statements must affirm that CoC Executive Board members will not participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents.

## **Membership Terms:**

Standing members serve for the duration of their term in office. Members with terms serve for three-year renewable terms.

## **Group Roles and Responsibilities:**

The *roles and responsibilities* of the CoC Executive Board are as follows:

1. **Approve** priorities for funding projects (CoC and YHDP)
2. **Approve** the CoC's annual collaborative application to HUD (CoC and YHDP)
3. **Approve** an appeals and grievance process to consider and resolve conflicts arising from CoC Program allocation decisions (CoC and YHDP)
4. **Approve** planning grant activities in accordance with the CoC Interim Rule (see Planning grant policies and procedures)
5. **Designate** a Collaborative Applicant to submit the CoC Program application on behalf of the CoC membership

6. Act as champions for efforts to prevent and end homelessness, as evidenced through public advocacy, funding and external communications
7. Provide an enduring forum for broad-based, collaborative and strategic leadership on homelessness in Hennepin County in alignment with Heading Home Hennepin County

### **Meeting Frequency:**

To fulfill these roles and responsibilities, the CoC Executive committee will be ***convened by the Collaborative Applicant on a quarterly basis***. If there is a need for a decision to be made in between CoC Executive committee meetings, then the chair/vice chair of the committee shall be allowed to vote on the matter. The membership, agendas, and minutes of each CoC Executive committee meeting will be made available to the CoC membership. CoC membership is welcome to attend meetings of the CoC Executive committee but will not have any voting privileges unless they are seated on the board.

### **Conflict of Interest:**

Pursuant to §578.95 of the [CoC Program interim rule](#), all members of the CoC Board must sign a conflict of interest statement (see Addendum B). The conflict of interest statements must affirm that CoC Board members will not participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents.

### **Conflict of Interest & Recusal**

It is the policy of the Hennepin CoC that a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the Board or any of its official committees and the organizations, which are receiving awards of grants or benefitting from other business items, shall in all cases be avoided. No member of the CoC (Board, Committee, Member, Agent or employee of Agent) shall vote or make recommendations on funding decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits that:

- Directly benefits them as an individual, or an immediate family member;
- Directly benefits any organization in which they have a direct financial interest;
- Directly benefits any organization with which they are affiliated in an official capacity; or
- Directly benefits any organization from which they derive financial benefit, exclusive of stipends.

To that end, neither Board nor Committee members whose organizations are submitted in the HUD CoC Application and ranked for that application may vote on ranking policies. Such members may participate in the development of performance targets and the evaluation tool. Persons with lived homeless experience who receive services from an organization that may directly benefit from a funding decision may vote or make recommendations on funding decisions.

Members of the CoC will disclose potential conflicts of interest that they may have regarding any matters that come before the Hennepin CoC in full session, Board or committee.

### **Procedure**

- Annual disclosures: All voting members will make a full, written disclosure to the executive committee of interests, relationships, and investments that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and be updated annually. If it is not entirely clear whether a Conflict of Interest exists, then the voting member must disclose the circumstances to the executive committee to determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest.

- Meeting discussions: A voting member who knows he or she has a Conflict of Interest must not participate in the discussion except to share essential facts and to respond to questions. The person must not attempt to influence the Board’s action, either at or outside the meeting.
- Voting: A voting member who knows he, she, or they has a Conflict of Interest on an issue may not vote on that issue. The meeting Chair will announce upcoming votes in agendas, and a voting member who knows he or she has a Conflict of Interest must disclose that they have a Conflict of Interest. Voting members are encouraged to contact the executive committee to disclose but may also disclose during the meeting. The disclosure must be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

**Quorum**

- A majority of 51% of the voting membership constitute a quorum at all meetings of the Hennepin CoC Executive committee.
- For purposes of time-sensitive and/or critical votes, an email vote may be used. On the direction of the CoC Board, e-votes may be initiated by the Collaborative Applicant. More than 51% of the voting membership must respond to the e-vote for the vote to be accepted.
- If it is not possible to obtain a quorum of voting members who do not have a Conflict of Interest, the issue can be approved by a majority vote of voting members without a Conflict of Interest whom have been approved by the Committee.

**Membership:**

The CoC Board will a **minimum of 7 and maximum of 21 Board** members.

**Leadership Positions:**

The CoC Board will be led by two Co-Chairs. All leadership positions will be nominated and voted on by the membership of the Board and will serve staggered terms. Annually, the CoC Board will affirm or adjust the leadership of their group.

The two Co-**Chairs** will be responsible for:

- Facilitate the Board meetings
- Work in partnership with Housing Stability staff to set the agenda for each meeting, prepare materials, and complete any necessary follow-up work
- Engage with the Committee’s membership to ensure buy-in and active participation

**Membership Stakeholders**

Membership and leadership of the CoC Board should consist of the following types of stakeholders, and should include racial, gender, faith, age and geographic diversity. Please note that members can represent multiple stakeholder groups.

**11. CoC Committees and Subcommittees**

There are several active and engaged CoC Committees, Subcommittees, and Working Groups in Hennepin County that are focused on contributing to and leading efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Hennepin County, as the CoC lead agency is responsible for supporting each CoC committee, identifying a facilitative lead and project manager, managing communications, and

accessibility for interested members. Committees will be established to conduct the functions necessary to support the CoC mission and meet funding obligations. The CoC may establish committees that are made up of CoC members to act on behalf of the CoC as needed beyond those listed below as needed. There are several active and engaged decision making, advisory and work groups in Hennepin County that are focused on contributing to and leading efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The CoC identifies the following committees as the groups that are responsible for assisting in and informing the operations of the CoC and acknowledges that this list is not exhaustive of every entity working to prevent and end homelessness in the community. In order to clarify roles/responsibilities of each committee below, each CoC committee will be identified as a decision-making, advisory, or a working group.

The CoC lead gives authority to the CoC committees for specific responsibilities that are required by the CoC Interim Rule, and designated to each committee, and are outlined below:

### **DECISION-MAKING COMMITTEES:**

The below decision-making committees are designated by the CoC Collaborative Applicant and board to make decisions on the following tasks:

#### **HMIS Statewide Governing board**

Task: 10 CoC's, State of Minnesota partners (MHFA and DHS), and the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative have formed a statewide HMIS board to assure we are getting what we need from HMIS in our efforts to prevent and end homelessness across the state. This board has representation from all 3 groups and is responsible for working with our HMIS lead agency, the Institute for Community Alliance to assure federal compliance and state requirements for use of the data system.

- **Review and revise** HMIS policies/procedures

#### **CoC Funding Committee**

Task: monitors and evaluates the performance of all projects funded by CoC. Provides advice to Hennepin County on Rapid Rehousing (RRH) projects funded with Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP). The committee solicits new project applications and recommends final funding decisions for CoC funds, and supports selection of providers who will be awarded FHPAP and other county funding.

- **Advise** ranking and develop continuous improvement plans
- **Approve** CoC project performance targets and performance metrics for FHPAP RRH projects
- **Approve** Hennepin CoC Written Standards
- **Approve** a score tool and quarterly monitoring report
- **Review & summarize** results of monitoring quarterly for all funds & for CoC, take action against poor performers
- **Develop recommendations** by way of an annual Needs & Gaps analysis to the CoC board for funding priorities. Together with the RRH Collective, develops similar recommendations to Hennepin County for FHPAP and other County funding.

#### **Hennepin County Coordinated Entry System Leadership Group**

Task: provide the guidance and decisions necessary to successfully operate the CES system throughout Hennepin County.

- **Approve** the documentation and policies necessary to establish & operate a CES system

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES:**

The below committees are in an advisory capacity for either federal, state or local funds. The final decisions are made by the various funders.

### **Rapid Re-Housing Collective**

Task: help put into effect the 10-year plan’s recommendations for rapid rehousing. It oversees and directs the system for rapid re-housing from homelessness. It also oversees the system’s related funding (state family homeless prevention and assistance program, U.S. Housing and Urban Development emergency solutions grant and the continuum of care program). This builds on the continuum of care's homeless prevention and assistance program for single adults, families with children and youth.

Together with the Funding Committee, the Rapid Rehousing Collective guides strategic direction, policy, and funding decisions related to Rapid Rehousing. As determined by the CoC governing board, the Rapid Re-Housing Collective will serve in either an Advisory role the Continuum of Care Governing Board or be empowered by the Continuum of Care Governing Board to make operational, program design, and funding decisions necessary to carry out the CoC’s 10-year plan for Rapid Rehousing. The Rapid Re-Housing Collective will ultimately take direction from, are accountable to, and will report to the Hennepin CoC Governing Board.

### **Prevention Coordination Governing Group (PCGG)**

Task: To inform planning and implement decisions for Hennepin County’s homeless prevention coordination system (PCS) resulting from statewide prevention redesign for people experiencing housing instability.

- Review and discuss how the system is working and give feedback or make recommendations for what needs to be iterated, scaled or improved
- Utilize personal experience to give advice on system improvement decisions
- Decide what information should be brought to the larger community and why

### **Lived Expertise Advisory Group (LEAG)**

Task: Consultants that advise and provide recommendations and feedback on various sectors and cross sections of Hennepin’s homeless response system.

- **Advise** Hennepin County on Request for Proposal applicants
- **Advise** Hennepin County by serving on various panels, work groups and committees

### **Youth Action Board (YAB)**

Task: The YAB makes decisions in HC and works to simplify the system for youth (16-24) experiencing homelessness and creates a bridge for those who serve and make decisions on behalf of youth and youth who are at-risk of and currently experiencing homeless. This is done through communication, mentorship, community building, advocacy, and building and taking action.

## **WORKING GROUPS:**

### **Unsheltered/Encampment group**

Task: An opportunity for multi-disciplinary communication and coordination for unsheltered households in Hennepin County. Meeting standing agenda will focus on high level updates and information sharing to support the work of responding to unsheltered homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

### **Rapid Rehousing group**

Task: The RRH Providers Committee is comprised entirely of rapid rehousing providers within Hennepin County. The purpose of the RRH Providers Committee is to provide timely input and feedback on RRH policy and program design to the Rapid Re-Housing Collective; and also creates space for provider networking, peer support, and training. It's members bring insights into program and policy design to the RRH Collective through overlap in membership between the two groups.

### **Shelter Efficiency Committee**

Task: improve the homeless shelter system for single adults. This group identifies barriers (in policy and programs) for single adult shelters and coordinates services for adults in shelter. It also enables more effective community-wide strategies to end homelessness. All shelter Executive directors meet quarterly with this group to further strategize as a shelter system.

### **Veterans Leadership - Hennepin County**

Task: to convene federal, state & local veteran agencies and service providers serving veterans to develop strategies that prevent and end homelessness for all veterans in Hennepin County.

## **Communications Strategy**

The primary method for providing communications to the community on the efforts of the CoC, shall be through the utilization of a CoC website and CoC newsletter and listserv. This publicly available website will be managed by the Hennepin CoC Communications coordinator, and will be the hub for critical documents and communications about the CoC, including:

1. CoC Board and committee meeting minutes, agendas and documents
2. Annual applications to HUD on behalf of the CoC
3. Resources for the CoC, including copies of written standards, policies and procedures, the latest federal guidance and proven practices, etc.
4. Links to how to connect with each Board, committee and Housing Stability planners that work with the CoC

## **Amendments to this Agreement**

The Charter can be updated annually and affirmed as necessary by the CoC Executive Committee in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant (Hennepin County) and the HMIS Lead Agency (ICA). The Charter shall be reviewed and approved in full every five years by the full CoC membership.

