

Prince George's County Continuum of Care Governance Charter

I. Introduction

HUD requires communities that receive funds under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act to establish a local Continuum of Care (CoC) to promote a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness, provide funding for efforts to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness, improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources, and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Service Providers (HSP) coordinate the CoC's policies, strategies, and activities toward preventing and ending homelessness through a coalition of more than 100 organizations that includes public and private non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, service providers, mainstream programs, consumers and concerned citizens. The HSP's work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses, educating the community on homeless issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring CoC performance. The HSP also serves as the official advisory board on homelessness to the County Executive.

The Prince George's County Continuum of Care (CoC) for homeless persons consists of the entire geographic area of Prince George's County, all of which is covered by this charter. The charter outlines the structure and work of the CoC as coordinated by the HSP and is organized as follows:

- Vision
- CoC Responsibilities
- HSP Membership
- HSP Organization and Structure
- Collaborative Applicant Responsibilities
- HMIS Lead Responsibilities

II. Vision

Prince George's County envisions a comprehensive housing crisis response system through which homelessness can be prevented, and when this is impossible, episodes of homelessness can be quickly ended. The HSP is responsible for implementing the County's 10-year plan to end homelessness, which is designed to identify and align our homeless support systems to meet the distinct needs of people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

The County shares the goals of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness:

- Ending veterans' homelessness
- Ending chronic homelessness
- Ending family, unaccompanied youth and child homelessness by 2020
- Setting a path to ending all homelessness

To make these goals a reality, the Homeless Services Partnership (HSP) commits to:

- Preventing homelessness whenever possible;
- Ensuring easy access to communitywide, culturally competent, safe and effective housing and homeless services;
- Ensuring people exit homelessness as quickly as possible;
- Connecting people to communities and the resources needed to thrive; and
- Building and sustaining the political will and community support to end homelessness

III. Responsibilities of the Prince George's County CoC

The responsibilities of the Prince George's County CoC, the HSP, and Prince George's County Department of Social Services (PGCDSS) as the Collaborative Applicant and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead include the following activities: Operate the CoC; Operate an HMIS; CoC Planning; Prepare an application for CoC Funds.

A. Operate the CoC

- Develop, follow, and update annually this Governance Charter, which includes all procedures and policies needed to comply with HUD requirements and with HMIS requirements.
- Conduct bi-monthly HSP meetings and at least quarterly meetings of HSP committees, subcommittees and workgroups.
- Appoint additional committees, sub-committees or workgroups as needed.
- Recruit new HSP members, issue a public invitation for new members, and conduct an orientation session for new members at least annually.
- Establish and operate a coordinated entry system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services.
- Establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC assistance.
- Consult with recipients and subrecipients to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type.
- Monitor performance of CoC recipients and subrecipients, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performance.
- Monitor and evaluate CoC System Performance against HUD's performance benchmarks
- Report the outcomes of CoC projects and CoC System performance to HUD annually.

B. Operate a Homeless Management Information System

- Designate a single HMIS for the CoC's geography, and an eligible entity to serve as the CoC's HMIS Lead.
- Review, revise, and approve a CoC HMIS data privacy plan, data security plan, and data quality plan and ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements.
- Ensure consistent participation by CoC recipients and subrecipients in HMIS
- Utilize HMIS data and reports to allow the CoC to evaluate the efficiency of programs and the system as a whole.

C. CoC Planning

- Coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within Prince George's County that meets the needs of homeless individuals and families. At a minimum, the system encompasses the following:
 - Outreach, engagement, and assessment
 - Shelter, housing, and supportive services
 - Prevention and diversion strategies
 - Emergency relocation strategies
 - Rapid Exit and Move on strategies
- Plan for and conduct a Point-In-Time (PIT) count of homeless persons within the CoC, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing for homeless persons.
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the needs of homeless people, as compared to available housing and services within the CoC geographic area.
- Utilize HMIS data, client interviews, and other methods to evaluate the effectiveness of CoC and ESG programs, as well as the County's homeless response system as a whole.
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan within the CoC geographic area.
- Coordinate with Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) recipients to ensure their participation in the Coordinated Entry System and HMIS.
- Consult with ESG recipients regarding the allocation of ESG funds and the evaluation of the performance of ESG recipients.

D. Prepare an Application for CoC Funds

- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of a CoC application to HUD.
- Establish priorities that align with local and federal policies for recommending projects for CoC Program funding.
- Designate an eligible Collaborative Applicant to collect and combine the required application information from all applicants.

- Determine whether to select the Collaborative Applicant to apply for Unified Funding Agency (UFA) designation from HUD.
- Approve the final submission of applications in response to the CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

IV. HSP Membership

A. General Membership

The HSP is open to any organizations or persons residing or doing business in Prince George's County with an interest in preventing and/or ending homelessness in the community.

Membership includes Faith-based organizations, Neighborhood Associations, Homeless and formerly homeless persons, Homeless advocates, Somatic and Behavioral Healthcare Providers, Government representatives, Non-profit Organizations, the Business Community, the Board of Education, Colleges and Universities, the Departments of Social Services, Health, Housing and Community Development, and Corrections, Law Enforcement, the Housing Authority, the Veteran's Administration, and Community Development Corporations. All members are encouraged to attend HSP meetings and to participate more extensively in the CoC by serving on a committee, sub-committee, or workgroup.

B. Duties of the HSP

- Promote a community-wide goal to end homelessness
- Implement the strategic plan to prevent and reduce homelessness and minimize the trauma and dislocation cause to homeless families and individuals
- Review and monitor any program that is a component of the CoC
- Produce an annual report for the County Executive and Council on the state of homelessness in the county, and suggest any improvements to the CoC, including process changes, to reduce any barriers to housing and minimize the time needed to move someone from homelessness to housing
- Educate the community about homelessness, best practices to reduce homelessness and resources needed
- Recommend and promote partnerships with any private organization, business, corporation, philanthropic organization/foundation, and any municipal, state, or federal government agency to improve the County's ability to prevent and reduce homelessness

C. Meetings and Agenda

The HSP holds full membership meetings at least bi-monthly. The HSP's Executive Committee, which consists of members from both the public and private sector, announces the date, time and location of these meetings, sets the meeting agenda and publishes it at least 24 hours before the meeting. Meeting agendas are posted to the HSP shared drive as well as emailed to all members for review prior to the meeting.

D. Voting

HSP members determine and approve CoC policy by a majority vote of HSP members. HSP member organizations are granted one vote per organization. This does not preclude organizations from having more than one employee attend CoC committee, subcommittee, workgroup and/or full CoC meetings. In situations where more than one employee from an organization is present at a committee, subcommittee, workgroup or full CoC meeting, only one person can represent the organization in a voting role. Furthermore, if there are different employees from the same organization, on different committee, subcommittee and/or workgroups each employee can vote at their own committee, subcommittee and/or workgroup meeting (as long as only one person per agency is voting at that meeting).

HSP individual members, including homeless and formerly homeless persons, are authorized to vote as an individual.

V. HSP Organization and Structure

HSP Executive Committee/CoC Board

The HSP is led by the Executive Committee (CoC Board) which consists of the Co-Chairs and Co-Secretaries of the HSP; Co-Chairs of all standing committees, sub-population work groups; and three members elected from the general HSP membership. Considerations for Executive Committee representation include expertise and experience in homelessness, geographic distribution, diversification of interests, as well as HUD funded and Non-HUD funded agencies. The HSP and all of its committees, sub-committees, and work groups shall be co-chaired by a representative from the public sector and a representative from the private sector.

The term for HSP Executive Committee members is two years. Upon expiration of the term, members can be reappointed to a new two year term. If a member is appointed to fill a vacancy before a term expires, the successor serves the rest of the unexpired term. The Co-Chairs and Co-Secretaries of the HSP are elected by the general membership. Co-chairs of the committees, sub-committees, and work groups are nominated by the Executive Committee and approved by the HSP membership.

The HSP Executive Committee meets a minimum of quarterly and written agendas and meeting minutes are kept and made public to promote transparency.

The HSP Executive Committee is responsible for establishing committee, sub-committees, and work groups, as well as drafting CoC policies and procedures. Additional duties include:

- Coordinate the overall system of care
- Implement, monitor, and update the CoC's Strategic 10-Year Plan to end homelessness
- Establish and follow written standards for providing CoC assistance
- Develop and recommend policies and procedures for approval by the HSP

- Plan CoC activities in coordination with appropriate groups including all other committees, subcommittees, and workgroups
- Review summary reports from all activities of committees, subcommittees, and workgroups
- Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least bi-monthly
- Coordinate the full CoC to adopt, follow, and update annually a governance charter in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead

Conflict of Interest

The CoC, the HSP and its Executive Committee will comply with the Conflict of Interest requirements outlined in 24 CFR part 578.95. In addition, any individual participating in or influencing decision-making must identify actual or perceived conflicts of interest as they arise and comply with this policy. Disclosure should occur at the earliest possible time and, if possible, prior to discussion of any issue. Individuals with a conflict should abstain from voting on any issue in which they may have a conflict. No member of the HSP Board shall vote upon or participate in the discussion of any matter which shall have a direct financial bearing on the organization that the member represents. This includes all decisions with respect to funding, awarding contracts, and implementing corrective actions. Any HSP Board member finding themselves in a situation where conflict of interest may arise shall recuse himself/ herself from proceedings. The recusal shall be duly recorded in the HSP minutes. All HSP processes shall comply as it relates with the requirements of 24 CFR Part 578.95(b).

Committees, Sub-Committees, & Work Groups

Prince George's County HSP is organized into eight committees that conduct the work of the CoC and five workgroups that represent the needs of distinct sub-populations. Each committee and workgroup is made up of stake holders from the public and private sectors and is responsible for completing the tasks and that will propel the County towards its goal of ending homelessness. Decisions made by the committees are decided by majority vote of committee membership. Each individual member has one vote, and one representative from each organization has one vote. All committees operate with two co-chairs.

Committees and workgroups provide members with a venue for coordinating efforts and assisting each other, which, in addition to improving outcomes for our consumers, makes the County a more attractive place for funders and government agencies to invest money. By working in partnership the HSP ensures that funding applications are submitted that meet the needs of our consumers, utilize the talents and strengths of provider organizations, and ultimately have a strong chance of being funded.



Outcomes/Data Committee

- Review and monitor aggregate CoC-wide performance through HMIS data, including the Annual Progress Report (APR), Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Point in Time (PIT) count, and Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)
- Establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and subrecipients
- Monitor recipients and subrecipients performance, evaluate outcomes, and recommend actions against poor performers
- Evaluate project outcomes of ESG and CoC programs, and report those outcomes to the Executive Committee
- Plan for and conduct a Point-In-Time (PIT) count of homeless persons within the CoC, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing for homeless persons.

Coordinated Entry Steering Committee: See the Prince George’s County Continuum of Care: Coordinated Entry Process and Policies, incorporated herein by reference.

- Establish policies, procedures and performance benchmarks for the County’s Coordinated Entry System
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of homelessness needs and services
- Resolve conflicts between organizations utilizing the Coordinated Entry System
- Coordinate funding resources to ensure the CES is fully operational and optimized within the County
- Research National Best Practices and provide education and training to the HSP

Media/Public Relations Committee

- Promote a community-wide goal to end homelessness
- Provide education to the community on homeless issues

Project/Program Committee

- Provide research and national best practices to other committees, subcommittees, and workgroups
- Organize relevant trainings on best practices for the CoC
- Create and recommend Standard Operating Procedures for the different segments of the Homeless Services System
- Workgroups

The HSP has 6 active workgroups that meet regularly to ensure that the needs of homeless sub-populations are met.

- Unaccompanied Homeless and Unstably Housed Youth
- Chronically Homeless and persons experiencing severe somatic and/or behavioral health challenges
- Veterans
- Survivors of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault
- Returning Citizens
- Elderly and Aging

Grant Advisory Committee

- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of joint CoC applications for federal funding, including HUD CoC funding.
- Establish priorities that align with local and federal policies for recommending projects for grant funding.
- Establish criteria for competitive ranking of applications that take into account local and federal goals, program performance and organizational capacity.

Fundraising/Development Committee

- Research upcoming local, state and Federal grant competitions that could help forward the mission of the CoC and disseminate the information to the HSP
- Foster partnerships between HSP members that increase the competitiveness of grant proposals by expanding services offered while reducing redundancies

Membership Committee

- Publish and disseminate an open invitation annually for persons within the Prince George's County CoC area to join as new CoC members
- Conduct an orientation session for new members at least annually
- Examine current HSP make-up and actively recruit membership from un/under-represented populations, businesses and organizations
- Approve all membership applications

Housing Development Committee

- Develop criteria and guidelines for use of Joint Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Housing Voucher set-asides
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures for the use of emergency rental assistance and Rapid-Re-housing funds in the County
- Work with the Housing Authority, Department of Housing and Community Development, and housing developers to increase housing opportunities for the homeless and affordable housing within the County.
- Engage landlords and property owners
- Develop emergency relocation and move out strategies and policies

VI. Collaborative Applicant

Prince George's County Department of Social Services Community Services Division acts as the Continuum of Care Collaborative Applicant. Duties include:

- Supporting the planning and operations of the CoC
- Coordinating, preparing, collecting information, and submitting the CoC Program application
- Applying for CoC Planning Funds
- Coordinating and conducting the annual PIT count
- Coordinating and completing the HIC
- Designing, operating, and following a collaborative process for the development of applications and approving submission of applications in response to a CoC Program NOFA
- Providing information required to complete the Consolidated Plan

- Reviewing performance data of providers and the system as a whole. Making recommendations and implementing policies to improve performance outcomes.
- Providing technical assistance and training in best practices to the CoC.

VII. HMIS Lead

Prince George's County Department of Social Services Community Services Division acts as the HMIS Lead. See HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual for detailed responsibilities. At minimum the HMIS Lead will:

- Designate a single HMIS system.
- Review, revise, and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans.
- Ensure consistent participation of recipients/subrecipients in HMIS.
- Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD.