

Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care Governance Charter

April 2020

Overview

Background - Continuum of Care Structure under [S. 896 HEARTH Act of 2009 and 24 CFR 578](#) Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule.

The Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care is composed of representatives of relevant organizations that are organized to plan for and provide a system of outreach, engagement, assessment, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, permanent housing, and prevention strategies to address the various needs of homeless or at risk of homelessness persons within the 96 counties that make up the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care jurisdiction. This group is the recognized decision-making body for this jurisdiction.

HUD encourages locally recognized jurisdictions to design their Continuum of Care to:

- Promote a continuum-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness.
- Provide funding for efforts for rapidly re-housing homeless individuals and families.
- Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs.
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

History

The body primarily responsible for planning and advocacy around homelessness for the State of Iowa is the Iowa Council on Homelessness (hereinafter referred to as the “Iowa Council”). This organization was established in Iowa Code 16.00A in 2008 and is now governed by Iowa Code Chapter 16.2D. Until January 2020, the Iowa Council served as the primary decision-making body for the Iowa Balance of State CoC.

In January 2020, the **Iowa Council on Homelessness** elected to reorganize its governance structure and separate the duties of the Continuum of Care from the Iowa Council. In its place, the Iowa Council approved an Interim CoC Board to assume responsibilities as the primary decision-making body for the CoC on a time limited basis. The separation of duties became effective on April 1, 2020. A full transition to the new permanent CoC Board is expected to take place in late 2020 or early 2021.

This charter is a living document that will be updated as decisions about the new governance structure are made.

Purpose

The Interim CoC Board/CoC Board serves as the HUD-designated primary-decision making group and oversight board of the Iowa Balance of State (hereinafter referred to as the “geographic area”) Continuum of Care for the Homeless (IA-501).

As the oversight board of the CoC, the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board and its members:

- Ensure that the CoC is meeting all of the responsibilities assigned to it by HUD regulations (see below).
- Represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations; Support persons experiencing homelessness in their movement from homelessness to economic stability and affordable permanent housing within a supportive community.
- Ensure that the CoC is inclusive of all needs of the Iowa Balance of State’s homeless population, including the special service and housing needs of homeless subpopulations.
- Facilitate responses to issues and concerns that affect the agencies funded by the CoC that are beyond those addressed in the annual CoC application process.

Responsibilities of the CoC Board (per Federal Interim Rule 24 CFR 578)

As the designated board of the CoC for the geographic area, the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board works with the CoC Lead Agency/Collaborative Applicant (Institute for Community Alliances) to fulfill three major duties:

1. Operate the CoC, which must:

- i. Hold meetings of the full CoC membership, with published agendas, at least semi-annually.
- ii. Make an invitation for new members to join, publicly available within the geographic area at least annually.
- iii. Adopt and follow a written process to select CoC Board members to act on behalf of the CoC. The process must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the CoC membership at least once every 5 years.
- iv. Appoint committees, subcommittees, or workgroups as may be deemed necessary.
- v. In consultation with the Lead Agency/Collaborative Applicant, and the HMIS Lead, develop, follow and update annually a governance charter, which will include all procedures and policies to comply with subpart B of 24 CFR 578, and with HMIS

requirements as prescribed by HUD; and a code of conduct and recusal process for the board, its chair, and any person acting on behalf of the board.

- vi. 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 act against poor performers. This work includes:
 - Identify performance standards for agencies and programs providing services to Iowans who are experiencing homelessness or are near homeless that are consistent with Federal and State requirements.
 - Establish benchmarks that will allow effective evaluation of these performance standards on an ongoing basis over time.
 - Determine and implement policies and procedures to deal with poor performing agencies.
- vii. Consult with the Iowa Finance Authority on evaluation of outcomes of projects funded under the Iowa Balance of State Emergency Solutions Grants program (hereinafter referred to as “ESG”) and the CoC program, and report to HUD.
- viii. In consultation with the Lead Agency/Collaborative Applicant, the HMIS Lead, and recipients of ESG funds, establish and operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services. This work includes:
 - Develop and implement a Coordinated Entry system for the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care. This continues to be led by the Coordinated Entry Committee.
 - Develop and approve a CoC-wide standard assessment tool (currently approved tool is the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)).
 - Ensure responsiveness to the needs of those fleeing domestic violence.
 - Develop support and structure for a regional approach to Coordinated Entry through all 96 counties of the Iowa Balance of State.
 - Coordinate with the HMIS Lead for the CoC to incorporate HMIS tools into Coordinated Entry, where appropriate, and where standards of confidentiality are a first priority.
- ix. In consultation with the Iowa Finance Authority (ESG grantee), establish and consistently follow written standards for providing ESG assistance. At a minimum, these written standards must include:
 - Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals’ and families’ eligibility for CoC assistance.

- Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance.
- Standards for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid rehousing assistance.
- Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance; and
- When the CoC is designated a high-performing community, policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive Homelessness Prevention Assistance.

2. Designate and oversee a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):

- i. Designate a single HMIS for the geographic area.
- ii. Designate an eligible applicant to manage the CoC's HMIS, which will be known as the HMIS Lead.
- iii. Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS.
- iv. Ensure consistent participation of recipients and sub recipients of CoC and ESG funding in the HMIS.
- v. Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.

3. Continuum of Care Planning: The CoC must develop a plan that includes:

- i. 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. At a minimum, such system will encompass the following:
 - Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
 - Shelter, housing, and supportive services;
 - Prevention strategies.
- ii. Planning for and conducting, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets the following requirements:
 - Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered homeless persons.
 - Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered homeless persons.

- Annual Housing Inventory Count
 - Other requirements established by HUD by Notice.
- iii. Conducting an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the geographic area:
- iv. Providing information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC's geographic area; Consulting 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.

Iowa Balance of State CoC Membership

The membership of the Continuum of Care is defined as those persons and organizations participating in the work of the CoC through committee or workgroup service, planning, other relevant stakeholders; or those who are experiencing homelessness. (24CFR Subpart B 578.5)

Membership in the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care is open to all stakeholders who are interested in preventing and ending homelessness in the 96-county jurisdiction of the CoC and willing to engage in and support the work of the Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care. Stakeholders include non-profit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, government entities, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Iowa Balance of State CoC Board Membership

The success of the Iowa Balance of State CoC depends in part on strong leadership by a group of invested individuals representing a variety of stakeholder interests. The Interim CoC Board/CoC Board acts as the primary decision-making body for the CoC and helps to guide the CoC's efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

To ensure cohesion and promote efficiency, the Iowa Balance of State CoC Board consists of 11 - 15 voting members. The Board is representative of the relevant stakeholders involved in preventing and ending homelessness within the CoC and includes at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. Given the broad geographic area of the Balance of State CoC, special attention is paid to ensure that Board membership includes stakeholders from across Iowa. Seats on the CoC Board are reserved, as follows:

- Homeless or Formerly Homeless Individual (1 seat)
- Government (up to 2 seats)
- Subpopulations

- Veterans (1 seat)
- Youth (1 seat)
- Survivors of Domestic Violence (1 seat)
- LGBT (1 seat)
- Health and/or Disability Services (1 seat)
- Mental Health (1 seat)
- Substance Abuse (1 seat)
- Education (1 seat)
- Criminal Justice (1 seat)
- Other funders (up to 2 seats)
- Faith-based community (1 seat)

Given the broad geographic area of the Balance of State CoC, special attention should be paid to ensure that Board membership includes stakeholders from across Iowa.

Board members may fill more than one representative role (e.g. one person may simultaneously be the representative for a CoC Region and a representative for youth homeless organizations).

Board Selection Process

An open invitation for Board membership will be done annually in May of each year to prepare to fill terms set to expire in June for a July 1st term start date. The CoC Board shall be composed of an uneven number of directors with staggered terms and must include representatives of the public and private sectors. At least one director must be a homeless or formerly homeless individual.

The initial Interim CoC Board will serve through June of 2021. In May of 2021, those members will be offered an opportunity to continue on the Board of a successive term of 1 year. A slate of additional Board member candidates will be considered as well at that time for a two-year term of service. Through the nominating and selection process, the Board will pay particular attention to approve resulting Board membership with an uneven total membership with staggered terms.

Regular attendance is expected of a CoC Board director as long as the delegate remains active and engaged in the field or the constituency represented by the director. If a director ceases to represent the constituency category to which he or she was selected the director shall tender his or her resignation to the CoC Board.

This process for selecting CoC Board members is reviewed, updated, and approved by the CoC Board at least once every five (5) years.

CoC Board Officers

The Officer composition of the CoC Board will be: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The Board's Executive Committee will be comprised of the Board Officers, and the Chair of the CoC's essential committees.

Meeting Frequency and Structure

The CoC Board will meet monthly on the second Thursday of each month to ensure that it meets its responsibilities. Meetings may also be held at the call of the Chairperson or whenever a majority of the members so request. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate in CoC Board meetings where feasible. Most meetings may be joined by conference call or webinar/online meeting. Information for each meeting is published in advance. From time to time, the Board will meet in person at a pre-determined location in Des Moines, Iowa. Information for each meeting is published in advance.

Written Agendas and Minutes

All Interim CoC Board/CoC Board meetings will follow written agendas. Agendas will be made available in advance to both members and the public. Agendas will be posted in-person at the Institute for Community Alliances at 1111 – 9th Street, Suite 380, Des Moines, IA 50314, and online here: [\[website\]](#) Generally, agendas and other meeting resources will be posted online at least 24 hours in advance of each meeting. Meeting minutes are posted online afterwards to the same location as agendas.

Decision Making Quorum/Rules of Order

A majority of the CoC Board members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings thereof. Any action taken by the CoC Board must be adopted by an affirmative vote of a majority of its membership. The CoC Board will utilize the [Democratic Rules of Order](#) to govern their business.

Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest

See Code of Conduct Policy, approved by the CoC Board, Exhibit A to Governance Charter.

Members of the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board are responsible for following the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board Code of Conduct Policy and Conflict of Interest.

No Interim CoC Board/CoC Board member may participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents.

Any individual participating in or influencing decision making must identify actual or perceived conflicts of interest as they arise and comply with the letter and spirit of this

policy. Disclosure should occur at the earliest possible time and if possible, prior to the discussion of any such issue.

Individuals with a conflict of interest should abstain from voting on any issue in which they may have a conflict. An individual with a conflict of interest, who is the committee chair, shall yield that position during discussion and abstain from voting on the item.

Completed disclosure statements will be submitted by each Interim CoC Board/CoC Board member at the commencement of their term and at any time afterwards when there are changes to the member's actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Members should not participate until the statement has been submitted to the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board.

The Interim CoC Board/CoC Board will also strictly adhere to the conflict of interest regulatory requirements of the Federal Continuum of Care Program – 24 CFR 578.95.

Iowa Balance of State CoC Task Groups

CoC Task Groups are either permanent or ad hoc task groups to coordinate oversight of discrete activities and provide recommendations to the CoC Board for approval.

The Interim CoC Board/CoC Board has the authority to create CoC Task Groups based on CoC need and by a majority vote. Task Group responsibilities and subject matter are assigned to each Task Group by the CoC Board per a written assignment of responsibilities

Standing Task Groups

The standing task groups, and their respective responsibilities, of the Iowa Balance of State CoC include:

- Governance/Nominating
- CoC Grant Competition
- Coordinated Services Regions
- Strategic Planning

Task Group Membership

CoC Task Group membership is based upon experience and familiarity with the relevant subject matter, as determined by the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board. As much as possible, the individual Task Groups incorporate regional diversity into their membership. Each standing Task Group must be Chaired by a CoC Board member, but broader task force make-up is open to non CoC Board members who meet the criteria of relevant stakeholder organizations within the CoC.

Decision-Making

Task Groups make recommendations to the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board for final approval. Task Groups do not make final decisions, except where specifically delegated authority to do so by the Interim CoC Board/CoC Board.

Ad Hoc Task Groups

The Interim CoC Board/CoC Board shall establish additional task groups or informal working groups from time to time as needed in order to fulfill its goals and obligations and to disband such committees when no longer needed.

Task Group Meetings

Standing Task Groups of the CoC may establish their own meeting schedule, while meeting the required meeting notifications standards and must report to the CoC Board on their work planning and progress.

Responsibilities of the Collaborative Applicant and Lead Agency: Institute for Community Alliances (ICA)

As a CoC Lead Agency, ICA will be primarily responsible for providing professional support to the CoC Board and the CoC, as directed by the CoC Board through a written assignment of responsibilities.

- **Administrative Functions**

Provide staff support for scheduling meetings, collecting, and distributing minutes, and leading communication efforts for the CoC.

The collaborative applicant shall design a collaborative process for the development of an application for the annual CoC grant competition.

- **Continuum of Care Program (CoC) Grant**

The Collaborative Applicant shall design a collaborative process for the development and submission of the Consolidated Application for the annual CoC grant competition, and coordinate with the Iowa Council on Homelessness to evaluate applications submitted and determine CoC grant awards.

The Collaborative Applicant will also provide administration to support the CoC completion of the registration process and composition and submission of the CoC's Grant Inventory Worksheet, and other related competition requirements.

The Collaborative Applicant will also prepare and submit the CoC Planning Grant.

Responsibilities of the HMIS Lead: Institute for Community Alliances

The Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) will operate all aspects of the Homeless Management Information System for the Balance of State – Iowa.

- **Data and Technical Standards Compliance**

ICA will ensure that this operation will be in compliance with the current HMIS Data Standards. ICA will review this compliance on an annual basis and report to the

Iowa Finance Authority and the Iowa Council on the review results with any corrective action if it is required.

- **HMIS Policies/Procedures**

ICA will maintain comprehensive HMIS operational policies and procedures, including but not limited to; privacy plan, security plan and data quality plan. These policies and procedures will be reviewed by ICA for any needed updates annually.

- **Contributing Homeless Organization Memorandum of Understanding**

ICA will execute a participation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each agency/program that contributes data to the State of Iowa HMIS network. These MOUs will be renewed annually. ICA will review the content of the MOU annually and recommend any changes to the document if they are required to the Iowa Council.

- **Training and Technical Assistance**

ICA will provide regular and ongoing training and technical assistance and support to all homeless system agencies engaged in use of the HMIS network.

- **Monitor System Participation/Data Quality Performance**

ICA will regularly monitor the number of homeless system agencies utilizing the network and report the percentages to the Research and Analysis Committee and CoC Committees of the Iowa Council on Homelessness. ICA will work collaboratively with the Iowa Council to develop a plan to address low participation rates if it becomes necessary to do so. ICA will support the efforts of the Iowa Council to ensure the fullest HMIS participation possible.

- **Performance Outcomes Reporting (CoC Wide/ Individual Program)**

ICA will coordinate a collaborative effort of the Iowa CoC Board and the Iowa Finance Authority to design a performance outcomes report, consistent with the expectations of the HEARTH Act, as well as newly developed reporting requirements. This report will be delivered to the Iowa CoC Board, and Iowa Finance Authority on a quarterly basis and will include an annual, year-end analysis.

- **Longitudinal System Analysis**

ICA will manage the collection of all data elements required for the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and produce and upload the data as required into the HUD Homeless Data Exchange on behalf of the CoC. ICA will provide a report of the data to the next full CoC Board meeting following final submission to HUD.

- **Required Program Reports**

CoC – Annual Performance Report

PATH – Annual Performance Report

HOPWA – Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report

ESGP – To be determined performance outcomes reports

SSVF - Regular data uploads to VA data registry

- **Point-In-Time**

As the HMIS lead, ICA will manage the collection of HMIS point in time related data collection, street count collection training and coordinate final reporting of required data into the Homeless Data Exchange to HUD. ICA will report to the Iowa Council on the results of the count at the next full Council meeting following the final submission to HUD.

- **Housing Inventory Report**

ICA will coordinate and collect all housing inventory data on behalf of the Balance of State CoC and enter the relevant data into HUD's Homeless Data Exchange. ICA will report to the Iowa Council on the current inventory at the next full Council meeting following the final submission to HUD. ICA will also provide a quarterly update on any changes to the inventory and provide information to the Research and Analysis Committee and the Iowa Council on HMIS bed coverage.

Iowa Balance of State Coordinated Services Regions

The Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care covers 96 of Iowa's 99 counties, excluding Polk, Pottawattamie and Woodbury counties. To help facilitate the planning for Coordinated Entry, the CoC worked to organize the various counties within the CoC into Coordinated Service Regions. These Coordinated Service Regions will also serve as the basis for the CoC Regions for governance purposes. The CoC Board retains the right to consolidate or break apart certain Regions, with or without the consent of the areas in question, if doing so would improve geographic contiguity or compactness, commonality of interests, and/or improve the capacity of the Region.

The CoC Regions are broken down as follows:

- Northwest Region- covering Sioux, Cherokee, Ida, Lyon, and Plymouth, Osceola, O'Brien, Monona, Crawford, Carroll
- North Central Region- covering Kossuth, Winnebago, Hancock, Wright, Hamilton, Worth, Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Mitchell, Floyd
- Northeast Iowa Region-covering Bremer, Allamakee, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek
- Eastern Iowa Region-covering Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson, and Clinton
- Two Rivers Region- covering Greene, Boone, Story, Marshall, and Hardin
- Linn, Benton, Jones Coordinated Services Region
- Johnson/Washington Region
- South Central West- covering Adair, Adams, Clarke, Dallas, Decatur, Guthrie, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union Counties
- Black Hawk/Grundy/Tama Region
- Southeast Iowa Coordinating Region- covering Cedar, Des Moines, Henry, Lee, Louisa, and Muscatine

- Upper Des Moines Region – covering Buena Vista, Calhoun, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Humboldt, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, and Webster
- Quad Cities Bi-State Region- covering Scott County
- Balance of Counties-covering remaining of the 23 counties
- Woodbury County- Woodbury County CoC will also participate in CE with the BoS CoC.

Coordinated Entry Responsibilities

Each region will design and implement a Coordinated Service Region (CSR) within the parameters of the system standards provided. The standards give each region a supportive framework to use when implementing local systems as well as standardized assessment tools that will be uniform across the BoS CoC. These tools include: a Prevention/Diversion Screening Tool, and all versions of the VI-SPDAT Screening Tool. The Iowa Balance of State Coordinated Entry Policies & Procedures Manual describes these assessments in the definitions section and demonstrates their use throughout the document.

Governance Responsibilities

Each Region functions as a CoC-in-miniature for its area and is separately managed by a representative entity or body that is responsible to both the Iowa Balance of State CoC Board and local stakeholders. Each Region is responsible for the following duties:

- Regional planning of homeless housing and services and implementation of both regional and CoC Board decisions, including operation of the coordinated entry system.
- Advocating for regional interests to the CoC Board and providing a single point of contact for local organizations and/or jurisdictions seeking to address homelessness within their geographic area; and
- Other duties as assigned by the CoC Board.

Iowa Balance of State Governance Charter

Approved by:

HMIS Lead: Institute for Community Alliances

Signature of Authorized Representative

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Date Signed

CoC Board: Interim CoC Board/CoC Board

Signature of Authorized Representative

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Date Signed

CoC Collaborative Applicant: Institute for Community Alliances

Signature of Authorized Representative

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Date Signed