

# Governance Charter of the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care

---

## ***Governance Charter Purpose***

This Charter sets forth the guiding principles of membership and participation in the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care (CoC) and the provisions for Continuum governance through the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) Advisory Board, and key policies and procedures as defined in the OHS Advisory Board Bylaws, attached to this Charter.

- The governing body for the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care (CoC) is the OHS Advisory Board. This charter and the Bylaws together detail the roles and responsibilities of the CoC and the OHS Advisory Board, as well as the rules and policies governing meetings, subcommittees, and decision making.
- The OHS Advisory Board and the CoC membership will review this Charter annually to ensure it remains consistent with HUD's CoC Program Requirements as well as CoC objectives and responsibilities.
- The OHS Advisory Board will have the power to adopt, amend, or repeal provisions of this Governance Charter by a majority vote of the Advisory Board present at any meeting where the proposed action has been described in the notice of the meeting. Such amendments will then be reviewed by the full CoC membership annually.

## ***A. Terms and Definitions***

**CoC Program Grantee (Recipient):** The CoC Program Grantee is the "recipient" as used by HUD and means an applicant that signs a grant agreement with HUD.

**Collaborative applicant:** The eligible applicant that has been designated by the OHS Advisory Board to respond to the Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) and to apply for Continuum of Care planning funds on behalf of the Continuum. Section E. of this Charter designates the Office of Homeless Services as the Collaborative Applicant for the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care.

**Continuum of Care Membership:** The agencies and individuals who are stakeholders in achieving the Continuum of Care goals and objectives to reduce and end homelessness for all populations in the community. **CoC Membership includes anyone who is interested in reducing and ending homelessness in the geographic area of the CoC, and who attends the most recent General CoC Membership meeting.**

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** The information system designated by the CoC to comply with the HMIS requirements prescribed by HUD. The Cuyahoga County Advisory Board CoC selected Bowman Systems, LLC, ServicePoint Software in 2003, for the CoC's HMIS provider. This is noted in Section E. of the Charter.

**HMIS Lead:** The entity designated by the OHS Advisory Board in accordance with this part, to operate the CoC's HMIS on its behalf. Section E. of this Charter designates the Office of Homeless Services as the HMIS Lead for the CoC.

**Office of Homeless Services Advisory Board:** The Office of Homeless Services (OHS) Advisory Board is the governing body of the CoC. It was originally established through legislative action by the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County in 1992. It is the group of persons elected according to the Bylaws of the CoC, to carry out the goals and objectives of the HEARTH Act on behalf of the Continuum of Care and in accordance with the CoC Charter and Bylaws.

**Office of Homeless Services:** The Office of Homeless Services was established through legislative action by the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County in 1992. It is currently a department within the County's Health & Human Services Department. Organizational funding for the OHS is provided 100% by the Health & Human Services Levy of Cuyahoga County. The OHS staff and operational procedures are dictated by the Charter of Cuyahoga County. The OHS has been designated by the OHS Advisory Board as the Collaborative Applicant on behalf of the CoC.

**B. CoC Purpose/Membership**

**I. The purpose of the CoC is to:**

- promote communitywide commitment to the goals of ending **all** homelessness through strategies aligned with Opening Doors, the Federal Strategic Plan To Prevent and End Homelessness, adopted by the Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness and amended in FY2015. The goals are:
  1. Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 2015;
  2. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017;
  3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 2020;
  4. Set a path to end all types of homelessness.

**II. The membership of the Continuum of Care** is defined as anyone who is interested in ending homelessness and who attends and participates in the most recent CoC General Membership Meeting.

- Information about the General Membership Meeting is made available through e mail list serve and on the Office of Homeless Services' website.
- There will be two General Membership Meetings annually, the dates to be determined by the OHS Advisory Board.

**C. The Office of Homeless Services Advisory Board Responsibilities**

1. Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least two times a year;
2. Make a public invitation available for new members to join the CoC within the geographic area at least annually;
3. Adopt and follow a written process to select Board members to act on behalf of the CoC. The process must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the larger CoC membership at least once every 5 years;
4. Appoint committees, subcommittees, and/or workgroups;
5. **Assure that all Advisory Board members adhere to the Conflict of Interest rules as described in detail in the OHS Advisory Board Bylaws;**
6. Designate the Collaborative Applicant, a single HMIS for the geographic area, and the HMIS Lead. The OHS Advisory Board has designated the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) as the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead.

7. The OHS Advisory Board gives authority to the OHS to conduct the following activities, to be developed and presented to the OHS Advisory Board for formal votes as required by law:
- a) Consult with recipients and sub-recipients of CoC funding to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type; monitor recipient and sub-recipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers;
  - b) Evaluate outcomes of projects funded under the City of Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Emergency Solutions Grants program (hereinafter referred to as “ESG”) and the CoC program, and report to HUD;
  - c) Establish and operate a centralized and coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services;
  - d) Develop written standards for providing Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Continuum of Care (CoC) assistance;
  - e) Develop a plan that includes coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of the homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families;
  - f) Plan for and conduct, at least biennially, a **point-in-time count** of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets the HUD requirements;
  - g) Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC’s geographic area;
  - h) Consult with state and local government ESG program recipients for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and sub-recipients.
  - i) Design, develop, and implement an annual project review and selection process that is fair and transparent;
  - j) Establish and implement an application process for the annual NOFA process.

Additional detail on the rules and requirements governing the OHS Advisory Board are discussed in the OHS Advisory Board Bylaws attached to the Charter.

#### ***D. Limited Authority***

Neither the CoC membership nor the OHS Advisory Board is a formal organization. As such:

- Neither has, and can have, assets or liabilities;
- Neither can indemnify member or participant action; and
- No member of the CoC, the OHS Advisory Board, or its committees/workgroups, may contract, incur debt, or otherwise create an enforceable obligation for the CoC, the OHS Advisory Board, or its committees.
- Only the OHS Advisory Board may designate an individual or entity to speak for the CoC or its components.
- With the exception of removal policies in this Charter, any grievance related to the CoC will follow HUD policies and contracts.

#### ***E. Collaborative Applicant, HMIS, and HMIS Lead***

As required, the Charter identifies the following:

- CoC Collaborative Applicant: Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services

- HMIS provider and Software: Bowman Systems, LLC; ServicePoint
- HMIS Lead: Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE CHARTER:**

**1. *Office of Homeless Services Advisory Board Bylaws***

**2. *HMIS Policy and Procedures Manual***

As required by the HEARTH Act, the CoC HMIS Policy and Procedures Manual is attached to the Charter document as ATTACHMENT II.

**3. *Written Standards for Order of Priority – under development***

**4. *Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures – under development***

**5. *Rapid Re-Housing – Standards for Assistance – under development***