Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

Guide to CoC Governance Documents

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the duties of a Continuum of Care (CoC), in short, are to plan for the CoC, operate the CoC, and administer a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the CoC. The following documents guide how the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (TX BoS CoC) performs those functions. Click on each title header to read the document.

In compliance with the CoC Interim Rule, 24 CFR 578, the TX BoS CoC is responsible for following and annually updating the TX BoS CoC Governance Charter and policies needed to comply with the CoC Interim Rule.

HUD Guidance

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, As Amended by S. 896 Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the foundational document on federal assistance for homelessness services in the United States. In 2009, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. The HEARTH Act consolidated several programs, including the CoC program, and codified the planning process for creating a CoC. It also increased the focus on homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities. Several updates related to the HEARTH Act have been made since the Act was passed in 2009.

CoC Program Interim Rule

The CoC Program Interim Rule, written in 2012, is the current guiding regulation for HUD's CoC Program. It outlines CoC responsibilities, including planning. THN works according to the CoC Program Rule even in communities that do not have projects funded by the CoC Program.

TX BoS CoC Governance Documents

Governance Charter

The TX BoS CoC Governance Charter outlines the structure of the CoC and the roles of all parties involved in its governance—the Board, committees, local homeless coalitions (LHCs), and CEPEs. It outlines CoC activities, goals, and responsibilities, including those mandated by HUD. The Governance Charter contains links to all external CoC Policies and Procedures. The charter is a HUD requirement, and must be updated and presented to the CoC General Membership annual. It is then approved by the CoC Board. The Governance Charter was last revised and approved in January of 2021.

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Memorandum of Agreement

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) outlines the role of Texas Homeless Network (THN) as the CoC Lead Agency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead. It was last update in August of 2017, and renews automatically yearly.

CoC Written Standards for Service Delivery

This document outlines standards for how the HUD CoC Program-funded projects' housing and services that form the Housing Crisis Response System (HCRS) will be delivered within the CoC. These projects include Homelessness Prevention, Diversion, Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Inclement Weather Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. HUD requires, under the CoC Interim Rule, a written standard for how services are delivered under the CoC's HCRS. Essential elements, participant eligibility requirements, prioritization, and performance metrics are defined for each project. This document also mandates the implementation of a Coordinated Entry (CE) system for all HCRS projects, and guidelines for termination of a project. The current CoC Written Standards were updated in September of 2018, and approved by the CoC Board in February of 2019.

Additionally, the following policies are related to service delivery and the CoC Application:

- Conditional Inclusion Policy
- Ranking Policy
- Reallocation Policy
- Review and Scoring Policy

Coordinated Entry Written Standards

Coordinated Entry (CE) is a system for ensuring that agencies within a service area are working together to provide access, assessment, and appropriate referral to people experiencing homelessness. The purpose of CE is to make these systems more efficient, in order to further the goal of homelessness being rare, brief, and non-recurring. The Coordinated Entry Written Standards document was created to meet new requirements for CE that were mandated by HUD in 2017. It outlines what CE is, the goals for CE implementation in the TX BoS CoC, how communities can implement CE, eligibility requirements for a client to be entered into the system, HMIS management guidelines, and how to regularly evaluate the CE system. There are also special guidelines on how to use CE in collaboration with Victim Service providers. The CE Written Standards were last revised and approved in July of 2020.

HMIS Policies and Procedures

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a database that enables agencies across the CoC to share data about people experiencing homelessness who are served by several sources of federal funding, and is essential for running a Coordinated Entry system. It also helps give THN and HUD a better understand of the state of homelessness within the CoC. The TX BoS CoC uses an HMIS system called ClientTrack. The HMIS Policies and Procedures document outlines the roles and responsibilities of THN as the HMIS Lead Agency, and of the agencies using the HMIS system. Implementation of the HMIS system, security, client privacy,

and data management are also covered in this document. It was last revised in August of 2016. The HMIS Policies and Procedures have been updated by staff and submitted for public comment. They will be reviewed by the CoC Board for approval in November of 2021.

HMIS Data Quality Plan

THN has established standards for data collection in HMIS that meet HUD's requirements for data quality. This ensures that the data collected can be used to accurately assess the state of homelessness in a community, CoC, state, and nationwide. The HMIS Data Quality Plan establishes the required Data Elements that HMIS users must enter into the system when assessing a client, and metrics for considering that information timely, complete, accurate, and consistent. The HMIS Data Quality Plan is currently being updated by staff.

HMIS Privacy Policy

This document describes HUD's requirements for how THN as the lead agency may use protected personal information (PPI) collected in HMIS. The HMIS Privacy Policy was last revised in March 2020.