



Governance Charter (version 4.2)

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I. Overview

A. Background

The Louisiana Balance of State Continuum of Care (LA BOSCO) was created in 2015 to provide for the efficient, effective, and ethical delivery of housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness throughout its membership area.

B. Purpose

In addition to submitting the CoC's consolidated application to the annual U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the CoC's major functions are as follows:

- Ensuring the efficient, effective, and ethical delivery of housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness;
- Providing training, technical assistance, and leadership to providers of housing and homeless services;
- Promoting community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- Educating the public, public officials, and other stakeholders about homelessness and homeless services.

C. Governance Charter

This Governance Charter ("Charter") details the operations and structure of the CoC, including those of its Board, committee structure, Collaborative Applicant, and HMIS Lead. It has been designed to meet all federal requirements for operating a Continuum of Care as outlined in 24 CFR § 578 and elsewhere.

II. Organization Structure

A. Membership

1. Membership Eligibility

The CoC is comprised of organizations and individual people within its membership area.

Eligible member organizations include 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, veteran organizations, State agencies, and other organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness.

Eligible individual people includes anyone who is interested in ending homelessness.

2. Membership Area

The CoC membership area is divided into five Regions. The Regions includes the following parishes:

- **Baton Rouge:** Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Point Coupee, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana
- **Houma:** Assumption, Lafourche, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, Terrebonne
- **Lake Charles:** Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis
- **Natchitoches/Sabine:** Natchitoches, Sabine
- **Plaquemines/St. Bernard:** Plaquemines, St. Bernard

3. Becoming a Member

The CoC is open at all times to new members. At least annually, the Collaborative Applicant will make an invitation for new members to join publicly available within its geography.²

Any organization or individual person who attends any meeting of the CoC full membership is considered a member. There is no application, application fee, or membership dues to join or participate in the CoC.

The CoC actively seeks the participation of people experiencing homelessness and people who formerly experienced homelessness.³

4. Good Standing

"Good Standing" is a designation for organizations that have consistently participated in the CoC. It has several requirements and benefits.

a. Good Standing Requirements

Organizations must meet all of the following criteria to qualify as being in Good Standing:

² 24 CFR 578.7(a)(b); note that all subsequent footnotes that reference the CoC Program Interim Rule will omit "24 CFR" and include only the reference within the part.

³ 578.7(a)

- (1) **General Meeting Attendance:** must have attended at least 1 of the most recent 2 semiannual General Meetings of the CoC;
- (2) **Regional Meeting Attendance:** must have attended at least 2 of the most recent 4 quarterly Regional Meetings of the organization's CoC Region;
- (3) **Committee Membership and Attendance:** must belong to and meet the attendance requirements⁴ of at least one committee, working group, or the Board;
- (4) **Point in Time (PIT) Count Participation:** must meet one of the following criteria:
 - a. *If the organization operates at least one Transitional Housing (TH) or Emergency Shelter (ES) project:* must submit participant data from all TH and ES projects to the 'sheltered' count;
 - b. *If the organization does not operate a TH or ES project:* at least one staff person must attend the 'unsheltered count' for the organization's Region or coordinate with the Region's PIT Captain for alternate participation.
- (5) **Ethics:** must not have violated any ethics or code of conduct policies approved by the CoC; the Membership and Rules Committee determines whether a violation has occurred and the length of time for which a violation disqualifies an organization;
- (6) **Other:** the Board may define additional Good Standing requirements at its discretion.

"Attend" means sending one or more staff employed by the organization. Organizations are not required to send the same staff person to each meeting. Organization staff are required to sign in or otherwise record their attendance according to the practice of the meeting in question to demonstrate their participation.

Individuals are always considered to be in Good Standing for the purposes of voting.

b. Good Standing Benefits

Organizations in Good Standing enjoy the following benefits:

- (1) **CoC Program Funding:** the organization may submit a project application to the CoC's annual local competition for CoC Program funding;
- (2) **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program Funding:** the organization may receive CoC certification;
- (3) **Other Funding:** the organization may request and receive letters of support or certification to apply to other funding sources that request or require them. Funding sources that request/require a letter from the CoC include but are not limited to:
 - a. Programs for Assistance in the Transition from Homelessness (PATH)
 - b. Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)
 - c. Runaway and Homeless Youth – Transitional Living Program (RHY-TLP)
- (4) **Voting:** the organization may vote during General Meetings and in Board member elections.

5. Waivers of Good Standing

The Board may, at its discretion, waive the Good Standing requirement for any organization to allow that organization to enjoy the benefits of Good Standing (e.g. to receive a letter of support).

Waiver requests must be submitted to the Collaborative Applicant at least ten (10) business days in advance of their due date. Waiver requests submitted fewer than ten business days in advance may be denied by the Collaborative Applicant at its discretion without Board review.

⁴ Each Committee shall develop and approve written attendance requirements. In absence of written requirements, each Committee's attendance requirement shall be that each member must attend at least 1 meeting in a given year, or if the Committee does not meet during a given year, each member shall be considered to have met the attendance requirement.

Organizations that have belonged to the LA BOSCOG for fewer than 12 months (i.e. whose first contact with the Collaborative Applicant or first General Meeting was fewer than 12 months ago) automatically receive a waiver of Good Standing.

6. Regional Applicants

Certain funding sources may require or allow each CoC Region to select an organization to apply for funding on behalf of a given Region as a whole. Organizations selected are called "Regional Applicants."

CoC Regions shall newly select a Regional Applicant for each application to each funding source. Regional Applicants shall only be elected during General Meetings or Regional Meetings. These meetings must be announced and have their agendas published at least five (5) business days in advance. The Board may grant exceptions to any of the requirements in this paragraph at its discretion.

Regional Applicants shall be selected by the CoC membership of a given Region via the process developed by the Membership and Rules Committee.⁵

7. Authority

The CoC full membership is empowered with the following authority in addition to other authorities granted elsewhere in this Charter:

- (1) **Governance Charter Revision:** at a General Meeting, or remotely as called for by the Collaborative Applicant, the CoC full membership may vote to approve or deny changes to the Charter. Note that this fulfills the following regulatory requirements:
 - a. Appointing committees to carry out the work of the CoC;⁷
 - b. Developing, following, and updating annually this Charter, which must comply with the requirements in 24 CFR 578.7(a)(5).⁸

B. Committees, Subcommittees, and Workgroups

This Charter and the Board shall create committees, subcommittees, and workgroups ("groups") to carry out the work of the LA BOSCOG. These groups are responsible for making formal recommendations to the Board in relation to their specific areas of focus and taking other actions as specifically designated by this Charter or by the Board at its discretion.

Generally speaking:

- Committees have broad oversight responsibilities for significant areas of CoC operations;
- Subcommittees have more narrow oversight responsibilities and are often tasked with specific CoC operations (i.e. regional subcommittees);
- Workgroups are narrow, task-oriented groups that may exist for a limited or unlimited duration; they fall under the purview of the entity that creates them and have only those authorities granted to them by the entity that creates them.

⁵ In absence of this process, Regional Applicants shall be selected by a simple majority vote of each Region's present constituency at the general meeting during which the vote is called.

⁷ 578.7(a)(4)

⁸ 578.7(a)(5)

1. Joining a Committee, Subcommittee, or Workgroup

Any person may join any group unless that group's membership is restricted or closed by this Charter or the Board.

To join a group, email both the Collaborative Applicant and the group chair. Group chairs and their contact information shall be listed on the LA BOSCO's website at <http://laboscoc.org>.

2. Group Creation

Committees shall only be created by this Charter. Subcommittees shall only be created by this Charter. Workgroups (or "working groups") shall be created by the Board, by a Committee, or by the Collaborative Applicant.⁹

3. Chartered Committees

This Charter creates the following committees.

Unless otherwise noted, all committee actions must be approved by the Board before implementation.

a. *Written Standards Committee*

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant and recipients of the Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area: establishing written standards for providing Continuum of Care assistance. These standards must comply with all subparts under 24 CFR 578.7(a)(9);¹⁰
- (2) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant: coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within the LA BOSCO's geographic area that meets the needs of homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families. At minimum, this system must encompass:
 - a. Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
 - b. Shelter, housing, and supportive services;
 - c. Prevention strategies;
- (3) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant: designing a collaborative process for the Collaborative Applicant to follow in creating and submitting LA BOSCO's consolidated applications in response to HUD NOFOs published under 24 CFR 578.19 (i.e. the CoC Program NOFO). This process must be updated annually;
- (4) Other tasks related to the CoC's written policies for implementing housing and services as specifically delegated by the Collaborative Applicant.

b. *Scoring Committee*

This committee shall be responsible for reviewing, scoring, and ranking all new and renewal project applications submitted to the LA BOSCO's for consideration under a given year's consolidated application to the CoC Program NOFO. The committee will conduct this process using information and materials developed by the Collaborative Applicant and approved by the Board. The Collaborative Applicant will use the results of this process to score and rank all projects seeking funding through the consolidated application.

⁹ 578.7(a)(4)

¹⁰ 578.7(a)(9) and all its subparts

Committee members shall be appointed exclusively by the Board. Employees and immediate relatives of employees of CoC Program recipients, subrecipients, or applicants are prohibited from serving on this committee.

c. HMIS Committee

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead: developing, following, and updating annually an HMIS Governance Charter, which will include all procedures and policies needed to comply with 24 CFR 578.7(b), its subparts, and the HMIS requirements as prescribed by HUD;¹¹
- (2) Assessing and reporting to the Board regarding participation in HMIS by users throughout the CoC geography;
- (3) Consulting with the Collaborative Applicant and CoC Program recipients and sub-recipients to establish performance targets appropriate for each population and program type, monitoring recipient and sub-recipient performance, evaluating program outcomes, and taking action against poor performers;¹²
- (4) In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant: evaluating the outcomes of projects funded under the Emergency Solutions Grants program and the CoC Program, and reporting that evaluation to HUD;¹³
- (5) In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant: consulting with State and local government Emergency Solutions Grants program funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of Emergency Solutions Grants program recipients and sub-recipients;¹⁴
- (6) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant: providing information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the LA BOSCOG geographic area;
- (7) Other HMIS-related tasks specifically delegated by the Collaborative Applicant.

d. Membership and Rules Committee

This committee ensures that the LA BOSCOG and its Board develop and implement its rules, processes, and functions in an ethical and just fashion. It shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead: developing and implementing the LA BOSCOG's Conflict of Interest, Code of Conduct, and Recusal Policy, which must at minimum apply to the Board, its chair and vice chair, and any person acting on behalf of the Board;¹⁵
- (2) Developing and implementing the LA BOSCOG's Board Member Ratification Policy, which must at minimum ensure the Board is representative of the LA BOSCOG's organizations and of its projects that

¹¹ 578.7(b) and all subparts

¹² 578.7(a)(6)

¹³ 589(a)(7)

¹⁴ 578.7(c)(5)

¹⁵ 578.7(b)(1)

In absence of this Policy, all Board, committee, subcommittee, and workgroup members are required to disclosure any real or perceived conflict of interest to the Board and the Membership and Rules Committee. If any person or organization has a direct conflict of interest, they will (1) refrain from discussing within their group any matter related to the conflict, (2) abstain from voting on any matter related to the conflict, (3) absent themselves from any discussion related to the conflict, and (4) refrain from any oversight or implementation related to the conflict.

serve homeless sub-populations, and subsequently ratifying all Board members in accordance with that Policy;

- (3) Acting to remove Board, committee, subcommittee, and workgroup members who fail to perform their duties in an ethical and just manner. *This requires a three quarters majority vote;*
- (4) Reviewing and updating the process in this Charter for selecting Board members, including the structure of the Board. This duty, including approval from the CoC full membership, must be completed at least once every five years;¹⁶
- (5) Reviewing, responding to, and recommending action to the Board in response to all complaints filed against the LA BOSCOG;
- (6) Responding to any other situation related to the ethical and just performance of the Board or any committee, subcommittee, or workgroup by recommending a course of action to either the Board or the CoC full membership (as appropriate). *Approving actions in response to a recommendation under this duty requires a two thirds majority vote from the Board or, if the situation involves the Board, a two thirds majority vote from the CoC full membership.*

e. *Coordinated Entry Committee*

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and recipients of Emergency Solutions Grants program funds within the geographic area, establish and operate a coordinated access system (Coordinated Entry) that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services. This includes developing a specific policy to guide the operation of the Coordinated Entry System on how it will address the needs of individuals and families who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, but who are seeking shelter or services from non-victim service providers;¹⁷
- (2) Assessing and reporting to the Board regarding participation in Coordinated Entry by users throughout the CoC geography;
- (3) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant: planning for and conducting, at least annually, a point-in-time (PIT) count of people who are homeless within the LA BOSCOG geographic area who meet the qualifications listed in the subparts of 24 CFR 578.8(c)(2);¹⁸
- (4) In partnership with the Collaborative Applicant: conducting an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the LA BOSCOG geographic area;¹⁹

Other Coordinated Entry-related tasks specifically assigned by the Collaborative Applicant.

f. *Domestic Violence Committee*

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Monitoring the provision of housing and services to people experiencing homelessness who are fleeing domestic violence, including people fleeing human trafficking;
- (2) In partnership with the HMIS Committee: overseeing the implementation of EmpowerDB.

¹⁶ 578.7(a)(3); if this Committee has fewer than three members at the time of review, this duty is carried out by the Collaborative Applicant and ratified by the Board.

¹⁷ 578.8(a)(8)

¹⁸ 578.8(c)(2)

¹⁹ 578.8(c)(3)

g. Veterans Committee

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Monitoring the provision of housing and services to people experiencing homelessness who are veterans;
- (2) Monitoring the LA BOSCOCC's progress toward ending homelessness among veterans.

h. Youth Committee

This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Monitoring the provision of housing and services to people experiencing homelessness who are youth (aged 18-24);
- (2) Monitoring the LA BOSCOCC's progress toward ending homelessness among youth.

4. Group Chairs

Each group shall select a chair from its membership using a process of its choosing. Group chairs shall have the following responsibilities:

- (1) Announcing, scheduling, publishing agendas for, and chairing group meetings;
- (2) Keeping records of group participation (e.g. meeting attendance) and reporting deficiencies to the CoC for the purposes of Good Standing compliance;
- (3) Reporting group activities to the CoC full membership during meetings of the CoC full membership and otherwise as appropriate or as required by the Collaborative Applicant.

5. Group Meetings

Groups shall meet quarterly, or on an alternate schedule approved by the group in question. The Board may require groups to meet on an alternate schedule at its discretion.

6. Authority

Each committee is empowered with the following authority in addition to other authorities granted to elsewhere in this Charter:

- (1) **Propose Policies and Policy Changes:** each committee may vote to propose creating new policies or amending existing policies that fall within the purview of that committee according to the document that created that committee. Proposals are submitted to the Board for approval and implementation;
- (2) **Propose Actions:** each committee may propose that the CoC take actions that fall within the purview of that committee according to the document that created that committee. Proposals are submitted to the Board for approval and implementation.
- (3) **Create/Dissolve Working Groups:** each committee may create or dissolve work groups that fall within the purview of the originating committee according to the document that created the committee. Committees may, at their discretion, devolve one or more of their authorities and/or purviews onto a work group. All other elements of the work group may, at the originating committee's discretion, be specified by the originating committee or left to the work group's discretion.

C. Board

The processes below govern the selection of a Board to act on behalf of the LA BOSCOCC.²¹

1. Composition

The Board shall be composed of the following members:

²¹ 578.5(b)

- The Louisiana Housing Corporation’s Deputy Administrator of the Homeless Solutions Department (representing the Collaborative Applicant)²²
- One designee of the HMIS Lead²³
- One designee of the Louisiana Department of Health
- One designee of the Louisiana Department of Education
- One designee of the Louisiana Department of Corrections
- One designee of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
- One designee of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- One person who is homeless or was formerly homeless²⁴
- One seat for each Region of the LA BOSCOG to be filled by the representative of that Region as elected by that Region’s constituency via the process developed by the Membership and Rules Committee.²⁵

Designees to the Board shall be selected by the Collaborative Applicant at its discretion. Designees must be ratified by the Membership and Rules Committee based on criteria established by that Committee.

2. Board Officers

Officers of the Board shall be as follows:

- (1) **Chair:** elected by the Board from its membership;
 - Convenes and oversees Board meetings;
 - Convenes and oversees General Meetings;
 - Signs documents on behalf of the CoC;
- (2) **Vice Chair:** elected by the Board from its membership;
 - Fulfills the duties of the Chair if the Chair is unable to do so;
- (3) **Ethics Officer:** filled by the Chair of the Membership and Rules Committee;
 - Ensures the ethical and just conduct of the Board;
 - *Is not a voting position unless otherwise elected or designated to the Board;*
- (4) **Recording Secretary:** elected by the Board from the CoC membership;
 - Records minutes for Board and General Meetings.

3. Resignation, Removal, and Vacancies

Resignations from the Board must be delivered by email or postal mail to the Recording Secretary or Chair.

The Board may vote to terminate a member due to excessive absences; “excessive” shall be defined for this purpose by the Ethics Officer, or if there is no Ethics Officer or the Ethics Officer is unable to participate on the Board, by the Chair. The Board may vote to terminate a member for any other reason; to pass, this vote requires a three fourths majority of the Board excluding the member in contention, or every member of a quorum excluding the member in contention.

In the event of a midterm vacancy, the vacant seat shall be refilled at the earliest convenience according to the seat’s normal method of selection. The newly elected Board member shall complete the former member’s term of service.

²² 578.7(a)(5)

²³ 578.7(a)(5)

²⁴ 578.7(b)(2)

²⁵ In absence of this process, elected seats shall be filled by a simple majority vote of each seat’s present constituency at the general meeting during which the vote is called.

4. Length of Service

Board members shall serve a term of 24 months. When possible, terms shall be staggered. Absent reappointment or a new appointment, Board members shall continue to serve indefinitely following the end of their term. There shall be no limit on the number of terms a given Board member may serve.

5. Board Voting

In addition to the voting rules specified in this Charter (see "Voting," below), the following voting rules apply to the Board:

- Regular votes cannot be called if less than one half of the Board is present.

6. Authority

The Board is empowered with the following authority in addition to other authorities granted to elsewhere in this Charter:

- (1) **Approve/Deny Proposed Policies and Policy Changes:** at a properly scheduled and announced meeting of the Board (see "Board Meetings," above), or remotely as called for by the Board chair or Collaborative Applicant, the Board may vote to approve or deny proposals from committees to create new policies and amend existing policies. The Board can approve amended versions of proposals; however, amended versions of proposals must be re-approved by the proposing committee before they are implemented. Implementation of proposed policies, including timing and roll-out mechanisms, are at the Board's discretion unless specified by the proposing committee;
- (2) **Approve/Deny Proposed Actions:** at a properly scheduled and announced meeting of the Board (see "Board Meetings," above), or remotely as called for by the Board chair or Collaborative Applicant, the Board may vote to approve or deny actions proposed by committees. The Board can approve amended versions of proposals; however, amended versions of proposals must be re-approved by the proposing committee before they are implemented. Implementation of proposed actions, including timing and roll-out mechanisms, are at the Board's discretion unless specified by the proposing committee;
- (3) **Create Policies and Policy Changes:** at a properly scheduled and announced meeting of the Board (see "Board Meetings," above), or remotely as called for by the Board chair or Collaborative Applicant, the Board may vote to create new policies or amend existing policies that do not fall within the purview of any committee, subcommittee, or working group;
- (4) **Take Actions:** at a properly scheduled and announced meeting of the Board (see "Board Meetings," above), or remotely as called for by the Board chair or Collaborative Applicant, the Board may vote to take actions that do not fall within the purview of any committee, subcommittee, or working group;
- (5) **CoC Full Membership Meetings:** in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant: scheduling, announcing, and holding meetings of the CoC full membership, with published agendas, at least semi-annually;³¹
- (6) **Funding Priorities:** in consultation with the Collaborative Applicant: establishing priorities for funding projects in the LA BOSCOG;
- (7) **Consolidated Application:** determining if one application for funding will be submitted for all projects within the geographic area or if more than one application will be submitted for the projects within the

³¹ 578.7(a)(1)

geographic area,³² acting in accordance with the subparts of 24 CFR 578.9(a)(3) depending on that determination, and approving the Continuum of Care Program application;³³

- (8) **Delegation:** at its discretion, delegating one or more of its authorities or responsibilities to the Collaborative Applicant or any other entity.

No Board member may participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that member or an immediate family member represents.³⁴

D. Open Meetings Law

All general, committee, working group, and Board meetings comply with Louisiana's "Opening Meeting Law."³⁵ That compliance includes but is not limited to the following specific actions.

1. General Meetings

The CoC full membership meets at least twice per year. These meetings are called General Meetings. These meetings are scheduled by the Collaborative Applicant in consultation with the Board. Agendas are published in advance of the meeting by the Collaborative Applicant and distributed to the CoC full membership and other interested parties.³⁶

Votes of the full membership shall only be taken during meetings scheduled in accordance with the previous paragraph. All votes shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. General meeting minutes shall be published by the Collaborative Applicant to the LA BOSCOG website for the duration of the calendar year in which the meeting occurred, after which the Collaborative Applicant shall maintain those records indefinitely and make them available to the public upon request.

2. Board Meetings

All Board meetings are open to the public. Board meetings can be closed (i.e. enter executive session) only in accordance with the executive session section of the Open Meeting Law. Common reasons for the Board to enter executive session which are permissible under the Opening Meeting Law include but are not limited to:

- Discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of a person, provided that that person is provided notice as required by the Open Meeting Law³⁷
- Conducting strategy sessions or negotiations with respect to prospective litigation after a formal written demand or when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, or the LA BOSCOG³⁸
- Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct³⁹

All Board meetings shall be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. All Board meetings shall publish their agendas at least 24 hours in advance. Board meetings and agendas shall, at minimum, be published by the

³² 578.9(a)(3)

³³ 578.9(b)

³⁴ 578.95(b)

³⁵ LA Rev Stat § 42:11

³⁶ 578.7(a)(1)

³⁷ LA Rev Stat § 42:17(A)(1)

³⁸ LA Rev Stat § 42:17(A)(2)

³⁹ LA Rev Stat § 42:17(A)(3)

Collaborative Applicant to the LA BOSCOCC website within the specified timeframe. The Board is exempt from this paragraph only as permitted by the Opening Meeting Law.

Board votes shall only be taken during meetings scheduled in accordance with the previous paragraph. All votes shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. Board minutes shall be published by the Collaborative Applicant to the LA BOSCOCC website for the duration of the calendar year in which the meeting occurred, after which the Collaborative Applicant shall maintain those records indefinitely and make them available to the public upon request.

3. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Meetings

All Committee and Subcommittee meetings are open to the public. Work Groups that do not have “closed” membership are open to the public.

All Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group meetings shall be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. All Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group meetings shall publish their agendas at least 24 hours in advance. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group meetings and agendas shall, at minimum, be published by the Collaborative Applicant to the LA BOSCOCC website within the specified timeframe. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group meetings are exempt from this paragraph only as permitted by the Opening Meeting Law.

Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group votes shall only be taken during meetings scheduled in accordance with the previous paragraph. All votes shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. Committee, Subcommittee, and Working Group minutes shall be published by the Collaborative Applicant to the LA BOSCOCC website for the duration of the calendar year in which the meeting occurred, after which the Collaborative Applicant shall maintain those records indefinitely and make them available to the public upon request.

III. Voting

A. Overview

The CoC full membership, committees, subcommittees, workgroups, and Board are required to vote before taking any action, including those specified in this Charter, unless otherwise specified by this Charter.

B. Eligibility to Vote

For votes of the CoC full membership, each organization shall cast no more than one ballot regardless of the number of staff members it has present. (Individuals not representing organizations shall also cast no more than one ballot.)

For votes of a committee, subcommittee, or workgroup, each organization shall cast no more than one ballot regardless of the number of staff members it has present. (Individuals not representing organizations shall also cast no more than one ballot.)

For votes of the Board, each voting member shall cast no more than one ballot.

C. Basic Mechanisms

Unless otherwise specified in this document, all votes must use the following mechanisms:

- (1) All votes must occur:
 - a. During a meeting of the relevant body that was announced to the full relevant body at least 24 hours in advance; or
 - b. Remotely by email, if the vote is emailed to the full relevant body and if the period of voting is at least three (3) business days; or
 - c. At the discretion of the Collaborative Applicant to ensure the successful completion and submission of any funding application, including the CoC Program Consolidated Application, or any report required by HUD or another federal funder;
 - d. At the discretion of the Collaborative Applicant in response to any time-sensitive or urgent matter;
- (2) All votes must be proposed by a member of the relevant body;
- (3) All votes must be seconded by a member of the relevant body except during votes of acclamation (see "Acclamation," below);
- (4) The results of all votes must be reported by the chair to the full relevant body and into the meeting minutes.

D. Voting Systems

Unless otherwise specified by this Charter or a policy developed by the Membership and Rules Committee and approved by the Board, the CoC's various entities shall use voting systems listed in this section. The choice of voting systems is at the discretion of the relevant body's chair.

1. First Past the Post

"First Past the Post" voting is the simplest system: each ballot votes for only one choice (e.g. candidate, approve or deny), and the choice that receives the most votes wins.

This voting system should be used for any vote in which there are only two choices.

2. Instant Run-Off

"Instant Run-Off" voting is a voting system that ensures any choice made is within the range of preferences for a majority of voters.

Each ballot ranks each choice in order of preference. (For example: if voters were choosing a kind of ice cream to have for dessert, and their choices were Chocolate, Vanilla, and Strawberry, a voter might rank Chocolate 1st, Vanilla 2nd, and Strawberry 3rd.)

Once the ballots are in: if more than half the ballots have the same 1st choice, that choice is selected.

If not, the ballot counters remove from contention whichever 1st choice received the fewest votes, then recount, moving onto each ballot's 2nd choice if their 1st choice has been removed.

The process is then repeated until a choice receives more than half the ballots' vote.

This voting system should be used for any vote in which there are more than two choices.

3. Acclamation

The Board chair or any committee, subcommittee, or working group chair may call for a vote of acclamation if the members present appear to be universally in agreement. Votes of acclamation may be proposed by the chair or member, do not require a second, do not require a formal vote, and are considered to proceed with the proposed choice or candidate unless any member present objects.

If any member present objects, the vote of acclamation fails, and voting must proceed using First Past the Post or Instant Run-Off.

E. Tie Votes

In the event of a tie vote in a simple majority vote in which there are only two options being voted on (i.e. a tie produced by First Past the Post or the final round of Instant Run-Off), subsequent discussion and voting on the same issue will be conducted according to a process defined for that vote by the presiding Board or committee chair until a non-tie vote is produced.

IV. Consolidated Application

A. Overview

One of the LA BOSCOG's primary functions is to coordinate the CoC's annual consolidated application to HUD's CoC Program NOFO. The consolidated application is created and submitted to HUD by the Collaborative Applicant.

Section IV of this Charter can only be amended by a three quarters majority vote of the General Membership during a duly scheduled in-person meeting at which at least one representative of the Collaborative Applicant is present.

B. The Collaborative Applicant

The Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) is the designated Collaborative Applicant for the LA BOSCOG. LHC shall maintain an online space for the LA BOSCOG on its website. That space will include an open invitation to new members, information related to upcoming Board and CoC full membership meetings, and information related to the CoC Program NOFO when applicable.

LHC shall provide comprehensive oversight for the LA BOSCOG in order to meet all requirements specified in this Charter and elsewhere by HUD. LHC shall collaborate as necessary or prudent with other CoCs in the State of Louisiana. LHC shall provide administrative support to the CoC Board, all CoC committees, subcommittees, and workgroups, and as otherwise necessary to ensure the sound operation and success of the LA BOSCOG.

C. Planning Funds

At its discretion, the Collaborative Applicant shall apply for and spend planning funds through the CoC Program NOFO.

D. Other Funds

At its discretion, the Collaborative Applicant shall apply for and spend other funds on behalf of the LA BOSCOG.

V. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

A. Overview

HUD requires all communities and agencies receiving CoC Program funds to use a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is a data application system designed to capture, record, and store data about the needs of, and community services received by, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

HMIS records and stores client-level demographics service data from participating community service agencies, organizations, programs, and projects (Participating Agencies). That data can be aggregated to discern information about the extent and nature of homelessness over time, the pattern of service usage, the effectiveness of participating agencies, and the services received by people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It can also provide an unduplicated count of people who are homeless at a given time. This section of this Charter designates an HMIS Lead for the LA BOSCOG and specifies the differing responsibilities of each party mentioned herein regarding the governance and operation of HMIS.

Section V.B. of this Charter can only be amended by a three quarters majority vote of the General Membership during a duly scheduled in-person meeting at which at least one representative of the HMIS Lead is present.

B. HMIS Lead

The Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) is the designated HMIS Lead for the LA BOSCOG.

C. HMIS Software

The designated HMIS software tool for LA BOSCOG is Community Services by WellSky of Overland Park, Kansas operated by the Louisiana Service Network Data Consortium (LSNDC).

D. Responsibilities

This Charter imposes the following responsibilities on the HMIS Lead, the CoC, and Participating Agencies in the LA BOSCOG. (If the HMIS Lead and Collaborative Applicant are the same agency, that agency will discharge the responsibilities of both the HMIS Lead and Collaborative Applicant as outlined in this Charter.)

1. LA BOSCOG Responsibilities

The Collaborative Applicant on behalf of the LA BOSCOG shall:

- Work with the HMIS Lead and LSNDC to read and interpret any and all regulations, notices and other communications issued by HUD, and to annually review, and as necessary, revise and adopt any and all policies, procedures and plans related to the operation and use of HMIS.
- Work with Participating Agencies to improve delivery of HMIS-related services and enable them to better comply with federal regulations.
- The HMIS Lead and LA BOSCOG agree to work with and participate in the statewide HMIS, which is operated by LSNDC. LA BOSCOG will actively participate on the LSNDC Board with one LA BOSCOG representative. This representative is authorized to provide one of two LA BOSCOG votes on LSNDC-related business. The second vote will be cast by a representative from the HMIS Lead.

- Provide support to the HMIS Lead when it is unable to perform its duties due to interference from a Participating Agency. This support may take the form of negotiating with the non-compliant agency entering data into HMIS, censuring said agency, or imposing consequences, including, but not limited to recommending to HUD that the Participating Agency's granted funds be removed.
- Gather data from the HMIS Lead and non-HMIS participating agencies to use in reporting for the Point-in-Time (PIT) count, the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), the Annual Homeless Assessment Report, and other HUD reporting that the HMIS Lead assists LA BOSCOG to complete.
- Collaborate with the HMIS Lead in all appropriate ways to ensure that the policy goals developed by LA BOSCOG are met. They will work together closely to share information, develop goals, and address issues with HMIS Software, data quality and Participating Agencies as they occur.
- Work with Participating Agencies and the HMIS Lead to develop CoC-wide and agency specific performance benchmarks, including for the HMIS Project.
- Gather reports from the HMIS Lead and review them to determine if benchmarks have been met, then report that data to LA BOSCOG to assist in reviewing and ranking projects for the CoC Program NOFO competition.
- Monitor to ensure the Lead Agency is fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in this Charter and complying with the HMIS grant agreement and HUD-issued regulations and notices.

2. HMIS Lead Responsibilities

The HMIS Lead shall:

- Manage, administer and oversee the day-to-day operations of HMIS.
- Obtain and maintain grants supporting the HMIS Project, provide staffing, and purchase the required licenses, equipment, software, space and operations for HMIS.
- Work with the HMIS software vendor to ensure data is collected, stored and reported in compliance with all HUD regulations.
- Determine if a different HMIS software vendor should be selected and recommend that change to LA BOSCOG.
 - *Changes in HMIS software vendor must be approved by a vote of the CoC full membership.*
- Provide training to all HMIS end users within Participating Agencies. Introductory trainings as well as any additional training shall be offered on a regular schedule. Additional trainings shall be offered periodically at the request of LA BOSCOG and at the HMIS Lead's discretion. Privacy training will occur at a minimum of once per calendar year.
- Promote the use of HMIS through regular contact with users, Participating Agencies, and organizations whose participation would benefit LA BOSCOG or HMIS.
- Sign and execute HMIS Participation Agreements with each Participating Agency. These agreements shall delineate the HMIS obligations and authority of LA BOSCOG, the HMIS Lead, LSNDG, and the Participating Agency. They shall include, directly or by reference, the requirements of the LSNDG Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (LSNDG P&P) and any future regulatory documents set forth by HUD and the LSNDG. They shall detail sanctions for violating the

agreement. They shall also require that LA BOSCOG, the HMIS Lead, LSNDG, and Participating Agencies process protected identifying information in a manner consistent with this Charter.

- Provide each Participating Agency with a copy of the LSNDG P&P, Agency Executive Director Training Manual, Agency Administrator Training Manual, and End User Training Manual.
- Monitor and verify data collection and entry from all Participating Agencies, ensuring data entered into HMIS complies with HUD requirements and the LSNDG P&P. Work with LA BOSCOG and Participating Agencies to address any deficiencies in data collection.
- Monitor and verify the quality of the data to ensure data is accurate, complete, and conforms to federal HMIS requirements. Analyze the data to identify areas of concern and/or weakness and make recommendations to Participating Agencies regarding how to correct them.
- Monitor Participating Agencies for compliance with all the appropriate security, privacy, and data quality policies, regulations and procedures.
- Implement the LSNDG P&P and provide necessary support to assist all Participating Agencies in implementing the LSNDG P&P. Monitor compliance with the LSNDG P&P and work with LA BOSCOG to resolve issues and enforce sanctions for non-compliance.
- Collaborate with LA BOSCOG to ensure that the policy goals developed by LA BOSCOG are met.
- Collaborate with LSNDG to, at least annually, review and, as necessary, revise statewide the LSNDG P&P and supporting documents. When HUD releases new HMIS rules or requirements, the HMIS Lead shall present the recommended system changes to the LA BOSCOG HMIS Committee within 30 days. After review and discussions with LSNDG, the HMIS Lead may, within six months of the new rules' publication, present the recommended system changes to the LA BOSCOG Board for approval. The HMIS Lead will make required changes and demonstrate a good faith effort to prepare CoC members to meet the requirements by HUD's effective date.
- Seek feedback from LA BOSCOG and Participating Agencies regarding the LSNDG P&P and supporting documents and provide that feedback to LSNDG.
- Generate appropriate reports that reflect the cumulative data for LA BOSCOG as needed and upon request from LA BOSCOG, HUD, Participating Agencies, and other entities seeking this information and as deemed appropriate by the HMIS Lead itself or LA BOSCOG. The HMIS Lead shall be responsible for creating and developing new reports as required by LA BOSCOG, the Collaborative Applicant, and HUD. These reports shall document collective data from LA BOSCOG for such purposes as CoC Program project applications, PIT, HIC, and AHAR reports, along with any appropriate CoC-wide purposes.

3. Responsibilities of Participating Agencies

Each Participating Agency shall:

- Sign and comply with HMIS-related agreements, including HMIS Lead Agency Terms of Service Agreements with the HMIS Lead, the LSNDG P&P Agreement, and all other agreements required by the Collaborative Applicant or HMIS Lead.
- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding client and data privacy, security, and confidentiality. If there is a conflict between these standards, the Participating Agency must contact the HMIS Lead for direction on how to resolve the conflict and remain in compliance.

- Work with the HMIS Lead to maintain complete and correct data in HMIS.

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Appendix A: Change Log

This change log provides a comprehensive overview of the significant changes made to the LA BOSCOG Governance Charter in any given version; however, it is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Version 4.2

Structure

- Replaced all charts with bulleted lists for ease of reading

Good Standing

- Added the regional meeting attendance requirement in II.A.4.a(2)
- Added a provision allowing the Board to waive the Good Standing requirement for any reason at its discretion in II.A.5
- Clarified that all organizations in their first 12 months of LA BOSCOG membership automatically receive a waiver of Good Standing in II.A.5
- Individuals are now always considered to be in Good Standing for the purposes of voting due to the challenges inherent in tracking individual attendance and due to the relatively limited number of non-organization CoC members

Committees, Subcommittees, and Workgroups

- The Youth, Veterans, and Domestic Violence Workgroups have been reconstituted as Committees and are now included in the Charter in II.B.3.f through II.B.3.h

Board

- The Secretary role has been renamed Recording Secretary in II.C.2
- Board voting has been significantly simplified, reducing the number of Board members required to be present from 2/3s to 1/2 and granting the Board chair the power to vote during all votes rather than simply quorum votes (which have been removed); for more information, refer to II.C.5

Opening Meeting Law

- On advice of counsel, all general meetings, Board meetings, and committee, subcommittee, and open workgroup meetings are now subject to Louisiana's Open Meeting Law; for more information, refer to II.D

Consolidated Application

- Section IV can now only be amended by a three quarters majority vote of the general membership; this change is intended to both (1) create a structure for changing the Collaborative Applicant at the CoC's discretion and (2) limit the scenarios in which a poorly attended general meeting could significantly destabilize the CoC. For more information, refer to IV.A

Homeless Management Information System

- Section V.B can now only be amended by a three quarters majority vote of the general membership; this change is intended to both (1) create a structure for changing the HMIS Lead at the CoC's discretion and (2) limit the scenarios in which a poorly attended general meeting could significantly destabilize the CoC. For more information, refer to V.A

Version 4.1

Structure

- Document restructured into outline format

Board Membership

- Added a designated seat for the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV)

Approval

- Language in the Approval section of this document updated to match other LA BOSCOG documents

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Approval

Approval Process Timeline

- **March 11, 2024** -- released for public review
- **date** -- reviewed during the LA BOSCOG General Meeting
- **date** -- approved by the LA BOSCOG General Membership

Signature

For this document to take effect, it must bear the signature of either the Board Chair or the Board Vice Chair.

This document is effective as of the date on its first page, not as of the date of this page's authorizing signature. This document's effective date cannot be earlier than the date of this page's authorizing signature.

By signing below, the signatory certifies that this document has been reviewed and approved for release according to the procedures of the LA BOSCOG Governance Charter. If the signatory is the Board Vice Chair, the signatory also certifies that they have the authority to sign this document as granted by most recently approved version of the LA BOSCOG Governance Charter.

Winona Connor, Chair
LA BOSCOG Board

Date

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