



A Way Home for Tulsa

Governance Charter

for the Tulsa City & County Continuum of Care

Authored by: AWH4T Governance Charter Task Force

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Background

In 2011, Community Service Council became the lead agency for the A Way Home for Tulsa (AWH4T) initiative, a collaboration of local agencies united to end long term homelessness and provide oversight to the implementation of the Pathways intensive case management model. In March 2013, the decision was made to merge the HUD Continuum of Care Steering Committee, the Homeless Services Network Advisory Board, the Homeless Management Information System and the Pathways Program with the AWH4T collaborative to create a single Continuum of Care. The AWH4T Governance Council was designated as the board for the Continuum of Care (CoC or Continuum). The change was necessary to comply with federal HEARTH legislation but it also set the stage for broader stakeholder participation and higher accountability for community wide outcomes. In 2015, a decision was made to create a Core Team to expedite time-sensitive decisions.

For purposes of clarity within this Charter, the term "AWH4T" may be used when referring to activities of the CoC. The terms "Governance Council" or "Council" may be used when referring to activities of the CoC's board. The term "Core" may be used when referring to the Core Team and term "at-large" will be used when referring to the non-voting membership.

Overview

A Way Home For Tulsa exists to plan and implement strategies that support a system of outreach, engagement, assessment, prevention and evaluation for those experiencing homelessness, or those persons at risk of homelessness, within the Tulsa County metropolitan area. AWH4T utilizes the Continuum of Care model mandated by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) amendment to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as further promulgated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CoC Interim Rule (24 CFR Part 578) (the Interim Rule).

AWH4T's primary emphasis is on providing emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing under the Housing First concept. The group's work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses and measuring results. AWH4T also manages the local process for applying, reviewing and prioritizing project applications for funding each year in HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants competition. This AWH4T Governance Charter outlines key operational components of the CoC including policies and procedures for AWH4T, its board, its members, various task groups, committee members, and the Community Service Council as its Collaborative Applicant.

Mission Statement for AWH4T

It is the mission of AWH4T to prevent and end homelessness in the Tulsa County metropolitan area through partnerships among nonprofit agencies, private businesses, governmental entities, philanthropic individuals and organizations, the investment community and citizens.

Purpose

The primary responsibilities of AWH4T and the Governance Council under the HEARTH Act include the following:

- Operating the CoC
- Designating a lead agency to operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- CoC planning

Additionally, AWH4T's goals shall include the following:

- Establish and maintain an accountable, responsive infrastructure for addressing and eliminating homelessness
- Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of preventing and ending homelessness
- Provide access to funding for local nonprofit providers and governmental entities that implement strategies to rapidly re-house individuals and families experiencing homelessness while minimizing the trauma and dislocation for those individuals, their families and the local communities
- Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs by individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Orchestrate a vision for preventing and ending homelessness in Tulsa and Tulsa County
- Encourage and develop public understanding and education on homelessness and housing issues
- Provide advocacy on homeless concerns to the City of Tulsa and cities located in Tulsa County
- Make long-range planning and policy formulation recommendations to the Tulsa City Council and the Tulsa County Commissioners
- Assess effectiveness, quality, efficiency, access, and availability of homeless services and supports including housing throughout the community
- Collect data on needs of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness through Point in Time counts and housing inventory surveys
- Facilitate on-going coordination and collaboration among all the components of the homeless services system for purposes of service delivery, planning and resource management, fund-raising, and policy and program development
- Strategize to fill gaps in homeless services and housing, avoid duplication of services and maximize efficiency in service provision
- Encourage homeless housing and service programs to adopt best practices
- Provide a forum for coordination among all government entities' jurisdictions and local agencies related to homelessness and prevention
- Coordinate a collaborative process for the development of a CoC Homeless Assistance Grants application to HUD
- Coordinate a process for evaluating the outcomes of homeless housing and services programs, especially those funded through HUD Homeless Assistance Grants

- Establish priorities for funding HUD Homeless Assistance Grants projects
- Participate in the City of Tulsa Consolidated Plan and work to align it with the strategies and goals of the CoC model
- Ensures operation of and consistent participation by HUD Homeless Assistance Grants programs in the HMIS
- Provide oversight to the ongoing implementation, expansion and continuous quality improvements for community-wide efforts to end homelessness.
- Provide oversight to the ongoing implementation, expansion and continuous quality improvements for the HMIS program

Structure/Membership

AWH4T membership is broad, with representation from all sectors of the community including but not limited to: nonprofit and for-profit homeless service providers including health and mental health and substance abuse assistance providers, representatives from federal, state and local governments, corporations, philanthropic organizations and concerned individuals and families currently experiencing or having formerly experienced homelessness. AWH4T maintains an open membership policy and supports diversification of its membership.

AWH4T Continuum of Care will be comprised of representatives from community agencies, a governing CoC board, a Participant Advisory Group, a Youth Advisory Board, a Collaborative Applicant as lead agency, and an HMIS lead agency.

AWH4T shall endeavor to ensure that its general membership includes the following representation:

- Representatives from the Participant Advisory Group or at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual
- Representatives from the Youth Advisory Board
- Emergency shelter providers
- Transitional housing providers
- Permanent housing providers
- Supportive service providers – includes all agencies providing supportive services to persons experiencing homelessness including: mental health, health care, veterans, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, employment, legal and education services
- Individuals or families who are either currently experiencing homelessness or have done so in the past
- Homeless provision programs
- Outreach service providers
- Persons who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and/or human trafficking
- Appointed representatives from local, State and federal government entities, such as:
 - City of Tulsa Grants Department
 - Tulsa County
 - Tulsa Housing Authority

- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Any other governmental entity that may request the right to appoint a member
- School districts
- Mental health care providers
- Health care providers
- Universities
- Businesses
- Affordable housing developers or owners
- Charitable organizations and philanthropic foundations
- Law enforcement
- Representatives of the Collaborative Applicant as ex officio members
- Representatives of other homeless service providers and advocates such as:
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Public housing agencies
 - Emergency shelters
 - Prevention providers
 - Basic needs and emergency financial assistance providers
- AWH4T membership is specific to each organization that belongs to the group while leadership positions are specific to the individual. Eligibility for a leadership position is contingent upon an individual's continued affiliation with a member organization.
- Nominations from the public to fill any existing vacancies on the Council or AWH4T will be solicited annually.
- Organizations applying for membership to the Council will be subject to acceptance by a vote by the existing members.

The AWH4T Governance Council, as the board for the CoC, will have authority to act on behalf of the CoC and the Core Team will have authority to act as its delegate for operational matters. The Governance Council members, as the board for the Continuum, will have voting privileges and will direct the Core Team to conduct the operation of the CoC. The Council will be representative of the full AWH4T CoC membership. Membership on the Council will be capped at twenty-four (24); additional or replacement members of the CoC Governance Council will be voted on by the Governance Council. The inaugural AWH4T members are grandfathered in at their respective positions on the Council.

AWH4T at-large members are non-voting members of the full Continuum supporting the efforts of the Continuum to achieve its goals of preventing and ending homelessness in the Tulsa area. These entities or individuals will offer support, guidance and expertise in an advisory capacity to the CoC. At-large members will not be able to vote on issues before the Governance Council. Members may serve on a committee or task force.

At-large member duties are as follows:

- Meet at least twice a year in a joint session with the Governance Council
- May present items of interest to a standing committee for discussion; such committee shall review and determine whether to present the item to the Governance Council

- Assist in identifying and recruiting new members.

Governance Council duties are as follows:

- Invite and solicit new at-large members within the local geographic area at a minimum annually using public invitations according to established AWH4T policies
- Create, adopt and follow a written process to select a board for the Continuum
- Review, update and approve the selection process for the board at least once every five years
- In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, develop and follow a governance charter that encompasses the policies and procedures required by HUD's Interim Rule and HUD's HMIS mandates, respectively, that will, at a minimum, include the following:
 - Empower the Collaborative Applicant to conduct an annual Point In Time (PIT) count of the homeless population consistent with HUD's requirements. AWH4T will review and approve the PIT Count Plan annually.
 - Review, revise and approve a privacy plan, security plan and data quality plan for HMIS
 - Review and update the governance charter and present it for approval by the full membership of the Governance Council at least annually
- Establish system performance targets (relative to respective populations and program types) by which outcomes can be measured, monitored and evaluated for continuous quality improvement
- In consultation with the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Grantee, establish and consistently follow written standards for:
 - A Coordinated Access and Entry system
 - Providing assistance with the ESG program
 - Operation of the Continuum of Care
- Ensure that a Code of Conduct with a recusal process is written, followed and updated, as needed
- Establish a recusal process for members of the Council
- Meet annually to review and act on annual funding requests and scoring of applications in response to the timing requirements of the HUD Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
- Designate a Collaborative Applicant for the purpose of managing HUD's annual CoC grant competition process for AWH4T and obtain HUD approval for same
- Coordinate with the membership and the Collaborative Applicant for oversight of the HMIS program

Meetings

AWH4T's Governance Council shall:

- Conduct meetings at least ten (10) times a year and call meetings of the CoC at least semi-annually. However, this schedule may be amended from time to time to suit the convenience of the members and to address pertinent issues that need to be discussed or voted on prior to the next scheduled meeting.

- Review, approve and publish the minutes of all meetings and consider recommendations from such committees established as may be necessary to conduct the business of AWH4T planning, CoC operations and HMIS governance .
- Agendas and minutes shall be published on the Collaborative Applicant’s website. Each meeting shall have on its agenda the opportunity for members of the public to provide input and comment. Discussion and voting during an agenda action item shall be held in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order.
- The Chair of the Council or a designee shall preside over all meetings when present.
- Record proceedings of all meetings and provide as minutes to the membership.
- Members are responsible to ensure a correct email address is on file with the Collaborative Applicant .
- Regular AWH4T and Council meetings may include:
 - Committee, subcommittee, task force and ad hoc committee reports
 - Ending long-term homelessness reports
 - HMIS lead agency reports
 - CoC program reports
 - Pathways program reports
 - City / County of Tulsa reports
 - Legislative updates
 - Various presentations related to serving the homeless population.

Voting

Information should be sought from members through a variety of means (i.e., focus groups, presentations, meetings, surveys, etc.)

- A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for all meetings of AWH4T, its Council, Core Team, committees or task forces.
- Votes are limited to one vote per Council member. Each Council member shall designate one representative to vote on its behalf and an alternate to vote in the absence of that primary representative. The Participant Advisory Group will be the sole exception to this rule in that, it shall have two votes.
- Attendance by proxy will count when establishing a quorum and votes by proxy will be accepted within the same organization. A valid proxy form (Attachment A) must be filled out and presented to the Chair before a proxy vote may be counted.
- Voting by use of telephonic, faxed, mailed or emailed votes on the business of the Core Team, the Governance Council and its committees will be allowed. In such instances, a majority of the membership of that body must participate in the voting process to constitute a quorum.
- Recusal by members will not adversely affect the ability of the Council to declare a quorum.
- In order to maintain a Council seat and voting rights, Council member organizations will have attended at least 50% of the meetings in the past twelve months. The Core Team will be responsible for monitoring compliance with the attendance policy and presenting a slate of recommended actions to the Council for consideration and/or approval.

- Roll call will be taken and recorded for all votes on motions before the Council.
- A majority of those voting will determine whether a resolution is adopted or defeated.

Core Team

The Core Team will be comprised of seven representatives of member agencies. Of these seven, five will be organizational representatives, which will be elected by the Governance Council every three years. To maintain continuity of leadership, organization representatives may be elected for consecutive terms. The additional two seats will be rotating representatives of member agencies to be elected annually by the Governance Council from among its members. The elected Chair of A Way Home for Tulsa will be assigned one of these two positions and the other one will be elected annually by the Governance Council. However, if the elected Chair of A Way Home for Tulsa is serving as one of these five organizational representatives, then both of these positions will be elected annually by the Governance Council. If the Chair is unable to attend a Core Team or Governance Council meeting, the Core Team members present shall choose a Chair Designee from among their members. Members of the Administrative Agent or the Collaborative Applicant may not serve as permanent Chair, but they may serve as Chair Designee, should the need arise.

Core Team Duties:

- Schedule and hold meetings as needed.
- Operationalize strategic direction for A Way Home for Tulsa.
- Implement policy priorities as set by the Governance Council.
- Develop and recommend policies for Governance Council approval.
- In the absence of the Chair at a meeting of the Governance Council, select a Chair Designee to preside over that meeting.

Council Officers

The officers of the Governance Council shall be a Chair Person and the Committee Chairs. The Chair will be elected by the general Council membership process with nominations presented by a nominating committee formed at the discretion of the Chair. Nominations from the AWH4T membership will also be encouraged.

- The Chair is authorized to form committees and appoint its members as needed in order to effectively plan, operate and govern the AWH4T, its Council and HMIS.
- In the event that the position of Chair becomes vacant, the Core Team will select a Chair Designee to serve in that capacity until a replacement Chair can be elected by the membership.
- The Chair will serve a one-year term.
- Committee Chairs will be selected each calendar year by a nominating committee formed by the Chair and confirmed at the initial meeting of the Governance Council each year.

Participant Advisory Group

The Participant Advisory Group is composed of persons who are currently experiencing homelessness or have formerly experienced homelessness. All Participant Advisory Group members have personal experience of Tulsa's homeless service delivery system. AWH4T ensures through its application and selection process that Participant Advisory Group members not only represent those with experience in accessing Tulsa homeless services and supports but also those having experienced chronic homelessness and those that represent veterans, families, unaccompanied youth, individuals with severe mental illness, chronic health conditions (including HIV/AIDS), and substance abuse disorders, and individuals who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and/or human trafficking.

The role of the Participant Advisory Group is to provide advice and feedback to AWH4T on a range of topics related to homelessness. Such topics include but are not limited to:

- Advocating for individuals and families experiencing homelessness with respect to the services and supports available or needed
- Improving the quality of available support and services
- Improving Pathways Case Management services and support
- Improving access to transitional, supportive and permanent housing
- Improving faith based connections, social inclusion and community involvement
- Improving health, mental health and substance abuse services and support
- Improving opportunities for employment and access to mainstream benefits
- Learning about public interest issues on which Participant Advisory Group members can provide leadership
- Promoting and educating our community regarding homelessness

The Participant Advisory Group will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary and will set its own agenda. The frequency of its meetings will be established in accordance with that group's own Governance Charter.

Youth Advisory Board

The Youth Advisory Board ensures that youth voices and experiences are heard and prioritized. Comprised of youth under the age of 25, the Youth Advisory Board's diverse expertise on youth programs and youth homelessness helps drive AWH4T's efforts to improve policies and service delivery for youth. Representatives from the Youth Advisory Board will attend the AWH4T's governance council meeting where they will represent the larger Youth Advisory Board.

Standing Committees

While members may volunteer to serve on any committee, subcommittee and task force, members are appointed by the Chair. However, regular meeting attendance and participation is expected. The following standing committees shall be established:

- Finance Committee - The primary role of the Finance Committee includes but is not limited to the development of a budget that details expenditures, funding needs, distribution and monitoring of expenditures.
- Communications Committee - The purpose of the Communications Committee is to increase cooperation and communication among all stakeholders and to raise awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding homelessness and AWH4T's efforts to address these issues. The Communications Committee attempts to ensure that AWH4T information is accessible, accurate, relevant, timely and meaningful to stakeholders in the community.
- Governance Charter Task Force - The Governance Charter Task Force updates and maintains the AWH4T Governance Charter. The Charter provides the guidelines and ground rules to help the Council members work productively together over the course of the implementation, maintenance and monitoring of the AWH4T activities. The Charter must be reviewed and updated at least annually. All updates or revisions are recommended by the Task Force to the Governance Council for review and approval.
- Data and Quality Management Committee - The Data and Quality Management Committee (DQMC) is responsible for the development and implementation of the Data Quality Assurance Program (DQAP). The DQMC's scope of responsibilities and accountability includes oversight of all quality improvement activities and initiatives within AWH4T as defined by the DQAP.

Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces

Ad Hoc committees and task forces may be created by the Chair to serve a limited purpose for a limited time to accomplish a specific project. Examples would include:

- A nominating committee formed annually to generate a slate of officers and/or committee Chairs for approval by the Governance Council
- A Governance Charter Task Force convened annually to review the Governance Charter and recommend updates as needed
- A committee created to conduct research, deal with a problem or develop an urgent response to an emerging community issue.

Collaborative Applicant

Once HUD has approved the Council's selection of a Collaborative Applicant, the Collaborative Applicant will be charged with managing the HUD CoC application process. Its additional duties shall also include:

- Providing administrative support and staffing for AWH4T
- Submitting the CoC grant application on behalf of AWH4T
- Applying for and receiving CoC planning funds

- Consulting with CoC and ESG grant recipients regarding performance targets, evaluation of outcomes and poor performance
- Consulting with CoC and ESG grant recipients on the establishment and operation of a coordinated access and entry system
- Developing a process that coordinates the consistent operation of the coordinated access and entry system with respect to how the safety needs of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness are prioritized and addressed including those with specific concerns of domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking
- Evaluating CoC and ESG grant programs' outcomes and reporting to HUD
- Partnering with CoC and ESG program recipients to establish and enforce written policies and procedures for evaluation of the following:
 - Eligibility for housing assistance for individuals and families
 - Prioritization of eligible individuals and families to determine levels of assistance for which they may qualify (i.e., transitional, Rapid Rehousing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) including the percentage or amount of rent support
- Conducting the annual PIT count and an annual gap analysis of homeless needs and services including a housing inventory in conjunction with the HMIS lead
- Providing information necessary to complete the local jurisdictions' Consolidated Plan

HMIS Lead duties are as follows:

- Administer and operate the HMIS according to federal regulations
- Organizing, overseeing and compiling counts of the homeless population and subpopulations
- Helping to plan, organize, promote and carry out the annual Point in Time count
- Working with the CoC Collaborative Applicant to provide education, feedback and support to the membership on improving data quality
- Working with the CoC Collaborative Applicant to create and review the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)

AWH4T Administrative Agent

Community Service Council shall serve as the administrative agent for the AWH4T. I will also serve as fiscal agent for any AWH4T funds received unrelated to its role as Collaborative Applicant. As the Administrative Agent, it will submit all required reports to the AWH4T funding organizations and AWH4T Finance Committee as requested.

Code of Conduct

The members of the AWH4T, as a consortium of entities and individuals working to end homelessness in the Tulsa area, dedicate themselves to conduct all deliberations and actions in a manner that ensures constructive teamwork, efficiency, honesty, and transparency. Members pledge themselves to a standard of conduct in the commission of the CoC's affairs so that the dignity of fellow members and their respective constituents is maintained while cultural diversity is honored and respected.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The Conflict of Interest Policy for the Governance Council, in its role as the CoC Board, is intended to meet the conditions set forth in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 24 CFR Part 578. Although not established as a legal entity, the Council will conduct all decision-making in accordance with 24 CFR Parts 84 and 85 for non-profit organizations and state, local, and government agencies that receive CoC or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) federal funding. The members of the AWH4T Governance Council, acting as the board of the AWH4T Continuum of Care, in order to ensure the fair and respectful conduct of the business of the Continuum, hereby commit to the following:

Conflict of Interest – Contracts, Awards and Other Benefits to Recipient

- No Council member may participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a CoC or ESG grant or other financial benefits to that member or the organization that the member represents.
- An organizational conflict of interest arises when, because of activities or relationships with other persons or organizations, the recipient or sub-recipient is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance in the provision of any type or amount of assistance under Part 578, or when an individual's objectivity in performing work with respect to any activity assisted under Part 578 is or might be otherwise impaired.
- Organizational conflicts arise when a Council member who is specifically associated with an applicant organization participates in a decision concerning the award of a grant, or provision of other financial benefits, to the organization that such member represents. It would also arise when an employee, recent employee, Council member or family member affiliated with a recipient or sub-recipient organization participates in contract monitoring or rate setting tasks that directly impacts said organization. Examples of ongoing conflicts of interest include the determination of rent reasonableness under § 578.49(b)(2) and § 578.51(g); housing quality inspections of property under § 578.75(b) that the recipient, sub-recipient, or related entity owns; participation in ongoing business ventures/partnerships, or participation in evaluation or determination of awards.

Conflict of Interest – Financial Interest of member

- Council members are prohibited from the solicitation and/or acceptance of gifts when in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information regarding the activities of the CoC (or by the organization(s) that they represent) that would provide a benefit in excess of fifty dollars (\$50) from persons, organizations, or corporations with a vested interest in the outcomes of decisions made by the Council on behalf of the CoC or its member agencies. This paragraph shall not be construed as prohibiting the receipt of attendance stipends by members of the Participant Advisory Group.
- Council members shall not participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract supported by CoC funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest exists. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to

employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the organization under consideration for an award.

- Except for unsolicited gifts of fifty dollars (\$50) or less, Council members shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from CoC-funded recipients, sub-recipients, contractors, or vendors.

Obligation to Declare Potential Conflict of Interest

To avoid apparent conflicts of interest, Governance Council members shall declare any real or potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts. The member must disclose this information before participating in the discussion and decision-making or evaluation process, including appointment to any sub-committee having influence over such decisions. This policy applies to both personal and organizational conflicts. Members of the public participating in AWH4T committees shall also be screened for potential conflicts.

Recusal Policy

Council members must recuse themselves from the decision-making process when a personal or organizational conflict exists.

Violations and Disciplinary Actions

Violations of the above-listed elements of the AWH4T Conflict of Interest Policy may be reported to the Chair of the Council or its designee by any member. Notice of any disciplinary action(s) for unacceptable behavior will be provided to the executive management for the respective member agency that the violating individual represents. Such disciplinary actions may result in any or all of the following:

- Loss of voting privileges;
- Censure by the AWH4T membership;
- Expulsion from AWH4T of the individual and/or the member agency that individual represents.

This Form must be handwritten BY THE VOTING MEMBER ASSIGNING THE PROXY (not typed)

AWH4T PROXY FORM

I hereby authorize _____ (Name/Affiliation)
to serve as my proxy and to vote on my behalf at the following meeting
_____ (Specify meeting) to be held on
_____ (Date).

This proxy is valid for:

- All Matters voted on at the Meeting
- Specific Issue/Matter (please explain)

A voting member wishing to vote at a Governance Council meeting or committee meeting via proxy may designate an individual from the voting member's organization. A voting member wishing to vote via proxy must complete the proxy form in its entirety. Failure by the member to sign the form and complete all sections by hand will invalidate the proxy. The duly executed hand-written proxy form shall be mailed, e-mailed as a scanned attachment, faxed by the voting member, or hand delivered by the proxy holder to the Chair of the Governance Council or committee prior to the applicable meeting or action. A separate proxy form shall be completed for each individual meeting of the Governance Council or committee meeting. The solicitation of proxies from voting members is prohibited. Solicited proxies will not be accepted. Your signature attests the above has been strictly followed.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Attachment A