

CoC FL-500: Manatee County and Sarasota County Continuum of Care Governance Charter

The name of this Continuum of Care (CoC) shall be the Suncoast Homeless Continuum of Care and the name of this CoC Board/Council shall be the Suncoast Homeless Leadership Council, herein referred to, respectively, as “the CoC” and “the CoC Leadership Council.”

I. Purpose of the CoC and the CoC Leadership Council

The CoC is a membership body of the two-county region of HUD CoC FL-500. The counties comprising the Continuum of Care region are Sarasota and Manatee. The purpose of the CoC is to develop and implement strategies to help end homelessness in Sarasota County and Manatee County.

The CoC, operating through the CoC Leadership Council and the CoC Lead Agency, 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, securing resources to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the CoC catchment area, identifying and bridging gaps in housing and services, educating the community on homeless issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring CoC performance.

The CoC Leadership Council, as constituted in Article III of this charter, provides ongoing leadership and oversight to fulfill the purposes of the Suncoast Homeless Continuum of Care.

II. Responsibilities of the CoC

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Continuum of Care Rule (see 24 CFR 578) and the State of Florida Statutes (see F.S. 420.624), the responsibilities of the CoC include, but are not limited to, ensuring that the following requirements are met by the CoC Leadership Council and CoC Lead Agency, working in collaboration with the CoC.

A. Operating a Continuum of Care

1. Adopt and follow a written process to select a board to act on behalf of the CoC (see above mentioned CoC Leadership Council).
2. Develop, follow, and update annually this governance charter, which will include all procedures and policies needed to comply with HUD requirements and with HMIS requirements, including a code of conduct and recusal process for the CoC Leadership Council, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the CoC Leadership Council.
3. In consultation with recipients of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and CoC funds within the CoC’s geographic area, as well as other community stakeholders, establish and operate a coordinated entry system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services.
4. In consultation with recipients of ESG and CoC funds within the CoC, as well as other community stakeholders, establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC assistance.

5. Consult with funding recipients, subrecipients, and other community stakeholders to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type.
6. Educate the community on homeless issues.
7. Hold meetings of the CoC full general membership, at least semi-annually, and make a public invitation for new members at least annually.
8. Monitor performance of CoC and ESG recipients and subrecipients, as well as subrecipients of State funding for homelessness which flows through the CoC Lead Agency.
9. Evaluate the outcomes of projects funded under ESG, CoC, and State homelessness funding programs.
10. Provide technical assistance and support to underperforming projects and programs.
11. Take appropriate action against ESG-funded, CoC-funded, and State-funded projects that perform poorly.
12. Report the outcomes of ESG and CoC projects to HUD annually.
13. Report the outcomes of State-funded programs to the State of Florida as required by contract.

B. Continuum of Care Planning

1. Coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within the CoC's geographic area that meets the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. At a minimum, such a system encompasses the following:
 - a. Outreach, engagement, and assessment.
 - b. Shelter, housing, and supportive services (supportive services include, but are not limited to mental health, substance abuse, medical services).
 - c. Prevention strategies (preventing an episode of homelessness).
2. Develop strategies to end homelessness locally, based on the consideration of documented best practices, local needs and gaps, innovations in programs and service delivery, and available and potential resources.
3. Plan for and conduct an annual point-in-time count of persons experiencing homelessness within the CoC geographic area that meets HUD requirements, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing reserved for persons who are homeless, in general, and persons who are chronically homeless and veterans experiencing homelessness, specifically, as HUD requires.
4. Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the needs of people experiencing homelessness, as compared to available housing and services within the CoC geographic area.
5. Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC catchment area.
6. Consult with State and local government ESG recipients within the CoC catchment area on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and subrecipients.

C. Designate an HMIS Lead Agency to Operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

1. Designate a single HMIS for the CoC's catchment area. The HMIS may be inclusive of other CoC catchment areas.

- a. The Suncoast Homeless Continuum of Care (FL-500) acknowledges that its HMIS is a shared system with Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County (FL-519).
 - b. The current HMIS vendor is Clarity Bitfocus.
 2. Designate an eligible applicant to serve as the CoC's HMIS Lead Agency. The designation of the HMIS Lead is valid for a maximum of six years before the designation must be reviewed by the Leadership Council and renewed. Should there be a need to designate a new Lead agency, at the time of review or under any other circumstance, the CoC reserves the right to open an RFP process.
 - a. The current HMIS Lead Agency is Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, Inc.
 3. The relationship between the CoC and the HMIS Lead Agency and its responsibilities will be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding, including, but is not limited to:
 - a. Ability of the HMIS lead agency to enter into user agreements.
 - b. Development, implementation, and maintenance of HMIS Policies and Procedures.
 4. Review, revise, and approve a CoC HMIS data privacy plan, data security plan, and data quality plan in accordance with the HMIS Policies and Procedures.
 - a. The Suncoast Homeless Continuum of Care (FL-500) acknowledges that with a shared system, both CoC's will have one set of agreed upon policies and procedures and shared governing plans for data privacy, security, and quality currently being updated.
 5. Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements.
 6. Ensure consistent participation by CoC and ESG recipients and subrecipients in the HMIS.
 7. The HMIS Lead Agency may serve as a Lead Agency for more than one CoC.
 - a. Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, Inc. serves as the HMIS Lead Agency for both the Suncoast Homeless Continuum of Care (FL-500) and Pasco County (FL-519).
 8. The CoC reserves the right to charge HMIS users a fee for service. Fee information is detailed in the HMIS Policies and Procedures.
- D. Designate a Single Organization to Serve as Collaborative Applicant and CoC Lead Agency to be Responsible for Preparing Applications for Funding on Behalf of the CoC
1. Designate a single eligible Collaborative Applicant and CoC Lead Agency to collect and combine the required application information from all applicants for the annual HUD CoC funding competition. This entity also serves as the agency eligible for State of Florida CoC funding related to homelessness, including but not limited to the Challenge Grant and the State Emergency Solutions Grant. For the purposes of this Charter and related CoC documents, the terms Collaborative Applicant and CoC Lead Agency refer to the same organization, have the same meaning, and are used interchangeably.
 2. Establish the local process for applying, reviewing and prioritizing project applications for funding in the annual HUD CoC funding competition, State of Florida Challenge Grant funding, State of Florida Emergency Solutions Grant funding, and any other funding for which the CoC Lead Agency is the eligible applicant on behalf of the CoC.
 3. Establish priorities that align with local and federal policies for recommending projects for HUD CoC grant funding and all funding for which the CoC Lead Agency is the eligible applicant on behalf of the CoC.

4. Determine whether to require the CoC Lead Agency to apply for Unified Funding Agency designation from HUD.
5. Approve the final submission of applications in response to the HUD CoC Notice of Funding Availability and other funding for which the CoC Lead Agency is the eligible applicant on behalf of the CoC.
6. The relationship between the CoC and the CoC Lead Agency, and its responsibilities will be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding.

III. Members of the CoC Leadership Council

The CoC Leadership Council shall consist of no fewer than 18 members and no more than 32 members who collectively represent the population within the CoC's catchment area, with representation from diverse sectors of the community, including but not limited to: individuals with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, business community, funders, faith community, housing providers, and representatives of government. CoC Leadership Council members shall serve without compensation.

- A. Because the CoC Leadership Council serves at the behest of the CoC, the majority of Council members will be elected by the full membership of the CoC through an annual election process. In addition to the elected members, certain members of the CoC Leadership Council will be appointed.

The CoC Leadership Council as a whole is intended to be balanced between Sarasota and Manatee Counties, as well as multiple stakeholder groups.

Nine (9) Council members shall be appointed, as follows:

Category	Category Description	Seats
A1	One appointee each by the governing City or County Commission or Council of each local government jurisdiction in the CoC geographic area that is designated by HUD as an entitlement jurisdiction for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and/or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs (Note: As of July 2017, there are three such local governments – Manatee County, Sarasota County, City of Sarasota, and City of Bradenton.)	4
A2	One appointee representing a Public Housing Authority within the CoC geographic area.	1
A3	One appointee each by any nonprofit hospital serving the CoC geographic area (Note: As of July 2017, there is one such hospital – Sarasota Memorial Healthcare)	1
A4	One appointee by the CoC Funders Committee	1
A5	One appointee by the State-certified Managing Entity serving the CoC geographic area	1
A6	The CoC Lead Agency Chief Executive Officer, serving in a nonvoting ex officio capacity	1

Up to twenty-three (23) Council members shall be elected by the full CoC general membership from among the following categories:

Category	Category Description	Seats
E1	Persons with lived experience of homelessness (at least one <i>required</i>)	1
E2	Veterans Administration <i>or</i> Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) provider representative	1
E3	Law enforcement agency representative	2
E4	State-certified behavioral health provider representative	2
E5	State-certified domestic violence services provider representative	1
E6	Public school system representative	2
E7	Emergency shelter provider representative	1
E8	Rapid Re-Housing provider representative	1
E9	Permanent supportive housing provider representative	1
E10	Minor youth and/or transition-age (15-25)-youth services provider representative	1
E11	Local chamber of commerce representative	1
E12	Faith community representative	1
E13	Business community representative	2
E14	At-large	2
E15	Unaccompanied Youth with Homeless Experience (Age 16 through 24) – Member of the Youth Action Board	1
E16	LGBTQ+ individual community representative	1
E17	Senior (55+) individual representative with lived expertise in homelessness or housing insecurity	1
E18	Disability individual community representative	1

B. Additional Membership Conditions:

1. No organization may have more than one (1) representative elected to a seat on the CoC Leadership Council at any time, regardless of which seats they occupy, and regardless of whether they are staff or board members of the organization.
2. Seats E1, E16, E17, and E18 only represent themselves and the voices of their respective communities and cannot represent an organization. Should one of these seat holders have a relationship with an organization (employee, volunteer, contractor, or other), in alignment with the Conflict of Interest policy, they must remove themselves from any discussion and/or vote that impacts said organization.
3. The CoC Leadership Council is intended to be a council of leaders and decision-makers. Individuals elected or appointed to the Council in representative capacities should either have a leadership and decision-making role within their organization, and/or have the authority to represent the perspective and viewpoint of their **respective** organizations.
4. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the CoC Leadership Council is representative of both counties in the CoC geographic area.
5. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the CoC Leadership Council represents the racial, gender, and ethnic demographics of the CoC geographic area.

6. Individuals who are appointed to the CoC Leadership Council by an appointing entity serve at the pleasure of the appointing entity. Individuals appointed or elected as representatives of agencies or populations serve in those capacities and may no longer serve in those capacities if their representative status changes.

IV. Executive Committee of the CoC Leadership Council

Annually prior to October 1, the CoC Leadership Council will elect the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and two additional members of the Executive Committee. These seats will be elected by, and from, the CoC Leadership Council. In no case may the Chair be affiliated with a nonprofit homeless or housing assistance organization or the CoC Lead Agency. The outgoing Chair may also serve on the Executive Committee as Immediate Past Chair for one year following the expiration of his/her term as Chair, so long as that person is still a voting member of the CoC Leadership Council.

The CoC Leadership Council's Executive Committee shall consist therefore of: the (1) Chair, the (1) Vice Chair, the (1) Secretary, the two (2) additional Executive Committee members, and the CoC Lead Agency Chief Executive Officer serving in an ex-officio nonvoting capacity. The Executive Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the full CoC Leadership Council between meetings of the full Council, in cases of emergency or as directed by the CoC Leadership Council. A quorum for Executive Committee action is 50% of Executive Committee membership plus one person.

Executive Committee action is subject to review by the full CoC Leadership Council at its next regular meeting. Actions of the Executive Committee may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the CoC Leadership Council members present at the next regular CoC Leadership Council meeting.

A member of the CoC Leadership Council Executive Committee may serve no more than two consecutive one year terms in a given office. No organization may have more than one (1) staff or Board representative on the CoC Leadership Council Executive Committee at any time, regardless of which seats they occupy.

V. Terms of CoC Leadership Council Office

Elected members of the CoC Leadership Council shall serve two-year terms. For elected Council members, continuation on the Council is not automatic; elected Council members must be reelected to serve at the end of each term. Elected members may serve no more than three (3) sequential terms of office except for the following seats:

Category	Category Description	Seats
E2	Veterans Administration <i>or</i> Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) provider representative	1
E4	State-certified behavioral health provider representative	2
E5	State-certified domestic violence services provider representative	1
E7	Emergency shelter provider representative	1
E8	Rapid Re-Housing provider representative	1

E9	Permanent supportive housing provider representative	1
E10	Minor youth and/or transition-age (15-25)-youth services provider representative	1

Terms may be staggered to ensure continuity of CoC governance. As directed by the Governance Charter (Revised 4-12-2018) the CoC Leadership Council has established that the following elected positions will have their initial term of membership active through the date indicated in the chart below.

Category	Final Date of Initial Term	Seats
E1	September 30, 2019	1
E2	September 30, 2019	1
E3	Unfilled Position within the category will have a term ending - September 30, 2019 Filled Position within the category will have a term ending – September 30, 2020	2
E4	September 30, 2020	2
E5	September 30, 2020	1
E6	Unfilled Position within the category will have a term ending - September 30, 2019 Filled Position within the category will have a term ending – September 30, 2020	2
E7	September 30, 2019	1
E8	September 30, 2019	1
E9	September 30, 2020	1
E10	September 30, 2020	1
E11	September 30, 2019	1
E12	September 30, 2019	1
E13	Unfilled Position within the category will have a term ending - September 30, 2019 Filled Position within the category will have a term ending – September 30, 2020	2
E14	The Sarasota County position within the category will have a term ending - September 30, 2019 The Manatee County position within the category will have a term ending – September 30, 2020	2
E15	September 30, 2020	1

Persons elected to serve the unexpired term of a member who has resigned or been removed will serve out the remainder of that person's term. The person will be eligible for appointment or election for up to three subsequent sequential terms.

VI. CoC Leadership Council Member Qualifications and Responsibilities

All members of the CoC Leadership Council shall affirm a professional interest in, or personal commitment to, effectively ending homelessness in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

Each CoC Leadership Council Member must also:

1. Be a CoC member with dues paid in full.
2. Sign a Conflict of Interest disclosure statement.
3. Collaborate in good faith with other members to work toward the CoC mission to end homelessness in the Suncoast CoC.
4. Abide by the CoC governance charter, policies, and procedures.
5. If representing a certain sector of homeless services, solicit input from others in that sector who are not on the Council to ensure their voices are represented.
6. Attend and participate actively in meetings.
7. Participate in the activities of the CoC, such as committees, workgroups, the Point-in-Time Count, HMIS oversight, strategic planning, advocacy and public education efforts, and project and system performance reviews.

VII. CoC Leadership Council Processes

As described in Section III, 8-10 Council members are appointed by specific bodies. The remaining Council members are elected at an annual meeting of the CoC membership. To be elected to the Council, a CoC member must obtain a majority vote of the CoC general membership in attendance.

A. Removal and resignation from the Council

If a CoC Leadership Council member has unexcused absences of 3 or more CoC Leadership Council scheduled meetings during their current term on the CoC Leadership Council, the person will be notified by CoC Lead Agency and may be subject to corrective action by the CoC Leadership Council, including but not limited to removal from the CoC Leadership Council.

If a Council member wishes to resign, the Council member shall submit a letter of resignation to the Chair.

In the case of removal or resignation, if a seat is an appointed seat, the appointing body will be asked to appoint a replacement; if an elected seat, the seat will remain open until the next CoC Annual Meeting unless the CoC Annual Meeting is not within the following 180 days. If more than 180 days remain between the time the seat is vacated and the CoC Annual meeting, the Leadership Council will elect a new Council member who meets the requirements of CoC Leadership Council membership for the respective seat. This newly elected Council Member will serve until the next CoC Annual Meeting.

B. Conflicts of Interest

The CoC Leadership Council shall adopt a Conflict of Interest policy and disclosure requirements establishing policies, procedures, and forms to implement an effective process by which to reveal and address potential and/or actual conflicts of interest.

Any individual participating in or influencing decisions must identify actual and potential perceived conflicts of interest as they arise and comply with the letter and spirit of this policy. A conflict of interest is broadly defined to include a conflict stemming from professional employment and groups, funding or vendor relationships, and may either be personal or

professional and/or be due to those of members of their immediate family or significant others.

Disclosure should occur at the earliest possible time and, if possible, prior to the discussion of any such issues. Individuals with a conflict of interest shall abstain from both discussion and voting on any issues in which they may have a conflict. An individual with a conflict who is the CoC Leadership Council Chair shall yield that position during discussion and voting on the item. Minutes of meetings involving possible conflicts of interest shall record such disclosure, abstention, and rationale for approval.

Decisions by the CoC Leadership Council must be justifiable as being in the best interests of the CoC and the mission of the CoC to end homelessness in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

C. Decision Making, Quorum, and Proceedings at Meetings

The CoC Leadership Council shall meet at least quarterly but may meet more frequently, as needed. If the Council meets no more than quarterly, the Council's Executive Committee shall meet in the interim.

CoC Leadership Council Meetings shall be open to any interested party. Meetings will be noticed in advance through the CoC membership list, the CoC Lead Agency website, and additional reasonable processes. Such notice will include the date, time, and location of the meeting. Meeting agendas shall be posted online at a specified location and/or emailed to members.

In addition, for the CoC Annual Meeting at which Leadership Council members are elected, public notice shall be provided. Should the requirements of the State of Florida Sunshine Law be deemed relevant, the Council will comply with the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

A quorum for CoC Leadership Council meetings is defined as 50% plus one of CoC Leadership Council membership.

Conduct of CoC Leadership Council meetings shall be vested in the Chair. Meeting procedures for CoC Leadership Council meetings must provide an opportunity for all CoC Leadership Council members present to be heard and for the efficient conduct of business. The CoC Leadership Council may open the meeting to input and public comment, as deemed appropriate.

Actions of the Council will be by majority vote (50% plus one) of the CoC Leadership Council members attending either in person or participating via conference call.

Minutes of meetings shall be taken by the Secretary or his/her designee and shall be made available to interested parties, as well as posted on the website of the designated CoC Lead Agency.

D. Committees and Workgroups

The CoC Leadership Council will appoint committees, subcommittees, or workgroups to fulfill the work of the CoC. Committees may include but not be limited to:

1. Executive Committee, as described in Section IV;
2. Funders Committee;
3. HMIS, Coordinated Entry, and Housing Prioritization Committee;
4. Community Networking and Homeless Crisis Intervention System Implementation Committee; and
5. Performance Review and Project Evaluation Committee.
6. Youth Action Board Committee.

The CoC Leadership Council may also create ad-hoc committees to develop recommended solutions to the specific issue for which they were created.

A Council member shall serve as Chair for each committee. Each committee shall be staffed by the CoC Lead Agency. Committees and work groups will submit their findings and recommendations to the CoC Leadership Council for action, as appropriate.

Opportunities for participation in Committees and work groups will be made available and distributed to all CoC general members, in addition to the CoC Leadership Council

VIII. CoC General Membership

CoC general membership is open to any individual or organization that is interested or has a personal or professional commitment to effectively ending homelessness in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

To be a member in good standing, the individual or organization must have completed an application for membership and paid dues in full for the year.

Membership dues are determined annually by the CoC Leadership Council. Dues will be waived for persons experiencing homelessness.

A. CoC General Membership Recruitment and Outreach

The CoC will publish and appropriately disseminate an open invitation at least annually for persons within the CoC geographic area to join as new CoC general members. Recruitment efforts will be documented by the CoC.

The CoC will identify and address membership gaps in essential sectors, from key providers or other vital stakeholders. The CoC will recruit members to ensure that it meets all membership requirements set forth in its governance charter, including representation of certain populations and certain organizations. Specifically, outreach will be conducted to obtain membership from the following groups as they exist within the CoC's catchment area and are available to participate in the CoC:

- 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
- Organizations that serve veterans
- Individuals who are, or have been, homeless
- Other relevant organizations within the CoC's geography (which may include mental health service providers and funders, substance abuse service providers and funders, foster care, local job councils, etc.)

B. Decision Making, Quorum, and Proceedings at CoC General Membership Meetings

CoC General Membership Meetings shall be held at least twice a year, with one meeting specified as the CoC Annual Meeting at which CoC Leadership Council elections are held. CoC General Membership Meetings are in addition to regular networking meetings, ad hoc work group meetings, and committee meetings, which will occur more frequently.

CoC General Membership Meetings shall be open to any interested party. Meetings will be noticed in advance through the CoC membership list and through posting on the website of the CoC Lead Agency. Such notice will include the date, time, and location of the meeting. Meeting agendas shall be posted online at a specified location and/or emailed to members. In addition, for the annual CoC meeting at which CoC Leadership Council members are elected, public notice shall be provided. Should the requirements of the State of Florida Sunshine Law be deemed relevant to any meeting, the CoC and Council will comply with the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

Conduct of CoC meetings shall be vested in the CoC Leadership Council Chair. Meeting procedures for CoC meetings must provide an opportunity for all present to be heard and for the efficient conduct of business.

Decisions at CoC meetings will be final upon a majority vote (50% plus one) of members present. Minutes of meetings shall be taken by the Secretary or his/her designee and shall be made available to interested parties, as well as posted online.

C. Relationship between the CoC Leadership Council and the full CoC Membership

The CoC Leadership Council serves at the behest of the CoC general membership. By approving this Governance Charter, approving the MOUs between the CoC and the Lead Agency, and electing Council members, the CoC is delegating CoC responsibilities to the CoC Leadership

Council and CoC Lead Agency.

The CoC Leadership Council will keep the full CoC general membership involved by involving CoC general members in workgroups and committees, and by sharing information via email lists and any other means appropriate.

As described in Section III, the majority of the members of the CoC Leadership Council are elected by the full CoC membership present at the Annual Meeting, with each member organization or member individual present having one vote.

IX. Amendment and Review of the Governance Charter

The CoC will review, update, and approve this governance charter at least annually. Amendment of the Charter requires a majority vote of the CoC membership present at a regularly scheduled meeting of the CoC general membership. Notice of the scheduled vote on the charter amendment must be provided at least two weeks prior to that CoC membership meeting.

Attachment A: Governance Charter Review Log

The following is a history of the governance charter review, amendments, and approvals beginning in 2025.

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