

SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY

CONTINUUM OF CARE

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

FINAL April 21, 2014

SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

I. GOVERNANCE CHARTER OVERVIEW

The Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care (referred to as ‘Continuum’ or ‘CoC’) is the county-wide plan to address homelessness in Chatham County Georgia. The plan represents key stakeholder organizations and individuals utilizing a systems approach. This system organizes, funds and provides outreach, engagement, and assessment; emergency shelter; rapid re-housing; transitional housing; and permanent housing. It also includes community awareness and education, homeless/at-risk of homeless prevention strategies and efforts to reduce the overall number of homeless individuals.

The Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless (CSAH) is the lead agency for CoC plan implementation. The twenty-one (21) member Continuum of Care Board is responsible for making key strategy decisions for the CoC. CSAH in collaboration with the Continuum of Care Board serves as the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) recognized decision making body for the Continuum rule at 24 CFR 578, Subpart B, entitled “Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care.”

CSAH is the 501c3 corporate entity that allows for securing funds necessary to implement CoC Board recommendations, ensuring consistent representation on the CoC Board, providing staffing support to the CoC Board, and acting as a sounding board and representative of organizations not represented on the CoC Board at any one time given the 21 position limit. This structure is consistent with the major roles assigned to it by HUD and is consistent with the expanded responsibilities identified in the HEARTH Act of 2009.

The geographic area covered by this charter includes all of Chatham County; the charter outlines the broad organizational structure and general work of the CoC and is organized as follows:

- Purpose, Mission and Goals
- CoC Responsibilities
- Board Membership, Governance & Structure, Key Responsibilities
- Committees and Sub-Committees
 - Standards, Rating and Project Selection Committee
 - Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Committee
 - Membership and Rules Committee
 - Needs Assessment
- Collaborative Applicant Responsibilities
- HMIS Lead Responsibilities
- Procedures

The Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care designates the Collaborative Applicant as Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless. The Collaborative Applicant is an entity that a) carries out the duties specified in section 402 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, b) serves as the applicant for project sponsors who jointly submit a single application for a grant

under subtitle C in accordance with a collaborative process; and c) if the entity is a legal entity and is awarded such grant, receives such grant directly from the Secretary. Subject to oversight by CoC committees, the Collaborative Applicant shall have the authority to submit the Continuum of Care Consolidated Application and to apply for planning funds. A Unified Funding Agency is a Collaborative Applicant that receives grants from HUD and distributes them to individual recipients in the community. A Collaborative Applicant may apply to HUD to be a Unified Funding Agency or HUD may designate a Collaborative Applicant as a Unified Funding Agency after finding that the Applicant has the capacity to perform that function and would further the goal of preventing and ending homelessness. Currently, there has been no Unified Funding Agency identified or established for the local CoC.

II. PURPOSE, MISSION AND GOALS

The **purpose** of the Chatham-Savannah Continuum of Care Continuum of Care is:

To assure people who experience homelessness or are at imminent risk of homelessness will have access to community and system resources to resolve their immediate housing crisis and transition from homelessness to stability. (The CoC shall align its mission and goals with the HUD Strategic Plan and with the Federal Interagency Homeless Council's 'Opening Doors' and remain consistent with them). The CoC shall provide the Board of the Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless recommendations and research for consideration in the development and implementation of policies to end homelessness in Savannah and Chatham County.

The **mission** of the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care is to:

Work with stakeholders community-wide to design effective strategies and solutions to end homelessness in Chatham County.

The **goals** of the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care are:

1. Ending chronic homelessness by December 31, 2015,
2. Ending veteran homelessness by December 31, 2015,
3. Ending family and youth homelessness by 2020, and
4. Setting a path to ending all homelessness.

To maximize effectiveness, the CoC Board works in collaboration with other entities such as the Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council. Broader collaborations help create integrated, state and community-wide strategies and plans to prevent and end homelessness. They also assure coordination among the many regional organizations and initiatives that serve people experiencing homelessness across various Continuum of Care geographical areas.

Ending homelessness remains the Continuum's overarching goal. Other critical priorities include:

- The immediate (same day) goal is to move all unsheltered persons to shelter or an otherwise safe location (hotel/motel, etc.).
- Ensuring rapid re-housing as a best practice.

- A focus on trauma mitigation, making certain service providers immediately link persons to appropriate homeless and mainstream services. This contributes to shortened unsheltered time or shortened time in shelter.
- Moving all homeless persons to stable housing that optimizes self-sufficiency.
- Recognizing and accommodating individuals for whom transitional housing is the most appropriate intervention. In this case, the move to transitional housing will take place as quickly as possible.

The CoC Board will work to understand and address homelessness through locally- and regionally-driven, collaborative processes that include regional meetings, attendance at local coalition meetings, participation in Project Homeless Connect events, work with communities participating in the State’s Georgia Institute for Community Housing initiative, as well as diligence in meeting HUD and Federal Interagency Council goals.

III. CoC RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Operate the CoC

1. Conduct quarterly meetings of the CoC board.
2. Issue a public invitation for new board members, at least annually.
3. Adopt and follow a written process to select a CoC board.
4. Appoint additional committees, subcommittees, or workgroups.
5. Develop and follow a governance charter detailing the responsibilities of all parties.
6. Consult with recipients and sub-recipients to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type.
7. Monitor the performance of recipients and sub-recipients, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performance.
8. Evaluate and report to HUD outcomes of ESG and CoC projects.
9. Establish and operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system.
10. Establish and follow written standards for providing CoC assistance to those served.

B. Operate an HMIS

1. Maintain Pathways HMIS.
2. Support CSAH’s commitment to manage the HMIS system.
3. Monitor recipient and sub-recipient participation in HMIS.
4. Review and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans.

C. CoC Planning

1. Coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within Chatham County.
2. Conduct a Point in Time count of homeless persons annually.
3. Conduct an Annual Gaps analysis.
4. Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan.
5. Consult with ESG recipients regarding the allocation of ESG funds and the evaluation of the performance of ESG recipients.

III. Membership, Governance/Structure, Key Responsibilities

A. Board Membership

Membership on the CoC board shall consist of interested individuals and representatives from relevant organizations within Chatham County. Annually, members shall be selected to ensure diverse representation of professional skills and experience, leadership capacity, influence capacity and organizational and special interest representation. Recruitment of CoC board members shall include a varied representative group including (but not limited to):

1. Faith-Based Community (Churches, Synagogues, Mosques)
2. Neighborhood Associations (DNA, Thomas Park, Edgemore-Sackville, etc.)
3. Homeless/Formerly Homeless, Homeless Advocates
4. Healthcare Providers (Memorial, St. Joseph's Candler, GA Regional)
5. Government (City of Savannah, Chatham County, DFCS)
6. Nonprofit Community (Domestic violence, early childhood, poverty agencies, etc.)
7. Homeless Service Providers
8. Ethnic Communities
9. United Way
10. The Board of Education
11. Colleges and Universities
12. Housing Authority of Savannah
13. Veteran's Administration
14. Law Enforcement
15. Mental Health Care Providers
16. Substance Abuse Providers
17. Business Community
18. Chamber of Commerce
19. Community Development Corporations

Savannah-Chatham Continuum of Care board members are expected to:

1. Commit to the elements outlined in the job description,
2. Attend each quarterly meeting,
3. Participate in one CoC Committee,
4. Adhere to the Code of Conduct requirements,
5. Agree not to influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefit to the organization that the member represents.

The work of the Savannah-Chatham Continuum of Care board will be accomplished through a comprehensive annual process. This is done via board meetings, committee meetings, collaborative community partnerships and education/outreach to the broader Chatham County community.

Full board membership votes shall be taken as follows:

1. An initial vote for ratification of the Governance Charter,
2. An initial vote for ratification of the HMIS Charter,

3. Periodic votes to elect “at large” members of the CoC Board,
4. An initial vote to develop and implement a housing strategy for Chatham County that goes beyond HUD performance requirements,
5. At least every five (5) years, review and/or update the Governance Charter’s process for Board selection [578.7(3)].

B. CoC Governance and Structure

The process for Board selection shall take place as follows [578.7(3)]:

The CoC Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as “Board”) is the advisory body for the Savannah-Chatham County CoC. Considerations for board representation include expertise and experience in homelessness, geographic distribution, diversification of interests, provider perspective, the perspective of homeless persons, limiting/managing conflicts of interest, and other relevant factors. Board members must be relevant -- meaning that they must live or work in Chatham County and otherwise qualified as outlined in this Governance Charter and by HUD rule.

The Board shall consist of twenty-one (21) members and also include:

1. Non HUD-funded agencies
2. HUD funded agencies

This structure allows smaller agencies to participate on an equitable level with often larger agencies. It also assures all community resources are at the table when addressing homelessness.

Board appointments:

1. Must be made by the senior executive of each organization.
2. Appointments may also be made by the Membership and Rules Committee.
3. All appointments are subject to approval by the Membership and Rules Committee based upon criteria established by that Committee.

C. Key CoC Board Responsibilities:

1. Upon initial CoC Board ratification {in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead (CSAH)}, adhere to the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care Governance Charter [578.7(5)]. Exception: The CoC Board selection process outlined in the Governance Charter may be revised by a vote of full membership.
2. Publish at least 5 working days in advance the CoC board meeting agendas on the CSAH website, Continuum of Care section.
3. Full membership meetings will be held at least quarterly.
4. Appoint standing committees outlined in this Governance Charter.
5. Appoint other committees as necessary for strategic goal attainment.
6. Work in collaboration with CSAH (Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead).
7. Appoint board members as necessary to maintain complement of 21 CoC board members.

8. Act on recommendations of CoC Board Committees, subcommittees and workgroups.

Officers, Terms and Meetings:

1. From its membership, the Board shall appoint a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
2. The Chair of the Membership and Rules Committee shall serve as the Ethics Officer of the Board.
3. The Board shall be governed by this Governance Charter, and otherwise by Roberts Rules of Order.
4. Each CoC Board member may serve three-year renewable terms with a maximum term of six years. The CoC board must approve each member's renewal.
5. Board members will sign an agreement to *actively* participate on the board.
6. Board members may be terminated by the Membership and Rules Committee for reasonable cause. Reasonable cause includes, but is not limited to, the presence of a conflict of interest that cannot be mitigated or if attendance at meetings does not meet standards established by the Membership and Rules Committee.

Meetings of the Board shall be held as called by and attended by the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH). Meetings may be attended either in person or via Webinar, must be called at least five (5) working days in advance and are open to the public. Meeting notices shall be distributed to all CoC board members and posted by the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH) on the CSAH website, Continuum of Care section. Board actions shall require a majority vote from a quorum of eleven (11) members of the Board. The Chair, or the person acting as Chair, shall only vote in the event of a tie vote from other Board members.

V. COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

General Requirements for All Committees

While decisions for the work of the Continuum will be made by the CoC Board, the work of the Continuum will generally be carried out by Committees and, as appointed by Committees; Subcommittees and workgroups.

Committee members may be recommended by the CoC Board, by Committees or other interested parties. CoC subcommittees and workgroups may be made up of CoC board members and other members of the community. Committee, subcommittee and workgroups must be chaired by a CoC board member.

Formal Committee meetings must be called and attended by the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH). The Collaborative Applicant is responsible to maintain Committee records including minutes and attendance. With the exception of the Membership and Rules Committee, Committees are responsible to make actionable recommendations to the CoC Board.

The CoC Board may appoint committees as necessary to carry out the work of the

Continuum, but at a minimum, CoC Committees shall include the following Standing Committees:

1. Standards, Rating and Project Selection Committee
2. HMIS Committee
3. Membership and Rules Committee
4. Needs Assessment Committee

A. Standards, Rating and Project Selection Committee

The Standards, Rating and Project Selection Committee shall be responsible to:

- a. Develop written standards for all phases of CoC and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) programs for CoC Board approval. Written standards shall prioritize assistance and placement for persons and families who are chronically homeless, persons with disabilities, and persons with the highest number of barriers to placement and stable housing.
- b. “Design, operate and follow a collaborative process” in response to a HUD NOFA. Due diligence in its implementation shall serve as “approval for submission” of the CoC by the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH).
- c. Written standards will be developed in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH), the Continuum’s ESG entitlement jurisdiction (City of Savannah) and stakeholders. Continuum recipients and sub-recipients shall be updated annually and approved by the CoC board. Standards shall be consistent with the HUD Strategic Plan, the McKinney Vento Act, and with the USICH plan entitled “Opening Doors.”
- d. Committee shall consult with ESG entitlements on the allocation of funds and develop and implement a rating and selection system for Continuum projects.
- e. Committee shall determine gaps in housing and services.
- f. Written standards shall be established for all prevention, outreach, shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional, supportive service, and permanent supportive housing programs that serve homeless or near homeless persons in Chatham County. These standards will include criteria for ESG and CoC programs including;
 - Policies and procedures for evaluating household eligibility,
 - Policies and procedures for determining appropriate transitional, permanent supportive (including rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing), or other housing placement; and
 - Rental payment standards for the Continuum’s rapid re-housing programs.

The standards will reflect priority for project type and performance and outcome criteria. Standards include scoring criteria for project applications, renewal applications, and monitoring criteria and related policy tied to poor performance. Standards implementation is the responsibility of the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH).

Outcome evaluation results will be reported to the CoC board, HUD and other stakeholders.

- g. This Committee shall be responsible for developing the annual “point in time count,” (the annual shelter and transitional housing count methodologies).

Perceived conflicts of interest will be disclosed and mitigated through a process established by the Membership and Rules Committee.

B. Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Committee

The HMIS Committee is responsible for communicating HMIS needs of the Continuum agencies and to assist the CoC Board with management and oversight of the HMIS System. This committee works closely with the Collaborative Applicant/HMIS Lead (CSAH). Further responsibilities include:

- Make recommendations to the CoC Board regarding maintenance, training, and systems approach to data gathering.
- Review, revise and recommend changes to support privacy, security, and data quality to the CoC Board.
- Monitor the Continuum’s compliance with HMIS requirements prescribed by HUD.
- Monitor HMIS user participation throughout the Continuum.

C. Membership and Rules Committee

Unlike any of the other committees, the Membership and Rules Committee will act with a great deal of autonomy. It will provide checks and balances for the Continuum and operate with absolute authority over all matters related to:

1. Develop and operationalize the Continuum’s “Conflict of interest and recusal policy” and process, as required by HUD rule at 24 CFR 578.95 (see Exhibit A). This policy shall also include code of conduct provisions for all board members. This duty shall also include oversight of implementation, interpretations of policy, etc.
2. The exercise of judgment over the selection of CoC Board members to assure those prospective members are qualified to serve.
3. Assurance of diversity among CoC Board members.
4. Ethics and parliamentary procedure are followed while carrying out CoC board business.

The Membership and Rules Committee through an election process will have ultimate responsibility for making sure that appointments meet HUD and Continuum rules around diversity in the selection of CoC Board members so that “relevant organizations” will be included. The election process will include criteria for selection, candidate verification of criteria and appointment ratification.

The Committee shall review, and as necessary, propose revisions to the criteria for Board selection and terms, not less than once every five (5) years. Revisions to structure must be

presented to the Board for approval, and once approved, ratified by a majority vote of CoC board members.

The Membership and Rules Committee will act on complaints filed against the Continuum in accordance with 24 CFR 578.7 and 578.9 and report on all complaints and actions to the CoC Board. As necessary, Committee recommendations will be presented to the Board for mitigation.

In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant/HMIS Lead (CSAH), this Governance Charter shall be reviewed updated by the Committee and approved not less than annually by a majority vote of the CoC Board. Substantial revisions to the Governance Charter (as determined by the CoC board), require external stakeholder review in advance of a final vote.

D. Needs Assessment Committee

The Needs Assessment Committee is primarily responsible for identifying and seeking to maximize and coordinate mainstream and homeless services. This committee addresses housing resources available for homeless and near homeless persons in Chatham County. Together with the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH), the Needs Assessment Committee will develop written standards for assessment and program admissions within the Continuum.

The Committee will develop CoC board approved policy and will work to ensure that the Continuum's system of care meets the needs of homeless individuals and families. This will be done with comprehensive strategies for:

- prevention,
- outreach,
- engagement,
- assessment,
- shelter (or other short-term housing),
- transitional, and
- permanent housing in Chatham County.

Those served also include:

- persons fleeing family violence (including victims of dating or sexual assault),
- unaccompanied youth.

This work will include identification of ongoing gaps in housing and service resources, as well as barriers to housing (including barriers to housing choice) and services that limit the ability of homeless persons to access and sustain stable housing. The Committee will work in partnership with all stakeholders (including educational liaisons, family violence staff, public housing officials, Savannah-Chatham Public School System) and other local, regional, state and Federal entities in order to identify resources to fill identified gaps in housing and services.

Specific work of this Committee will center on measures that will enable the Continuum's homeless providers to:

- Implement plans within their programs that will affirmatively further fair housing,

per 24 CFR 578.93(c).

- Prevent involuntary separation of families experiencing homelessness within Chatham County.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to maximize the availability of HUD McKinney resources for housing and services for families with school age children.

The Committee will recommend (and may oversee the development of) training for Continuum service providers. It will monitor changes and proposed changes to funding programs and other public assistance at all levels (local, regional, state and Federal) for diminished programs and benefits, as well as stricter eligibility requirements that limit access to ongoing benefits that may either (1) limit the Continuum’s ability to place and serve homeless persons in stable housing, or (2) lead to further destabilization of fragile populations currently housed.

This Committee will troubleshoot system access issues on a state, local and regional basis and will coordinate/collaborate closely with the Georgia State Interagency Council on Homelessness. Working closely with the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH), the Assessment, Placement and Services Committee will be responsible for oversight related to meeting the HUD mandate for “coordinated or centralized intake and assessment”.

VI. COLLABORATIVE APPLICANT-CHATHAM-SAVANNAH AUTHORITY FOR THE HOMELESS (CSAH)

In accordance with HUD’s Continuum of Care Interim Regulations, the Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless is designated as the Collaborative Applicant. CSAH is a state-legislated authority and is the designated legal authority of the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care. At its discretion, the Collaborative Applicant shall have the authority to apply for planning funds from HUD.

CSAH shall provide comprehensive oversight of the Continuum in order to meet HUD’s rule for Continuum of Care and to assure that requirements are met for the annual HUD Continuum of Care funding competition. CSAH shall collaborate with other Georgia Continuum and provide administrative support for the CoC Board, all Continuum committees/sub-committees/workgroups, and to assure the sound operation and success of the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care. CSAH shall work to build awareness for and public/stakeholder confidence in the Continuum and will publicize its work.

Working with Continuum stakeholders through state, regional and local meetings (onsite and/or web-based), attendance at local and regional events (such as Project Homeless Connect), local coalition meetings, etc., the Collaborative Applicant (CSAH) will support the Continuum’s planning. This includes coordination and implementation “of a housing and service system within Chatham County that meets the needs of the homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families. Minimally the system encompasses the following:

- (i) Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
- (ii) Shelter, housing, and supportive services; and
- (iii) Prevention strategies” [578.5(c)].

Supporting the Continuum CSAH will;

- Provide staffing for the CoC board and its processes,
 - Maintain three permanent CoC board positions from the CSAH board,
 - Ensure strategic goals to develop and implement a housing strategy, including Fair Housing for Chatham County (that goes beyond HUD performance requirements) drives CSAH's external work.
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- Provide overall administrative support for the Continuum including:
 - maintain membership lists,
 - support CoC board recruitment campaigns,
 - call for and publish meeting times,
 - publish agendas for all relevant meetings,
 - keep CoC Board meeting minutes and committee minutes,
 - maintain the CoC webpage on the CSAH website and ensure all the work detail of the CoC is available to the general public,
 - assist the CoC board with draft policies and updates,
 - other relevant duties as negotiated with CoC board to meet compliance requirements.
 - Working with the Standards, Rating and Project Selection Committee, CSAH will seek outside funds for, and will provide staff oversight and training for the annual unsheltered point in time count and the annual shelter survey [578.7(c)(2)].
 - CSAH will collect and combine all required application information from projects within the Continuum, prepare, and submit the annual Continuum application to the Board for approval and then to HUD.
 - CSAH will meet the Continuum's obligations through the HUD rule to coordinate with the ESG Entitlement (City of Savannah), and to collaborate with and provide information to complete plans for the HUD Consolidated Planning jurisdiction (City of Savannah) within the Continuum [578.7(c)(4)].

VII. HOMELESS MANGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (HMIS) LEAD - CSAH

The Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless (CSAH) is designated as the HMIS lead agency and operates the HMIS system in Chatham County. CSAH works closely with the Continuum HMIS Committee and shall have the authority to apply for and administer Continuum funds for HMIS in accordance with all HUD requirements. CSAH shall review, revise and approve a privacy, security and data quality plan (or plans) for the Continuum's HMIS.

CSAH shall exercise required due diligence in order to assure that the Continuum's HMIS is administered in compliance with all present and future HUD requirements, and ensure consistent participation by all HUD McKinney-funded recipients and subrecipients in the Continuum. CSAH shall work with non-HUD funded agencies to maximize HMIS participation.

CSAH will work to maximize the use of HMIS data in order to meet the Continuum's obligations through the HUD rule to coordinate with the ESG Entitlement (City of Savannah) and the HUD Consolidated Planning jurisdiction (City of Savannah) within the Continuum.

VIII. PROCEDURAL PROCESSES

By numerical order the work of the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care shall proceed, as follows:

1. Initial Continuum Board Membership has been established by the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care planning group. Planning Group membership meetings were held on the following dates: January 23, February 20, March 20, April 17, May 15, 2014. Input was received by members and much of said input was incorporated into the Founding Governance Charter.
2. This Founding Governance Charter dated May 15, 2014 shall first be distributed to all planning group members and the CSAH board of directors on May 21, 2014 for review and ratification by a majority vote of each group.
3. Upon ratification of the Founding Governance Charter, CSAH shall obtain CoC Board appointments from appointing authorities. The Founding CoC Board shall consist of appointed members.
4. Once the Founding CoC Board is in place it shall conduct an initial CoC Board meeting for the sole purpose of initial training of members and appointing members to the Membership and Rules Committee.
5. The initial Membership and Rules Committee shall:
 - a. Develop criteria for all future CoC board members,
 - b. Confirm appointment of seated CoC Board members,
 - c. Secure individuals for any vacancies on the Founding CoC Board,
 - d. Ensure Founding CoC Board has a complement of twenty-one (21) members.

Upon completion of the first CoC Board meeting the Savannah-Chatham County Continuum of Care shall be operationalized in accordance with this Governance Charter.

Exhibit A – Conflict of Interest

Exhibit B – By-Laws

Exhibit C – CoC and CSAH Responsibilities

END