

Columbia Greene Housing Coalition Continuum of Care

Bylaws

Approved 12.5.2025

I. Mission Statement

The Columbia Greene Housing Coalition Continuum of Care (CGHC CoC) is a two-county collaborative which partners with local community members and organizations to end homelessness by ensuring that an effective system of care and services is in place for Columbia and Greene Counties.

II. Continuum of Care Purpose and Responsibilities

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 Counties of Columbia and Greene 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 CGHC, including conducting an annual review of these bylaws.

III. Membership

A. Executive Board

1. The CGHC CoC general membership elects an Executive Board to act on their behalf
2. The CGHC CoC general Membership will vote on proposed Executive Board members at any meeting of the Membership. (Section IV B.4)

3. The CGHC CoC will review, update and approve the Executive Board selection process once every five (5) years. {HEARTH 578.7(3)}
4. The CGHC CoC Executive Board will be comprised of at least five members (including a representative of each funded CoC project and a Community Representative with lived experience, who will serve two-year terms with no term limits
5. "In addition to the established Board members as described above, in order to be in compliance with 2025 HUD requirements, there will be six (6) special Executive Board members appointed with the following affiliation(s): three (3) shall be elected public officials, holding office on the date of selection, or their representatives, b. two (2) will represent the law enforcement community, and one (1) will be a business representative.
6. An established Board member who fits one of these categories will be considered acceptable in meeting the 2025 HUD requirement.
7. When applicable, a single board member, may represent more than one of the affiliations noted in items 4 & 5.
8. CGHC CoC Executive Board will elect three officers who will serve two-year terms with no term limits. They will be titled: Co-Chairs (one from each county) and Secretary/Treasurer.
9. *Officer responsibilities:*
 - a. Co-Chairs will share the responsibility to call, set agendas for, and preside over all CGHC CoC Executive Board and general Membership meetings.
 - b. In coordination with the Collaborative Applicant, the Secretary/Treasurer will be responsible for providing notice of any meetings and taking and distributing minutes. The Secretary/Treasurer will track Executive Board and general Membership attendance.
10. The CGHC CoC Executive Board will review the general Membership and endeavor to ensure that all relevant community partners and geographic areas covered by the Columbia Greene Housing Coalition are equitably represented. {HEARTH 578.5(a)}
11. The CGHC CoC Executive Board will include a community representative who has lived experience {HEARTH 578.5(b)2}
12. Mid-term Board vacancies will be appointed from the general Membership as recommended by one or more remaining Executive Board members and approved by a simple majority of the Executive Board to fulfill the unexpired term.
13. The Executive Board shall consider any candidates recommended as nominees by general members of the CoC. Any member nomination will be presented at the annual membership meeting.

B. General Membership

1. The CGHC CoC will be open to individuals and organizations committed to developing

affordable housing options and residential supports to end homelessness in Columbia and Greene Counties. Representation by relevant organizations and projects which serve homeless subpopulations will be encouraged {HEARTH 578.5(b) (1)}.

2. At least annually, the CGHC CoC will issue a public invitation for new members. {HEARTH 578.7(a) (2)} The CGHC CoC will endeavor to include members of all relevant organizations in Columbia and Greene Counties, including but not limited to interested individuals, nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, housing advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve veterans, and homeless or formerly homeless individuals. {Hearth Requirement 578.5(a)}.

3. Member organizations may designate a representative and an alternate to represent their interests. However, each organization will only have a single vote.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Executive Board

1. The CGHC CoC Executive Board will hold full Membership meetings with published agendas, at least semi-annually {HEARTH 578.7(a)(1)}.

2. The Executive Board will be responsible for identifying a Collaborative Applicant, which must be approved annually by the general Membership.

3. The Executive Board will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Coordinated Entry system, a Point-in-Time Count (completed at least bi-annually) and an annual gaps analysis {HEARTH 578.7(c)}.

4. The Executive Board will maintain and annually review the Code of Conduct which will include a recusal process for the Executive Board, its Chairs and any person acting on its behalf to ensure that no Board member will participate in or influence any decision concerning grant awards or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents. Organizational conflict will also be included in the Code of Conduct. {HEARTH 578.7(5); 578.95(b)(c)}

5. The Executive Board will appoint committees, subcommittees and workgroups as needed to assist the CGHC CoC in coordinating efforts among Coalition members to fulfill all CoC responsibilities. {HEARTH 578.7(4)}

6. Committees, subcommittees, and workgroups shall include at least one Executive Board

member.

7. Board members may be terminated for violating the Code of Conduct.

B. General Membership

1. Members may request to submit agenda items for discussion at any regularly scheduled CGHC CoC Executive Board meeting.

2. Members may attend regularly scheduled CGHC CoC Executive Board meetings.

3. Committees, subcommittees and workgroups appointed by the Executive Board shall meet as needed or as determined by the Executive Board.

4. Members are encouraged to attend the semi-annual Membership meetings to stay informed, and to review and vote on the Executive Board slate of members, officers, and the annual budget.

5. Members will be responsible for reviewing the Executive Board selection process once every five (5) years.

V. Committees

Columbia Greene Housing Coalition Continuum of Care standing/permanent Committee include:

- *Ranking & Monitoring Committee:* Responsible for the design, operation, and implementation of a collaborative process for the development of funding applications, including funding priorities. The committee is responsible for ensuring the monitoring is done and knowing results of monitoring. Application ranking recommendations will be provided to the CoC Executive Board and shared with the general Membership. Performance evaluations will be used as a tool to identify and respond to project specific strengths and needs. Performance evaluations will be shared with the Executive Board. Membership is open to CoC members. To avoid conflict of interest, only non-funded agency representatives are permitted to rank and review CoC funding applications.
- *HMIS/PIT:* Responsible for the electronic management of data and the required Point-in-Time Survey Instrument, deployment and data collection.
- *Education/Outreach:* Responsible for engaging and educating local community members and elected officials about homelessness and the need for permanent housing opportunities with a mechanism to routinely access community feedback on the issue.
- *Coordinated Entry Committee:* Responsible for operating the Coordinated Entry System.

The Committees will meet at least bi-annually or as determined by the CGHC CoC Executive Board. The CGHC CoC Executive Board shall appoint additional committees as needed. Each Committee will have a representative from the CGHC CoC Executive Board. Committee meeting summaries will be prepared, by the Collaborative Applicant and shared with the Executive Board and general Membership at the following meetings.

VI. Meetings

A. Executive Board

1. The CGHC CoC Executive Board will meet at least quarterly. A meeting agenda will be prepared and distributed prior to each meeting, along with a draft of the minutes from the prior meeting and committee meeting summaries. Any changes to meeting dates or times will be announced in advance and members will be notified by e-mail.
2. Members of the Executive Board or any committee designated thereby may participate in a meeting of the board or such committee by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment or by electronic video screen communication so long as all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time allowing each director to participate in all matters, including, without limitation, the ability to propose, object to, and vote upon a specific action to be taken. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting for purposes of determining a quorum.

3. Voting as a Board

a. A quorum is the minimum number of Board members who must be present at a properly called meeting to conduct business in the name of the group. A quorum is defined as 40% of the seated Board members.

b. Each Board member will have one vote.

c. A motion will be passed by a majority of votes cast. by Board members

d. Members may not vote by proxy.

e. Action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Executive Board may be taken by an Action without a meeting if consent setting forth the action so taken is signed by all the directors entitled to vote with respect to the matter. Such consent may be written or electronic. If written, the consent must be executed by the director in writing by any reasonable means, including, but not limited to, facsimile signature. If electronic, the transmission of consent must be sent by electronic mail from which it can reasonably be determined that the transmission was authorized by the director. Action taken without a meeting is effective when the last director signs the consent unless the consent specifies a later date. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the Executive Board.

f. The Board will have the right/ responsibility to vote on items such as, but not limited to:

- Annual Officer Slate
- Rank & Review Application Tiering
- Submission of Annual Application to HUD

g. Election of Executive Board Officers shall be conducted during the Board meeting that follow's the Annual Meeting and officers will immediately assume their elected role.

4. Members may participate in a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment or by electronic video screen communication so long as all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time allowing each director to participate in all matters, including, without limitation, the ability to propose, object to, and vote upon a specific action to be taken. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting for purposes of determining a quorum.

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B. General Membership

1. Full CGHC CoC Membership meetings will be held semi-annually. The Fall meeting will be considered the annual Membership meeting.

2. The proposed Executive Board slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. This slate will be provided to the members one week prior to the Annual Meeting with all other materials for said meeting. In the case of an electronic or hybrid meeting, virtual votes will be cast.
3. Members may participate in a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment or by electronic video screen communication so long as all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time allowing each director to participate in all matters, including, without limitation, the ability to propose, object to, and vote upon a specific action to be taken. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting for purposes of determining a quorum.
4. Meeting agendas will be prepared and distributed prior to the CGHC CoC Membership meetings, along with draft minutes from the previous meeting.
5. A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present at a properly called meeting to conduct business in the name of the group. A quorum is defined as 40% of the membership.
6. Each agency or organization shall delegate a single representative or alternate entitled to one vote in the affairs of CGHC.
7. The CGHC may host a vote via email to pass a motion when necessary. Votes taken outside of a formal meeting must be unanimous among all seated members for the issue being approved.
8. General Membership will approve the following at the Annual Meeting:
 - CGHC CoC budget,
 - Executive Board slate
 - Revisions to the by-laws and written standards
9. A motion will be passed by a majority of votes cast by members.

CGHC's membership year shall begin on the first day of January and continue through the last day of December within that calendar year. Should an application be submitted after the first of January, that membership will be valid through the last day of December.

VII. Membership & Dues

1. Membership applications and dues will be collected up to and include the date of the Annual Membership meeting.
2. CGHC CoC will fulfill its local match for planning and related activities through annual dues paid by member organizations and individuals. Organizations with multiple members will pay a single annual dues.
3. Dues will be established based on CGHC CoC approved expenses as detailed in the annual budget.

4. The Executive Board will make recommendations to the CGHC CoC Membership regarding the dues amount and how dues will be used. The Membership will vote on the recommendations.
5. The CGHC CoC will make accommodation for those individuals or organizations unable to pay all or part of the dues amount agreed upon by the Membership. The individual or organization requesting accommodation or exemption must apply to the Executive Board for consideration.
6. An agency designated by the CoC will be responsible to invoice and account for dues fees.

VIII CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT

Conflict of Interest/Recusal Process

Conflict of Interest CGHC is committed to maintaining the highest standard of conduct in carrying out its fiduciary duties of care, obedience and loyalty in pursuit of CGHC's mission. The Executive Board members of the CoC must be aware of and fully abide by the bylaws and policies of CGHC. The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect CGHC's interests whenever contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of the member or member agency that might result in a possible excess benefit transaction.

CGHC must disclose all interest(s) that may result in a conflict. Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made so as to permit an impartial and objective determination. Every Executive Board 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.).

For any transaction in which a 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.

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.

Code of Conduct Form (Attachment 2) shall be signed annually, as noted in the CoC Membership Application.

X. Dissolution

1. The CGHC CoC Executive Board may authorize dissolution only after a special meeting for that purpose in which a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the general Membership approves dissolution.
2. Upon dissolution or other termination of the CGHC CoC, all remaining assets of CGHC CoC, after payment in full of all its debts, obligations, and necessary final expenses, or after the making of adequate provision therefore, shall be distributed to such tax-exempt organizations

with purposes similar to those of CGHC CoC, as shall be chosen by the then existing Executive Board of CGHC CoC.

XI. Planning, Written Standards, Policies and Procedures, Coordinated Entry

Overseen by the Board, the CGHC CoC will annually review the process for the following:

A. HMIS

1. Designation of a single Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the geographic area;
2. Designate an eligible applicant to manage the CGHC CoC HMIS, which will be known as the HMIS lead;
3. Review, revise and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS;
4. Ensure consistent participation of recipients and sub recipients in the HMIS; and
5. Ensure HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.

B. Planning

1. Coordinating the implementation of the housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of the homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families. Specifically focusing on outreach, engagement, assessment, shelter, housing, supportive services, and prevention strategies.
2. Planning for and conducting a bi-annual point-in-time count of homeless persons within the geographic area that meets the following requirements:
 - i. Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered homeless persons.
 - ii. Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered homeless persons.
 - iii. Other requirements established by HUD by Notice.
3. Conducting an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the CGHC CoC geographic area;
4. Providing information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) covered by the CGHC CoC geographic area;
5. Consulting with the State, local governments and program recipients within the CGHC CoC's geographic area on housing fund allocations, including but not limited to Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) with input on performance evaluation and reporting requirements for recipients and subrecipients.

C. Coordinated Entry System

The CGHC 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) is easily accessible to homeless households; and 3) is well advertised. Coordinated Entry is designed to organize program participation intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. The CGHC Executive Board will oversee the operation of the CE system.

D. Written Standards and Policies & Procedures

The CGHC CoC will review the Written Standards for funded programs in compliance with HUD regulations. The CGHC CoC Board will be responsible for ensuring the Written Standards 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 Continuum of Care transitional housing assistance;
3. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive Continuum of Care rapid rehousing assistance;
4. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive permanent supportive housing assistance;
5. Policies and procedures for the Emergency Transfer Plan for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking;
6. Policies and procedures for identifying, encouraging and supporting individuals and families to achieve housing stability and self-sufficiency;
7. Standards that determine what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid rehousing assistance;
8. Standards will be reviewed in consultation with Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area.
9. If the CGHC CoC is designated a high-performing community, Written Standards will be developed in accordance with HUD regulations.
10. And any other standards and/or regulations as required by HUD.

D. Applying for HUD Funds

The CGHC CoC Executive Board with the appropriate committees will:

1. Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve the submission of applications in response to NOFA's published by HUD;
2. Establish priorities for funding projects;

3. Determine if one application for funding will be submitted for all CGHC CoC projects or if more than one application will be submitted;
 - i. If more than one application will be submitted, CGHC CoC will designate an eligible applicant to be the Collaborative Applicant who will collect and combine the required application information from all applicants and for all projects that the CGHC CoC has selected for funding. The Collaborative Applicant will also apply for Continuum of Care planning activities. If the Continuum is an eligible applicant, it may designate itself;
 - ii. If only one application will be submitted, that applicant will be the Collaborative Applicant and will collect and combine the required application information from all CGHC CoC projects that the Continuum has selected for funding and apply for Continuum of Care planning activities;
4. Retain all of its responsibilities, even if it designates one or more eligible applicants other than itself to apply for funds on behalf of the Continuum. This includes approving the Continuum of Care application.
5. Establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type, monitor recipient and subrecipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers.