



Three County Continuum of Care (MA-507)

Collaborative Applicant: Community Action Pioneer Valley

Governance Charter

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Mission Statement of the Three County Rural Continuum of Care

The Three County Continuum of Care (CoC) MA-507 promotes and guides a community-wide vision, strategy, and commitment to efforts to prevent and end homelessness; mobilizes funding; improves coordination and integration of mainstream resources and programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness through a housing first model; and establishes system-wide data collection and performance measurement practices to ensure successful housing strategies and equitable housing for vulnerable populations. The CoC strives to engage funded projects in processes and procedures that are anti-racist, free of bias, and advance the priorities of those most impacted by housing instability and homelessness. The CoC geography includes Franklin, Hampshire, and Berkshire Counties in Western Massachusetts.

Continuum of Care Overview and Requirements

CoC Requirements

1. Ensure that the Collaborative Applicant and its sub-recipients are meeting the responsibilities of the HUD regulations;
2. Represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations;
3. Support homeless persons in their movement from homelessness to economic stability and affordable permanent housing within a supportive community;
4. Ensure that the CoC engages in processes and procedures that foster learning, growth, & accessibility inclusive of the needs and perspectives of Berkshire, Hampshire and Franklin Counties homeless population, including supportive services and housing needs of homeless subpopulations (particularly youth and those which are disproportionately impacted by homelessness); and
5. Facilitate responses to issues and concerns that affect the agencies funded by the CoC that are beyond those addressed in the annual CoC application process.

CoC Responsibilities

1. *Operate the CoC, meaning:*
 - a. Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least annually.
 - b. Invite new membership within the geographic area at least annually.
 - c. Adopt and follow a written process to select Board members to act on behalf of the CoC members. The process is reviewed, updated, and approved by the larger CoC membership at least once every 5 years.
 - d. Appoint, create, and support committees, sub-committees, or workgroups based on current practices and available resources regarding changes in HUD's expectations or the needs of the communities we serve.
 - e. In consultation with the CoC Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, develop, follow, and update annually, this governance charter, to include all procedures and policies needed to comply with CoC requirements as prescribed by HUD; and a code of conduct and recusal process for the Board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the Board.

- f. Consult with recipients and sub-recipients of CoC funding to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type, monitor recipient and subrecipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers.
 - g. Evaluate outcomes of projects funded under the Emergency Solutions Grants program in the three counties (hereinafter referred to as “ESG” and the CoC program, and report to HUD;
 - h. In consultation with recipients of ESG funds, establish and operate a centralized; coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services, includes sub-regional components, and recognizes the individual nature and needs of specific subpopulations, as well as addresses and accounts for vulnerability factors which affect how these practices may not be equitable (*see written standards for CE.*).
 - i. Establish a set of written standards for the provision and prioritization of CoC and ESG resources, consistent with the requirements in the HUD CoC Program Interim Rule.
2. *Designate and operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), meaning:*
- a. Designate a single HMIS for the geographic area.
 - b. Designate an eligible applicant to manage the CoC’s HMIS, within or outside of the agency representing the Collaborative Applicant.
 - c. Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS, inclusive of the needs of our funded and un-funded projects.
 - d. Ensure consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients of CoC and ESG funding in the HMIS.
 - e. Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.
3. *Continuum of Care planning, meaning the CoC must develop a plan that includes:*
- a. Coordination and implementation of a housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of the homeless individuals and families - including unaccompanied youth, people with disabilities, people who identify as LGBTQ, and people of color. At a minimum, such a system encompasses the following:
 - i. Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
 - ii. Shelter, housing, and supportive services;
 - iii. Prevention strategies.
 - b. Planning for and conducting, at least biennially, or as expected by HUD, a Point-in-Time (PIT) count of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets the following requirements:
 - i. Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered homeless persons.
 - ii. Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered homeless persons.
 - iii. Other requirements established by HUD by Notice.
 - c. Conducting an annual housing inventory count of programs and housing services available within the geographic area;
 - d. Providing information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC’s geographic area;



- e. Consulting with state and local government ESG program recipients for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and sub-recipients.

CoC Membership

Membership Composition

The membership of the CoC is defined as those persons and organizations attending committee meetings or workgroups; providing lived expertise; representing projects funded by the CoC; coordinated entry partners; and/or is a member of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness.

Membership in the CoC is open to all stakeholders in Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties, including people with lived experience of homelessness, political subdivisions and other government organizations, businesses, homeless service providers, victim service providers, faith communities, social service providers, organizations that serve veterans, funding entities, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, advocacy groups, hospitals/medical providers, behavioral health providers, landlords, public housing authorities, school systems and universities, law enforcement and the corrections system, and the local Workforce Investment Act board. We look specifically to engage businesses and organizations who interface regularly with people whose housing is insecure.

New members may enroll at any time during the year by providing to the CoC Board Secretary or any CoC staff their contact information and any relevant affiliations.

Responsibilities of Members

Per this charter, most of the responsibilities of the CoC outlined above will be carried out by the CoC's Board and Lead Agency, with the following exceptions:

- Members will vote directly to approve the governance framework set forth in this Governance Charter and any subsequent changes or additions to the Governance Charter;
- Members will review, update, and approve changes to the Governance Charter at least annually;
- Members will review, update/approve the CoC Board Selection process at least every five years;
- Members will participate in CoC committee meetings and/or participate in the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness: and
- Unless the Board selection process is changed by a subsequent amendment to the Governance Charter, members will vote annually to elect Directors to available CoC Board positions.

Member Meetings

The full membership of the CoC shall meet at least twice per Federal Fiscal Year. The membership meetings shall include a report on the CoC's activities, funding, and progress toward meeting goals, and be open to members of the general public.

Annual Member Meetings will be held in the Winter and Spring. The agenda for the Annual Meetings will include:

- The election of Directors to serve on the Board based on open or vacant seats;

- A review of any proposed changes to the CoC Governance Charter, HMIS Charter and Coordinated Entry Written Standards followed by a vote to incorporate those changes;
- Opportunity for training and evaluation of the work of the CoC.
- Any other business the Board chooses to put before its members;
Members may propose to the Board in advance topics or areas of business.

Notice of Annual Member Meetings

Notice of the place, date and time of Member Meetings shall be sent to members by email or other reasonable means of communication at least 30 business days before the meeting date. Voting matters may also be added to the agenda by suggestion of the Board within the final 10 days prior, if such a matter presents that it requires immediate action.

Quorum and Voting

The members present at any properly announced meeting of CoC members shall constitute a quorum.

Commitment to Diversifying CoC Membership- Board and Committees

The Three County CoC is committed to having a Membership that reflects the diversity of populations served by the CoC, including diversity in race, ethnicity, gender identify, sexuality, disability, geography, housing status, languages spoken, and lived experience of homelessness. The CoC shall conduct periodic surveys to evaluate diversity of current membership to identify diversity needs.

CoC Board of Directors

The CoC shall be governed by a Board, which will provide oversight and accountability for all CoC responsibilities and carry out all CoC duties except those described above as being the responsibility of the CoC Membership. The Board serves as the HUD-designated primary decision-making group of the Three County Continuum of Care. The Board is elected by the general membership and given decision making and delegation authority. The CoC shall commit to having Board representation that reflects the diversity of populations served by the CoC.

CoC Board Responsibilities:

- a. Act on behalf of the CoC to fulfill the regulatory duties of a Continuum of Care set forth in 24 CFR 578.
- b. Designate or reaffirm a Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead Agency, and HMIS implementation vendor no less than annually.
- c. Maintain responsibility for approval and implementation of all CoC policies, procedures and business.
- d. Attend Board meetings quarterly
- e. Read the final approved application annually as well as HUDs final ranking of the Three County CoC and address areas for growth, provide assistance in meeting the outcomes stated and measured.
- f. Evaluate the CoC's progress in adhering to its written standards and policies and procedures bi-annually.
- g. Recognize and promote the CoC's positive outcomes, growth and successes



- h. Support the CoC in addressing challenges faced.
- i. Evaluate Funded Project challenges and provide the CoC Collaborative Applicant with support in addressing and meeting needs.
- j. Chair Committees of the CoC & periodically review minutes of the CoC's committee meetings.
- k. Develop and support efforts for Strategic Planning for the CoC
- l. Represent the Continuum of Care in outreach and community engagement events

Quorum, Voting, and Conflicts

A number equal to a majority of those serving on the Board being present, in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. Board Members may, when necessary, participate and vote via phone/internet and vote via email; however, Board Members are strongly encouraged to attend meetings in person when possible and in person participation is planned.

For the purposes of quorum and any voting matters, only one individual may represent a single organization. Any cross-affiliations or potential conflicts of interest will be disclosed to the Board, prior to a vote. In certain circumstances, members of the Board will not vote (For example: during Project Ranking and Evaluation, Board members affiliated with CoC Funded Projects will not vote on Ranking or Tier placement for any projects.)

No member may vote on any item which presents a real or perceived conflict of interest. All Board members must complete and submit a Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Agreement and act in accordance with the conflict-of-interest policies in this charter.

At all Board meetings, business items may be decided by arriving at a consensus. If a vote is necessary, all votes shall be by voice or ballot. The majority of the members comprising a quorum, as defined above, shall constitute a final decision of the Board. Each individual shall have one vote (regardless of how many permanent seats that individual represents).

Board members may be removed from the Board by a majority vote of remaining Board members for repeated absence, misconduct, failure to participate, or violation of conflict-of-interest policies.

Board Meetings

The Board shall meet no less than quarterly but may meet more often if necessary. An annual schedule of quarterly meetings will be developed by the Board Co-Chair(s) with assistance from the Board Secretary. Additional meetings may be called by the Board Chair(s); other Board Members may request additional meetings to be called by the Co-Chairs. The Collaborative Applicant may request to hold meetings of the Board.

Notice of the place, date and time of additional Board Meetings shall be sent to members by email or other reasonable means of communication at least 15 business days before the meeting date. The meeting agenda, to include any voting matters, will be distributed at least 7 days of the meeting. Voting matters may also be added to the agenda by suggestion of the Board at any time.



Action Without a Meeting

Any action that may be taken at any meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting if that action is approved, in writing (i.e., letter, email) by a majority of the Board membership. Reasonable opportunity and time for consideration and discretion in ensuring fairness are expected when action is taken without a meeting.

Board of Directors Permanent Seat Allocations

*At minimum, the Board of Directors shall include the following:

- Berkshire County Representative
- Hampshire County Representative
- Franklin County Representative
- Homeless Advocate
- Homeless or formerly Homeless Individual(s)
- McKinney Vento Education Liaison Representative
- Western MA Regional Network to End Homelessness Representative
- ESG Representative(s)
- Domestic Violence Service Provider Representative
- Youth Action Board representative
- Affordable Housing Developer or Advocate
- College Representatives
- Employment Representative
- Department of Children and Families (required for YHDP funded CoCs)
- Public Housing Authority
- Shelter Provider

Board Recruitment Priorities & Suggestions:

- Representatives from HUDs priority populations/those with experience of marginalization: chronic, youth, family, individual, veteran, domestic violence survivor, GLBTQ, persons with disabilities, persons with lived experience of homelessness, BIPOC.

A single individual may represent more than one of these permanent seats at the discretion and approval of the Board.

Board Officers

The officers of the Board shall be two (2) Co-Chairs, except when no second nominee is able to be identified. A representative of the Collaborative Applicant will act as Secretary.

Election and Term

The Board membership consists of 16-30 members with some entities afforded permanent seats to the Board, as described below. The CoC encourages other stakeholder nominations in addition to those listed as permanent seats. Members serve 2-year terms with no limit to the number of consecutive terms served.



The Board will elect the officers as terms deem necessary or at any properly called meeting.

Board Co-Chairs shall hold office for a term of one (1) year or until their successors have been elected and qualified. Co-Chairs may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms.

The Secretary will be a non-voting position filled by the CoC Collaborative Applicant. The Secretary position is not bound by term limits. The Secretary may not serve as a Co-Chair to the Board.

Officer Vacancies

Vacancies among the officers may be filled by a vote of the majority of the Board representatives at any meeting at which a quorum is present. Unless otherwise provided by written agreement, any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to a Co-chair and the Secretary. Any such resignations shall take effect at the time specified within the written notice or if the time is not specified therein upon its acceptance by the Board. Members may resign from Officer positions but continue to serve on the Board if they so choose. The Board has the authority to, by quorum vote, replace a Board Member if that Board Member is unable to continue serving on the Board. Interim replacements will be included on the slate of Board nominations at the next properly called Member Meeting for full term election.

Co-Chairs

Co-chairs or their designee, in coordination with the Secretary, are responsible for scheduling meetings of the Board, ensuring that the Board meets no less than quarterly, and for setting the agenda for meetings. Co-Chairs maintain the primary responsible for ensuring inclusive, fair and goal-oriented processes and actions.

Secretary

The Secretary or their designee shall keep accurate records of the acts and proceedings of all meetings of the Board, or designate another person to do so at each meeting, including documenting all actions taken without a meeting, as described above. Such records will include the names of those in attendance. The Secretary shall give all notices required by this Charter. The Secretary shall have general charge of Board records.

Signatory

The Chairs of the CoC Board and the Collaborative Applicant and Lead Agency have signatory permissions to sign documents on behalf of the CoC.

Designation and Role of the Collaborative Applicant

The Three County Board will designate an organization that is a 501 (c) (3) legal entity or a government entity as the Collaborative Applicant to design, operate, and follow a collaborative process in the development of applications and approve the submission of applications in response to a NOFO published by HUD, including applying for CoC Planning Dollars (Activities). The Collaborative Applicant has the following responsibilities:

- Collect and combine information to complete and submit the consolidated application for the CoC Program Competition NOFO;
- Apply for CoC Planning Dollars (Activities) under the direction of the CoC Board;

- Apply for the HMIS funding and handle HMIS and Data Reporting required by HUD;
- Apply for SSO-CE funding and lead a Coordinated Entry process;
- Lead the Request for Proposal, New and Renewal application process, ranking and evaluation process, and all other CoC Project related financial and programmatic contractual requirements.
- Develop, follow, and update annually this governance charter in consultation with the Coc Board - any amendments must be approved by the CoC Membership as described in this charter;
- Create and maintain a database or repository, preferably web-based page to include the meeting dates and times, agendas and minutes;
- Act as the custodian of all Three County records and documents;
- Provide administrative support for the CoC, including staffing support;
- Act as the Secretary of the CoC Board; and
- Conduct all CoC Planning activities and overall operations in coordination with CoC Membership and under the direction of the CoC Board.

Committees and Working Groups

The CoC Lead Agency will carry out its responsibilities with support and collaboration with the work of a number of Committees and working groups. All CoC Members are encouraged to participate on Committees. All Funded Projects must have representatives who participate on Committees. All Committees must include at least one Board member who is responsible for communicating committee activities to the Board. Policy recommendations made by the Committees must be approved by the Board before taking effect. CoC Committees are charged to make recommendations to the Board that will improve the overall CoC system and help the CoC achieve its mission and HEARTH requirements.

The Board or CoC Collaborative Applicant may establish Working Committees as it deems necessary.

Standing or Working Committees

The CoC shall have eight standing committees, as follows:

1. Data Evaluation Committee
2. Ranking and Evaluation Committee
3. Coordinated Entry Committee
4. Equity and Inclusion Committee
5. Youth Action Committee (Members of the Youth Action Board)
6. Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Committee
7. PLE Action Board
8. DV Expansion Committee

Data Evaluation Committee

The Three County CoC follows a “CoC Lead Agency Governance Model” with support from the Data & Evaluation Committee. The Three County CoC transitioned away from the EOHLC MA-HMIS implementation beginning in January of 2022 and now utilizes a Clarity HMIS Implementation. This change is still in the late stages of transition. The Clarity HMIS implementation was procured by the

Collaborative Applicant/HMIS Lead through a thorough, community-driven review and selection process. Bitfocus, Inc. is the selected vendor for this procurement.

The Data Evaluation Committee works collaboratively with the Collaborative Applicant's Data and Evaluation Manager, CoC Board, HMIS platform providers, Green River Warehouse provider, CoC funded entities, and CoC membership to:

- a. Review and support the production and submission of HUD-required reports, including and not limited to the following tasks:
 - i. Annual Sheltered Point-In-Time Count report (PIT)
 - ii. Housing Inventory Count (HIC)
 - iii. Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA)
 - iv. HMIS Annual Performance Report
 - v. HMIS Renewal Project Application for the annual CoC Competition
 - vi. System Performance Report
- b. Review PIT, HIC, and LSA/SPM data in order to assess trends, opportunities and unmet needs.
- c. Make recommendations to the Board regarding CoC priorities for use in ranking requests for CoC funding, utilizing Gaps Analysis.
- d. In collaboration with the HMIS Lead, establish performance measures and targets to track the CoCs progress toward reducing and ending homelessness, in consultation with CoC providers.
- e. Monitor performance, evaluate outcomes, and make recommendations to the Board regarding actions to be taken to elevate poorly performing programs.
- f. Annually review, make recommendations, and help revise if necessary, data collection, reporting, and privacy policies. This includes but is not limited to a privacy plan, a data security plan, and a data quality plan, required by HUD for implementation within 6 months of the published HMIS Final Rule.
- g. Explore opportunities to ensure sustainability of the HMIS project by seeking new and diversified funding sources.
- h. Support and protect the rights and privacy of clients.

Ranking Evaluation Committee

The Ranking Evaluation Committee will collaborate with the Collaborative Applicant, CoC Board, Area Service Providers, CoC-Funded Entities, and CoC members to:

- a. Evaluate the Annual NOFO process and offer feedback to streamline and meet the ever changing and growing HUD expectations, review trends and expectations which might result in changes to the site monitoring and ranking strategies.
- b. Read the final approved application annually as well as HUDs final ranking of the Three County CoC and address areas for growth and assist in meeting the outcomes stated and measured.

- c. Design and implement a collaborative process for developing a consolidated application for Three County programs and projects seeking CoC funding.
- d. Examine other CoC's practices with regards to Project Ranking and make recommendations to the Board & Collaborative Applicant.
- e. Review and revise written policies and procedures for the Ranking Evaluation Committee and seek Board approval.
- f. Review findings and program priorities established by the Board or Collaborative Applicant, and the applications for new programs or projects, and make recommendations to the Board about which programs/projects to include in the annual CoC application, and rank projects for the application.
- g. Develop and oversee operation of a grievance process for agencies whose applications for funding have not been selected by the CoC.

This committee must consist of at least 50% entities with no financial or other conflict of interest related to funding competitions or awards. The committee will make final recommendations to the Board related to project ranking and funding opportunities. The Board retains full rights to amend the recommendations or reject the committee's proposals.

Coordinated Entry Committee

The Coordinated Entry Committee will collaborate with the Collaborative Applicant, Board, Area Service Providers, CoC-Funded Entities, and CoC membership to:

- a. Review and provide feedback to the CoC staff and Board re: Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures
- b. Support the CoC in conducting annual assessment and evaluation of Coordinated Entry programs, including polling and surveys of homeless individuals participating in Coordinated Entry, and keeping Projects accountable to the Housing First Model.
- c. Review the Vulnerability Assessment tool annually and make recommendations based on new information or HUD requirements.
- d. Remain abreast of the outcome measures for HMIS and Data Warehouses with regards to Coordinated Entry.
- e. Review Emerging Practices for other Coordinated Entry systems and make recommendations for Three County CoC based on findings.
- f. Offer support and outreach to partner agencies who are or might participate in Coordinated Entry.
- g. Support the CoC in expanding their reach to our most vulnerable and hard to reach neighbors by representing the Coordinated Entry system in community and through networks.
- h. Identify training needs for partners in conducting vulnerability assessments and support CoC in development of trainings.
- i. Collaborate with other CoC committees around CE-related goals and action steps, including the Youth and Young Adult Committee, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and Data Evaluation Committee.
- j. Support the implantation of the "Supportive Services Only" (SSO-CE) subcomponent of Coordinated Entry, including support of subcontracted providers, if applicable.

- k. Reviewing and expanding on case conferencing practices
- l. As needed, identify goals and actions steps for CE Workgroup.

Equity and Inclusion Committee

The Equity and Inclusion Committee will:

- a. Review CoC reports that present data on disparities (primarily the Annual Racial Disparities report) and make recommendations to the Board and Collaborative Applicant based on findings.
- b. Support the CoC in conducting surveys and evaluations about racial equity in our practices. For example, create surveys to identify barriers to professional advancement.
- c. Evaluate CoC policies and procedures to ensure that we provide equitable, and trauma-informed practices, in our housing work and make recommendations of policy change based on findings. For example, changing Coordinated Entry prioritization to address equity in housing referrals.
- d. Monitor language and dissemination of CoC communications to remove barriers to inclusivity. For example, reviewing, and revising job descriptions with a racial equity lens.
- e. Set expectations for and evaluate how the CoC is supporting inclusion of people from underrepresented groups in the workforce including, varying races, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, economic level, and sexual orientation. For example, rate all hiring managers on recruitment, retention and promotion of underrepresented staff.
- f. Monitor and support the implementation of an anti-discrimination policy, which ensures equal access to housing for protected classes in HUD programs.
- g. Support matters of equal access and cultural sensitivity of our programs and practices for various populations, including accessibility for hearing impaired and other languages.
- h. Collaborate with other CoC committees around CE-related goals and action steps, including the Youth and Young Adult Committee, CE Committee, and Data Evaluation Committee
- i. Create and/or provide ongoing training, such as, Leadership training for BIPOC staff, Unconscious Bias and Racism training, cultural humility and professional development opportunities. For example, to create career paths within and across all agencies, and promote pay equity.

The Youth/Young Adult Action Board (i.e., Committee)/YAB

The Youth Action Board will:

- a. Review and offer feedback and recommendations to the Board and Collaborative Applicant on the Governance Charter for trauma-informed, evidence based, and Positive Youth Development Perspectives.
- b. Review language of the policies, procedures, and CoC forms to consider content in relation to barriers that may exist to preventing and ending homelessness for youth and young adults in our area with an emphasis on equitable practices, specifically racial equity.
- c. Support the CoC in evaluating accessibility of our entry systems and cultural competency of our programs and practices for youth who have or may experience housing instability including GLBTQ youth, youth of color, and parenting youth.
- d. Support the CoC in evaluating available resources for education, employment and workforce development for youth and young adults.



- e. Actively participate in the Planning, Project Selection and coordinated response to the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project.

Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Committee

The YYA Committee, in conjunction with the YAB, area stakeholders, the CoC, and YHDP project representatives will:

- a. Support the implementation of the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan (CCP); develop strategies and measurements in reference to its goals.
- b. Make decisions according to the framework developed during the YHDP CCP planning process.
- c. Review outcome data and feedback from community partners to identify trends and best practices, evaluate performance, and propose and approve changes to the plan.
- d. Include key members of the YHDP Planning Team and participants from the YAB, the CoC, YYA providers, child welfare, justice, education, and community partners.
- e. Strive to include as many representatives from relevant sectors as possible and maintain a racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and gender identity balance that reflects the community to the greatest extent possible.
- f. Perform community outreach to engage partners in participating in the Coordinated Community Plan for ending youth homelessness.

Persons with Lived Experience (PLE) Action Board

The PLE Action Board is a unique entity, in that it is not targeted at a specific project, but rather provides essential support, insight and collaboration across all aspects of CoC operations. Some of the group's objectives include:

- a. Creating a safe space for persons with lived experience to gather, have their voices heard and get needs addressed
- b. Within the community of PLE, sharing ideas, experiences, solutions, resources and offering support to others in their journey
- c. Across all CoC functions, offering support and suggestions in any aspects where PLE voice is necessary, including discovering different avenues than standard approaches allow for
- d. Assisting CoC Committees in reviewing reports, documents, standards and supporting events and activities across all areas
- e. Supporting and promoting change through "breaking the system" (working to change and redevelop systems) that impact the CoC, our projects and their participants
- f. Advocating for themselves, one another, project participants, projects and the CoC as a whole

Domestic Violence (DV) Expansion Committee

The DV Committee supports the development and implementation of practices related to the operation of the SSO-CE project which provides services specifically to Domestic Violence survivors in collaboration with partners specializing in these needs.

- a. Review and offer feedback and recommendations based on the expertise of DV/SA providers, PLE of DV, and the community to the Board and Collaborative Applicant on the Governance Charter for trauma-informed, participant-centered practices.
- b. Across all CoC functions, offering support and suggestions in any aspects where PLE of DV voice is necessary, including discovering different avenues than standard approaches allow for
- c. Create and/or provide ongoing training and guidance, such as, DV101 and subsequent trainings, that uplift the expertise of PLE of DV and their intersectional identities, including but not limited to people of the global majority, LGBTQ+, etc.
- d. Support the CoC in evaluating accessibility of our entry systems and cultural competency of our programs and practices for participants who have or may experience housing instability as a result of domestic violence/abuse.
- e. To create career paths within and across all agencies.
- f. Reviewing and recommending changes to CoC policies, charters, and standards to implement system changes, such as VAWA requirements, emergency transfer plan, etc.

(a full list of duties within each committee is available upon request)

Ad-Hoc / Working Groups

Any members may suggest a new Committee, but the Board will have discretion in ensuring that committees are necessary to achieve the CoC's goals and mission. The CoC leadership, at the direction of the Board, may establish ad-hoc working groups.

Working Groups will be developed as needed by the Collaborative Applicant in response to concerns, CoC objectives, new project implementation or significant changes to operating practices or regulations. Working Groups allow for more specialized, smaller group discussions and tasks that are action and implementation-driven. Each Working Group will be connected to one of the 6 CoC Committees in order to establish a chain of reporting and accountability.

Ongoing/Continuing Working Groups:

- a. **Coordinated Entry & Assessment Workgroup:** Under guidance of the Coordinated Entry Committee, this working group is tasked with regular oversight of the Coordinated Entry practices, including focus on equitable access (collaborates w/ Racial Equity Workgroup when appropriate). This workgroup also develops updates to the Crisis Triage Tool and Coordinated Entry training/support materials through ongoing evaluation and best practices.
- b. **Racial Equity Workgroup:** Under the guidance of the Equity & Inclusion Committee, this workgroup focuses specifically on implementation of the CoC's Racial Equity Plan and any objectives identified as a part of that plan.
- c. **Reimagining Interim Housing Workgroup:** Reimagining Interim Housing is a nation-wide initiative focused on shifting the fundamental nature of emergency shelter and other temporary housing settings by addressing systemic needs. Areas of focus include person-centered & Trauma Informed practices, stigma & community perception of interim housing, and an increased focus on after-care & sustainable progress as a measure of success. This initiative is driven by Persons with Lived Experience and, as such, is accountable to both the PLE Action Board and the Equity & Inclusion Committee, although the CoC Director and Collaborative Applicant leadership are also incorporated into the chain of reporting for this project.



Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness & the CoC

The Three County Continuum of Care collaborates closely with the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (WMNEH) and, thereby the Hampden County CoC as a collective voice of connection, innovation and discussion of providers across Western Massachusetts. Jointly with that region's two CoC's, the WMNEH promotes collaboration in areas of: coordination of services, improvement of operations and best practice standards, sharing successes & challenges along with innovative responses, and other topics. The Three County CoC Director serves as the co-chair of the Network's Steering Committee (the decision-making entity for WMNEH) along with the Director of the Hampden County CoC.

The WMNEH provides guidance and engagement for applicable community issues, developing opportunities and legislative needs across Western Massachusetts. Additionally, the Network facilitates several Committees, each focused on different practical components and/or sub-populations within the scope of housing and homelessness services. These committees include:

1. *Joint Individual Services Committee*: This Committee represents both the Three County CoC's region as well as Hampden County and focuses on programs and services across outreach, housing, shelter and service-level providers. The Individual Services Committee is responsible for overseeing discharge planning for Corrections, Mental Health, and Health facilities.
2. *Family Services Committee*: The Family Services Committee focuses on the needs of families with children across various service levels and providers.
3. *Youth & Young Adult Services Committee*: This Committee focuses on the needs of youth or youth experiencing homelessness up to age 24 who are unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or spouse. Youth up to age 24 who are with their own children are considered to be unaccompanied. This Committee is responsible for planning for counting of youth in the annual Point-in-Time count, and for overseeing discharge planning from foster care, and coordinates closely with the COC's own Youth and Young Adult Committee.
4. *Veteran's Services Committee*: The veteran's committee will focus on the needs of homeless veterans, assisting in the annual Point-in-Time count with veterans and the service delivery system designed to identify housing and support services needed to assist homeless veterans in stabilizing their housing and overall needs. This committee will also interact with the state Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) Veterans Partnership Workgroup.
5. *Career Services Committee*: Members of this committee focus on employment and education-related needs, barriers and opportunities in the interest of supporting individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

VAWA Requirements

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), a federal law that was reauthorized in 2022, provides housing protections for persons applying for or living in units subsidized by the federal government who have

experienced domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, to help keep them safe and reduce their likelihood of experiencing homelessness. VAWA applies to the CoC and its Subrecipients.

The CoC has developed an Emergency Transfer Plan and Notification forms, which can be found on its website. Additional VAWA resources and technical assistance will be referenced in Subrecipient materials posted to the CoC website, and updates to requirements will be announced in writing to Subrecipient contacts.

Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

Conduct and Attendance

Directors, committee members, and other CoC agents and employees must exercise care, diligence, and prudence when acting on behalf of the CoC. These individuals must timely complete work they have agreed to undertake on behalf of the CoC. In addition, they must attend Board and committee meetings and be prepared to discuss matters presented for their deliberation. Absence without notice or explanation for three meetings within a calendar year or repeated failure to complete work assignments may be grounds for removal from the Board and/or committee assignments.

Conflict of Interest

Rules Regarding Conflict

Directors, committee members, and other CoC Board Members or relevant CoC Members, must abide by the following rules in order to avoid conflicts of interest and promote public confidence in the integrity of the CoC and its processes. Failure to honor these rules will be grounds for removal from the Board and any of its committees. Directors, committee members, and other CoC agents and employees may not participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefit to:

- Any organization that they or a member of their immediate family represents; or
- Any organization from which they or a member of their immediate family derives income or anything of value.

Whenever CoC directors, committee members, agents, employees, or any of their immediate family members have a financial interest or any other personal interest in a matter coming before the Board or one of its committees, they must:

- Fully disclose the nature of the interest; and
- Withdraw from discussing, lobbying or voting on the matter.

Disclosure

Board and committee members must disclose if they have any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest no less than annually. Members or relevant stakeholders must also disclose new conflicts of interest as such conflicts arise or are deemed necessary.

Abstention from Decision-Making

Any matter in which Board Members or CoC committee members have an actual or potential conflict of interest will be decided only by a vote of disinterested individuals or entities. In addition, the minutes of any meeting at which such a vote is conducted must reflect the disclosure of interested directors' and committee members' actual or potential conflicts of interest and their abstention.



Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Form

CoC Board Members and CoC relevant committee members must sign a conflict-of-interest form annually, affirming that they have reviewed the conflict-of-interest policy and disclosing any conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties as directors.

Approval of Governance Charter and Subsequent Amendments

This Governance Charter and every subsequent amendment to it must be approved by a majority Member vote and in accordance with the quorum guidelines included in this charter. In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, the Board and CoC staff will review the Governance Charter annually and recommend to the Members changes to improve the functioning of the CoC and maintain compliance with federal and state regulations. In addition, every five years, the Board will invite interested CoC Members to participate in a review and discussion of the Governance Charter. Based on consensus achieved in that discussion, the Board will ask CoC Members to ratify the existing Governance Charter or approve proposed changes to the Governance Charter at their next Annual Meeting.