

# ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC)

## GOVERNANCE CHARTER

### Purpose

The U.S. Department of **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** charges communities that receive funds under the Homeless Continuum of Care Program of the **Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act)** with specific responsibilities. This document summarizes the Responsibilities and Authorities for Operation and Governance of the **Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC)** under the HUD HEARTH Act<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this Charter is to:

- Outline the responsibilities and membership of the CoC;
- Establish the responsibilities and membership of the CoC's Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) to act on behalf of the CoC;
- Establish the duties and responsibilities of the CoC's Infrastructure Organization (IO), the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS); and
- Establish the code of conduct, conflict of interest, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Governance Charter, and Charter Update Rules for the CoC.

### Key Stakeholders and Terminology

Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) – The CoC is the county's community-based homeless services planning network, organized to carry out the responsibilities required under the CoC Program Interim Rule (24 CFR Part 578). It is composed of representatives from organizations such as nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve veterans who are experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness, and individuals who are experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness. [Hearth Act §578.5(a)]

While the CoC's work will focus, at a minimum, on those services funded through HUD's Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs, its work is intended to be generally inclusive of all housing and services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless, regardless of the funding source associated with the services.

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<sup>1</sup> The Continuum of Care program is authorized by subtitle C of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381–11389)

The Continuum of Care program – This program represents one of HUD’s funding streams. It supports transitional housing, permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities, permanent housing, supportive services, and the HMIS.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program – This program represents one of HUD’s funding streams. ESG is a formula grant and may be used for street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing assistance, and HMIS, as well as administrative activities.

Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) - The HAB is the working board that acts on behalf of the Allegheny County CoC. It is comprised of representatives of relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations, at least one individual who is currently or has formerly experienced homelessness, and other stakeholders and local funders of the CoC. [Hearth Act §578.5(b)]

Infrastructure Organization (IO) – The Allegheny County DHS serves as the IO. The HAB has delegated to the IO the day-to-day and operational responsibilities that fulfill the core duties of the CoC. These, in part, include acting as the CoC’s Collaborative Applicant and Unified Funding Agency (UFA), providing overall financial management, developing and maintaining the HMIS, developing and running a centralized assessment and coordinated intake system, monitoring performance, providing data and reports, and staffing HAB meetings and initiatives.

Collaborative Applicant – The Collaborative Applicant collects and combines the required application information from all projects within the CoC and also applies for planning funds on behalf of the CoC. The HAB on behalf of the CoC has designated the Allegheny County DHS to serve as the CoC’s Collaborative Applicant. [Hearth Act §578.9(a3)]

Unified Funding Agency- A (UFA) is a Collaborative Applicant selected by the CoC (and approved by HUD) to apply for, receive, and distribute funding for all projects in a CoC. The UFA is the sole grant recipient for the CoC; HUD signs a grant agreement with the UFA and the UFA signs separate grant agreements with each subrecipient carrying out the CoC-funded projects [Hearth Act § 578.11].

## **Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC)**

Membership: The Allegheny County CoC is the collective membership body of representative stakeholders engaged in ending and preventing homelessness in Allegheny County. It meets bi-monthly. Any individual interested in contributing to and productively shaping the delivery of housing or homeless services who annually attends at least one recognized meeting of the CoC (which includes CoC meetings or HAB committee meetings) and provides basic contact information will be recognized as a general member of the CoC.

Responsibilities: As outlined in the Hearth Act CoC Interim Final Rule [§578.7], the broad responsibilities of the CoC include (1) operating the CoC, (2) designating an HMIS for the CoC, and (3) planning for the CoC. As a large membership body comprised of numerous stakeholders throughout the county, the CoC has delegated these responsibilities and decision-making authority to the HAB.

## **Homeless Advisory Board (HAB)**

Membership: To ensure that the HAB can operate as an effective decision-making body, the HAB membership will have individuals representing an array of diverse sectors, stakeholder groups and organizations, and experiences. Individuals on the HAB may represent multiple sectors or stakeholders:

- Affordable Housing Developer or Landlord
- Allegheny County Homeless Provider(s) (including faith-based organizations) representing diverse subpopulations<sup>2</sup> and program types
- Allegheny County
  - County Executive’s Office
  - Department of Human Services
  - Department of Economic Development, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
- Behavioral Health Provider(s)
- City of Pittsburgh
  - ESG
  - Mayor’s Office
- City of McKeesport
- Municipality of Penn Hills
- Consumer(s) of Homeless Services (Present or Former)
- Education
- Faith-based Organization(s)
- Health/Hospital
- Housing Authority (e.g., City of Pittsburgh, City of McKeesport, Allegheny County)
- Local funders, including the foundation community
- Training and Employment
- Chamber of Commerce and other members of the business community

Responsibilities: Ultimately, the HAB is responsible for all duties assigned to the CoC in the Hearth Act CoC Interim Final Rule (§578.7). In carrying out the CoC’s duties to address homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system of housing and services that address those needs, these responsibilities include:

- *Operating the CoC:*
  - Designate an Infrastructure Organization (IO) that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the CoC.
  - Convene regular CoC Meetings.
  - Review, vote on amendments, and approve a Governance Charter annually.
  - Establish and oversee collaborative process for the development and submission of CoC applications. This includes appointing a Collaborative Applicant.
  - Establish and evaluate performance targets and outcomes for recipients within the CoC program. The HAB CoC Analysis and Planning Committee recommends performance and ranking targets (finalized and voted upon by the full HAB) and the IO monitors and reports upon them.
  - Ensure the operation of a coordinated intake and assessment system.
  - Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place that will result in an efficient, high quality operation in compliance with HUD standards. The HAB reviews and approves policies and procedures, drafted by the IO, for items that fall under the HAB’s responsibilities for operating and planning the CoC.

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<sup>2</sup> Examples of subpopulations that may be represented include: persons with substance use disorders; persons with HIV/AIDS; veterans; the chronically homeless; families with children; unaccompanied youth; the seriously mentally ill; and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

- *Designating and operating an HMIS:*
  - o Designate an HMIS Lead that has the capacity to run a system that collects and reports meaningful data.
  - o Please see Appendix C, HMIS Governance Charter, for the complete list of HAB responsibilities related to HMIS.
  
- *CoC Planning:*
  - o Coordinate the implementation of a system within Allegheny County that meets the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including (a) outreach, engagement, and assessment; (b) shelter, housing, and supportive services; and (c) prevention strategies.
  - o Review and approve any new CoC projects that become possible through strategic re-allocation of HUD funding or when new monies become available from HUD or other federal partners.
  - o Ensure the completion of an annual Point-in-Time count, an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available in the county, and the Consolidated Plans.
  - o Include ESG program recipients as part of the CoC planning and evaluation process.

HAB Logistics and By-Laws: Please see Appendix A, HAB By-Laws, which outline HAB terms of appointment and service, use of proxy, voting parameters, CoC meeting participation, meeting logistics including scheduling of meetings and cancellations, board officer elections and responsibilities, and committee structure.

## **Infrastructure Organization (IO)**

History: For the last 20 years, the day-to-day and operational responsibilities to fulfill the core duties of the CoC have been delegated by the HAB to an IO, the Allegheny County DHS. DHS also acts as the Collaborative Applicant on behalf of the CoC. DHS is well-positioned to play this role given its stewardship and access to county-wide funding for many of the services that supplement and complement HUD's funding (e.g. mental health; drug and alcohol; child welfare; etc.). It subsidizes the staffing needed to support the CoC and the HAB. It also maintains internal analytical capacity through its office of Analysis, Technology and Planning (ATP) and provides access to the county's nationally acclaimed data warehouse that allows cross-system analysis of the individuals and families accessing the CoC.

DHS was created in 1997 to consolidate the provision of human services across Allegheny County. It is the largest department within Allegheny County government. In addition to its Executive Office, DHS encompasses five program offices (Behavioral Health; Children, Youth and Families; Community Services; Developmental Supports; and the Area Agency on Aging) and three support offices (Administration Equity and Engagement; and Analysis, Technology and Planning). Annually DHS serves more than 210,000 individuals (approximately one in six County residents) through an array of 1,700 distinct services.

DHS provides a wide range of services, including: services for older adults; mental health and drug and alcohol services (includes 24-hour crisis counseling); child protective services; at-risk child development and education; hunger services; homeless services; non-emergency medical transportation; job training and placement for public assistance recipients and older adults; and services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. As primary contractor to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the Medicaid Behavioral Health HealthChoices program, DHS is able to work closely with the behavioral health managed care organization and others to promote prevention and holistic health.

DHS and its partners are also able to leverage behavioral health funds in order to maximize the benefit of HUD and other funding streams.

DHS provides services to eligible individuals without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, familial status, military service, or religious, community or social affiliations.

Responsibilities: DHS serves as the Allegheny County CoC's IO. As the IO, DHS will fulfill the following responsibilities:

**1. Administration:**

- Serve as the Collaborative Applicant for the Allegheny County CoC program, including:
  - collecting and combining the required application information from all sub-recipients in the CoC,
  - receiving input from the HAB CoC Analysis and Planning Committee on the draft application,
  - working with the HAB which will advise, review drafts, and approve the final submission of the CoC program application,
  - submitting the annual application on behalf of the HAB to HUD for the CoC program, and
  - applying, with guidance and approval of the HAB, for new projects through strategic re-allocation of funding or when new monies become available from HUD or other federal partners,
  - fulfill the duties of a Unified Funding Agency (UFA), pursuant to 24 CFR 578.11 and the processes of the CoC
- Submit Annual Performance Reports (APRs) to HUD for individual projects within the CoC;
- Submit an Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to HUD on behalf of the CoC;
- Manage and maintain homeless/housing provider contracts for CoC program operations;
- Mediate disputes between program participants and homeless service providers in the CoC;
- Maintain staff to fulfill all IO responsibilities;
- Develop written standards and procedures for service providers in the CoC, as well as the IO, including prioritization for permanent supportive housing, transitional, and rapid re-housing assistance and how much program participants will be expected to pay towards the rent in such programs, etc.;
- Draft written policies and procedures that are related to the HAB's responsibilities for planning for the CoC and present them to the HAB for their review and approval;
- Staff all CoC meetings, events and HAB committees; arrange scheduling and other logistics as necessary, and;
- Perform any other day-to-day duties necessary to support the HAB in overseeing the CoC.

**2. Planning:**

- Conduct an annual gap analysis of needs and services available to the homeless population in Allegheny County;
- Assist in the allocation of ESG funding in Allegheny County;
- With the CoC Analysis and Planning Committee, develop performance measurements to ensure that programs are meeting the needs of homeless persons in the CoC;
- Taking direction from the HAB, ensure implementation of the CoC's annual planned goals and priorities.

### **3. Data collection, monitoring and reporting:**

- Serve as the HMIS Lead for Allegheny County CoC, including:
  - developing Data Quality Standards, a Privacy Plan, and a Security Plan, and an HMIS Governance Charter (see Appendix C),
  - designing the HMIS, ensuring the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD,
  - training HMIS participating organizations on the HMIS,
  - ensuring consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients in the HMIS,
  - monitoring HMIS participating organizations to ensure that they are complying with adopted policies and procedures (including data quality, security and privacy),
  - producing an APR and other reports using data out of HMIS,
  - compiling a Housing Inventory Chart (HIC),
  - adding additional fiscal resources to develop HMIS and integrate it into the larger human services information system infrastructure; and
  - administering HMIS grant funds from HUD.
- With input from the CoC Analysis and Planning Committee, conduct an annual Point-in-Time count per HUD's specifications;
- Monitor recipient and sub-recipient compliance with HUD regulations;
- Monitor recipient and sub-recipient performance and bring trends that highlight areas of concern before the HAB;
- Work with the HAB to take action against poor performers;
- Evaluate outcomes of projects funded under the ESG program and CoC program, and report to HUD;
- Produce and submit reports as needed for different funding streams within the CoC; and
- Provide information to local partners who are required to submit a Consolidated Plan to HUD annually.

### **4. Systems Coordination:**

- Serve as the Operator for the CoC's Centralized Assessment and Coordinated Intake System, including:
  - answering incoming calls, e-mails, or walk-ins from persons experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness in the CoC;
  - making referrals to programs through the HMIS for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to CoC providers and programs;
  - diverting individuals and families from the homeless system who are not homeless or who can be prevented from becoming homeless;
  - counseling individuals and families on other services available through DHS (e.g. services for mental health concerns, disabilities, early childhood, aging, etc.) as well as services and supports in the community at large;
  - ensuring fair and equal access to the Allegheny County homeless system,
  - using a standardized assessment tool to triage those most at-risk of homelessness and to prioritize those with the most need for services;
  - developing a specific policy to guide the operation of the centralized or coordinated assessment system on how its system will address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers;

- providing regular updates to the HAB about the status of the system;
  - ensuring that this system complies with requirements established by HUD; and
  - contributing additional fiscal resources to operate coordinated intake and integrate it into the larger human services business practice and information system infrastructure. Facilitate cross-DHS program area collaborations (e.g. drug and alcohol, mental health, child welfare, aging, etc.) to strengthen CoC outcomes;
- Develop community partnerships with funders and organizations that serve sub-populations such as (but not limited to) veterans, unaccompanied youth, people with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders, and affordable housing to implement county-wide strategies to prevent homelessness, and when it occurs, ensure that it is as brief as possible and likely not to reoccur.

**5. Fiscal Oversight:**

- Account for and manage all resources received from HUD for the operation of the CoC with oversight of the County Controller to assure that there is no waste, fraud or abuse of funds;
- Allocate additional Allegheny County resources (e.g., block grant funds, Medicaid funds) to complement and supplement the CoC; and
- Work with the HAB to fundraise additional sources of CoC funding.

**6. Accountability to the CoC:**

- Provide data and information on the operation and performance of the CoC in a timely manner as requested by the HAB; and
- Meet all federal, state, and local deadlines.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Board members, committee members, and staff members of the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead must exercise care, diligence and prudence when acting on behalf of the CoC.

The members of the HAB are entrusted with specific responsibilities related to use of public funds invested in addressing a serious community concern—homelessness. Members are expected to observe the highest standards of ethical conduct in the execution of these responsibilities. In the performance of their duties, HAB members are expected to carry out the mandate of the CoC to the best of their ability, and to maintain the highest standards of integrity for actions with other members of the HAB, CoC representatives, service recipients, service providers, and members of the public.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to emphasize the CoC’s commitment to the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and conduct so as to ensure the maximum public trust. The below guidance provides foundational expectations of conduct. Good judgment of CoC Members is essential, and no list of rules can provide for all of the possible circumstances that arise.

***Expectations***

- Keep the CoC’s mission and goals in consideration when performing all duties as HAB members and representatives of the CoC.

- Fully participate in CoC meetings and other public forums while demonstrating respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others. Responsiveness and attentive listening in communication is encouraged.
- Prepare in advance of CoC meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda.
- Participate in scheduled activities to increase CoC effectiveness and review CoC procedures, such as this Code of Conduct.
- Personal relationships should not result in special considerations, including bias or favoritism, that influence the performance of their official duties in a manner contrary to the interest of the broader CoC.
- HAB members must assure that the resources entrusted to them are used for conducting official business only. Members of the HAB must abide by the Conflict of Interest Policies set forth below
- In line with the rules and guidelines of the CoC, members of the HAB have a responsibility to protect the security of any confidential information provided to, or generated by, the activities of the CoC
- It is not permissible to offer or accept gifts, gratuities, excessive favors or personal rewards intended to influence the CoC's decisions or activities.

### **Conduct**

- Members of the HAB are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy, and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of all people. This conduct is expected in all settings where representing the CoC and HAB.
- Harassment, acts or threats of physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
- Practice civility and respect in discussions and debate - The dignity, style, values, and opinions of each HAB member shall be respected. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. This does not allow, however, HAB members to make belligerent comments.
- Honor the role of the Chair in maintaining order. It is the responsibility of the Chair to keep the comments of HAB members on track during public meetings. HAB members should honor efforts by the Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason.
- Demonstrate practical problem-solving approaches to seek solutions that benefit the community.

### **Media Guidance**

- Official comments and statements to the media on behalf of the HAB itself can only be made by an executive officer of the board. Media should be directed to contact the board chair.
- Board members are able to accept or decline to speak to the media per their own preferences. If you do choose to speak to media, it will be as an individual and cannot be on behalf of the HAB itself.
- When asked specific questions about HAB business, we recommend focusing on matters that the HAB directly has authority over and has voted on. This would include things like our governance charter, the strategic plan, and/or items related to funding applications.

### **Conflict of Interest Rules**

- HAB and committee members 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 has represented in the previous year; or



- Any organization from which they or a member of their immediate family derives, or has derived, income or anything of value in the previous year.
- Whenever HAB or committee members or any of their immediate family members have a financial interest in a matter coming before the HAB or one of its committees, they must:
  - Fully disclose the nature of the interest; and
  - Recuse themselves from lobbying or voting on the matter.
- HAB and committee members must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest regarding any business included in the meeting's agenda at the beginning of each HAB or committee meeting.
- The minutes of any meeting at which a vote is conducted must reflect the disclosure of interested Board and committee members' actual or potential conflicts of interest and their abstention.
- No person whose has a conflict of interest, as described by the bullets below, will serve on the Evaluation Committee, or any other review panel for which they and/or their affiliated organization has submitted a proposal. In particular to proposal/funding decisions, a conflict of interest exists if:
  - The person currently, or within the last one year has been, or has a current agreement to serve in the future as, a Board member, staff member or paid consultant of an organization making a proposal for funding; or
  - The person's employer or an organization on whose Board of Directors the person sits now has, or within the last one year has had, a contractual relationship with an organization making a proposal for funding. However, if the person's employer, or the organization on whose Board of Directors the person sits, is a funding entity or organization whose mission includes providing services and/or funding to other services providers, under this definition of "conflict of interest," no conflict exists; or
  - Any other circumstance which impedes the person's ability to objectively, fairly and impartially review and rank the proposals for funding. For example, the person is currently enrolled in a program that is administered by an organization making a proposal for funding.

### ***Breach of Conduct***

Penalties imposed for breach of the CoC's Code of Conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Excluding the member from portions of all future meetings and discussions which relate to the breach, and/or
- Censure of the member in private, public, or both, and/or
- Removal of the member from the board by a resolution passed by a vote of two-thirds of the HAB

### ***Annual Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form***

Members of the HAB must sign a Code of Conduct form annually, affirming that they have reviewed the Code of Conduct and disclosing any conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties as members. Members will not be permitted to participate until the statement is on file with the Collaborative Applicant.

## **GRIEVANCES**

The CoC defines grievance as a “cause for complaint or protest.” Grievances may be filed in response to decisions made by the CoC (e.g. policy adoption, NOFO ranking priority decision, or HAB member election results that is believed to have been influenced by perceived bias). A grievance may be filed with the Continuum by emailing [DHS-HAB@AlleghenyCounty.us](mailto:DHS-HAB@AlleghenyCounty.us), with “GRIEVANCE\_Date of submission (mm/dd/yyyy)” in the subject line of the email. Only grievances related to CoC business will be in purview. Grievances related to CoC-funded housing or services will be redirected to the Directors Action Line.

At least two (2) members of the Executive will conduct a full review of the grievance. Following the review of CoC-related grievances, the Committee shall recommend an appropriate course of action to resolve the matter to the full Executive Committee. The full Executive Committee shall then review the grievance and accompanying recommendation and render a final, binding decision. Such decisions will be made within 60 business days of the filing date. Executive members must recuse themselves from the process if a grievance involves a matter in which they find themselves in conflict. A neutral mediator may be sought for grievances in which objectivity within the Executive, or broader HAB, cannot be maintained.

## **UPDATING THIS CHARTER**

The HAB will review this Governance Charter on an annual basis and make changes or additions as required by regulation or in order to advance the goals and mission of the HAB. This Governance Charter and every subsequent amendment to it must be approved by a majority of the HAB members. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the IO, will review the Governance Charter annually and recommend to the HAB changes to improve the functioning of the HAB and maintain compliance with federal and state regulations.

## **Appendix A: Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) By-Laws**

Terms of Appointment and Service: Annually, the HAB will invite CoC members to join the Board. Persons wishing to serve on the HAB (or to nominate someone else) will fill out a nomination form that will be collected by the HAB each November. The selection process will involve a review for:

- HAB stakeholder representation needs<sup>3</sup>;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Nominee willingness and ability to meaningfully contribute to CoC mission (e.g., time, staffing, finances, research, etc.);
- Nominee commitment to the CoC as evidenced by attendance at CoC meetings and/or experience in the field; and
- Consideration for diversity.

The HAB Executive Committee will make selections for new members from the annual pool of nominated applicants. These selections will then be voted on, as a slate, by the full HAB at the first HAB meeting in January of each year. Members may serve for two consecutive three-year terms. If a HAB member resigns during their term, they must notify the HAB Chair and Secretary in writing. HAB members may be asked to be replaced if they fail to meet expectations of the position as determined by the Chair of the HAB. Vacancies created by a resignation or failure to meet expectations will be filled through the discretion of the Executive Committee. Any member appointed to fill such a vacancy will serve out the remainder of the existing term and can choose to run for a second term. Under normal circumstances, each year, it is anticipated that one third of the board membership will rotate through the nomination and appointment process.

All HAB members will attend bi-monthly CoC meetings; at minimum, attending four of six meetings annually. In addition, HAB members are expected to serve on at least one HAB Committee, most of which meet monthly.

Use of Proxy: A HAB member who is unable to attend a given meeting may not designate another person to act as their proxy (including the ability to vote on action items).

Voting: Items presented for a vote must be submitted to the chair at least 2 weeks in advance of the next CoC meeting. Only HAB members can vote on motions. Half plus one of the seated members will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. If no quorum is present, votes will be tabled until a quorum can be reached. Two thirds vote is required to pass any motion.

No member may vote on any item which presents a real or perceived conflict of interest, as determined by the HAB Member and/or the HAB Chair.

Items presented for a vote will be publicly shared at least six business days prior to the HAB meeting to enable CoC members to provide comment. All comments and questions must be submitted in writing at

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<sup>3</sup> HUD annual guidance through the NOFA will be considered to help assess if representation from new sectors or areas is needed. Additionally, the HAB will continuously seek to have representation from the four regions outlined as the CoC geography area, which includes Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Penn Hills and McKeesport. Officials from each of these four areas will be sought to serve as representatives, however the representation may be a non-government entity if that is approved and supported by the government official in that area.

least three days prior to the HAB meeting. The IO will distribute all comments and questions to HAB members with reasonable time to review prior to the meeting.

In the event that an emergency vote is needed, and as such the vote did not appear on the published agenda established by the HAB Executive Committee, the HAB will allow a 15-minute comment period prior to the vote at the HAB meeting. The HAB chair will have the discretion to limit each agency to one person providing comment during the open comment period, and each comment to 2 minutes. The HAB chair has the discretion to extend the time period for comment before the vote is taken.

Any action may be taken without a meeting of the HAB when necessitated by an urgent matter that requires approval by the Board in advance of the next scheduled meeting. If a meeting cannot be called, a discussion and vote may be held in the form of a conference call or electronic process.

CoC Participation in Meetings: All CoC meetings will be open to the public and will be conducted in accordance with the [Pennsylvania Sunshine Act](#). CoC and community members are encouraged to attend CoC meetings and to provide information to the CoC orally or in written form. Fifteen minutes will be designated at the end of every meeting for ad hoc updates and information sharing. Further, any member of the CoC may present an action item to the HAB for consideration or vote, provided that these items are submitted to the HAB Chair or Vice Chair at least two weeks prior to the scheduled CoC meeting date. Only appointed members of the HAB will be permitted to vote on these items.

Meeting Logistics: CoC Meetings will be held every other month on the last Tuesday of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November at 10:00 AM, or as otherwise determined by the Board in accordance with HUD requirements, at DHS's offices at 1 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh PA 15222 or at other locations in the CoC, as set by the board and announced in advance of each meeting. Meeting agendas will be created by the HAB Executive Committee with support from the IO and will be distributed to HAB and CoC membership at least one week prior to the scheduled meetings, along with any meeting handouts and materials. Materials will be distributed by email unless a specific member requests fax or postal delivery. The IO staff will maintain records necessary to meet, at minimum, the requirements under the CoC Interim Rule. All meeting minutes and formal documents will be kept on file electronically at the Allegheny County DHS for a period of 5 years.

Meeting Cancellations: If a CoC meeting is cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the Chair will decide if the meeting will be rescheduled for a later date not to exceed 1 month past the original meeting date. If the meeting is not rescheduled, materials and updates will be sent to all HAB and CoC members within 1 week of the cancelled meeting date.

Board Officers: The election of officers will take place at the January meeting of the CoC. HAB members nominate candidates for officer positions within their existing membership and elect officers to a two-year term. Officers can be re-elected by HAB membership for up to two consecutive terms (four years). The three elected officers are the Chair, and two (2) Vice Chairs,. These officers serve as part of the Executive Committee [described below]. Duties and responsibilities of the officers are as follows:

- Set CoC meeting agendas and run CoC meetings
- Represent the CoC and HAB at various community meetings and will advocate for the needs of the homeless population in Allegheny County

Committees: The HAB may designate committees to facilitate carrying out its duties. All committees are advisory to the board; they do not have decision-making ability outside of a vote by the full HAB, with the

exception of the Executive Committee. Each HAB Committee must have one HAB member Co-Chair and is recommended to have another Co-Chair representing the CoC-at-large. Co-Chairs are appointed by the HAB Executive Committee, who will take guidance from the Committee. Each Committee will have at least one IO representative and should also strive to have at least one participant who has experienced a housing crisis, either in the past or present. Any member of the CoC can serve on a committee. Co-Chairs are responsible for setting the direction and agenda for the Committee in accordance with HAB priorities and ensuring the right membership mix is available for committee work. Each Committee will keep records of attendance and minutes. Each Committee will establish a regularly scheduled date, time and location for meetings.

Proxy Committee Chairs: If a HAB Member would like to name a proxy to serve as a committee chair, the proxy member must represent a similar organization/background as the member and must have an understanding of the issues presented before the committee. The written request for proxy authorization must be provided to the HAB Chair so that it may be entered into the record.

Committee Chair Responsibilities: Committee Co-Chairs attend all CoC meetings and may be asked to provide a report of their Committee's progress at CoC meetings, at the discretion of the HAB Chair. Committee Co-Chairs may request for items to be presented for vote at CoC meetings, following rules for submission of items outlined above. In the event that a specific committee has achieved its specific goals or there is a desire to merge committees, the Chairperson from the committee will place this item on the agenda of the CoC meeting and the HAB will vote on the change in structure.

The following are HAB standing committees; their duties and responsibilities are outlined below.

1. **Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee is the primary planning body for the CoC. It consists of the three HAB officers (Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary), the HAB members who are also Committee Co-Chairs, and an IO representative. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to set CoC meeting agendas and to drive the strategic direction of the HAB and the Allegheny County CoC, based upon data, best practices/evidence-based practices and established priorities.

The Executive Committee has the authority to:

- Represent the HAB as a whole and vote on critical issues when timing required for a decision does not permit scheduling a full board meeting. If this occurs, the decision must be ratified by the full HAB at the next meeting ;
  - With HAB and full CoC input, draft the strategic plan/direction for the CoC and present the plan/direction for vote by the HAB;
  - Annually review the CoC Governance Charter and recommend changes to improve HAB functioning;
  - Appoint Co-Chairs to HAB Committees;
  - Orient new HAB members;
  - In collaboration with IO, ensure that the CoC is operating in compliance with federal and state regulations; and
  - Creates Ad Hoc Committees when needed.
2. **Continuum of Care Analysis and Planning Committee (CoCAPC).** The CoC Analysis and Planning Committee provides ongoing analysis to support the planning of the CoC, at both the provider and system level. This includes analysis of policies and performance measures in order to

recommend strategies to the HAB so the PA-600 Continuum of Care’s funding applications remain competitive, as well as studying changes to policy specific to project types and shifts in emphasis within the CoC related to projects and policies. In addition, the Committee regularly reviews available data, proposes data collection needs and performance metrics to the HAB, and identifies trends, gaps and needs presenting from the data. It establishes clear guidelines for data requests to the IO and annually determines the HAB’s main data needs for the coming year so the IO can meet those needs in a timely fashion. In conjunction with these ongoing analysis efforts, the Committee will review and develop ranking tools and recommend housing priorities for our homeless continuum of care. The Committee establishes the Evaluation Subcommittee for the review and ranking of all applications submitted to HUD. The Evaluation Subcommittee then submits their recommended ranking to the HAB for final review and approval.

3. **Communication and Education Committee (formerly Advocacy).** The purpose of the Communication and Education Committee is to develop and distribute messaging about the needs of homeless persons in Allegheny County. Based on the conviction that the organized, strategic, and effective engagement of stakeholders in relevant policies and funding is critical to creating an effective homeless system, this committee also coordinates advocacy efforts at the county, state and federal levels.
4. **Homeless Outreach Coordinating Committee (HOCC).** The purpose of the HOCC is to address the complex issues and challenges faced by people experiencing housing crisis living in places not meant for human habitation, which includes being on the streets and under bridges or using the emergency shelter network in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Annually, the HOCC assists with implementation of the Point-in-Time study. The committee also ensures that street outreach agencies are notified of any targeted homeless encampments before evictions. They also help to develop strategies to education and inform public safety officials and other stakeholders about the needs of unsheltered population.
5. **Provider Committee.** The Provider Committee captures the experiences and perspectives of providers in order to inform CoC planning and processes. The committee provides an avenue for strengthening communication across the CoC by facilitating systematic information sharing among service providers and between providers and the HAB. Finally, this Committee will support system and service improvements by utilizing the provider lens to identify gaps/needs and recommend responses. *See Appendix B for the Provider Committee Operating Procedures.*
6. **Ad Hoc Committees.** In addition to the above standing committees, the HAB Executive Committee may create ad hoc committees to carry out special initiatives that it deems can best be accomplished by a committee of the HAB.
7. **Collaborating Groups.** While not official HAB Committees, there are numerous outside affinity groups and taskforces whose work is of critical importance to the CoC and is integrated into the HAB’s planning capacity. Their members are represented within the CoC and the HAB includes their work in CoC meeting agendas as well as Ad Hoc Committees when appropriate.

## **Appendix B: Provider Committee Operating Procedures**

1. The Provider Committee will be overseen by “Co-Chairs” consisting of
  - a. IO Co-Chair (County CoC representative appointed by the HAB)
  - b. Provider Co-Chair (elected by the providers and endorsed by the HAB)
  
2. Provider eligibility and representation to attend (have voice) and vote with regards to the Provider Committee:
  - a. The Provider Committee will include any organization offering housing services to individuals who are homeless. (Voice)
  - b. Only providers funded through the CoC will be authorized to have a voting representative. (Vote)
  - c. Each CoC funded provider Executive Director or their assignee will identify the individual who is the voting representative for that organization.
  - d. The IO Co-Chair will keep a record of eligible voting providers, actively participating providers (both CoC and non-CoC providers), CoC provider voting representatives and contact information and submit that list to the HAB annually in by the end of the first quarter of each calendar year.
  - e. Each organization (voting and non-voting) is responsible to provide the Co-Chairs with updated information on their provider representatives.
  
3. Process for selecting the Provider Co-Chair:
  - a. Nominations – The Provider Committee will accept nominations from CoC funded providers (one per organization) and hold elections annually. One person from each CoC funded provider organization can be nominated or self-nominate.
  - b. Dates for the Process. Current Co-Chairs are responsible for the following yearly process:
    - Nomination forms will be sent out no later than October 9<sup>th</sup> of each year.
    - Nominations will be due back by the end of the third week of the October.
    - The slate of nominees will be circulated to the voting provider representative no later than the last Friday of October.
    - The voting period will be between November 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>
    - Results will be disseminated by the end of the third week of November.
    - The current Co-Chairs will submit the Provider Committee’s nominee for Vice Provider Co-Chair to the HAB Executive Committee for endorsement.
  - c. Votes will be cast electronically utilizing a system such as Doodle Poll and the electronic link will be sent to the provider voting representative on file at the time of the vote.
  
4. Selection of and rotation of HAB representation.
  - a. The Provider Committee will have up to three (3) Provider Representatives (Co-Chairs) on the HAB at any time.
  - b. Provider Co-Chairs elected through the above selection process can serve up to two (2), three-year terms.
  - c. One (1) Provider Representative will serve as Committee Chair at a time. This representative will serve on the HAB Executive Committee. The remaining Provider

Representatives will serve as Committee Co-Chairs. They will not be on the HAB Executive Committee, but will be voting members of the HAB.

- d. The Provider Committee Chair will serve in that role until their term on the HAB ends, they recuse themselves, or the Committee votes for a new Chair.
5. The Co-Chairs will solicit a volunteer from the group to act as recording secretary.
  6. Replacement of HAB representation:
    - a. If a Provider elected to the HAB leaves their position, the person who received the next highest amount of votes in the most recent election would be offered the remainder of the term being vacated.
    - b. If there was a tie for second place in the most recent election, the voting providers would take a vote at the next committee meeting as a run-off election.
    - c. If the person leaving is in the Provider Committee Co-Chair position, Provider Committee Leadership would move up positions and the newly elected person would assume the entry level position of Vice Co-Chair.
  7. Quorum
    - a. A quorum for voting purposes is 51% of eligible members.
    - b. The majority of the votes constitutes a decision.
  8. Voting processes and eligibility:
    - a. Voting will be conducted electronically with one vote per organization
    - b. Voting representatives can name someone to vote for them by proxy. This proxy must be submitted to the Co-Chairs in writing on agency letterhead and signed by the voting representative indicating the duration of the proxy (start and end dates).



## **Appendix C: HMIS Governance Charter**

### **Purpose**

- HMIS is an information system designated by the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) used to record, analyze, report and transmit client and activity data in regard to the provision of shelter, housing and services to individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- The governance charter includes all procedures and policies needed to comply with the CoC Program Interim Rule and with HMIS requirements as prescribed by HUD
- Outlines roles and responsibilities of the CoC, the HMIS Lead Agency and Contributing HMIS Organizations (CHOs).

### **CoC Responsibilities:**

The Homeless Advisory Board (HAB), with the authority given it under the CoC Governance Charter, will:

- Designate a single information system as the official HMIS software for the CoC. The HAB designates the Allegheny County CoC HMIS software developed by Green River as the official HMIS software of the CoC.
- Designate an HMIS Lead Agency to operate the HMIS. The HAB designates the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as the HMIS Lead Agency for the CoC.
- Develop and annually review an HMIS Governance Charter
- Maintain documentation evidencing compliance with this governance charter
- Review, revise and approve all required HMIS policies and plans, including a privacy plan, security plan and data quality plan
- Ensure the HMIS is adequately funded
- Regularly monitor the HMIS Lead Agency to ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements
- Ensure consistent participation of the CoC's CHOs within the HMIS

### **HMIS Lead Agency Responsibilities**

The HMIS Lead Agency (Allegheny County Department of Human Services) will:

- Operate the CoC's HMIS in accordance with this governance charter and at the direction of the HAB
- Host, maintain, backup, recovery, repair, upgrade, customize and enhance the HMIS as well as integrate with warehouse data
- Conduct training for recipients on the use of the system
- Develop written policies and procedures that comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations
- At least once annually, or upon request from HUD, submit to the CoC an unduplicated count of clients served and an analysis of unduplicated counts, when required by HUD
- Submit reports to HUD as required
- Develop and submit a privacy policy, per 24 CFR 580.35

- Develop a written security policy, per 24 CFR 580.35
- Develop a written data quality policy, per 24 CFR 580.35
- Ensure completeness, accuracy and consistency of HMIS data
- Execute a written HMIS Participation Agreement with each CHO, including obligations and authority of the HMIS lead
- Ensure HMIS is in compliance with HUD data, technical and data standards

## **Appendix D: Code of Conduct Acknowledgment Form**

### **Code of Conduct Acknowledgement**

Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) members are required to abide by the Code of Conduct rules and explications set forth in the Governance Charter. The intent of the policy is to emphasize the CoC's commitment to the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and conduct so as to ensure the maximum public trust.

HAB members must complete this code of conduct form annually, affirming that they have reviewed the code of conduct policy and disclosing any conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties as members. Members will not be permitted to participate until the statement is on file with the Collaborative Applicant

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***I certify that I have reviewed the Allegheny County CoC Governance Charter Code of Conduct and am committed to carrying out the mandate of the CoC to the best of my ability, and to maintaining the highest standards of integrity. I understand that failure to abide by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a Board member, pursuant to the requirements and processes provided in the Governance Charter.***

***I certify that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to the responsibility of the HAB. If any conflict exists, please define hereafter:***

*Using the space below, please describe any interest/arrangement that could be perceived as a real or apparent conflict of interest in the context of the HAB's responsibility to fulfill the duties of the CoC, including operating the CoC, designated an HMIS for the CoC, and planning for the CoC; if no conflict exists, please enter "none":*

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Name:

Signature:

Date: