

BERGEN COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE BYLAWS DRAFT

ARTICLE I – ORGANIZATION

Section I – Name: The name of this consortium shall be the Bergen County Continuum of Care (CoC).

Section II – Service Area: The CoC enables homeless provider agencies to serve the homeless and those at imminent risk of homelessness in the Bergen County geographic area.

Section III – Address: The principal office of the CoC shall be at the Bergen County Division of Community Development, One Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, NJ 07601.

ARTICLE II – MISSION AND DESCRIPTION

THE MISSION OF BERGEN COUNTY’S CONTINUUM OF CARE IS TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS THROUGH COLLABORATION BY MAXIMIZING EFFORTS AND LEVERAGING RESOURCES.

The Continuum coordinates a broad array of services that includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach Assessments
- Prevention of Homelessness
- Emergency Shelter/Services
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing
- Case management/Support Services
- Permanent Housing
- Education Resources

The CoC agencies will provide these services through funding from local, state, federal and private sources. The Continuum collaborates with other agencies, government, the faith-based community and other concerned organizations and individuals.

ARTICLE III: LEADERSHIP & DECISION –MAKING

A. For the purposes of relating to HUD, the Bergen County Division of Community Development shall serve as the Collaborative Applicant and Lead Administrative Agency of the Continuum of Care.

B. The leadership group of the CoC shall be known as the Leadership Committee.

C. The purpose of the Leadership Committee is annually:

- To set priorities for homelessness services and housing based on analysis of community data and need, in accordance with HUD and the State of New Jersey;
- To make funding recommendations to the Collaborative Applicant for the annual allocation from the U.S. Department of HUD;
- To assure that programs receiving HUD funding are appropriately monitored and meet program performance standards;
- To identify additional funding sources that contribute to the community's ability to respond to homeless populations;
- To monitor the effective functioning of the CoC, including review of attendance
- Additional planning and coordinating activities

D. The CoC and all its committees shall be supported by the Division of Community Development and/or an entity designated by the Leadership Committee of the CoC.

E. Membership

The Membership of the Leadership Committee shall consist of 11 members, as delineated below. No more than one employee of an agency shall serve on the Leadership Committee at any time.

Category 1: Government Funders (1 from each agency)

- Bergen County, Division of Community Development (CoC Lead)
- Bergen County Department of Human Services (HMIS)
- Bergen County Board of Social Services

Category 2: Public Housing Authorities (2 representatives)

Category 3: Community Stakeholders (2 representatives)

- Education
- Hospitals
- One (1) additional member (such as food pantries or other interested stakeholders)

Category 4: Providers and Consumers or Advocates of Homeless Services and/or Housing, HSAC

- Two (2) homeless provider agencies chosen from the membership by nomination and ballot at the annual meeting
- One (1) homeless or formerly homeless Individual
- One (1) HSAC Representative

F. Terms of Service

Nominations committee consists of 2 representatives from the General Membership 2 members of the Leadership Committee, approved by the Chair. They are responsible to present a slate by the November membership meeting and will be voted on by the January annual membership meeting.

Agencies chosen will rotate every 2 years. Category 2 & 3 will serve one (2) year term except in extenuating circumstances to be approved by majority of Leadership committee.

One member of each category will be initially elected to a 3 year term and that the remainder from each category will be elected to a 2 year term. All terms, thereafter, will be for 2 years.

G. Chairperson

The chair of the Leadership Committee shall be elected annually. The term of service is 2 years.

H. Meetings

The Leadership Committee shall meet at least 6 times annually. The Chair of the Leadership Committee will establish the date, time and place. The notice shall contain a tentative agenda and minutes from the last meeting.

I. Quorum & Voting

A quorum shall consist of five members, at least one member of each category.

J. Minutes of Meetings

Minutes shall be kept of every meeting and shall include, at a minimum, the date, time and place of the meeting, a list of the attending members, the topic discussed, the decisions reached and actions taken, the list of roll call votes on all motions, any reports made, and other information as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

K. Conflicts of Interest

It is the policy of the Bergen County CoC to avoid any conflict, or the appearance of a conflict between the CoC decision-making entity and the organizations receiving awards of grants. All members of the CoC decision-making entity shall absent themselves from discussing and voting on projects in which they or their agency have a financial or potential financial test.

ARTICLE IV – CoC

A. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: (Private/ Nonprofit Sector/Public membership)

1a. Organizational membership (Private/Non Profit/Public agency)

A private nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization whose primary purpose is to provide housing, resources, education and/or services for the homeless.

1b. Individual membership (Public Sector)

An individual (consumer or advocate) who has an interest and/or works in the field of homelessness.

General Membership Eligibility

a. Organizational membership

1. Ascribe to the mission and program standards of the CoC.
2. Have a demonstrated understanding and knowledge in the field of homelessness.
3. Shall be committed to providing quality service through cooperative, non-competitive means, and networking with programs in the field of homelessness.
4. Maintain general and professional ethical standards.
5. Have a governing board, i.e. a board directors/board of governors.

b. Individual membership

1. Ascribe to the mission and program standards of the CoC.
2. Have a demonstrated understanding and knowledge in the field of homelessness.
3. Maintain general ethical standards.

Approval and Removal of General Members

- a. Approval of a new member is by majority vote of the CoC Leadership Committee, upon recommendation of the CoC.
- b. Removal of a member shall be for good cause or for acting in a manner seriously detrimental to the continuum. Such a removal should be approved by a majority vote of the CoC Leadership Committee, upon recommendation of the CoC Membership Committee.

Voting and Meetings

- a. Each organizational member and each individual member is entitled to one vote on issues that come before the full membership.
- b. Members may attend CoC Leadership meetings, except closed meetings, and serve on standing committees of the CoC Leadership and CoC Membership committees.
- c. Designee/Alternate:
The designee's name/title and the alternate should be identified and submitted to the CoC Lead, at Bergen County Division of Community Development prior to the voting. Designees may not be changed without written notification.

B. There shall be at least one member from each entity named below, never to exceed one third public sector at all times:

Category A: Local Government representatives:

Bergen County Division of Community Development
Bergen County Board of Social Services
Bergen County Department of Human Services
Bergen County Division of Veterans
Bergen County One Stop

Category B: All Public Housing Authorities located in Bergen County

Category C: Educational Institutions:

Schools with the highest totals of homeless children, as identified by
Bergen County Homeless liaison

Category D: Federal/State Government (Including but not limited to):

Veterans Administration, NJ Office
VASH Service Staff
Department of Children and Families

Category E:

Providers of Housing and/or Homeless services receiving local, County, State or Federal
government funds (such as, but not limited to CDBG, SSH, HUD).

Category F: Community Stakeholders (including but not limited to):

United Way of Bergen County
Local Private Hospitals
Federally Qualified Health Centers
Nonprofit providers
Consumers or Community Advocates

C. There will be a minimum of two members representing homeless or formerly homeless individuals
and families.

D. All organizations and individuals wishing to be considered for membership on the CoC should submit
an application to the Leadership Committee.

E. Meetings

The full CoC shall meet at least 10 times per year, but may meet more often, as determined by the CoC
Lead. The CoC Lead shall establish the date, time and place of each meeting. There shall be at least 7 or
10 days' notice for regular meetings and at least 48 hours for emergency meetings. The notice shall
contain a tentative agenda and minutes from the last meeting. All membership meetings are open to
the public.

January shall be designated as the Annual Meeting, at which time elections are to occur.

F. Attendance:

All members are expected to regularly attend 70% of the CoC meetings. The Leadership Committee reserves the right to remove any member for consistent failure to attend without a reasonable explanation.

G. Quorum & Voting

1. Regular Meetings: The presence of 40% of the Consortium's members at any meeting shall constitute a quorum.
2. Emergency or Special meetings not on the regular schedule require 50% member attendance for the purpose of voting or handling any official business of the Consortium and must provide a minimum of one week prior notice in writing, fax, mail, or email.

H. Minutes of Meetings:

Minutes shall be kept of every meeting and shall include, at a minimum, the date, time and place of the meeting, the number of the attending organization members, the topics discussed, the decisions reached and actions taken, the list of roll call votes on all motions, any reports made, and other information as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson. The CoC Lead will keep official copies of the minutes for a minimum of seven years as is the standard for HUD documentation.

ARTICLE V: ANNUAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A. The Leadership Committee shall set community priorities in keeping with the overall mission of the CoC.

B. The Leadership Committee shall set performance standards to be incorporated in contracts with all funded provider agencies and nothing in this document shall imply that the CoC supersedes the authority of the contractor.

C. The Leadership Committee shall appoint a Technical Review Committee to review all applications for new or renewal projects and make recommendations to the Leadership Committee for approval.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

A. The Leadership Committee Chairperson shall appoint individuals to chair the various standing committees and other committees on an as-needed basis. The appointee may be an executive-level member of the CoC or other staff member or community volunteer.

B. Responsibilities of Committees

a. Responsibilities of the Committee Chairpersons are to: (1) hold regularly scheduled meetings; (2) send out meeting notices; (3) facilitate committee meetings; (4) carry out goals and objectives of committee with committee members; (5) keep accurate attendance records and; (6) report to the full CoC on a quarterly basis.

b. Committee Participation – CoC member agencies are expected to actively participate on pertinent committees. Committee members' responsibilities are to: (1) regularly attend committee meetings called by the committee chair; (2) participate in committee discussions; (3) assist in the development and implementation of committee activities such as policy development, surveys, etc.; and (4) participate in committee activities related to preparation of relevant sections of HUD applications.

C. The following shall be the standing committees of the Bergen County CoC.

a. Membership Committee

Purpose: Solicit and review CoC applications. Make recommendations for removal of members who are in violation of the bylaws.

b. Mainstream Assistance

Purpose: To develop policies and systems to help clients to secure mainstream benefits for which they are eligible (e.g. GA, TANF, SSI, SNAP).

c. Discharge Policy

Purpose: To develop and implement policies and protocols for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care (such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction programs and institutions) in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.

d. Homeless Survey (BCDHS)

Purpose: To develop methodology and tools to conduct point-in-time surveys to identify the homeless or those who are at imminent risk of homelessness and to implement such surveys on at least an annual basis.

e. Homeless Prevention & Rapid Rehousing

Purpose: To look at trends and issues among those seeking services related to homeless prevention and permanent housing and to utilize data to inform committee recommendations.

f. Housing Management Information System (HMIS) (BCDHS)

Purpose: To engage all funded providers in meeting expectations for maintaining accurate and up-to-date program-level data and to provide a forum to discuss HMIS issues or problems.

D. Other committees and subcommittees may be established to respond to community needs and/or emerging funding sources (e.g. frequent users of emergency services, veterans).

ARTICLE VII: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended at regular or special meeting of the CoC Consortium by a majority vote of the members present and voting. Amendments must be in written form a distributed to members of the Consortium at least two weeks prior to presentation and vote.