

Governance Charter for AR-500 (Little Rock/Central Arkansas)  
Continuum of Care (CoC)

**Purpose of the Charter**

This charter sets out the responsibilities of AR-500 (Little Rock/Central Arkansas) Continuum of Care (CoC) which is the planning body that coordinates the homelessness prevention and response system for the four-county region of Central Arkansas that includes Pulaski, Lonoke, Saline, and Prairie counties.

This charter is guided by the regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) in the [CoC Program Interim Rule, 24 CFR 578](#).

**Purpose of the CoC**

AR-500 is an inclusive, membership group that plans for and manages the homelessness prevention and assistance resources in the region. Its work includes 1) gathering and analyzing information to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness; 2) implementing strategic responses to prevent and end homelessness; 3) educating the community on issues related to people experiencing homelessness; 4) providing input and advice on the operations of homeless services in the community; and 5) measuring CoC performance.

**Responsibilities**

AR-500's activities and responsibilities are outlined in this document; all activities and responsibilities will be delegated to a designated entity charged with ensuring they are completed and compliant with the CoC Program Interim Rule. These entities are:

- CoC Membership
- Collaborative Applicant
- CoC Board of Directors (CoC Board)
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agency
- Coordinated Entry Lead Agency

**CoC Membership**

The CoC membership is open to all interested parties, and both individuals and organizations may be members of AR-500. Individual membership shall not be associated with any organization.

CoC organization members generally include 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 homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons that are organized to plan for and provide, as necessary, a system of outreach, engagement, and assessment; emergency shelter; rapid re-housing; transitional housing; permanent housing; and prevention strategies to address the various needs of people experiencing homelessness and people at risk of homelessness for a specific geographic area (adapted from 24 CFR 578.2, Definitions).

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Requests for membership may be directed to any Board member or the Collaborative Applicant through completion of a membership application. To qualify as a voting member, an individual or organization must:

- Attend at least 75% of the AR-500 membership meetings.
- Participate in at least 1 CoC activity (committee meetings, Point-in-Time volunteer, other CoC-related activities).
- Support the goals and objectives of AR-500's efforts to prevent and end homelessness in Central Arkansas.

The responsibilities of the CoC membership include:

- Vote on a recommendation from the CoC Board to approve the entity that will serve as the Collaborative Applicant.
- Vote on a recommendation from the CoC Board to approve the entity that will serve as the HMIS Lead Agency and the HMIS software application.
- Vote on a recommendation from the CoC Board to approve the entity that will serve as the Coordinated Entry Lead Agency.
- Review and vote on the Governance Charter and any amendments brought to the body from the CoC Board.
- Elect CoC Board members.
- Participate in annual evaluations of the Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead Agency, and Coordinated Entry Lead Agency.

**CoC Membership - Meetings and Voting**

AR-500 holds membership meetings quarterly. CoC members are expected to attend meetings and participate actively in CoC-level discussions. Meetings will be open to the public for the purposes of transparency and for interested parties to learn more about the CoC and its activities. However, voting will be limited to CoC members only.

Each voting member of the CoC shall have one (1) vote. Should an organizational member have multiple individuals present at a meeting where voting occurs, it will have only one (1) organizational vote.

Quorum will be one-third (1/3) of the CoC's voting members. Votes may be held in person but may also be held and confirmed by the same quorum via email for time sensitive matters.

**Collaborative Applicant**

The Collaborative Applicant is a designation by HUD to recognize the agency charged with submitting the HUD CoC application for funding each year, among other duties. AR-500 designates the City of Little Rock as its Collaborative Applicant.

The responsibilities of the Collaborative Applicant include:

- Maintain a full-time position to provide staff support to the CoC and the CoC Board.

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- Develop, follow, and update as needed the CoC's governance documents, which includes all policies and procedures needed to comply with HUD requirements, including a code of conduct and recusal process for the CoC Board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the CoC.
- Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least semi-annually.
- Coordinate the implementation of a housing and service system within the CoC's geographic area that meets the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This will include, at a minimum:
  - Outreach, engagement, and assessment;
  - Shelter, housing, and supportive services; and,
  - Prevention strategies.
- In consultation with the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) recipient and subrecipients within the CoC's service area, draft written standards for providing CoC assistance.
- In consultation with the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) recipient and the area's victim service providers, draft an emergency transfer plan policy that supports the safety of survivors and is compliant with 24 CFR 578.99(j).
- Consult with CoC recipients and subrecipients to establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type.
- Report CoC and ESG project and system-level outcomes to HUD annually.
- Plan for and conduct a point-in-time count of all sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons that meets HUD's requirements within the CoC's geographic area, including a housing inventory of shelters, transitional and permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including any subpopulations (ex. veterans) that HUD requests. This count will occur at least one time per calendar year.
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the needs of people experiencing homelessness as compared to available housing and services within the CoC's geographic area.
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the CoC's geographic area.
- Share information with the CoC Board to facilitate effective leadership of the CoC.
- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of a CoC application to HUD.
- Prepare the CoC Planning Grant application and administer awarded CoC Planning grant funds, including providing required matching funds.
- Submit the final application in response to the CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

**CoC Board of Directors**

The Board is an elected body of the CoC individually drawn from membership that provides strategic oversight of the homeless assistance resources and activities related to the prevention and end of homelessness in the CoC's geographic area.

The responsibilities of the CoC Board include:

- Meet monthly, with published agendas.

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- Engage community leaders to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to reduce and end homelessness in the CATCH geographic service area: Pulaski, Lonoke, Saline, and Prairie counties.
- Establish priorities that align with local and federal policies for recommending projects for CoC-related grant funding.
- Bring recommendations on CoC-related business to the membership body for approval.
- Recommend to the CoC a Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead Agency, and Coordinated Entry Lead Agency for the region.
- Develop a proposed plan regarding public education on homelessness, advocacy at the state or local level related to housing and homelessness, and policy recommendations to state or local governments in the CoC region.
- Appoint committees, subcommittees, or workgroups as may be deemed necessary to support the CoC's efforts to prevent and end homelessness.
- Review and approve the CoC's written standards, at least annually.
- Provide programmatic oversight of the Collaborative Applicant regarding the performance targets established for contract recipients and subrecipients appropriate for population and program type.
- Conduct annual evaluations of the Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead Agency, and Coordinated Entry Lead Agency.
- Approve the CoC's HMIS data privacy, data security, and data quality plans.
- Support the Collaborative Applicant's application, scoring and review process for all CoC-related funding proposals.
- Coordinate with the Collaborative Applicant on all funding proposals related to CoC activities.
- Approve the final application before submission to HUD for the CoC NOFO.

**Collaborative Applicant and CoC Board of Directors (in partnership)**

The Collaborative Applicant and CoC Board will coordinate activities and work in collaboration to conduct the following activities:

- Prepare for and facilitate membership meetings.
- Assess the performance of the CoC; identify gaps; develop and implement strategies to address gaps and improve the overall CoC performance, including implementation of best practices.
- Monitor performance of CoC and ESG recipients and subrecipients in the CoC's geographic area.
- Evaluate CoC and ESG project outcomes.
- Take action against CoC and ESG projects that perform poorly. "Take action" is broad and may range from offering technical assistance and support to reallocating funds.
- Propose revisions to this Governance Charter to ensure compliance with all procedures and policies needed to comply with HUD requirements.
- Consult with the ESG recipient for the geographic area on the plan to allocate ESG funds and report on and evaluate the performance of ESG recipients and subrecipients.

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- Identify best practices to implement in the CoC and educate CoC member agencies about best practices.
- Determine whether the Collaborative Applicant should apply for a Unified Funding Agency designation.
- Implement an Emergency Response Plan by planning, developing and meeting with the Board of Directors before an unexpected incidence happens that requires immediate action such as Severe Weather Warnings (Winter Storms or Extreme Heat), Natural Disaster, Health and Safety Disaster, etc.

**HMIS Lead Agency**

The HMIS Lead Agency is the entity designated by the CoC to manage the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in accordance with the requirements of the CoC Program Interim Rule and all HMIS requirements prescribed by HUD on the CoC's behalf. AR-500 has designated People Trust as its HMIS lead agency. Further, AR-500 has selected Community Services (vendor: WellSky) as its HMIS software.

The responsibilities of the HMIS Lead Agency include:

- Review, revise and submit for approval to the CoC Board a CoC HMIS data privacy plan, data security plan, and data quality plan.
- Ensure the CoC has a successful and operational HMIS and that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements.
- Ensure consistent participation by CoC and ESG recipients and subrecipients in the HMIS.
- Develop and follow a reporting calendar, including dates and deadlines for reporting requirements and submissions.
- Support HMIS end users through regular training and technical assistance.
- Provide regular reports for the CoC Board on project-level and system-level data quality.
- Coordinate efforts to encourage non-HUD funded projects to participate in HMIS.
- Generate reports as needed to assist with performance review, funding processes, and decision making. Make these reports easy to understand and use for end users.
- Review HMIS plans, policies and procedures, end user agreements and other required documents annually and update as needed.

**Coordinated Entry Lead Agency**

The Coordinated Entry Lead Agency is the entity designated by the CoC to manage the CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES) in accordance with the requirements of the CoC Program Interim Rule and all relevant CES notices. AR-500 has designated People Trust as the Coordinated Entry Lead Agency.

The responsibilities of the Coordinated Entry Lead Agency include:

- Manage the day-to-day operation of coordinated entry, which includes the use of the CoC's HMIS.

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- Update and maintain information on program vacancies/openings on a weekly basis regardless of whether there are new openings to report.
- Regularly update and make current all programs eligibility guidelines and program contact information so that housing and service providers can make the best referrals possible.
- Ensure that when a referral is made, the Coordinated Entry Lead Agency People Trust confirms within two (2) business days whether the referral is accepted, declined by provider or client, is pending, or the provider is unable to contact the client.
- Lead monthly Coordinated Entry Committee meetings, including identification of issues, recommendations, and solutions. Work closely with the HMIS Lead to identify and resolve problems and challenges with CE-specific tasks in the HMIS.
- Ensure that all CE access points will use the same screening and assessment tool, data collection forms, policies on eligibility verification and referral/information-sharing systems.

**Board of Directors - Membership and Voting**

The AR-500 Board will have at least eleven (11) but no more than fifteen (15) Directors. Directors are individuals and not specific organizations. Special elections will be called if the Board of Directors census drops below eleven (11) members.

To be eligible to serve on the CoC Board, an individual or an individual's organization must have been an active member of AR-500 for at least one (1) year and be a member in good standing (meeting attendance and participation in CoC activities).

Per 24 578.5 (b)(2), the CoC Board will have at least one member who has experienced or is currently experiencing homelessness.

Voting procedures for the CoC membership and the Board of Directors will follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Non-Discrimination

AR-500 will make active efforts to seek geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic diversity among its Directors, and shall not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation.

Director Selection

AR-500 should reflect the diversity of its membership which include skill sets and functions of the CoC board members. The CoC Board will develop a committee structure to create and administer a nomination and election process for additional board members. This committee will bring any recommendations for Directors to the CoC membership for review and approval.

No single organization may hold more than one (1) seat on the Board. Currently funded CoC agencies shall comprise no more than one-third of the Board at any given time.

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Terms

Directors may serve up to two (2) three-year terms consecutively, for a total of six (6) consecutive years. At the end of two (2) full terms, an individual must roll off the board for a period of at least one (1) year before returning to board service through election by the CoC membership. The CoC membership elects the Directors and must approve a second term for any Director.

It is expected that Directors will:

- Serve actively on at least one (1) CoC committee.
- Attend at least 75% of the regularly scheduled board meetings per year, unless excused by the Board President. Board meetings are expected to occur monthly except for months when there is a General Membership meeting.
- Serve as an ambassador in the community on behalf of AR-500 and support all efforts to prevent and end homelessness in Central Alabama.

Leadership

Leadership of the Board will be decided annually by a majority vote of the CoC Board at the first December meeting.

- The President shall serve as the Executive Officer of AR-500 and will preside at all board meetings.
- The President Elect shall, in the absence of the President or in the event of the President's inability to act, perform the duties of the President.
- The Secretary shall keep meeting minutes (or shall designate a person at the board meeting to keep minutes), ensure notice for meetings is properly given, maintain meeting minutes, and keep an updated register of Director contact information.

Termination

If a Director wishes to resign, the Director will submit a letter of resignation to the President.

Directors may be dismissed from the Board for reasons of gross misconduct or failure to meet expectations as determined by 2/3 vote of the CoC Board.

Decision Making and Voting

A meeting quorum will consist of a majority of sitting Directors. Attendance at a meeting is defined as in-person or via telephone/video conference when available. Votes may also be held and confirmed by the same quorum via email for time sensitive matters and when called for by the Executive Committee.

Relationship between the CoC Board and CoC Membership

The CoC Board meetings will be open to the full membership and the board will have meeting minutes available upon request. The CoC Board will encourage and maintain full membership involvement by including CoC members in workgroups and committees and sharing information,

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including meeting minutes, resources for homeless services providers, plans and implementation progress, data about homelessness in the region and funding availability, via email distribution or via the CoC website. The Collaborative Applicant will assist with these efforts.

Conflict of Interest

Any individual participating in or influencing decision making must identify actual or perceived conflicts of interest as they arise and comply with the letter and script of this policy. Disclosure should occur at the earliest possible time and, if possible, prior to the discussion of any such issues. Individuals with an appearance of an actual or perceived conflict of interest should abstain from any discussion and voting on any issues in which they may have a perceived conflict. An individual with a conflict who is the CoC Board President shall yield that position during discussion and abstain from voting on the item. Each CoC Board member must sign a Conflict of Interest Statement annually.

**Committees**

The AR-500 CoC Board is responsible for appointing committees, subcommittees, or workgroups to support the CoC's efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Committees can include board members, CoC membership, and other interested parties. The standing committees include:

- Executive: The CoC Board will have an Executive Committee consisting of a 1) President, 2) President Elect, 3) Secretary, and 4) two (2) Directors who serve as liaisons of board committees. All actions taken by the Executive Committee require CoC Board approval which will take place at the next scheduled board meeting. In addition, it will prepare planned agendas and determine next steps for CoC meetings, review the Governance Charter regularly and offer edits and amendments to the full CoC Board for review and approval annually.
- Membership and Training: This committee is responsible for CoC membership recruitment, development, and facilitation of membership orientation materials, and seeking out training and educational opportunities for the membership body. It will also serve as the board's nomination committee, seeking out and accepting nominations for Directors from the general membership, and will prepare a slate of officers for the CoC Board to vote on annually.
- Public Policy and Community Awareness: This committee is responsible for 1) preparing and disseminating general information on homelessness and AR-500's activities to the broader community, 2) review and disseminate federal, state, and local legislative and public policy information affecting homelessness, and 3) preparing public policy position papers, articles, and/or materials on behalf of AR-500.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: This committee, working in collaboration with the Collaborative Applicant, will establish a monitoring and evaluation procedure for AR-500, will engage in performance monitoring of CoC and ESG projects, and prepare and report on project- and system-level outcomes and performance to the CoC membership.



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- Data: This committee develops policies and procedures and provides oversight to the HMIS Lead Agency on HMIS issues including project participation, participant privacy, data security, data quality, and HMIS governance. It assists the HMIS Lead Agency with ensuring HMIS participation across the CoC. This committee also hears grievances related to sanctions by the HMIS Lead agency. Finally, this committee will lead the annual process of reviewing the performance of the HMIS Lead Agency and the annual process of either re-appointing the HMIS Lead Agency or undertaking a competitive process.

The CoC Board may create ad hoc committees for special activities and to support CoC activities throughout the year such as the annual HUD competition rating and ranking process and Point-in-Time count. These ad hoc committees will be formed, and dissolve as needed. A description of such committees is below.

- Competition: The committee will review grant proposals and make decisions on awards for grant programs. Committee members shall analyze the grants before they are accepted, renewed or subject for continuation.
- Rank and Review: The committee is responsible for reviewing, ranking and scoring each applicant applying for CoC grants. Committee members will meet to discuss any concerns or additional documentation needed to rank and score applicants.
- Point in Time (PIT) Count: The committee responsible for planning and recruiting PIT Count volunteers and suggesting other local service providers to assist with the count, select count sites, planning meetings, trainings, and participate in the PIT Count.

**Amendments**

This charter may be amended at any time by a majority vote of both the CoC Board and the AR-500 membership.

<b>AR-500 Governance Charter Version History</b>	
<i>February 9, 2024</i>	<i>AR-500 Board of Directors</i>
<i>April 19, 2024</i>	<i>AR-500 Board of Directors</i>
<i>May 17, 2024</i>	<i>AR-500 Membership Approval</i>