

GOVERNANCE CHARTER FOR THE NORTH SHORE CONTINUUM OF CARE

This charter lays out the agreed terms, roles and responsibilities of the various entities that make up the North Shore Continuum of Care (hereinafter referred to as the “NS CoC”).

NORTH SHORE CoC FULL MEMBERSHIP:

The North Shore Continuum of Care Full Membership is the vision making body for the North Shore CoC. The Full Membership is defined as those interested community partners who represent the interests of the homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness. These partners may come from, but are not limited to, nonprofit homeless assistance 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, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals, or other entities or individuals who have an interest in homelessness and the issues related to it.

The communities of the North Shore CoC are: Amesbury, Andover, Beverly, Boxford, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Hamilton, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Merrimac, Methuen, Middleton, Newburyport, North Andover, North Reading, Peabody, Rockport, Rowley, Salem, Salisbury, Topsfield, Swampscott, Wenham, West Newbury, and Wilmington. The Full Membership meets at least semi-annually and more often as necessary so that the North Shore CoC Board may obtain feedback from the full membership on the needs of the community to inform the NS CoC’s response to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Notice of Funds Availability.

Role:

1. Appointing two of its members to represent the full membership on the CoC Board
2. Providing information and advice to the North Shore CoC Board regarding best practices in homeless services;
3. Provide a vision, priorities and goals for the CoC community;

NORTH SHORE CoC BOARD:

The North Shore Continuum of Care Board is comprised of those two appointed Full Membership members and those other members who attend at least one of the semi-annual full membership meetings and six regular meetings of the North Shore Continuum of Care Board. The North Shore CoC Board meetings are open to all. The North Shore CoC Board has their regular meetings on the third Wednesday of the month. The North Shore CoC Board holds the responsibility of deciding the needs of the community, how the application review and ranking process is to be administered, endorsing the projects to be submitted for funding consideration and the community priority rankings, although some of these responsibilities are delegated to other partners as outlined in this charter.

Role:

The North Shore CoC Board is made up of one homeless or formerly homeless person, agencies who serve various homeless populations, agencies who serve those who are at risk of homelessness, governmental departments charged with addressing homelessness and individuals who are

interested in addressing the issue of homelessness in the North Shore community. The North Shore CoC Board body is responsible for:

1. Establishing and providing oversight of the HMIS system and designating an HMIS administrator;
2. Designating an entity to write the application for funding in response to HUD's annual CoC Program NOFA for homeless assistance resources;
3. Striving to provide the best services to each of the community's specific homeless populations;
4. Establishing and providing oversight of the Monitoring Committee;
5. Working within the CoC homeless provider system to provide comprehensive and appropriate services to move homeless persons into permanent affordable housing as quickly and appropriately as possible;
6. Participating on CoC Committees and in monthly board meetings;
7. Reviewing, endorsing, and establishing policies and procedures including the process of CoC Board selection;
8. Developing and following a governance charter which will be updated annually detailing the responsibilities of all parties;
10. Consulting with recipients and subrecipients to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type, monitoring the performance of recipients and subrecipients, evaluating outcomes, and taking action against poor performers;
11. Evaluating and reporting to HUD outcomes of CoC projects and consulting with CoC applicants regarding allocations;
12. Establishing and providing oversight of a Coordinated Entry system and Coordinated Entry subcommittee;
13. Conducting a Point-in-Time count of homeless persons, at least biennially;
14. Conducting an annual gaps analysis;
15. Providing information required to complete the North Shore HOME Consortium Consolidated Plan;
16. Designing, operating and following a collaborative process for developing the application and approving its submission;
17. Establish priorities for funding projects in the CoC geographic area;
18. Establish a process for funding recommendations through HUD and other funding streams available in the community; and
19. Oversee all CoC committees and responsible for the creation/dissolution of committees as deemed necessary.
20. Consult with grantees of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding in the geographic area.

Voting Rights:

NS CoC Policies Related To Board Membership: It is the policy of the North Shore Continuum of Care that each Continuum of Care board member/agency:

1. Board membership is open to an agency or governmental entity, not individuals.
2. The agency holds one vote;
The agency designates a delegate and an alternate who are authorized to cast the agency vote when such action is needed;
3. The agency is allowed to send more than these designated people to the community meetings but when a vote is taken, only the delegate or alternate is eligible to cast a vote;

4. The agency is required to send a representative to at least 6 out of the last 12 community North Shore CoC Board meetings prior to the vote in order to be eligible to cast a vote;
5. If an agency is unable to send either the delegate or alternate, that agency may send a representative to the meeting and receive credit for attendance. However, only a delegate or alternate has the right to vote on any issue.
6. If an agency has not been a member of the Continuum of Care for a full twelve months at the time of a vote, the number of absences allowed that agency will be proportional to the number of months they have been a member of the CoC.
7. An agency board member is not eligible to vote on any issue regarding a project where that board agency/member has a financial interest or serves the project's agency in any capacity; and
8. An agency has the right to submit new and renewal proposals within the guidelines and specifications of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. (The full membership then has the right and responsibility to decide which projects are to be included in the CoC application.)

North Shore CoC Board Membership:

The North Shore CoC Board is elected from the full membership at a CoC full membership meeting or through other means (email, U.S. Postal Service, FAX) and should:

1. Include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual and
2. Represent the relevant organizations and projects serving the homeless including:
 - i. Persons with substance use disorders,
 - ii. Persons with HIV/AIDs,
 - iii. Veterans,
 - iv. The chronically homeless,
 - v. Families with children,
 - vi. Unaccompanied youth,
 - vii. The seriously mentally ill, and
 - viii. Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Voting Methods:

The CoC voting procedure may be carried out within a CoC meeting of the members or through other means (email, U.S. Postal Service, FAX) as long as each completed ballot is:

1. Designated for an eligible voting member (agency), and
2. The ballot contains the signature of the CoC delegate or alternate.

Election and Terms:

The North Shore Continuum of Care Board is made up of no less than 9 and no more than 21 members. It should always have an odd number of members including:

1. Two representatives of the Membership Body;
2. A homeless or formerly homeless person;
3. Community representatives and leaders.

Members are elected by the membership body for two year staggered terms, and these representatives can serve two consecutive 2 year terms.

Vacancies:

Vacancies are filled by a majority vote of the North Shore CoC Board at the following monthly meeting.

Quorum:

In order to do binding business, there must be a quorum of at least 51% present for a Board vote.

Officers:

The Board will elect its own Chairperson, Vice Chair, Clerk and any other roles as seen fit by the Board.

1. Chairperson. The Chairperson shall call, preside over all meetings, and set agendas for all NS CoC meetings. The Chair can call special meetings of the NS CoC.
2. Vice Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall assume all duties of the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence.
3. Clerk. The Clerk shall be responsible for all correspondence and prepare reports as required. The Clerk shall be responsible for the minutes of the meetings of the NS CoC and for their distribution. The Clerk is responsible for tracking CoC meeting attendance.

Limitations:

Only one person per agency may serve on the Board at any given time. Board members representing provider agencies represented on the Board can have a proposal on the table although they should not vote on these issues.

Grievances:

All members of the North Shore CoC full membership are encouraged to report any grievances with the North Shore CoC Board through this procedure without fear of reprisal. Grievances should be submitted as soon as possible to ensure proper responses.

First, the CoC member should submit their grievance in writing or in person to the North Shore CoC Board. The CoC Board should respond in writing with their response or decision within 7 working days of receiving the grievance.

If the member is dissatisfied with the outcome or decision, they should submit a written request to present their grievance at the following CoC full membership meeting. The membership will vote and give a decision at that meeting.

All members also have the right to file a complaint against the North Shore CoC Board to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). However, we encourage members to use the grievance process above first as filing a grievance with HUD can affect the score of all CoC applicants.

Reallocation Policy

HUD encourages the use of a reallocation is a strategy in order for CoCs to can create new, evidence-informed projects by eliminating projects that are underperforming or are more appropriately funded from other sources. Through utilization of the North Shore CoC's Reallocation Policy and Procedure, attached as Appendix A, the goal is to ensure that, where

scarce funding is available, a strategic plan is employed in order to assess current projects for performance and effectiveness in ending homelessness.

Plan to End Youth Homelessness

The North Shore CoC is committed to addressing the unique challenges and circumstances of unaccompanied homeless youth age 24 and younger. This plan, attached as Appendix B, aims to develop and strengthen partnerships within the CoC's geographic region that will provide opportunities for collaboration and resource development for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness as well as those youth who are at risk of homelessness. Specifically, the CoC will maintain participation in the Youth Committee of the North Shore Housing Action Group, a collaboration between the Lynn and North Shore CoCs, in order to identify the needs of this population and collaborate on solutions across the region. The CoC will also maintain its own standing Youth Committee whose purpose is to organize the CoC's participation in the annual youth homeless count that is funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in an effort to identify homeless youth throughout the region. As resources are made available throughout the CoC's geographic region by HUD or other funding sources directed towards ending youth homelessness, the CoC will evaluate the current need for this funding as well as its ability to apply for these funds as a stand-alone entity or through collaboration with partners in the community whose goal is to address the housing and support services needs for this population.

Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

The North Shore CoC is dedicated to ending chronic homelessness across their geographic catchment area. As exhibited in the CoC's adopted Standards for Ending Chronic Homelessness, attached as Appendix C, the CoC has adopted the order of priority for both dedicated permanent supportive housing (including permanent supportive housing not awarded as dedicated but identified as prioritized) and for non-dedicated permanent supportive housing as defined in Notice CPD-16-11: *Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing*. Specifically, these Standards will focus the CoC's efforts on three key areas in an effort to end chronic homelessness, including targeting persons with the highest needs and longest histories of homelessness for existing and new permanent supportive housing, increasing the number of dedicated permanent supportive housing units, and improving outreach to this specific population.

Policy for Filling Housing vacancies within CoC Funded Programs

Coordinated Entry refers to the process used to assess and assist in meeting the housing needs of people at-risk of homelessness and people experiencing homelessness. The North Shore CoC has adopted a Coordinated Entry Intake, Assessment and Prioritization system that requires all HUD funded programs to complete a Coordinated Entry Intake and Assessment for households presenting as homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, as defined in the North Shore CoC Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures, and who wish to be added to the Prioritization Database. As outlined in the North Shore CoC's approved Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures, any HUD funded housing program is required to fill any vacancies exclusively through the Coordinated Entry System. Applicants enrolled in the Coordinated Entry system will be selected based on program eligibility and consumer preference, as indicated in the Prioritization Database, and prioritized according to HUD guidelines set forth in CPD-16-11 "**Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing**" which gives first priority to individuals

and families experiencing chronic homelessness. If there are no applicants meeting the definition of chronic homelessness, applicants will be prioritized based on the criteria outlined in Section 3B of notice CPD-16-11.

The North Shore CoC Board will actively encourage affordable housing partners who are not funded through the CoC to adopt these priorities as well in filling vacancies.

Prevention of Involuntary Separation

It is the policy and expectation of the North Shore CoC that any CoC funded program shall abide by all state and federal regulations and the provisions of the HEARTH Act that prohibit emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing from denying admission to or separate any family members from other members based on age, sex, gender or disability. In addition, CoC funded programs will adhere to state and federal regulations as they apply to the separate of children from a custodial adult or from other siblings.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts oversees the emergency shelters and rapid rehousing programs for families with children and prohibits the involuntary separation of family members based on age, sex, gender or disability. The Commonwealth has formal appeal process for any decision taken relative to a family's request for shelter, including who is deemed part of the assistance /family unit for shelter placement or rehousing programs.

COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Planning Committee

This committee coordinates the planning for and completion of the annual consolidated application in collaboration with the entity that has been hired to write the response to HUD's NOFA. This committee meets regularly during the NOFA application period and quarterly during the rest of the year to discuss related topics such as debriefing from previous applications and planning for new permanent supportive housing projects.

Role:

1. Collaborate with the entity hired to complete the consolidated application, including providing prompt feedback and communication to said entity in order to ensure timely and complete submission of the application, develop standards for reviewing and ranking project proposals.
2. Make recommendations for funding priorities.

Proposal Ranking and Review Committee:

Each year, the North Shore CoC appoints a committee of non-funded members to make strategic decisions for the North Shore CoC throughout the year.

Role:

1. Complete the review and ranking of all project applications to be submitted for funding in response to HUD's NOFA.
2. Review the monitoring of all project applicants as part of the overall application review process.

3. Make recommendations to the Board regarding individual project applications to be submitted in response to HUD's NOFA.

HMIS Committee

This committee is responsible for designating and overseeing the work of the HMIS Lead Agency. This committee operates in accordance with the NS CoC HMIS Governance Policy. This committee oversees and coordinates the annual HUD Point-in-Time count that requires Continuums of Care to conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night.

Membership Committee

1. Recruits new members to the NSCoC Board.
2. Plans and executes full membership meetings.
3. Reviews membership applications.
4. Tracks members in good standing.

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee

1. Monitor performance of North Shore CoC, recipients, and subrecipients.
2. Develop a standardized monitoring tool, in collaboration with the CoC Board, to use in the evaluation of all project proposals in response to HUD's NOFA.
3. Conduct an annual on-site evaluation of funded projects to determine compliance with HUD program rules and assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting HUD and NS CoC defined objectives and the specific targets and goals outlined in their project application to HUD.
4. Inform the NS CoC Leadership of performance related concerns stemming from this monitoring and evaluation process.

Youth Committee

The North Shore CoC will maintain a youth committee in order to exert a continued effort towards ending homelessness for youth ages 24 and under.

Role:

- Coordinate annual youth homeless count in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the CoC membership and other youth service providers who may not be represented at the regular meetings of the CoC.
- Ensure continued collaboration between the North Shore CoC and the Youth Committee of the North Shore Housing Action group by providing periodic updates to the CoC Board.
- Conduct outreach to youth service providers within the region to make an effort to increase representation in the CoC.

NORTH SHORE CoC COLLABORATIVE APPLICANT:

The North Shore CoC Board must select a Collaborative Applicant best able to successfully submit the CoC application to HUD each year.

Role:

The designated Collaborative Applicant must complete the following:

1. Complete the electronic application in response to HUD's annual CoC Program NOFA for homeless assistance resources in collaboration with the entity hired to write and complete the response to the NOFA
2. Present a timeline and deadlines to all project applicants for individual project plans that have been determined in collaboration with the entity hired to write and complete the NOFA response
3. Serve as main point of contact between entity hired to write and complete response to NOFA and CoC Board;
4. Collect all data and submit a chart to HUD of all projects planning to reapply;
5. Create and submit the housing inventory chart;
6. Create and submit the grant inventory worksheet;
7. Establish priorities for funding projects in the CoC geographic area in collaboration with the CoC Board;
8. Lead process for creation of ranking tool with regard to applications for funding in response to the NOFA;
9. Oversee committees and volunteers;
10. Update and monitor progress on the Plan to End Homelessness;
11. Create agendas for CoC full membership and Board meetings in collaboration with the Board Chair;
12. Notify others that they can join the CoC full membership annually;
13. Monitor who is eligible to vote on the full membership.

HMIS LEAD AGENCY:

An entity must be selected by the North Shore CoC Board to oversee HMIS management for the North Shore CoC. They are responsible for:

1. Ensuring compliance with the latest HMIS Data and Technical standards published by HUD through collaboration with the HMIS software provider, Social Solutions, and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the entity responsible for oversight of the entire HMIS system for the North Shore CoC;
2. Serving as main point of contact for CoC with Social Solutions and DHCD, providing accurate and timely updates to CoC membership with relevant information regarding HMIS system;
2. Accurately calculating the size and needs of the homeless population;
3. Coordinating training of new staff at member agencies on accurate HMIS entry;
4. Serve as primary contact with Social Solutions.
5. Reporting as necessary to various entities such as Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, the City of Peabody or other cities and towns within the Continuum of Care, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and others, ensuring that any and all required reports are completed in an accurate and timely manner in accordance with requirements set forth by requesting entity.

NSCoC Providers' Education-Related Duties

I. Duty to Designate an Education Coordinator

A. Designation and Duties of Education Coordinator

Every HUD-funded NSCOC project that provides shelter, housing, or services for homeless families with children or unaccompanied youth must designate a staff member to be responsible for ensuring that children and youth served by the project are enrolled in school and connected to appropriate education-related programs and services in the community, including early childhood programs, such as Head Start; programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities operating under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and programs for homeless children and youth authorized under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney Vento Act.

B. Ongoing Training and Collaboration to Improve Educational Outcomes for the Homeless. NSCOC providers are expected to:

1. Encourage their education coordinators to participate in meetings convened by the NSCOC to promote better educational outcomes for homeless children within the continuum's geographic area;
2. Ensure that their education coordinators have opportunities to participate in webinars, workshops, and other programs offered by experts in the field;
3. Provide their education coordinators with opportunities, where possible, to be trained in assessment programs that provide indicators of potential development delays.

II. Duties to Establish Policies Consistent with McKinney-Vento and Other Education Laws and Document Compliance with Those Policies.

A. Required Policies and Practices

All HUD-funded NSCOC projects that provide shelter, housing, or services for homeless families or unaccompanied youth must:

1. Place posters about their educational rights in places where clients can see them;
2. Establish policies requiring that staff take the following steps in dealing with clients:
 - a. Explain to each homeless family and unaccompanied youth as soon as possible, their right to choose whether to continue to attend school where they were enrolled before becoming homeless, or to enroll in any school that other children residing in the same attendance area are eligible to attend;
 - b. Provide to each homeless family and unaccompanied youth a document summarizing their education rights;
 - c. Ask families and youth if they have any concerns about school attendance, particularly fears related to domestic violence, and provide help, as necessary, to resolve these concerns;
 - d. Discuss with families the impact that changing schools might have on children's education, social, and emotional well-being;
 - e. Immediately refer homeless families with school-aged children to their school district's homeless liaison and follow up to ensure contact and provide assistance, as necessary, with enrollment;
 - f. Inform unaccompanied youth of their rights to enroll in school without a parent or legal guardian and immediately link them with their school district homeless liaison and assist them, as necessary, with school enrollment;
 - g. Provide parents with information about Head Start and other public preschool programs and facilitate enrollment and attendance;

- h. Collaborate with early intervention and special education providers to conduct screenings, especially for children, birth to five, to determine if the children are eligible for special services due to a development delay or disability;
- i. Work with parents, school liaisons, and other advisers as appropriate to identify the programs and services each child will need to thrive academically and make those programs and services available to the child;
- j. In a case management plan for every family with children, identify steps that will be taken to serve the educational interests of each child, including steps to link each child with necessary programs and services (such as tutoring) as well as beneficial extracurricular and enrichment activities;
- k. Actively encourage and support the parents and youth in carrying out that plan; and
- l. Inform parents and youth exiting a HUD-funded homeless program that they continue to have educational rights for at least the remainder of the school year.

B. Documenting Compliance with Required Policies.

All NSCOC providers that are required to establish policies outlined in section II.A., above, are also required to document their compliance with those policies and produce that documentation (redacted as necessary to preserve client safety), including copies of education plans, upon the request of the Continuum of Care Planner, or any other designated representative of the NSCOC.