

# By-laws of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board

## ARTICLE I

### **Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

## ARTICLE II

### **Mission and Vision**

**Section 1. Mission** The Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is dedicated to eliminating homelessness and ensuring that a comprehensive system of care and services is in place to respond to the needs of homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness in Schenectady County.

**Section 2. Vision** Every person in our community has safe, affordable, stable and appropriate housing.

## ARTICLE III

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is to

1. serve as the Continuum of Care for Schenectady County as described in the HEARTH Act and its implementing regulations.
2. operate the Continuum of Care in compliance with HUD regulations.
3. promote inter-agency coordination and collaboration.
4. maintain a knowledge base of the current system and its efforts to reduce homelessness in Schenectady County.
5. identify unmet needs and gaps in services.
6. develop and implement a short- and long-term plan to address the identified unmet needs and gaps in services.
7. coordinate, review and approve applications for HUD funding.

8. establish and evaluate targeted goals for system improvement on an annual basis.
9. increase community awareness of the causes of homelessness, the needs of homeless people and ways to end homelessness.
10. maintain the HMIS data base.
11. serve in an advisory capacity to local governmental units in Schenectady County.

### **Written Standards & Policies and Procedures**

The HSPB will annually review both the *Written Standards* and the *Policies and Procedures* for funded programs in compliance with HUD regulations. The HSPB Board will be responsible for ensuring the *Written Standards* as well as the *Policies and Procedures* include the following:

1. Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals' and families' eligibility for assistance;
2. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive transitional housing assistance;
3. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive rapid rehousing assistance;
4. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance; and
5. There will be an annual review of policies and procedures to guide the operation of the coordinated entry system to comply with any requirements established by HUD by Notice.
6. Standards that determine what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving assistance;
7. Standards will be reviewed in consultation with Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area.

8. If the HSPB is designated a high-performing community, written standards as well as policies and procedures will be developed in accordance with HUD regulations.

### **Coordinated Entry System**

The HSPB will operate a coordinated entry system that will provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services. It is designed to be easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. The system is designed to coordinate program participation intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. The HSPB Board will oversee the implementation of the coordinated entry system. The funded Coordinated Entry agencies will report on the implementation of the Coordinated Entry system at each meeting of the Board of Directors and the membership.

### **Article IV**

#### **General Structure**

The Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board consists of

1. a broad-based membership of individuals and others committed to the mission and purpose as set forth in Article V,
2. a Board of Directors as set forth in Article VI elected by the membership and charged with the overall direction, management and implementation of the purposes, goals, objectives and business of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board,
3. officers, as set forth in Article VII, selected by the Board of Directors and
4. four standing committees (Governance, Data, Continuum of Care, and Strategic Planning, Systems) and ad hoc committees as set forth in Article VIII established to assist the Board of Directors in carrying out its work.

**ARTICLE V**  
**MEMBERS**

**Section 1. Membership** Membership in the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board is open to individuals and representatives of relevant public and private organizations committed to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board. Relevant individuals and public and private organizations shall include but not be limited to nonprofit at risk and homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, legal services providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, nonprofit affordable housing developers, law enforcement, veteran service organizations, the Department of Social Services, Emergency Solutions Grant Program providers, and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

**Section 2. Public Invitation** At least annually, the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board will issue a public invitation for new members.

**Section 3. Application/Renewal Process** Members must apply for or renew their membership annually by submitting an application in writing to the Governance Committee.

In the application a member shall state her support for the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board and indicate knowledge of and willingness to comply with the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board Code of Conduct, including the disclosure of any conflict of interest.

The applicant must also state whether she is acting in an individual or representative capacity. If the applicant is acting in a representative capacity, she must state the name of the organization she is representing and submit authorization from that organization of her representative capacity. An organization may designate one alternate to appear as a voting representative of that organization, such alternate must also complete an application for membership.

The Governance Committee shall determine whether applications for membership have been received from organizations which are in essence part of the same organization as demonstrated by corporate structure, mission and purpose, services provided, separate and independent Boards of Directors, organizational leadership and control, and fiscal policy making independence. Such organizations may be members, but only one of such organizations, as determined by the Governance Committee, shall be permitted to vote and run for the Board of Directors.

Applications/Renewals of membership will be reviewed and approved by the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee will forward approved applications to the Secretary. Copies of Applicants and Renewals will also be held by the Collaborative Applicant.

**Section 4 Dues and Fees** Annual dues and other fees may be established by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer, in writing, shall notify any member two months in arrears that failure to pay arrears within one month of the date of notification will result in removal from membership. Removal or resignation shall not relieve a member from liability for dues and fees incurred prior to resignation or removal. Payment of outstanding dues and fees shall be required for reinstatement to membership.

Homeless or formerly homeless individual members shall not be required to pay dues or other fees.

**Section 5. Removal of Members** Members shall be removed for failure to pay dues and fees after notification by the Treasurer as required in Section 4.

Members also may be removed by the Board of Directors for acting contrary to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board, violating the Code of Conduct, failing to disclose a conflict of interest or for other good cause after written notice and an opportunity to be heard before the Board of Directors.

The Secretary shall notify members in writing of their removal and any action necessary for reinstatement, as determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 6. Voting** Members are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting for the Board of Directors. Members are also entitled to vote on amendments to these bylaws.

Each individual member shall have one vote.

Representatives of organizations shall have one vote to be cast by the person or the alternate designated in the organization's application, unless the organization has been determined by the Governance Committee to be ineligible to vote because it is a part of the same organization as another voting member.

Members who fail to attend 3 out of any 4 consecutive membership meetings without excuse or who are in arrears in dues and fees shall not be permitted to vote.

**Section 7. Resignation** Resignations shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Regular Meetings** The regular meetings of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board will be held semiannually in November and March. A more frequent regular meeting schedule may be established by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Annual Meeting** The regular meeting held on the second Thursday in November shall be known as the annual meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing the Board of Directors, receiving reports from the Board of Directors, the Secretary, the Treasurer and all committees, the annual review of these by-laws and other policies and procedures as required by HUD and for any other business that may arise.

**Section 3. Special Meetings** Special meetings may be called by the Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors, or a majority of the Board of Directors, or on written request by ten members of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board. The purpose of the meeting shall be specified in the call for the meeting, which shall be sent to all members at least three days before the meeting.

**Section 4. Quorum** Fifty one percent of the members of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 5. Agendas/Minutes** Agendas and draft minutes shall be distributed electronically at least one week in advance.

**Section 6. Attendance** In person attendance is required. Excuses for nonattendance shall be given to the Secretary prior to the meeting. Member agency staff may attend but not vote, unless authorized pursuant to the application approval process set forth in Article III.

## ARTICLE VII

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1. Purpose and Powers of Board of Directors** The Board of Directors shall conduct any and all business necessary to facilitate the implementation of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board mission, vision and purpose, including setting goals, objectives and plans for the achievement of the purpose and mission, implementing HUD Continuum of Care requirements, including the development and operation of the Coordinated Entry system, designing and implementing a collaborative process for the development, submission and approval of the annual application for HUD funding, determining the applicants, the collaborative applicant or unified funding agency and approving the HUD Continuum of Care funding application, designating the HMIS lead, and ensuring that planning, systems development and implementation and program performance reviews occur in a collaborative and constructive manner.

The Board of Directors shall have overall responsibility for the operation of the Schenectady County Continuum of Care.

The Board of Directors shall determine annual dues and fees as may be required to accomplish the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

The Board of Directors shall report to the membership at the annual membership meeting, or more frequently as determined by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors may appoint special, ad hoc committees composed of members and nonmembers of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board.

The Board of Directors may appoint its own members to participate in standing committees.

**Section 2. Board of Directors Composition** The Board of Directors shall be composed of an odd number of nine to thirteen members elected by a majority vote of the members at the Annual Meeting.

A majority of the Board of Directors shall be composed of member representatives of organizations funded in any one of the last two years of Continuum of Care funding or organizations whose mission, purpose and work are to provide housing and/or services to at risk or homeless households.

The Board of Directors shall also be representative of relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations in Schenectady County, such as persons with substance abuse, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, the chronically homeless, families with children, unaccompanied youth, the seriously mentally ill, and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and shall include one homeless or formerly homeless person.

If the Governance Committee has determined that two or more organizations have applied for membership which are in essence part of the same organization as demonstrated by corporate structure, mission and purpose, services provided, separate and independent Boards of Directors, organizational leadership and control, and fiscal policy making independence, only one representative of such organizations, as determined by the Governance Committee, shall be permitted to run for and serve on the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors takes office at the close of the Annual Meeting.

**Section 3. Terms of Office** Members of the Board of Directors serve two-year staggered terms of office. In the first two years following the adoption of these bylaws, four and up to



six members shall serve a one-year term and five and up to seven members shall serve a two-year term.

**Section 4. Board of Director Meetings** The Board of Directors shall meet and conduct the business of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board at least four times per year in the months between the semiannual membership meetings.

**Section 5. Special Meetings of the Board of Directors** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by any four members of the Board. The purpose of the meeting shall be specified in the call for the meeting, which shall be sent to all Board members in writing at least three days before the meeting.

**Section 6. Quorum** A majority of the Board of Director membership who are present shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 7. Attendance** Board members may attend Board of Directors meetings in person or telephonically. The Board of Directors may vote electronically by email.

**Section 8. Vacancies and Removal** Any Board member who wishes to resign shall submit her resignation to the Recording Secretary who shall present it to the Board.

A Board member may be removed by a two thirds vote of the Board for acting contrary to the mission and purpose of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board, violating the Code of Conduct, failing to disclose a conflict of interest or for other good cause, after notice and an opportunity to be heard.

A Board Member shall be automatically removed for missing 3 meetings of the Board of Directors without excuse in any 12-month period.

At the meeting following a resignation or removal of a Board member, a majority of the Board shall appoint a member of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board to complete the remainder of the Board of Directors member's term, following the requirements of Board of Directors membership set forth in Section 2 of this Article.

All Members sign a Code of Ethics annually.

## ARTICLE VIII

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS**

**Section 1. Officers and Duties** The officers of the Board of Directors of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board shall be two Co-Chairpersons, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

**Section 2. Selection Process** At the Board meeting following the Annual Meeting, four members of the Board shall be selected by majority vote to serve as Co-chairs of the Board of Directors, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

**Section 3. Terms of Office** Officers shall serve two-year staggered terms with the exception of the first two years following the adoption of these By-Laws. In the first two years following the adoption of these By-Laws, one of the Co-Chairpersons and the Treasurer shall serve one-year terms.

If an Officer resigns or is removed pursuant to Article VII, Section 8, the Board of Directors shall appoint a member of the Board to fill the unexpired term.

#### **Section 4. Officer Responsibilities**

The Co-Chairpersons shall set the agenda for and preside over membership and board meetings and ensure that the board and the standing and other committees are pursuing the mission and purpose and fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Treasurer shall collect dues and fees and shall act as a fiduciary with respect to such funds to be placed in a bank account opened by a willing member agency, requiring two signatures for disbursement of said funds, in amounts and for purposes to be established by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall make a full financial report to the membership at the Annual Meeting and to the Board of Directors at every meeting of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall also report immediately to the Board if a member is more than two months in arrears on any dues and fees.

The Secretary, in coordination with the Collaborative Applicant, shall serve as the custodian of the records of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board including all agendas, minutes, and reports of all committee and Board meetings and activities, keep the membership roll, take minutes of Board and membership meetings, keep records of committee and Board membership and activities, maintain mailing/contact lists and ensure timely and proper agenda distribution. The Secretary shall also maintain up to date membership records available at all times to members. The Secretary shall serve on the Governance Committee.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **COMMITTEES**

**Section 1. Standing/Special Committees** There will be 4 Standing Committees as set forth in this Article and other special, ad hoc, committees as may be established by the Board of Directors pursuant to Article VII Section 1. All such Committees shall follow the directives of and report to the Board of Directors and also report to the members at the Annual Meeting of the membership, unless directed to report otherwise by the Board of Directors. All Committees shall review and report to the Board of Directors on all matters assigned to them by these by-laws and the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Governance Committee** A Governance Committee comprised of the Secretary and 3 other members appointed by and of the Board of Directors shall develop and present a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting, shall conduct reviews of and recommend, as needed, actions to be taken with respect to these bylaws and governance charter related issues, shall ensure compliance with HUD requirements regarding membership and Board of Directors composition, and oversee the membership application and renewal process.

The Governance Committee shall conduct a nominations and election process that ensures that the Board of Directors is composed of representatives as set forth in Article VII Section 2.

**Section 3. Data Committee** A Data Committee shall review and prepare plans and recommendations for review and approval by the Board of Directors and carry out action plans approved by the Board of Directors with respect to community wide data including but not limited to HMIS, PIT, YWCA, school districts, City Mission and DSS data to identify needs, trends, gaps, and emerging issues, the designation of the HMIS and oversight of the operation of the HMIS.

**Section 4. Continuum of Care Committee** A Continuum of Care Committee shall review and prepare plans and recommendations for review and approval by the Board of Directors and carry out action plans approved by the Board of Directors with respect to HUD related tasks, including those related to funded agencies and the funding application, including the PIT count, performance of funded agencies, review of aggregate data of funded agencies with respect to performance targets and the funding application.

**Section 5. Systems Committee.** Systems Committee is responsible for engaging, collaborating, and developing communication protocols with system partners to reduce homelessness and/or improve transitions from other systems of care, such as health, mental health, foster care, criminal justice, first responders, and the Department of Social Services.

**Section 6. Committee Membership** The Board of Directors shall appoint members and nonmembers of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board as needed to serve on all standing and special, ad hoc committees in such number and for appropriate terms as necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Committees. The Board may remove or add committee members as it sees fit.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **PARLIMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws and any

special rules of order the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board may adopt.

**ARTICLE XI**

**AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

The Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Schenectady County Homeless Services Planning Board membership by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular membership meeting.