

# Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care

The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) is a HUD-designated entity designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.

The VT BoS CoC facilitates discussions, develops a community plan, conducts a homeless count (PIT), determines services/housing needs gap, advocates, and other activities, participates in an annual CoC NOFO competition (complete/submit community application and approve individual project applications for CoC Program)

The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) mission is to coordinate the planning and implementation of a housing and service system that meets the needs of families and individuals experiencing homelessness within its geographic area, with the ultimate goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

# Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

## Continuums of Care

**1987** Congress passes first federal law to address homelessness and authorizes HUD homeless programs: The McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act

**1988 to 1993** HUD held national competitions for homeless assistance funds every year with individual organizations writing separate applications

**1994** HUD requires communities to collaborate on a single comprehensive CoC application (CoC NOFO Notice of Funding Opportunity). All project applications must be approved by the HUD-approved CoC as part of a collaborative community planning process

**2009** The HEARTH Act was signed to amend and reauthorize the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 with substantial changes  
Created U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to establish goals & priorities

- Increased Emphasis on Performance (Individual Projects and System-wide)
- New Definition of Chronic Homelessness and other Homeless Definitions
- Published regulations on the CoC Program (CoC), Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

# Vermont's Continua of Care System

## Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) Chittenden County Continuum of Care (COC)

Vermont has two HUD-recognized Continua of Care (CoC) that coordinate a response to homelessness and apply for federal homeless funding for their corresponding geographic areas.

### **VT Balance of State CoC (VT BoS CoC)**

- Covers all VT except Chittenden County
- VT BoS CoC Board is the governing body
- Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAHV) is the Collaborative Applicant for HUD CoC Programs & Grant Application (NOFO) and provides staffing

### **Chittenden County CoC**

- Governing body: Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA)
- Covers Chittenden County
- City of Burlington -Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) is Collaborative Applicant for HUD CoC Programs & Grant Application (NOFO)

### **What is a Continuum of Care?**

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a HUD-designated geographic region and collaborative entity made up a variety of stakeholders including service & resource providers, housing developer, state agencies & others designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.

# Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care

## VT BoS CoC Membership

Anyone who attends local housing coalition meetings or VT BoS CoC meeting!  
All providers and advocates are welcome as members. The only requirement is attending one VT BoS CoC membership meeting a year.

## VT BoS CoC Board

The Board is comprised of up to 21 representatives. The board supervises the affairs of the CoC, including but not limited to the development and review of the Governance Charter, the implementation and practice of Coordinated Entry, an annual gaps analysis, and system-wide performance monitoring.

## Local Housing Coalitions

Each local housing coalition has a representative to the VT BoS CoC Board

<b>Addison</b>	<b>Lamoille</b>	<b>Springfield (Windsor South/Windham North)</b>
<b>Bennington</b>	<b>Northeast Kingdom:</b>	
<b>Brattleboro</b>	<b>Caledonia Southern Essex</b>	<b>Upper Valley</b>
<b>(Windsor South)</b>	<b>Orleans Northern Essex</b>	<b>(Orange/Windsor North)</b>
<b>Franklin/Grand Isle</b>	<b>Rutland</b>	<b>Washington</b>

# VT BoS CoC Board

The Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care is required to:

- Meet 6 - 12 times year
- Notify and hold public meetings for full CoC membership with a wide variety of stakeholders 2 - 4 times a year
- Elects a CoC Board of Directors, voted on by the full CoC membership
- Approve a Governance Charter, Policies, and Committees/Workgroups
- Develop Written Standards for and Monitor all HUD CoC and ESG Programs
- Conduct/submit Point-in-Time count (PIT) of the homeless, Homeless Inventory Count of All Homeless Beds (HIC), Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR), etc.

**[View the VT BoS CoC Governance Document Here](#)**

# VT BoS CoC Membership

The Vermont BOS CoC invites everyone with an interest in preventing and ending homelessness within the established geographic area to become a member.

There are three tiers of membership:

**Non-Voting Member:** Individuals and organizations with a desire to be informed about and participate in the work of the CoC, without any condition of participation or limitations.

**Organization Member:** Organizations and agencies operating within the CoC's homelessness response system and other connected systems with a commitment to resolving homelessness. Organizational Members shall have a single vote for their entire organization.

**Individual Member:** This membership tier is open to all interested individuals who are not affiliated with any Organizational Member. Individual Members will have a single vote for all CoC wide votes.

A meeting of the full membership of the Continuum of Care shall be held no fewer than twice per year. All membership meetings are open to all Non-Voting Members, Organizational Members, Individual Members, and the public. Meetings may be held virtually or in person as needed.

# Local Housing Coalition Responsibilities

The VT Balance of State work with 11 regional Local Housing Coalitions, made up of varying types of organizations and other 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.

The local coalitions organize and facilitate regular regional meetings, held monthly.

Each local housing coalition nominates a representative to the VT BoS CoC Board who is responsible for relaying information between the regional Continuum and the statewide Coalition and for voting on its behalf.

The local housing coalitions participate in the statewide response to homelessness including coordinating region-wide homeless data collection efforts consistent with statewide homeless efforts as needed for planning and reporting (this includes participating in Coordinated Entry and the Point-in-Time Count.)

# **Collaborative Applicant**

## **Vermont BoS CoC's Collaborative Applicant is the Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont**

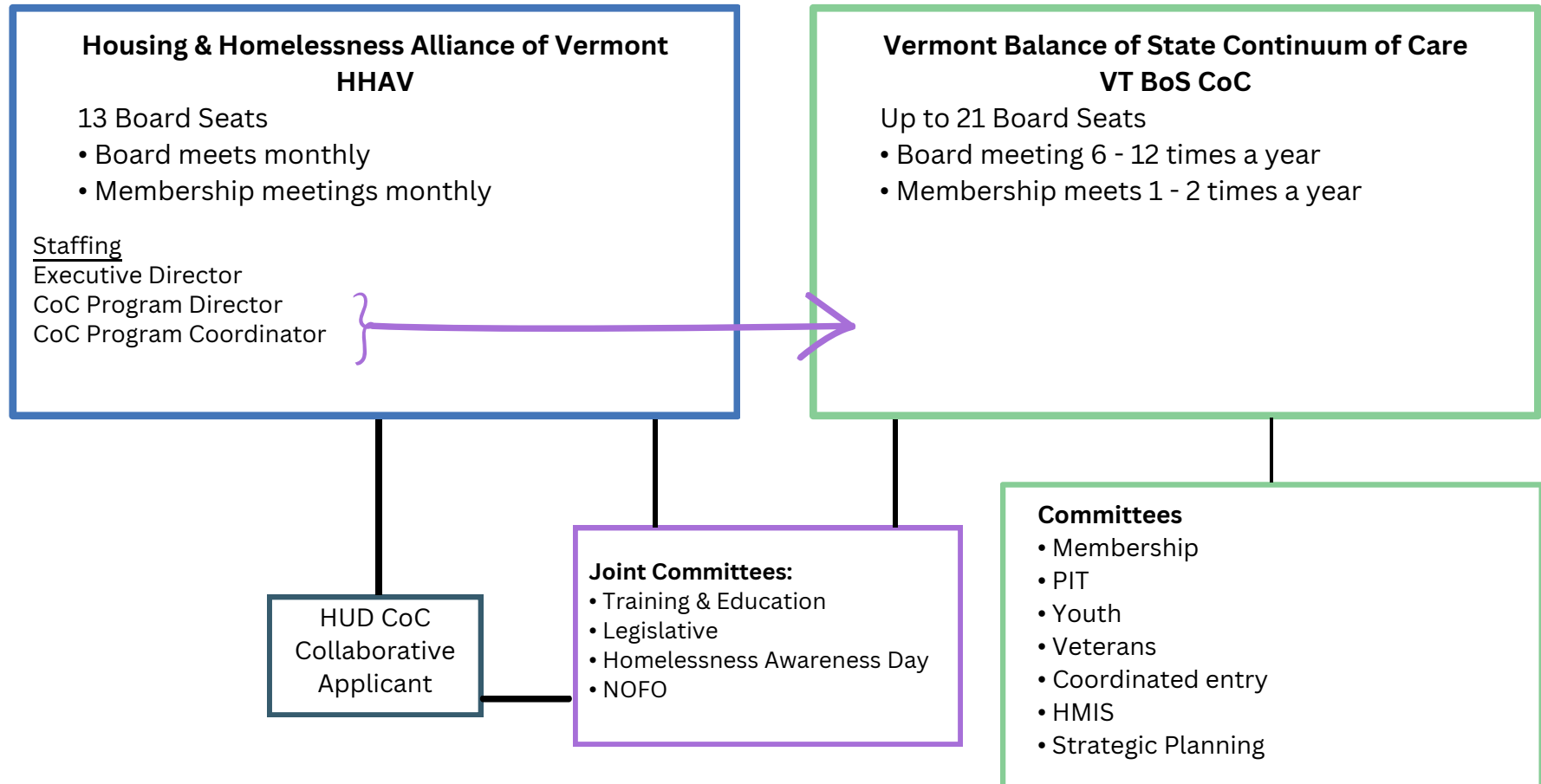
HUD CoC must designate a Collaborative Applicant to work on its behalf and provide necessary information to HUD, to:

- Design collaborative process for the annual CoC Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and submit a community application and assist CoC in establishing selection criteria/priorities to submit all individual project applications
- Ensure the CoC meets compliance/requirements of the CoC Program Interim Rule; participates in the Consolidated Plan; evaluates outcomes for all HUD ESG and CoC programs
- Complete and/or ensure timely submission of reports: Housing Inventory Chart of All Homeless Beds (HIC), Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless (PIT), AHAR, System Performance, etc.

Our collaborative applicant, HHAV, provides staffing to the VT BoS CoC and collaborates on committees.



# HHAV & VT BoS CoC Governance



*Committees meet monthly, except for those that are tied to an annual event,  
i.e. Homelessness Awareness Day, NOFO, and PIT*

# Homeless Management Information System

HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting a Lead Agency to operate a single CoC HMIS and an HMIS software.

HMIS helps understand individual household/provider need (Coordinated Entry/Program Evaluation), community need (advocacy, prioritization of funds, development of services & housing), and statewide/U.S. need (System Performance, PIT homeless count, AHAR, ongoing funding)

The VT BoS CoC selected the **Institute for Community Alliances** as our HMIS Lead and **BitClarity** as our HMIS software.

Direct data entry into the VT BoS CoC HMIS is required of all federal homeless programs: HUD CoC/ESG, SAMHSA-PATH, Veterans Affairs, HHS-Runaway & Homeless Youth, etc. Private & state-funded homeless programs are encouraged to participate in the CoCs HMIS

Learn more about our HMIS Lead on the [\*\*Institute for Community Alliances website\*\*](#)

# Coordinated Entry System

Coordinated entry is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

Coordinated Entry is a streamlined system that provides quick access to individuals and families seeking assistance through a coordinated referral and housing placement process.

Households are assessed using a standard and objective tool that identifies their vulnerability and barriers to housing. Those who are assessed as having the highest vulnerability and housing barriers will be prioritized for access to available housing programs as vacancies occur.

The VT BoS CoC must establish a formal, homeless coordinated entry system to improve people's access to services & housing, identify & assess needs, and prioritize limited resources accordingly.

An effective coordinated entry process has the following qualities:

- Full CoC Coverage, prioritize people with greatest needs, use CoCs HMIS and other systems
- Inclusive of all homeless populations, fair/equal access, outreach, low barrier, housing first, person-centered, timely, referrals to all ESG/CoC and other programs
- Safety planning to ensure the safety of people fleeing domestic violence with confidential access and adherence to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

# HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**Each year, all 380+ HUD CoCs compete for CoC Program funds in the CoC Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity.**

When HUD releases the NOFO, CoCs have 60-90 days to complete & submit both a Community Application and all individual CoC Project Applications

Project applicants must either submit a renewal application, reallocation application, or new application after the CoC sends out the RFP (Request for Proposals) for that year's NOFO.

These applications are then scored according to objective data collected through HMIS and through the submitted applications by a small Scoring Committee made up of CoC members or adjacent persons who do not have any conflict of interest (their organizations are neither grantees nor subgrantees of any project applicants).

These projects are then ranked according to the scoring and will receive funding based on the application prepared by the Collaborative Applicant and CoC, which includes narrative questions and objective data.

The NOFO is often submitted in September and October. Results of the competition and awarding of funds usually are announced in February or March of the following year.

These funds then become available through direct grant agreements with HUD.

The Collaborative Applicant receives a planning grant to support the work of the CoC. These funds become available the following December after the announcement of awards. **For Example** The FFY22 NOFO was submitted in October 2022, awarded in March 2023, and the grant year began in December 2023 and will run until November 2024.

# VT BoS CoC Committee Lists

**Membership Committee** This committee annually coordinates nominations for the election of Board representatives and officers. Annually, mailing list registrants will be invited to become voting members of the CoC and their Local Housing Coalition. The Membership Committee shall aim to promote participation statewide and from the full diversity of organizations and stakeholders working to end homelessness.

**HMIS Advisory Board** This committee serves to inform and advise the Continuum of Care 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 people experiencing homelessness served by the Continuum of Care.

**Point-In-Time Committee** This committee plans and supports implementation of the annual Point-In-Time Count of people experiencing homelessness

**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

**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 Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), United States Interagency Council on Homeless (USICH), and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

**Strategic Planning Committee** This committee develops and recommends strategic objectives, goals, and plans to the CoC to prevent and end homelessness. The committee utilizes data to understand the nature and extent of homelessness, coordinated with other statewide efforts, monitors progress towards goals, operationalizes planning grant activities, and works to ensure long-term capacity of the CoC.

**Youth Committee** This committee is comprised of youth provider and housing agencies working together to address youth and youth adult-specific housing needs throughout the state. The primary focus of the committee is to ensure that every community has the capacity to identify and engage youth at risk of experiencing homelessness and intervene to prevent loss; reduce barriers to emergency crisis services; and increase short, medium and long term housing supports appropriate for the unique populations needs through data collection and analysis, implementation of system changes strategies, and develop a shared understanding of evidence-informed practices to address youth homelessness.

# VT BoS CoC & HHAV Joint Committee Lists

**Legislative Committee** (Co-run with HHAV) This 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 CoC.

**HUD Continuum of Care Funding Committee (“NOFO Committee”)**

The committee shall be comprised of CoC members with experience and willingness to support activities related to the federal grant application. A sub-group of this committee serves as the Scoring Committee for the NOFO.

**Training & Education** This committee meets quarterly throughout the year to discuss and coordinate training initiatives to help improve our homelessness and housing system of care for members of both the BoS CoC, HHAV, and other practitioners throughout Vermont. These trainings are based on the needs of members and providers, collected through various types of needs assessments.

**Homelessness Awareness Day** This committee meets from October to January and plans the annual Homelessness Awareness Day at the statehouse and around the state. This committee builds a panel of testifiers for House and Senate committees, organizes a group to attend the statehouse to speak with legislators, and coordinates awareness-raising campaigns around the state. This group also assists local housing coalitions in their planning of Homelessness Awareness Day.

# VT BoS CoC Calendar

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Awareness Day (HAD)</li> <li>• Annual Point-In-Time Count (PIT)</li> <li>• New VT BoS CoC Board voted on (every 2 years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Point-In-Time Count (PIT) Data Entry</li> <li>• Orientation for new board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Grant monitoring for NOFO grant recipients</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Preparation for upcoming NOFO process</li> <li>• Education &amp; Training Work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIT Report Released</li> <li>• Preparation for upcoming NOFO process</li> <li>• Education &amp; Training Work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIT Report Released</li> <li>• Meeting of the full VT BoS CoC Membership</li> </ul>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuum of Care Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity Released</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuum of Care Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity Released</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuum of Care Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity Due</li> </ul>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuum of Care Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity Due</li> <li>• Meeting of the full VT BoS CoC Membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin planning for Homelessness Awareness Day (HAD)</li> <li>• Begin planning Point-in-Time Count (PIT)</li> <li>• Choose new representative for the VT BoS CoC Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue planning for HAD &amp; send name of lead planner for HAD to CoC Program Director</li> <li>• Continue planning PIT &amp; send name of PIT Coordinator to CoC Program Director</li> <li>• Nominations for VT BoS CoC Board positions sent to CoC Director</li> </ul>