**HUD'S
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Building Effective Coalitions

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development

Acknowledgements

BUILDING EFFECTIVE COALITIONS

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

To address the complex and interrelated problems associated with homelessness, communities must marshal their varied resources – including resources from the community and economic development sector, social service organizations, business, health care sector, philanthropic community, law enforcement, and housing and homeless organizations. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, later renamed McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, provides federal financial support for a variety of programs to meet the many needs of individuals and families who are homeless. Initially, HUD did not impose any requirements for systemic planning at the local level and simply allowed individual organizations throughout the country to submit applications for these funds. However, since 1994, HUD has required jurisdictions eligible to apply for McKinney-Vento funds to create coalitions called Continuums of Care (CoCs), whose members come together to submit a single comprehensive application. HUD no longer accepts applications from individual providers in a community. HUD's intent in creating this structured application process was to stimulate community-wide planning and coordination of programs for individuals and families who are homeless.

While the CoC application process provides communities with an incentive for creating a coordinated homeless services system, planning that is limited to this application process will not result in a comprehensive system for providing homeless services. To achieve these results continuums need to conduct multi-year, comprehensive, strategic planning efforts that encompass mainstream services and multiple funding sources. However, many CoCs have not yet developed the organizational capacity that would allow them to achieve a truly community-wide collaboration.

In fact, levels of development found among continuums vary widely. Continuums in their early stages of development typically focus their planning efforts on homeless-specific programs and services that HUD will fund through the CoC application. Little if any meaningful participation occurs from providers of non-homeless programs, emergency shelters and homeless prevention services. At the next level of development, a continuum's community planning extends to all homeless-specific programs and services, including emergency shelter, outreach, and prevention. While many continuums have reached these first two levels of development, they now need to move to the next level by expanding beyond the homeless assistance system to involve mainstream public agencies and the private sector in a meaningful way.

PURPOSE

This guidebook discusses how to begin structuring an effective community-wide coalition that will help continuums reach that next level of development. It provides step-by-step guidance on how to develop and manage a coalition. It covers what a coalition is, why it is important, and how it may be organized and managed. The guidebook also focuses on how to build and organize a coalition's membership, while recognizing that stakeholders' roles and responsibilities can and should vary widely.

The guidebook is designed to help CoCs that have formed coalitions with homeless service providers but still have not successfully involved organizations beyond the homeless services system and have not yet achieved a truly community-wide coalition. These continuums can

learn how to broaden their goals and objectives, collaborate with other organizations, and manage an increasingly diverse coalition of stakeholders.

With a better established community-wide coalition, a community is well-positioned to embark on broader goals, such as helping people who are homeless escape the cycle of homelessness by obtaining employment. Currently, communities struggle with how to link homeless people with employment, primarily because housing, employment, and treatment systems are well formed into separate silos, generally without "bridges" for those who need to access services from multiple systems. The HUD guidebook, *Creating Community Employment Pathways*, focuses on the *systems*-level aspects of implementing and promoting employment for people who are homeless. It can be found on HUD's Homelessness Resource Exchange (www.hudhre.info).

OVERVIEW

The chapters in this guidebook are organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Understanding Coalitions. This chapter provides an overview of the concept of a coalition. It begins with a general definition of a coalition and then applies this definition to a CoC. The chapter then goes on to discuss the benefits of a coalition with specific examples from the CoC system, critical components of a successful coalition, and finally, how to overcome barriers to success.

Chapter 2: Building a Community-wide Coalition. This chapter provides guidance on how to begin building a community-wide coalition by evaluating and improving contacts between agencies and organizations in a continuum's service area. The first section outlines a 10-step approach to building a community-wide coalition. The next section then focuses on the relationships between agencies and organizations and defines the four possible levels of contact – communication, coordination, collaboration between agencies, and community-wide collaboration. As continuums expand and diversify their membership, their goals and objectives will need to be re-examined and oftentimes revised. The third section discusses issues to consider when re-defining a continuum's goals and objectives. The final section provides guidance on how to assess the level of support in a community for a community-wide effort to address homelessness.

Chapter 3: Collaborating with Mainstream Agencies. Mainstream agencies provide many services that people who are homeless need. This chapter focuses on issues to target when working with mainstream agencies. Specifically, continuums need to work with mainstream agencies to prevent homelessness and to improve the access of persons who are homeless to the mainstream service system. This chapter also includes some suggested strategies for attaining these goals.

Chapter 4: Building a Coalition's Membership. While a diverse group of stakeholders is crucial for a continuum to achieve a community-wide coalition, continuums need a clear vision of how stakeholders will be involved. The first section of this chapter discusses the challenges of finding the right balance between diversifying the stakeholders involved in a continuum and managing that larger more diverse group. The next section discusses how to define generally the varying roles of stakeholders, which include core, secondary, and advisory roles. The next two sections then explain how to identify specific stakeholder organizations and the specific roles that they should play in a continuum.

Chapter 5: Managing an Effective Coalition. This chapter discusses the process for managing a continuum, which requires year round planning and multi-year strategic planning efforts. Once established, continuums need to continue to evolve to meet the changing needs

of the people they serve. To do this, planning groups periodically need to rethink goals and alter their programs and service systems. This chapter highlights how continuums establish a common vision and system-wide performance goals; create a governance structure; and monitor and measure their performance.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING COALITIONS

INTRODUCTION

The community-wide planning that HUD requires from applicants for its competitive homeless assistance funds encourages communities to move towards comprehensive planning and the creation of coalitions to coordinate systems for providing homeless services. The networks of programs and services that have evolved as a result of the development of Continuums of Care (CoCs) offer more support to people who are homeless, with more cohesion, than would otherwise have been possible. Continuums have also resulted in significantly higher levels of shared knowledge about resources available in communities, greater program and service coordination, improved referral networks, and the development of new joint projects.[1]

This chapter provides an overview of the concept of a coalition. It begins with a general definition of a coalition and then applies this definition to the CoC. The next section then discusses the benefits of a coalition with specific examples from the CoC system. The third section outlines the three critical components of a successful coalition – clear expectations, strong leadership, and adequate resources. The final section then describes some of the problems coalition organizers may encounter, so that these problems can be anticipated and addressed before they become barriers to success.

WHAT IS A COALITION?

A coalition is an alliance of individuals and organizations, sometimes referred to as an "organization of organizations," that come together to address a specific problem or issue and reach a common goal(s). Goals that focus on system-wide changes and collaborations and require a variety of expertise are particularly well suited for coalitions.[2]

A CoC is one example of a coalition. The CoC planning process was designed to promote the development of comprehensive systems to address homelessness by providing communities with a framework for organizing and delivering housing and services. To receive HUD funding, a continuum's plan must demonstrate broad community participation and identify resources and gaps in the community's approach to providing outreach, emergency shelter, and transitional and permanent housing, as well as related services for addressing homelessness. The plan should also include action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A COALITION?

For a coalition to be successful, it must be able to achieve goals and objectives that its individual stakeholder organizations would benefit from but would not be able to achieve on their own. Otherwise, its stakeholders would not be willing to invest the time and effort to participate in the coalition. So what are the benefits of a CoC coalition and why should stakeholders participate?

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[1] Burt, Martha R. *et. al.* (2002). *Evaluation of Continuums of Care for Homeless People: Final Report.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

[2] Phil Rabinowitz, "Coalition Building I: Starting a Coalition", Community Tool Box: Part B ed. Tom Wolff, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/

Creates more efficient homeless program and service delivery system and maximizes use of limited resources by eliminating duplication in services. Historically, homeless services have been fragmented at best. Overlaps in services can occur both within the homeless services community and between homeless services and mainstream services organizations. One of the main benefits of an effective coalition is the coordination of the service delivery system. CoC planning can help providers to identify ways to coordinate and link resources to avoid duplication and facilitate movement towards permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Improves communications and data and information sharing. Some examples of methods for improving communications through a coalition can include the following:

- Holding regular coalition meetings

- Sending weekly or monthly email newsletters or updates

- Creating and maintaining a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Establishing information-sharing agreements with homeless and mainstream service providers

These information-sharing tools would be difficult to create without first establishing a coalition.

Enhances understanding of homeless community's needs. One organization working alone to meet a specific homeless service need may not fully appreciate the array of needs in the homeless community. When a diverse group of homeless and mainstream service providers, and representatives from the public and private sectors come together to share different perspectives, experiences, and expertise, they are more likely to come up with new and creative solutions to meet the needs of the homeless in their community.

Expands networking opportunities. By working with a broad array of organizations beyond the immediate homeless services community, homeless services organizations can improve access to contacts and relationships formed by other groups. These contacts may provide access to new funding opportunities, local or state government decision-makers, and staff with a broad array of expertise.

Strengthens political position in community. A coalition comprised of a wide array of organizations will have far more political clout than a single homeless services organization or even a coalition solely composed of homeless services organizations. With this political clout, a coalition can improve access to decision makers and increase opportunities to obtain services and other benefits.

Increases access to funding opportunities that require community collaboration. In addition to the HUD CoC proposal, many other funders now require community collaboration in order to receive funding. Even if a funder does not specifically require collaboration, it is still likely to look favorably upon a community that has the vision and organizational skills to form an effective coalition.[3]

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[3] For detailed guidance on fundraising see Enterprise Foundation Fundraising Fundamentals --a seven part guide to identifying potential funders, soliciting and submitting proposals, and maintaining strong relationships with funders. http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewResourcesByTopic&topicid=16

WHAT MAKES A COALITION SUCCESSFUL?

Understanding and implementing key components of an effective coalition will greatly increase its likelihood of success. These key components include clear expectations, strong leadership, and adequate staffing.

Clear Expectations

Coalition organizers should clearly define the mission, membership, and structure and ensure that all stakeholders agree with these approaches. Coalition stakeholders need to understand and agree on the vision for a coalition and the goals and objectives formulated to reach this vision. While most stakeholders may agree with the broad mission of a continuum, such as ending homelessness, a group may find it challenging to formulate and agree on the detailed steps that need to be taken to reach this goal. So it is important for a continuum to take the time to define goals and objectives relevant to its mission before moving forward with specific activities. Additionally, as a continuum grows and evolves, it should be able to expand and modify its goals and objectives in response to the changing demands in its community and its enhanced organizational capacity.

With a clear mission, goals, and action steps to reach its goals, stakeholders can then take on specific roles and assignments to achieve these goals. Stakeholders' roles should be clearly defined including expected level of involvement and time, needed areas of expertise, and nature of participation. From the outset, stakeholders should be able to see clearly how the continuum benefits their organization and how their input will help the continuum.

It is important to develop an organizational structure in the early stages of coalition building. This is particularly important for continuums as they focus on comprehensive planning processes to end homelessness. The ground rules for participation and decision-making should be clear to both newcomers and to veterans of the planning process. For example, how and what information will be presented, who will have input and how, and who may vote. The ultimate goal is that all involved stakeholders consider the decision-making process to be legitimate and fair.

Strong Leadership

Finding a prominent community leader who is a champion for a coalition and the homeless assistance system overall can significantly improve the likelihood of success for a coalition. Continuum leaders must possess both strong organizational skills and the ability to inspire commitment and action. A continuum may find one person who has all the skills and abilities needed to run the organization but it is more likely that it will require a group of leaders who, combined, have all of these skills.

One leader in a group may be an inspirational speaker who conveys the vision and strong sense of purpose of a coalition and represents it to the community at large. This type of leader can obtain the critical commitments from agency heads and public figures that they will develop and sustain a community-wide strategy for addressing homelessness and can be especially important during the start-up or expansion phase of a coalition. Such prominent leaders in the community might include long-time advocates for the homeless, a business leader who has supported homeless organizations in the past, an elected official, or the director of a government agency.

To make such a strategy work, however, a continuum also needs a leader to manage the strategy, analyze performance, promote collaboration, and organize all the other activities that make a system work well. This leader must have the strong organizational skills needed to maintain the group's focus on its goals and process for achieving those goals and to manage

the daily tasks of a coalition. This type of leader must also understand how to form a service system by coalescing programs and personalities and must have the social and political skills to make it happen.

What to Look for in a Leader

A continuum leader or group of leaders must be able to do the following:

- Foster team building

- Inspire commitment and action

- Take responsibility

- Speak clearly and persuasively

- Convey vision and strong sense of purpose

- Maintain focus on goals and process for achieving those goals

- Capitalize on stakeholders' strengths

Adequate Staffing

Because coalition building and management is such a labor-intensive process, coalitions without a dedicated staff person responsible for managing its day-to-day tasks often fail. Some continuums may have the resources to hire a paid staff person to manage the coalition. Others may assign staff from a lead agency to organize and manage its efforts. Those continuums that rely on stakeholders for operational tasks, however, will find it extremely challenging to expand the coalition beyond the homeless services community.

The wide array of tasks involved in creating and operating a successful continuum should not be underestimated. They include the following:

- Organizing and facilitating meetings

- Maintaining communications between stakeholders

- Organizing and leading the needs assessment, including a point-in-time count

- Identifying service needs and selecting projects

- Assessing the performance of providers

- Providing technical assistance to providers

- Managing and overseeing the preparation of the HUD application

- Completing other funding applications

- Managing the long-range planning process

- Building partnerships

- Overseeing system coordination

- Assessing progress of system change

Each of the tasks listed above demand significant amounts of time and effort. For example, simply organizing a continuum meeting requires preparing an agenda, planning the meeting, providing facilitation, coordinating with board and committee members, compiling background materials, locating and preparing the meeting site, and contacting existing and potential stakeholders. After the meeting, the minutes of the meeting must be prepared and sent to all continuum stakeholders. Some have suggested that when planning for the number of hours per month required for a category of tasks, such as planning and conducting meetings, it is necessary to estimate the number of hours required for each category and then multiply by two.[4]

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL COALITION

Coalition organizers may face a range of problems when attempting to work together with a diverse group of organizations and personalities. Organizers should anticipate these problems and be prepared to address them before they become barriers to a coalition's success. The problems described below should be considered in the context of a specific community.

Finding the right lead organization. A lead organization that has strong leadership, access to resources, and high visibility in a community can provide a continuum with the credibility needed to attract broad-based participation in the community. The lead organization should have the resources and capacity to conduct a wide range of tasks. While a strong lead organization is important to the success of a coalition, continuums should place limits on a lead organization's control of the process. Dominance by any single organization or government agency may ultimately impede the long-term success of a coalition. Continuums need to strategically assess who should be designated as the lead organization.

Competition between groups. Organizations that have competed in the past for the same funding opportunities and clients may find it difficult to begin working together. The first step in forming a strong working group is to provide concrete examples of how coalition stakeholders might benefit from working together. Organizers should provide specific examples of funding opportunities that would only be available to a coalition and review the benefits listed above tailoring them to the specific characteristics of their community.

Inability to agree on specific goals, objectives, and activities. Challenges and disagreements among members are inevitable. During the early stages of a coalition and during periods of significant expansion, coalition stakeholders should invest time in relationship building and planning activities. Understanding the organizational structures and missions of coalition members and building trust among stakeholders will provide a strong foundation for addressing these challenges and disagreements.

Poor organizational capacity. The time and effort required for organizing and managing a coalition should never be underestimated. The lead agency will bear the brunt of this effort although some work should be delegated to stakeholders. Establishing management and governance structures early on will improve the overall operations of a coalition.

Cost of participating viewed to be greater than the benefits it provides. Coalition stakeholders typically have full time jobs in addition to their work for the coalition. If a coalition demands significant amounts of time from stakeholders and does not seem to provide comparable benefits, a coalition will quickly begin to lose its stakeholders. Coalition leaders should be realistic about the amount of time stakeholders can contribute to the work of a

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[4] Cohen, L., Baer, N. and Satterwhite, P. Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide. In: Wurzback ME, ed. Community Health Education & Promotion: A Guide to Program Design and Evaluation. 2nd ed. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers Inc; 2002: 144-161.

coalition. Meetings should be productive and action oriented. Coalition efforts should focus on activities that individual participating organizations would not be able to accomplish on their own such as system-wide changes and collaborations. Finally, coalition leaders need to find a balance between the needs of a coalition and its individual stakeholders.[5]

[5] Phil Rabinowitz, "Coalition Building I: Starting a Coalition", Community Tool Box: Part B ed. Tom Wolff, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/

CHAPTER 2: BUILDING A COMMUNITY-WIDE COALITION

INTRODUCTION

A community's definition of a Continuum of Care (CoC) and its goals for its homeless assistance network will have an impact on the type of partnerships it develops. If a community's goal is to eliminate homelessness, its continuum must move beyond homeless-specific programs to achieve this goal. Only by creating permanent affordable housing and targeting resources for prevention can communities end homelessness. Reaching the goal of ending homelessness requires year-round planning, service coordination, a wide array of public and private resources, and integration with mainstream agencies. Therefore, the support of public, private, and nonprofit organizations is critical to the broad goal of eliminating homelessness.

The CoC process has stimulated an increase in communication and information-sharing among homeless service providers, and in many communities, among homeless-specific entities and mainstream entities. Information sharing has, in turn, led to increased coordination of programs and services.[6] To build a community-wide coalition, a continuum needs to take stock of its existing partnerships and consider ways to strengthen them. A continuum should also assess how to expand its membership.

This chapter provides guidance on how to evaluate and improve existing contacts between agencies and organizations in a continuum's community with the goal of creating a community-wide coalition. The first section outlines 10 steps to building a community-wide coalition. The next section defines the four levels of contact between agencies – communication, coordination, collaboration, and community-wide collaboration and applies these definitions to CoCs. As continuums expand and diversify their membership, their goals and objectives will need to be re-examined and oftentimes revised. The third section discusses issues to consider when re-defining a continuum's goals and objectives. The final section provides guidance on how to assess the level of support in a community for a community-wide effort to address homelessness.

FORMING A COMMUNITY-WIDE COLLABORATION[7]

This section provides a brief overview of the step-by-step process for forming and managing a community-wide collaboration. (For a more in-depth discussion of many of these steps see Chapter 5: Managing an Effective Coalition.) The 10 steps are divided into three phases: formation, management, and evaluation. These general coalition building principles can be applied to a variety of circumstances. Some continuum leaders may have already applied many of these principles when they initially formed their CoC. These basic coalition building techniques should again be applied when expanding a continuum to a community-wide collaboration.

Formation

1. **Involve a diverse group of stakeholders.** A coalition comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders brings a wide variety of viewpoints and experiences. This diversity of

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[6] Burt et. al., Evaluation of Continuums of Care for Homeless People, p. 24.

[7] This section was adapted from *Essential Tips for Successful Collaboration*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA.

experience can enhance stakeholders' abilities to understand and address complex issues. Such diversity of experience and resources is required for a continuum that is trying to achieve the far-reaching goal of ending homelessness.

2. **Allow for sufficient front-end time to build a strong foundation and prepare to face challenges.** Continuums should invest time during the early stages of coalition building to learn about each others' organizations focusing on such issues as missions, decision making processes, funding, and staffing. Continuums should also develop a leadership structure and management capacity to support a community-wide collaboration. This early investment of time and effort will increase the likelihood of a continuum's long-term success.

3. **Establish a shared vision.** A shared vision provides the guidance for developing goals and objectives and specific actions to be taken by a coalition. A shared vision may simply be expressed as a broad goal or mission statement such as "preventing and ending homelessness in our community."

4. **Conduct a needs assessment.** Planning for an evaluation from the outset can help a community-wide coalition think through the entire process of designing, implementing, and evaluating its work. The first step in this process is a needs assessment, which should examine the needs and expectations of stakeholders, the dynamics of working relationships among stakeholders and their respective organizations, local leadership, collaborative experience, and management capacity.

5. **Formulate a data-driven plan of action.** At this stage, a coalition faces the challenging task of moving from a broad mission statement to delineating the specific work that needs to be undertaken. Develop SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time specific – for each project in an action plan.

Management

6. **Develop a shared approach to meeting responsibilities.** Under this approach, individuals or teams can undertake specific projects that require their particular expertise or experience. This approach can be an effective way to coordinate meetings and presentations, conduct research and disseminate information, develop effective tools, and articulate strategies for the provision of services.

7. **Maintain consistent and effective channels of communication.** Establishing effective methods of communication early on are critical for building strong working relationships and a smooth functioning collaboration. Some communication strategies include: face-to-face meetings; group e-mail, group mobile phone text messages, and listservs. Also, hiring a professional facilitator in strategic planning meetings and other pivotal working meetings can be beneficial.

8. **Monitor progress frequently: reassess, revise, and recommit.** Coalitions should evaluate the progress of their work throughout the process and make any necessary changes, as they go along, based on this evaluation. To evaluate its progress at various stages, coalitions will need to formulate interim goals and objectives. Coalitions can use the information gathered in these progress reports to make the appropriate changes to their long- and short-term goals and objectives, expand or change the membership of a planning or outreach team or other working groups.

Evaluation

9. **Assess the coalition's efforts.** Coalitions should conduct evaluations of their overall effort once the work has been completed. Evaluations are important for measuring the effectiveness of efforts and documenting successes. In evaluating far-reaching goals, such

as the elimination of homelessness in a community, coalitions need to formulate interim goals such as decreasing the number of homeless households by a certain percentage within a specified timeframe. Coalitions can then assess whether they have accomplished their goals and objectives, whether they are making the necessary progress toward their final goal, and what the next steps should be. In addition to assessing outcomes, such as the reduction in homelessness, evaluations should also assess the collaboration itself including whether it has broad-based involvement of stakeholders, smooth flowing communication between stakeholders, and an effective leadership structure.

10. **Share lessons learned.** Continuums can learn a great deal from one another. Given that each community is different, a successful approach in one community might fail miserably in another community. However, some effective strategies for bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders around a complex issue can be applied to a variety of circumstances.

DEFINING LEVELS OF AGENCY CONTACT[8]

The first step in forming a community-wide collaboration is to involve a diverse group of stakeholders. To accomplish this, continuums need to understand the varying levels of contact that may exist between agencies, evaluate their existing contacts, and assess how to improve these contacts.

The four levels of contact between two or more agencies working together may be described as communication, coordination, collaboration, and community-wide collaboration. These levels of contact build on one another—agencies cannot coordinate without communicating, and cannot collaborate unless they both communicate and coordinate. The level of contact reflects the extent to which agencies pay attention to other agencies, perhaps change their own ways, and make a joint effort to reach shared goals.

- **Communication.** Agencies are at the level of communication if they have accurate knowledge of each other's existence, service offerings, and eligible clientele. They will also know how to access each other's services, and may refer clients to each other. They may have shared involvements through cross-training, meetings, committees and task forces, but they do not have mechanisms in place to support each other's work. Communication may occur between direct services workers, middle management, or agency leadership.

- **Coordination.** Agencies are at the level of coordination if, in addition to communicating, they support each other's efforts to obtain resources for clients. However, they do not deliberately work to develop shared goals and structure their operations to meet these goals. Agencies at this level do not make any significant changes in the services they offer or how they do business. Coordination may occur between direct services workers, middle management, or agency leadership.

- **Collaboration between Agencies.** Agencies are at the level of collaboration if they work with each other to articulate shared goals, analyze their operations to determine how they may achieve those goals, and make the changes dictated by this analysis. Collaboration can occur between two agencies, or among several agencies. Because collaboration requires organizational commitments, agency leadership must be involved

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[8] Adapted from Burt, M. R., & Spellman, B.E. (2007). *Changing Homeless and Mainstream Service Systems: Essential Approaches to Ending Homelessness.* Paper presented at the National Symposium on Homelessness Research, Washington, DC.

in determining, supporting, and enforcing new policies and procedures that may be instituted through this collaboration.

- **Community-wide Collaboration.** When the level of collaboration extends to include all or most agencies in a community focused on the same population with the same goals, it becomes a strong community-wide level of organization. A community-wide collaboration involves system-wide change and integration of services through a variety of mechanisms. Maintaining this collaboration requires ongoing planning to assess what has been effective, what needs to change, and what needs to be done to reach the community's goals. This planning might be done through task force, council, or stakeholder meetings or through quarterly retreats. Regardless of the method, it must involve shared decision-making and strategic planning at multiple levels as well as the expectation that each part of the system will modify its own activities to support and complement the work of the other parts.

Some agencies actually relate to one another *below* the level of communication—that is, they do not know how the other operates, do not interact in any way, interact negatively, and/or hold inaccurate views of each other.[9]

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[9] Burt et. al.

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Continuum Planning Stages

Continuums should strive to engage in community-wide, multi-year, strategic planning for managing, coordinating, and providing homeless programs and services. While some communities have reached this goal, many have not. The descriptions below highlight some of the planning stages and levels of contact among continuums:

- **Early Planning – Homeless Service Providers Coordinate and Collaborate:** Continuums in their early stages of development typically limit their planning to the CoC application. While they may conduct year-round planning, homeless service providers dominate the planning group membership and process. At this level, homeless service providers know how to access each other's services and refer clients to one another. As they progress, they typically have defined shared goals and revised their operations in an effort to reach these goals.

- **Mid-Level Planning - Continuums Communicate and Coordinate with Public, Private and Non-profit Organizations:** At the next level of planning, continuums conduct year-round planning that focuses on the larger system of homeless programs and services. This broader planning includes the CoC planning process but expands beyond it. This level of planning integrates other programs and services into the CoC process. At this level, partnership involvement may mean participation in meetings, client referrals, and some sharing of resources. Partners, however, would not have defined shared goals with a continuum and restructured their operations to meet those goals.

- **Advanced Planning – Continuums Form a Community-wide Collaboration:** At the highest level of planning, communities engage in multi-year, strategic planning for homeless programs and services that are well integrated with their partners' planning efforts. These communities also have built enough flexibility into their systems to be able to periodically rethink their goals and their plans to achieve those goals. This flexibility allows them to meet the changing needs of homeless subpopulations and to evaluate the quality of programs and services and replace them with better programs and services.

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RE-DEFINING A CONTINUUM'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES[10]

As explained above, to integrate public, private, and nonprofit organizations into the homeless assistance system, a continuum must go beyond merely planning for HUD's CoC application. One of the objectives of a community-wide coalition should be to develop a comprehensive planning process and a comprehensive and coordinated services delivery system that has prevention and elimination of homelessness as its goal. Local organizations, even those who are not primarily providers of homeless services, should be encouraged to make investments of their own funds and staff time in homeless-related programs and services, and in homelessness prevention.

When re-examining a continuum's goals and objectives to achieve a community-wide collaboration, organizers should remember that coalitions that achieve multiple objectives that build on one another are most effective. Some objectives to consider which have been found to

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[10] Cohen et. al., Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide, p. 7. Burt et. al., Changing Homeless and Mainstream Service Systems: Essential Approaches to Ending Homelessness, p. 2-19.

help promote policy reforms and develop coordinated systems of housing and supportive services include the following:

- Fostering collaborative planning and consensus building and conducting system-wide strategic planning

- Investing and leveraging resources

- Coordinating, streamlining, and integrating funding

- Building provider capacity

- Establishing and monitoring performance

- Cultivating leaders, champions and advocates

- Influencing policy and legislation

- Changing/coordinating organizational processes and procedures

- Building the case for system change through research and data, and effective communication and advocacy

For example, to achieve the goal of coordinating homeless assistance with mainstream service systems, a coalition might only focus on coordinating organizational processes and procedures. However, a coalition that also conducts system-wide strategic planning could not only coordinate existing procedures but also change and improve procedures to enhance the integration of homeless assistance with mainstream service systems.

GENERATING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR A COMMUNITY-WIDE COALITION

To generate community support for a community-wide coalition, organizers should first consider how their community has dealt with the homeless issue in the past. Have there been any attempts to address homelessness as a community-wide effort? If so, which community-wide efforts have succeeded, which have failed, and why have they succeeded or failed? Do any existing organizations or coalitions focus on the same or similar issues? Would their members be willing to support an expanded continuum? Would any organizations or individuals in the community oppose the continuum's objectives or view it as competition for limited resources?

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Assessing Barriers to Building a Community-Wide Coalition

Organizers should use this tool to assess a continuum's strengths and weaknesses in achieving support for a community-wide coalition. The low ratings will indicate areas that need to be addressed as continuum organizers begin expanding their coalition.

(1=weakest level; 5=strongest level)

History of cooperation or collaboration	1	2	3	4	5
Resources	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5
Clear expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Shared vision	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational Capacity	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Planning for Change: A Coalition Building Technical Assistance System, Coalition Building Basics, Sheila Sherow, JoAnn Weinberger, August 2002.

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Oftentimes an event can trigger a community's willingness to mobilize and participate in a community-wide collaboration. Some factors that may influence this willingness to create systemic change include whether providers are satisfied with current methods of addressing homelessness; data available that indicates a need for change; the political, economic, or social climate; and commitments of those who control the major resources within and beyond the community. Some examples of trigger events that have led to the formation or expansion of a community-wide coalition include a proposed downtown development that would displace homeless people, an anti-homeless city ordinance, or a new funding source that requires community-wide collaboration. Such events can be the impetus that forces communities to re-examine their situation and take action to mobilize the people and resources needed to address the homelessness in their community.

Finding the resources to pay for new programs and services is always a challenge. The goal of reducing or eliminating homelessness cannot be met if the homeless assistance network providers are the only players, and Federal funding streams the only resources. Ultimately, continuums cannot succeed without building strong relationships with public, private, and nonprofit organizations in their communities. By understanding their existing relationships with various agencies and organizations, continuums can begin to assess how to improve those relationships. Mainstream agencies can and should play an especially important role in reducing or eliminating homelessness. To achieve this goal requires significant investment by mainstream public agencies, bringing both their commitment and energy, and local dollars. The next chapter discusses how to target this specific type of partnership.

ATTACHMENT 2.1:
EVALUTING LEVELS OF AGENCY CONTACT

To begin the process of forming a community-wide coalition that involves collaboration between representatives from the state, local, private, and nonprofit sectors, a Continuum of Care should evaluate the scope of its existing planning effort and the levels of contact between organizations and consider how to improve those contacts. Based on this evaluation, a continuum should then re-formulate its goals and identify a list of potential members.

Continuum organizers should use the questionnaire in Part 1 to evaluate each individual organization with which they have contact. Based on each individual evaluation, continuum organizers can then complete the chart in Part 2 by designating each individual agency's level of contact. The goal is to gain a clear picture of where a continuum is in the process of developing an effective community-wide collaboration. Answering the questions in Part 3 can help a continuum assess its progress toward achieving a community-wide coalition and focus its efforts in reaching this goal.

PART 1: LEVEL OF CONTACT QUESTIONNAIRE

Communication

- Does the continuum conduct cross-training with this agency?

  ➢ Do the continuum and the agency's staff understand each other's services?

  ➢ Do the continuum and the agency staff understand each other's program eligibility requirements?

  ➢ Do the continuum and the agency staff understand how to access each other's programs?

- Do the continuum and the agency's staff refer clients to one another?

- Does agency staff meet with continuum members in any routine format (service providers' consortium, for example)?

Note: If a continuum and an agency have accurate knowledge of each other's service offerings and eligible clientele, know how to access each other's services, refer clients to one another, and meet together in a routine format, the communication column should be checked. If not, the "Below Communication Level" column should be checked.

Coordination

- Has the continuum applied jointly for funding with this agency?

- Have the continuum and this agency coordinated their existing service delivery systems?

Note: Agencies are at the level of coordination if, in addition to communicating, they support each others efforts to obtain resources for clients

Collaboration

- Has the continuum and this agency worked together to develop shared goals to address homelessness?

- Has the continuum and this agency analyzed their operations to determine how they may achieve these shared goals?

- Has the continuum and this agency restructured their operations based on this analysis?

- Has the continuum and this agency created feedback mechanisms to ensure collaboration on service and program delivery?

- Has agency leadership been involved in the development of these goals and in the resultant restructuring of their operations?

Note: If a continuum and an agency work with each other to articulate shared goals, analyze their operations to determine how they may achieve these goals, and make changes dictated by this analysis, the collaboration column should be checked.

PART 2: LEVEL OF CONTACT CHART

Coalition Members/ Potential Members	Below Communication Level	Communication	Coordination	Collaboration
Elected officials/key staff				
State Medicaid Office				
State or Regional VA				
Local Public Mental Health				
Local Public Substance Abuse Services				
Local Public Health Services				
Public Housing Authority				
City/County Housing Services				
Advocates/ formerly homeless persons				
Legal Aid				
Child Care Services				
Education System				
Other _____				

PART 3: ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY-WIDE COLLABORATION

Once a continuum has answered the questions in Attachment 2.1, it can evaluate its progress toward achieving a community-wide collaboration by answering the questions below and focus its efforts in reaching this goal.

Community-wide Collaboration

- Are all the systems in a community essential to preventing and ending homelessness involved?

- Have they integrated services across systems to create a streamlined service delivery system?

- Have they created feedback mechanisms and data collection to review what has been achieved and identify and resolve problems?

- Have they developed ongoing planning mechanisms to assess what has been effective, what needs to change, and what needs to be done to reach the community's goals?

Note: If a continuum has formed collaborations with all the parties listed, has integrated services across systems, and has created ongoing feedback and planning mechanisms, it has achieved a community-wide collaboration.

ATTACHMENT 2.2:
STEPS IN A PLANNING A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT[11]

The following steps related to the formation, management, and evaluation of a community-wide coalition highlight the differences between a coordinated and collaborative approach. These comparisons should help continuums determine the extent to which they are working in a *collaborative* way with their partners.

Building a Community-Wide Collaboration	Coordinated Approach	Collaborative Approach
Choose a visible leader for the effort	There will be leadership within and potentially across systems but no formal leadership structure.	Selected leader acts as a cross-systems authority to improve programs and integrate activities. This person should have credibility with stakeholders across systems and be able to marshal the personal commitment and resources of key partners to support joint activities.
Create and formalize a process for engaging and sustaining the involvement of key stakeholders	There is mutual understanding of the need to involve diverse stakeholders on an ongoing basis, but there may not be a process for identifying additional individuals or organizations that could be involved.	A formal process is developed to identify, involve, and support new project stakeholders who play an integral role in the strategic plan or approach.
Develop a mutually held vision across systems for providing services	Multiple systems may meet regularly at a management or staff level for case management discussions and will support each others efforts to obtain resources for clients.	Stakeholders develop a shared mission, vision, and practices for providing services for people who are homeless. Management must be involved to implement and enforce these changes.
Institute joint planning between homeless assistance and other systems	Clients are referred to partner agencies and case management is coordinated.	Stakeholders plan program goals, outcomes, and related strategies for services that are consistent across systems. In addition to coordinating services, agencies may change policies and procedures to improve service delivery to people who are homeless. Partners create a formal collaborative structure using Memorandum of Understanding.
Integrate supportive services, including links to treatment services, benefits planning, and case management	The homeless assistance system and other systems may be seen as resources for one another and they may coordinate their existing service delivery systems.	Service delivery goes beyond coordination. Changes can be made at the agency level and system wide to ensure that clients receive integrated services and that any barriers to service delivery are addressed.
Identify, obtain, and manage funding to support homeless population	Stakeholders are represented on each other's planning groups and may apply jointly for funding. Although stakeholders cooperate on funding issues, they have no ongoing sustainability plans.	Stakeholders across systems identify resources that can be blended, seek new resources specific to achieving the goals of the collaboration, and collaborate on funding and sustainability strategies. Drawing on the strength of multiple service providers rather than a single agency or system enhances the collaboration and benefits both for individual clients and the providers that serve them.
Determine how to identify, track, and analyze program outcomes and performance measures	There may be mutual recognition of the outcome requirements of each system but limited use of compatible criteria and joint reporting	Stakeholders develop mutual and clear expectations and agreements about program goals, performance measures, and outcomes in advance of joint planning activities. Goals and outcomes are developed through cross-systems and interagency planning, supported by documented results, and funded accordingly.

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[11] This material was adapted from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Coordinating Community Plans, May 2008, pp. 33-36.*
http://www.hudhre.info/documents/CoordinatingCommunityPlans_June2008.pdf

CHAPTER 3: COLLABORATING WITH MAINSTREAM AGENCIES

INTRODUCTION

Individuals who are homeless require many services and supports beyond what homeless service providers offer (Burt et al., 2002). Mainstream agencies (i.e., agencies that do not specifically focus on homelessness) provide many of the services and support that people who are homeless need. These services include mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, health care, employment services, and other social services. Because of the resources available from these agencies, HUD strongly encourages communities to use mainstream agencies to the maximum extent possible when serving people who are homeless.

> **What are Mainstream Resources?**
>
> "Mainstream resources" is a term used to describe a variety of Federal and state benefit government assistance programs homeless families and individuals may be eligible to receive. Mainstream resources are not targeted to assist individuals who are homeless. Rather, persons who are homeless must qualify for assistance based on their disability and/or economic status.
>
> Together, mainstream (non-targeted) service resources or benefit programs account for billions of dollars in Federal and state funds available nationally to provide low-income persons, including individuals and families who are homeless, with cash payments and supportive services for needs such as housing, health care, job training, and food and nutrition services.

Getting mainstream public agencies to the "homeless" table takes planning, persistence, and sometimes power. It also often takes being able to present the case for their involvement as a mutually beneficial situation in which mainstream agencies are able to serve "their own" clients better by joining forces with the local homeless assistance network. The mainstream agencies whose own missions coincide most closely with the goal of ending homelessness have the greatest incentive to work with homeless assistance networks. These agencies include housing and community/neighborhood/economic development agencies; health, mental health, and substance abuse agencies; and to an increasing extent, corrections agencies. To succeed in addressing homelessness effectively, communities and service networks need to find resources from many different funding streams. Continuums of Care (CoCs) need to encourage local agencies that control these funding streams to devote not only the Federal resources they control, but also their own state and local resources, towards achieving the goal.[12]

This chapter discusses how to target collaborations with mainstream agencies. Mainstream agencies are essential to any community's efforts to end homelessness. As continuums begin planning how to include mainstream agencies in their coalitions, they should carefully think through how to target these efforts. A continuum's work with mainstream service systems

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[12] For an in-depth discussion on how the homeless assistance and workforce development systems can work together to recognize and address their common goals see U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Coordinating Community Plans, May 2008.*
http://www.hudhre.info/documents/CoordinatingCommunityPlans_June2008.pdf

should focus on two primary efforts – coordinating efforts to prevent homelessness and providing services needed by those exiting the homeless service system.

PREVENTION

Prevention resources are unlikely to be used efficiently unless they are part of a larger structure of planning and organization that addresses the issue of targeting those at greatest risk of homelessness. A single agency can target prevention and do it well. But to get the most from a community's prevention dollar, one needs a community-wide system. The system should have a carefully articulated targeting strategy and mechanisms to ensure that funds allocated to prevention are used in ways likely to reach the people at greatest risk of homelessness. Thus, when organizing a community for prevention, three overall strategies—short-term assistance, long-term support, and discharge planning—should be applied:

- **Short-term Assistance:** Extreme poverty, coupled with a short-term crisis, often leads to homelessness for individuals and families. Setting up a system designed to identify those households, and provide them with access to short-term, emergency services, is a simple and effective way to keep people in housing.

- **Long-term Support:** People with disabilities or other chronic problems require long-term solutions of housing with supportive services.[13] For individuals and families with long-term service needs, the identification of households at risk of homelessness is a first step in prevention. For example, looking at residential instability as an indicator, individuals with mental illness can be identified as "at risk" for homelessness and offered more intensive services and supports.

- **Discharge Planning:** Discharge planning refers to persons who are exiting mainstream systems such as mental hospitals, jails, prisons, foster care and other long term care youth systems. When individuals exit these systems without solid planning for employment, housing, access to health care and real opportunities for community integration, many people become homeless. It is important, then, to encourage those systems to use discharge planning, and to establish solid links to housing and other supports upon discharge.

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[13] Research on homelessness has revealed information about a small group of individuals with disabilities such as mental illness or substance abuse, who experience chronic homelessness. Data show that, in the communities studied, people who have long term episodes of homelessness or who have multiple episodes of homelessness (10-20 percent of the homeless population) use more than half of the resources in the Continuum of Care systems studied.

Strategies to Improve Discharge Planning Procedures

- Continuums should include mainstream service system representatives in their planning process. Decision makers from each system should be invited to the CoC planning group. Some strategies might involve more than one public agency working together to prevent homelessness. For example, mental health and corrections agencies could collaborate to prevent homelessness at institutional release for mentally ill inmates.

- A continuum should create a standing committee within the continuum planning group to work on discharge planning, with a standing report item on each meeting agenda.

- State representatives should be invited to continuum meetings since implementing changes in discharge planning procedures may be most feasible from the state level. The goal is a written agreement or protocol that governs discharge planning from publicly funded institutions, along with regular monitoring of the agreements, and a measurable decrease in the number of people exiting institutions into homelessness.

ENTRY OR RE-ENTRY INTO MAINSTREAM SYSTEMS

Mainstream services can be effective re-entry points for individuals exiting the CoC system and joining or re-joining mainstream health and behavioral health services. It is important to remember that people with mental illness and other co-occurring disorders have service needs that cross system lines, and a lack of responsiveness from the mainstream systems to accommodate those needs may have been a precipitating factor for homelessness.

A community's strategy for improving entry or re-entry into mainstream systems generally falls into one of the following categories:

- **Coordination:** Activities are designed to ease access into the mainstream system. For example, the Veteran's Administration might place a caseworker in a homeless shelter. In this approach, partners are working within the existing system but are not trying to change any of the mainstream system rules.

- **Collaboration:** Activities are designed to change some provision(s) within the mainstream system that are blocking access to services for persons who are homeless. For example, if the intake for mental health services requires a valid diagnosis of psychiatric disorder, this requirement could be postponed for persons entering the system through a homeless shelter. The agency could allow intake without requiring the person to wait for weeks for a psychiatric evaluation, although the requirement would have to be met eventually. In this approach, partners are changing an agency's rules governing intake to facilitate access to services by persons who are homeless. Agencies might also collaborate to find new funding or re-allocation of resources that provides expanded capacity and access for people who are homeless.

STRATEGIES

This chapter has discussed how to target collaborations with mainstream agencies. As discussed above, continuums need to work with mainstream agencies to prevent homelessness and to improve the access of persons who are homeless into the mainstream service system. Some suggested strategies for attaining these goals include:

- **Education:** Mainstream service providers should be educated about homelessness and chronic homelessness and how they can both prevent and help end this pattern. Mainstream agencies also need to recognize that stable housing contributes to their clients' well being—possibly as much as medications and other official "treatments." Information about the pattern of homelessness in specific communities, plus identified strategies that have worked in other places should be part of an overall training package.

- **Housing Coordinator:** Continuums should encourage mainstream agencies to create positions of housing developers and coordinators, and make housing and housing stability a priority. Housing and housing stability are usually needed in order for service delivery, such as health care, mental health treatment, and employment assistance, to be effective.

- **Contracts:** Responsibility for the homeless population should be incorporated into existing contracts. At the local level, it is often helpful to have state support for including or targeting the homeless in mainstream services. Specific language in the State Medicaid Plan, for example, can support local providers in serving people who have been homeless.

- **Co-location:** Continuum stakeholders should co-locate services and staff. Locating staff members from one agency within the building of another agency can help reduce barriers to services.

- **Coordination:** Continuums should work with mainstream agency partners to improve coordination of services across agency boundaries. Data on referrals can be obtained through local utilization management systems or use of HMIS to track service events. Routine service coordination meetings with case managers and eligibility workers can be effective in improving system performance.

- **Collaboration:** Continuums should work with mainstream agencies to conduct multi-year, strategic planning for homeless programs and services that is well integrated with planning for mainstream services. This should include working together to develop shared goals to address homelessness and, when necessary, changing procedures and/or restructuring their operations to achieve these shared goals.

Collaboration between homeless and mainstream agencies helps maximize existing resources through referrals to appropriate agencies and creates new resources when two or more organizations work together to identify a need and then develop a service that did not previously exist. Additionally, when mainstream service agencies take responsibility for their clients' housing stability, homelessness prevention efforts have a more far reaching impact than if only homeless organizations or even mainstream housing organizations focused on prevention.

As continuums and mainstream agencies work together and improve their communication and coordination, they will begin to see where changes in the system need to be made to improve access for persons who are homeless and to prevent homelessness. Building on these coordination efforts, continuums and mainstream agency partners can begin to collaborate on how to change existing rules and operations within mainstream agencies. Ultimately, they should work together on multi-year strategic plans so that they may develop shared goals and make the necessary changes within their respective organizations to achieve these goals. By doing this, these communities are not simply working within an existing framework but have the flexibility to change that framework to meet their needs.

ATTACHMENT 3.1:
SAMPLE PLANNING PROCESS

The following example highlights how a continuum might use the planning process to focus on one particular goal, in this case, reducing the number of individuals leaving mental hospitals who become homeless.

Overall Continuum of Care Goal: Improve discharge planning for individuals leaving mental hospitals, including planning for employment, housing, and access to health care, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the likelihood of homelessness for these individuals.

- **Step 1.** Create a smaller, measurable one-year goal. For example: Reduce the number of individuals who become homeless when leaving a mental hospital by 20 percent over the next 12 months.

- **Step 2.** Review continuum goals and achievements over the last 12 months in HMIS or APR data. Identify trends, gaps, or other information that may make it easier or more difficult to meet the goal as stated.

- **Step 3.** Assign a working group the task of creating solutions for the goal. Include decision makers and persons able to affect the change. For this example, this may include Department of Mental Health representatives; housing or service providers; and workforce development representatives. Additionally, state representatives should be included since implementing changes in discharge planning procedures may be most feasible from the state level. The working group should also include anticipated milestones. For example: The Mainstream Resources Committee is charged with meeting the mainstream goal by June 2009, with quarterly progress reports to the Board on progress made.

- **Step 4.** Identify challenges providers and consumers face in obtaining housing, employment, health care or other benefits. Identify challenges or issues with their administrative processes.

- **Step 5.** Identify strategies that can help meet the goal and resources available. Examples include a written agreement or protocol that governs discharge planning from publicly funded institutions, along with regular monitoring of the agreement.

- **Step 6.** Implement strategies identified. Analyze data to understand if progress is being made toward goals. Report progress monthly or quarterly to Governing Body.

CHAPTER 4: BUILDING A COALITION'S MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

While it is important to encourage broad participation in the Continuum of Care (CoC), levels of participation may and should vary among continuum stakeholders. Some stakeholders will be involved in the daily activities while others will simply provide their expertise on an "as-needed" basis. A successful coalition should be able to explain clearly why a stakeholder should participate, the level and amount of participation, and the expected outcomes of participation. This chapter discusses these and other issues to consider when building the membership of a coalition.

The first section discusses the challenges in finding the right balance between allowing for an inclusive membership and maintaining a manageable size for a coalition. The second section delineates the levels of stakeholder involvement and factors to consider when assessing this involvement. The final section discusses the process of identifying community leaders and organizations to join a coalition and the range of roles stakeholders might play.

FINDING THE RIGHT MEMBERSHIP BALANCE

Organizers should establish the ideal size and desired diversity of the coalition through a careful and thorough thought process that is based on agreement as to the overall purpose for developing the coalition. A coalition with a narrow purpose would not need or, for that matter, be able to attract a large or diverse membership. For example, if a coalition's sole purpose were to compile and submit a CoC application to HUD, this coalition would have trouble attracting organizations that cannot receive McKinney-Vento funds. If, on the other hand, a coalition establishes a far-reaching goal, such as ending homelessness in its community, a large and diverse membership would be necessary to meet such a challenge.

However, as coalitions grow they can become less manageable and require more resources – increased organizational capacity, staffing, and expenses. A large organization is likely to have a slower decision-making process and therefore not respond as nimbly to issues that arise. Thus, it is important to find the right balance between having a diverse and inclusive membership and maintaining a manageable size.

Why a Diverse Group of Stakeholders Is Important

A coalition comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders brings a wider variety of viewpoints and experiences than a coalition with a narrowly defined membership. This diversity of experience can enhance stakeholders' abilities to understand and address complex issues. Conversely, a diverse group is less likely to fall prey to the "group think" mentality and, as such, is more likely to come up with new ideas and creative ways to solve problems than a group with like-minded stakeholders. A diverse membership also increases a coalition's access to a wide variety of resources including funding opportunities, specialized skills, experiences, and expertise.

Why a Diverse Group of Stakeholders Can Be Challenging

Working with a narrowly defined group whose stakeholders come from organizations that share similar goals can make it easier to accomplish objectives and undertake action steps more quickly than a diverse group of stakeholders. Stakeholders with diverse interests may encounter difficulties agreeing on objectives and methods for achieving those objectives.

Additionally, with a large group and one that is diverse, each organization will have its own internal approval process, which can slow down the coalition's ability to make decisions, complete tasks, and meet deadlines. To work together effectively, coalition stakeholders must trust one another. When stakeholders come from the same field and have worked together on issues in the past, a level of trust has already been established. However, when stakeholders come from a wide array of fields and have never worked together that trust must be built, which takes time and thus can slow down the overall process. Finally, conflicting interests are more likely to occur with a diverse group of stakeholders given the broader array of missions among diverse organizations.

How to Build and Manage a Diverse Group of Stakeholders

Initially, a narrowly defined group, such as homeless service providers, may constitute a majority of the stakeholders in a coalition. Because of their similar interests, they may be able to obtain results quickly. For example, service providers may form a coalition to coordinate the homeless services they provide and to expand opportunities for staff training and development. These early accomplishments then can provide a coalition with the credibility and momentum to attract a broad array of stakeholders and the strong foundation necessary to expand its overall mission. Additionally, decisions regarding which agencies to recruit during the early stages of a coalition's development may vary depending on the homeless population being targeted. For example, in a community targeting family homelessness, the crucial agencies to recruit early on may be child welfare, TANF, workforce development, and public housing agencies. If, instead chronic homelessness is being targeted, law enforcement, courts, mental health, substance abuse, and public benefits agencies may be recruited during the early stages of a coalition.

There is no single right way for a continuum to grow and diversify. Each continuum must respond to the needs and resources in its community and expand its membership accordingly. However, the key to building and managing a diverse continuum is to invest time in relationship building and planning activities during a continuum's early stages of development and during periods of significant expansion. Clearly defining roles and expectations of new and existing stakeholders, understanding the organizational structures and missions of stakeholders, and building trust among stakeholders will provide a strong foundation for addressing the challenges and disagreements that may arise amongst a diverse group of stakeholders.

DEFINING LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Regardless of how a coalition grows, it is critical to define clearly the roles and expectations of individual stakeholders and their organizations. Continuum leadership should make sure stakeholders understand and agree on the vision for a coalition and the goals and objectives formulated to reach this vision. Then they should ensure that the roles stakeholders are assigned or choose to undertake clearly help the coalition to meet its goals and objectives. Stakeholders should be able to see clearly how the coalition benefits their organization and how their input will help the coalition.

In a large and diverse coalition, stakeholders' roles can and should vary. When defining the roles and responsibilities of coalition stakeholders consider the following factors:

- The amount of overall staff time an organization can commit and the amount of time an individual can commit

- Skills, expertise, and experience that individuals and organizations as a whole offer

- Access to resources

- Interest and level of commitment to specific issues

Based on these factors, stakeholders may fall into one of the three categories described below.

Core Stakeholders

Core stakeholders of a coalition are willing to dedicate a significant amount of time to a coalition and have a high level of interest in and commitment to a coalition's mission. Their responsibilities may require them to spend a significant number of hours per month on coalition activities. Core stakeholders may take responsibility for developing the structure of the planning process, which includes formulating a vision and guiding principles, defining a clear decision-making procedure, and establishing a timeline and desired outcomes. They keep a coalition moving forward by undertaking action steps that will help a coalition meet its goals and objectives. They also regularly participate in a coalition's meetings. Depending on the structure of a coalition, these stakeholders oftentimes serve on the board of directors and subcommittees.

Secondary Stakeholders

Secondary stakeholders may be directly affected by the activities of a coalition but may not want to be involved in the day-to-day activities of a coalition. These stakeholders may take on short-term projects that are of particular interest to their organization. Similarly, they may only attend coalition meetings sporadically when the meetings are relevant to their organization's mission. Essentially, secondary stakeholders do not want to take on ongoing responsibilities for a coalition. Continuum leadership should understand that all stakeholders do not have to be involved from the beginning of a coalition, nor do all stakeholders need to be involved in all aspects of system change. A secondary stakeholder can still collaborate with a continuum to develop shared goals and new policies and procedures to achieve those goals without participating in the daily activities of a coalition.

Advisory Stakeholders

Advisory stakeholders usually have some specialized knowledge or skills, access to resources, or clout in the community that may benefit a coalition. As a courtesy, advisory stakeholders should be regularly kept abreast of a coalition's activities and accomplishments. However, they should not be expected to participate in coalition activities on a regular basis. Instead, advisory stakeholders should only be called upon for highly specialized assignments that take advantage of their unique skills or access to resources.

SELECTING A LEAD ORGANIZATION

A lead organization that has strong leadership, access to resources, and high visibility in a community can provide a continuum with the credibility needed to attract broad-based participation in the community. The lead organization should have the resources and capacity to conduct multi-year strategic planning efforts, establish a community-wide collaboration, schedule and hold meetings, and with the help of the other stakeholders in the continuum, organize and lead the needs assessment including a point-in-time count, identify service needs and select projects, assess the performance of providers, complete the CoC and other funding applications, and produce planning materials. While a strong lead organization is important to the success of a coalition, continuums should place limits on a lead organization's control of the process. Dominance by any single organization or government agency may ultimately impede the long term success of a coalition. Continuums need to strategically assess who should be designated as the lead organization. Continuum leadership typically comes from one of the following:

- Homeless coalition
- Government
- Nonprofit organization

Homeless Coalition Leadership

In this approach, a coalition of homeless providers coordinates the CoC process. The planning group is made up of representatives from not only coalition stakeholders, but also local foundations, corporations, and people who are, or formerly were, homeless. Both city and county government officials may have a seat at the table and support the process, but they do not lead.

As a group, the coalition conducts a comprehensive needs assessment and planning process over the course of the year to develop a CoC plan. Committees are organized to address specific aspects of the CoC process, including membership development, research and information, and interagency planning. The coalition typically leverages resources—such as researchers from a local university—to assist with the CoC needs assessment and other activities. Overall responsibility for developing the plan and monitoring its implementation is usually provided by the stakeholder agencies, through committee assignments.

Advantages of this Approach

- Promotes broad-based participation in the CoC process. With a wide range of players involved, stakeholders may establish creative partnerships and learn about new funding opportunities and programs.
- Facilitates data collection by involving more agencies to contribute to the effort.

Disadvantages of this Approach

- If the coalition has no staff dedicated to the CoC effort, it may be more difficult for planning activities to be accomplished, and stakeholders may have to share a large portion of the workload.
- Although this approach may encourage broad-based participation, without a prominent community leader acting as a champion for the coalition, a coalition of homeless providers may not have the clout to attract a broad-based membership.
- There is no mechanism inherent in this CoC approach that ensures accountability from the parties involved. Stakeholders may become frustrated by the lack of follow through on strategies and action steps.

Government Leadership

In a government led CoC, staff from government agencies takes a leadership role in organizing the planning process and implementing the CoC. Government staff typically coordinates all data collection activities, including an annual census of street and sheltered people who are homeless. They also facilitate meetings with key stakeholders in the community – including homeless shelter and service providers, advocacy organizations, housing providers, veterans groups, people who are, or formerly were, homeless, and leaders from the business community – to inventory the system, identify gaps, set priorities, and develop strategies and action steps. When necessary, subcommittees focus on particular subpopulations or discrete system issues. These activities are accomplished through an ongoing process in order to get input from a broad range of players and build consensus on priority activities and strategies. Government staff

would also be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CoC plan and making policy recommendations to local and state officials.

Advantages of this Approach

- Government agencies are usually able to contribute staff and/or resources towards the CoC effort. Other stakeholders will be able to participate without feeling over-burdened by the workload.

- Government agencies have the power and ability to hold people accountable for gathering data, implementing action steps, and accomplishing other planning related tasks.

Disadvantages of this Approach

- As part of local or state government, government agencies coordinating the CoC process may be subject to the political agenda of local officials.

- Coordination by a government agency sometimes can lead to the process being controlled by that government agency. This domination by one entity may create a more rigid and less creative process and make it difficult to get new and innovative ideas heard.

Nonprofit Leadership

In this approach, a nonprofit agency takes the leadership role in organizing and implementing the planning process. In some communities, a nonprofit organization may be formed for the sole purpose of coordinating and monitoring the CoC plan. The organization must have staff with the capacity, resources, and organizational skills to coordinate the planning process. When the nonprofit has programs funded through the CoC process, it must separate its role as facilitator and leader of the planning process from its role as a funded agency.

Advantages of this Approach

- As with the government led process, a nonprofit organization may be able to dedicate staff and resources to the CoC planning effort. Consequently, less of the burden for arranging logistics (such as meeting space, distributing information, gathering materials, etc.) will fall on coalition stakeholders.

- A local nonprofit organization may be very aware of the community's needs. This knowledge will enhance the quality of the Housing and Services Needs Assessment and will facilitate legitimacy in the community.

Disadvantages of this Approach

- This approach has the potential for perceived or actual bias in decision making and allocation of funding since the nonprofit organization coordinating the efforts may also be receiving funding obtained through the CoC process. Stakeholders may find it difficult to get support for new projects if the decision-making process is not fair. By creating a new nonprofit organization with the sole purpose of facilitating the CoC process, this bias can be avoided.

- Although the nonprofit organization may have staff and resources that can be used by the CoC group, this staff – and the agency as a whole – may be over-burdened and unable to accomplish many of the action steps. Consequently, stakeholders may perceive a lack of leadership and experience frustration at the inability to get things done.

Lead Organization Responsibilities

- Establish format for conducting meetings

- Develop meeting agendas, protocol, and conflict resolution procedures

- Define roles and responsibilities

- Maintain group process

- Prepare homeless assistance grant application annually

- Assess continuum provider performance and act on those assessments

- Oversee multi-year strategic planning efforts

- Maintain focus on goals, objectives and action steps

- Delegate responsibilities

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES

Identifying Potential Stakeholder Organizations

As a starting point, a core group should brainstorm to identify new potential stakeholder organizations. The core group may first identify those organizations whose missions most closely align with that of the coalition. In the case of a CoC, homeless service organizations and advocacy groups fall into this category. Then they should broaden the membership search to include organizations that may affect or be affected by the coalition, have shown an interest in the coalition's mission, or have resources to contribute to the coalition. Some mainstream agencies whose missions coincide most closely with those of continuums include housing and community/economic development agencies; health, mental health, and substance abuse agencies; and to an increasing extent corrections agencies.

In considering some of the organizations listed below, coalition organizers must also decide who in the agency would best serve a coalition. For example, an agency director would be effective in influencing policy and legislation, obtaining funding, and bringing on other community leaders. Service providers would have an understanding of the day-to-day needs of people who are homeless and the organizations that serve them. They would also be more available to participate regularly in coalition meetings and activities and benefit more directly from a coalition's accomplishments.

Coalition organizers should consider using agency directors or other senior staff strategically. Having an agency director participate in a coalition during its early stages or during periods of significant expansion can enhance the credibility of a coalition, help attract other community leaders, and establish a high level of commitment from the organization. To achieve a true collaboration, agencies must articulate shared goals, analyze their operations to determine how they may achieve those goals, and make the appropriate structural and staff changes based on this analysis. Since many key changes and decisions will need to be made during the early stages of a coalition and during periods of significant expansion, it is useful to have representatives from organizations who have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their

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organizations. Thereafter, senior staff may then attend coalition meetings on an as-needed basis and service providers or other junior staff could participate in regular coalition meetings.[14]

Potential Stakeholder Organizations

Directly Aligned with Coalition Mission

- Homeless service providers
- People who are, or have been, homeless
- Homeless advocates

Mainstream Housing Services

- Public housing agency representatives
- Nonprofit housing developers
- Local housing and finance representatives
- Property managers/landlord group representatives

Mainstream Service Agencies

- Mental health agencies
- Substance abuse treatment centers
- Veteran service agencies
- Public health agencies
- Local employment and training agencies
- Organizations representing special needs populations

Access to Resources

- Colleges and vocational educational institutions
- Local and state government representatives (e.g., TANF, child welfare)
- School district
- Religious leaders
- Business leaders
- Philanthropic organizations and foundations
- Police/law enforcement
- Prison/jail/correctional facility representatives

Potential Roles

- Participating in core working group meetings
- Joining an issue-related task force or sub-committee

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[14] Cohen, L., Baer, N. and Satterwhite, P. Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide. In: Wurzback ME, ed., p. 10.

- Influencing policy and legislation

- Improving organizational practices and communication

- Sponsoring activities that benefit people who are homeless

- Financially supporting CoC activities

- Providing staff or resources to support CoC activities

- Providing input on specific strategies or action steps

- Providing training to providers

- Promoting community education

- Commenting on written materials

- Collecting data

- Reviewing data to ensure accuracy

- Reviewing proposal for funding

- Other

Recruitment Methods

As discussed above, implementing the goals of a continuum requires the support of a wide range of organizations. This section focuses on how to get there – what methods, both formal and informal, to use to engage stakeholders.

Continuum organizers should develop a recruitment plan with goals, timelines, and assignments, which should include an individual or committee assigned to oversee recruitment efforts. The recruitment plan should prioritize organizations and individuals to be recruited. For example, if a particular organization or individual will help attract many other new stakeholders, they should be recruited early on.

Certain individual stakeholders in a community may also be able to help a continuum reach some of its initial goals. These stakeholders should also be recruited in the early stages of a continuum's development. Based on the interests, experience and focus of a potential new stakeholder, it may be most useful for a stakeholder to participate in a workgroup or subcommittee. This will provide an introduction to a continuum and its work specifically in a stakeholder's area of interest. The momentum and credibility a continuum achieves by accomplishing some of its goals can also help attract new stakeholders.

Face-to-face meetings should be the primary method used for targeted recruitment efforts, especially for those organizations that are a high priority. Preparation for these meetings is critical to their success. Before a meeting, a continuum's outreach committee should conduct background research on an organization and its staff. The committee should use this information to develop a clear understanding of how an organization may help a continuum, how a continuum may help the organization, how and at what level the organization may participate in the continuum, and possible outcomes of a collaboration. The membership outreach tools in the attachment to this chapter provide a framework for conducting these face-to-face meetings.

Continuums may also consider holding regularly scheduled membership outreach meetings at which potential stakeholders are provided with background information about the continuum. At a minimum, new stakeholders should receive a brief orientation that includes the following:

- Orientation materials that include background information on the continuum, a strategic (or annual) plan, organizational structure, meeting dates, membership contact information, and other resources to engage new stakeholders.

- Contact information so that all new stakeholders can be added to the continuum's mailing list. Use this mailing list to keep them informed about the activities of the continuum.

A continuum that is able to bring in new stakeholders will remain energized, grow, and have increased ability to achieve its goals. Comprehensive, broad-based planning encompassing mainstream services and multiple funding sources allows continuums to share the burden of solving homelessness among many players and resources. As discussed in this chapter, to accomplish their goals, continuums need to consider a wide array of issues as they expand including finding the right membership balance, choosing a strong lead organization, and identifying stakeholders and their roles. Finally, to be effective in their outreach efforts, continuums need to conduct the necessary background research and preparation.

ATTACHMENTS:
MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH TOOLS

When a continuum's outreach committee meets with potential continuum stakeholders, the committee needs to be able to explain clearly to potential stakeholders how working together would be mutually beneficial. The attached outreach tools provide a general framework that continuums can tailor to meet the specific outreach needs in their communities.

The first set of tools included here is designed for use with professionals from various mainstream service systems. While by no means a comprehensive list, the attachments include examples for possible use in reaching out to the public mental health system, to organizations supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and to law enforcement agencies. An outreach committee can use these tools to guide their face-to-face discussions with these mainstream systems representatives. In approaching them, it is important to be clear about a continuum's mission and purpose and to be as specific as possible in describing what the continuum is asking of the prospective stakeholder. Working through these details before meeting with stakeholders can help an outreach committee define the purpose and benefits of its collaborations.

Once an organization has agreed to join a continuum, the outreach committee should use the second tool, Questions for Potential Stakeholders, to determine the type of role staff within the organization will play in the continuum. As explained in this chapter, various staff may play core, secondary, or advisory roles.

Outreach Tool 4.1A:
Benefits to and Roles of Participating Agency

[Name of Public Mental Health Organization]

Description of the Local Situation

This introduction should provide a clear explanation of the homeless problem in a community as it relates to the mental health system. Whenever possible, the description should include specific statistics, such as the number of mentally ill who are homeless.

How will [organization's name]'s participation in the coalition benefit the public mental health system?

- Access to more housing resources for people with serious mental illnesses who are homeless

- Establish partnerships with other providers in the community

- Improve discharge planning from mental health institutions so that individuals exiting an institution obtain assistance in employment, housing, and health care

- Prevent homelessness of individuals exiting mental health institutions

How will the Homeless Coalition benefit from [organization's name]'s help?

- Help persons with mental illness among the homeless "re-enter" mental health service system

- Improve knowledge of mental health field, such as the provision of support services to people with serious mental illnesses

- Obtain access to highly trained staff of mental health professionals to work with homeless

- Identify alternative funding sources for mental health services that HUD currently funds in order to free up more HUD funding for housing

What will [organization's name] need to do?

- Attend monthly planning meetings for coalition.

- Help to organize and participate in a subcommittee that addresses persons with mental illness among the homeless population and the discharge planning efforts of mental health agencies.

- Agency director should attend only those meetings in which policy decisions must be made. Otherwise, direct services staff should represent the agency at coalition and committee meetings.

- Provide training to homeless assistance staff on mental health resources available and how to access those resources for homeless clients.

- Participate in training offered by homeless assistance staff and housing agency staff on housing resources available in community.

Outreach Tool 4.1B:
Benefits to and Roles of Participating Agency

[Name of Organization Supported by VA]

Description of the Local Situation

This introduction should provide a clear explanation of the homeless problem in a community as it relates to the organization supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Whenever possible, the description should include specific statistics, such as the number of veterans who are homeless.

How will [organization's name]'s participation benefit veterans?

- Advocate within homeless coalition for veterans' needs, share information on services and resources available through homeless veterans' organizations, and learn about other available resources in the community

- Access more housing resources for veterans who are homeless

- Establish partnerships with other providers in the community to expand resources available to veterans

- Ensure that veterans remain a focus for the coalition

How will the homeless coalition benefit from [organization's name]'s help?

- Obtain more information about the size of the homeless veteran population as well as the special services that homeless veterans require

- Identify alternative funding sources for veteran services that HUD currently funds in order to free up more HUD funding for housing

- Improve understanding of and access to the services that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides for homeless veterans

What will [organization's name] need to do?

- Attend monthly planning meetings for coalition.

- Participate in a subcommittee that focuses on the needs of homeless sub-populations, including the homeless veteran population.

- Help prepare the gaps analysis, set priorities, and write the CoC application.

Outreach Tool 4.1C:
Benefits to and Roles of Participating Agency

[Name of Law Enforcement Representation]

Description of the Local Situation

This introduction should provide a clear explanation of the homeless problem in a community as it relates to law enforcement. Whenever possible, the description should include specific statistics, such as the number of people discharged from prison who become homeless and crime rate statistics among people who are homeless.

How will [organization's name]'s participation benefit law enforcement?

- Reduce staff time spent dealing with chronically homeless persons

- Reduce recidivism by improving access to employment, housing, and health care resources for individuals as they are discharged from prison

- Reduce crime rates among individuals who are chronically homeless

How will the homeless coalition benefit from [organization's name]'s help?

- Reduce number of people who become homeless when they are discharged from the prison system

- Improve outreach efforts to chronically homeless persons

What will [organization's name] need to do?

- Participate in committee meetings concerning prison discharge policy.

- Help prepare crime statistics and percentage of homeless population that are ex-offenders.

- Help outreach teams locate homeless persons living on the streets or in other places unfit for human habitation.

Outreach Tool 4.2: Interview Guide,
Questions for Potential Stakeholders

Use this to determine the type of role staff within the organization will play in the continuum.

1.   What staff member(s) of your organization can participate in the coalition?

2.   How much time per month can you or other staff members dedicate to coalition work?

3.   What is the decision making process in your organization?

4.   Which of your staff members can make decisions on behalf of your organization?

5.   What special skills or experience would your staff members bring to the coalition?

6.   What resources can your organization offer the coalition?

7.   What role would your organization want to play in the planning process?

8.   What do you want to gain from participating in the coalition?

9.   What roles are of particular interest to your organization?
    ➢ Policy and legislation
    ➢ Organizational practices
    ➢ Staff development and training
    ➢ Funding opportunities
    ➢ Strategic planning
    ➢ Evaluation design and implementation
    ➢ Other_____
10.   What other coalition stakeholders would you recommend?

CHAPTER 5: MANAGING AN EFFECTIVE COALITION

INTRODUCTION

Because of the enormous diversity of people who are homeless and the unique problems and specific needs of each subgroup, a highly complex service system is required. The need to provide specialized services for different sub-populations means that some services or programs are appropriate for some groups of clients but not others. In addition, a single client may need the help of numerous mainstream services beyond housing including health care, cash benefits, food, employment, and substance abuse treatment. Community-wide planning and good coordination among homeless service providers and mainstream service providers is important if individuals are to get the help they need to exit homelessness and stayed housed.

Once established, Continuums of Care (CoCs) need to continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the people they serve. To do this, planning groups periodically need to rethink goals and, as needed, alter their programs and service delivery systems. Over time, continuums also need to evaluate the quality of their programs and services and improve them or replace them with better programs and services.

To accomplish the far-reaching goals of ending current homelessness and preventing future homelessness, continuums need to develop strategic plans and manage multi-year planning efforts that address each of the following issues:

- The identified needs of homeless individuals and households

- The availability and accessibility of existing housing and services

- The opportunities for linkages with mainstream housing and services resources

While each community, based on its unique circumstances, uses its own approach to manage and deliver services to people who are homeless, some basic guidelines can apply to all communities. This chapter covers the following steps in managing an effective continuum:

- **Establishing a common vision and system-wide performance goals:** This step helps to create and maintain a common sense of purpose and an action-oriented continuum. This common vision may be articulated through a mission statement and/or guiding principles that help focus a group's planning efforts. As continuums evolve, they may need to rethink their goals and objectives.

- **Creating a governance structure:** A successful CoC should have a year-round planning process that is coordinated, inclusive, and outcome oriented. The expectation is that the process will be organized with a governance structure and a number of sub-committees or working groups. This section provides a brief overview of how continuums have set up effective governance structures.

- **Managing a CoC:** The CoC strategic planning process can be complex, wide ranging, and very labor intensive. So it is critical that staff and committee members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This section addresses the day-to-day management of a continuum, including staff responsibilities, committee development, and meeting management.

- **Monitoring and measuring provider performance:** Finally, a continuum should monitor and measure the performance of providers within its system and how the system performs as a whole. CoC leadership can then act on performance information,

rewarding effective performance, excluding poorly-performing projects from the application for funding, and making any systemic changes deemed necessary. This information is also critically important for making strategic planning decisions. This section provides a basic framework for assessing this performance.

ESTABLISHING A COMMON VISION AND SYSTEM-WIDE PERFORMANCE GOALS

Establishing a common vision and system-wide performance goals creates a common sense of purpose and leads to an action-oriented continuum. This common vision may be articulated through a mission statement and/or guiding principles that help focus a group's planning efforts. To accomplish this, a continuum should develop a common understanding of the CoC and why it is important, agreement on the extent of the homeless problem in its community, and a shared vision on how to address its problems. A continuum will need to revise its goals periodically based on changing needs and resources in its community.

While a continuum should tailor its goals to address the specific needs of its community, HUD has established the following four basic goals that should apply to all continuums:

- Identify and develop partnerships with a wide range of public, private, and nonprofit entities and create a continuum structure and decision-making processes that are inclusive of all parties.

- Create, maintain, and build upon a community-wide inventory of housing and services for homeless families and individuals; identify the full spectrum of needs; and coordinate efforts to fill gaps between the current inventory and existing needs.

- Institute a continuum-wide strategy to achieve the continuum's goals, especially to end chronic homelessness.

- Work toward the HUD/national performance objectives, reporting on progress toward continuum goals, and coordinating homeless assistance with mainstream health, social services, and employment programs.

A key HUD priority is to end chronic homelessness and to move families and individuals who are homeless to permanent housing. Consistent with this priority, HUD has established five national objectives that directly relate to CoC homeless assistance programs. To receive HUD funding, a CoC must establish specific goals and objectives for addressing homelessness that allow them to meet or exceed HUD's national objectives. The five national objectives focus on the following:

- Increasing the number of new permanent housing beds for people who meet the definition of chronic homelessness

- Increasing the percentage of formerly homeless individuals who remain housed in HUD permanent housing projects for at least six months

- Increasing the percentage of homeless persons who have moved from HUD transitional housing to permanent housing

- Increasing the percentage of formerly homeless persons who are employed

- Decrease the number of homeless households with children

In practice, these national objectives include specific percentages and timeframes. The percentages are goals and are based on national averages. HUD expects CoCs to treat these measurable standards as minimums, so that all continuums will be meeting or exceeding the standards as they modestly increase over time.

In addition to the national objectives, each community should set objectives based on local need and resources. The assessment of housing and services capacity in the system should be examined carefully and compared to information on need. Any objectives that are created should be based on consideration of the data at hand and a reasonable analysis of that data. Finally, the individual providers should establish performance goals that further the overall goals of the continuum, can be accomplished with their organization's resources, and are consistent with their individual missions.

Coalitions may find it useful to obtain outside, neutral facilitation when conducting strategic planning to minimize the extent to which individual agency priorities and politics color and influence the discussion. It is often difficult to determine the significance of data. For example, in some communities, while shelter beds might be full and shelters turn people away every night, this information needs to be analyzed before the community concludes that more shelter beds are needed. It may be that the community's shelters are allowing people to stay longer than a week or a month because there is no housing to go to upon leaving the shelter. This is a humane decision by shelter providers that keeps people from sleeping in the streets. However, it may not indicate a need for more shelter beds, but rather a need for more transitional and permanent housing. The numbers need interpretation that considers specific circumstances in each community.

GOVERNING PROCESS

To manage its year-round and multi-year planning processes, a continuum needs a governance structure and a number of sub-committees or working groups.

Creating a Governing Board

A steering committee or governing board frequently oversees a continuum's planning efforts and may review progress of plan implementation. The membership of the governing committee should be decided through an open and democratic process and should be representative of private, nonprofit, and public sectors. For example, even when a governmental department

coordinates a continuum's governing process, a significant portion of the governing committee should come from the private and nonprofit sectors. Members of the governing committee should be fair, impartial, and objective when reviewing projects and making decisions. If a member of the governing committee has a relationship with a provider that is being considered for selection or funding, that governing committee member should not participate in the decision. A continuum should establish clear criteria under which members of the governing committee should abstain from discussion and voting.

Within the governing committee, leadership should be rotated in a planned way, through the use of staggered terms. Private and public sector leadership should also be rotated, and both sectors should be represented in leadership positions (Chair and Co-Chair, for example). Committee meetings should be open and interested citizens should be provided with timely notice of those meetings. The governing committee should have a code of conduct that includes information about how the governing process works, what may be considered a conflict of interest, and what redress people have if they are unhappy with the process or decisions made by the governing committee.

One key to success is documenting the activities of all continuum committees. At a minimum, documentation involves keeping attendance and minutes of all planning group meetings, being specific about which agencies attended, and making the connection between agencies and the sub-population served. For ease of communication and transparency, this information should be readily available to both interested organizations and the community at large.

Another consideration is the development of "up-front" and transparent decision-making rules. Developing procedures ahead of time allows the membership to agree on how decisions will be made, gives members a written procedure to follow, and provides members with a sense of fundamental fairness in the decision-making process.

Developing Clear Ground Rules for Participation

The decision-making process for a continuum may be simple or complex depending on the size and geography of the continuum. Smaller continuums with limited membership may have a decision-making process that involves face-to-face meetings with the entire membership. Continuums with a large membership may delegate decision-making for some of the policies to a leadership group that is representative of its stakeholders. Certain decisions may still need to be voted upon by the full membership. An example is a vote on the goals of the annual plan or the size and composition of the leadership group that makes decisions for a continuum.

Whatever process a continuum decides to use, it should be logical and fair, and the ground rules for participation and influencing the decision-making should be clear to everyone involved. For example, how and what information will be presented; who will have input and how; and who can vote. The ultimate goal is that all involved stakeholders consider the decision-making process to be legitimate and fair. Some approaches to decision making include:

- **One Person/One Vote.** Each individual participating in a CoC has one vote. The planning group may want to develop criteria that determine which planning stakeholders get the right to vote and ensure balanced participation from all stakeholders. For example, criteria could be based on number of meetings attended during a specific time period. The group could use a secret ballot to avoid any bias due to intimidation or the problem of voting against "friends." The one person one vote method will work as long as one agency doesn't "pack" the room during voting. This can be avoided by having a formal membership list and only allowing official members to vote.

- **One Organization/One Vote.** Each organization participating in a CoC has one vote. The one organization one vote method ensures that all providers have an equal voice.

This method requires that a continuum to make an up-front decision about how unaffiliated individuals (advocates, formerly homeless persons) may vote.

- **Proportional Voting:** A CoC may use a proportional voting method in which each individual or provider is given a number of points – 100 for example. These points can be placed either on one item (e.g., 100 votes for Project A) or can be divided among multiple items. When an individual/provider assigns points to an item, there could be a minimum number of points (e.g., 30). This method works especially well when ranking six or eight proposals. A continuum must still decide whether to use individual voting and organizational voting.

- **Two-Tiered Voting:** Under this approach, there are two votes. For the first vote, each individual/provider gets to vote for three different items. Once these are tallied, the top three items are then put up for a second vote. Each individual in the group gets to vote on these "finalists." This method works especially well when ranking six or eight proposals. A continuum must still decide between individual voting and organizational voting.

- **Committee Vote.** A continuum may elect an objective committee to make decisions such as the prioritization of gaps in the system or the ranking of project proposals. Persons or agencies that have any potential interest in any current funding proposal would be prohibited from serving on the committee. All participants in the CoC process would democratically elect the committee. The committee would review pertinent information, all relevant data, and might interview stakeholders as part of the decision-making process.

MANAGEMENT

With a governance structure in place, a continuum is ready to plan and implement programs and services. Effective implementation requires a clear understanding of who does the work, how it gets done, and when it gets done. This section addresses the day-to-day management of a continuum including staff responsibilities, committee development, and meeting management.

Staffing

Staff may be volunteers or paid professionals depending on the resources and the structure of a continuum. The typical responsibilities for these persons include the coordination, communication, and implementation of a continuum's plans.

Similarly, the typical responsibilities of persons managing the continuum are identified below:

- Provide support to the board and its key committees in matters of policy formulation and interpretation.

- Plan, direct, supervise and evaluate daily operations of the continuum, including staff and volunteer assignments, coordination of Committee and Board activities to accomplish goals of the continuum.

- Establish organizational plans, policies, and procedures as necessary for effective operation of the continuum.

- Provide training and technical assistance to the continuum stakeholders.

- Manage existing financial resources.

- Administer and evaluate fundraising for the continuum.

- Act as spokesperson for the continuum to the press, prepare and execute advocacy alerts, schedule presentations to community groups and increase awareness of homelessness issues.

- Maintain contact with state, county, and federal agencies that deal with issues that affect the homeless population. Keep abreast with and participate in legislative issues affecting homelessness.

- Keep the leadership group informed through regular reporting of contractual obligations to funding sources, progress in carrying out the organization's goals, objectives, and strategic plans, committee reports and all other relevant matters.

- Execute the strategic plan and plan amendments developed by the board.

Note that the sample descriptions of responsibilities listed apply regardless of the type of lead agency for a continuum.

Developing a Framework: Workgroups and Committees

Since the CoC planning process and implementation of programs and services can be complex, wide ranging, and very labor intensive, its management frequently requires a variety of subcommittees. In fact, the participation of stakeholders on subcommittees can keep them engaged and at the table if the goals and activities are meaningful and action oriented. Many planning groups have: a data committee, charged with the assessment of needs and gaps; a service coordination committee, charged with interagency case coordination and identifying problems with interagency referrals; a reporting committee, frequently concerned with HMIS implementation; an implementation committee, concerned with provider performance and operation of the CoC system.

Committees fall into two primary categories—ongoing management and time-limited or task-specific committees:

- **Ongoing Management.** A continuum may use committees of the Board for many of its standard operations such as the Executive or Steering Committee for organizational oversight; the Program Committee to coordinate and develop new and emerging programs for the continuum; the Evaluation Committee to coordinate the research and evaluation; or the Grants and Funds Committee to oversee funding applications. Committees should be used only for those issues that will continue through the life of the continuum.

- **Task-specific.** Subcommittees or workgroups may be formed for time-limited, specific projects and then be disbanded or transitioned once the goals for which they were formed are completed. For example, a workgroup may be formed to develop recommendations for addressing discharge planning from mental institutions. Subcommittees may be needed if a committee's work becomes increasingly complex and labor intensive. For instance, a Research and Evaluation Committee may have a sub-group on developing a database of research on program models for serving various homeless populations. However, this effort to delegate responsibility among committees, subcommittees, and taskforces should be balanced with maintaining a manageable size for a continuum. A sample organizational structure is illustrated in Exhibit 5-1.

Exhibit 5-1: Sample Committee Structure
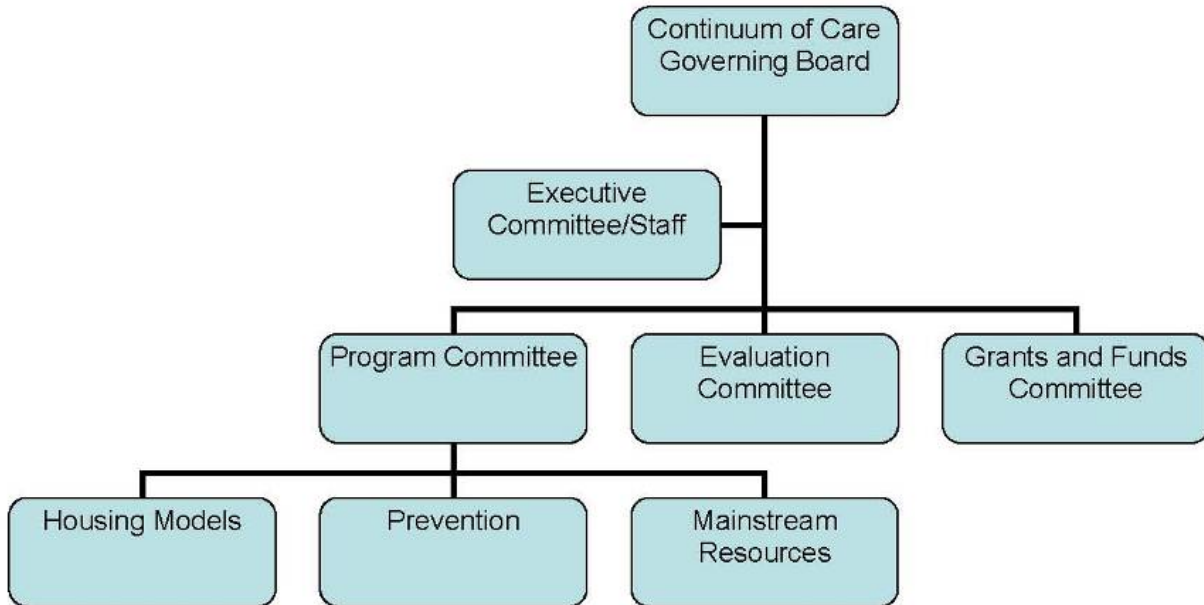
A Committee chair may also serve as a member of the governing board. Committee chairs coordinate and facilitate committee meetings and generally present the recommendations to the board for its approval. Establishing reporting mechanisms to the continuum and its board helps keep the committees and workgroups accountable. It is also important for committees to be inclusive and to involve stakeholders who have the expertise required for achieving the committee's goals. Finally, committees provide important opportunities to involve key stakeholders and subject matter experts in a continuum.

Checklist for Effective Committee

- Clear purpose

- Development of overall committee timeline

- Good preparation on part of the chair and committee members

- Carefully planned meetings including agendas, facilitation, and next steps

- Interested and motivated committee members

- Sensitivity to committee members' needs

- Good communication among all committee members

- Complete and concise meeting minutes

- Periodic self-assessment of committee's performance

- Recognition and appreciation of committee members

- Completed committee assignments

Source: Effective committees by Susan Humphries

Small continuums with few homeless, limited resources, and simple plans will not need the elaborate structures described above. The small group itself may be responsible for achieving all of the goals. Stakeholders may share all tasks and approve policies through consensus.

Conducting Meetings

Continuum meetings should be held frequently throughout the year. A year-round schedule helps to ensure that the planning process serves multiple roles in addressing homelessness and is not focused solely on completing the funding application. Meeting often builds trust among participants, fosters partnerships, and may even lead to better services and more referrals as participants learn more about what services each participating organization offers.

The importance of year-round planning and the complex tasks presented by the continuum planning process, however, may lead to meeting overload, stakeholder fatigue, and waning interest. To avoid this phenomenon, continuum leaders should ensure that meetings are meaningful and action-oriented. Continuum leaders can best accomplish this by being well prepared for meetings. To better control the length of meetings, meeting facilitators should follow an agenda as closely as possible that specifies time allotments for each topic to be covered. To ensure that meetings result in action, facilitators should always discuss next steps and assign responsibilities. In most situations the committee chair may lead or facilitate the meetings. In meetings that involve large, complex groups, the person facilitating the meetings should be someone who is comfortable and skilled with facilitation, and can manage a group process. The descriptions below help clarify the distinct purpose of each type of continuum meeting:

- **All-continuum meetings** that include the entire membership should be held at least once a year. More typically they should be held two or three times a year. The meetings may be held (1) for training and preparation for the SuperNOFA funding application; (2) to keep the stakeholders informed of progress to the annual (or ten year) plan and the key goals for the following year; and (3) to discuss or plan a major new initiative that involves the entire membership. These meetings are also opportunities to broaden and increase the membership of a continuum. Depending on the technical resources available in a continuum, stakeholders may be kept informed of a continuum's

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activities more frequently through newsletters, e-newsletters, a website with updated information and other such means of communication.

- **Leadership meetings** such as the Board of Directors, Steering Committee, or core group may be held quarterly or once every two months depending on the goals of a continuum. The purpose of these meetings is to advance the goals of a continuum, and develop and approve policies. These meetings should be open whenever possible even if the vote is restricted to the leadership. Whenever possible, approved minutes of these meetings should be made public with stakeholders being made aware of the decisions.

- **Committee meetings** are generally the place where the work of a continuum gets done. Committees may meet during the months that the leadership does not, or more frequently depending on the tasks to be accomplished.

- **Task-group meetings** may be held as frequently as twice a month to accomplish the specific tasks required of the group. The size of the group should be fairly small and should include the expertise required to accomplish the tasks. For example, a task group created to develop a discharge plan for youth exiting foster care should include youth service and housing providers, a senior staff person from the welfare agency, employment specialists who work with youth, and if possible formerly affected youth.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE

A continuum should monitor and measure performance of its homeless assistance providers and how the system performs as a whole. Periodic evaluation is important to the success of any endeavor. It helps document and communicate the success of a continuum, but it also helps to identify areas where changes may be needed. CoC leadership is responsible for acting on performance information, rewarding effective performance and excluding poorly-performing projects from the application for funding. When assessing an existing CoC process, one should think about what an ideal system for meeting the needs of people who are homeless would be. This vision should encompass the quantity, quality, and type of housing and supportive services that are needed and preferred by clients. Continuums should regularly evaluate their planning process and service delivery and determine whether they are moving the existing homeless system towards this vision.

Assessment Framework

Communities should consider the following issues when assessing performance: progress towards goals and objectives, including national objectives; provider performance based on client level outcomes, and; provider performance as a member of the system of care.

Communities should ask the following questions when assessing performance:

Program-Level Performance Measures[15]

1. Are the providers within the CoC meeting their goals and objectives? Providers need to examine their stated objectives and specify numerically, from year to year, the extent to which their objectives have been accomplished. Communities need access to all participating organizations' Annual Performance Reports (APRs).

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[15] For more detailed guidance on developing program evaluations see "MEA$URE UP: A Program Evaluation Training. This is a customized training for continuums on how to use program evaluation techniques to help improve both a system of care and individual programs. http://www.hudhre.info./index.cfm?do=ViewResourcesByTopic&topicid=17.

2. What are the outcomes for people using the provider? Client records tracked in a longitudinal database, such as an HMIS, can be used to evaluate program performance. The database must contain fields for relevant outcomes and providers must be diligent about collecting and entering relevant information for this data source to be useful. To evaluate the outcomes or impact of their programs, providers should ask the following questions:

> ➢ Are we having an impact in moving individuals and families who are homeless to permanent housing settings?

> ➢ Do our housing programs and services make a difference?

> ➢ Are we using dollars wisely?

> ➢ Are there weak links in our program?

> ➢ How can we make improvements?

> ➢ Can positive outcomes lead to positive public information?

System-Level Performance Measures[16]

3. **Process Outcomes**: Is the CoC system meeting its goals and objectives? Continuums need to examine their stated objectives and specify numerically, from year to year, the extent to which objectives have been accomplished. This includes establishing indicators that will help a community know whether it has completed the strategies needed to effect system change. An objective measure of overall service integration might consider the total component services received by clients including: independent housing; case management; general medical care; substance abuse treatment; mental health services; and VA services. Another objective measure would be the total number of individual service providers assisting a client over the previous year. A subjective measure would consider the extent to which delivery of these services was perceived to be well coordinated or fragmented.

4. **Program Outcomes**: What are the outcomes for people using the homeless service system? What client outcomes are needed at the program level in order to achieve the system outcomes? At a minimum, continuums should provide data on the percentage of clients who gained access to mainstream services. Continuums should also describe the policies they have implemented to help eligible clients secure mainstream benefits.

5. **System Outcomes**: Are the providers within the CoC working together to provide a seamless system of care for people who are homeless? Continuums need to determine how effectively individuals and families who are homeless are moving through the homeless service system and mainstream supportive services and into stable, permanent housing. When evaluating changes in system connectedness and integration continuums should assess whether changes have occurred in the following areas: coordinated service delivery and planning; inter-organizational trust and respect; and exchanging resources.

A genuine system inventory looks at the degree to which the system is working efficiently to address homelessness. Good coordination and collaboration among providers is necessary

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[16] For communities seeking formal quantitative documentation of system change see the methods used in Greenberg, G. A., Mares, A. S., and Rosenheck, R.A. (2007). *Collaborative Initiative to Help End Chronic Homelessness National Performance Outcomes Assessment: Is System Integration Associated with Client Outcomes?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Administration.
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/CICH07/integration/report.pdf

both when people who are homeless enter the system initially and when they are moving through the system. Whether a community has a single point of entry or multiple points of entry into the homeless system, the need to streamline the information and referral process applies. If a community is going to address homelessness in a meaningful way, attention to these matters is essential. When a community creates performance measures for providers, measurable indicators of service coordination and collaboration should be included.

<u>Planning Process Review</u>

An effective planning process is critical to ensuring that a continuum meets its performance goals. So as part of its assessment, a continuum should also review its approach to the planning process:

- **Are people directly affected by homelessness given a voice in the process?** Providing mechanisms for incorporating the voices of those directly affected by policies is imperative to the CoC process and the successful delivery of homeless services. Experiences of people who have been, or are, homeless are essential to learn what works, what does not work, and what is missing in the homeless services system.

- **Is the process for conducting the housing and services needs assessment sound and accurate?** The housing and services needs assessment is a key component in the CoC process since it is the basis for determining which unmet needs are the highest priority for the community and therefore should be addressed first. Given its importance, continuum leaders should make certain that the process results in a sound and accurate analysis. Continuum leaders also should ensure that this analysis encompasses the needs of all people who are homeless and not only the needs of those people who receive services from the most dominant provider.

- **Is the decision making process fair, clearly defined, and organized?** Countless decisions have to be made throughout the CoC process. No matter how well a CoC group plans for its decision-making process, problems will naturally arise. Many of the decisions – particularly those regarding funding and priorities – are difficult. It is also difficult to make decisions that may have a perceived negative impact on an agency or project. The best way to avoid tension is to plan ahead. Laying out a fair process in advance, before difficult decisions have to be made, will take the pressure off when the group is actually making tough decisions.

Assessment Tools

It is the lead entity or planning committee's responsibility to set up a system to monitor and measure provider performance and system performance. The process needs to be developed as part of a collaborative process, published, and strictly followed. The development of assessment tools up front is crucial to the perception of fairness. Providers must know ahead of time how they will be measured and must have a way to provide input to the process. The process, however, should be run by a neutral party to ensure that providers are held accountable.

At a minimum, a performance review should include a review of provider Annual Performance Reports (APRs). However, to conduct a thorough assessment, multiple methods should be used to assess provider and system performance. Some assessment tools might include structured interviews and on-site reviews of programs. Interviewing people who are currently using or have formerly used CoC services can provide information about services received, client satisfaction, and outcomes. On-site reviews of programs can be conducted by teams consisting of lead entity representatives, homeless or formerly homeless persons, advocates,

and case managers. The teams need training and support, and the lead entity must ensure objectivity in the process.

Part of the purpose in assessing performance is to hold providers accountable for helping to meet community and national objectives. Projects have an obligation to serve the correct population, cooperate with other providers and with the lead entity on system performance, and when necessary, adapt their common practices to serve people who are homeless. Also, providers have an obligation to help the community and HUD meet national performance objectives.

Assessments also provide information that is invaluable for a continuum's strategic planning. Continuums need to base their strategic planning decisions on both quantitative and qualitative data regarding client needs, system and provider capacity, and overall performance.

Considerations in Hiring an External Evaluator[17]

Evaluations can be conducted by stakeholders or by an independent evaluator. An independent evaluator brings objectivity to the process. However, evaluations may be more effective when performed by continuum stakeholders as part of a continuum's normal activities along with running task groups, meetings and producing newsletters. A continuum may create an evaluation committee that agrees to plan, implement, and interpret the results of an evaluation that is conducted either by the committee or an outside evaluator that it selects.

- An evaluator should have experience in evaluating collaborations.

- An evaluator should be sensitive to diverse racial, ethnic, and political backgrounds.

- An evaluator should be able to present information in clear, direct, user-friendly formats. Data and reports should be presented in a timely, readable manner that can be disseminated widely.

- A continuum should look for an evaluator who will listen and respond to its needs. An evaluator must be able to provide feedback in a style that can be used to strengthen a continuum's planning and activities.

Dissemination

Once the results have been collected and analyzed, an evaluation report should be disseminated to continuum stakeholders so that they may examine the data, decide what changes are necessary in response to the evaluation findings, and move ahead to change or adapt the strategic plan and the continuum's activities to reflect the results of the evaluation. Depending on the specific results of an evaluation, possible changes might include the following:

- Add new stakeholders to fill gaps in expertise or viewpoint.

- Improve methods of communications utilizing meetings, newsletters, listservs, etc.

- Provide training and technical assistance in the key areas revealed by the evaluation.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

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[17] [17]Tom Wolfe, "A Practical Approach to the Evaluation of Collaborations," Evaluating Community Collaborations, ed. Thomas E. Backer, http://www.tomwolff.com/resources/backer.pdf.

- Make changes to participating organization's operations so that the shared goals of a continuum can be achieved.

- Modify relevant goals and objectives where it is deemed necessary.

The evaluation report should be made widely available. Depending on the level of detail and the information, the executive summary may be used for dissemination to the public, the media, policy makers, and legislators. The evaluation team and the leadership of a continuum may decide the extent of the dissemination, and the time and means by which to make any reports public. A continuum's stakeholders should have access to the details of the full report, since it most affects their work and participation in the continuum.

One tool to disseminate information may be the annual report. This report can begin with a review of a continuum's missions, goals, and structure and then summarize the various activities and outcomes of committees and task groups. An annual report can document that a continuum has clear mission goals and objectives for its overall functioning; that each of its task forces is set up to work within those mission goals and objectives; that each of the task groups has its own set of goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes for a given year; and that, at least on an annual basis, continuum leadership is monitoring those activities and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of the CoC process is to end homelessness. To attain such a far-reaching goal, continuums need to build community-wide coalitions that involve collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit agencies. As continuums continue to expand their focus and efforts beyond HUD funding to broader community initiatives, they will become increasingly effective in developing approaches to preventing and eliminating homelessness. While the lack of affordable housing in many communities continues to affect their ability to move people out of homelessness, community-wide coalitions can address this issue more effectively than coalitions comprised solely of homeless service providers.

ATTACHMENTS:
MANAGING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The following charts and exhibits offer a concrete example of how one Continuum of Care created a detailed implementation plan for their long-term strategic plan to end homelessness. Because most long-term plans require a modification to a continuum's current structure and a gradual redeployment of resources to different activities, it is critical that that the coalition use a purposeful approach to this process, breaking down each strategic goal into subgoals and then individual tasks. In order to make progress against the plan, timeframes must be established and accountability for each task must be assigned.

**Attachment 5.1: Chicago's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness:
Core Principles[18]**

Core Principles | Strategic Goals

Prevention & Engagement

- Expand available financial assistance to support residential stability
- Provide services and support to all consumers who access prevention services to ensure housing stability
- Coordinate with institutional settings to ensure a realistic transition to appropriate housing
- Ensure appropriate levels of outreach and engagement services and programs to provide access to and draw people into the system of services
- Increase access to legal services that will prevent homelessness

Housing First: Moving to Permanent Housing

- Ensure a range and quantity of interim and permanent housing models that meet the needs and are readily available
- Create new project-based permanent supportive housing for persons who are homeless
- Develop a strategy to access private market rent units with subsidies in place for those at or below 30% AMI
- Develop a strategy to access private market units without subsidies in place for those at or below 30% AMI
- Explore the development of a centralized waiting list for permanent housing units funded for homeless individuals and families
- Develop resources to assist families moving into housing

Wraparound Services

- Provide access to comprehensive supportive services to all consumers entering the system regardless of point of entry
- Strengthen the community-based support system for consumers to bolster housing stability
- Increase consumer access to workforce development services that have the capacity to assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient
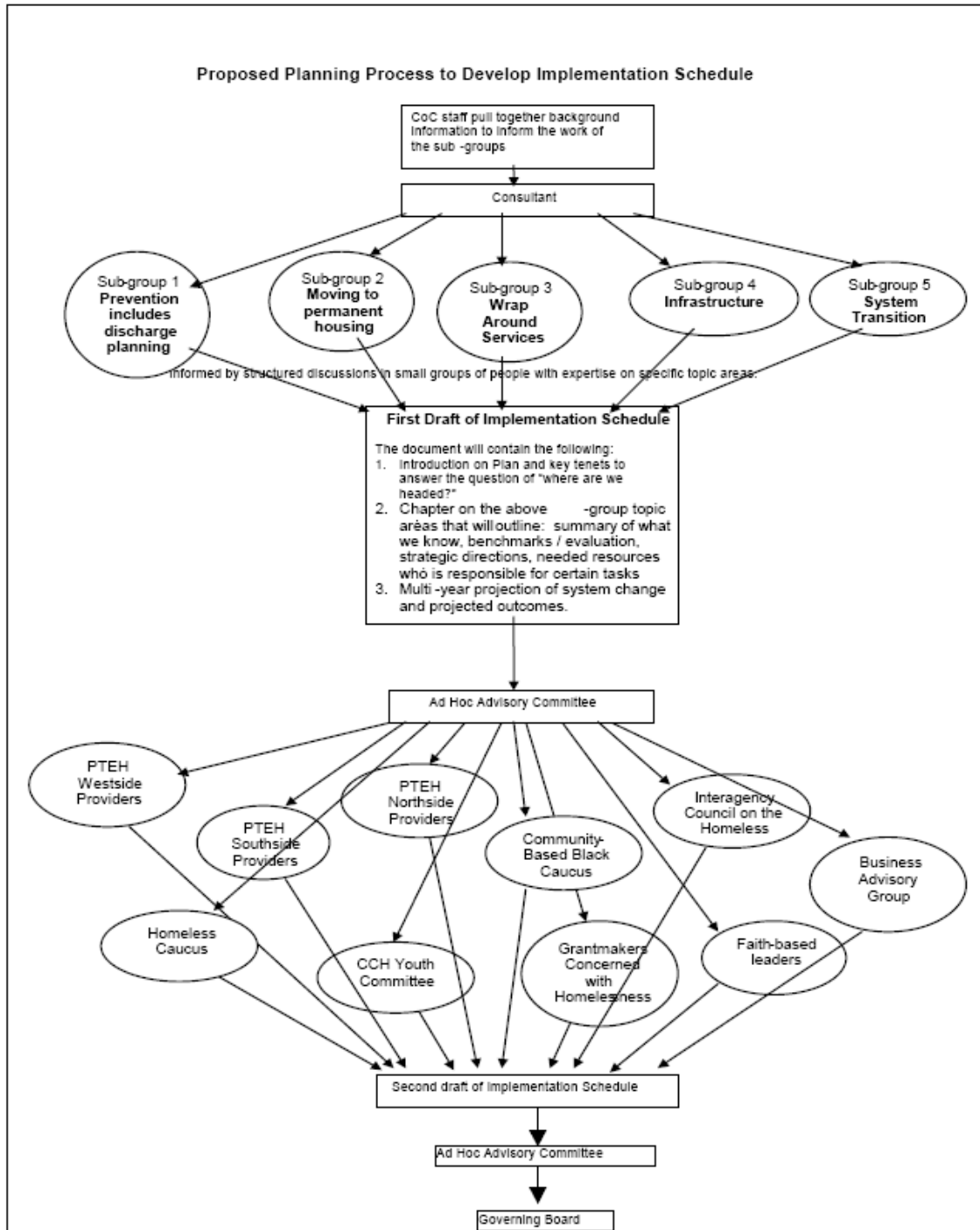
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[18] *Implementation Schedule for Chicago's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness: Getting Housed, Staying Housed.* January 2005, page 8 of 104.
http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_ATTACH/homlesnesImplementationSched.pdf

Attachment 5.2: Chicago's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness:
Systems Level Infrastructure [19]

Attachment 5.3: Chicago's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness: Implementation Plan Development[20]

**Attachment 5.4: Chicago's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness:
Implementation Plan Schedule[21]**

#	ID	Task Name	Completion Date	Accountable Entities	Collaborative Partners
1	**1. Prevention and Engagement**				
2	Vision for 2012: Prevent homelessness whenever possible and engage people into appropriate services. Prevent homelessness by protecting against individual housing loss and by developing seamless transitions to housing for all persons who are homeless.				
3	Strategic Goal 1	**Expand availability of financial assistance to support residential stability**	4th quarter 2006	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services, Prevention Task Group
4	Subgoal 1	Identify the amount of emergency resources needed to meet the current needs of the system.	3rd quarter 2005	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services
5	Task	Finalize projection of prevention resources needed.	3rd quarter 2005	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services
6	Task	Identify total resources needed for prevention	3rd quarter 2005	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services
7	Task	Develop and implement resource development strategies to meet all system needs	3rd quarter 2005	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services, Prevention Task Group
8	Subgoal 2	Execute resource development strategies per comprehensive funding plan (see Coordinated Resource Development)	4th quarter 2006	Chicago Dept of Housing, Chicago Continuum of Care	Chicago Dept of Human Services, Prevention Task Group
9	Strategic Goal 2	**Provide services and support to all consumers who access prevention services to ensure housing stability**	4th quarter 2006	Chicago Dept of Human Services, Chicago Continuum of Care	Prevention Task Group
10	Subgoal 1	Implement system-wide first contact prevention screening protocols	4th quarter 2005	Chicago Continuum of Care	Prevention Task Group
11	Task	Survey landscape and gather current system screening protocols	2nd quarter 2005	Chicago Continuum of Care	Prevention Task Group
12	Task	Develop uniform screening protocol with providers	3rd quarter 2005	Prevention Task Group, Chicago Dept of Human Services	Chicago Continuum of Care
13	Task	Implement standard protocols	4th quarter 2005	Chicago Continuum of Care, Chicago Dept of Human Services	Prevention Task Group

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[21] *Implementation Schedule for Chicago's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness: Getting Housed, Staying Housed.* January 2005, page 11 of 104.
http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_ATTACH/homlesnesImplementationSched.pdf

Implementation Plan Schedule (Cont'd.)[22]

#	ID	Task Name	Completion Date	Accountable Entities	Collaborative Partners
14	Subgoal 2	Continue to explore innovative prevention strategies	Ongoing	Prevention Task Group	Chicago Continuum of Care
15	Task	Understand successful national models related to prevention	Ongoing	Prevention Task Group	Chicago Continuum of Care
16	Task	Examine success (of NYC, Boston, etc) models and find areas for possible replication	Ongoing	Prevention Task Group	Chicago Continuum of Care
17	Subgoal 3	Develop early intervention strategies to help tenants and landlords when / if problems arise	2nd quarter 2006	Chicago Dept of Human Services	Prevention Task Group
18	Task	Increase connection to permanent housing providers to ensure housing stability	2nd quarter 2006	Chicago Dept of Human Services, Chicago Dept of Housing	Prevention Task Group
19	Strategic Goal 3	Coordinate with institutional settings (Prisons, Jails, DCFS, Mental Health Facilities, Substance abuse facilities, and Hospitals) to ensure a realistic transition to appropriate housing	2009-2010	Chicago Continuum of Care, Chicago Dept of Human Services	Chicago Dept of Housing, Interagency Council, Dept of Veterans Affairs, relevant state committees, etc
20	Subgoal 1	Develop policy and program analysis with corresponding recommendations for realistic transition to appropriate housing	1st quarter 2006	Chicago Continuum of Care, Chicago Dept of Human Services	Chicago Dept of Housing
21	Task	Understand the various discharge policies in Illinois	3rd quarter 2005	Chicago Continuum of Care	Regional Roundtable
22	Task	Work with Regional Roundtable to inform research on discharge planning policies in Illinois	4th quarter 2005	Chicago Continuum of Care	Regional Roundtable
23	Task	Complete analysis and develop a draft final report of policy research	1st quarter 2006	Chicago Continuum of Care	Regional Roundtable

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[22] Note that there are several additional pages to this implementation plan schedule. The pages presented here are for illustrative purposes only.

Attachment 5.5: Sample Planning Meeting Agenda

Whoville Continuum of Care

Membership Outreach Committee Meeting
February 2, 2009
10:00 a.m. Conference Room A-1

I. Outreach Update

- Research on potential stakeholders
- Membership Outreach Tools
- Interviews
- Outreach meetings and orientations
- List of new stakeholders and their roles

II. Interviews

- Review list of interviewees
- Review draft Interview questions
- Discuss potential roles for interviewees

III. Stakeholder Orientation Meeting (February 12)

- Discuss goals for meeting
- Review list of participants
- Walk through and discuss draft presentation
- Discuss materials needed for meeting

IV. Assignments and Next Steps

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Wolfe, T. *A Practical Approach to the Evaluation of Collaborations*, Evaluating Community Collaborations, ed. Thomas E. Backer, http://www.tomwolff.com/resources/backer.pdf

Enterprise Foundation Fundraising Fundamentals --a seven part guide to identifying potential funders, soliciting and submitting proposals, and maintaining strong relationships with funders. http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewResourcesByTopic&topicid=16

Essential Tips for Successful Collaboration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA.

MEA$URE UP: A Program Evaluation Training. http://www.hudhre.info./index.cfm?do=ViewResourcesByTopic&topicid=17

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Coordinating Community Plans, May 2008.* http://www.hudhre.info/documents/CoordinatingCommunityPlans_June2008.pdf