



## Eastern PA CoC Board Meeting

### Agenda

February 24, 2025

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95780178070?pwd=emtjUy9lelByTndUdng3cGVZT29wQT09>

Meeting ID: 957 8017 8070

Passcode: 020931

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
10:00 a.m.	Call to order-Alisa Baratta	
10:05 a.m.	Approval of December meeting minutes - Pages 2-6	Vote needed
10:10 a.m.	Funding Policies Review-Jessica Sones - Pages 7-22	Vote needed-Attached is the previously circulated for Jan retreat packet.
10:25 a.m.	Coordinated Entry Budget and Manager Position - Pages 23-25	Plans for position and future budget
10:40 a.m.	Discuss Planning Grant Budget Allocations-Brendan Auman - Pages 26-27 - HMIS Update, pages 28-29	Target spending for the balance of the year.
10:50 a.m.	Communication to grantees/ membership - Communication Plan, Pages 30-31 - Advocacy Strategy, Page 32	Discussion about how the CoC will share advocacy information and develop a potential strategy
11:00 a.m.	Government Shutdown Preparedness Plan	Discuss training for the CoC membership
11:15 a.m.	Housing First RFP-Leigh Howard - Pages 33-41	Update on proposals and plan forward
11:25 a.m.	DEI Discussion and update of meeting with the committee	Moving committee members into other work.
11:35 a.m.	Spring Full CoC Membership Meeting	The venue is under construction and is no longer available on our scheduled date. Available dates are April 24, 29, 30, and May 7
11:40 a.m.	Written Standard Update - Training on Written Standards is also requested.	Does the board add this to the DMA contract or issue an RFP?
12:00 p.m.	Meeting Adjourned	

**Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care  
Board Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2025  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**In Attendance**

Alisa Baratta  
Leslie Perryman  
Brendan Auman  
Tiffany Jones  
Carol Thornton

Jeff Rich  
Jessica Sones  
Nick Dennis  
Ash Hersh  
Stephanine Meyer

Dorese Tolson  
Amanda Riehl  
Leigh Howard  
Mary Penny

**Call to Order**

Alisa Baratta called the meeting to order. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously. The board proceeded to the first agenda item.

**Funding Committee Update**

Jessica Sones provided an update from the CoC Funding Committee. She announced Stephanie McElwee as the new committee chair from Adams County. Jessica then presented proposed updates to the CoC's funding policies, which included:

- Two-Year NOFO Cycle Implementation: HUD has shifted to a two-year Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) cycle. However, annual project evaluations for renewal projects will still occur each year to ensure accountability and performance monitoring.
- Conflict of Interest Policy: The Committee recommended that all Funding Committee members must now formally sign the CoC's Conflict of Interest Policy. Additionally, it was proposed that only one representative per organization may serve on the Funding Committee, preventing any agency from having a disproportionate influence on funding decisions.
- Evaluation Timeline for New Projects: Recognizing the operational challenges faced by newly funded projects, the Committee proposed a new policy stating that any project starting on or after July 1st of a given year would not be subject to a performance evaluation until the following year. This adjustment provides grantees with additional time to establish operations before being evaluated.
- Reallocation Policy for Underutilized Projects: The Committee addressed a recurring issue where some projects were not spending their full grants but were also underutilizing available units or services. To address this, the Committee introduced a new policy stating that:
  - Projects utilizing less than 85% of their contracted units for two consecutive years will receive a formal letter of notification from the CoC.
  - Technical assistance will be offered to help grantees improve their utilization rates.
  - Projects may face potential reallocation if underutilization persists.
- Expanded Appeal Process for Reallocation: The Committee recommended extending the appeal notification period for projects identified for reallocation. The Committee now proposes:
  - Applicants must notify the CoC of their intent to appeal within 24 hours.
  - However, they will be given an additional 48 hours to submit supporting documentation.
- Domestic Violence (DV) Bonus Reallocation Protection: HUD introduced a new policy requiring that any project funded through the Domestic Violence (DV) Bonus must retain its funding specifically for services to survivors of domestic violence, even if the project is reallocated. The Committee formally added language, ensuring that any reallocated funds from a DV Bonus project would still exclusively serve the DV population.
- Enhanced Communication: The Committee recommended strengthening communication regarding reallocation decisions. Moving forward, when a project is identified for reallocation:
  - The CoC will provide a clear, detailed letter outlining the specific reasons for reallocation.
  - The letter will also include guidance on accessing technical assistance to address performance issues.

Jessica emphasized that these policy changes aimed to promote equity, transparency, and stronger performance accountability across all CoC-funded projects. After a detailed discussion, the board voted to accept the changes all were in favor with no objections or abstentions.

### **Board Vote**

1. The CoC board voted unanimously to accept the Funding Committee's recommended update to the COC's Funding Policies

### **Coordinated Entry Budget and Manager Position**

Leslie Perryman reported on the status of the Coordinated Entry (CE) Manager position. The role remains vacant, and the committee recommended reallocating the \$97,500 budgeted for the position to support staffing costs for 211 call center operations. Concerns were regarding recent issues around call handling and incorrect housing referrals. Board members emphasized the need for additional training and more transparent communication from 211.

Following a detailed discussion, the committee modified its recommendation. The revised motion proposed reallocating the \$97,500 to hire 1.5 additional housing specialists with the condition that 2-1-1 provides regular performance reports and additional staff training.

### **Board Vote**

2. The board voted and unanimously approved reallocating the \$97,500 to hire 1.5 additional housing specialists with the condition that 2-1-1 provides regular performance reports and additional staff training.

### **Planning Grant Budget Allocations**

Brendan Auman provided an update on the Planning Grant budget, highlighting that \$366,000 remained unallocated. He recommended potential uses for these funds, including:

- Developing a peer-to-peer learning program for providers.
- Investing in branding, marketing, and website design for the new CoC nonprofit entity.
- Securing a fiscal management entity to support financial compliance.

Leigh Howard added that certain DEI committee funds (\$16,000) were no longer in use due to federal restrictions and could be reallocated to training or technical assistance initiatives. The board agreed to revisit the discussion during the March retreat. The consensus was to prioritize scalable, low-risk investments such as training content development and digital infrastructure.

### **Communication with grantees/ membership**

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding the need for improved communication with CoC grantees and membership, particularly around advocacy efforts and federal policy changes that may impact homelessness services and funding. It was acknowledged that the ongoing uncertainty in federal funding, compounded by recent executive orders impacting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, had created widespread anxiety among service providers. The Board agreed on the importance of developing a communication strategy to ensure that the membership remains informed.

### **Discussion on Federal Funding Uncertainty**

A discussion ensued regarding broader federal funding challenges. Brendan Auman reported that all federal procurement activities related to the CoC were currently on hold, pending further guidance from HUD. This raised concerns about moving forward with hiring and large financial commitments. Stephanie Meyer emphasized the importance of preserving existing resources and building internal capacity while navigating uncertain funding landscapes. The Board generally agreed to adopt a cautious, strategic approach moving forward.

The Board discussed the importance of preparing CoC-funded agencies for any funding interruptions that might occur. Leigh Howard emphasized that many CoC providers operate on thin financial margins, and even a temporary suspension of federal funding could lead to severe service disruptions or staff furloughs. To proactively address this risk, the Board discussed developing a Government Shutdown Preparedness Plan that would provide clear guidance to CoC member agencies in the event of a federal shutdown. DMA staff, Alisa Barratta and other CoC members will host a virtual informational session specifically focused on managing cash flow during government shutdowns, which would include practical guidance on payroll adjustments, grant fund drawdowns, and programmatic service delivery during a funding pause.

### **Housing First RFP Update**

Leigh Howard provided an update on the Housing First Request for Proposals (RFP), which was previously issued to identify service providers capable of expanding Housing First programming across the CoC's geographic region. Leigh reported that multiple proposals had been received from agencies interested in providing the training, but Housing Innovations' proposal best met the requirements and needs of the CoC. Leigh recommended that the Board formally approve their proposal and authorize the CoC to proceed with funding allocations. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the motion was carried. Leigh Howard confirmed that the funding agreement would be finalized within the next 30 days, and program implementation was expected to begin by April 2025.

#### **Board Vote**

3. The Board voted unanimously in favor of contracting with Housing Innovations for Housing First Training.

#### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Discussion and Committee Meeting Update**

Leigh Howard provided context, explaining that the Executive Order issued by the federal government had suspended the use of federal funds for DEI-related activities, significantly impacting the CoC's ability to sustain its DEI initiatives. This included the suspension of contracted DEI technical assistance services, such as the work being done by TAC (Technical Assistance Collaborative), which had been providing equity-focused guidance and technical assistance to CoC member agencies. Leigh reported that despite the funding freeze, the DEI Committee remained committed to advancing equity goals within the CoC. The committee will regroup and meet to discuss how they can move forward under the current federal mandate and report back to the board with recommendations for future work.

#### **Spring Membership Meeting**

The Board engaged in a discussion about planning the next full CoC Membership Meeting. The board voted to move the meeting to 4/29/25 because the meeting location was being remodeled and unavailable on the original date.

The key objectives for the Membership Meeting would include:

- Providing an update on HUD's two-year NOFO cycle and its impact on funding, project renewals, and new project opportunities.
- Governor's Housing Plan
- Possible panel discussion with Managed Care Organizations (physical health MCOs)
- Discussing the impact of federal policy changes, including the funding restrictions on DEI initiatives, and outlining the CoC's response plan.
- Offering space for grantee feedback, allowing service providers to share their challenges and best practices

#### **Board Vote**

4. The board voted to move the Spring Membership Meeting to 4/29/25

#### **Written Standards Update and Training Discussion**

The discussion focused on necessary updates to the written standards, including:

- VAWA Updates - Ensuring the standards align with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) for individuals experiencing domestic and gender-based violence.
- Transfer Policy - Addressing gaps in the policy for transferring participants between Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) or within the same program type.
- Coordinated Entry Process - Updating language to reflect the shift from a "pull" to a "push" process in Coordinated Entry.
- Training Needs - Developing training on the written standards after the necessary updates are made.

The board discussed whether to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for external support to update the written standards and provide training or if the updates should be managed internally. Leigh Howard from DMA mentioned that if an RFP were issued, DMA would likely respond to it, and they would leave the call if the board wanted to continue with that conversation. This led to the discussion about recommendations for updating the written standards needed to come from the Written Standards Committee to maintain transparency and neutrality in the process.

#### **Action Item**

1. Brendan to follow up and discuss the updates needed with the Written Standards Committee and ask them to make a recommendation to the board.

Alisa noted that they were at the end of the agenda and asked if there was any more business, anyone would like to discuss or a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.