

2022 Austin / Travis County Homelessness Response System Governance Roadmap

Leadership Council (CoC Board)

Purpose: The Homelessness Response System (HRS) Leadership Council ensures that Austin / Travis County has a strong homelessness response system that is based on evidence-informed practices and meets the needs of those experiencing homelessness. Leadership Council is the board of the TX-503 Austin Travis County Continuum of Care and as such is responsible for setting the policies and procedures for the governance, operations, and written standards for assistance and coordination of the Homelessness Response System and Continuum of Care funds.

This document outlines HUD requirements for Leadership Council as well as HRS System Goals for 2022. Following these goals, are the prioritized Tasks that are identified as needed to meet these goals in 2022. These Goals and Tasks will be developed collaboratively between Leadership Council and Committee members.

● **HUD Requirements**

- Comply with 24 CFR § 578.7 (Responsibilities of the Continuum of Care), which encompasses but is not limited to:
 - Adopting and following a written process to select a board (Leadership Council itself or a replacement) to act on behalf of the Continuum of Care. The process must be reviewed, updated, and approved by the Continuum at least once every 5 years.
 - In consultation with the collaborative applicant and the HMIS Lead, develop, follow, and update annually a governance charter, which will include all procedures and policies needed to comply with 24 CFR § 578.5 Establishing the Continuum of Care, Subpart B - Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care, and with HMIS requirements as prescribed by HUD; and a code of conduct and recusal process for the board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the board.
 - Overseeing and approving the work of committees and workgroups.
 - Serving as the primary decision-making body for the Austin / Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) funding.
 - Providing oversight of CoC funds and ensuring all CoC funded agencies fulfill their responsibilities as assigned by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Comply with 24 CFR § 578.95 in avoiding Conflicts of Interest.

● **Goals**

- The HRS will ensure that all people experiencing homelessness are provided dignified options to meet their daily needs, including equitable access to safe affordable permanent housing, shelter, diversion, and support services, including non-judgemental substance use treatment (harm reduction), health care,

transportation assistance, resource linkage, access to mainstream benefits, and behavioral health.

- The HRS System leads with Racial Equity, focusing on the following goals:
 - Establish a system in which Black people are no more likely to be experiencing homelessness, eliminating the current disparity in homelessness rates by race in our community.
 - Ensure and increase positive outcomes for Black households in the HRS, including long-term permanent housing stability.
 - Increase the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness in setting system- level policies and goals.
 - Increase the number of Black-led organizations as service providers.
 - Ensure that funding is equitably awarded.
- Service providers within the HRS are well-equipped with the technical assistance, training, and capacity to provide high quality, effective, and equitable services.
- The HRS has strategies to create permanent housing options for every person experiencing homelessness. In the absence of enough resources to meet the need, the HRS will prioritize housing resources equitably.
- HRS interventions must meet the established Written Standards for service delivery to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are appropriately and equitably served.
- The HRS will use all available funding to meet the unmet needs as determined by the Annual Needs and Gaps and the Racial Disparity Reports. The HRS uses evidence-based practices, and is continually informed by local data analysis to inform the needs and the performance of projects, agencies, and interventions.
- The HRS will ensure that survivors of sexual assault, domestic and family violence, dating violence, human trafficking, and stalking have access to immediate, high quality, and equitable services that meet their needs in accordance with VAWA requirements and best practices for trauma-informed service delivery..
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- **Work Groups**
 - Compensation: Development of the Compensation Policy, develop sustainable funding source for people with lived experience, and ensure a funding mechanism to distribute compensation.
 - Governance: Review and revise Governance Charter
 - Funding Alignment:

Governance Committees

Crisis Response

Purpose: The HRS will ensure people experiencing homelessness are provided dignified options to meet their daily needs, including referring households experiencing homelessness to permanent housing service provider, shelter, diversion, outreach, and navigation, as well as services, such as harm reduction, health care, mainstream benefits & community-based supports, and behavioral health.

- Identify needs and gaps in pre Coordinated Entry (Prevention, Diversion, and Street Outreach leading to Coordinated Assessment if Diversion fails) and post Coordinated Entry (continued Street Outreach services, Housing Problem Solving, and Re-Housing System Navigation) interventions and services.
- Provide recommendations on improvement of encampment response and inclement weather shelter protocols, including prioritization of funding needs and identification of needed resources.
- Develop policies, procedures, and opportunities for expanding crisis system capacity to respond to immediate basic needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Create or revise Written Standards for Diversion, Street Outreach, and Navigation programs.
- Improve access to and user experience of wellness resources (mental health, medical healthcare, and substance use services), legal support services, and humanitarian aid.
- Work Groups
 - Outreach and Engagement – coordinate outreach schedules and areas to ensure no area or population is unserved or underserved; develop shared written standards, policies, and procedures that can be implemented by all outreach programs
 - Crisis Beds – coordinate pathways from unsheltered homelessness until HRS-dedicated emergency shelter beds; develop shared written standards, policies, and procedures that can be implemented by all emergency shelter programs
 - Encampment Response – coordinate strategies that aim to engage and serve entire campsites as a cohesive strategy/unit; communicate and coordinate HEAL information and interaction with the broader system
 - Diversion Scaling – coordinate diversion/rapid exit services across DRE programs and in conjunction with other crisis response programs to bring these services to where they are needed, as they are needed; develop shared written standards, policies, and procedures that can be used by all diversion/rapid exit programs
 - Inclement Weather Shelter – advocate to the City for revisions to inclement weather shelter policies and procedures; coordinate strategies and communications between inclement weather facilities/resources and the people/programs in need of accessing them
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Permanent Housing

Purpose: The HRS will ensure that permanent housing options are available to every person experiencing homelessness in the community. This committee will work to ensure that all permanent housing programs meet a minimum standard of service delivery. In the absence of enough resources to meet the need, the HRS will prioritize housing resources equitably.

- Create a community strategy for managing a centralized housing portfolio, the creative use of risk mitigation and landlord incentives, and the development and implementation of new strategies, tools, and partnerships for property engagement and re-housing access expansion.
- Establish streamlined and equitable procurement policies and procedures for new and existing funding opportunities and support procurement processes for new funding opportunities for permanent housing.
- Refine permanent housing project models including updating of CoC Written Standards for Rapid Rehousing & Permanent Supportive Housing to center racial and gender equity and increase focus on quality of service delivery in collaboration with clients.
- Work Groups
 - *Property Engagement*: Develop strategies to increase access to safe affordable housing units for the HRS.
 - *Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)*: Ensure high quality, effective, and equitable RRH services within the HRS.
 - *Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)*: Ensure high quality, effective, and equitable PSH services within the HRS.
 - *Navigation Expansion*: Develop procedures to ensure that, once referred to permanent housing services, program participants have what they need to rapidly transition to permanent, stable housing.
 - *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*: Ensuring the survivors of sexual assault, domestic and family violence, dating violence, human trafficking, and stalking have access to immediate, high quality and equitable services that meet their needs within the HRS.

Equity

Purpose: To eliminate racial disparities within the HRS, to increase the safety and accessibility of the HRS to LGBTQ clients, and to address intersections of marginalization of groups that would not be served equitably without explicit focus.

- Tasks for 2022-
 - Ensure and increase the referrals and success of Black households in the HRS, including incorporating more qualitative data into defining “success.”
 - Move towards a system in which Black people are no more likely to be experiencing homelessness, eliminating the current disparity in homelessness rates by race in our community
 - Ensure that people with lived expertise of homelessness have increased input and direct authority in setting system-level policies and goals, through the development of sustainable presence in governance
 - Identify gaps in how services are provided to queer households.
 - Rectify identified gaps in how services are provided to queer households.
 - Ensure that funding is equitably awarded by prioritizing smaller orgs that are led by or serve larger minority populations and improving equitable geographic distribution of resources.
 - Encourage the hiring and retention of PLE within HRS orgs, including in positions beyond Peer Support.
 - Identify gaps in geographical distribution of crisis response services

- Work Groups
 - *Policies and Procedures*: Review and evaluate HRS policies to improve racial equity and center the experiences of people experiencing homelessness in the community.
 - *Trainings*: Develop and deliver opportunities for training and skills building around racial and gender equity, power sharing, and other issues to improve service delivery to HRS clients.
 - *Professional Development*: Develop partnerships with workforce programs, assess barriers, and develop more career growth opportunities to assist people with lived expertise of homelessness in getting work and receiving professional development within the HRS.
 - *Tools*: Build out tools for assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement towards goals around equity and increasing the input and authority of people experiencing homelessness and program participants.
 - *PLE Support Space*: Hold a support space for PLE involved in system governance to connect and resource/knowledge share.
 - *API Development*: Continue to evaluate and improve upon the Austin Prioritization Index.

Performance Monitoring

Purpose: The HRS will use quantitative and qualitative data to inform service delivery and funding priorities. This committee will work to evaluate system performance, needs and gaps, racial disparities, system flow, and program performance.

- Tasks for 2022
 - Create systems, processes, and policies that promote data-driven program evaluation and continuous improvement through accountability and transparency.
 - Review and revise policies and procedures related to Coordinated Entry, HMIS, and Performance Monitoring, including Written Standards, Quarterly Performance Scorecards, and Performance Improvement Plan Policy.
 - Maintain oversight of HRS data quality, system capacity and flow, and tracking of community goals and objectives (e.g., based on community funding priorities)
- Work Groups
 - *Coordinated Entry*: Develop and monitor key performance measures of the Coordinated Entry system.
 - *HMIS*: Discuss and monitor HMIS data standards and best practices
 - *CoC NOFO and Performance Scorecards*: consult with the Collaborative Applicant in the creation of the annual NOFO policies, procedures, and funding priorities and coordinate with the Performance Monitoring Committee and the Collaborative Applicant in the design, implementation, and upkeep of relevant and impactful performance scorecards for CoC-funded projects.
 - *CoC IRT (ad hoc annually per CoC NOFO)*: Convene an Independent Review Team, including people with lived experience of homelessness, which appropriately and proportionately reflects the racial diversity of the community being served to score CoC NOFO applicants in order to prioritize funding for well-designed projects from agencies able and committed to engaging in high-quality, equitable service delivery.
 - *PIT Count Planning*: Work with the local community to plan and prepare for the PIT Count.

System Improvement

Purpose: The HRS understands that ending homelessness requires robust support services and true collaboration between complex systems. This committee will work to evaluate the effect that other systems (education, child welfare, healthcare, mental health, criminal justice, transportation, environmental, etc.) have on the HRS and develop strategies to actively engage those systems in ending homelessness in our community.

- Tasks for 2022:
 - Supporting and increasing cross-system collaboration to improve wrap-around service provision with adjacent systems that feed into and work with the HRS.
 - Increasing systems integration through better data-sharing and stronger partnerships.
 - Mapping adjacent programs and systems to better understand what sectors/systems have historically not been at the table/haven't been heard and how to bring them in to increase successful homelessness prevention/response

- Work Groups
 - *Capacity Building*: Develop written standards to create strategies and sustainable funding to build capacity for traditional service providers and newly engaged service providers.
 - *Systems Involvement*: Develop written standards to create strategies to actively collaborate with other complex systems (criminal justice, foster care, child welfare, juvenile justice, et cetera).
 - *Peer Support & Advocacy Development*: Developing strategies and written standards to better integrate peer support into the HRS organizations (Mental Health and Substance Use, Healthcare, HIV/AIDS services, safe spaces for all people regardless of gender identity, Employment, Criminal Justice etc.)
 - *Free Transportation*: Collaborate with Capital Metro to ensure free or low cost access to transportation assistance for people experiencing homelessness.
 - *Employment*: Develop written standards to trauma-informed strategies to actively collaborate with the work force to ensure that people experiencing homelessness have access to opportunities to increase their income through employment, entrepreneurship, and education/training opportunities to ensure more employment options
 - *Healthcare*: Develop best practices to create trauma-informed strategies to ensure that people experiencing homelessness have access to low-barrier, high quality healthcare support, products & medications, and adequate access to respite care that honors their personhood, autonomy, and personal choice.
 - *Criminal Justice / Law Enforcement*: Develop trauma informed strategies to better the role of law enforcement in the response to homelessness
 - *Reunification of Parents with Children*: Develop trauma informed strategies to support the reunification of parents with children
 - *Mental Health and Substance Use*: Develop written standards for trauma informed strategies to ensure people experiencing homelessness have access to low barrier, high quality mental health and substance use treatment that honors their personhood, autonomy and personal choice. Develop process for beds, harm reduction and outpatient care for those who request treatment help from the bridge shelters and the outreach team