



## **Continuum of Care**

**Organizational Documents,**

**Charter, Policies,**

**Procedures**

**Spring 2024**

The following summarizes and provides links to essential governing documents, policies and procedures that guide the Continuum of Care for Ramsey County, Heading Home Ramsey. In most instances the full text of the document is found via a link in the summary provided below.

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## CONTINUUM OF CARE DEFINITION AND AUTHORITY

**What is a Continuum of Care (CoC)?** According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a CoC is “a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.” In practice, a CoC is a partnership and decision-making process that includes a wide variety of nonprofits, community leaders, local governments, and people with lived experience. HUD’s CoC program is governed by [24 CFR Part 578 - CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAM, also known as the Continuum of Care Interim Rule.](#)

# RAMSEY COUNTY CONTINUUM

## OF CARE

### Heading Home Ramsey Governance

Heading Home Ramsey is the Continuum of Care covering Ramsey County. The responsibilities of the Continuum of Care and a description of its governance are detailed in a [Governance Charter which can be found here](#). Below are excerpts from the Charter.

**Vision Statement:** We work together to create a community where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring, where we eliminate racial disparities, and everyone is housed.

**Mission Statement:** We prevent and end homelessness by delivering effective, people-centered, integrated responses that are equitable and driven by community voice, advocacy, and learning.

**Overview:** Ramsey County Continuum of Care is responsible for planning and implementing the homeless response system in Ramsey County and carrying out the duties identified in the [Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing \(HEARTH\) Act](#) and the [Continuum of Care Interim Final Rule \(24 CFR 578\)](#).

Specifically, those duties are to:

- Develop a communitywide process involving the coordination of all the relevant CoC stakeholders
- Determine the geographic area the CoC will serve
- Develop a CoC system
- Design/implement a centralized or coordinated assessment system
- Evaluate the outcomes of projects for which funds are awarded including the ESG program
- Participate in the consolidated plan of the geographic area
- Prepare and submit an application to HUD on behalf of the entire CoC membership including conducting a sheltered and unsheltered point-in-time count and other data collection as required by HUD

Additionally, the Continuum of Care (CoC) must be involved in the coordination of funding streams and resources – federal, local, or private – of targeted homeless programs and other mainstream resources. The Continuum of Care:

- promotes community-wide goals to end homelessness
- provides funding to quickly rehouse homeless individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families while minimizing trauma and dislocation
- promotes access to, and effective utilization of mainstream programs; and
- optimizes self-sufficiency for all persons experiencing homelessness.

### Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agency

The Continuum of Care has concurred on the decision to operate a HMIS and, along with the other Continuum of Care regions in the state, has designated Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) as the lead agency of that system. Specific responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency are detailed in a [Memorandum of Understanding](#). The MOU describes the responsibilities of the CoC and ICA including

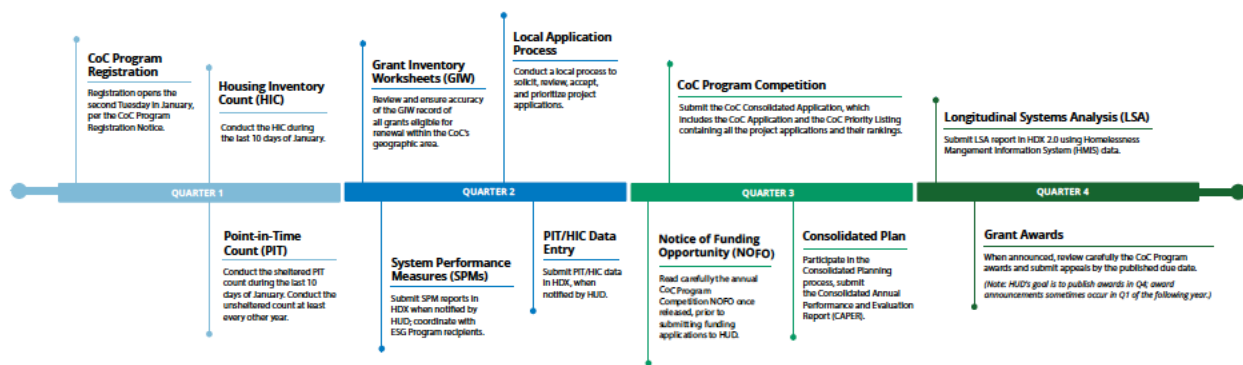
data quality and providing training on HMIS. The MOU also notes that ICA provides a minimum of quarterly reports to CoC on data quality and makes recommendations for improvements to data quality.

**The Designated Continuum of Care Collaborative Applicant: Ramsey County**

The Continuum of Care selects Ramsey County as the Collaborative Applicant having ascertained that Ramsey County has the commitment to equity and inclusion, experience and knowledge of HUD regulations and grant management as well as familiarity with the local community.

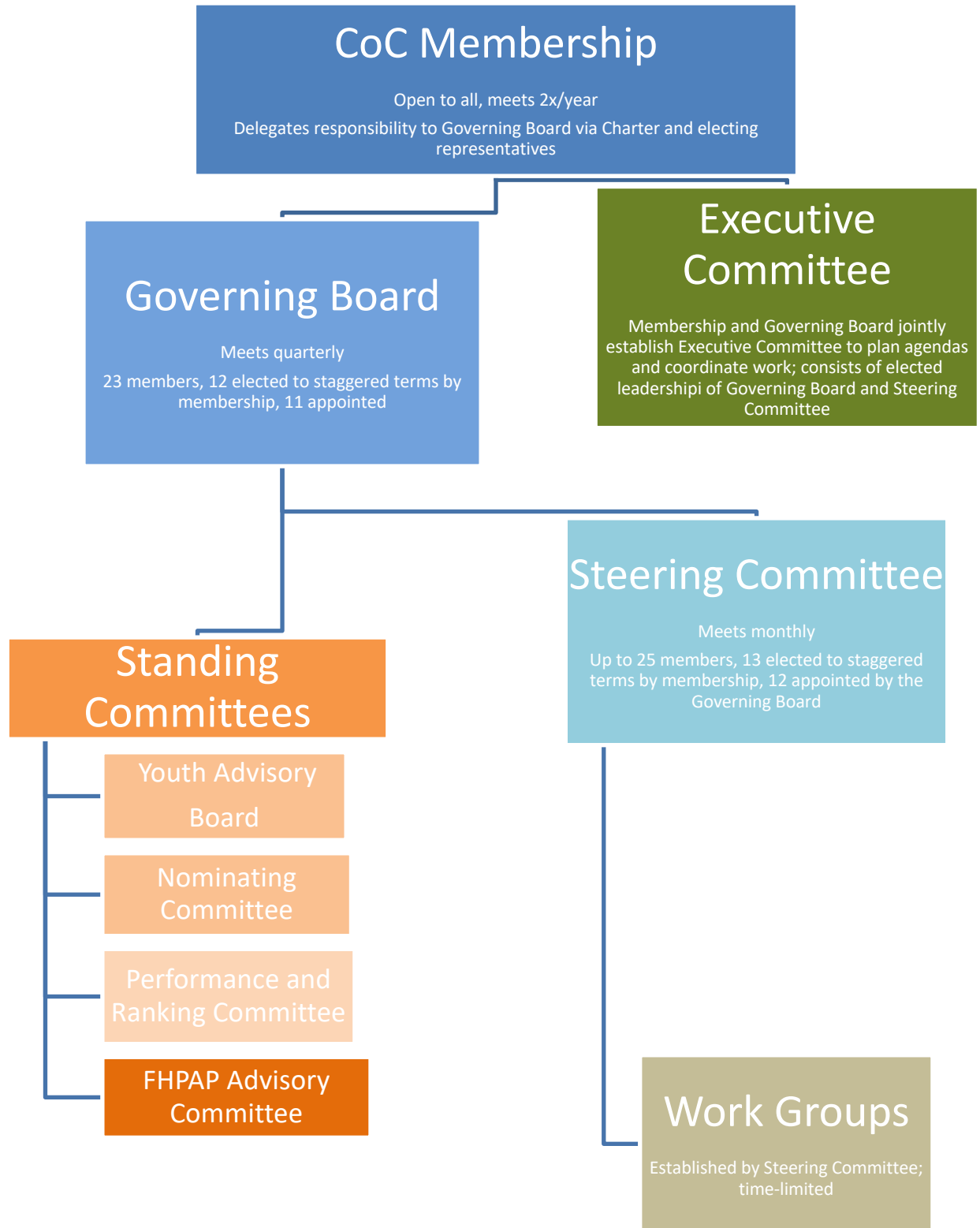
The Collaborative Applicant is an entity tasked by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with developing a systemic response to homelessness in their jurisdiction. The Collaborative Applicant is the eligible applicant designated by the CoC to collect and submit the CoC Registration, CoC Consolidated Application (which includes the CoC Application and CoC Priority Listing) and apply for CoC planning funds on behalf of the CoC during the CoC Program Competition. The Collaborative Applicant serves as the primary point of contact with HUD and is responsible for managing the CoCs grant funds. Additional information on the [annual duties of the Collaborative Applicant](#) are available at this link.

**HUD Annual Requirements: CoC Collaborative Applicant Activities**



**Continuum of Care Governance Structure**

Heading Home Ramsey has adopted a governance structure designed to engage high-level decision-makers as well as people with deep knowledge of the homeless response system. Through its broad membership, Governing Board, Steering Committee and other Committees and Work Groups, Heading Home Ramsey fulfils the responsibilities of a Continuum of Care as defined by HUD.



**Continuum of Care Membership**

The Ramsey County Continuum of Care seeks to be as inclusive as possible and to include the opinions and insights of various stakeholders, including people who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness. Membership in the Continuum of Care is open to anyone who has an interest in ending homelessness and may include, but is not limited to nonprofit 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, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals

### **Governing Board**

The Continuum of Care Governing Board is the delegated authority and decision-making body for the Continuum of Care consisting of 23 members to carry out the responsibilities as assigned by the Continuum of Care. The Governing Board must be racially diverse and include a range of stakeholders. A Nominating Committee recruits people to serve on the Governing Board and they are elected annually at the spring Full CoC meeting. The Board has primary responsibility to:

- Provide overall direction and high-level leadership of the CoC
- Designate and negotiate an MOU with the CoC Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant
- Seek, secure, align, and coordinate CoC, State of Minnesota, philanthropic and other homeless assistance, and mainstream resources.
- Develop and advocate for legislation and funding to support the CoC, including a legislative platform based on Steering Committee and Collaborative Applicant recommendations
- Coordinate strategies across systems and partners such as County, cities, school districts, public housing, etc.
- Review and consider recommendations from the Steering Committee and Collaborative Applicant related to CoC policies and strategies
- Review, adopt, and modify CoC policies and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) as needed, including policies relating to Coordinated Entry, HMIS, and HUD monitoring
- Ensure compliance with HUD requirements, including:
  - Approve priorities for funding projects
  - Approve the CoC's annual NOFO submittal to HUD
  - Approve an appeals and grievance process to consider and resolve conflicts arising from CoC funding allocation decisions

The Governing Board delegates additional authority to the Collaborative Applicant and specific committees through adopted policies that are specified in Article IV, Section 3 (Ranking Committees) and/or posted on the Heading Home Ramsey website. Among the duties delegated by the Governing Board are specific responsibilities and accountabilities related to Coordinated Entry and the re-allocation of program funds administered by Collaborative Applicant. Adopting and changing these policies and entering MOUs, is done by a majority vote of the Governing Board.

### **Continuum of Care Committees**

#### **Steering Committee**

The Governing Board and Continuum of Care membership jointly establish a Steering Committee to, in collaborative consultation with the Collaborative Applicant:

- Responsible for day-to-day oversight and guidance of the CoC, and vote to bring key recommendations to the Governing Board for discussion and action



- Provide on-going, structured engagement with CoC Work Groups, key County Departments, and specific key stakeholder groups, including people with the lived experience of homelessness or housing instability; and ensure an inclusive process to develop and implement CoC strategies
- Handle routine business, exercise oversight, and engage with designated entities as needed
- Establish Work Groups as needed to fulfill strategic plan goals and other operational duties, ensure Work Groups establish annual work plans, and monitor implementation of those plans.
- Ensure HUD requirements are met, including:
  - Annual Point-In-Time count (PIT) and Housing Inventory Count (HIC)
  - Annual Needs Assessment
  - Review of System Performance Measures
  - Policies to establish and operate Coordinated Entry
  - Establish process for NOFO submittal including ranking process
  - Review and revise HMIS policies and procedures

The Steering Committee consists of up to 25 people with intimate knowledge of the field, operations, and funding

### **Executive Committee**

The Board and Continuum of Care membership jointly establish an Executive Committee to prepare the agenda for each Governing Board and Steering Committee meeting, facilitate coordination between the Governing Board and Steering Committee on key issues, ensure adequate communication with all Governing Board and Steering Committee members regarding meeting times and places, and perform other duties necessary for the proper functioning of the Governing Board and Steering Committee.

Executive Committee members are elected annually and serve one year terms.

The Executive Committee consists of the following:

- Governing Board Chair
- Governing Board Vice Chair
- Governing Board Member-At-Large Elected by the Governing Board
- Elected Official from Ramsey County serving on the Governing Board unless that person is Chair or Vice Chair
- Mayor or Mayor’s Designee from the City of St. Paul serving on the Governing Board unless that person is Chair or Vice Chair
- Steering Committee Chair
- Steering Committee Vice Chair
- Steering Committee Member-At-Large Elected by the Steering Committee
- Continuum of Care Coordinator (non-voting)

### **Ranking Committees**

The Board and Continuum of Care membership empower standing committees – including, but not limited to, the Performance & Ranking Committee and the FHPAP Advisory Committee – with specific responsibilities to, in collaborative consultation with the Collaborative Applicant:

- Evaluate proposals for funding under the purview of the CoC – including, but not limited to the COC, ESG, and MN Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) programs – and make funding recommendations to the Governing Board for final approval
- Evaluate project performance and consider applications in light of the findings of the bi-annual Needs Assessment
- Monitor programs and providers with information provided by the Collaborative Applicant which

- performs the monitoring and evaluation function
- Approve funding re-allocations as needed in accordance with CoC program policies
- Membership on a ranking committee is open to all CoC members, subject to the approval of the Steering Committee, in keeping with the CoC's Conflict of Interest Policy in Article V and Ramsey County procurement policies.
- Follow procurement and conflict of interest policies of the Collaborative Applicant (Ramsey County) that adhere to all Federal, State and Local regulations.

### **Nominating Committee**

Annually, the Governing Board will appoint up to six members from the Continuum of Care to serve on a Nominating Committee to recruit members to the Governing Board and Steering Committee. This committee will conduct all outreach and nominating activities. The committee will bring a list of candidates to the Continuum of Care annually for a vote. The committee will work closely with the Collaborative Applicant to recruit candidates and conduct elections. The committee will select its own Chair.

**Youth Advisory Board** – as required by HUD in order for the CoC to apply for Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program funding. This is a standing advisory body focused on recruitment, partnerships, and engagement for transitional-aged youth and young adults. It currently meets monthly.

### **Work Groups**

The Steering Committee can establish Work Groups as it deems necessary to create and carry out the work of the CoC. In these bodies, strategies are developed, deepened, and expanded into actionable work plans. These groups may also be directly responsible for specific initiatives or for exploring options to solve particular concerns. Work Groups may include any HHR members or members from the community at large. Unless specified, Work Groups have no formal decision-making authority but make policy and programmatic recommendations to the Steering Committee for further consideration.

Each Work Group shall develop and manage a work plan with clear objectives. At least one member of the Steering Committee must serve on each Work Group. Whenever possible, the Chair of each Work Group will be a member of the Steering Committee or Governing Board. Meeting locations must be accessible to all interested participants.

The Steering Committee may disband any Work Group.

Current Work Groups and descriptions are as follows:

- i. **Coordinated Entry:** for community partners to connect, collaborate and reform Coordinated Entry System policies and procedures, training, and educational opportunities to meet the changing needs of Ramsey County residents. This group looks at the Coordinated Entry System as a whole to suggest and identify gaps, needs, and ease of system navigation for family, single adult, and youth populations, as well as community partners, to recommend resolutions. It currently meets every other Thursday.
- ii. **Family Shelter:** to ensure the inclusion of children and youth as part of the dialogue at the Steering Committee level, educate Heading Home Ramsey regarding the needs of families, include individuals with lived experience, and expand shelter resources for families to functionally eliminate the waiting list. It currently meets monthly.

- iii. **Prevention & Tenant Stabilization:** to stop the inflow of households that experience homelessness and/or enter the homeless crisis response system. The members of this Work Group also meet as the [FHPAP Advisory Committee](#), which has [delegated powers](#) for the state's Family Homeless Prevention & Assistance Program (FHPAP). This group currently meets twice monthly, and every third meeting is as the FHPAP Advisory Committee.
- iv. **Public Policy:** meets on an ad hoc basis as needed to discuss legislative and state budgetary initiatives and inform CoC funding priorities.
- v. **Single Adult Shelter:** to serve the needs of single adults experiencing homelessness, increase the flow of individuals from shelters into housing to ensure that homelessness is brief, and recommend improvements that will lead to a more balanced, equitable shelter system with differentiated shelter programs. It currently meets monthly.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Heading Home Ramsey's Charter includes a Conflict-of-Interest policy that requires all members of the Governing Board, Steering Committee or any of its official committees to declare and adhere to the policy. The policy is reviewed by members annually and members complete a declaration annually.

### **Adoption and Amendments to the Governance Charter**

Heading Home Ramsey requires that the charter be adopted by a majority of the members of the Continuum of Care annually. Amendments to the charter are posted at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which the vote will occur.

## **Memorandum of Understanding Between Heading Home Ramsey CoC and Collaborative Applicant**

The purpose of the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) is to confirm agreements between Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care Governing Board (Board), organized pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended (the Act), and Ramsey County, a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota. The Board is the lead decision-making body for the Continuum of Care (CoC) and has selected Ramsey County to serve as the Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant, as defined in the Act. This MOU defines the general understanding, roles and specific responsibilities of each party related to the CoC.

The parties will meet and confer annually to review the MOU to ensure the continued relevance of the terms of the MOU to the parties, and to ensure continued consistency and compliance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

### **CoC Governance**

The CoC is the lead planning entity for HUD-funded and non-HUD funded efforts to end homelessness and for implementing and operating a homeless prevention and response system in Ramsey County. As such and per HUD policy, the CoC is responsible for oversight and governance of the Continuum of Care/Homeless Prevention and Response System. The CoC's oversight and governance responsibilities are carried out by its Governing Board.

The CoC designates the Governing Board to set policies and priorities and to make funding decisions related to the CoC Application for funding through HUD. The Governing Board provides direction to the Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant to ensure implementation of the CoC's goals and priorities.

### **Responsibilities of Heading Home Ramsey CoC**

- Establish Governance Structure to Meet Requirements and Serve Homeless Response System
- Effectively partner with Ramsey County in its role of Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant

### **Responsibilities of Ramsey County as Collaborative Applicant for CoC**

Ramsey County has agreed to lead and perform a range of duties to support the CoC. A detailed description of the Collaborative Applicant responsibilities and staff roles, administrative processes, etc. are included in the [Collaborative Applicant Policies & Procedures](#) document but generally include:

- Serve as the Collaborative Applicant for the Continuum of Care  
The Collaborative Applicant is the eligible applicant designated by the CoC to collect and submit the CoC Registration, CoC Consolidated Application (which includes the CoC Application and CoC Priority Listing) and apply for CoC planning funds on behalf of the CoC during the CoC Program Competition.

- **Conduct a Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons**  
 Plan for and conduct, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of homeless persons that meets the following requirements:
  - a) Homeless persons who are living in a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans must be counted as unsheltered homeless persons
  - b) Persons living in emergency shelters and transitional housing projects must be counted as sheltered homeless persons
  - c) Other requirements established by HUD by Notice
  
- **Serve as Collaborative Applicant for the CoC**  
 The CoC Collaborative Applicant is tasked by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with developing a systemic response to homelessness in their jurisdiction. As Collaborative Applicant, Ramsey County will accomplish the following duties that are detailed in the MOU between the CoC and Collaborative Applicant:
  - Administrative Duties
  - Planning Duties
  - Funding Duties (beyond the HUD CoC NOFA)
  - Communications Duties
  
- **Coordinated Entry Operations Designation**  
 The CoC Board designates Ramsey County to coordinate and oversee the Coordinated Entry system. Coordinated Entry is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

## **Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care Collaborative Applicant Policies & Procedures**

In addition to the description of the roles and responsibilities of the CoC and the Collaborative Applicant included in the MOU above, Ramsey County Housing Stability Department (HSD) provides the following additional information on its role, authority, staffing and administrative support to the CoC. This information is found in full in the [Collaborative Applicant Policies & Procedures](#) document.

1. Developing a communitywide process involving the coordination of nonprofit homeless 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, organizations that serve veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.
2. Developing a Continuum of Care system including administering the Coordinated Entry system for Single Adults, Families, and Youth with priority list managers, housing providers, and assessors. The Collaborative Applicant also coordinates homeless prevention efforts through the administration of the state's Family Homeless Prevention & Assistance Program (FHPAP).
3. Evaluating the outcomes of projects for which funds are awarded in the geographic area, including the Emergency Solutions Grants program. This includes coordinating and supporting the System Performance & Ranking Committee, which evaluates project outcomes in addition to system-level performance, for both the HUD CoC and ESG programs, in addition to other publicly-funded programs. In coordinating and supporting the System Performance & Ranking Committee, the Collaborative Applicant utilizes the [procurement and conflict of interest policies established by Ramsey County](#) found in Section V of the Governance Charter. These policies and procedures meet required Federal, State and Local regulations related to procurement.
4. Perform grant administration and monitoring activities, including contract administration which includes technical assistance (training, data quality, referral management, invoice and outcomes management and program monitoring for HUD CoC, ESG and MN FHPAP and all other funding overseen by the CoC. Ramsey County HSD evaluates project performance through analysis of data, written reports, and monitoring visits. Staff provide feedback and direction to projects to ensure compliance and to correct deficiencies.
5. Participating in the consolidated plan(s) of the jurisdiction(s) in the geographic area.
6. Preparing and submitting an application to HUD on behalf of the entire Continuum of Care membership, including conducting a sheltered and unsheltered point-in-time count and other data collection as required by HUD.

Ramsey County HSD has a staff team to fulfill CoC Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant roles and responsibilities, as documented in a bi-weekly time-reporting process. In addition, Ramsey County HSD retains the right to contract with professional consultants in accordance with the County's procurement policies to fulfill its CoC responsibilities.

The Collaborative Applicant is also responsible and delegated authority to perform several HUD required projects. These include:

- [Point in Time Count \(PIT\)](#): On a given night in January, the number of people experiencing homelessness (in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or unsheltered). The most recent Ramsey County PIT Count [is available here](#).
- [Housing Inventory Count \(HIC\)](#): On a given night in January, the number of beds and units dedicated to serving persons who are homeless and persons in Permanent Supportive Housing. The most recent Ramsey County [HIC is available here](#).
  - HHR is required to ensure that all HMIS data, and the data from the PIT/HIC are accurate and uploaded to become part of the “[Annual Housing Assessment Report](#)” [AHAR] which HUD submits to Congress each year.
- [HUD System Performance Measures](#): HUD has seven system-level performance measures to help communities [gauge their progress in preventing and ending homelessness](#). The reports measure changes in each of the indicators between the current and most recent past federal fiscal year. These measures are one component that HUD uses to evaluate CoC funding awards. The most recent Ramsey County System Performance Measures are [available here](#).
- [Heading Home Ramsey Biannual Needs Assessment](#): Every other year, Heading Home Ramsey (HHR) conduct a homeless needs assessment to identify gaps in our overall homeless response system. Assessments are conducted early in even calendar years, with final results published during the summer. The needs and/or gaps identified in the system direct how HHR prioritizes services, new housing projects, and future funding especially informing the CoC’s response to the annual Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by HUD. The Needs Assessment also is used to inform the CoC’s strategic plan and goal setting related to System Performance Measures, Coordinated Entry prioritization, the CoC’s legislative Strategy and fund development.

## **Heading Home Ramsey Member Orientation Manual**

At least once each year Heading Home Ramsey provides an orientation session for new members elected or appointed to the Governing Board or Steering Committee utilizing an orientation manual. [This manual](#) is designed to give members the information they need to be effective participants and includes:

- overview of what a CoC is as defined by HUD
- description of governance and structure of Heading Home Ramsey including its committees, work groups through review of material in the [Governance Charter which can be found here](#)
- how Heading Home Ramsey works with the Collaborative Applicant and Collaborative Applicant referencing details in the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) between the CoC and Collaborative Applicant and a detailed description of Collaborative Applicant responsibilities, staffing and processes included in the [Collaborative Applicant/Collaborative Applicant Policies & Procedures](#)
- a description of [Coordinated Entry](#) system and the components of the Heading Home Ramsey CoC homeless response
- overview of funding resources available to address homelessness
  - [HUD Programs](#)
  - [Health & Human Services Programs](#)
  - [Veterans Affairs](#)
  - [Family Homeless Prevention & Assistance Program \(FHPAP\)](#)
  - [Housing Support](#)
  - [Housing Stabilization Services](#)
  - [General Assistance](#)
  - [Minnesota Supplemental Aid \(MSA\)](#)
  - [Office of Economic Opportunity](#)
- additional resources to help understand the CoC



## **Heading Home Ramsey** **Policies**

### **Purpose and Overview**

The purpose of this document is to establish and organize the policies and procedures of the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care (HHR CoC), including key elements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations for projects funded under HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) Program; other federal, state, and county programmatic policies; and other policies adopted by the HHR Governing Board in consultation with the HHR Steering Committee and the full CoC membership.

All projects funded by the CoC Program must comply in full with the applicable standards described in this manual, as well as all HUD regulations and NOFO requirements established for the CoC Program. HUD regulations may be found at:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule.pdf>

CoC Program funded projects may also be subject to additional criteria as set forth in annual competitive application processes administered by HHR in conjunction with HUD annual CoC program competitions.

## Policies

### Coordinated Entry System (CES) /Coordinated Access

[Link to: Coordinated Entry Policy Manual – revised 6/16/22](#)

Coordinated Entry (CES) or Coordinated Access (CAH) is a process that coordinates entry into, movement within, and ultimately exit from a homeless system. Coordinated Entry processes increase the efficiency of a homeless assistance system by standardizing access to homeless services.

As part of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) regulations that govern Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all CoCs across the United States to implement Coordinated Entry.

According to HUD guidance, required elements of Coordinated Entry include:

- Access: ensures the entire Continuum of Care (CoC) area is covered and that service access points are easily accessible and well-advertised.
- Assessment: standardizes information gathering on service needs, housing barriers, and vulnerabilities.
- Prioritization: matches the output of the assessment tool to community priorities based on severity of need and establishes a priority rank for available housing and services.
- Referral: coordinates the connection of individuals to the appropriate and available housing and service intervention.

Supportive housing resources are extremely limited. The CoC utilizes the bi-annual Needs Assessment to help determine priorities and considers individuals and families with the highest vulnerability, most significant service needs, and longest history of homelessness as priorities.

The CE Priority List for singles, known as Coordinated Entry for Youth and Singles (CEYS), is operated by Ramsey County; the CE Priority List for families, known as Coordinated Access for Housing and Shelter (CAHS), is operated by Catholic Charities; the CE Priority List for unaccompanied youth is operated by Street Works Collaborative.

The Heading Home Ramsey Coordinated Entry System is detailed in a policy manual that is updated regularly based on recommendations of the Coordinated Entry Work Group as approved by the Steering Committee and Governing Board. The manual includes policies and procedures detailing how the Coordinated Entry system works in Ramsey County including:

- Eligibility for Assessment
- Assessor Approval and Training
- Prioritization and General List Management
- Client Choice
- Prioritization Policy for Prevention
- System Transfers
- Housing Referral Procedure
- Program Denials
- Program Transfer within Supportive Housing
- Move Up Policy and Procedure
- Fair and Equitable Access
- Access to Coordinated Entry for Victim-Survivors

- Street Outreach Policy
- Targeting Policy
- Transfers, Review and Accommodations in Coordinated Entry (TRACE)
- Data Management
- Policy Approval Process

## **Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP) Policies**

Link to [FHPAP Policy Manual](#)

The Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) provides supportive services and financial assistance, such as rent deposits, rent payments or utility payments, to eligible households that are homeless or at imminent risk of homeless. FHPAP resources are intended to complement the existing network of services in the Continuum of Care (CoC) region and provides funding for four activities designed to address or prevent homelessness. The four activities are: 1) Coordinated Entry; 2) Street Outreach; 3) Prevention; and 4) Rapid Rehousing.

## **Funding and Reallocation Policy**

Link to [Funding and Reallocation Policy](#)

HUD now encourages Continuums of Care to reallocate funds from renewal projects to provide funding for new projects and to create additional permanent housing stock. Heading Home Ramsey has developed a Funding and Reallocation Policy that is: aligned with HUD and HEARTH Act policy guidance; performance-based as specified with the annual HUD NOFA; and finally, based upon performance metrics of import. Just as HUD's guidelines determine the program focus targeted in each Continuum of Care (CoC) competition, HHR's reallocation decisions will similarly be driven by this focus, with additional emphasis on local needs, data and use of common assessment tool.

Reallocation involves using funds in whole or in part from existing eligible renewal projects to create one or more new projects. CoCs should reallocate funds to new projects whenever reallocation would reduce homelessness. Renewal projects may voluntarily reallocate part or all of their funding. Low-performing projects are encouraged to reallocate, and potential applicants are encouraged to apply for new projects through reallocation. Recent NOFOs have stated that HUD would prioritize those CoCs that have demonstrated a capacity to reallocate funding from lower performing projects to higher performing projects through the local selection process.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Link to [Heading Home Ramsey Nondiscrimination Policy](#)

Heading Home Ramsey is committed to providing housing and services in an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and with equal treatment and opportunity. Heading Home Ramsey's Nondiscrimination Policy applies to staff, volunteers, and contractors at all partner agencies, including agencies that receive CoC and ESG funding. We strongly encourage all partners, regardless of funding source, to adopt this policy.

## **Policy on Ensuring Access to Educational Services**

Link to [Heading Home Ramsey Policy on Ensuring Access to Educational Services](#)

The [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The act requires that children and youths have access to the education and other services that so they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. The Act further states that entities must ensure that children and young adults are immediately enrolled in school and that they are connected to transportation and educational services to help them succeed in school.

Heading Home Ramsey requires that recipients and sub-recipients of CoC funds serving families with children and/or young adults 18-24 are responsible adhere to a policy ensuring access to educational services. The intent is that providers will comply with requirements established by HUD through the annual CoC project application. All projects receiving CoC funds that are serving families with children and/or young adults 18-24 are required to have similar policies. Projects may opt to adapt the Heading Home Ramsey policy or to adopt a different policy that fulfills the requirements.

## **Emergency Transfer Policy for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking**

Link to [Heading Home Ramsey Emergency Transfer Policy](#)

HUD regulations provide options for participants in CoC funded programs who are a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, to utilize an emergency transfer if they reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence, including but not limited to physical, sexual, emotional, or financial violence, if the participant remains within the same housing unit. If the participant is a victim of sexual assault, the participant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar- day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

Heading Home Ramsey adopted a policy governing transfers following the HUD regulations. That policy requires housing providers to seek to find alternative units within their portfolio first. If none is available, a transfer request can be made through the CoC Transfers, Reviews, and Accommodations in Coordinated Entry (TRACE) process. The TRACE process has been developed to honor client choice, accommodate client needs, and ensure accountability for decisions made by the system about client requests. Additional information on TRACE and Emergency Transfers can be found in the [Heading Home Ramsey Coordinated Entry Policy](#) manual.

## **Policy on Ensuring Trauma Informed Care to Survivors of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking**

Link to [Heading Home Ramsey Policy on Ensuring Trauma Informed Care](#)

Domestic violence and sexual assault are significant contributors to family homelessness and serve as both a cause and an outcome of housing instability. Trauma-informed care in homeless service settings recognizes and responds to clients' previous trauma, approaches clients through a strengths-based lens,

and provides clients with safety, respect, and choice. Heading Home Ramsey has adopted a policy and commits its members and providers to provide trauma-informed care to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Members and partners should employ trauma-informed care and ensure their organization has policies and practices aligned with trauma-informed care including awareness, safety, respect, control and choice, and strengths-based approach to clients.

### **Policy on Compensation for Consultants with Lived Experience**

Link to [Gift Card Policy](#)

The CoC utilizes the Gift Card Policy Guide developed by the Collaborative Applicant which provides suggested compensation amounts for participation in community engagement activities for lived experience consultants. The guide also explains the process for staff to complete gift card requests and submit completed receipt forms.

### **Process on Becoming an Assessing Agency**

Currently the CoC delegated approval to be an assessing agency to the Coordinated Entry Work Group. In 2024, the Work Group will develop a formal policy that outlines what type of assessing agencies are needed, how they can apply, and what the approval process is. Until that policy is developed, no new assessing agencies are being approved.

### **Policy on Transfer, Reviews, and Accommodations in Coordinated Entry (TRACE)**

The CoC recognizes that an effective coordinated entry system must be person-centered and trauma-informed. [The Transfers, Reviews, and Accommodations in Coordinated Entry \(TRACE\)](#) process has been developed to honor client choice, accommodate client needs, and ensure accountability for decisions made by the system about client requests. There are a variety of reasons why a person may be unable or unwilling to participate in the standard Coordinated Entry process. These include but are not limited to: immigration status, trauma, severe, persistent mental illness or cognitive ability or estimated length of time to secure stable housing. The policy includes: CoC Coordinated Entry Standard Transfer Policy and Procedure; Intra-Agency Pre-Placement Transfer Policy and Procedure; and Inter-County Housing Support to Housing Support Transfers.

## Components of Heading Home Ramsey and Written Standards

Heading Home Ramsey will be developing written standards for all components within its homeless response system (including projects providing Continuum of Care assistance, ESG and FHPAP programs). All agencies that participate in the Coordinated Entry System (CoC funded, ESG and FHPAP) will be expected to adhere to the standards.

Components of Heading Home Ramsey's Homeless Response System include:

### Outreach:

- Street Outreach: Street outreach teams engage people living in unsheltered situations, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, and other emergency services. NOTE there is a [street outreach standards manual](#) dated 2019 that will be reviewed and revised by the Adult Shelter Work Group in 2024.
- Drop-In Centers: Provide basic needs including access to showers, preventive healthcare, and referrals.
- Homeless Prevention: Homelessness Prevention funds programs that provide housing and other assistance to households that are at risk of becoming homeless due to a crisis situation, extremely low-incomes, or physical or mental health problems.
- Diversion: Diversion targets unstably housed people who are seeking access to shelter. Services include problem solving, mediation, and one-time flexible financial assistance to preserve a household's current housing and/or to help households move directly to alternative housing

### Support Resources:

- Day Services: Supplement homeless and low-income residents when the shelter stays are on an overnight basis. Case management is often provided. Some day shelters/day services have laundry and shower facilities. Meals and basic hygiene products may also be offered.
- Housing Stabilization Services: Housing Stabilization Services is a new Minnesota Medical Assistance benefit to help people with disabilities, including mental illness and substance use disorder, and seniors find and keep housing.

### Shelter:

- Single Point of Entry to Shelter: Heading Home Ramsey is developing and plans to launch in 2024 a single point of contact for shelter entry and diversion services for single adults. The process is designed to maximize utilization of shelter resources while providing more client-centered and trauma-informed care through more seamless and efficient service.
- Emergency Shelter: Any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations intended primarily to provide temporary shelter for people experiencing homeless.
- Domestic Violence Shelter: A shelter facility means a secure crisis shelter, housing network, safe home, or other facility operated by a nonprofit organization for the purpose of providing food, lodging, safety, and 24-hour coverage for abused women and their children. Minn. Stat. §§ 611A.37

### **Time-Limited Supportive Housing:**

- **Rapid Re-Housing:** Rapid re-housing combines time-limited rental assistance and services, focused on rapid exit from homelessness. In CoC, and ESG-and FHPAP funded RRH, households can receive rental assistance and services for up to 24 months. [NOTE – there is a RRH standards manual dated 2018](#) that will be reviewed and revised by the Coordinated Entry Work Group in 2024.
- **Transitional Housing:** Transitional housing is time-limited housing (can be shared units or individual apartments owned or leased by the provider agency), typically with stays of 6 to 24 months. Sometimes it is service intensive with case management and other services.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Combines long-term rental assistance and intensive services for people with disabilities, prioritized for people with the longest histories of homelessness and highest service needs. There is no time limit on receiving PSH. (See MHFA sponsored Best Practices in Permanent Supportive Housing, May 2020)
- **Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers:** The program partners with private rental market landlords to provide affordable housing opportunities for households that pay a minimum of 30% of their income toward their rent and the administrator pays the remaining amount to the property owner. Saint Paul Public Housing Agency administers the Voucher Program and the owns and manages 4,273 dwelling units throughout the City of Saint Paul. The apartments are located in hi-rise buildings, townhouse developments, and duplex and single-family units. Public housing provides a clean, safe and affordable living environment for eligible lower and very low-income individuals and families. Public housing families pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income for rent and utilities. Metropolitan Housing Redevelopment Authority: Metro HRA administers Housing Choice vouchers in suburban Ramsey County.
- **Housing Support:** State funded income supplement program that pays for room and board for low-income adults with disabilities. Landlords and Providers respond to RFP to participate in the Housing Support program. Housing support pays for room and board in a number of licensed or registered settings, including adult foster care; board and lodging establishments; supervised living facilities; non-certified boarding care homes; and various forms of assisted living settings registered under the Housing with Services Act.
- **Moving On Strategies:** For clients in permanent supportive housing (PSH) who may no longer need or want the intensive services offered in PSH but continue to need assistance to maintain their housing. Moving On strategies challenge a community to create partnerships between the Continuum of Care (CoC) and mainstream housing programs, such as public housing, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and HUD-funded multifamily housing providers.

## **Additional Policies and Procedures to be Developed in 2024**

The CoC is committed to continuing to develop and adopt relevant policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all HUD guidelines. In 2024 the Collaborative Applicant will draft for review, discussion and recommendation the following additional policies and procedures. These drafts will be reviewed by relevant CoC Work Groups with eventual adoption by the CoC Steering Committee and Governing Board.

- Housing First Policy
- Developer Endorsement Policy
- Family Separation and