



**Contra Costa Council on Homelessness**  
**By-Laws**  
**(Rules for the Conduct of Business)**

Approved and Adopted by the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness on:

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Approved and Adopted by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors on: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Article I. Name of the Continuum of Care and the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness**

### Section 1. CONTRA COSTA CONTINUUM OF CARE

The name of this Continuum of Care (CoC) shall be the Contra Costa Continuum of Care, herein referred to as the Continuum of Care or the CoC. The Contra Costa Continuum of Care includes the full general membership of all community members committed to our guiding principle.

### Section 2. CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

The name of this Continuum of Care's governing body shall be the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness, herein referred to as the Council on Homelessness or the Council. The Council is comprised of the members serving in the seats outlined in Article IV. Council Membership and Committees.

## **Article II. Overview and Mission**

The Council is committed to the Housing First approach, and has established this Guiding Principle:

*"Homelessness is first a housing issue, and necessary supports and services are critical to help people remain housed. Our system must be nimble and flexible enough to respond through the shared responsibility, accountability, and transparency of the community."*

The CoC has identified two goals and three strategies for the implementation of this Guiding Principle:

- Goal 1: Permanent Housing
- Goal 2: Prevention
- Strategy 1: Coordinated Assessment
- Strategy 2: Performance Standards
- Strategy 3: Communication

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness, serving at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors, provides advice and input on the operations of homeless services, program operations, and program development efforts in Contra Costa County. Further, the Council on Homelessness establishes the local process for applying, reviewing and prioritizing project applications for funding in HUD Homeless Assistance Grant Competitions, including the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program. The Council will review, update, and approve the Council on Homelessness Governance Charter at least annually and will update these By-Laws when appropriate.

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness provides a forum for the Continuum of Care to communicate about the implementation of strategies to prevent and end homelessness. The purpose of the forum is to educate the community on homeless issues, and advocate on federal, state, county and city policy issues that affect people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

### **Article III. Council on Homelessness Responsibilities**

#### **Section 1. FUNCTIONS AND TASKS**

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness is the planning body that coordinates the community's policies, strategies, and activities toward preventing and ending homelessness in Contra Costa County, California. It is a regional, year-round collective planning body of stakeholders ranging from non-profit service providers to local governmental entities. The Council's work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses, educating the community on homeless issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring performance as related to serving the homeless population in Contra Costa County.

The responsibilities of the Council include the development and implementation of all procedures and policies needed to comply with the HEARTH Act and relevant HUD regulations and guidance (see C.F.R §578.7). The Council must consult with recipients of CoC and ESG funds within Contra Costa County and other homeless service providers in order to coordinate care.

Further, it is the role of the Council to provide oversight and take direct action in the following areas:

#### **A. COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS PLANNING**

##### **1. Policies and Procedures**

- i. Develop, follow, and update these By-Laws.
- ii. Develop, follow, and update annually the Council on Homelessness Governance Charter.
- iii. Vote on any action items that arise at Council on Homelessness meetings.

- iv. Review, rank, and recommend CoC and ESG Program Applications for submission to the Board of Supervisors, the CA Department of Housing and Community Development, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- 2. Systems Development
  - i. Implement a coordinated entry system focusing on quality assurance, access, interdependency between programs and interdependency between programs and clients, and addressing barriers.
  - ii. Develop and implement written standards for providing CoC assistance, including written policies and procedures as required by HUD.
- 3. Data, Analysis, and Evaluation
  - i. Point-in-Time Count

Plan for and conduct, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of homeless persons within Contra Costa County that meets HUD requirements, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing reserved for homeless persons, in general, and chronically homeless persons and veterans, specifically, as HUD requires.
  - ii. HMIS

Design and operate the Contra Costa County Homeless Management Information System (Contra Costa HMIS) Project. Designate a single HMIS lead agency. Ensure consistent participation in HMIS by recipients and sub-recipients, and that the HMIS is administered pursuant to all HUD requirements. In compliance with Sub-part B and the HMIS requirements, the HMIS Governance Charter, Policies and Procedures, and the Data Security, Quality, and Client Data and Privacy Plans outline specific details as to the relationship between the Council on Homelessness and the collaborative applicant, namely the Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Homeless Program. These By-Laws fully incorporate those standards, policies, and plans.

iii. Performance Measurement

Develop performance measures that can be used to inform a variety of tasks, including CoC Program competition project scoring and reporting; determining how federal, state, and local funds should be utilized; and, creating a responsive system that provides constructive support promoting efficiency by analyzing and responding to gaps in housing and service interventions offered in the system. Additionally, the Council will:

1. Set targets that focus on real change, and are meaningful (relevant to the desired impact), measurable, realistic (adaptable and flexible), and regularly assessed.
  2. Consult with recipients and sub-recipients, evaluate their performance, and take action against poor performers.
- iv. Conduct an initial comprehensive assessment in coordination with ESG Program, and then annually conduct a gaps analysis of the needs of homeless people, as compared to available housing and services within Contra Costa County.
- v. Facilitate and support the reporting of outcomes of CoC and ESG programs to HUD in coordination with the Collaborative Applicant.

B. FUNDING COORDINATION

1. Facilitate and support the development of funds and resources for homeless services in Contra Costa County in partnership with local jurisdictions located in Contra Costa County. Specifically, the Council will:
  - i. Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within Contra Costa County.
  - ii. Consult with State and local government ESG recipients within Contra Costa County on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of ESG recipients and subrecipients. Further, in consultation with recipients of ESG funds within Contra Costa County,

establish and consistently follow written standards for providing homeless services and housing assistance.

C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Facilitate a forum for Healthcare for the Homeless partners to voice the concerns of the people they serve. Discuss issues relating to access to health care for homeless persons.
  - i. Analyze biannual reports from the Consumer Advisory Board and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and cities located in Contra Costa County concerning those issues.
  - ii. Evaluate the operation of Healthcare for the Homeless and make recommendations on how service delivery can be made more responsive to the needs of the homeless community.
2. Encourage and develop public understanding and education on homeless and housing issues in relationship to identified strategies.
3. Advise the Board of Supervisors, the Behavioral Health Director, and the Health Services Director, on the special needs of the homeless and matters of urgency regarding homelessness. Specifically, the Council will:
  - i. Provide advocacy on homeless concerns to the Board of Supervisors and cities located in Contra Costa County.
4. Make recommendations about long-range planning and policy formulation to the Board of Supervisors and cities located in Contra Costa County.

Section 2. TRANSPARENCY AND DIVERSITY

The Council encourages all members of the community to participate in group discussions and working groups. The Council ensures a diverse population contributes to deliberations and decision-making—including consumers and community members—as well as gender, ethnic, cultural, and geographical representation. To align with this effort, the Council conducts an annual recruitment effort by advertising open positions. Further, all interested persons are encouraged to attend meetings, provide input, and voice concerns to the Council.

The Council follows all provisions of the Brown Act and the Better Government Ordinance in its conduct as a public body. CoC membership is open to any interested party upon request. Further, anyone interested in sitting on the Council may submit an application in compliance with the process established by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

#### **Article IV. Council Membership and Committees**

##### **Section 1. ELIGIBILITY**

All members of the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness must reside in or be employed in Contra Costa County.

All members of the Council shall demonstrate a professional interest in, or personal commitment to addressing and alleviating the impact of homelessness on the people of the County of Contra Costa.

##### **Section 2. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership on the Council will be as shown in the chart below. The Council will make an invitation for new members to join publically available annually. Each seat will have a term of two years expiring in alternating years:

##### **Area of Representation**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Behavioral Health Representative                 | 10. Government Seat #1                     |
| 2. CoC/ESG Program Grantee                          | 11. Government Seat #2                     |
| 3. Community Member Seat #1                         | 12. Health Care Representative             |
| 4. Community Member Seat #2                         | 13. Homeless Housing Provider              |
| 5. Community Member Seat #3                         | 14. Philanthropy Representative            |
| 6. Consumer/Consumer Advocate*                      | 15. Public Housing Authority               |
| 7. Education and Vocational Services Representative | 16. Public Safety Representative           |
| 8. Emergency Solutions Grants Representative        | 17. Veterans Administration Representative |
| 9. Faith Community Representative                   | 18. Consumer/Consumer Advocate Alternate*  |

\* The appointees to the Consumer/Consumer Advocate Seat and Alternate Seat must have a lived experience of homelessness (i.e., be homeless or formerly homeless).

All representatives appointed by the Board of Supervisors serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors and may have their appointments rescinded by majority vote of the Board of Supervisors.



In addition to the seats that have already been designated, outreach will be made to specifically obtain participation from the following groups: *veterans' rights advocates, victim service providers, school districts, colleges and universities, social service providers, and mental health agencies.*

In addition to the above requirements, both public- and private-sector seats should, as much as possible, include representation from organizations or agencies who serve various homeless subpopulations such as: *persons with chronic substance abuse issues, persons with serious mental illness, persons experiencing chronic homelessness, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, families with children, unaccompanied youth, victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and seniors.*

### Section 3. SELECTION PROCESS

The Council will review all eligible applications for open seats annually. The Council will recommend new members through majority vote. This selection process will be reviewed by the CoC every five years at a minimum.

### Section 4. OFFICERS

The Council shall elect one chair and one vice-chair to provide for the operation and conduct of business. Terms for the Officers shall be two years. Officers may serve no more than two consecutive terms in the same Council seat.

Officers may recommend and implement policies governing the business and operation of the Council.

The Chair of the Council shall provide oversight for the operation of the Council. The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Council. The Chair may call for special meetings of the Council or its committees.

The Vice-Chair shall provide oversight for the operations of all sub-committees. If the Chair is absent, or the office is vacant, the Vice-Chair shall assume responsibility for the operation of the Council.

### Section 5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In addition to residency requirements, to be eligible for Council membership:

A person must contribute unique expertise, opinions, and viewpoints on homeless issues. Where a potential Council member represents a coalition, consortium, association, neighborhood group, or voluntary organization, the nominee must represent to the Council the group's mission, in addition to the various viewpoints personally held by the nominee.

## Section 6. WHEN A SEATED MEMBER NO LONGER MEETS THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

If a seated Council member no longer meets the eligibility criteria, the Council:

- A. May request the Council member to submit a statement of resignation to the Council within 30 days of the change.
- B. May recommend to the Board of Supervisors the removal of the member and the subsequent appointment of an eligible nominee selected by the Council.
- C. May, where there is no apparent candidate to fill the seat, continue the seated member's participation, with or without limitation, until an eligible candidate is found.
- D. A designated Council member, or staff, if any, may, where a resignation is not forthcoming, contact the seated Council member who no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

## Section 7. MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

The Council will set an annual meeting schedule. The Council will meet monthly and the full membership of the Continuum of Care will convene quarterly with published agendas.

Two absences, excused or unexcused, from the regularly scheduled Council meeting in a rolling 12-month period will warrant inquiry from the Council as to ability and interest of the individual in continuing as a member. Three absences, excused or unexcused, within a rolling 12-month period from time of appointment will result in a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that this member be removed from the Council.

Any Council member unable to attend a meeting should notify the Chair of the Council or its administrative designee.

The Chair of the Council or its administrative designee will maintain attendance records, and notify the Council when two absences are recorded.

## Section 8. VOTING MEMBERS

A quorum of 50% plus one of the seated Council members is required for the conduct of business. Decisions must be made by an affirmative vote of 50% plus one Council member present during a Council meeting.

## Section 9. AMENDMENT AND REVIEW

The Council will review the Governance Charter and By-laws at least annually and update and approve as needed. Amendment requires a majority vote of the Council at a regularly scheduled Council meeting, provided that notice of the scheduled vote on the amendment was provided at least two weeks prior to that Council meeting.

Amendment of the Council on Homelessness Governance Charter and By-laws requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of current sitting Council members. Amendments to the By-Laws must be submitted to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors for approval. An amendment of the By-Laws takes effect only upon approval by the Board of Supervisors.

#### Section 10. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

- A. There is only one Council on Homelessness standing committee: the Consumer Advisory Board Committee. This committee is charged with providing information to the Council on the effectiveness of the various services, assisting with identification of gaps in services, providing feedback to the Council from other consumers, and bringing forward for discussion and possible presentation to the Council, ideas and strategies for preventing and ending homelessness from a consumer's viewpoint.
- B. The Council may create ad hoc committees as the need arises. The purpose of these ad hoc committees will be to develop recommended solutions to the specific issue for which they were created. The ad hoc committees may be comprised of members of the CoC and outside individuals. Ad hoc committees may be dissolved upon a vote of the Council.
- C. The Council may create an ad hoc nominating committee to make recommendations on the filling of vacancies. The ad hoc nominating committee will solicit and assess applicants, rank them in order of preferred appointment, and submit these recommendations to the Council for approval. The Council will submit final recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.
- D. Ad hoc committees can be appointed to address any matters within the jurisdiction of the Council.

#### **Article V. Conduct & Conflict of Interest**

## Section 1. CONDUCT

Each Council member will uphold certain standards of performance and good conduct and avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest. In order to prevent a conflict of interest, a Council member, chairperson, employee, agent, or consultant of the Council may not:

- A. Influence decisions concerning the selection or award of a grant or other financial benefit to an organization that the Council member, employee, officer, or agent has a financial or other interest in or represents, except for the Council itself.
- B. Solicit and/or accept gifts or gratuities by anyone for their personal benefit in excess of minimal value.
- C. Engage in any behavior demonstrating an actual conflict of interest or giving the appearance of any such conflict.

## Section 2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Council members must file an initial and annual conflict of interest statement with the filing officer designated in the code. Failure to file such a statement may result in the removal of a member.