
CITY OF PORTLAND CONTINUUM OF CARE

GOVERNANCE
CHARTER

REVISED: January, 2014

1. Organization

United Way of Greater Portland and the City of Portland formed a committee in 1987 in response to community concerns regarding the lack of shelter and ancillary supports for Portland's homeless population. The Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) was created to monitor the usage of shelter beds and supports to ensure that adequate services were being provided to this population.

In 1996, ESAC was designated by the Portland City Council to serve as the governing entity for the City's Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grant Program. ESAC is a collaborative of service providers, consumers, local and state government representatives, advocates, and other interested community members working to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who are homeless in Portland. Through planning, service coordination, and advocacy, ESAC promotes a Continuum of Care (CofC) and support for people experiencing homelessness. ESAC leadership is comprised of two co-chairs; one person representing government, one consumer advocate. Membership is open to all interested parties and decisions are made in consensus voting style. Meetings are held throughout the year to plan, implement, and coordinate the services delivered under Portland's Continuum of Care. Agendas include sharing information about new initiatives, resources, discussion of emerging unmet needs/trends, and decision-making regarding how to respond to identified concerns. CofC planning work occurs through standing ESAC subcommittees.

2. Geographical Area

The Portland CofC serves as the HUD-designated primary decision making group and oversight board of the city of Portland (hereinafter referred to as the "geographic area") Continuum of Care for the Homeless (ME-502) funding process.

The CofC will continue to increase collaboration and cooperation with other agencies and local municipalities in order to best serve the greater Portland area. The City of Portland has been designated as the Lead Agency and as such, is responsible for the general coordination and oversight of Portland CofC planning efforts, and has the authority to certify and submit the annual HUD homeless assistance funding application and Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR).

3. Purpose and Mission

The mission of the Portland CofC is to plan and coordinate a system that helps individuals in the greater Portland area avoid or exit from homelessness, and to address the underlying causes of homelessness. Portland CofC shall accomplish this mission by conducting the following activities:

- Prevention;
- Outreach services;
- Emergency shelters and supportive services;
- Permanent housing and permanent housing with supportive services; and
- Linkages to mainstream and community resources.

The purpose of the Portland CofC is to:

- Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and the city of Portland to re-house homeless individuals and families rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness;
- Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families;
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

4. Responsibilities

The City of Portland CofC is responsible for fulfilling the following major duties:

4.1. Operation of the Portland CofC

- Hold meetings of the membership, with published agendas and meetings, on the third Wednesday of each month;
- Adopt and follow the process to select the CofC Chairs at least once biennially;
- Appoint additional committees, subcommittees, or workgroups;
- For CofC and ESG grants, establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and subrecipients, then monitor performance, evaluate outcomes, take actions as necessary, and report to HUD; and
- Establish and operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system in consultation with recipients of grant funds.

4.2. Designation and operation of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Review, revise, and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans;
- Ensure consistent participation of recipients/subrecipients in HMIS; and

- Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements.

4.3. Continuum of Care Planning

- Coordinate implementation of a housing and service system;
- Regularly conduct a Point-in-Time count of homeless persons that meets HUD requirements of homelessness;
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s);
- Consult with State and local ESG recipients in the geographic area on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting/evaluating performance of ESG programs.

4.4. Preparation of a CofC Application for Funds

- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve submission of applications in response to a CofC Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA);
- Establish priorities for funding projects;
- Designate the collaborative applicant to submit the application;
- The collaborative applicant must collect and combine the required application information from all projects within the geographic area and will apply for funding for CofC planning activities.

5. CofC Membership

5.1. Membership of the Portland CofC

Membership in the Portland CofC is open to all stakeholders in the city of Portland, including 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.

Membership and participation is required for all agencies actively receiving CofC funds. At a minimum, participation shall be defined as attending and participating in regular meetings.

New members may enroll at any time during the year by providing to the CofC their names, contact information, and any relevant affiliations. Contact information, meeting agendas and minutes are listed on the CofC page of the City of Portland's website:

<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/sscontinuumofcare.asp>

5.2. Operation of the Portland CofC

Most of the responsibilities of the Portland CofC will be carried out by its Committee Chairs (with input from Members), with the following exceptions:

- Members will vote directly to approve the governance framework set forth in this Governance Charter and any subsequent changes or additions to the Governance Charter;
- Unless the Chairperson selection process is changed by a subsequent amendment to the Governance Charter, members will vote biennially to elect committee chairs to available positions.

5.3. Membership Meetings

The Portland CofC shall meet on a regular basis and shall include a report on the CofC's activities and progress toward meeting goals.

5.4. Notice of Meetings

Notice of the place, date and time of each Membership Meeting shall be sent to members by email along with the agenda for the meeting. The meeting schedule is also posted on the City of Portland's CofC web page.

5.5. Voting Rights by Members

There shall be one vote per Agency, Association or Individual in attendance and eligible to vote on all CofC matters that come up at general CofC meetings and committee meetings. Participation by conference call or other electronic means shall count as attendance and eligible members may vote by electronic means.

An Agency or Association shall be considered in attendance if they are represented by any member of their organization (it need not be the same person at all meetings).

6. Elected Officers

The Portland CofC shall be governed by two elected Chairs who will provide oversight and accountability for all Portland CofC responsibilities.

6.1. Chair Composition

The two elected Chairs must be representative of the stakeholder organizations by organization type. One chair must be from a government entity; one from a nonprofit organization.

6.2. Term of Office

Chairs will serve terms of two years each, which may run staggered or concurrent. There is no limit to the number of terms a chair may serve.

6.3. Nomination and Voting

Every two year, unless the case of a resignation or removal arises, the CofC members will be solicited for candidates. The membership will vote for each position as the need arises, or biennially.

6.4. Resignation and Removal

Any representative may resign at any time by giving written notice to the second Chair. In addition, Chairs may be removed from their position by a majority vote of CofC Members for repeated absence, misconduct, failure to participate, or violation of conflict of interest policies.

6.5. Vacancies

When a Chair resigns or is removed from their position, or cannot serve his/her full term for any reason, the second Chair may appoint another Portland CofC member to fill the unexpired term.

7. Committees and Working Groups

The Portland CofC will carry out its responsibilities through the work of a number of Committees and Working Groups. All CofC Members may participate on Committees and Working Groups.

7.1. Prioritization Committee

As approved by ESAC, this committee consists of members or individuals with no direct interest in CofC funded applications, to make recommendations regarding funding, scores, or ranking of applications.

This committee is responsible for reviewing, scoring, and ranking all applications for the Portland CofC. Members are appointed to this committee by ESAC and must be part of

the Portland Homeless Continuum of Care Network. No Prioritization Subcommittee member may be employed by an agency that is applying for CofC funding.

Committee members conduct on-site visits to new and renewal project applicants; these visits include a monitoring/audit of all HUD CofC Funded projects. The Committee's monitoring tool is adapted from a HUD Supportive Housing Program Self-Monitoring tools from the Supportive Housing Program Help Desk. Audits focus on outcome measures, homeless documentation, homeless involvement in policymaking, HMIS participation, the use of Mainstream resources, and financial management. Committee members review case files, documentation, fiscal reports, forms, and consumer house meeting notes. Renewal applicant's APR reports are reviewed prior to site visits, allowing an opportunity for detailed questions based on the APR results.

The Prioritization Committee, in collaboration with the Portland CofC, is responsible for developing a scoring template that reflects the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Super NOFA criteria. Project applicants may be asked to present their proposals to the Prioritization Committee in writing and in person, so that questions may be asked. The Committee ranks applications based on the pre-approved criteria. Applicants are issued a letter containing their ranking score, and informed in writing of the grievance policy and process.

7.2. Gaps Analysis Subcommittee

This committee leads development of the statewide point-in-time survey, in coordination with the statewide advisory group. Together, they will:

- Review PIT and HIC data, conduct a gaps analysis, and make recommendations for the priorities to be used in ranking requests for CofC funding;
- Establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and subrecipients, then monitor recipient and subrecipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and recommend actions to be taken against poor performers;
- Develop performance measures to evaluate Portland's overall success in eliminating homelessness, using guidance available from HUD and making changes over time as necessary to incorporate new regulations or guidance available from HUD and making changes over time as necessary to incorporate new regulations or guidance available from state or local authorities;
- Establish written standards and performance measures for ESG assistance and providers;

- Evaluate outcomes of projects funded under the ESG and CofC Program, and provide outcome data to the Collaborative Applicant to report to HUD; and
- Consult with state and local government agencies, homeless service providers, private funders, and other relevant entities and organizations to evaluate available resources and reach agreement about how those resources can be allocated most effectively to implement plans to eliminate homelessness.

7.3. HMIS/Data Committee

The HMIS/Data Committee works to collect information on homelessness throughout the CofC area and to improve data collection techniques and data analysis methods for use in the CofC application and to better inform CofC members, and the general public regarding homelessness in Portland. This committee will work with the HMIS Lead to:

- Coordinate the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count of sheltered and unsheltered persons and the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC) of shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing in the CofC area.
- Work with the Maine CofC HMIS Project Team on the implementation issues related to the integration of the PIT survey and other relevant information within the HMIS system.
- Conduct research and reviews of “Best Practices” on data collection methods.
- Develop, annually review, and, as necessary, revise for Membership approval a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS, as well as any other HMIS policies and procedures required by HUD.
- Develop for approval and implement a plan for monitoring the HMIS to ensure that:
 - Recipients and subrecipients consistently participate in HMIS;
 - HMIS is satisfying the requirements of all regulations and notices issued by HUD;
 - The HMIS Lead is fulfilling the obligations outlined in its HMIS Governance Charter and Agreement with the CofC, including the obligation to enter into written participation agreements with each contributing HMIS organization.
- Coordinate with the other Standing Committees to ensure they have the information they need to properly perform their functions.

7.4. Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) Committee

This committee works to establish a centralized consumer database across all agencies of the CofC without duplication of data. This goal is met through:

- The creation of a uniform central intake application.
- Sharing data between agencies through HMIS.
 - Cleaning up duplicate or incomplete records
 - Increase the number of agencies enrolled in data sharing
 - Regular review of the Duplicate Client Report
- Review APRs for shared programs

8. Appointment of Agents and Designation of HMIS

8.1. Collaborative Applicant

The City of Portland serves as the Portland CofC's Collaborative Applicant.

8.2. HMIS Lead

The City of Portland serves as the Portland CofC's HMIS Lead. The Maine State Housing Authority serves as the State of Maine CofC's HMIS Lead.

9. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

9.1. Conduct and Attendance

Chairs, committee members, and other Portland CofC agents and employees must exercise care, diligence and prudence when acting on behalf of the Portland CofC. These individuals must timely complete work they have agreed to undertake on behalf of the Portland CofC. In addition, they must attend meetings and be prepared to discuss matters presented for their deliberation.

9.2. Recusal Process

If at any time there is a conflict of interest whereby an organization or individual will have a direct interest in the funding, scoring, ranking, or policy decision making, then that organization, representative of the organization or individual will recuse themselves for the process in order to mitigate any perceived conflict of interest. The recusal may be

oral or in writing. In addition, the CoC may request an organization, representative of organization or individual to recuse themselves from any activities. The CoC may also elect to develop a subcommittee consisting of members or individuals with no direct interest to make recommendations regarding funding, scoring, ranking or policy decision.

10. Approval of Governance Charter and Subsequent Amendments

This Governance Charter and every subsequent amendment to it must be approved by a majority of Portland CofC members. In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, the Members will review the Governance Charter as needed and recommend changes to improve the functioning of the Portland CofC and maintain compliance with federal and state regulations.