



Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness

Governance Charter

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ARTICLE I. MISSION

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (hereafter referred to as the Coalition), acting as the primary decision-making body of the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC), shall have a mission to:

End homelessness in Vermont through sharing information, developing resources, and providing a forum for decision making and to promote decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all.

The Coalition will achieve this mission by:

- ❖ Creating a network of organizations, service providers, advocates, consumers, concerned citizens and policy makers committed to ending homelessness.
- ❖ Fostering communication and building local Continua and developing collaborative partnerships.
- ❖ Ensuring that all Vermonters, particularly low and moderate income persons, people with disabilities, homeless people, elders, families with children and others, have safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing.
- ❖ Encouraging resident participation and control in their housing.
- ❖ Advocating for the preservation of existing housing, protection of renters, and the development of new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing.
- ❖ Promoting the recognition of housing as a basic right for all Vermonters through education of the public and elected officials.
- ❖ Acting as a catalyst in the exploration and development of innovative means of preserving and increasing Vermont's affordable housing stock.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility. Membership shall be open to all interested individuals and organizations. All members are invited to be voting members of their local Continua of Care and of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness.

Section 2. Dues. All members will be requested to pay annual dues established by the Coalition. Each member shall pay dues each year to remain in good standing with voting rights in the Coalition. In no way should dues be considered a prerequisite for participation or voting at the local Continua of Care level. The CoC Board has the authority to waive dues in cases of financial hardship and to establish a dues structure that considers member organization operating budgets. Homeless/formerly homeless individuals are not required to pay dues.

No part of the assets or income of the Coalition may be distributed for the financial benefits of the officers, members, board representatives or volunteers, except as noted below for consumer assistance. Upon the dissolution of this Coalition, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes as agreed upon by the CoC Board.

All Coalition expenditures must be reviewed and approved by the Board. The following activities are eligible expenses:

- Monthly Coalition meeting space rental
- Annual membership in the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
- Trainings for the Coalition
- Events sponsored by the Coalition (including but not limited to the annual homeless vigil)
- Annual HUD Continuum of Care grant application preparation
- Consumer assistance for Coalition-approved expenses associated with conferences and/or trainings
- A monthly stipend (amount to be determined by the Coalition Board) paid to two consumer Board Representatives

Section 3. Fiscal Year. The Coalition shall observe a July 1st to June 30th fiscal year.

Section 4. Resignations. Members in good standing may submit resignations in writing to the Secretary.

ARTICLE III. MEETINGS

Section 1. Full Membership Meetings. A meeting of the full membership of the Coalition shall be held no fewer than twice per year, in addition to the Annual Meeting. A membership meeting may be held concurrent with a Board meeting. All membership meetings are open to the public.

Section 2. Board Meetings. Regular Board meetings shall be held on the third Tuesday of each month with no fewer than 10 meetings per year. All meetings are open to the full membership. As a preliminary goal, meeting agendas will incorporate the following topics each quarter:

- 1st quarter: Hold Annual Meeting, including elections. Set annual goals and propose changes to the Governance Charter. Approve an annual budget.
- 2nd quarter: Discuss and vote on Legislative priorities. Plan and implement annual homeless vigil. Prepare for Point-In-Time count.
- 3rd quarter: Conduct the Point-In-Time count, gaps analysis, housing inventory, and review/revise the Coalition's goals.
- 4th quarter: Complete HUD funding application and project prioritizing.

Section 3. Annual Meeting. Annual meetings of the full membership of the Coalition will be held the third Tuesday of July.

Section 4. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board or Membership may be called with three (3) days notice by the Co-Chairs or by a majority vote of the Board, and may also be called upon written request of ten members.

Section 5. Quorum. Twenty-five percent of the members shall constitute a quorum for membership meetings. A quorum of the Board shall consist of a majority of the filled seats.

Section 6. Notice. Except in the case of Special Meetings, all meeting information and agendas shall be noticed to the membership at least one week in advance.

ARTICLE IV. GOVERNING BOARD

Section 1. Board Composition and Nominations. The Governing Board shall be comprised of four Officers and up to twenty five representatives who are members in good standing. The following Officers and Representatives shall be nominated as stated here:

Officer or Representative	Nominating Body
A. Two Co-Chairs	A. By the Membership Committee
B. One Secretary	B. By the Membership Committee
C. One Treasurer	C. By the Membership Committee
D. One representative for each Local Continuum of Care (12 in total)	D. By each respective Local Continuum of Care
E. One representative for youth	E. By the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
F. One representative for victims of domestic/sexual violence	F. By the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
G. One representative for veterans	G. By the network of Veteran Service Providers, including the White River Junction Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Vermont Veteran Services, Veteran's Inc.
H. Up to two representatives who are self-identified as currently or previously experiencing homelessness	H. By the Membership Committee
I. Two representatives for the Vermont Agency of Human Services, including one representative from the Department of Mental Health	I. By the Vermont Agency of Human Services
J. One representative for Housing Partners	J. By Housing Partners, including the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, and the Department for Housing and Community Development
K. One representative for the Vermont State	K. By the Vermont State Housing Authority

Housing Authority	
L. One representative for the HMIS Lead Agency	L. By the HMIS Lead Agency
M. Up to three representatives at large	M. By the membership at large

In all cases, nominations shall be permitted from the floor.

To the extent possible, the composition of the Board should reflect the fact that the Coalition is a statewide organization and comprised of varying types of organizations and stakeholders, such as: 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 other organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Section 2. Board Duties and Power. The Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Coalition. The Board shall be subject to the Governance Charter of the Coalition, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the Coalition. Coalition members who serve on the Board represent the greater good of the Coalition and not necessarily the interests of one specific organization.

The Board may designate Committees or Officers to undertake specific work for the Coalition.

Board representatives may be removed from office by a majority vote of the membership at a meeting warned for that purpose.

Board representatives may appoint alternates to attend in their place through written prior notice to the Co-Chairs.

ARTICLE V. VOTING

Section 1. Motions. Each item requiring Coalition approval will be formally voted on by the Board. A motion will be made by a representative of the Board, it will be seconded and a full vote will be taken with the outcomes reflected in the minutes. Warned votes may also be conducted in between regular meetings through the use of written communication or online tools. Each representative will be entitled to one vote. Votes are determined by a majority of Board representatives present.

Section 2. Notice. To the extent possible, votes will be warned as part of the notice for a meeting. For unwarned or unanticipated motions, a vote may be tabled and warned for action at the next meeting upon request by any member.

Section 3. Votes by the Membership. The Board may vote to take a motion to the full membership for a vote. In these cases, the vote will be warned as part of a membership meeting

notice. Each member in good standing will be eligible to vote. Votes will be determined by a majority of members present.

Section 4. Eligible Voters. When voting on Balance of State Continuum of Care items, the Chittenden Continuum of Care is not eligible to participate. As appropriate, this shall be duly noted in the meeting minutes.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers and Duties. The Officers shall be 2 Co-Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer. The Officers may also be representatives. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by this Governance Charter.

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for chairing and convening all full membership meetings of the Coalition and Board Meetings. The Secretary shall assure that minutes are taken and distributed for all meetings and be responsible for keeping the attendance and membership records of the Coalition. The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the Coalition and report to the membership at the regular meetings on the financial condition of the Coalition.

Section 2. Terms of Office. Co-Chairs shall serve a two year staggered term. The Secretary and Treasurer shall serve a one year term and can serve consecutive terms with no limit. Terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 3. Nominations. The Membership Committee (described in Article VII) shall nominate candidates for the election at the annual meeting. Additional nominations shall be permitted from the floor.

Section 4. Elections. Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Elections shall be by ballot for any position with more than one nominee.

Section 5. Vacancies. A vacancy in any other office shall be filled by the Board, with inclusion in the meeting notice.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Special Committees. Special committees shall be appointed by the Co-Chairs as directed by the Board.

Section 2. Committee Composition and Reports. It is required that at least one Board representative actively participate in each committee formed under the Coalition. All committees shall provide reports of their activities at regular Board meetings. As appropriate, it is the intention of the Coalition that all Committees operate in a manner which is open, fair and transparent.

Section 3. Committees List. The following have been approved by the CoC Board:

- A. Membership Committee. The Membership Committee will annually coordinate nominations for the election of Board representatives and officers. The committee shall also conduct membership outreach through the Coalitions website, mailing list, and in-person. Annually, mailing list registrants will be invited to become voting members of the Coalition and their local Continuum of Care. The Membership Committee shall aim to promote participation statewide and from the full diversity of organizations and stakeholders working to end homelessness.
- B. Legislative Committee. A Legislative Committee shall exist to initially deliberate over any advocacy and/or legislative matters for consideration by the larger group. Recommendations to support or not support issues should be brought to a vote by the full Coalition.
- C. HUD Continuum of Care Programs Committee (“NOFA Committee”). The committee shall be comprised of Coalition members with experience and willingness to work on the federal grant.
- D. Point-In-Time Committee. This committee plans and supports implementation of the annual Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless, including related reports and activities such as the Housing Inventory Chart of Homeless Beds and needs analysis.
- E. HMIS Advisory Board. This committee serves to inform and advise the Coalition and the HMIS Lead Agency on the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care HMIS implementation, including: utilization, compliance, budget, security and privacy, data quality, and HMIS activities. This charge of this committee is fully outlined in the HMIS Governance Charter. This committee will improve efficiency and opportunity for the homeless that the Coalition serves.
- F. Coordinated Entry Committee. This committee plans and supports the implementation of coordinated entry and assessment across the Balance of State Continuum of Care, including ongoing evaluation of coordinated entry processes and support for local Continua of Care.
- G. Veterans Committee. This committee is comprised of homeless veteran provider agencies working together to address veteran-specific housing needs throughout the state. A primary focus of the committee is to end veterans’ homelessness as part of a national federal initiative involving three federal partners; Health and Humans Services (HUD), United States Interagency Council on Homeless (USICH), and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
- H. Strategic Planning Committee. This committee develops and recommends strategic objectives, goals and plans to the CoC to prevent and end homelessness. In order to develop and follow through with the aforementioned, the committee utilizes data to understand the nature and extent of homelessness, coordinates with other statewide efforts, monitors progress towards goals, operationalizes planning grant activities, and works to ensure long-term capacity of the CoC.

ARTICLE VIII. LOCAL CONTINUUM OF CARE

Section 1. Local Continuum of Care. The following local continua are recognized by the Coalition:

1. Franklin – Grand Isle Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Franklin County
 - Covering all of Grand Isle County
2. Orleans Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Orleans County
 - Covering the Essex County towns of: Norton, Canaan, Warrens Gore, Avery's Gore, Averill, Lemington, Lewis, Bloomfield, Brighton, Ferdinand, Brunswick, and Maidstone.
3. Chittenden Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Chittenden
4. Lamoille Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Lamoille County
 - Covering the Caledonia County town of Hardwick
5. Caledonia – Essex Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Caledonia County, except the town of Hardwick
 - Covering the Essex County towns of East Haven, Granby, Guildhall, Lunenburg, Victory, and Concord.
6. Washington Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Washington County
7. Addison Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Addison County
8. Orange and Windsor North Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Orange County
 - Covering the Windsor County towns of Bethel, Rochester, Stockbridge, Barnard, Hartford, Hartland, Norwich, Pomfret, Royalton, Sharon, Bridgewater, and Woodstock
9. Rutland Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Rutland County
10. Southern Windsor – Windham Continuum of Care
 - Covering the Windsor County towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading, Springfield, Weathersfield, Weston, West Windsor, and Windsor.
 - Covering the Windham County towns of Grafton, Londonderry, Rockingham, and Windham.
11. Bennington Continuum of Care

- Covering all of Bennington County

12. South Windham Continuum of Care

- Covering the Windham County towns of Stratton, Jamaica, Townshend, Athens, Westminster, Brookline, Wardsboro, Newfane, Putney, Somerset, Dover, Dummerston, Wilmington, Marlboro, Brattleboro, Whitingham, Halifax, Guilford, and Vernon.

Section 2. Continuum of Care Responsibilities. Each Continuum pledges to the following:

1. To nominate a Board representative who is responsible for relaying information between the regional Continuum and the statewide Coalition and for voting on its behalf.
2. To organize and facilitate regular regional meetings, including outreach to encourage participation in the meetings. Regular meetings shall be held no less than once every two months.
3. To the greatest extent possible, actively reach out to and include varying types of organizations and stakeholders in its activities, such as: 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 other organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.
4. To take minutes of each meeting, utilizing the forms provided, and to maintain the minutes should the Coalition need to provide evidence of activities. The Chair of the local Continuum of Care (or designee) is responsible for these minutes and must maintain for at least three (3) years. The Coalition's website may be used to post and archive local meeting minutes and information.
5. To facilitate documentation of regional efforts to provide housing and services.
6. To coordinate within their local region Homeless Day activities, and assist in organizing Homeless Day activities through the Coalition.
7. To coordinate region wide homeless data collection efforts consistent with statewide homeless efforts as needed for planning and reporting.
8. To organize regional prioritization of projects to be presented at the statewide Coalition, and to provide updates for the Coalition.
9. To work toward the coordination of regional and statewide housing and service.
10. To encourage participation in the Continuum of Care planning process by people who have direct experience with homelessness.
11. To coordinate the regional response to State and Federal applications for homeless funding.
12. To participate in ad hoc committees as needed.

13. To ensure all children are enrolled in schools and connected to appropriate services within the community.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

These Governance Charter may be amended or repealed at any meeting of the members by a two-thirds vote of the Coalition with notice or a nine-tenths vote without notice.

ARTICLE X: POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

All policy documents formally approved by the Coalition, including but not limited to Memoranda of Agreement and other approved policies, are to be considered with this Governance Charter as the Balance of State Continuum of Care Policy & Procedures Manual.

ARTICLE XI: NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Coalition that no person shall be discriminated against because of their race, sex, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or because they have minor children, or receive public assistance. The organization shall be operated in an open and democratic fashion and shall not discriminate against anyone because they are a member of one of the above groups.

ADOPTED: JANUARY 17, 2006
Revised: June 20, 2006 (Article VI/Section 1)
Revised: November 21, 2006 (Article I, Article II/Section 2, Article IV/Section 1, Article V/Section 2, Article VII/ new Section 4 and 5)
Revised: February 20, 2007 (Article VII/Section 5)
Revised: May 20, 2008 (Article II/Section 2; Article III/Section 4; Article VII/Sections 1, 2, 3)/Section /Sections 1/Section
Revised: October 18, 2011 (Article VIII/Section 2/number 12)
Revised: September 17, 2012 (Article VI/Section 1)
Revised: January 21, 2014 (Article 1; Article VI/Section 1)
Revised: August 18, 2015 (Major Reorganization and Revisions)
Revised: July 16, 2016 (increase number of members at large on CoC Board)
Revised: July 28, 2017 (addition of Strategic Planning & Veterans Committee, new slots created on board for Officer positions, decrease number of members at large)

CoC Co-Chair (print name): Mary Ellen Mendl Date: 7/28/17

CoC Co-Chair (signature): Mary Ellen Mendl

CoC Co-Chair (print name): Peter Kellerman Date: 7/28/17

CoC Co-Chair (signature): P. Kellerman