

CONTINUUM OF CARE Policies & Procedures

This document contains the Continuum of Care (CoC) policies that guide and inform the services provided to those experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County. The most current version of this and all CoC policies and procedures can be found at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.

2015

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I. OVERVIEW

A. CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Washtenaw County [Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)ⁱ coordinates the community's policies, strategies, and activities toward ending homelessness. CoC membership is constituted by any agency, organization, entity, or individual interested in ending homelessness in our community. In this way, we ensure broad engagement and representation from the many systems of care that homelessness touches. The CoC's work includes gathering and analyzing information to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses, educating the community on homelessness issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, measuring CoC performance, and providing coordinated oversight to [Emergency Solutions Grant \(ESG\)](#)ⁱⁱ and CoC grant recipients, both of which provide homelessness and housing programs in Washtenaw County.

CoC information and documents can be accessed at by [clicking here](#)ⁱⁱⁱ.

B. GOVERNING BODY & COMMITTEES

The Washtenaw County CoC is governed by a Board, the decision-making body of the CoC. The Board provides the CoC with the guidance and influence needed to effectively implement policies, strategies, and activities toward ending homelessness. Board membership includes formerly homeless individuals, organizations that address homelessness, local businesses, government, law enforcement, and public housing agencies. Furthermore, the CoC abides by a [Governance Charter](#)^{iv}, approved by the CoC each year.

The CoC Board appoints various committees to engage in the CoC work and make recommendations to the Board. These committees consist of:

CoC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The CoC Board has two chairpersons and a secretary, voted into leadership by the CoC Board. Co-chairs and secretary serve one-year terms.

FUNDING REVIEW TEAM (FRT): The FRT reviews program outcomes, compliance, and data quality in order to make funding recommendations to the CoC Board for the CoC and ESG annual funding competitions.

DATA & PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT COMMITTEE (DPMC): The DPMC seeks to ensure local compliance with HUD Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) data standards, improve agency and community-wide data quality, as well as use HMIS data to inform CoC program/system design and measure progress on community goals and plans to end homelessness.

HAWC OVERSIGHT & EVALUATION COMMITTEE: This committee's responsibility is to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the county's centralized intake, Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC). The committee reviews customer service evaluation results, agency provider survey results, HAWC policies and procedures, and marketing materials in order to make program improvement recommendations.

II. COORDINATED ENTRY: HOUSING ACCESS FOR WASHTENAW COUNTY (HAWC)

Washtenaw County CoC has operated a coordinated entry since 2011 called Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC). HAWC and its partners are committed to working together to utilize scarce housing and homeless resources in the most targeted and efficient manner possible.

HAWC is largely funded by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), and is a mandate of the Emergency Solutions Grant funding they provide Washtenaw County. While HAWC is operated by the Salvation Army of Washtenaw County, it follows a community process that involves partner agencies. The HAWC Partnership is composed of leadership from the single adult shelter, a family shelter, and the central intake agency. The HAWC Partnership provides a checks and balances for HAWC and seeks guidance from other service providers, including the CoC Lead Agency and the HAWC Oversight & Evaluation Committee.

To better serve the community, HAWC's customer service and service provision is monitored closely. Quarterly customer service evaluations are completed by HAWC clients. These findings are reported to the HAWC Oversight & Evaluation Committee. The Committee also conducts other evaluations in order to gauge the satisfaction of the overall community. Both of these types of evaluation findings are used by the committee to make HAWC recommendations for the consideration of the CoC Board. Reports highlighting findings are shared with the CoC at-large.

HAWC also administers financial assistance dollars for prevention and rapid rehousing. HAWC's role is listed in further detail in the Memorandum of Understanding in attachment A.

III. COMMUNITY HOUSING PRIORITIZATION (CHP) COMMITTEE

The HAWC Community Housing Prioritization (CHP) Committee is responsible for overseeing the centralized referrals process for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs. As per the CoC community application to HUD, the Washtenaw County CoC is committed to prioritizing chronically homeless individuals and families as defined by [HUD's category 1 Homeless definition](#)^v which is defined as, "an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

Committee members include both those who provide housing services to those experiencing homelessness and those who have housing stock, including: HAWC, shelter/RRH/PSH providers, Public Housing Authorities, Veterans Administration, and PORT/PATH (community mental health).

CHP Policies and Procedures can be viewed in Attachment B. A flowchart of the HAWC and CHP process is shown in Attachment C. Moreover, a document detailing frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to the CHP process is available at www.ewashtenaw.org/coc.

IV. COC PARTNERS

The CoC and its service providers understand that coordinated entry and prioritization requires community buy-in and consistency across all CoC partners. Partners include shelters, Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) providers, and other partners, such as the Veterans Administration and Public Housing Authorities. A list of specific partners is shown in the flowchart (Attachment C).

In an effort to align partner agency services with best practices, the CoC has committed to supporting and funding programs that utilize the following processes:

- **Coordinated Entry**- All partners commit to access and deliver housing and homelessness services through the coordinated entry system.
- **Housing First** – All partners, including HAWC and other housing providers agree to the principle of [Housing First](#)^{vi}. HUD defines Housing First as "[a program that] offers individuals and families experiencing homelessness immediate access to permanent affordable or supportive housing, without clinical prerequisites like completion of a course of treatment or evidence of sobriety and with a low-threshold for entry"

- **Shelter Diversion** – All partners commit to the goal of shortening shelter stays by utilizing the Housing First approach and by diverting from shelter whenever possible and safe for the client.
- **Rapid Re-Housing**- All partners agree to embrace rapid re-housing programming administered utilizing [national best practices](#)^{vii}.
- **HMIS**- All partners commit to real-time HMIS data entry, except those agencies that are exempt, such as domestic violence shelters. Further, all partners agree to routinely review and correct HMIS data quality issues and monitor outcome performance.
- **Community Housing Prioritization**- Partners agree that all clients with housing needs begin with HAWC and then are referred to the appropriate housing resources based on acuity and vulnerability in accordance with HUD Notice CPD-14-012: *Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness and Other Vulnerable Homeless Persons in Permanent Supportive Housing and Recordkeeping Requirements for Documenting Chronic Homeless Status* (attachment D). All unit placements are completed through the Community Housing Prioritization Process, detailed in attachment B.
- **Staff training**: All community partners agree to attend shared trainings and community meetings.

To comply with funding regulations, each agency must follow the regulations provided by HUD and/or MSHDA, depending on the agency’s funding source. This includes, but is not limited to, mandatory documentation, program eligibility, grant administration, reporting requirements, and match/leverage requirements. Links to regulations are as follows:

[Continuum of Care \(HUD\)](#)^{viii}

[Emergency Solutions Grant \(HUD\)](#)^{ix}

[Emergency Solutions Grant \(MSHDA\)](#)^x

In additional, an FAQ document for HUD CoC recipients and sub recipients can be accessed at www.housingaccess.net. This document helps to address frequently asked questions and details responses as they are implemented within the Washtenaw County CoC.

For any questions or comments on the Washtenaw County CoC policies and procedures, visit www.ewashtenaw.org/coc or contact Laura Urteaga-Fuentes at urteagal@ewashtenaw.org or 734.544.3052.

ⁱ <https://www.onecpd.info/coc/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.hudexchange.info/esg/>

ⁱⁱⁱ www.ewashtenaw.org/coc

^{iv} <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/human-services/continuum-of-care/coc-documents-2014/coc-governance-charter>

^v https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf

^{vi} http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing_First_Checklist_FINAL.pdf

^{vii} <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf>

^{viii} <https://www.hudexchange.info/coc/coc-program-law-regulations-and-notices/>

^{ix} <https://www.hudexchange.info/esg/esg-law-regulations-and-notices>

^x <http://www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-5515-241719--,00.html>