

# Lee County Continuum of Care

## Governance Charter

Lee County Continuum of Care Governing Board

Original adopted by the Lee County CoC  
Governing Board on February 8, 2017


Amended August 9, 2017

Lee County CoC Board-Chair Approval:

Signature

Mathew Visaggio

Printed Name

  
~~8-9-17~~ 8-9-17

Date



**GOVERNANCE CHARTER  
OF  
THE LEE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE**



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## THE LEE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

**I. Purpose of the CoC and CoC Governing Board**

The CoC is a membership, planning, and oversight body for Lee County, Florida. The purpose of the CoC is to develop and implement strategies to help end homelessness in Lee County. The CoC coordinates the community's policies, strategies, and activities toward ending homelessness. Its work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, identifying and bridging gaps in housing and services, implementing strategic responses, educating the community on issues related to homelessness, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring CoC performance.

The CoC Governing Board provides ongoing leadership, administrative oversight, and implementation responsibility for fulfilling the purposes of the Lee County CoC, including the responsibilities set forth in Article IV of this charter. Membership on the CoC Governing board is constituted by the completion of a Continuum of Care Board Membership Application and majority favorable vote by the CoC General Membership.

**II. Purpose of the Governance Charter**

This charter shall provide the structure for the Lee County CoC and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the County, the Coalition, and the CoC Governing Board to effectively operate the CoC and:

1. Ensure that the CoC is meeting all of the responsibilities assigned to it by HUD regulations;
2. Promote the commitment to end homelessness;
3. Represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations;
4. Support persons who are homeless in their movement from homelessness to economic stability and affordable permanent housing within a supportive community, as well as to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs;
5. Ensure that the CoC is inclusive of all needs of Lee County's homeless population, including the special service and housing needs of homeless sub-populations;
6. 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; and
7. Promote funding to achieve CoC goals and objectives.

**This Charter and Policies and Procedures shall be maintained and available for review at the offices of the Coalition or the County.**

**III. Organization**

The Lee County Continuum of Care includes:

1. The Lee County Department of Human Services, the Collaborative Applicant for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) competitive funding process, and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead agency, herein after referred to as "County."
2. The Lee County Homeless Coalition, a nonprofit agency that advocates on behalf of the homeless, herein after referred to as "Coalition."
3. The CoC Governing Board, which meets and monitors regulatory compliance of the CoC.
4. The General Membership, paid or unpaid members in good standing of the Lee County Homeless Coalition. Membership include 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, veterans service providers, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, and other relevant organizations.

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IV. Responsibilities**

The following sections outline the specific characteristics and CoC responsibilities of the County, the Coalition, and the CoC Governing Board.

### **A. The County**

As the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead Agency, the County will be responsible for:

1. Consulting with recipients and sub-recipients of CoC funding to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type, monitor recipient and sub-recipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers;
2. Evaluating outcomes of projects funded under the Emergency Solutions Grants program (hereinafter referred to as “ESG”) and the CoC program, and report to HUD;
3. Consulting with recipients of ESG funds to establish and operate a centralized and coordinated assessment system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and service. After the system has been established, a policy to guide the operation of the system will be written, including how the system addresses the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers;
4. Consulting with recipients of ESG funds within the geographic area, to establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC assistance. At a minimum, these written standards must include:
  - a. Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals’ and families’ eligibility for CoC assistance;
  - b. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance;
  - c. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive rapid re-housing assistance;
  - d. Standards for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid re-housing assistance;
  - e. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance; and
  - f. 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.
5. Operating a single Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the geographic area as the eligible applicant, serving as the HMIS Lead;
6. Reviewing, revising, and approving a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS.
7. Ensuring consistent participation of recipients and sub-recipients of CoC and ESG funding in the HMIS;
8. Ensuring the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.
9. Providing information required completing the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC’s geographic area;
10. 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, as applicable; and
11. Submitting the annual CoC competitive funding application to HUD as the Collaborative Applicant.

## **B. The Coalition**

The Coalition will operate many facets of the CoC, and in that capacity, must:

1. Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least semiannually;
2. Make an invitation for new members to join publicly available within the geographic area at least annually;
3. Adopt and follow a written process to initially select the first Governing Board members to act on behalf of the CoC. The process must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the full CoC membership at least once every five years;
4. Appoint committees, subcommittees, or task forces/workgroups to address CoC objectives and goals, including but not limited to:
  - a. **By-Name List (BNL) Committee**  
*Mission:* To make, rapid, effective, and consistent client-to-housing and service matches.  
*Objectives:* Facilitate the delivery of multi-agency services for the homeless to eliminate duplication of services and maximize the use of limited resources 420.623(2)(e); Minimize the time and frustration people spend trying to find assistance; Maximize the use of available system resources, including mainstream resources, to meet client needs; Maintain a master by-name list; Review clients at monthly meetings, including particularly high risk individuals and those where the coordinated assessment tool did not reveal the full depth and/or urgency of the situation; Report on monthly housing placements.
  - b. **Coordinated Entry Committee**  
*Mission:* Evaluate client access or entry points across the CoC, along with intake & assessment process.  
*Objectives:* Develop a coordinated assessment and encourage agencies to participate; Reorient housing and service provisions to be focused on the needs of the people it serves, creating a more client-focused environment; Review and update the Coordinated Entry System training curriculum annually; Facilitate ongoing planning and stakeholder consultation in coordination with the Lee County CoC, HMIS Lead Agency, and Lee County Homeless Coalition concerning the implementation of the Coordinated Entry System through quarterly Coordinated Entry Committee meetings; Organize client satisfaction surveys regarding the Coordinated Entry, to be combined with provider surveys sent by the Coalition.
  - c. **Community Outreach & Awareness Committee**  
*Mission:* Organize and execute the annual Point in Time Count, Homeless Service Day and Veteran Stand Down, the Candlelight Vigil, and Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month  
*Objectives:* Plan, coordinate and facilitate the Homeless Service Day and Veteran Stand Down; Collect information related to the homeless population served during the Point in Time count; Collect and compile information related to the homeless population served, and report on a regular basis such information to the department (i.e., the Florida Department of Children and Families) 420.623(2)(k); Plan and facilitate Candlelight Vigil; Plan National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week activities such as the Homeless Challenge.
  - d. **Community Resources & Needs Committee**  
*Mission:* Gather and evaluate data regarding community resources and needs, and recommend actions to transform homeless services into crisis response systems that prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness to stable housing.  
*Objectives:* Inventory all local resources for the homeless, including shelter, housing, supportive services and employment 420.623(2)(c); Review and assess all services and programs in support of the homeless and identify unmet needs of the homeless 420.623(2)(d); Facilitate the delivery of multi-agency services for the homeless to eliminate duplication of services and maximize the use of limited resources 420.623(2)(e); Develop a community resource directory of services available to the homeless (i.e., the “Green Book”) 420.623(2)(g); Update the Green Book and Homeless Survival Guide biannually; Monitor and evaluate local homeless initiatives to assess their impact, to determine the adequacy of the services available, and to identify additional unmet needs of homeless persons 420.623(2)(j); Perform gaps analyses and the Homeless Needs Assessment annually; Conduct Annual Provider Survey, including the Coordinated Assessment (HMIS) survey.

**e. Research, Education & Advocacy Committee**

*Mission:* Provide and promote collaborative leadership in all levels of the community sectors to inspire and energize residents and service providers to commit to preventing and ending homelessness.

*Objectives:* Discuss local issues related to homelessness and the needs of the homeless 420.623(2)(b); Develop public education and outreach initiatives to make homeless persons aware of the services available to them 420.623(2)(h); Identify and explore new approaches to shelter care for the homeless 420.623(2)(i); Research availability of health, public safety, and transportation, supportive services, employment and housing resources and disseminate information to the CoC and the Lee County Homeless Coalition General Membership.

5. Plan for and conduct an annual point-in-time count of persons who are homeless within the geographic area that meets the following requirements:
  - a. Persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered persons who are homeless.
  - b. Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered persons who are homeless.
  - c. Other requirements established by HUD by Notice.

**C. The Coalition and County shall work together to:**

1. Collaborate with the Governing Board to develop and adopt a CoC plan that includes coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of individuals who are homeless (including unaccompanied youth) and families. At a minimum, such system encompasses the following:
  - a. Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
  - b. Shelter, housing, and supportive services;
  - c. Prevention strategies.
2. Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the geographic area.
3. Collaborate with the Governing Board on the process to receive applications for funding to the annual CoC competitive funding application to HUD, to include:
  - a. Development of priorities for funding projects;
  - b. Developing of application ranking criteria;
  - c. Development of a Ranking and Review committee to review and rank applications according to the priorities and criteria;
  - d. Approval of the full application to the annual CoC competitive funding application to HUD.

**D. The CoC Governing Board**

As the entity meeting regulatory requirements for the CoC, the Governing Board must adhere to the following:

1. The Board shall provide semi-annual reports on activity to the full CoC membership;
2. The Board shall update annually this governance charter and related Policies and Procedures relevant to this charter, which will include all procedures and policies needed to comply with CoC requirements as prescribed by HUD;
3. The Board shall review and adopt performance targets appropriate for population and program type, review monitoring reports and sub-recipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and recommend County action against poor performers;
4. The Board shall review outcomes of projects funded under the ESG program.
5. Administrative duties of the Governing Board shall be shared by the Coalition and County.

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V. Board Membership**

- A. The Board shall consist of no less than 9 and no more than 35 General Membership approved Governing Board members.
- B. The Board members shall consist of those filling permanently represented seats and those that are not.
1. The permanently represented seats shall be:
    - a. At least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “advocate,” but may also meet the required representation of another community representative, such as a business.
    - b. Lee County Department of Human Services Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “governments,” but also fills the role of “social service provider” in the event that non-permanent seat is vacated.
    - c. Lee County Homeless Coalition Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “advocate.”
    - d. Lee County Housing Authority. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “Public Housing Authority.”
    - e. Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “Public Housing Authority.”
    - f. SalusCare, Inc. Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “mental health agency,” but also fills the role of “nonprofit homeless assistance provider” and “social service provider” in the event those non-permanent seats are vacated.
    - g. Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc. (ACT) Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “victim service providers (private, nonprofit organizations whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including rape crisis centers, battered women’s shelters, domestic violence transitional housing, etc.).”
    - h. Lee Health System Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “hospitals.”
    - i. Lee County Schools Representative. This position shall be considered to fill the role of “school districts.”
  2. Other seats not permanently filled by the above mentioned representatives shall represent relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations, including:
    - a. Nonprofit homeless assistance providers;
    - b. Governments;
    - c. Faith-based organizations;
    - d. Businesses;
    - e. Social service providers;
    - f. Universities;
    - g. Affordable housing developers;
    - h. Law enforcement;
    - i. Organizations that service veterans;
- C. No organization may have more than one representative on the Board.
- D. Potential Board Members will be required to submit a Board Member application to the current Board Chair or Co-Chair prior to the February or July General Membership meeting, held in concurrence with the February and July Coalition meetings. Applications for membership will be reviewed and voted upon as specified in article VI of this charter.



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- E. All terms of Board Membership shall be 1 calendar year in length. Representatives who vacate a seat during their term will be responsible for replacing their seat with an appropriate board member. Notification of the replacement will be made to Lee County. The seat of any representative that is absent without cause for one meeting of the Board will be declared vacated. The representative who has vacated in this manner may still replace their seat with an appropriate board member.
- F. This process to select Board members shall be reviewed at least every five years.
- G. The officers, consisting of a Chair and a Co-Chair, shall be elected by the Board at the first regular meeting following the July General Membership meeting, held in concurrence with the July Coalition meeting. Nominations will be taken at the beginning of the meeting and a majority vote on the officers shall determine the officers.
1. Officers shall not be compensated for their services as such officers.
  2. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive terms.
  3. Officers are responsible to:
    - a. coordinate with the County and Coalition to review policies, procedures, and project performance;
    - b. lead CoC Governing Board Meetings in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order;
    - c. maintain board member attendance record and notify representatives that have been absent without cause for one meeting;
    - d. provider semi-annual updates to the CoC General Membership;
    - e. solicit new board members;
    - f. sign any required and/or necessary documents on behalf of the Lee County CoC Governing Board.

## VI. Meetings

- A. General Membership Meetings are held monthly in coordination with monthly Coalition meetings.
1. Available board positions will be outlined and the nomination process for the Board will be explained at each January and June General Membership meeting.
  2. A slate of potential Board members will be presented to and voted on by the CoC general membership at each February and July General Membership Meeting.
- B. CoC Governing Board Meetings are held one time per quarter, or more frequently as needed.
1. It is the intent of the CoC Governing Board to be open and transparent in all of its efforts. All CoC Governing Board meetings shall be open to any interested party. Meetings will be noticed a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting through the CoC membership email list. Such notice will include the date, time, and location of the meeting. Meeting agendas shall be sent with meeting notification. These notice and posting timeline requirements shall be waived if the business of the CoC Governing Board or its committees requires a meeting which does not permit such timely notices. In such instances, notice shall be provided as quickly as possible.
  2. Meeting minutes shall be taken by a member of the Lee County Department of Human Services Clerical Staff or his/her designee and shall be made available on the Lee County Department of Human Services website.
  3. Meeting procedures for CoC Governing Board meetings must provide an opportunity for all Board members present to be heard and for the efficient conduct of business.

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VII. Voting**

At all Board meetings, business items may be decided by arriving at a consensus. If a vote is necessary, all votes shall be by voice or ballot at the will of the members of the Board.

- A. Each representative will have one vote. No one organization shall have more than two votes.
- B. No member may vote on any item which presents a real or perceived conflict of interest.
  - 1. Representatives from CoC funded agencies must abstain from voting on any funding matters at CoC Governing Board Meetings.
  - 2. Representatives from CoC funded agencies may still vote at CoC General Membership meetings regarding potential Board Members and Officers.
- C. Action that may be taken at any meeting of the Board will be allowable in writing through email or letter only for special circumstances. The County will confer with the Board Chair and Co-Chair regarding the circumstance and to determine if an email vote is allowable in lieu of convening a special board meeting. If approved by the Board Chair and Co-Chair an email vote will be conducted.
- D. A quorum for CoC Board meetings is defined as two-thirds of the CoC Board Membership.
- E. Actions of the CoC Board will be by majority vote 50% +1 of the CoC Board Members present.

## **VIII. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest**

The Board is responsible for the development, update, and adherence to the following code of conduct and conflict of interest processes.

### **A. Conduct and Attendance**

Governing Board members, committee members, and other CoC agents and employees must exercise care, diligence, and prudence when acting on behalf of the Lee County CoC. Members must complete work undertaken on behalf of the CoC in a timely manner, attend Board and/or committee meetings, and be prepared to discuss matters presented for deliberation.

Board members must notify, via email, the County or the Board Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting. Absence without notice or explanation for one meeting within a calendar year, or repeated failure to complete work assignments, will be grounds for removal from the Board and/or committee assignments.

### **B. Conflicts of Interest**

- 1. **Rules Regarding Conflict.** Governing Board members must abide by 24 CFR Part 578.95 as noted in this section to avoid conflicts of interest and promote public confidence in the integrity of the CoC and its processes. Failure to honor these rules will be grounds for removal from the Board and any of its committees.
- 2. **Conflicts.**
  - a. *Individual conflict.* No Governing 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.

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- b. *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, or when a covered person's (see next section) objectivity in performing work with respect to any activity assisted 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 24 CFR Part 578.49(b)(2) and 24 CFR Part 578.51(g), and housing quality inspections of property under 24 CFR Part 578.75(b) that the recipient, subrecipient, or related entity owns.
- c. *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, or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to activities assisted, 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 or herself or for those with whom he or she has immediate family or business ties, during his or her tenure or during the one-year period following his or her tenure.
  2. *Exceptions.* Upon the written request of the recipient, HUD may grant an exception to the provisions of this section on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the cumulative effects of the criteria, provided that the recipient has satisfactorily met the threshold requirements:
- d. *Threshold requirements.* HUD will consider an exception only after the recipient has provided the following documentation:
- (A) Disclosure of the nature of the conflict, accompanied by a written assurance. If the recipient is a government, that there has been public disclosure of the conflict and a description of how the public disclosure was made; and if the recipient is a private nonprofit organization, that the conflict has been disclosed in accordance with their written code of conduct or other conflict-of-interest policy; and
  - (B) An opinion of the recipient's attorney that the interest for which the exception is sought would not violate State or local law, or if the subrecipient is a private nonprofit organization, the exception would not violate the organization's internal policies.
- e. *Factors to be considered for exceptions.* In determining whether to grant a requested exception after the recipient has satisfactorily met the threshold requirements, HUD must conclude that the exception will serve to further the purposes of the Continuum of Care program and the effective and efficient administration of the recipient's or subrecipient's project, taking into account the cumulative effect of the following factors, as applicable:
- (A) Whether the exception would provide a significant cost benefit or an essential degree of expertise to the program or project that would otherwise not be available;
  - (B) Whether an opportunity was provided for open competitive bidding or negotiation;
  - (C) Whether the affected person has withdrawn from his or her functions, responsibilities, or the decision-making process with respect to the specific activity in question;
  - (D) Whether the interest or benefit was present before the affected person was in the position;
  - (E) Whether undue hardship will result to the recipient, the subrecipient, or the person affected, when weighed against the public interest served by avoiding the prohibited conflict;

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- (F) Whether the person affected is a member of a group or class of persons intended to be the beneficiaries of the assisted activity, and the exception will permit such person to receive generally the same interests or benefits as are being made available or provided to the group or class; and
- (G) Any other relevant considerations.

3. **Abstention from Decision-Making.** Governing Board members must disclose if they have any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest regarding any business included in the meeting agenda. Any matter in which Governing Board members have an actual or potential conflict of interest will be decided only by a vote of disinterested individuals. If the abstention changes the quorum, additional votes may be accepted by email from disinterested members who are not present. In addition, the minutes of any meeting at which such a vote is conducted must reflect the disclosure of interested directors' and committee members' actual or potential conflicts of interest and their abstention. If email votes have been accepted, the minutes shall reflect the final vote including those votes.
4. **Annual Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement Form.** Governing Board members must sign a conflict of interest form annually, affirming that they have reviewed the conflict of interest policy and disclosing any conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties as board members.



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**Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

*I have read and am fully familiar with the Lee County Continuum of Care's Conflict of Interest policy as described in the Governance Charter. Except for the matters listed below, there is no situation in which I am involved in which my decision on behalf of the Lee County Continuum of Care may be influenced by my own gain or advantage, financial or otherwise.*

Please describe any existing or potential conflict of interest associated with any particular contract or transaction relating to your role within the Lee County Continuum of Care. If "none," please indicate in space below.

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I agree to promptly, in accordance with the requirements of the Lee County Continuum of Care Governance Charter Section VIII. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest; disclose any additional interest which may arise after the filing of this statement.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Name

