Austin/Travis County CoC Homelessness Response System

Governance Members' Code of Conduct

(Updated by Leadership Council on May 1, 2023)

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Governance Members' Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Governance Members of the Austin/ Travis County CoC Homelessness Response System (HRS) are expected to adhere to the code of conduct outlined herein. The term "Governance Members" refers to *all* individuals participating in Governance Structure, including all voting and non-voting members and participants of the CoC Leadership Council, Committees, and Workgroups.

Certain Governance Members are also required to sign this document annually as an added demonstration of commitment to these standards, and in recognition that they may be removed from their positions due to repeated violations. [See section entitled "Addressing Violations of the Code of Conduct.] Those Governance Members are:

- Leadership Council Members
- Committee Voting Members
- Workgroup Leads (as assigned by Committees)
- Individuals receiving compensation via the Governance Compensation Policy

This Code of Conduct is a living document to which Governance Members may suggest amendments and revisions at any time. The Leadership Council will review this document at least annually.

2. Governance Members

Governance Members are expected to adhere to the Austin/ Travis County Homelessness Response System Shared Values and Group Agreements.

Additionally, while Governance Members are not expected to always be able to make well-informed arguments on the spot, they are expected to communicate clearly and truthfully. Every effort should be made to listen carefully and understand each other. When there are disagreements, Governance Members must refrain from personal attacks and disparagements.

Governance Members must prioritize the group's mission over their individual interests.

Lastly, Governance Members are responsible for adhering to all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations regarding the CoC Program.

3. Leadership Council Members

a) HUD Regulations

Leadership Council (LC) Members are responsible for adhering to all HUD regulations regarding the CoC Program, and for ensuring that the Collaborative Applicant and CoC-funded agencies are compliant with all HUD regulations regarding the CoC Program. If a Leadership Council Member is unsure about whether a comment or position conflicts with HUD regulations or CoC Program rules, they must consult Leadership Council-Co Chairs or ECHO support staff for better understanding. Compliance with HUD regulations and CoC Program rules are critical to ensuring continued funding for our HRS.

Any LC Member who publicly suggests non-compliance with any HUD CoC Program rules will be considered in direct violation of the responsibilities of the Leadership Council that may put the CoC at risk. As such, the Member will be subject to a closed executive session discussion. The Member will be given an opportunity to explain themselves, after which there will be a vote by majority on the specific Member's continued service on the HRS Leadership Council. If there is a majority approval for removal of a Leadership Council Member, said Leadership Council Member will vacate their seat effective immediately.

If said Leadership Council Member commits a second offense, the removal of said Member will automatically go to a vote.

b) Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy

Leadership Council Members must agree to abide by the Anti-Discrimination Policy adopted by the Continuum of Care.

c) Dual Roles and Conflicts of Interest

It is important to have a diversity of perspectives and experiences represented on the Leadership Council. In addition to representing the collective mission of Leadership Council, members may also feel they represent one of more other entities or interests such as:
- A perspective of lived experience of homelessness
- A homeless service agency
- Another employer or group with an interest in the work of Leadership Council
- A committee of LC Governance
- A workgroup of LC Governance
- A city, county, or government agency

It is natural that Leadership Council Members will have dual or multiple roles during their term on Council. During Leadership Council meetings and other Leadership Council activities (such as committee or workgroup meetings) participants should be transparent about the roles they occupy and are representing. This helps the group better understand the areas of interest, expertise, and focus that each member brings. For more information about our Leadership

Council selection policy including both appointed and elected seats, term limits, roles and responsibilities please review our CoC Board Selection Policy.

All Leadership Council Members also agree to the following established Conflict of Interest Policy while representing a seat on Leadership Council. At all times, the best interest of the CoC should influence the decisions made by Leadership Council members. Personal relationships should not result in special considerations, including bias, nepotism or favoritism that influences the performance of their official duties in a manner contrary to the interests of the broader CoC. Each calendar year, the HRS Leadership Council Members and any voting Committee or Workgroup members must sign a Conflict of Interest form affirming that they have reviewed this Conflict of Interest policy and on which they disclose any potential conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties.

d) Public Statements

LC Members may not act in an official capacity, make statements within governance on behalf of the Leadership Council, or communicate publicly on behalf of Leadership Council unless they are specifically designated to do so by a majority vote of Leadership Council Members. If a Member is designated to communicate on behalf of the LC, their communications must be limited to the content and scope authorized by the majority of LC Members. LC members should make a good faith effort to resolve ambiguity where it might exist, including identifying the entity they are speaking on behalf of when making statements to the media or broader public, where necessary.

All requests for communication, including but not limited to requests for public comment, petition signatures, political advocacy, meeting agenda items and letters of support, can be submitted through the Leadership Council's online portal or directly submitted to the Co-Chairs of Leadership Council. Such requests will be responded to as follows:

- If the request is for a letter of support needed for a funding opportunity and the deadline for the request falls before the next regularly scheduled meeting of the HRS Leadership Council, Leadership Council Co-chairs will alert Leadership Council Members for a response. Any such requests and their responses will be reported to the full leadership council at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- All other requests will be reviewed by the full HRS Leadership Council meeting and a response approved by majority vote.
- If the deadline for the request does not allow for review by the full HRS Leadership Council at a regularly scheduled board meeting, Leadership Council Co-Chairs may inform the requesting entity that the request cannot be fulfilled and if so, will report this to the HRS Leadership Council at the next meeting. If they deem it appropriate, Leadership Council Co-Chairs may instead call a special Leadership Council meeting to review the request.

e) Meeting Frequency and Attendance

During the first meeting of the year, the LC will set and approve all other LC meetings for the next 12 months.

LC Co-Chairs may call a special meeting of the Council provided it meets all notice and quorum requirements to address urgent matters. The LC shall take all reasonable and practical steps to keep CoC-interested parties informed of their activities.

LC Members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled board meetings and special meetings. In order to establish quorum, Members will inform the LC Co-Chairs and ECHO Staff of unavoidable absences. In the event of such absences, Members may choose a Delegate to attend meetings in their stead, informing the LC Co-Chairs in writing of their Delegate at least three (3) days before the meeting. The Charter further outlines the procedure for appointing Delegates for single meetings and/or extended leaves of absence.

Members may also appoint Delegates to represent them in meetings during which an agenda item presents a personal conflict of interest. Members may not appoint Delegates when the nature of their Seat presents a conflict of interest.

If a Member fails to attend three (3) out of six (6) consecutive LC meetings, the LC will go into Executive Session for discussion of the Member's absences, and follow procedures laid out in the Charter.

4. **Committee Voting Members**

All Committee Voting Members must actively participate and seek to abide by the committee's priorities as laid out in the Governance Roadmap.

a) **Co-Chairs**

- Committee Meetings
  o Committee Co-Chairs will determine the frequency of committee meetings with the approval of committee members.
  o They will facilitate meetings in a manner that provides space for genuine collaboration and co-creation, actively creating opportunities for members to sincerely and respectfully share their perspectives.
  o Co-Chairs will strive to make space for, and seek out, the perspectives and opinions of people with lived expertise and those with subject-matter expertise, and respond to any concerns or issues that committee members may raise pertaining to the participation of people with lived experience.
  o Co-chairs will refrain from using personal attacks and insults, derogatory remarks, or language that promotes the dehumanization, discrimination, or ridicule of any group of persons.
- Agendas
  o Co-Chairs will work with ECHO Support Staff to prepare an agenda for every meeting which will be made available to all participants before the beginning of each meeting.
- Governance Documents

- o Co-Chairs will familiarize themselves with the Governance Charter and Roadmap which they will use as guiding documents when setting priorities and activities within Committees.
- o With ECHO Support Staff and other Committee Voting Members, Co-Chairs will develop and update Written Standards to meet the goals outlined in the Roadmap.
- o Co-chairs will make good faith attempts to remind governance members of the expectations within this Code of Conduct.
- Power-Sharing
  - o While co-chairs may choose how to share responsibilities, both Co-Chairs must share equally in decision-making and agenda-setting while prioritizing relationship-building.
- Leadership Council Meetings
  - o Co-Chairs will strive to ensure that at least one Co-Chair will attend regularly scheduled Leadership Council meetings where they will provide updates on their Committee's progress and the progress of the Workgroups they oversee,and if they are not able to do so, will appoint a committee member to provide updates in their stead.

b) Meetings

Committee Voting Members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings, which must be held: in accessible and convenient locations in person with a remote access option and/or the opportunity to participate in written feedback before or after meetings, or completely virtually. If a Committee Voting Member fails to attend three (3) out of six (6) consecutive LC meetings, the LC will go into Executive Session for discussion of the Member's absences, and follow procedures laid out in the Charter.

A calendar of scheduled committee meetings must be posted on the CoC website.

c) Leadership Council Representation

All Committees within the CoC must include a Leadership Council Member as a Committee Voting Member. If there are more committees than LC Members, LC Members will at minimum support the Governance Committee.

5. **Workgroup Leads (as assigned by Committees)**

- Workgroup Meetings
  - o Workgroup Leads will facilitate meetings in a manner that provides space for genuine collaboration and co-creation, actively creating opportunities for members to sincerely and respectfully share their perspectives.
  - o Workgroup Leads will strive to make space for, and seek out, the perspectives and opinions of people with lived expertise and those with subject-matter expertise, and respond to any concerns or issues

that committee members may raise pertaining to the participation of people with lived experience.

- o Workgroup Leads will refrain from using personal attacks and insults, derogatory remarks, or language that promotes the dehumanization, discrimination, or ridicule of any group of persons.
- o All Workgroup Leads will provide ECHO with attendance following every workgroup meeting in order to ensure timely payments distributed through the Compensation Policy.
- Agendas
  - o Workgroup Leads will prepare an agenda for each meeting which will be made available to all participants before the beginning of the meeting.
- Governance Documents
  - o Workgroup Leads will familiarize themselves with the Governance Charter and Roadmap which they will use as guiding documents when setting priorities and activities within their workgroups.

6. Individuals Receiving Compensation

All recipients of the Compensation Policy will actively participate in meetings, contribute their perspectives, listen to the perspectives of others, and collaborate towards the goals in the Roadmap. If there are any barriers preventing their active participation, recipients will proactively seek support and clarification from Committee Co-Chairs. Lastly, they will refrain from using personal attacks and insults, derogatory remarks, or language that promotes the dehumanization, discrimination, or ridicule of any group of persons.

7. ECHO Support Staff

While ECHO Support Staff are not Governance Members, they are critical to the functions of the CoC and its governance structure. As such, they are required to meet certain standards in their work with the LC, Committees, and Workgroups. In all CoC settings, ECHO Support Staff will refrain from using personal attacks and insults, derogatory remarks, or language that promotes the dehumanization, discrimination, or ridicule of any group of persons.

- Leadership Council
  - o ECHO Support Staff will make a reasonable effort to work with LC Co-Chairs to prepare meeting agendas and ensure that agendas are available to LC members before the beginning of each meeting.
  - o They will take minutes of LC Meetings and ensure that they are available to LC Members following the meeting.
  - o They will ensure that additional ECHO Staff are in attendance at meetings to support agenda items as subject matter experts, as needed.
  - o They will support the LC Co-Chairs in adhering to governance documents.

- Committees
  - ECHO Support Staff will make a reasonable effort to work with Committee Co-Chairs to prepare meeting agendas and ensure that agendas are available to committee members before the beginning of each meeting.
  - They will take minutes of Committee Meetings and ensure that they are available to Committee Members following the meeting.
  - They will ensure that additional ECHO Staff attend meetings to support agenda items as subject matter experts, as needed.
  - They will support the Committee Co-Chairs in adhering to governance documents, including the Roadmap.
- Workgroups
  - ECHO is not responsible for staffing Workgroups.

8. Addressing Violations of the Code of Conduct

Governance Members can report violations to the Code of Conduct in writing to any Leadership Council Member or ECHO Support Staff. In writing, the Governance Member ought to establish grounds for the accused Governance Member's removal, which can include but is not limited to, violations to the Attendance Policy or Code of Conduct.

Upon receipt of a violation, LC Co-Chairs will initiate an investigation into the alleged violation by bringing the information to a closed Executive Session for review. At that point, the following procedure will be enacted:

- The LC establishes grounds for the Governance Member's removal and brings the full motion to the group.
- The Governance Member accused of being in violation will be given the opportunity to advocate for themselves and present their case before a vote is called.
- The LC will hold a majority vote on whether to bring the removal of said Governance Member to a vote. If there is majority approval to move to a vote, the LC Members will vote on the Governance Member's continued service in CoC Governance.
- If there is majority approval for removal, the Governance Member will vacate their seat immediately.

If the Governance Member in question wishes to appeal the decision, they have five (5) calendar days to submit a written appeal to the full Leadership Council. The Leadership Council will meet within twenty (20) calendar days to review all materials and determine by majority vote whether a violation occurred. The determination made by the Leadership Council is final and will be communicated in writing to the Governance Member, by the Leadership Council Co-Chairs within five (5) calendar days of the decision being made. The announcement will be made in the next appropriate public meeting, and reflected where appropriate.

9. Signature

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and will abide by the Code of Conduct of the Austin/Travis County CoC Governance. I also acknowledge that I have read, understand, and will abide by the Governance Charter.

_____

Governance Member Printed Name

_____   _____

Governance Member Signature   Date

Austin Travis County HRS Governance
Onboarding Checklist

Initial Onboarding:
- Review and Sign HRS Governance Members' Code of Conduct
- Review and Sign HRS Leadership Council Conflict of Interest Policy
    - Work with CoC Governance Staff to get connected to TOOF who is implementing the compensation policy
    - Complete all applicable paperwork requested by TOOF to begin receiving compensation.
- For Leadership Council Members, submit a brief bio with photo to CoC Governance Staff to be added to the ECHO website
- Review CoC Governance Charter
- Review applicable policies and procedures related to CoC governance on ECHO website
- Reach out to ECHO Support Staff to schedule an onboarding training with the ECHO Governance Manager

Yearly Recommitment
- Review and Sign HRS Leadership Council Conflict of Interest Policy, annually