

Ulster County Continuum of Care UCCOC GOVERNANCE CHARTER

Article I- Name and Purpose

Section 1.1: Name of the Organization

Ulster County Continuum of Care (UCCOC)

Section 1.2: Geography of UCCOC

The UCCOC will encompass Ulster County within the State of New York which includes 20 towns, 3 villages and the City of Kingston. There are two Consolidated Plan Jurisdictions, Ulster County and the City of Kingston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Section 1.3 Mission and Value Statement

To coordinate a community-wide commitment to end homelessness in Ulster County through a community-based process of identifying needs and building/sustaining a system of housing and services that addresses those needs with a system-wide response to end homelessness with a focus on Racial Equity and Social Justice.

The UCCOC is committed to creating a homelessness response system that centers on customer voice with the goal of ensuring the CoC focuses on responding to customer needs and eliminating inequities. The values of racial equity and centering voices of people with lived experience are integral to the work of the CoC.

The CoC (through the Board and its committees) will endeavor to make funding, program and policy actions that are aligned with its stated values. These values will guide the actions of all CoC bodies established under this Charter:

- Recommendations and decisions will reflect the diversity of people experiencing homelessness.
- The CoC will promote equity for communities of color disproportionality affected by homelessness.
- Decisions and recommendations made by the CoC will reflect a cross-sector and regional approach.
- The CoC will operate with transparency and inclusiveness.
- The CoC will promote shared responsibility and accountability.
- CoC leadership will establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities and communicate decisions clearly and widely.

Section 1.4 Vision

The mission of the CoC is to end homelessness in Ulster County by utilizing strategies that are equitable and inclusive to all.

Section 1.5 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Ulster County Continuum of Care is to:

1. Serve as the Continuum of Care as described in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act and implementing regulations.
2. Operate the Continuum of Care in compliance with HUD regulations noted in 24 CFR Subpart B 578.7 in such a manner as to promote inter-agency coordination and collaboration.
3. Facilitate dialogue and strategic action among public, private and non- profit sectors to prevent and end homelessness and promote affordable housing.
4. Consult and coordinate with the State of New York, the County and City of Kingston and other municipalities in developing, updating and implementing their plans and programs to reduce and end homelessness and to provide an effective system of care and services responsive to the needs of at risk and homeless individuals and families.
5. Consult and coordinate with governmental entities in developing, updating and implementing their Consolidated Plans, including the establishment of goals, objectives and action steps for reducing and ending homelessness, the allocation of Emergency Solutions Grant program funds, the development of performance standards, outcomes and evaluations of projects and activities assisted by Emergency Solutions Grant program and the development of funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of HMIS.
6. Conduct all business necessary to implement the mission and purposes of the UCCOC, including conducting an annual review of these Bylaws.

Section 1.6: Guiding Principles

1. Inclusive Structure: UCCOC is committed to considering and learning from the full range of opinions from individuals, members or entities with knowledge of homelessness or an interest in preventing or ending homelessness and who reflects all demographics of the population in Ulster County. An open invitation process shall govern all board and membership meetings which shall be open to the public and be inclusive of homeless and formerly homeless individuals, 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, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals interested in working to end and prevent homelessness in Ulster County.
2. Transparent Process: An open invitations process shall govern all board, membership and committee meetings which shall be open to the public. Notification of meetings shall be sent to the entire membership.
3. Strategic Resource Allocation: The UCCOC will undertake comprehensive review of projects by applying approved scoring criteria and selection priorities when ranking and rating projects for funding,
4. Maximize Mainstream Resources: UCCOC will proactively seek and provide information to all stakeholders on mainstream resources and funding opportunities as well as coordinating with State and local agencies.
5. Leverage Resources through Partnerships: UCCOC will partner with other stakeholders that have resources that could be used to serve persons experiencing homelessness.
6. Low Barrier and Housing First Models: UCCOC funded programs will have as few barriers to housing as possible and follow a harm reduction philosophy. Prioritizing rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing based on the needs and desires of the individual(s) without

participation requirements or preconditions.

Section 1.7 Written Standards and Policies and Procedures

Written Standards for CoC funded programs will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure compliance with HUD regulations, that do not discriminate against any segment of the population, and confirm inclusion of 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;
5. An Emergency Transfer Plan* for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking;
6. Policies and procedures which guide the operation of the Coordinated Entry (CE) System to comply with requirements established by HUD by Notice.
7. Standards for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid rehousing assistance;
8. Standards are reviewed in consultation with the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program priorities (updated every five years) within the geographic area

*UCCOC's Emergency Transfer Plan is clearly outlined in the CoC's Written Standards and meets the requirements under 24 CFR 578.99(j)(8). (24 CFR 578.7(d)).

Section 1.8 Coordinated Entry System

The UCCOC will contain within its projects a Coordinated Entry (CE) System. The CE Project Lead will ensure the CE system 1) includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool; 2) multiple ways for homeless households to gain access to CE; and 3) is well advertised. Coordinated Entry is designed to organize program participation intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. The UCCOC Board will oversee the operation of the CE system.

Article II - Membership

Section 2.1 Role of Members

Members of the UCCOC shall assist in the responsibility to carry out the duties of the UCCOC including fulfilling the mission, purpose, scope, and guiding principles of the UCCOC. Duties include the election of members to the governing board and annual updates to this Governance Charter. Members are encouraged to attend quarterly membership meetings, participate on committees and collaborate with and support other member agency efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

Section 2.2 Membership

Membership in the UCCOC is open to the community within the Ulster County area. Relevant individuals and public and private organizations shall include 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, other health care providers and related entities, universities, nonprofit affordable housing developers, law enforcement, veteran service organizations, Department of Social Services, employment and workforce agencies, and persons with lived experience of homelessness.

Section 2.3 Membership Meetings

The UCCOC will hold quarterly membership meetings with one of the meetings designated as the Annual Meeting. The UCCOC will issue a public invitation annually for new members to join. At the annual meeting membership will approve bylaw revisions annually, written standards as needed; approve the slate of board of directors; and updates to community initiatives regarding services and housing. UCCOC's membership year shall begin on the date of the Annual membership meeting and continue until the date of the next Annual membership meeting. Should an application be submitted after the Annual meeting, that membership will be valid through the remainder of the membership year.

UCCOC's members or prospective members can complete their annual membership application on the CARES of NY, Inc. website. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

In addition to the membership application, the Diversity Assessment Tool will be administered to new members as a part of their onboarding. All members will be requested to retake the Diversity Assessment Tool annually. Completion is strongly encouraged but will not impact membership standing.

Section 2.4: Special Meetings

Membership meetings may be called outside a regularly scheduled meeting to discuss a specific topic that is time sensitive by the UCCOC Board Chair or at the request of six member agencies. Only topics listed in the email invitation will be discussed. All membership will be notified via e-mail with at least three days' notice.

Section 2.5 Voting

A quorum of Fifty Percent (50%) of member agencies or individuals must be present to vote.

1. A quorum is the minimum number of the member agencies who must be present at a properly called meeting to conduct business in the name of the group. A quorum is defined as 50% of voting agencies and/or individuals.
2. Each agency or organization shall delegate a single representative entitled to one vote in the affairs of UCCOC.
3. motion will be passed by a majority vote of those that cast votes.
4. The Membership may host an electronic meeting and vote (i.e. via email, telephone, or video conference) to pass a motion during the meeting. A meeting conducted by electronic means must be a deliberative assembly, providing, at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous communications among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. Motions may be proposed via email and may be voted on by membership via email/virtual ballot, providing, at a minimum, conditions for members to participate in communications and engage in debate before casting a vote (such as an email thread).

Membership will vote on items such as, but not limited to: the annual board slate, updates to by-laws and written standards and other business as needed.

Section 2.6 Support Letter Approval

Agencies seeking support letters for housing related projects or funding are required to present to the Board and applications should reflect the needs of the community. The board will vote to approve the Support Letter request and membership will be invited to presentations on new project proposals. If the support letter request comes from a project that has previously been approved by the board and there is not another competing project, the Chair may execute the support letter request without a formal board vote. Both board and membership will be notified that the support letter request was issued at the next scheduled meeting.

Article III Board of Directors

Section 3.1. Role of the Board of Directors

The UCCOC Board of Directors will consist of 14-20 members. Members shall be individuals vested with decision-making authority from the Ulster County departments of Social Services, Mental Health/Health, and Planning or their designees. The remaining board members will be elected “at large” and include persons with lived experience. At large members are determined by the General Membership at the Annual Meeting and must reflect the Inclusive Structure delineated in this Charter’s Guiding Principles (Section 1.6 (1)). One board member may represent the interests of more than one homeless subpopulation, and the Board must represent all subpopulations with the UCCOC to the extent that someone is available and willing to represent that subpopulation on the board.

In addition to the duties of membership, members of the Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring operational, planning, and oversight functions.

On behalf of the UCCOC, the Directors will:

1. Adopt, follow, and update annually, this Governance Charter, and in consultation with the membership, at least once every five years, ensure the processes detailed in this Charter are reviewed, updated, and approved by the membership.
2. Adopt, as needed, policy statements guiding operational aspects of the UCCOC such as a code of conduct or programmatic management and performance.
3. Build membership and issue public invitations for new members; hold regular meetings of the membership and appoint committees, sub-committees, and work groups as needed; ensure transparency of board activities for members; and foster effective membership participation.
4. Implement Continuum of Care planning including coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within Ulster County that meets the needs of the homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families. At a minimum, such system encompasses (i) outreach, engagement, and assessment; (ii) shelter, housing, and supportive services; (iii) prevention strategies.
5. Plan for and conduct, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of homeless persons within Ulster County consistent with criteria established by HUD. The board will approve the PIT methodology for

the Point in Time count.

6. Provide information required to complete the City of Kingston and Ulster County's Consolidated Plans.
7. Prepare an application for funds; design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve the submission of applications in response to a NOFA published by HUD; establish priorities for funding; de8. Select the collaborative applicant annually to ensure compliance with HEARTH Act, collect and combine the required application information from all projects within Ulster County and apply for funding for CoC planned activities.
9. Retain all responsibilities of the UCCOC, even if it designates one or more eligible applicants other than itself to apply for funds on behalf of the UCCOC, including approving the application. Responsibilities extend to approval of the CoC Program application.
10. Ensure a HMIS system is developed and formally documented; that a formal agreement has been executed that outlines the management processes, responsibilities, decision-making structures, and oversight of HMIS , and HMIS designated lead regularly monitors compliance with requirements as prescribed by HUD; and review, revise, and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans annually.
11. Consult with recipients of UCCOC funding from HUD – and the sub-recipients – to establish performance targets appropriate for the population and program type, monitor performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers.

Section 3.2

Members of the Board of Directors shall serve two-year staggered terms of office except for the first term. There are no term limits.

Section 3.3

Eligibility and Declaration of Candidacy

1. The UCCoC Board of Directors consists of 14- 20 members. The Collaborative Applicant will send out a Board Interest Form to members of the CoC or other community members prior to the annual meeting. The Bord Interest Form will also be available on the CoC's Website. The board will review all nominations and contact interested parties. Additionally, board nominations may be made on the floor when the slate is presented to membership. The written process to select the Board will be reviewed, updated, and approved by the CoC at least once every 5 years.
2. Candidates should be individuals who live or work in the CoC geographic area; should be knowledgeable about the Continuum of Care and the community. The Board will make efforts to ensure the level of diversity on the board is proportional to the population served. The CoC shall identify any candidates recommended by member/s and identify the member/s making such recommendation/s.
3. Nominations will be reviewed by the Board, prior to creating the slate of directors. After any nominations from the floor, the slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3.4 Voting on the Board

1. The proposed Board of Directors slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.
2. This slate will be provided to the members one week prior to the Annual Meeting with all other materials for said meeting.
3. If the Board receives more nominations than seats available a verbal/virtual vote will be conducted by the Collaborative Applicant

Section 3.5: Voting Rights of Board Members

A quorum of Fifty Percent (50%) of duly seated board members must be present to vote.

1. A quorum is the minimum number of the Board of Directors who must be present at a properly called meeting to conduct business in the name of the group. A quorum is defined as 50% of voting members.
2. Each agency or organization shall delegate a single representative entitled to one vote in the affairs of UCCOC.
3. The Board may host an electronic meeting and vote (i.e. via email, telephone, or video conference) to pass a motion during the meeting. A meeting conducted by electronic means must be a deliberative assembly, providing, at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous communications among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. Motions may be proposed via email and may be voted on by membership via email/virtual ballot, providing, at a minimum, conditions for members to participate in communications and engage in debate before casting a vote (such as an email thread).
4. Board of Directors will have the right to vote on items such as, but not limited to:
 - Approval of Rankings and Tiering for New and Renewal Projects
 - Approval to submit the Annual CoC Application

Section 3.6 Board Vacancies

Vacancies on the Board of Directors which occur prior to the expiration of the normal term shall be filled by appointment from the Chair following a discussion with seated board members. The Chair may choose to leave the seat vacant until the next election.

Section 3.7 Board Member Eligibility

Any individual member is eligible to be elected as an Officer or Executive Board Member, with respect to ensuring the broadest possible representation. There will be an Executive Committee of the Board of Directors comprised with both Board of Directors and may include at large members.

Section 3.8 CoC Officers

The Chair or Vice Chair shall: preside at all meetings of UCCOC and of the Board of Directors; execute in the name of UCCOC all agreements entered by it and see that these agreements are properly carried out; consult with Chairs of committees and partner with the Collaborative Applicant to ensure that committee deliverables are carried out and perform other duties as directed by UCCOC. The Vice Chair shall, during the absence of the Chair, perform the duties of the Chair; and shall perform such other duties as UCCOC shall direct.

Section 3.9 Board of Directors Officers

Membership will elect the Chair and Vice Chair as part of the board slate approval at the annual meeting. The Chair, Vice Chair and Collaborative Applicant will be responsible for setting the agenda for monthly Board of Directors meetings and General Membership meetings and will be responsible for conducting the annual meeting. The Board will elect a secretary and two

additional board members between nominations from the floor to form the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will provide decision making and guidance to the UCCOC sub-committee chairs ahead of or between regular meetings. Board terms will be for two years, with no limit on the number of terms served.

Section 3.10 Voting

1. Elections shall be conducted during the Board meeting that follows the Annual Meeting and officers will immediately assume their elected role.
2. There are no proxy votes for officer elections.
3. The Collaborative Applicant shall assist the CoC Board as needed in conducting the election of board officers.
4. Nominations may come from the floor at the Board meeting prior to the vote.
5. Results of the election shall be immediately reported to the Board, then shared with full Membership at the next scheduled meeting.

Section 3.11 Election Disputes

Any disputes regarding the election process shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors to be addressed at the next scheduled meeting.

Section 3.12 Officer Position Removal

In the event an Officer is unable to regularly attend board meetings that officer should resign the position as not fulfilling their duties or that demonstrate a conflict of interest or resigns, the Board of Directors will determine a plan of action, which may include directing the Board to hold an election to replace the vacated position.

Section 3.1 Board of Director Meetings

The Board of Directors will meet a minimum of six times per year. Sub-Committees will set meeting schedules requisite to meet the task.

Section 3.12 Board of Directors Commitment

Consistent with the governance role of the Board of Directors as enumerated in Section 3.1, it is vital that board members function as active participants. Each member of the Board of Directors will select a committee on which to participate. Members are expected to attend board meetings and be informed about the matters scheduled to come before them. If a board member has three or more consecutive absences, he or she may be approached by an officer of the Board to discuss attendance issues and, as may be indicated, replacement on the board.

Article IV- Committees

Committees shall be comprised of members and/or directors of the UCCOC. Committees may be ad hoc to serve interim, sporadic needs. Standing committees shall be appointed to address

recurrent needs and long-term goals.

Data Committee:

The Data Committee will review quarterly Data Quality and HMIS reports, System Performance, data from the Regional Racial Justice Committee, Data from the Coordinated Entry project and outside data provided by committee members to identify housing and homeless system gaps as well as inform local planning efforts.

The committee chair will report to the Board on both local trends, priority populations reflected on the Coordinated Entry list and HUD System Performance measures. The Board and Membership will develop actionable measures to improve CoC performance and address local homeless issues. The Data Committee Chair or designee will serve on the CoCs Coordinated Entry Committee.

Rank and Review Committee: The Rank and Review Committee is responsible for the development, review and operation of the Continuum of Care’s annual Rank and Review process. The Committee is expected to:

1. Develop a Rank and Review tool that focuses on annually prioritizing projects to best address community needs,
2. Reviewing and Scoring all CoC funded new and renewal projects including interviews with project applicants as needed,
3. Recommend to the Board for Approval: The new and renewal Rank and Review tool, scoring of applications, approvals, or any denials of HUD funded programs, and use information from both the tool and interviews to draft and present the Board with a final ranking of projects to be included in that annual HUD submission.
4. Review Monitoring reports from the Collaborative Applicant for both CoC and ESG funded programs. Any findings will be brought to the board.

Coordinated Entry Committee: HUD requires that all CoC’s implement coordinated entry systems within their communities based upon required core elements including access, assessment, prioritization, and referral. The CE committee works with the Coordinated Entry lead (CARES) and provides oversight of CE implementation. Tasks include working with CE Lead to ensure the system meets HUD’s core requirements. Update policy and procedures annually as recommended by the CE Lead. Hold monthly case conferences to review vacancies and by-name wait list.

(4) Work with the CE Lead to evaluate the performance of CE.

Point in Time (PIT) Committee: the members of the PIT annual homeless count are responsible for coordinating and implementing an unsheltered homeless count that covers the entire CoC geography in compliance with HUD regulations.

Racial Justice Committee: The Racial Justice Committee serves as a primary resource and catalyst for the work of racial justice within the homeless service system within the Ulster County CoC. Members support, engage and uphold the work of local Continuum of Care in coordination with the Regional Racial Justice Advisory Committee coordinated through the Collaborative Applicant.

The focus of the racial justice committee will be on long term, structural and systemic change. By tending on issues within the homeless service system to address and ensure the dignity and rights of people of color who are socially, politically, or economically disadvantaged, and to maximize opportunities to assist and work with organizations, coalitions, and neighborhood groups to promote our common interests.

Committee members are responsible to attend regional racial justice meetings, participate in one of the regional work groups (data, outreach or training), meet quarterly as a local CoC task force, and provide education to membership as well as advise the board on equity issues.

Article V Conflict of Interest Statement and Code of Conduct

Section 4.1 – Conflict of Interest/Recusal Process

UCCC is committed to maintaining the highest standard of conduct in carrying out its fiduciary duties of care, obedience, and loyalty in pursuit of UCCC’s mission. The Board must be aware of and fully abide by the bylaws and policies of UCCC. The purpose of this Committee’s conflict of interest policy is to protect UCCC’s interests whenever contemplating entering a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of the committee Member/Member Agency that might result in a possible excess benefit transaction.

1. UCCC must disclose all interest(s) that may result in a conflict. Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made to permit an impartial and objective determination. Every member of the CoC with the authority to vote must, on an annual basis, file in writing a conflict-of-interest statement with the Collaborative Applicant (CARES, Inc.).
2. For any transaction in which a Committee member or agency member has a financial or personal interest; the conflicted member shall recuse and abstain from participating in the Committee’s discussion and vote on the issue.
3. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention and rationale for approval.

The Conflict of Interest form (Attachment 1) will be signed by Board members annually.

Section 4.2 – Code of Conduct

UCCC members shall annually agree to a Code of Conduct, as noted in the CoC Membership Application.

Appendix 1 Conflict of Interest

Continuum of Care Representatives Conflict of Interest Statement

Representatives from relevant organizations within a geographic area shall establish a Continuum of Care for the geographic area to carry out the duties of this part. Relevant organizations include 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, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

The Continuum of Care must establish a Board to act on behalf of the Continuum using the process established as a requirement by § 578.7(a)(3) and must comply with the Conflict-of-Interest requirements at § 578.95(b). Board members will be required to sign the following Conflict of Interest statement on an annual basis, and/or at the start of their next term.

Conflicts of Interest:

(a) Procurement. For the procurement of property (goods, supplies, or equipment) and services, the recipient and its subrecipients must comply with the standards of conduct and conflict-of-interest requirements under 2 CFR 200.317 and 200.318.

(b) Continuum of Care board members. No Continuum of Care board member may participate in decision making concerning direct financial benefits to the organization that the member represents, or any personal benefits that financial decisions made by the CoC board may yield. Board members shall identify potential conflicts of interest that may arise at the start of each term year.

Please describe any potential conflicts of interest you anticipate in your role as a board member for the Ulster County Continuum of Care (UCCoC) in the space below:

Conflict of Interest Statement

Check one in this section

- I am not a recipient/subrecipient of CoC Funding. I will not influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning other financial benefits to the organization I represent.*
- I am a recipient/sub recipient of CoC Funding. I will not influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization I represent.*

Check this box if you agree to the following statement

- I will recuse myself from voting on matters that may be deemed as conflicts of interest for myself or my organization. *

**Board members can participate in discussion and vote on issues related to CoC funding, including Ranking & Tiering, the Rank & Review process, and other funding decisions related to the CoC. Board members should recuse themselves from votes that pertain directly and/or solely to the organization they represent. If a board member is unsure whether to recuse themselves from a vote, they should consult with the rest of the board before voting.*

Name

Organization

Signature

Date