



The Way Home Continuum of Care Charter

1. Purpose of the Charter

This Charter sets out the composition, roles, responsibilities and committee structure of The Way Home Continuum of Care (CoC) whose jurisdiction includes the Houston, Pasadena, Conroe/Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery Counties.

2. Purpose of the Continuum of Care

The purpose of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care is to create a collaborative, inclusive, community-based process and approach to planning for and managing homeless assistance resources and programs effectively and efficiently to end homelessness in the jurisdiction as specified in Department of Housing and Urban Development, 24 CFR Part 578, Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Continuum of Care Program.

3. CoC Steering Committee

A. Roles and Responsibilities of Steering Committee

The CoC Steering Committee is the lead decision-making body responsible for managing community planning, coordination and evaluation to ensure that the system of homeless services and housing rapidly ends people's homelessness permanently. This includes planning for the use of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HEARTH CoC resources and coordinating these funds with other relevant resources in the jurisdiction.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Providing overall direction and leadership of the process;
- Making all formal decisions of the CoC;
- Leading strategic planning and goal-setting;
- Aligning and coordinating CoC and other homeless assistance and mainstream resources;
- Ensuring the availability of data for planning;
- Establishing priorities for and making recommendations to HUD about the allocation of CoC resources;
- Establishing system and program outcomes for evaluation purposes;
- Monitoring and evaluating both system wide and individual program performance on established goals;
- Receiving reports and recommendations from sub-committees and task groups;
- Establishing sub-committees and task groups as needed to perform CoC functions;
- Selecting the lead support agency and HMIS administrator;
- Entering into all contracts and MOUs on behalf of the CoC;
- Monitoring performance under these contracts; and
- Distributing official communications from the CoC.

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B. Members of the Steering Committee

The membership of the Steering Committee consists of up to 16 designated seats as outlined below. Each Steering Committee member must have the fiscal and program authority of the organization they represent.

- City of Houston Housing and Community Development
- Harris County Community Services Division
- City of Houston Public Housing Authority
- Harris County Public Housing Authority
- Fort Bend Community Development Department
- Pasadena Community Development Department
- Montgomery County Community Development Department
- Two Service or Housing Provider Representatives
- Two Consumer Representatives
- Funders Together Representative
- Four At-large Representatives from Public/Government/Academic Organizations (e.g., Health, Mental Health, Veterans Administration, Workforce Investment Board, University, etc.)

C. Selection of Steering Committee Members

- Each Steering Committee member that is a named organization or jurisdiction selects or appoints its representative(s) to the committee.
- Provider representatives are selected by the CoC Provider Forum.
- Consumer representatives are selected from the Community Input Forum participants. These representatives may be receiving services from agencies funded through the Continuum of Care process.
- At-large representatives are selected by a vote of the members of the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee can add new members by a majority vote of the existing members.

D. Terms

- For those members who represent a government department or organization, that person may serve as long as they continue to hold the same job/position.
- For those members who represent a segment of the population or a named organization, the term of office is two years. These members may serve up to three consecutive terms.
- A member may be reelected to the Steering Committee after a period of twelve (12) months of non-service.
- A term year is a calendar year, January through December.
 - Members that fail to attend regularly scheduled meetings shall be subject to removal from the Steering Committee by vote of the Committee if they attend less than 75% of meetings. The Steering Committee will require the appointing and electing agencies to appoint a substitute in the event of the removal of a member of the Steering Committee. Attendance may be via virtual meeting.

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E. Steering Committee Meetings, Quorum and Voting

- The Steering Committee shall meet no less frequently than every quarter.
- A quorum will be one-half plus one of the seats on the Steering Committee. In the event that all seats are not filled at any given time, a quorum will be one-half plus one of the total number of seats filled.
- The vote of a majority of members present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present is enough to constitute an act of the Steering Committee.
- Voting may be done via virtual meeting participation.

F. Conflicts of Interest

Steering Committee members with actual or perceived conflicts of interest must identify them as they arise. Individuals with a conflict of interest may participate in all discussion but should abstain from voting on any issue in which they may have a conflict. No member of the Steering Committee shall vote upon any matter which shall have a direct financial bearing on the organization that the member represents or sits as a board member on the organization. This includes all decisions with respect to funding, awarding contracts, and implementing corrective actions.

G. Compensation of Members

Steering Committee members will receive no compensation for their duties. They may receive direct expense reimbursement for any expenses incurred for activities directed by the Steering Committee. Consumer Representatives will be reimbursed for travel and meeting time.

H. Officers of the Steering Committee

There will be three officers of the Steering Committee – Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. These positions will be recommended by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Steering Committee. Each officer will have a one year term with an optional additional one year renewal. Renewal options will be recommended by the Nominating Committee.

- Chair – The Chair will preside at all meetings of the Steering Committee. Subject to the direction of the Steering Committee, the Chair shall give oversight to the development of policies and execution of the policies and programs of the Continuum of Care. The Chair will perform other duties prescribed by the Steering Committee and all duties incident to the office of Chair of the Steering Committee.
- Vice Chair – The Vice Chair will preside over meetings of the Steering Committee in the absence of the Chairman and assist the Chair and the Steering Committee on matters as may be requested from time to time.
- Secretary – The Secretary will (or delegate to another) give all notices of meeting dates, times and locations, take minutes of the meetings and keep the minutes as part of the corporate records. The Secretary will perform duties incident to the office of the Secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the Chair or Steering Committee.

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I. Standing Committees

The Chair may establish standing committees as may be necessary to conduct the business of the Steering Committee. The Chair shall appoint the members of each committee established. The current standing committee is the Nominations Committee. No standing committee has the authority to act on behalf of the Corporation beyond duties described in the following sections.

- Nominations Committee Duties:
 - Recommend members to fill the positions of:
 - Four At-large Representatives from Public/Government/Academic Organizations (e.g., Health, Mental Health, Veterans Administration, School District, Workforce Investment Board, University, etc.)
 - Recommend a slate of officers annually.

4. Organization of the CoC

The Continuum of Care is comprised of several volunteer committees and task workgroups which have various roles and responsibilities. These committees/groups include but are not limited to the following:

- CoC Provider Forum
 - The CoC Provider Forum is the primary policy, input and planning group for the CoC provider community. Members of the CoC Provider Forum will include all homeless service provider agencies (see CoC Membership Policy). Participation in the CoC Provider Forum is vital to the CoC planning process.
 - The CoC Provider Forum shall elect the two service or housing provider representatives to the Steering Committee. These elected representatives will be the intermediary between the Steering Committee and the provider community.
 - The CoC Provider Forum will convene no less than quarterly and may convene for special meetings when needed.
 - The CoC Provider Forum will review the annual update to the CoC Charter.
- Consumer Input Forum
 - The Consumer Input Forum is the primary vehicle through which the CoC gathers input from the consumer population. Members of the Consumer Input Forum will include those currently experiencing homelessness and those who have formerly experienced homelessness.
 - The two consumer representatives to the CoC Steering Committee will be selected from participants in the Consumer Input Forums. These representatives, in cooperation with the Lead Agency, will convene forums no less than twice a year to gather input to inform the CoC Steering Committee in their decision making.
- HMIS Forum

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- The Houston/Harris County HMIS will conduct quarterly HMIS Forums open to the public and specifically participating agency HMIS users and managers. The Forum will offer community reports on performance measures and provide user training opportunities when necessary. Notice of the Forum will be sent in advance to the HMIS e-mail distribution list.
- HMIS Support Committee
 - The primary role of this committee is to guide policy decisions for the HMIS program. This committee will be responsible for providing input into the overall HMIS structure and assist in reviewing existing policies and procedures as well as recommending additional items as needed based HUD's HMIS Data Standards, local needs to include both HUD funded and non-HUD funded agencies. The HMIS Support Committee will convene subcommittees as needed which will report back to the HMIS Support Committee recommendations for action.
- Provider Affinity Groups
 - Provider Affinity Groups include existing and to be formed work groups focused on planning around specific program types or system components such as prevention/diversion, permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, outreach, etc. These groups include staff from provider and government organizations, consumers, funders, etc.
- Population Specific Work Groups
 - Provider Specific Work Groups include both existing and to be formed groups focused on planning for the needs of specific sub-populations such as Domestic Violence Survivors and Youth/Young Adults. These groups include staff from provider and government organizations, consumers, funders, etc.
- Task Specific Work Groups
 - Task Specific Work Groups include both existing and to be formed groups focused on planning for a task specific activity or function such as the Homeless Count, Community Conversation Planning, 25 Cities, Housing Houston's Heroes, and the 100,000 Homes Campaign. These groups include staff from provider and government organizations, consumers, funders, etc.

5. Lead Agency

The CoC Steering Committee shall appoint a lead agency to provide staff and leadership to the various committees and work groups that constitute the CoC. The lead agency will perform a variety of necessary functions such as performance monitoring, workgroup facilitation, provider training, technical assistance, CoC coordination, leadership, advocacy, engagement and education of stakeholders and submission of the annual collaborative CoC grant application. The Steering Committee will maintain an MOU agreement with the lead agency that is reviewed and updated periodically, at a minimum, biennially. The lead agency will be eligible to apply for CoC planning and Coordinated Access funds through the CoC grant process when available. These funds will be used to provide dedicated staff and resources to leadership and work of the CoC including the CoC

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Steering Committee as specified by HUD guidelines. At this time, the Coalition for the Homeless has been designated as the lead agency for the counties of Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery and the cities of Houston, Pasadena and Conroe.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Provide leadership to CoC stakeholders regarding best practices, system planning and direction
- Facilitate workgroups
- Produce planning materials
- Coordinate Needs/Gaps Assessments
- Convene Provider and Consumer Forums
- Coordinate annual homeless “point in time” count
- Collect and report CoC and program performance data
- Monitor program performance
- Coordinate resources, integrate activities and facilitate collaboration
- Prepare collaborative application for CoC funds
- Apply for the CoC Planning Funds as available
- Act as collaborative applicant for other funds as deemed necessary and appropriate to meet CoC goals
- Provide technical assistance and training to CoC members
- Represent progress and learnings of the CoC in state and national forums
- Build awareness
- Recruit Stakeholders
- Analyze and report on CoC expansion opportunities for the CoC Steering Committee
- Perform all administrative and supportive tasks of the CoC

6. HMIS Administrator

The CoC Steering Committee shall select an administrator for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the CoC. The Steering Committee will maintain an HMIS Governance Agreement with the HMIS administrator. This agreement is updated periodically, at a minimum, annually. The administrator is eligible to apply for HMIS funds through the CoC grant process and other sources and will use these funds to dedicate staff and resources to the functions of the HMIS as specified by HUD guidelines.

At this time, the Coalition for the Homeless has been designated as the HMIS administrator for the CoC which includes the counties of Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery and the cities of Houston, Pasadena and Conroe.

The HMIS administrator will be responsible for the following:

- Execute HMIS participation agreements;
- Monitor compliance with applicable HMIS standards on a regular basis;
- Establish and review annually End User Agreements;

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- Maintain and update as needed the files for HMIS software to include software agreements, HUD Technical Submissions, HUD executed agreements and Annual Progress Reports;
- Develop and maintain HMIS agency files to include original signed participation agreements, original signed user license agreements and all other original signed agreements pertaining to HMIS;
- Develop and update as needed a Data Quality Plan;
- Review and update HMIS Privacy Policy yearly;
- Develop and review annually the HMIS Security Plan, including disaster planning and recovery strategy;
- Review and update as needed HMIS Policies and Procedures;
- Provide copies of the Data Quality Plan, Privacy Policy, Security Plan and Policy and Procedures to the HMIS Steering Committee for review and feedback on an annual basis;
- Review national, state and local laws that govern privacy or confidential protections and make determinations regarding relevancy to existing HMIS policies;
- Provide new user training and refresher user training monthly;
- Pro-actively contact new users for immediate follow up and issuance of username and password to access HMIS in an effort to begin entry of data as soon as possible following training;
- Provide on-site technical support to agencies using HMIS for trouble-shooting and data input;
- Maintain performance dashboards based on HMIS data;
- Monitor data quality and provide corrective feedback to participating programs;
- Monthly review of HMIS data and bed lists to ensure that participating agency programs are using HMIS accurately;
- Provide assistance to agencies upon request for additional on-site training and support
- Conduct unduplicated accounting of homelessness annually.

7. Reporting

- Proceedings of all Steering Committee meetings are documented in minutes.
- Minutes of all meetings are circulated and approved at the subsequent meeting. Once approved, minutes are made available electronically to the public.