



INDIANAPOLIS CONTINUUM OF CARE

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

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I. Governance Charter Purpose & Overview

This document sets forth:

- Guiding principles of membership and participation in the Indianapolis Continuum of Care (the Continuum)¹.
- Responsibilities delegated by the Continuum to its Board (Blueprint Council), committees, and agents.
- Provisions for Continuum governance through the Blueprint Council and key policies and processes.

The structure of the Continuum is reproduced here:



As defined in this Charter:

- The Continuum is the collaborative body implementing homelessness prevention and intervention strategies **as a spoke in the collective response to homelessness across Indianapolis.**
- The Lead Entity staffs the work of the Continuum as a base, holding the work together.
- The Blueprint Council acts on behalf of the Continuum to maintain momentum and oversight.
- Workgroups are responsible for specific activities and strategies, reporting to the Council.
- The Collaborative Applicant submits the CoC's Consolidated Application to HUD and applies for HUD's CoC Program funding, reporting to the Council.
- The HMIS Lead operates the Continuum's data system, reporting to the Council.
- The CoC Program Grantee is the official recipient of CoC Program funds **and** works closely with the Blueprint Council.

¹This Continuum of Care "IN 503" as designated by HUD.

II. The Continuum of Care

A. Continuum Mission, Vision, Purpose & Responsibilities

Mission: The mission of the Continuum is to coordinate **and connect with** all stakeholders, systems, and resources available **across the Indianapolis Homeless Response and housing System** with the goal of preventing and ending homelessness in Indianapolis.

Vision: We believe everyone has the right to be housed and connected to care.

Purpose: The Continuum is a collective impact endeavor that aims to align and organize all homelessness prevention and response resources and activities to achieve a measurable reduction in homelessness and embodies three concepts:

- **A Working Coalition:** It is the collection of individuals and entities that have specifically committed **to the common goal of ending homelessness** and aligning resources and **mutually reinforcing** activities to implement the Indianapolis Community Plan to End Homelessness.
- **A System of Housing & Services:** It is the system of housing and service entities that provide a broad range of homelessness prevention and intervention services to the community, the pieces of which leverage one another in assisting individuals and families move to stable housing. It incorporates outreach, engagement, assessment, prevention, shelter, housing, and services to successfully achieve housing stability.
- **The HUD CoC Program-Defined Continuum of Care:** It is the delegated local community planning body that awards access to HUD's CoC Program funding to nonprofit and faith-based providers and state and local governments to meet the specific needs of people who experience homelessness and promotes the effective utilization of these programs and mainstream resources.

Responsibilities: Specifically, it is obliged to the following minimum activities:

- **Regular meetings**
 - Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, **at least semiannually**. CoCs may conduct membership meetings more often for purposes of activity planning, ongoing communication, staff training, etc.
- **Invitation for new members**
 - Issue a public invitation for new members from within the CoC's geographic area **at least annually**.
- **Board selection**
 - Adopt and follow a written process to select a **CoC board to act on behalf of the CoC**. The CoC must **review, update, and approve the selection process at least once every five years**. The CoC board must be representative of the relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations and include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual.
 - Represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations, such as persons with substance use disorders; persons with HIV/AIDS; veterans; the chronically homeless; families with children; unaccompanied youth; the seriously mentally ill; and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
 - Reflect the racial and ethnic demographics, as well as the experiences and identities (e.g., LGBTQIA+, people of varying abilities) of the community being served.
- **Performance Targets & Monitoring**
 - Establish appropriate performance targets Monitor performance and evaluate outcomes of ESG and CoC programs Develop a fair process for performance improvement and recommend action per that process
 - Report to HUD as required/requested

- **Governance charter:**
 - In consultation with the collaborative applicant and the HMIS lead, **develop, follow, and update annually**
 - a. **a governance charter** that includes **all procedures and policies** needed to comply with 24 CFR part 578.5,
 - b. and with **HMIS requirements** as prescribed by HUD, and;
 - c. **a code of conduct and recusal process for the board**, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the board.

- **Coordinated Entry System**
 - Establish a centralized or coordinated entry system
 - Operate and actively manage a centralized or coordinated entry system
 - **Ensure policies on how the system will triage and address the safety needs of individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness.**
 - **Ensure the system will address the needs of individuals and families that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.**

- **Written Standards**
 - Establish and maintain written standards for providing homelessness assistance programs
 - Ensure written standards are followed through regular monitoring

- **HMIS**
 - Designate a single HMIS for its geographic area and designate an eligible applicant to manage its HMIS
 - Review, revise, and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans
 - Ensure consistent participation of the CoC Program Grantee and sub-recipients in HMIS
 - Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements

- **Planning**
 - Coordinate implementation of a housing and service system
 - Conduct a point-in-time count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness that meets HUD's requirements, at least annually
 - Conduct an annual gaps analysis of homelessness needs and services
 - 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

- **Application for CoC Program Funds**
 - Design, operate and follow a collaborative, fair, and transparent process for developing applications and approving submission of applications in response to a CoC Program NOFAO
 - Establish priorities for funding projects
 - Determine if one or more applications will be submitted
 - If more than one, designate the collaborative applicant
 - If only one, the applicant is the collaborative applicant
 - Rank multiple applications if required by HUD

Delegation: The Continuum has delegated all elements of its day-to-day work to the Blueprint Council, the management team, and implementation work groups as described in this Charter. However, the Continuum retains its responsibility to vote directly to approve the governance framework set forth in this Governance Charter and any subsequent changes or additions to the Governance Charter.

B. Continuum Membership Composition and Voting Rights

Composition: CoC membership should comprise of relevant organizations within the given geographic area. Representation is imperative for an effective homelessness response system; membership should include all of the individuals, businesses, community groups, associations, and community-based organizations required to further local efforts to end homelessness. CoC leadership **must** be reflective of the racial and ethnic demographics, as well as the experiences and identities (e.g., LGBTQIA+, people of varying abilities) of the community being served. The Indianapolis Continuum is made stronger through the participation of broad and diverse members. Therefore, membership in the CoC is open to any individual or organization that embraces the mission, vision and goals of the Community Plan to End Homelessness.

Establishing Voting Membership: Those individuals that meet the following provisions are voting members of the Continuum of Care:

- Self-identification as having lived experience of homelessness, OR;
- Commitment to Indianapolis' strategic plan to end homelessness as demonstrated by completion of an Annual Continuum Membership Statement **AND**,
- Commitment to Indianapolis' annual Winter Contingency and other occurring crisis response plans demonstrated through advocacy, planning, referral or program design efforts **AND**,
- Commitment to engaging in the CoC annual PIT Count.

An Annual Continuum Membership Statement may be completed at any time throughout the year but is necessary to establish voting membership as specified above.

"Commitment" to Indianapolis' annual Winter Contingency and other occurring crisis response plans could include any or all of the following activities. This list is not exhaustive and participation will be subject to a member's capacity, availability, and other commitments:

- Participating in community discussions to problem-solve and add system resources or capacity
- Leveraging your expertise to support community planning and implementation efforts
- Leveraging your network to assist with sharing crisis response efforts, donations, volunteer needs or other crisis response work as relevant
- Adhering to alternative or adaptive referral and data processes as are approved by the Blueprint Council for Coordinated Entry
- Be willing to work with Continuum of Care partners in good faith, in whatever ways are aligned with your ability and capacity, toward the community goal at hand regarding Winter Contingency or other crisis planning

"Commitment" to engaging in the CoC annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count could include any or all of the following activities. This list is not exhaustive and participation will be subject to a member's capacity, availability, and other commitments:

- Spreading the word about the Point-In-Time Count to help recruit volunteers by email, social media, or personal networking
- Providing PIT and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data when requested and as relevant
- Volunteering for site-based surveying or coordinating outreach efforts with the CoC
- Providing feedback on the process or methodology of the PIT if feedback is requested
- Making connections with possible donors who are interested in supporting PIT night or PIT survey efforts

Organizations who are established members of the CoC may have up to 5 voting members. Organizations may have more than 5 members participate in the CoC but must designate no more than 5 voting members.

Eligibility for Blueprint Council Membership is defined in Section III.A.

Diversity Statement: Indianapolis is a diverse community composed of individuals with different racial and ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, sexual orientations, housing statuses, gender identities, and religious beliefs. The Continuum of Care and the Blueprint Council will make an active effort to ensure representation from individuals with a broad array of backgrounds and experiences. By creating a Continuum of Care and Blueprint Council that is diverse, and by including individuals representing government entities, businesses, homeless service agencies, housing providers, and other non-profit entities, we will reflect the diversity of the homeless population and the population of Indianapolis as a whole.

The ~~Support Entity Lead Agency~~ will maintain records of membership statements, participation (including serving on committees and workgroups), and voting and make them available prior to all meetings of the full Continuum.

C. Continuum Meetings

Frequency: The Continuum will hold full membership meetings at least two (2) times per year at a time and location determined by the Blueprint Council. The Blueprint Council will select a meeting location that is accessible to potential homeless participants and in regard to ability/disability.

Open Meeting: Meetings of the Continuum will be open to any interested persons.

Agendas: The Lead Entity will post agendas in advance of the meeting on the CoC website.

Notice: A minimum of twenty-one (21) days' notice will be given for meetings of the Continuum. See *definition of Notice in appendix of this Charter*.

Quorum: Quorum for the transaction of business at Continuum meetings will be defined as those present at a properly noticed meeting.

Voting: Each voting member must be present to vote on Continuum matters, unless a meeting is called electronically. Votes will be conducted either electronically, by voice, or paper ballot. No member may vote on any item that presents a real or perceived conflict-of-interest.

Proxy: There is no proxy voting. Decision-making requires live conversation and active participation from all parties.

III. The Blueprint Council

A. Blueprint Council Roles and Responsibilities

Definition: The Continuum Governing Board (known as the Blueprint Council) is the delegated authority and decision-making body for The Continuum. The Blueprint Council is primarily responsible for:

- i. ~~Prioritizing near term Setting~~ strategy and defining annual system implementation priorities and activities,
- ii. Monitoring system performance and implementation progress,
- iii. Reviewing and approving governing policy recommendations created within the implementation work groups, ~~and~~
- iv. ~~Identifying and~~ aligning resources and activities to allocate~~ing~~ funding in accordance with implementation priorities, ~~and~~
- v. ~~Building relationships across sectors to further enhance the mission of the CoC and align resources across Indianapolis~~

In addition, The Blueprint Council is the designated entity for managing the CoC Program process in Indianapolis, including the ranking of proposals for submittal to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development under the annual NOFA. The Blueprint Council approves the design, coordination, and review of the HUD CoC grant application process for the Continuum, which includes defining community priorities and ranking CoC Program applications for approval through the CoC Program Grantee.

Individual Blueprint Council Member Eligibility and Requirements: Individuals serving on the Blueprint Council must be an established ~~voting~~ member of the Continuum of Care ~~in good standing as defined by Section II.A. and, defined below:~~

- ~~• Commit to preventing and ending homelessness~~
- Attend 75% of the meetings of the Blueprint Council and at least one of the meetings of the Continuum.
- Participate as an active member of at least one standing committee.
- Communicate Blueprint Council work to the peers, industry, and/or population he/she/they represents.
- ~~Commit to a housing first approach to ending homelessness~~
- ~~• Adhere to all Governance Charter policies~~

- Reside in or be employed in Indianapolis
- Be willing to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy (see section V.A. and V.B.) upon being seated as a Blueprint Council member and annually thereafter
- Commit to strategically aligning their resources and activities in support of the collective impact goals

Candidates and Council members must meet criteria for the designated seat and adhere to all Governance Charter policies. Unless specific qualifications are noted, individuals are eligible to serve in a seat with the following areas of representation if they work or volunteer in a role that provides services in the designated category. Individuals may also be eligible to serve in each area of representation if they work or volunteer for an agency that provides services in the designated category. Eligible candidates for any Blueprint Council seat that also have previously lived experience of homelessness will be given priority in the application selection process.

B. Blueprint Council Number, Terms, Composition & Guidelines

Number: The Blueprint Council will operate with no fewer than ~~13 nor more than 26~~ 16 and no more than 22 (subject to change with the creation or elimination of Other Systems Representatives).

Composition: Members of the Blueprint Council represent local funders, government, services providers, consumers, and other community members whose interest relate to homeless services and housing systems. ~~While members may personally represent various entities, Blueprint Council Members represent the specific seat they are elected or appointed to fulfill.~~ Specifically, the Blueprint Council consists of the following:

- **Elected Seats**
 - Two (2) consumers with ~~previously lived experience of homelessness (financially compensated seats; one seat must also serve on the Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Committee as described in Section IV.A.)~~
 - ~~Two (2)~~ One (1) Direct Homeless Service Providers ~~(Direct service providers can include those who do and do not receive federal funding; those serving individuals, families, youth, veterans, or any other targeted population; a wide range of services such as outreach, shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, victim services, service only, etc.; and a mix of secular, faith-based, and community providers.)~~
 - One (1) Domestic Violence Provider (Direct service providers can include those who do and do not receive federal funding; those serving individuals, families, youth, veterans, or any other targeted population; a wide range of services such as outreach, shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, victim services, service only, etc.; and a mix of secular, faith-based, and community providers.)
 - One (1) Special Populations Representative (Direct service providers can include those who do and do not receive federal funding; those serving youth and young adults, veterans, families, or any other targeted population; a wide range of services such as outreach, shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, victim services, service only, etc.; and a mix of secular, faith-based, and community providers. Domestic Violence Providers are not eligible for this elected seat since there is a Domestic Violence Provider designated seat.)
 - One (1) Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Member (A YAB member will be elected by current the Youth Advisory Members)
- **Appointed Seats**
 - City of Indianapolis / Office of the Mayor
 - Executive Director of CHIP
 - CEO of Indianapolis Housing Agency
 - ~~3-4~~ 2 Private Funders
 - ~~2-6-2-4~~ Other Systems Representatives which may include, but are not limited to:
 - Health Care Systems Representative
 - Veterans Representative
 - Office of Public Health and Safety Representative
 - Reentry/Restorative Justice Representative
 - Workforce Development Representative
 - Immigrant/Refugee System Representative
 - ~~Business Representative~~

- Affordable Housing Developer Representative OR PSH Representative
- Indianapolis Director of the Department of Metropolitan Development (can be delegated to a Deputy Director, the Policy Director for Homelessness, or the Administrator of Community Investments) / Federal Homeless and Housing Funding Administrator Representative
- Faith Community Representative
- ~~Local University/Research/Evaluation Representative~~

Terms:

- Elected Blueprint Council members will serve a ~~two (2)~~-three-(3)-year term assuming all eligibility requirements continue to be met. Elected Blueprint Council members ~~and~~ must wait at least ~~two (2)~~-one (1) year after rotating off to run for election again.
- Appointed members are nominated based on their occupation of a specific role. Appointed member terms will continue as long as the appointed member holds their occupational title and meets eligibility requirements. An appointed member may, ~~or is approved by the Blueprint Council to delegate their seat to an appropriate member in their organization as approved by the Blueprint Council. And will serve a term commensurate with their occupation of the referenced role.~~

Voting Guidelines: In managing Blueprint Council number and composition, the following will be true:

- Each seat has a vote as exercised by a named individual, and each individual may exercise only one vote.
- ~~The Chair of the Blueprint Council only casts a vote in the event of a tie.~~
- ~~The Blueprint Council should strive to reflect the diversity of all persons and families experiencing homelessness and Indianapolis as a whole.~~
- ~~Direct service providers can include those who do and do not receive federal funding; those serving individuals, families, youth, veterans, or any other targeted population; a wide range of services such as outreach, shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, victim services, service only, etc.; and a mix of secular, faith-based, and community providers.~~
- ~~Other Systems seats provide opportunity for other systems that serve individuals experiencing homelessness to become engaged with the Blueprint Council and commit to strategically aligning their resources and activities in supportive of the collective impact goals.~~

C. Blueprint Council Member Nominations and Elections

Process Review: ~~The Blueprint Council will review this process, as well as the elected and appointed seats, at least every five (5) years to ensure it remains consistent with Continuum objectives and responsibilities.~~

Blueprint Council Officers and **Executive Committees**

Officers: The Blueprint Council members vote in a Chair, Vice Chair, ~~and Secretary and Second Vice Chair~~ from its membership to form the Executive Committee.

- The Chair conducts Council meetings
- The Chair conducts meetings of the full CoC
- The Vice Chair serves in the Chair's absence ~~and chairs the Governance Committee~~
- The Secretary works with the Lead Agency to maintain Blueprint Council records
- ~~The Second Vice Chair serves as a parliamentarian~~

Terms: An officer serves for a one(1)-year term.

Term Limits: An officer cannot serve for more than three (3) consecutive terms in the same role for a maximum of three (3) consecutive years.

Executive Committee Responsibilities: ~~The Executive Committee consists of the officers listed above and receives administrative support from the lead agency.~~ The Executive Committee is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Setting and timely dissemination of the agenda for Blueprint Council meetings
- Setting and timely dissemination of the agenda for all all-member Continuum of Care meetings

- Setting and upholding process decisions to determine which issues go to the **Blueprint** Council for official vote, and for determining when the need for action is sufficiently urgent as to require either an unscheduled meeting, or a vote by the **Blueprint** Council on a matter which was not included on the publicly disseminated meeting agenda or action by the council without a meeting
- Calling emergency meetings of the full **Blueprint** Council to coordinate messages and/or responses to public relations concerns or issues impacting the CoC

Blueprint Council Governance Committee: Annually the Blueprint Council chair will appoint four (4) Blueprint Council members to a ~~nominating~~ **governance** committee, **at least one of which must be an individual with previously lived experience.** The vice chair of the Blueprint Council will be the chair of the Governance Committee. The Blueprint Council Governance Committee is charged with the following responsibilities:

- ~~Conducting an annual assessment and evaluation of~~ **Evaluating** the conduct of **Blueprint** Council members, ~~especially their compliance with the conflict of interest and attendance policies to ensure they're continuing to meet all Blueprint Council eligibility requirements set forth in this governance charter.~~
- Taking action to correct or remove **Blueprint** Council members who are not fulfilling their responsibilities
- ~~The Blueprint Council will renew appointments and their MOUs based on their performance each year.~~ Ensuring all appointed seats and MOUs are renewed based on continually meeting all **Blueprint** Council eligibility requirements
- Managing appointed entity relationships which may be terminated upon mutual agreement or for cause with a vote of 75% of the then-seated **Blueprint** Council
- Conducting all outreach, orientation, and nominating activities on behalf of the **Blueprint** Council, including bringing all nominations to the **Blueprint** Council for approval

~~This committee will conduct all outreach, orientation, and nominating activities on behalf of the Blueprint Council. The committee will bring all nominations to the Blueprint Council for approval.~~ The Governance Committee will work closely with the Lead Agency to conduct elections in accordance with the representative intent of the elected seats. ~~The committee will select its own chair.~~

D. **Blueprint Council Vacancy, Removal & Resignation**

Vacancy: In the event of a vacancy of an elected seat, the members of the **Blueprint** Council will appoint a successor to hold the seat for the remainder of the term of the elected person vacating the seat. At the end of the term, a regular election will be held as described in this Charter. In the event that an appointed position is vacant, then the **Blueprint** Council will follow the nominations process described in this Charter.

Removal: **Blueprint** Council members may also be removed by a 3/4 vote of the **Blueprint** Council then-seated for cause including but not limited to:

- Failure to perform **Blueprint** Council duties
- Failure to comply with this Charter and/or applicable policies
- Engaging in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest
- Engaging in behavior that causes harm to the reputation of the Continuum

Such seats will then be filled through the process described under vacancies.

Resignation: Unless otherwise provided by written agreement, any member of the **Blueprint** Council may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair. Any such resignations will take effect at the time specified within the written notice or if the time be not specified therein upon its acceptance by the **Blueprint** Council.

E. **Blueprint Council Meetings & Action**

Frequency: The **Blueprint** Council will meet ~~no less frequently than four (4) times per year~~ **no less than six (6) times per year** at such times and places as the **Blueprint** Council will determine. The Chair or a Vice Chair may call a special meeting of the **Blueprint** Council provided it meets all notice and quorum requirements.

Meetings and Attendance: Two absences, excused or unexcused, from the regularly scheduled Blueprint Council meeting in any 12-month period will warrant inquiry from the Blueprint Council as to the ability and interest of the individual in continuing as a member. Three unexcused absences within any 12-month period from time of election or appointment will result in a recommendation to the Executive Committee that this member be removed from the Blueprint Council. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to a meeting or leaving more than 15 minutes early qualifies as an absence.

Any Blueprint Council member unable to attend a meeting should notify the Chair of the Blueprint Council or its administrative designee to request an excused absence. The Chair of the Council or its administrative designee will maintain attendance records and notify the Blueprint Council when two absences are recorded.

Open Meeting: It is the intent that all meetings of the Blueprint Council will be open to any interested person. However, in rare circumstances the Blueprint Council may vote by majority to hold an executive session which would not be open to the public.

Agendas: The Blueprint Council will disseminate agendas in advance of the meeting.

Notice: Fifteen (15)-day notice will be given for regularly scheduled meetings of the Blueprint Council. Special meetings may be called in emergency situations with three (3)-day notice.

Quorum: A number equal to a majority of the Blueprint Council members then-seated will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. No decision will be made unless a quorum is present.

Decision-Making: The Blueprint Council makes decisions by consensus.

In consensus decision making, participants contribute to a shared issue and shape it into a decision that meets the concerns of all group members as much as possible. Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than competing for personal preferences. All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process. All members have the opportunity to present and amend proposals. The consensus process should actively solicit the input and participation of all decision-makers. ~~The goal of consensus is a decision that is consented to by all group members.~~ Full consent does not mean that everyone must be completely satisfied with the final outcome – in fact, total satisfaction is rare. The decision must be acceptable enough, however, that all will agree to support the group in choosing it. Consensus depends on participants having shared values and goals. If the group cannot reach consensus on an issue **within a reasonable and adequate time determined by the Chair**, a vote will be taken with simple majority rule.

Voting: Each member of the Blueprint Council is eligible to vote on decisions being made when present at the meetings, except for the chair, who only votes in the event of a tie. If a vote is necessary, all votes will be by voice or either paper or electronic ballot at the will of the majority of those in attendance at a meeting with a quorum represented. No member may vote on any item that presents a real or perceived conflict-of-interest.

Proxy: There is no proxy voting. Decision-making requires live conversation and active participation from all parties.

Action Without a Meeting: The Blueprint Council may take an action without a meeting provided:

- The action is within its authority
- Notice is provided
- It is approved via email (or letter when email is unavailable)
- It is approved by a majority of all Blueprint Council then-seated members who are entitled to vote on the matter

F. Blueprint Council Staffing

The Lead Agency will provide administrative support to the Blueprint Council including recording minutes, sending meeting notifications, ~~and~~ ensuring appropriate updates to the Blueprint Council members, ~~and~~ other responsibilities as defined by the Blueprint Council and the Lead Agency.

IV. Committees, Workgroups, & Ad Hoc Workgroups

A. Formation and Composition

Blueprint Council Member Standing Committees: Blueprint Council committees carry out Blueprint Council activities and are comprised of Blueprint Council members. This charter previously references the formation procedures for two standing Blueprint Council committees:

- i. Executive Committee
- ii. ~~Nominating~~ Governance Committee

Other Standing Committees and Advisory Boards: CoC Standing Committees and Advisory Boards ensure CoC activities are aligned with key CoC initiatives. They include:

- i. NOFO Non-Conflicted Workgroup
- ii. NOFO Provider Workgroup
- iii. Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Committee
- iv. Racial Equity Committee
- v. Youth Advisory Board (YAB)

NOFO Non-Conflicted Workgroup: The NOFO Non-Conflicted Workgroup shall strive to include multiple members of the community and meet the diversity policy set by the Continuum of Care (CoC) in the Governance Charter. This includes inviting members with lived experience, persons of color, and members of the LGBTQ community. In accordance with our conflict-of-interest statement, members of the Non-Conflicted Workgroup cannot have conflicts and must be at least one-year removed from working for an agency that currently receives CoC funding or ESG Funding, or that agency must have no CoC or ESG funding for at least one-year (from the end of their contract) before any staff member could be considered non-conflicted and eligible for workgroup participation.

This group will undertake, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Amend and recommend the following CoC policies/documents:
 - Renewal Project Scoring Standards
 - Project Scoring, Reallocation, Selection and Ranking Process
 - New Project Solicitation(s)
- Complete and recommend the selection of new project applications.
- Complete and recommend the final scoring of renewal project applications.
- Complete and recommend the final ranking and tiering of all CoC-funded project applications.
- Recommend a list of projects to be fully or partially reallocated, reallocation amounts and reallocation appeals.
- Provide oversight to the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding through annual application review.

As other funding opportunities arise, the Non-Conflicted Workgroup will follow federal guidelines and competition rules. Any organization applying for these funding opportunities may not have an employee or board member participate on the Non-Conflicted Workgroup.

NOFO Provider Workgroup: The NOFO Provider workgroup is dedicated to COC and ESG funded service providers who provide input for the development or changes to scoring tools and policies. Their feedback is reported by DMD and the NOFO grant writer to the Non-Conflicted Workgroup to ensure equity and alignment throughout the NOFO process.

Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Committee: A Person with Lived Experience Advisory Committee will inform decision-making on policies and procedures related to ending homelessness. This group will include adults ages 18+ who have experienced homelessness within the past 10 years. At least 2 committee members must be between the ages of 18 and 24. One representative of this committee who is not currently experiencing homelessness will have a seat on the Blueprint Council and will serve as the chair of the Persons with Lived Experience Advisory Committee. This committee can establish standing rules that do not conflict with the CoC bylaws. Any suggested changes for policies and procedures related to ending homelessness from workgroups and ad hoc workgroups should be vetted by the Person with Lived Experience Advisory Committee, which will send the recommendation to the Blueprint Council for vote along with their endorsement or recommendations for adjustments. A project manager from the lead agency will be assigned to coordinate this committee, provide administrative support, and provide ongoing onboarding and training materials.

Racial Equity Committee: The Racial Equity Committee is a standing Committee of the Blueprint Council. The committee shall assist the Blueprint Council in fulfilling its responsibilities to prioritize and advance racial equity strategies across the Continuum of Care. The committee will use its influence to dismantle structural racism within the CoC and the communities we serve. The committee will be held accountable for creating tangible action steps and guiding the development of anti-racist and socially just policies, procedures, and positions.

The Racial Equity Committee shall be responsible for:

- Reviewing all homeless-related application processes to ensure racial equity and advocate for community inclusion
- Ensuring BIPOC with Lived Experience of Homelessness are at all the tables with true SHARED DECISION-MAKING POWER (no tokenism)
- Building in accountability measures for the homeless system
- Coordinating the design and implementation of a Racial Equity Action Plan
- Acknowledging, educating, and strategizing related to addressing inequitable policy and practices within homeless services and resource allocation
- Informing considerations and recommendations to embed racial equity and social justice to the Blueprint council
- Collecting and analyzing data for documenting, measuring, and evaluating progress
- Capacity-building to homeless system to disseminate learning, skills, and tools for operationalizing racial equity

Youth Advisory Board (YAB): The Indianapolis Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a committed group of young adults (18-24 years old) with lived experience of homelessness. The group is youth led and facilitated by CHIP (Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention) staff as part of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) implementation.

Youth Providers may co-facilitate and collaborate with the YAB for education, training, and program or system feedback. The YAB convenes at least once a month to review and provide input to Continuum of Care policies, activities, and programs, especially as they pertain to youth services. Feedback from the YAB helps to uplift and center youth expertise and improve youth access to and experience with system resources.

Workgroups and Ad Hoc Workgroups: Workgroups and ad hoc workgroups carry out implementation and policy creation activities through the gathering and analysis of information and data, experimentation with implementation tactics, and formulation of subsequent policy recommendations. ~~Workgroups will be organized within standing implementation verticals. Each vertical can create and install workgroups to accomplish the annual work plan.~~ in alignment with community goals and priority areas to accomplish the annual work plan and ensure compliance with HUD. The most up-to-date ~~vertical and~~ work group structure and descriptions of responsibilities will be posted on the Indy CoC website.

At any time, the Blueprint Council may ~~decide vote~~ to create or eliminate a ~~workgroup. standing committee.~~

Any community member may join any work group. Each work group may set its number and recruit critical members.

An example governance chart of the Indianapolis CoC, including standing committees and workgroups can be found in the Appendix.

B. Committee, Workgroup, and Ad Hoc Workgroup Leadership

A Project Manager or Co-Project Managers will be assigned from the ~~Management Team~~ Lead Agency to coordinate each ~~vertical and~~ work group. Project Manager responsibilities include:

- Maintaining Work Plans
- Recruiting Effective Workgroup Participants and Critical Voices
- Tracking & Reporting Progress
- Managing and Anticipating Intersections Across Verticals
- Elevating Issues/Challenges/Successes
- Managing Conflict
- Defining Objectives and Major Milestones
- Actively Facilitating Workgroup Meetings
- Preparing Work Products (Policies, Workflows, Plans, Training Curriculum, etc.)
- Developing and Maintaining Key Stakeholder Relationships

C. Decision-making Limitations

Work Groups are intentionally designed to allow for experimentation and testing of implementation tactics that inform policy creation. As such, great latitude is extended to work groups and project managers to facilitate such implementation experiments provided they are within the strategic boundaries set forth in the community plan and annual work plans. All recommendations related to funding, policy changes, or issues that impact access to services and delivery of services across the system must be elevated to the Blueprint Council for consideration and action.

V. Continuum Policies

A. Conflict of Interest & Recusal

The Indianapolis Continuum of Care will adhere to the CoC Regulations that govern funding decisions, specifically § 578.95 Conflicts of interest.

- **Continuum of Care Blueprint Council Members.** No Continuum of Care Blueprint Council 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.
- **Organizational Conflict.** An organizational conflict of interest arises when, because of activities or relationships with other persons or organizations, the recipient or subrecipient is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance in the provision of any type or amount of assistance under this part, or when a covered person, as in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, objectivity in performing work with respect to any activity assisted under this part is or might be otherwise impaired. Such an organizational conflict would arise when a board member of an applicant participates in decision of the applicant concerning the award of a grant, or provision of other financial benefits, to the organization that such member represents. It would also arise when an employee of a recipient or subrecipient participates in making rent reasonableness determinations under § 578.49(b)(2) and § 578.51(g) and housing quality inspections of property under § 578.75(b) that the recipient, subrecipient, or related entity owns.
- **Other Conflicts.** For all other transactions and activities, the following restrictions apply: (1) No covered person, meaning a person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the recipient or its subrecipients and who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to activities assisted under this part, or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to activities assisted under this part, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from an assisted activity, have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement with respect to an assisted activity, or have a financial interest in the proceeds derived from an assisted activity, either for him/herself or themselves or for those with whom he/she/they has immediate family or business ties, during his/her/their tenure or during the one-year period following his/her/their tenure.

The Continuum of Care will apply the conflict-of-interest policy to all voting decisions that can impact funding decisions, including the priority listing during the CoC NOFO competition, scoring criteria for new and renewal project applications, ranking criteria, policy amendments and other items that affect procedures undertaken by the Continuum of Care.

No member of the Continuum will vote in the ranking, selection, or award of any grant funds in which they have a financial interest, or agent has a financial or other interest in or represents or in which any member of their immediate family (such as parent, sibling, child, niece/nephew, or person with whom they cohabitate) has a financial interest. Anyone may participate in the planning process.

Members of the Continuum will disclose potential conflicts of interest that they may have regarding any matters that come before it in full session, **Blueprint** Council, committee, or other group of the CoC.

Members will recuse themselves from any matter in which they may have a conflict of interest – abstaining from decision making on the matter.

- **Duty to Disclose** – In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the conflict and/or financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Board.
- **Recusal of Self** – Any Member has a duty to recuse himself or herself at any time from involvement in any decision or discussion in which the member believes he or she has or may have a conflict of interest, without going through the process for determining whether a conflict of interest exists. Voting

Members of the Continuum of Care should recuse themselves from any decision. Committee Members and Board Members should recuse themselves from any discussion and decision.

- **Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists** – The Board shall review all Conflict-of-Interest Annual Statements to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. The Board shall notify each member to review the conflict.

B. Code of Conduct

Each Blueprint Council member will uphold certain standards of performance and good conduct and avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest. In order to prevent a conflict of interest, a Blueprint Council member, chairperson, employee, agent, or consultant of the Blueprint Council may not:

- Influence decisions concerning the selection or award of a grant or other financial benefit to an organization that the Blueprint Council member, employee, officer, or agent has a financial or other interest in or represents, except for the Blueprint Council itself.
- Engage in any behavior demonstrating an actual conflict of interest or giving the appearance of any such conflict
- Engage in violations of the law or unethical business practices

Each Blueprint Council member commits to creating a productive and supportive climate where Council members encourage healthy debate and treat each other with respect. Each Blueprint Council member will:

- Fully participate in discussions.
- Promote open and honest communication.
- Respect differing opinions and perspectives.
- Challenge ideas not people.
- Engage in objective analysis of opinions.
- Demonstrate support for the group's decisions.

C. Non-Discrimination

The members, officers, committee members and contractors of the Continuum will be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other federal, state or locally protected group. In addition, selection will strive to meet the diversity commitments referenced in this Charter.

D. Limited Authority

The Continuum is not a formal organization. As such:

- It has, and can have, no assets or liabilities;
- It cannot indemnify member or participant action; and
- No member of the Continuum, Blueprint Council or its committees may contract, incur debt, or otherwise create an enforceable obligation for the Continuum, Blueprint Council or its committees.

Only the Blueprint Council may designate an individual or entity to speak for the Continuum or its components.

With the exception of removal policies in this Charter, any grievance related to the Continuum or CoC Program will follow HUD policies and contracts.

VI. Appointed Entities

A. Process

Except as otherwise specified in this section, the process for entity appointment will be as follows:

- Specific performance expectations for each appointment will be outlined in MOUs
- The Blueprint Council will renew appointments and their MOUs based on performance each year
- Appointed entity relationships may be terminated upon mutual agreement or for cause with a vote of 75% of the then-seated Blueprint Council

A broad description of each appointment is provided in this section of the Charter.

B. Collaborative Applicant

For the purposes of the annual HUD NOFA application and the management of CoC Program planning grants, the Blueprint Council must designate a grant recipient to be the Collaborative Applicant.

The Collaborative Applicant is the only entity that may

- Submit the CoC Consolidated Application to HUD.
- Apply for grants from HUD on behalf of the Continuum.
- Apply for and receive CoC Program planning funds on behalf of the Continuum.

The Collaborative Applicant will be chosen by the Blueprint Council. **It is strongly encouraged that the Collaborative Applicant and Lead Agency solidify their relationship via an MOU.**

C. CoC Program Grantee

CoC Program Grantee is the entity or entities selected by the Indianapolis Continuum of Care to contract with HUD to receive CoC Grant money to allocate towards CoC projects in the Indianapolis Continuum of Care.

D. HMIS Lead

HMIS policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis in accordance with HMIS data standards and HEARTH act. The policies and procedures can be accessed through the Support Entity and the Continuum website once created. The HMIS Lead will be chosen by the Blueprint Council.

E. Lead Agency

Lead Agency roles are outlined in the definitions of this Charter. An annual MOU will outline the management activities to be conducted each year and provided delegated authority and empowerment to utilize its staff to actively manage the implementation and maintenance of the Continuum of Care.

The Lead Agency has the staff and skills to coordinate Continuum members as well as its Blueprint Council and committees as they implement the Blueprint.

The Lead Agency will be chosen by the Blueprint Council **and must have the capacity to communicate to the full CoC on behalf of the Blueprint Council.**

F. Coordinated Entry Entity

Coordinate Entry Entity is one or more entities selected by the Blueprint Council to install, maintain, and facilitate coordinated entry in Indianapolis, **with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources, including mainstream resources.**

A coordinated entry entity is responsible for coordination and communication among all the projects and agencies in the CoC as well as those available in the community to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

A coordinated entry entity is also responsible for a formal policy and management structure, will establish and review policies and procedures, and has the management responsibility to implement the day-to-day workflow of the process.

These responsibilities can be executed separately by different entities or combined and managed by a single entity.

VII. General Provisions

A. Operating Year

The operating year of the Continuum will commence on January 1st of each calendar year and end on the 31st day of December of said calendar year.

Newly elected Blueprint Council members will be seated by ~~January 31st~~ **March 31st** of each year.

B. Annual Document Review

The Blueprint Council will review this Charter annually to ensure it remains consistent with HUD's CoC Program requirements as well as Continuum objectives and responsibilities.

C. Record Keeping

The Lead Entity is responsible for recording minutes for meetings of the Continuum and Blueprint Council meetings.

Lead Entity will also maintain updated work plans for each vertical. Annual work plans and progress tracking will be made available upon request.

D. Amendments

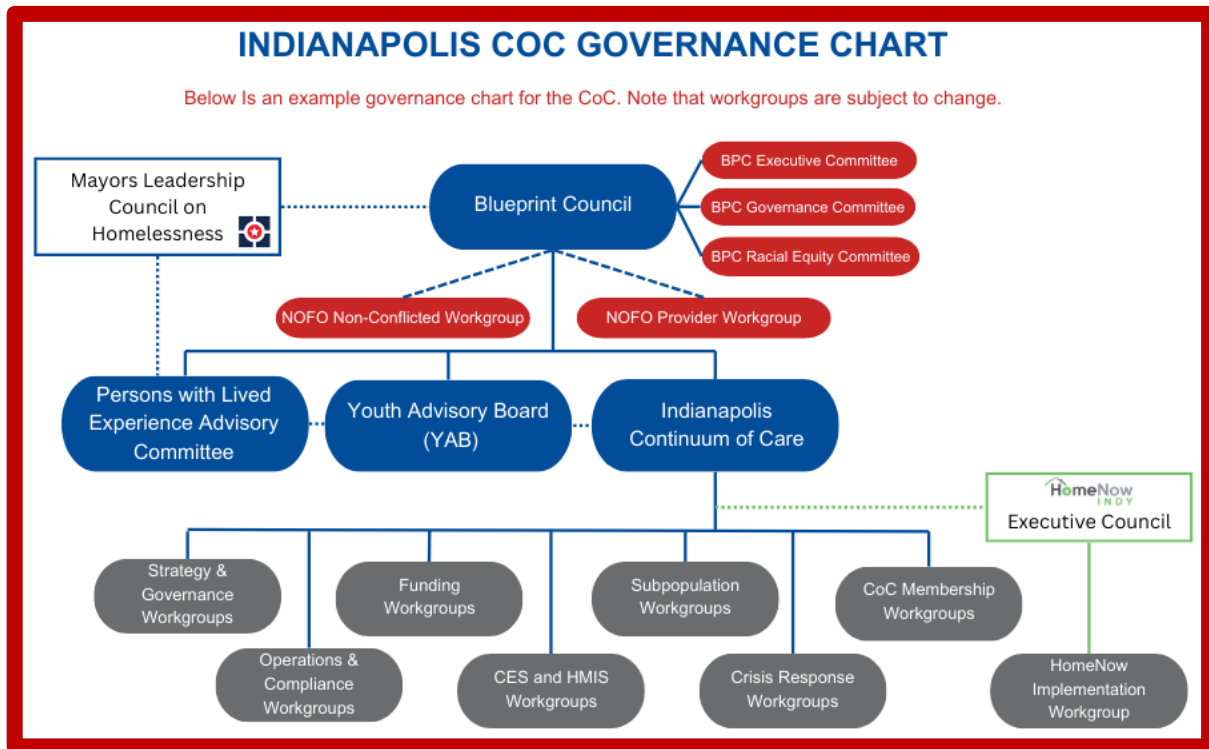
The members of the Continuum will have the power to adopt, amend, or repeal the provisions of this Governance Charter by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present at any meeting where such proposed action has been described in the notice of the meeting.

VIII. Appendix | Acronyms, Charts, Terms & Definitions

Acronyms

- **CES** Coordinated Entry System
- **CHIP** Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention
- **CoC** Continuum of Care
- **CFR** Code of Federal Regulations
- **ESG** Emergency Solutions Grants
- **HMIS** Homeless Management Information System
- **HPC** High-Performing Community
- **HUD** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **MOU** Memorandum of Understanding
- **NOFO** Notice of Funding Opportunity
- **UFA** Unified Funding Agency

Charts



[Consider adding a table of all standing workgroups including the lead and responsibilities of each]

Terms & Definitions

For additional information, see [Indianapolis Written Standards for Homelessness Assistance & Services](#).

Adequate Notice is defined as when the Support Entity:

- Delivers the content electronically to Continuum member lists.
- Posts the content to the Continuum website.
- Meets the time requirement noted in this Charter.

This further requires that:

- Members take responsibility for providing their electronic contact information to the Support Entity.

- Committees disseminate the notice to their members.
- Continuum members disseminate the notice both electronically and onsite as appropriate to its clients, staff, and volunteers.

Blueprint Council is the governing board established to act on behalf of the Continuum using the process established as a requirement by C.F.R. §578.7(a)(3) and in compliance with the conflict-of-interest requirements at §578.95(b).

The Blueprint Plan/Indianapolis Community Plan to End Homelessness is the Indianapolis community's strategic plan to prevent, reduce and end homelessness as implemented by the Continuum.

CoC Program Grantee (Recipient) as used by HUD and means an applicant that signs a grant agreement with HUD. There can be one or multiple entities that serve as a CoC Program Grantee.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) means the general and permanent rules published in the *Federal Register* by the Executive departments and agencies the U.S. federal government.

Collaborative Applicant means the eligible applicant that has been designated by the CoC to submit the annual CoC Consolidated Application for funding on behalf of the CoC. The collaborative applicant must collect and combine the required application information from all projects within the geographic area and will apply for funding for CoC planning activities. The designated Collaborative Applicant will enter into an MOU with the Continuum of Care

The Continuum (Continuum of Care) means the group organized to carry out the responsibilities required by the HUD CoC Program and that is composed of representatives of organizations, including nonprofit homeless 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, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons to the extent these groups are represented within the geographic area and are available to participate.

Consolidated Plan means the HUD-approved plan developed in accordance with 24 CFR 91.

Coordinated Entry System means a “centralized or coordinated assessment system” with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources, including mainstream resources. In consultation with the recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants program funds, the CoC is responsible for developing a policy that guides consistent operation of the centralized or coordinated assessment system, with respect to how the system will triage and address the safety needs of individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. In addition, the policy must state how the system will address the needs of individuals and families that are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Coordinated Entry System Lead means an entity is responsible for coordination and communication among all the projects and agencies in the CoC as well as those available in the community to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness. A coordinated entry entity is also responsible for a formal policy and management structure will establish and review policies and procedures and has the management responsibility to implement the day-to-day workflow of the process. These responsibilities can be executed separately by different entities or combined and managed by a single entity.

Eligible applicant means a private nonprofit organization, State, local government, or instrumentality of State and local government.

Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) means the grants provided under 24 CFR part 576.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) means the information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with the HMIS requirements prescribed by HUD.

HMIS Lead means the entity designated by the Continuum of Care in accordance with this part to operate the Continuum's HMIS on its behalf. The HMIS lead will enter into an MOU with the Continuum of Care.

Lead Agency is the coordination hub responsible for:

- Providing logistical support for Continuum responsibilities as in Interim Rule – 24 CFR §578.7.
- Convening and facilitating the Blueprint Council and key working groups.
- Monitoring strategic coherence across efforts.
- Coordinating communication within the Continuum.
- Managing web and social media presence and information distribution.
- Mobilizing planning efforts that frame future Blueprints, related community-wide plans and their revision.
- Stewarding resources for collective impact as appropriate.
- Ensuring Blueprint Council members receive all necessary information regarding changes on the local, state, and federal level that may influence or impact the Continuum of Care.

As such it acts on behalf of the Continuum and ensures that the Continuum:

- Coordinates Continuum meetings
- Scans the environment for best practices and innovations.
- Assesses the Continuum for gaps, overlaps, duplication, strategic conflicts, etc.
- Provides an annual outcomes report to the community.

Point-in-Time count means a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons carried out on one night in the last 10 calendar days of January or at such other time as required by HUD.

Private nonprofit organization means an organization:

- (1) No part of the net earnings of which inure to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual;
- (2) That has a voluntary board;
- (3) That has a functioning accounting system that is operated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, or has designated a fiscal agent that will maintain a functioning accounting system for the organization in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and
- (4) That practices nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance.

A private nonprofit organization does not include governmental organizations, such as public housing agencies.

Program participant means an individual (including an unaccompanied youth) or family who is assisted with Continuum of Care program funds.

Project means a group of eligible activities, such as HMIS costs, identified as a project in an application to HUD for Continuum of Care funds and includes a structure (or structures) that is (are) acquired, rehabilitated, constructed, or leased with assistance provided under this part or with respect to which HUD provides rental assistance or annual payments for operating costs, or supportive services under this subtitle.