

# GOVERNANCE CHARTER

## MISSISSIPPI BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE

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The purpose of this charter is to:

- confirm the vision and principles that will guide the Continuum of Care (CoC) towards ending homelessness
- establish the structure of the governance body for the CoC (the “Governing Council”)
- establish the overall scope of responsibility of the Governing Council, including the general limitations of its budgetary and policy-making authority

The charter shall replace the governance agreement adopted by the MUTEH Board on December 13, 2012. It shall be ratified by the chartering jurisdiction (MS United to End Homelessness Board of Directors), and then reviewed, updated annually by the CoC Governing Council as described herein.

## VISION AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

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### **Our vision:**

No one should be homeless –everyone needs a safe, stable place to call home.

### **Our principles are to:**

#### **• Prioritize vulnerable populations**

Homelessness has significant detrimental effects on everyone, yet there are some whose health and safety are placed at even greater risk for harm without a safe and stable place to call home. These groups include, but are not limited to: children, women fleeing from domestic violence situations, veterans and people with disabilities. Strategies to identify and assist the most vulnerable groups will be prioritized.

#### **• Promote justice for all vulnerable populations**

To eliminate the disproportionate rates of homelessness among many communities of vulnerable populations, we will adopt strategies to achieve equity in both access and outcomes in all areas of housing and services. These strategies will include culturally specific services, using a racially equitable lens across all program investments and dedicated funds to eliminate disparities.

- **Use data-driven assessment and accountability**

To best utilize our resources, we must understand the outcomes of our investments, evaluate progress and demonstrate accountability. We will continue to improve and expand our communitywide data system so funders and providers can efficiently collect data, share knowledge for better client outcomes and report outcomes against the goals of the CoC.

- **Engage and involve the community**

Policy makers and community stakeholders must understand the magnitude of the challenge, the costs if we don't meet the challenge, our strategies for ending homelessness and the importance of obtaining and allocating resources equal to our aspirations. An action plan for ending homelessness in Mississippi will ensure that the specific concerns and interests of our local, regional and national stakeholders are heard.

- **Strengthen system capacity and increase leveraging opportunities**

The longstanding solutions to prevent and end homelessness transcend multiples systems of care, foster care, domestic violence, community justice, health, mental health and addictions and available resources. To permanently end homelessness, we must strengthen efficiencies in our current system and better align other resources towards ending homelessness.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

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The Mississippi Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) shall be the collective membership body of representative stakeholders charged with ending homelessness in the 71 county service area. Unless otherwise specified, the CoC's scope of responsibilities shall include oversight, organization, and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated approach to service delivery for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless in the 71 county service area.

While the CoC's work will focus, at a minimum, on those services funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant programs, its work is intended to be generally inclusive of all housing and services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless in the 71 county area of the Balance of State, regardless of the funding source associated with the services. The actions of the CoC may be completed by the membership at large, or through delegation to various committees and task forces, a CoC lead agency or other CoC network groups. Specifically, the CoC shall complete these actions:

### **Operate a CoC**

- Develop, follow, and annually recommend updates to this governance charter.

- Establish and operate either a centralized or coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services.
- In consultation with recipients of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds within the CoC, establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC assistance.
- Consult with CoC service providers to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type.
- Monitor performance of CoC service providers, specifically including HUD-funded CoC and ESG recipients and sub recipients.
- Evaluate the outcomes of projects funded within the CoC, including those funded under HUD's ESG and CoC programs.
- Work with CoC projects that perform poorly to improve outcomes
- Report the outcomes of CoC projects to HUD annually

### **Conduct CoC Planning**

- Coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within the CoC's geographic area that meets the needs of homeless individuals and families. At a minimum, such a system encompasses the following:
  - outreach, engagement, and assessment
  - shelter, housing, and supportive services
  - prevention strategies
- Plan for and conduct, at least biennially (i.e., every other year), a point-in-time count of homeless persons within the CoC geographic area that meets HUD requirements, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing reserved for homeless persons, in general, and chronically homeless persons and veterans, specifically, as HUD requires.
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the needs of homeless people, as compared to available housing and services within the CoC geographic area.
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan (a required planning document that sets priorities for local uses of HUD formula funds, including HOME, ESG, HOPWA, and CDBG) within the CoC geographic area.
- Consult with State and local government ESG recipients within the CoC geographic area on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and sub recipients.

### **Designate and Operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**

- Designate a single HMIS for the CoC's geography, and an eligible applicant to serve as the CoC's HMIS lead agency.
- Review, revise and approve a CoC HMIS data privacy plan, data security plan, and data quality plan.
- Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements.

- Ensure consistent participation by CoC and ESG recipients and sub recipients in the HMIS.

### **Prepare an Application for HUD 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 HUD Homeless Assistance CoC Grant 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 designation from HUD.
- Approve the final submission of applications in response to the CoC Notice of Funding Availability.
- Review MOU between entities as needed for direct responsibilities related to application.

### **Develop and Implement an Action Plan for Ending Homelessness in Mississippi**

- Annually assess CoC funding from all sources and make recommendations for coordination of investments in safety net services and permanent solutions, which will help “break down silos” among various systems (health, community justice, mental health).
- Preserve public and private investments, with a commitment to align dollars to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Set ambitious goals and hold the CoC accountable to measuring and achieving them.
- Create strategies to leverage additional resources among public, philanthropic, business, faith and secular nonprofit sectors.
- Identify new resources and develop proactive strategies to meet CoC goals.

## **FUNDING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE**

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The CoC Funded agencies shall support the staffing of the MS Balance of State Continuum of Care. This shall be accomplished by allocating a fee of 3% of the Administrative budget from the HUD funded CoC projects. This fee will generate revenue to support the staffing and overhead of the CoC. The Collaborate Applicant shall serve as Fiscal Agent for the Governing Council and will have direct supervision of Continuum Coordinator. The Governing Council shall approve the Job Description and responsibilities of the Continuum Coordinator. Additional resources may be identified as needed.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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No member of the Regional Coalitions or Governing Council shall vote upon or participate in the discussion of any matter which shall have direct financial bearing on the organizations the member represents. Conflict of interest and even the appearance of a conflict of interest must be avoided. All members of the Regional Coalitions and Governing Council will acknowledge this policy by signing a non-conflict of interest statement upon appointment or election and annually thereafter. Regional Coalitions and Governing Council members shall report conflict of interest to the Executive Team or Governing Council, and recuse themselves from voting on issues where a conflict of interest is apparent or identified by the membership. No member of the Governing Council may take part in the final deliberation in any matter in which he or she, members of his or her immediate family or any organization to which such member has allegiance, may have a direct financial bearing on the organization or has a personal interest that may be seen as competing with the interest of the organization. Any member who believes he or she may have such a conflict of interest will so notify the Council prior to deliberation on the matter in question. The minutes of the Council meeting will reflect disclosure of any conflict of interest and the recusal of the interested member.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONTINUUM OF CARE GOVERNING COUNCIL

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The MS Balance of State Continuum of Care membership shall be lead by a Governing Council.

### Governing Council Leadership

The MS Balance of State Continuum of Care shall have a Governing Council that consists of representation from the following groups, for a total of fifteen chartered voting members who will be the primary decision making group of the CoC membership:

- Chair of each of the 6 regional coalitions (prefer non-funded agency representation)
- Formerly Homeless person
- ESG subrecipient agency representative
- Mississippi Municipal League representative
- MS Permanent Supportive Housing Council representative
- Veteran's Affairs representative
- Philanthropic/Foundation representative

- MS Department of Mental Health representative
- Executive Director of the Collaborative Applicant agency
- At-Large CoC membership representative

The Governing Council shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer. (The Executive Committee)

When the members of the Governing Council are chartered by role (regional coalition chair and CA Executive Director), terms of individual Governing Council members shall be the duration of time in which they continue to hold the role. Governing Council members representing other groups shall hold two-year terms. There is no limit to the number of terms an individual can serve.

Governing Council meetings will be conducted in accordance with Mississippi's Public Meetings Laws and will be directed by the Governing Council Chair. The Governing Council Chair may designate other Governing Council members to direct Governing Council meetings if required due to Governing Council Chair absence. Regular meetings will be held at least once per quarter. Additional meetings may be called by any member of the Executive Committee. At a duly called meeting of the Governing Council, a majority of the Governing Council or greater than 50% shall constitute a quorum. All business of the Governing Council will be transacted at a duly called meeting of the Governing Council. Meeting dates, locations and agendas will be made public at least one week in advance of the meeting. Notes from the meeting will be posted publicly within seven business days of the meeting.

The Governing Council will strive to make decisions through modified consensus. When consensus is not possible, decisions shall be made by a vote of the majority of Governing Council members present. When an Governing Council member is not able to attend a duly called meeting, he or she may, with prior notice to the Governing Council, designate a proxy. Designations of proxies to conduct Governing Council business should be rare. If an Governing Council member assigned by chartered role is unable to routinely conduct Governing Council business, the CoC should seek to amend the charter to assign Governing Council representation through another role.

The Governing Council shall be responsible for the following actions:

- Annually assess needs for housing and homeless services and recommend prioritization of gaps in services to be filled through reallocation of existing resources and/or additional resource development
- Directly make policy and funding decisions related to the following CoC resources:
  - HUD Continuum of Care funds
  - HUD Emergency Solutions Grant funds
- Assist in developing and adopt a plan to end homelessness in Mississippi and associated annual updates

- Approve all portions of the Consolidated Plan and associated Annual Action Plans as specifically related to the use of HUD Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant funds
- Approve the annual HUD Continuum of Care application, including associated strategic plan goals and project ranking
- Direct the scope of work of the Regional Coalitions, including working with the Regional Coalitions Chairs to establish Regional Coalitions meeting agendas
- Establish any associated CoC committees, task forces, or ad hoc work groups, define their membership and generally establish and direct their scopes of work.
- Hire a CoC Coordinator and determine the responsibilities of that position by developing and updating a Job Description annually

### **Relationship between Ranking Committee and Executive Committee**

The Governing Council shall serve as the Ranking Committee. The Ranking committee will ratify the Project Priority Ranking for submission in the CoC Application. The Executive Team members will recuse themselves from the activities of the Ranking Committee. The Executive Team will serve as the Appeals Board for any conflict that may exist as a result of the Ranking Committee's decisions. If a member of the Executive Team is a representative of a CoC funded agency, the member will not participate in the appeal process as it relates to Project Priority Ranking decisions.

- The decision of the Executive Committee shall control when decisions specifically focus on HUD CoC or ESG funding, policies related to the implementation of HUD CoC- or ESG-funded programs or the HUD CoC annual application.
- The decision of the Governing Council shall control in all other matters.

### **Subcommittees and Network Groups**

The Governing Council shall charter subcommittees, task forces, ad hoc workgroups and other network groups associated with the work of the CoC, and may restrict or directly appoint the membership therein. Each standing committee shall be comprised of a minimum of three persons, with at least one from the Governing Council. The Standing Committees of MS Balance of State CoC are as follows:

- Executive Committee
  - This committee consists of the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer of Governing Council. Except for the power to amend the Governance Agreement, the Executive Committee shall have all the powers and authority of the

Governing Council in the interval between meetings of the Council, and is subject to the direction and control of the full Council.

- **Ranking Committee**

This committee shall be comprised of the Governing Council less Executive Committee (*Funded agencies will recuse themselves from membership in the Ranking Committee*) This committee shall be responsible for soliciting project applications, conducting threshold review of all agencies submitting an application, rejecting or accepting applications for submission to HUD, reviewing and scoring accepted applications, notifying applicants of submission status, determining project priorities, proofing draft of application to HUD.
- **HMIS/Technology Committee**

The primary role of this committee is to guide policy decisions for the HMIS program. This committee will provide input into the overall HMIS structure and assist in reviewing existing policies and procedures as well as recommending additional items as needed based on local needs to include both HUD funded and non-HUD funded agencies. The committee will review all HMIS reporting, updates and training, including APR, AHAR, CoC exhibits, e-HIC and Strategic Planning Objectives.
- **Resource Development/Membership/Awareness Committee**

This committee shall be responsible for seeking resources for the coalition members to utilize in providing housing and supportive services, to provide technical assistance to assist in writing application for financial assistance. This committee shall contact and solicit input from non-member agencies on housing and supportive services for the homeless, update contact information from all members annually, work with other coalitions to exchange ideas on public awareness and membership.
- **Funding and Strategy Committee**

This committee will be responsible for developing short and long term plans to prevent and mitigate homelessness in the MS Balance of State CoC area. This includes point in time counts, annual homeless needs gaps analysis, providing information for the Consolidated Plan, and consulting with ESG recipient.
- **Quality and Performance Evaluation/Monitoring Committee**

This committee shall establish means of annually monitoring performance of CoC recipients and sub recipients, evaluating outcomes of both CoC and ESG recipients and developing correction action plans for poor performers. This committee makes recommendations for non-funding of ESG and CoC Projects.

- Coordinated Assessment Committee  
This committee shall establish and guide a coordinated assessment system that will provide initial, comprehensive assessment of needs and can be easily accessed. This system will document the plan for to coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within the CoC's geographic area to encompass outreach, engagement and assessment.

## MS BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE REGIONAL COALITIONS

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The Governing Council will include representation from the 6 Regional Coalitions. The Governing Council will identify and address membership gaps in essential sectors, from key providers or other vital stakeholders (see below). Regional Coalition representation on the Governing Council is specifically intended to bring broad representation from multiple service delivery systems and areas of expertise throughout the state. Regional Coalition membership on the Governing Council should include representation from all of the sectors or stakeholders listed below. Individual board members may represent multiple sectors or stakeholders.

- Nonprofit homeless assistance providers
- Domestic violence victim service providers
- Culturally-specific service providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Governments
- Businesses and workforce development organizations
- Advocates
- Public housing agencies
- School districts
- Social service providers
- Behavioral health providers
- Hospitals and primary health care providers
- Coordinated Care Organizations
- Universities
- Affordable housing developers
- Law enforcement and criminal justice
- Organizations that serve veterans
- Homeless and formerly homeless individuals
- Department of Human Services self-sufficiency and foster care programs
- Other relevant organizations within community as determined by the Governing Council

The Regional Coalitions shall support the principles of the Continuum of Care through shared agendas and participation in the Governing Council, committees and work groups, and CoC meetings.

The members of the Regional Coalition shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair every 2 years. There is no limit to the number of terms that an individual can be elected or appointed to serve. The Chair will serve as the appointment to the Governing Council. Regional Coalition meetings will be conducted in accordance with Mississippi's Public Meetings Laws and directed by the Regional Coalition Chair. The Regional Coalitions Vice Chair will direct Regional Coalitions meetings if required due to Regional Coalitions Chairs' absence. Regular meetings will be held at least once per quarter, but generally on a monthly basis. Additional meetings may be called by the Regional Coalitions Chair. At a duly called meeting of the Regional Coalitions, a majority of the Regional Coalitions or greater than 50% shall constitute a quorum. All business of the Regional Coalitions will be transacted at a duly called meeting of the Regional Coalitions. Meeting dates, locations and agendas will be made public at least one week in advance of the meeting. Notes from the meeting will be submitted to the CoC Coordinator and posted publicly within seven business days of the meeting.

The Regional Coalitions will make decisions by a vote of the majority of Regional Coalitions members present.

### Terms of Service

The Regional Coalition appointment to the Governing Council shall serve as long as they hold the office of Regional Coalition Chair. There is no limit to the number of terms that an individual can be elected or appointed to serve. If a Regional Coalition Chair is unable to routinely conduct Regional Coalitions business, the Governing Council should seek to assign Regional Coalitions representation to another appointed individual.

Regional Coalitions members appointed to the Governing Council may have their appointments revoked at any time and at the sole discretion of the Governing Council.

## FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE MEMBERSHIP

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Beyond its governance structure, as chartered herein, the general membership of the CoC shall be established as follows: All meetings of the MS Balance of State Continuum of Care, its Governing Council, and the various subcommittees and workgroups established by the Governing Council will be public, and any individual interested in productively shaping the delivery of housing or homeless services in the 71 county service area is welcome to attend.

Anyone who attends meetings of the CoC (to include Regional Coalition meetings) can complete the membership application and pay membership dues. Dues are set at \$10 annually for individuals and agencies. Membership dues will be used to offset costs of meetings such as facility rental, paper reports and miscellaneous costs. This minimal fee is set to encourage participation from all subpopulations that have an interest in the work of the CoC. This shall not exclude, however, the Governing Council from limiting participation in subcommittees, task forces, ad hoc workgroups and other network groups associated with the MS Balance of State Continuum of Care as it deems necessary to conduct the work of the CoC. Individuals and agency representatives that have actively participated in the CoC meetings and are current on their membership dues may vote on matters presented to the CoC membership.

In the interest of transparency, the work of the MS Balance of State Continuum of Care shall be published on a publicly available website, and relevant updates and announcements shall be distributed through a single publicly-accessible email distribution list to the full CoC membership.

The MS Balance of State Continuum of Care shall convene a general membership meeting annually in June. Elections to the Governing Council and updates to the Governance Charter shall be conducted at the annual meeting.