

Trenton / Mercer Continuum of Care

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATION

A. Name: The name of this affiliation shall be the Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care (Trenton/Mercer CoC).

B. Service Area: The Trenton/Mercer CoC will enable homeless provider agencies to serve the homeless and those at imminent risk of homelessness in the Mercer County geographic area.

C. Address: The principal office of the CoC shall be at The Department of Health and Human Services, Trenton City Hall, 319 East State Street, 3rd Floor, Annex, Trenton, NJ 08608.

ARTICLE II: MISSION

Mission: The Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care works to ensure that people who experience homelessness or are at imminent risk of homelessness will have access to community and system resources to resolve their immediate housing crisis and facilitate their transition from homelessness to stability in permanent housing as rapidly as possible. The CoC is charged with overseeing the annual application process to HUD. It provides a forum for analysis and discussion of emerging needs, development of program standards, assessment of progress toward ending homelessness and identification and coordination of other sources of funding.

ARTICLE III: CoC MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership:

Membership on the CoC shall consist of executive-level members (or their designees who have been granted decision-making powers). No agency shall be represented by more than one individual for the purposes of voting. The CoC shall be governed by an Executive Committee (See Article IV).

B. Designee:

The designee's name and title shall be submitted to the City of Trenton, Dept. of Health and Human Services prior to the meeting at which the designee will appear. Designees may not be changed without written notification.

C. There shall be one member from each entity named below:

- Category A: Local Government representatives
 - City of Trenton, Dept. of Health and Human Services
 - County of Mercer, Dept. of Human Services
 - Mercer County Board of Social Services
 - Mercer County One-Stop
 - Mercer County Veterans Services

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- Category B: Public Housing Authorities located in Mercer County
 - Hamilton Housing Authority
 - Hightstown Housing Authority
 - Princeton Housing Authority
 - Trenton Housing Authority

- Category C: Public Schools with highest totals of homeless children
 - Ewing Board of Education
 - Hamilton Board of Education
 - Trenton Board of Education

- Category D: Federal Government
 - Veterans Administration, NJ Office

- Category E:
 - Providers of Homeless Services and/or Housing receiving local, county, state or Federal government funds (such as, but not limited to CDBG, SSH, HUD).

- Category F:
 - Providers of Services and/or Housing not receiving government funds but serving the following populations (if not represented in Category E):
 - Youth, Single Adults, Reentry, Veterans, Families, People in housing crisis (Prevention).

- Category G: Community Stakeholders (including but not limited to)
 - United Way of Greater Mercer County
 - Trenton Health Team
 - Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness
 - Mercer County Community College
 - Mercer County Prosecutor's Office

D. There will be a minimum of two members representing consumers.

E. Category F & G Agencies wishing to be considered for membership on the CoC should submit an application to the Executive Committee.

F. Meetings:

The full CoC shall meet at least four times per year, but may meet more often, as determined by the Chair of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall establish the date, time and place of each meeting. There shall be at least two weeks' notice for regular meetings and at least 48 hours for emergency meetings. The notice shall contain a tentative agenda and minutes from the last meeting. The first meeting of the calendar year shall be designated as the Annual Meeting, at which time elections are to occur.

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G. Attendance:

All members are expected to regularly attend CoC meetings. The Executive Committee reserves the right to remove any member for consistent failure to attend.

H. Quorum & Voting

Those members present at any meeting will constitute a quorum. All votes will be taken by roll call or ballot of all official representatives. CoC members must attend 75% of the meetings during the preceding twelve months in order to be eligible to vote.

I. Minutes of Meetings:

Minutes shall be kept of every meeting and shall include, at a minimum, the date, time and place of the meeting, the number of the attending organization members, the topics discussed, the decisions reached and actions taken, the list of roll call votes on all motions, any reports made, and other information as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

Article IV: Leadership & Decision-Making

- A. For the purposes of relating to HUD, the City of Trenton shall serve as the Collaborative Applicant and lead administrative agency of the CoC.
- B. The CoC and all its committees shall be staffed by the City of Trenton and/or an entity designated by the Executive Committee of the COC.
- C. The leadership group of the CoC shall be known as the Executive Committee.
- D. The purpose of the Executive Committee is annually:
 - to set priorities for homelessness services and housing based on analysis of community data and need, in accordance with HUD and the State of New Jersey;
 - to make funding recommendations to the Collaborative Applicant for the annual allocation from the U.S. Department of HUD;
 - to assure that programs receiving HUD funding are appropriately monitored and meet program performance standards;
 - to identify additional funding sources that contribute to the community's ability to respond to homeless populations;
 - and to monitor the effective functioning of the COC, including review of attendance.
- E. Membership

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The Membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of 11 members, as delineated below. No more than one employee of an agency shall serve on the Executive Committee at any one time.

- Category A: Government Funders
 - City of Trenton, Dept. of Health and Human Services
 - Mercer County, Dept. of Human Services
 - Mercer County, Board of Social Services
- Category B: Community Stakeholders
 - Trenton Housing Authority
 - Trenton Health Team
 - United Way of Greater Mercer County
 - Chairperson of Emergency, Prevention & Housing Forum
 - Mercer County One Stop
- Category C: Providers of Homeless Services and/or Housing
 - Three (3) provider agencies chosen from the membership by nomination and ballot at the annual meeting.

F. Terms of Service

Category C member organizations shall be elected for two year terms and may stand for reelection upon the completion of their terms.

G. Chairmanship

The chairmanship of the Executive Committee shall rotate between City of Trenton, Dept. of Health and Human Services; Mercer County, Dept. of Human Services and Mercer County, Board of Social Services. Their terms of service shall be for two years.

H. Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet monthly on a regular schedule. The Chair of the Executive Committee will establish the date, time and place. The notice shall contain a tentative agenda and minutes from the last meeting.

I. Quorum & Voting

A quorum shall consist of six members, at least two of whom must be from City of Trenton, Dept. of Health and Human Services; Mercer County, Dept. of Human Services and Mercer County, Board of Social Services. Voting requires the presence of a quorum. Executive members cannot vote unless they have attended 75% of the meetings during the preceding twelve months.

J. Minutes of Meetings

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Minutes shall be kept of every meeting and shall include, at a minimum, the date, time and place of the meeting, a list of the attending members, the topics discussed, the decisions reached and actions taken, the list of roll call votes on all motions, any reports made, and other information as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson. A copy of the minutes shall be made available to the COC membership.

K. Conflicts of Interest

It is the policy of the Trenton/Mercer COC that a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict between the COC-decision making entity and the organizations receiving awards of grants shall in all cases be avoided. All members of the COC decision-making entity shall absent themselves from discussing and voting on projects in which they or their agency have a financial or potential financial interest.

ARTICLE V: Annual Decision-Making Process

- A. The Executive Committee shall set community priorities in keeping with the overall mission of the CoC.
- B. The Executive Committee shall set performance standards to be incorporated in contracts with all funded provider agencies and nothing in this document shall imply that the CoC supersedes the authority of the contractor.
- C. The Executive Committee shall appoint a Technical Review Committee to review all applications for new or renewal projects and make recommendations to the Executive Committee for approval. The Technical Review Committee shall consist of an odd number of no less than five people, chosen from member organizations without conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest.

ARTICLE VI: Committees

- A. The Executive Committee Chairperson shall appoint individuals to chair the various standing committees and other committees on an as-needed basis. The appointee may be an executive-level member of the COC or other staff member or community volunteer.
- B. Responsibilities of Committees
 - a. Responsibilities of the Committee Chairpersons are to: (1) hold regularly scheduled meetings; (2) send out meeting notices; (3) facilitate committee meetings; (4) carry out goals and objectives of committee with committee members; (5) keep accurate attendance records and (6) report to the full CoC on a quarterly basis.
 - b. Committee Participation - CoC member agencies are expected to actively participate on pertinent committees. Committee members' responsibilities are to: (1) regularly attend committee meetings called by the committee chair; (2) participate in committee

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discussions; (3) assist in the development and implementation of committee activities such as policy development, surveys, etc. and (4) participate in committee activities related to preparation of relevant sections of HUD applications.

C. The following shall be the standing committees of the Trenton/Mercer COC.

a. Mainstream Assistance

Purpose: To develop policies and systems to help clients to secure mainstream benefits for which they are eligible (e.g. GA, TANF, SSI, SNAP).

b. Discharge Policy

Purpose: To develop and implement policies and protocols for the discharge of persons from publicly funded institutions or systems of care (such as health care facilities, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction programs and institutions) in order to prevent such discharge from immediately resulting in homelessness for such persons.

c. Homeless Survey

Purpose: To develop methodology and tools to conduct point- in -time surveys to identify the homeless or those who are at imminent risk of homelessness and to implement such surveys on at least an annual basis.

d. Emergency, Prevention & Housing Forum

Purpose: To provide a forum for agencies to discuss trends and issues among those seeking services related to homelessness, prevention and permanent housing and to utilize data to inform committee recommendations.

e. Housing Management Information System (HMIS) & Data Forum

Purpose: To engage all funded providers in meeting expectations for maintaining accurate and up-to-date program-level data and to provide a forum to discuss HMIS issues or problems.

D. Other committees and subcommittees may be established to respond to community needs and/or emerging funding sources (e.g. frequent users of emergency services, veterans).

ARTICLE VII: Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at regular or special meeting of the CoC Consortium by a majority vote of the members present and voting. Amendments must be in written form and distributed to members of the Consortium at least two weeks prior to presentation and vote.