



**WESTCHESTER COUNTY CONTINUUM
OF CARE PARTNERSHIP TO END HOMELESSNESS**

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES –APPROVED 04/19/23

This document sets forth the guiding principles of membership and participation in The Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness.

Article I – Name

Section 1: The name of this association shall be the Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness (CoC Partnership).

Article II – Mission, Vision, Purpose

Section 1: The mission of the CoC Partnership is to coordinate all of the stakeholders, systems and resources available to prevent and end homelessness in Westchester County

Section 2: The vision of the CoC Partnership is that within the next ten years, all persons and families experiencing the possibility of homelessness in Westchester County will have a permanent, safe, decent and affordable place to call home, will secure the means to economic stability and that no one will remain homeless in Westchester for more than 30 days before being restored to appropriate housing.

Section 3: The purpose of the CoC Partnership is to assist in the coordination and development of services and housing for persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness by seeking to:

- Provide knowledge and engage the general population of Westchester County to understand the issues around homelessness;
- Identify housing and services needs of persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Westchester County based upon ongoing needs assessments ;
- Distribute relevant information to Westchester County service providers to address housing needs;
- Mobilize the fullest possible variety of public and private resources to prevent and end homelessness in Westchester County;
- Mobilize resources to help individuals and families achieve economic stability;
- Support planning and development of services to meet prioritized needs within Westchester County;
- Encourage and advocate for the development of a diverse array of permanent affordable, subsidized and supportive housing throughout Westchester County; and
- Effectuate all Continuum of Care responsibilities as set forth by HUD

Article III – General Membership

Section 1: General Membership shall be comprised of individuals and agencies concerned with the development and coordination of assistance programs for individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Membership is open and shall include but is not limited to:

- Persons currently or formerly experiencing homelessness,
- Developers and landlord organizations,
- Neighborhood groups,
- Not-for-profit organizations representing special needs populations including (but not limited to) veterans, youth, domestic violence survivors, and people with disabilities,
- Representatives of business and financial institutions,
- Representatives of private foundations and funding organizations,
- Social service providers,
- Federal, state and local government agencies, and
- Advocates and other interested parties.

Section 2: General Members are entitled to:

- Have voting rights at annual General Membership meetings (One vote per entity unless individual member),
- Receive assistance with relevant letters of support or proof of membership documentation,
- Receive information and updates via e-mail distribution list,
- Serve on committees, and
- Receive selected data related to homelessness and homeless services in Westchester County collected by the CoC Partnership.

Section 3: General Membership shall be updated annually. Only active members are eligible to vote. For membership to be considered active, a representative must have attended at least 1 of the last 2 General Membership meetings or 50% of a specific CoC committee's meetings in the previous calendar year. Individuals interested in becoming a general or committee member should contact one of the CoC Co-Chairs or their designee.

Section 4: General Membership motions will be carried by majority vote of those active members present.

Article IV – CoC Board

Section 1: The business of the CoC Partnership shall be managed by a Board of voting members, as follows:

- Continuum of Care Program grant funded recipient and sub-recipient agency representatives, 1 from each CoC grant recipient/sub-recipient
- Two persons currently or formerly experiencing homelessness
- One ESG grant recipient
- One vocational/employment services representative
- One educational representative
- One health care representative
- One veterans services representative
- One domestic violence services representative
- One local municipality representative
- One or Two at large members so that the total number of Board members is an odd number

Section 2: Voting shares will be allocated to Board members in proportion to the total amount of annual CoC Program grant funding administered by the agency represented as either a grant recipient, sub-recipient, or both (in which case the funding counts twice). The number of voting shares allocated to the CoC Program funded Board members will be equal to the total annual CoC Program grant funding administered by the agency represented divided by 1,000,000 rounded up to the nearest whole number.

The number of voting shares allocated to each non-CoC Program funded Board member (the sector representatives and at large members) will be equal to the average number of voting shares allocated to the CoC Program funded Board members.

Board membership and allocation of voting shares will be determined by the Co-Chairs following the final annual CoC Program funding announcement by HUD each year and shared at the next monthly CoC Board meeting.

Section 3: The grant recipient and sub-recipient representatives are assigned by their organization's CEO or comparable designating body.

Section 4: ESG, Vocational, Educational, Health Care, Veterans, Domestic Violence Survivors, Local Municipality & current/formerly homeless representatives are nominated by the Co-Chairs with approval by the Board.

Section 5: The one or two at large representatives are elected by the General Membership and can include but not be limited to representatives from the business sector, faith based organizations, law enforcement, non-profit agencies, mental health, victims services, foster-care, veteran's services, current or formerly homeless individuals and/or affordable housing development sectors.

At large members must be drawn from individuals or agencies not otherwise represented by other Board member positions.

Elections will be held at a General Membership meeting within 60 days following the submission of the annual HUD application. Nominations will be solicited from the floor, eligibility determined and a vote taken.

Section 6: Each member will serve a term of 2 years. Terms shall be staggered. There is no limit to the number of terms a Board member can serve.

Section 7: Each organizational Board member can designate up to 2 alternates. This notification and any changes must be in written form and submitted to the CoC Co-Chairs or their designee.

Section 8: Responsibilities

- The CoC Board as a whole is responsible for meeting the CoC Partnership objectives described in Article II; Section 3: Purpose.
- Each Board member, or their alternate(s), is expected to:
 - Attend at least 50% of Board meetings held
 - If applicable, communicate important CoC activities and decisions to their agencies/sub-recipients
 - Participate in efforts that achieve the objectives in Article II: Section 3: Purpose
- Members not in compliance will be notified by the Co-Chairs that their agency is no longer in good standing and will be unable to receive assistance with relevant letters of support or proof of membership documentation, until rectified.

Section 9: Board motions will be carried by a majority of the voting shares cast by the Board members (or their named alternates) present, with Board members casting votes according to the allocation of voting shares determined per Section 2 above.

Quorum shall be more than one-half of the number of total voting shares allocated to all Board members. If no Quorum is present, the Co-Chairs may reschedule Board meetings per Article VII, Section 1, as necessary.

Article V – Collaborative Applicant

Section 1: For the purposes of the annual HUD NOFA application and the management of the Continuum of Care Planning Grant, the CoC Board must designate one particular grant recipient to be the “collaborative applicant.” The collaborative applicant is the only entity that can apply for grants from HUD on behalf of the Continuum that the collaborative applicant represents. The collaborative applicant is also the only entity that may apply for and receive Continuum of Care planning funds on behalf of the CoC.

Section 2: The collaborative applicant will be chosen by the CoC Board annually prior to the release of the HUD NOFA and accepted by majority vote of those Board members (or their named alternates) present.

Article VI – HMIS

Section 1: The CoC Board must:

- Designate a single Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the CoC;
- Designate an eligible applicant to manage the Continuum's HMIS, which will be known as the HMIS Lead;
- Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS;
- Ensure consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients in the HMIS; and
- Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.

Article VII – Coordinated Entry

Section 1: The CoC Board must:

- Employ a Coordinated Entry system that assesses individuals and families experiencing homelessness for severity of need, length of time homeless, as well as specific disabilities and barriers. A HUD-funded Coordinated Entry Administrator, employed by DSS with oversight of the system then identifies the type of housing assistance appropriate to each household and refers those experiencing homelessness to available housing opportunities in priority order to ensure equitable access to housing resources.
- Develop and review, on an annual basis, a Coordinated Entry System policy manual that describes the policies and practices used by CoC member agencies.
- Develop a specific policy to guide the operation of the Coordinated Entry on how it will address the needs of individuals and families made homeless by fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- Monitor, directly or via sub-committee, the effectiveness of the Coordinated Entry System and ensure that annual formal reviews of the system take place.

Article VIII – Co-Chairs

Section 1: The Co-Chairs shall perform the following duties:

- Co-Chairs call, facilitate, and set agendas for all CoC Board meetings. A Co-Chair can call special meetings of the CoC Partnership. Co-Chairs are not voting members of the Board.
- Co-Chairs will be responsible for, directly or via designee, monitoring membership and tracking CoC meeting attendance. They shall be responsible for, directly or via designee, the minutes of the Board meetings of the CoC Partnership and for their distribution.

- Co-Chairs shall provide information as requested to the Collaborative Applicant and recipients.
- Co-Chairs shall nominate ESG, Vocational, and Educational, Veterans, Health Care, Domestic Violence survivors, Local Municipality & current/formerly homeless representatives to the CoC Board.
- Co-Chairs shall assist the Collaborative Applicant and CoC grant recipients with the preparation of the Continuum of Care application to HUD.
- Co-Chairs shall assist in the development of the CoC's communitywide system involving the coordination of all stakeholders to reduce homelessness.
- Co-Chairs shall assist with the implementation and monitoring of all HUD Continuum of Care funding.
- Co-Chairs shall give support and supervision to all CoC Sub-committees to insure that they are running well.
- Co-Chairs shall assist with auditing and monitoring of all direct CoC and ESG grantees.

Section 2: One of the Co-Chairs shall be appointed by a consensus of the Commissioners of the Westchester County Departments of Community Mental Health and Social Services. One of the Co-Chairs shall be appointed by a vote of the other non-County Board members.

Section 3: To be eligible for Co-Chair, a candidate must be an active member of the CoC as defined in Article III Section 3. Co-Chairs will serve a term of 2 years from the date of election/appointment. There is no limit to the number of terms a Co-Chair can serve.

Section 4: Any vacancies that occur in the appointed seats shall be filled upon the recommendation of those described above.

Article IX – Committees

Section 1: The CoC Partnership operates standing Committees, including:

- Anti-Racism Evaluation & Advisory Committee (AREA –C)
- Coordinated Entry/Data and Systems
- CERC (Coordinated Entry Referral Conference) Meetings
 - Permanent Supported Housing CERC
 - Rapid ReHousing CERC
- Domestic Violence Resource Group
- Education Committee
- Housing Success Workgroup
- Landlord Relations Committee
- Patriot Housing Initiative

- PIT Count Planning
- Lived Experience Advisory Group
- Self-Sufficiency Committee
- Street Outreach Workgroup
- Westchester Homelessness Prevention Network

Section 2: Recipients also operate regular sub-recipient meetings.

Section 3: Ad Hoc Committees can be formed at the request of Co-Chairs and/or the Collaborative Applicant to complete specific tasks, such as the Ad Hoc HUD NOFA Application Workgroup.

Section 4: Committee motions will be carried by a majority vote of those present.

Article X – Meetings/Attendance

Section 1: General Membership will meet at least twice annually. The Board will meet at least quarterly. Committee meetings will be held at least quarterly.

Section 2: If requested at any time by at least five members of the Board, a special General Membership meeting must be called by a Co-Chair. A notice of the special General Membership meeting must be distributed to the CoC membership at least 2 business days prior to the meeting date.

Section 3: Attendance will be recorded at all CoC Partnership and Committee meetings.

Article XI- Amendments

Section 1: These Guiding Principles may be approved and amended by a majority vote at a meeting of the CoC Partnership Board provided that the proposed amendment(s) have been distributed in writing to each Board member at least 10 business days before the meeting of the CoC Partnership. As per HUD regulations, these Guiding Principles will be reviewed, updated as needed and approved by the CoC Partnership Board at least annually.

Article XII – Nondiscrimination

Section 1: The members, officers, and persons served by the CoC Partnership shall be selected/served entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual harassment), familial status, and disability in accordance with all state and federal regulations.

Article XIII – Conflict of Interest

Section 1: It is the policy of the CoC Partnership that the Co-Chairs and Board members disclose any perceived conflicts of interest. Co-Chairs may require that a Board member recuse themselves from voting depending on the nature of any disclosure.

Article XIV – General Provisions

Section 1: Parliamentary Authority: Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedures not specifically covered by these Guiding Principles.