



**The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness  
in the City of Alexandria**

## **Governance Charter**

**The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria Continuum of Care  
Governance and Policy Statements**

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## **OVERVIEW**

### **Name**

The name of this entity is The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria. For purposes of this document, “The Partnership” will be used.

### **The Vision for The Partnership**

Within the City of Alexandria, no one experiences homelessness – no one is without a safe, suitable, and stable place to call home.

### **Purpose of The Partnership**

The Partnership serves as the Continuum of Care (CoC) in the City of Alexandria, The purpose of The Partnership is to ensure the planning, coordination and implementation of an effective and efficient system-wide response to homelessness within the City of Alexandria; to promote community-wide planning and commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to secure funding for efforts to prevent homelessness and rapidly rehouse homeless individuals and families; to promote access to and strategic use of mainstream resources; to optimize self-sufficiency among persons experiencing homelessness; and to improve data collection and community performance measurement. The Partnership oversees and coordinates the delivery of prevention and homeless services, and the implementation of the Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

### **Purpose of the Governance Charter**

The Governance Charter:

- Defines the structure of The Partnership
- Defines the process for recruiting membership
- Designates and defines the roles of the Collaborative Applicant, the Coordinated Assessment Lead Agency, the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Lead Agency, the Point in Time (PIT) Lead Agency
- Outlines governance roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board
- Defines the membership and roles of the committees
- Defines the process for appointing additional committees and workgroups
- Defines the CoC’s Code of Conduct

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **Membership of The Partnership**

The Partnership is a collaborative group representing public and private stakeholders providing services or resources to persons experiencing or are at risk of homelessness in the City of Alexandria, Virginia, or who have an interest in housing affordability in the city. The Partnership is committed to ensuring a broad, diverse, active membership reflective of the City of Alexandria community.

Membership includes stakeholders such as:

- Homeless services providers
- Government agencies
- Elected officials
- Domestic violence service providers
- Faith based organizations
- Businesses
- Consumers/former consumers
- Advocates
- Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA)
- Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS)
- Social services providers
- Mental health services providers
- Youth services providers
- Substance abuse service providers
- Affordable housing developers and landlords
- Law enforcement
- Veterans service organizations
- Universities/Community Colleges
- Hospitals

Requests for membership are forwarded to and managed by the Membership Committee for consideration.

### **Governing Board**

The Governing Board creates the vision, develops and approves policy and collaborative funding applications, appoints committees and workgroups, ensures accountability, and provides leadership and advocacy for The Partnership's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. It is the primary decision-making group for The Partnership. The Governing Board meets no less frequently than four times per year and is comprised of no less than 7 and no more than 18 representatives of The Partnership who carry the authority from their respective entities to make decisions and/or allocate resources for solutions to prevent and end homelessness. The board includes at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. Members of the Governing Board and officers are elected in accordance with procedures specified in the Bylaws.

## **OFFICIAL DESIGNATIONS**

### **Official Designations by The Partnership**

The Partnership is responsible for addressing the response to homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs, and building a system of housing and services that address those needs. In order to identify needs based on verifiable data, develop a strategic plan and annual action steps that address the identified needs of individuals and families at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, and ensure a system-wide evaluation of the community's response to homelessness, the following designations have been made.

### **Collaborative Applicant**

The Collaborative Applicant is the eligible applicant designated to apply for federal CoC, state collaborative, and other grant opportunities on behalf of The Partnership. The Governing Board is responsible for designating the Collaborative Applicant and has designated the City of Alexandria. The contact is the DCHS/Office of Community Services staff. The duties include:

- Coordinating the application for CoC planning funds on behalf of The Partnership;
- Maintaining the authority to certify and submit the CoC and State homeless assistance funding applications, including ESG subrecipient funding;
- Collecting and combining the application information for all applicants for all projects;
- Coordinating and conducting oversight of the CoC planning efforts, and monitoring recipient performance;
- Ensuring updated information, announcements, and ranking processes are included on The Partnership's webpage;
- Compiling outcomes of projects funded under the CoC and State programs, including ESG, and relaying information about underperforming projects to the Monitoring & Evaluation Committee;
- Submitting The Partnership's collaborative application for State funding opportunities
- Calling for Governing Board agenda items monthly from the membership and preparing the agenda.

### **Coordinated Assessment Lead Agency**

The Coordinated Assessment lead agency is responsible for managing the entry point into the local homeless services system, and ensuring all residents have equal access and receive a standard evaluation of service needs. This includes application of an objective assessment tool to triage residents towards the most appropriate CoC assistance for which they are qualified. The Governing Board is responsible for designating a Coordinated Assessment Lead and has designated the City of Alexandria.

### **HMIS Lead Agency**

The HMIS Lead Agency oversees the day-to-day administration of the HMIS; develops plans, policies and procedures; executes agency participation and user agreements; and provides technical support and training. The Governing Board is responsible for designating an HMIS Lead and has designated the City of Alexandria. The contact is the DCHS/Office of Community Services staff. The duties include:

- Provides staffing for the management of HMIS
- Maintains written policies and procedures
- Oversees the day-to-day administration of the HMIS system
- Provides training on software and related issues
- Provides technical support to participating agencies
- Ensures agency participation and maintains executed agency user agreements
- Regularly monitors participating agencies for compliance
- Ensures agencies are collecting all necessary data to produce required reporting
- Ensures system integrity and availability
- Ensures HMIS software is capable of producing required reporting

- Regularly reviews data quality against established benchmarks and reports to CoC and Gaps and Needs Committee
- Ensures accuracy of CoC NOFA and AHAR reporting

The HMIS Lead Agency has authority to select a contractor to assist with developing and improving HMIS functions and reports.

### **PIT Lead Agency**

The PIT lead agency is responsible for conducting the annual Point in Time count of all homeless persons residing within the CoC's entire geographic area and reporting PIT enumeration to Federal, State, and local authorities. This includes developing a process to administer PIT surveys to the sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations, collecting and de-duplicating survey results, and providing guidance for data analysis. The Governing Board is responsible for designating a PIT Lead and has designated the City of Alexandria. The PIT Count occurs during the last week of January.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Creation and Operation of Committees**

Members from The Partnership are appointed by the Governing Board or volunteer for membership on the various committees. If a new committee is needed to meet a particular need of The Partnership, it may be recommended to the Governing Board for approval. The Committee Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the committee. The committees meet at least quarterly, more often as necessary, and provide a progress report on their Strategic Plan strategies to the Partnership prior to each Governing Board meeting. Committees are the primary avenue through which coordination, collaboration and progress towards strategic plan targets are achieved. Suggestions for changes in programs, processes, and procedures are recommended by committees to the Governing Board for review and approval. In addition, committees provide recommendations for resource allocation to the Governing Board for action.

### **Advocacy Committee**

The Advocacy Committee consists of members of the Partnership and other advocates in the community interested in working for the adoption of public policies and resources that address the housing and human service needs of homeless persons and families and those with extremely low incomes. Advocacy activities include building community awareness and knowledge regarding the causes of homelessness, meetings with elected officials and testimony at public hearings.

### **Communications Committee**

The Communications Committee consists of members with interest in, and knowledge of, effective communication practices and procedures as well as CoC activities. This Committee is responsible for disseminating pertinent information to other members of the Partnership or to the public as necessary. The Committee develops materials to educate the community on the issue of homelessness in Alexandria, the extent of homelessness and efforts to address it, and resources available to residents. The Committee is also tasked with maintaining communication among service providers within the

CoC, and identifying ways to improve processes for information sharing.

### **Employment Committee**

The Employment Committee consists of members of various agencies within the CoC and other public and private organizations familiar with the employment issues, especially related to individuals with barriers to employment. The Employment Committee is responsible for identifying existing employment efforts among CoC member agencies, finding opportunities to coordinate employment efforts among these agencies, identifying barriers and challenges to employing persons experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness and recommending to the Governing Board solutions to reducing or eliminating those barriers and challenges. Also, the Committee is responsible for identifying the training needs of persons experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness as well as opportunities to enhance the job skills of those persons.

### **Gaps and Needs Committee**

The Gaps and Needs Committee consists of the HMIS Administrator, collaborative applicant staff, several direct service providers and interested members from The Partnership. The Committee is responsible for reviewing progress on system performance metrics quarterly, and proposing policy changes to the Governing Board via Recommendation Reports. Gaps and Needs Recommendation reports target a variety of issues including CoC service gaps, leveraging of resources, trends in community need, data quality and use, and the general strategy to prevent and end homelessness. Each April, the committee's work is compiled to create the CoC Needs Assessment, which informs potential reallocations and any requests for new funding proposals in upcoming community funding applications. The Needs Assessment is presented to the Governing Board for its consideration at that time. Gaps and Needs also works with The Partnership's program-focused committees to monitor and assess progress toward accomplishing The Partnership's annual implementation plan for its Strategic Plan.

### **Data Committee**

The Data Committee consists of HMIS agency administrators at each CoC service provider and HMIS Lead and CoC Lead staff. As the primary user of the HMIS data, the Committee is responsible for assessing, monitoring, and reporting on the quality and usefulness of the HMIS data, and works closely with data providers to ensure a high level of data integrity. It also provides advice and technical assistance to The Partnership's program-focused committees regarding data collection, quality and use. On a monthly basis the Data Committee reviews progress on system performance metrics before drilling down to the individual program level to identify issues and discrepancies. Quarterly trends including analysis are then reported to the CoC Gaps and Needs Committee every three months to inform potential Recommendation Reports to the Governing Board. Data collected by the Data Committee throughout the year is additionally utilized by the CoC Priorities Committee in the annual update to the Compliance & Performance Monitoring Scorecard.

### **Health Committee**

The Health Committee consists of members of various agencies within the CoC and other public and

private organizations within the City of Alexandria familiar with primary and behavioral health services and benefits for adults and children experiencing homelessness. The Health Committee is responsible for identifying, in collaboration with the Gaps and Needs Committee, the health needs of adults and children experiencing homelessness, identifying existing health services provided by CoC member agencies and other organizations within Alexandria, assessing whether people experiencing homelessness are accessing available health services and benefits and for those who are not, recommending to the Governing Board solutions to increase access to health services. The Health Committee also will follow state actions regarding implementation of the Affordable Care Act as such issues concern adults and children experiencing homelessness. This Committee should also work closely with the Partnership's Transition Planning Committee.

### **Housing Crisis Response Committee**

The Housing Crisis Response Committee consists of members of various agencies within our CoC including management and frontline staff from the Homeless Services Assessment Center, prevention/diversion services, Emergency Shelters, Rapid Rehousing providers, Transitional Housing Providers, Community Services Board staff and the HMIS Administrator. The purpose of the Committee is to provide oversight for the provision of services and resources within the Housing Crisis Response System as well as to develop policies and procedures for its effective and efficient operation. The goal of the Committee is to assist the CoC with aligning services with best practices that will make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in the City of Alexandria.

### **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee consists of members of The Partnership interested in ensuring a broad, diverse, and active membership reflective of the community from various agencies, including the collaborative applicant, as approved by the Governing Board. The function of the Committee is to recruit and retain The Partnership's members; maintain the list of current membership; evaluate gaps in membership and solicit applicants for membership who will fill those gaps; ensure that membership information is available to the public on The Partnership's website page; and create and provide an orientation packet to new members.

### **Priorities Committee**

The Priorities Committee is approved annually by the CoC Governing Board. It is comprised of community members and Governing Board representatives with knowledge of local homeless services, but without connection to direct assistance programs within the CoC. The Priorities Committee convenes with the CoC Gaps and Needs Committee no later than May each year to update the Performance & Compliance Monitoring Scorecard, a tool built to grade renewal grantees' capacity, adherence to regulations, and program performance. During annual community funding applications, the Priorities Committee again convenes to select the best proposals to put forward for new or reallocated funding opportunities, and for the HUD-CoC application, to objectively rank all programs in order of priority. In this process the Priorities committee utilizes the CoC Needs Assessment, completed Performance & Compliance Scorecards, and submitted Notices of Intent to inform their decision.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

The Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Board, the Chairs from each committee as well as at-large members, develops and oversees the planning of system strategies to end homelessness in the City of Alexandria, recommends proactive solutions, and evaluates the continuum's progress toward that goal. The work of the Committee is reflected in the Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria. The committee is responsible for reviewing Federal and State Plans, as well as ensuring that the local plan reflects the needs of the City of Alexandria community. Annual strategies, initiatives and targets are established based on data obtained from the Gaps and Needs Committee.

### **Transition Planning Committee**

The Transition Planning Committee consists of members familiar with the various discharge plans of institutions in the region as they relate to those persons experiencing homelessness. The primary focus of the Committee is the evaluation and elimination of barriers and challenges to obtaining housing upon discharge from institutions, and creating policies and procedures that ensure persons exiting institutions, including foster care, health care, mental health and corrections, are not entering homelessness.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **HMIS Policies and Procedures**

The Alexandria CoC's HMIS is an integral aspect of all operations, data collection, reporting, coordinated system management, and program monitoring and evaluation. Detailed HMIS policies and procedures can be found in the "HMIS Manual."

### **Performance and Compliance Monitoring**

The CoC has implemented a comprehensive Performance and Compliance Monitoring Process that can promptly respond to service gaps and measure program effectiveness over time.. The Data Committee is responsible for monthly monitoring of system and program performance outcomes and reporting quarterly trends to the Gaps and Needs Committee. With the data, Gaps and Needs produces Recommendation Reports to the Governing Board, identifying service issues and potential solutions including CoC policy changes or Technical Assistance requirements.

Aggregated data through three quarters is used by the Priorities Committee update the Performance and Compliance Scorecard each May, which is approved by the CoC Governing Board. Annual performance data is applied to the Performance and Compliance Scorecard by the HMIS Lead Administrator and the results are used by the Priorities Committee in upcoming funding prioritization decisions.

### **Reallocation**

Reallocation decisions in the CoC result from regular Performance and Compliance Monitoring of the homeless service system and collaborative, transparent discussion at all program levels. Through

ongoing monitoring Gaps and Needs may identify performance issues resulting from a single project, prompting its inclusion in a Recommendation Report to resolve the problem on a defined timeline, including the strategies and necessary support to do so. Changes are implemented by the Housing Crisis Response Committee and performance improvements are monitored by the Data Committee.

Programs with unresolved issues, as documented by Recommendation Reports, at time of Community Funding Application are ineligible to apply for new funding opportunities until the issue is resolved. If a program fails to meet multiple consecutive resolution deadlines as documented by Recommendation Reports it may be recommended to the CoC Governing Board for Reallocation. Detailed Reallocation policies are outlined in the “Homeless Assistance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reallocation Policy.”

Criteria to be considered for Potential Reallocation include:

- Previous Project Ranking results or Priorities Committee recommendation;
- Previous Performance and Compliance Monitoring results
- Previous or ongoing Recommendation Report outcomes
- Ongoing program performance
- Financial stewardship
- Alignment with HUD and Alexandria’s Strategic Planning Targets

In all instances of reallocation, a request for proposals (RFP) will be widely distributed to solicit proposals for use of reallocated funds. Specifics of the RFP will vary according to funder guidance and local strategic goals being pursued at time of reallocation.

### **CoC Project Review, Selection, and Ranking**

The Priorities Committee meets during competitive application processes to select new projects, and an additional time during HUD-CoC application to rank new and renewal projects. The Priorities Committee discusses each year’s guidance from HUD, past project performance, as well as community priorities outlined in the CoC Needs Assessment.

The Priorities Committee reviews information on all projects and discusses them each in detail before achieving consensus on Final CoC Rankings. Ranking criteria include: project type, population served, performance on the Compliance and Performance Monitoring process, agency fiscal and management capacity, community need, as well as timely and accurate deliverables throughout the grant cycle.

All grantees are directly notified of inclusion in community funding applications and HUD-CoC rankings are made available to the public on the CoC’s Webpage.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Partnership requires that all members conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner. Members are expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Partnership members should avoid any conduct that may place the member in a conflict of

interest or creates the appearance thereof. Conflicts of interest arise when members or officers use their membership to gain advantages for the organization they represent or for personal gain or for the personal benefit of others, such as family members or friends.

- Partnership members are prohibited from accepting payment or services from others for personal gain or in exchange for favors or special preference for the organization that they represent.
- No Partnership member participates in the selection, award, or administration of a contract or grant if a real or apparent conflict of interest is involved. Such a conflict arises when the member, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the firm or organization selected for an award unless the financial or other interest is not substantial. In the case of insubstantial conflict, such conflict should be disclosed to the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Members neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to sub-agreements unless the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value.
- Any Partnership member who has reason to believe that this Code of Conduct has been violated by another member should report such belief to the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Members of the Governing Board or of committees may be exposed to information which is confidential or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of The Partnership that such information must be kept confidential and must not be disclosed to any person, including their relatives, friends, or business and professional associates.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE GOVERNANCE CHARTER**

The Governance Document will be reviewed annually at the June Governing Board meeting. It may be amended by a majority vote of the members attending a Governing Board meeting, as long as the draft amended document has been provided to the Governing Board members at least five business days in advance of the vote.