



CoC FACING COMPENSATION

PURPOSE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)¹ expects Continuums of Care (CoCs)² and community partners to work with persons with lived experience and expertise of homelessness (PLEE)³ to create and improve local homeless response systems. This document is intended to help CoCs think through their compensation structures and policies to ensure that everyone is paid for their work.

PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE PAID FOR WORK⁴

In the past, PLEE have been expected to donate or volunteer their time while others around the table are paid. When PLEE partner with a CoC, they should be compensated fairly for that work. CoCs should be clear and upfront about payment before the work begins. There should also be discussions about when and how people with lived experience prefer to be paid. These conversations are especially important if some have concerns about how payments may have tax implications or affect one's eligibility for public benefits.

Payment methods can include compensation in the form of:

- Cash
- Money order
- Checks
- Electronic fund transfers (direct deposit)
- Payment apps: Zelle, Cash App, PayPal, Venmo
- Gift cards

Since processing fees may apply for issuing and cashing checks, the CoC should survey PLEE to determine whether they have no- or low-fee check-cashing abilities before determining the method of payment.

Also, note that some PLEE may not have the banking capability to receive fund transfers, so this will be important to confirm with the bank if a PLEE selects a direct deposit option. In addition, processing fees may apply for fund transfers and can vary depending on the bank.

Lastly, if PLEE choose to receive payments in the form of gift cards, CoCs should go over any limitations for how that gift card can be spent.

ROLES AND COMPENSATION RANGES⁵

COMMON PLEE ROLES

Engagement can and should look different across communities. Each community has unique issues that need the insight of PLEE to solve. This means there are a lot of ways in which PLEE can partner with the CoC.

Engagement work can be very short (a one-time commitment that lasts one or two hours) or very long (several months or years). It can also have many entry and exit points, meaning PLEE are brought into the work at different points. Not all roles have decision-making power. For example, a PLEE may be asked to be an advisor on a specific CoC policy, but they may not have the final say in decisions made about that policy. They may be asked to sit on the CoC Board but will not have the power to change the HUD definition of homelessness. CoCs should be clear about what power will be shared on the project, the goals, and limitations of the engagement, and how PLEEs' roles will make an impact.

Below is a list of some common engagement roles along with the work these roles typically do. The tables may help in selecting the roles and responsibilities of PWLE partners and the level of compensation that commitment warrants.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT THEY DO
Advisor	Provides information, feedback, and ideas related to a specific program, policy, or research area either as part of a group or as an independent consultant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs committees, workgroups and advisory boards • Review and feedback of work products
Data Analyst	Collects, cleans, and interprets data sets to answer a question or solve a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and evaluation • Data analysis
Leadership	Serves in leadership roles within organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as director/CEO of organizations that focus on or intersect with homelessness. • Organization management and coordination. • Serves on CoC Board
Peer Mentor	Acts as a point person to help with questions, concerns, support, and regular, respectful check-ins for other PLEE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in facilitation • Mentoring and coaching other PLEE • PLEE-to-CoC liaison
Staff	Works as a fully integrated member of the CoC/agency either as an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and technical assistance • Grant monitoring

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT THEY DO
	employee or as a contractor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research and evaluation ● Project management and coordination ● Mentoring and coaching other staff
Storyteller	Shares insights and context about a problem or issue and educates outsiders about their cultural experiences and perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running listening sessions ● Conducting interviews ● Shares public testimony
Trainer/Researcher/Technical Assistance Provider	Collaborates on the creation, implementation, and oversight of products, programs, policies, practices, and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training and technical assistance ● Materials development ● Research and evaluation ● Consultation

COMPENSATION FOR PLEE ROLES BY REGION

The hourly compensation ranges provided in the table below are based on 2022 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS') Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program. BLS state-level data was assigned to a region based on HUD's existing ten regions. More information about how the compensation ranges were created can be found in [Appendix A](#).

The ranges are meant to be used as a guideline. The compensation CoCs offer to PLEE partners can vary regionally from state to state and from one CoC to another. A CoC's capacity, funding, whether the engagement is short-term or long-term, and the local job market all impact decisions about payment options and ranges for an engagement.

Some CoCs may offer benefits packages for PLEE roles in longer engagements that would add additional value to the compensation rate offered. In contrast, PLEE roles that are more likely to be short-term (like a storyteller that participates in a single one-hour feedback session or an advisor providing a few hours of consulting on a local policy) have higher compensation rates listed to account for the potential lack of benefits packages.

When researching comparable wages, CoCs should take into account if additional benefits packages will be offered to PLEE partners or if PLEE partners will be treated as independent contract workers. Independent contract workers are often paid a higher wage due to the lack of a benefits package. With this in mind, CoCs should consider raising hourly rates by at least a third for PLEE partners working as independent contractors.

COMPENSATION RANGES BY PLEE ROLE BY HUD REGION*

Region*	Advisor	Data Analyst	Leadership	Peer Mentor	Storyteller	Staff	Trainer/ Researcher
1	\$30–\$46	\$21–\$34	\$28–\$42	\$17–\$22	\$30–\$46	\$17–\$22	\$48–\$72
2	\$37–\$51	\$26–\$35	\$36–\$52	\$17–\$24	\$37–\$51	\$17–\$24	\$63–\$98
3	\$36–\$54	\$22–\$30	\$30–\$47	\$16–\$23	\$36–\$54	\$16–\$23	\$47–\$74
4	\$30–\$47	\$17–\$24	\$24–\$38	\$13–\$19	\$30–\$47	\$13–\$19	\$36–\$62
5	\$33–\$47	\$23–\$29	\$27–\$42	\$16–\$22	\$33–\$47	\$16–\$22	\$40–\$68
6	\$31–\$45	\$18–\$27	\$26–\$39	\$14–\$20	\$31–\$45	\$14–\$20	\$37–\$61
7	\$29–\$43	\$21–\$33	\$24–\$38	\$14–\$19	\$29–\$43	\$14–\$19	\$38–\$61
8	\$29–\$42	\$18–\$31	\$28–\$42	\$15–\$21	\$29–\$42	\$15–\$21	\$42–\$66
9	\$35–\$53	\$21–\$31	\$26–\$44	\$15–\$22	\$35–\$53	\$15–\$22	\$39–\$67
10	\$34–\$54	\$21–\$28	\$28–\$45	\$18–\$23	\$34–\$54	\$18–\$23	\$40–\$67

*HUD technical assistance is organized in 10 regions. Each region is managed by a Regional Administrator, who also oversees the Regional Office. Each Field Office within a region supports a portion of the United States and Territories.

When distributing stipends, it is important to balance choice, timeliness, and staff capacity. Each CoC will have different internal constraints for distributing stipends, ranging from staff capacity to internal control and procurement standards.

CoCs should share estimated turnaround times for the various reimbursement options with PLEE so they can make an informed decision on which form of payment will best meet their needs. It is also important to share the disbursement schedule with PLEE once reimbursement options are finalized so PLEE know when they can expect to receive their compensation.

Additionally, when considering payment options, CoCs should inform PLEE that accepting a stipend may impact their access to public benefits. For example, different public benefits programs may consider a gift card a form of income. Further, stipend amounts of more than \$599 may trigger requirements to report the income. A CoC might be able to connect PLEE to IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance locations if they have questions regarding their federal taxes or encourage them to talk through any concerns about the earned income impacting their benefits with their case managers or benefits coordinator.

Strategies to reduce the amount of administrative challenge for stipend distribution include:

- Work with the finance team to understand the internal controls required for stipend distribution (e.g., signed receipts).
- Create an internal stipend policy that details the required documentation and steps for approval.
- Minimize the amount of paperwork PLEE must complete to receive compensation (e.g., have staff pre-fill a tracker with meeting attendance and known activities and then have PLEE verify it for completeness and accuracy).
- Develop a consistent schedule for payments.
- Purchase physical gift cards in bulk.
- Align one member of the finance team to respond to PLEE questions about stipends.

ENGAGEMENTS SHOULD BE FAIR⁶

CoCs should approach engaging PLEE in ways that are fair, trauma-informed, and collaborative:

- The CoC **offers a variety of days/times and ways to participate** (in-person, virtually, in writing, through social media).
- The CoC is **clear about time commitments for engagements** and specific engagement **roles**.
- The CoC is **open about how decisions are made** and what impact PLEE have on final decisions related to the engagement.
- The CoC provides **monetary compensation** to PLEE who are not staff at rates that are **comparable to industry standards for other types of experts**.
- The CoC provides **detailed orientation, background, or preparation materials** for PLEE **before the engagement begins**.
- The CoC **asks what resources people need to participate** (child care, transportation, technology assistance, mental health services).
- The CoC has a person or group to provide **emotional support** to PLEE when sharing stories or processing data and this emotional support structure is informed or led by PLEE.
- The CoC **follows up** after the engagement to **report** what **impact** the people's feedback had and, if relevant, **communicates why input may not have impacted changes**.

FOOTNOTES FOR TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND RESOURCES

1. Department of Urban and Housing Development (HUD): The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is one of the executive departments of the U.S. federal government. It administers federal housing and urban development laws.
2. Continuum of Care (CoC): A CoC can refer to a geographic region, a funding stream, or a governing body that coordinates housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in their geographic area. A CoC is responsible for systems operations and planning.
3. Persons with lived experience/expertise (PLEE): People who have ever experienced homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
4. Information about compensation best practices were taken from [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Paying People with Lived Experience and Expertise](#). (HUD).
5. Some of the PLEE engagement roles in the table were adapted from [Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience](#). (ASPE, 2021).
6. Some of the engagement practices in this list were adapted from [What Does it Look Like to Equitably Engage People with Lived Experience?](#). (ASPE, 2022)

APPENDIX A

CHARACTERISTICS OF BLS DATA

The compensation ranges in this tool are based on data from the BLS. Specifically, 2022 state-level data from the BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program were used. BLS data include:

- Full- and part-time paid employees working at the location specified after “Report for” in the mailing address
- Employees on paid leave
- Employees assigned temporarily to other work locations, including employees who are working remotely
- Paid owners, officers, and staff of incorporated firms

BLS data do not include:

- Contractors and temporary agency employees not on your payroll
- Unpaid family workers
- Workers on unpaid leave
- Proprietors, owners, and partners of unincorporated firms
- Workers not covered by unemployment insurance

Hourly wages are reported as opposed to annual salaries. Full-time employment is considered to be 2,080 hours a year, including paid vacations. More information about the data can be found on the website for the [BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#).

PLEE ROLES AND BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS OCCUPATIONS

Before making the ranges, BLS occupations were chosen that most closely aligned with the common PLEE roles mentioned in this tool. Each role was aligned with a single BLS occupation.

Below is a comparison table of each PLEE role and the BLS occupation chosen to align with it. BLS occupational codes are also included. Note that for the Advisor and Storyteller roles, the same BLS occupation was chosen. Similarly, the same BLS occupation was chosen for the Staff and Peer Mentor roles.

PLEE ROLE	PLEE ROLE DESCRIPTION	BLS OCCUPATION	BLS OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION
Advisor	Provides information, feedback, and ideas related to a specific program, policy, or research area either as part of a group or as an independent consultant	Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Other (19-3099)	All social scientists and related workers not listed separately.
Data Analyst	Collects, cleans, and/or interprets data sets in order to answer a question or solve a problem	Statistical Assistants (43-9111)	Compile and compute data according to statistical formulas for use in statistical studies. May perform actuarial computations and compile charts and graphs for use by actuaries. Includes actuarial clerks.
Leadership	Serves in leadership roles within organizations	Social and Community Service Manager (11-9151)	Plan, direct, or coordinate the activities of a social service program or community outreach organization. Oversee the program or organization's budget and policies regarding participant involvement, program requirements, and benefits. Work may involve directing social workers, counselors, or probation officers.
Peer Mentor	Acts as a point person to help with questions, concerns, support, and regular, respectful check-ins for other PLEE	Human and Social Service Assistants (21-1093)	Assist other social and human service providers in providing client services in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, or social work, including support for families. May assist clients in identifying and obtaining available benefits and social and community services. May assist social workers with developing, organizing, and conducting programs to prevent and resolve

PLEE ROLE	PLEE ROLE DESCRIPTION	BLS OCCUPATION	BLS OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION
			problems relevant to substance abuse, human relationships, rehabilitation, or dependent care. Excludes “Rehabilitation Counselors” (21-1015), “Psychiatric Technicians” (29-2053), “Personal Care Aides” (31-1122), and “Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs” (43-4061).
Staff	Works as a fully integrated member of the CoC/agency either as an employee or as a contractor	Human and Social Service Assistants (21-1093)	Assist other social and human service providers in providing client services in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, or social work, including support for families. May assist clients in identifying and obtaining available benefits and social and community services. May assist social workers with developing, organizing, and conducting programs to prevent and resolve problems relevant to substance abuse, human relationships, rehabilitation, or dependent care. Excludes “Rehabilitation Counselors” (21-1015), “Psychiatric Technicians” (29-2053), “Personal Care Aides” (31-1122), and “Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs” (43-4061).
Storyteller	Shares insights and context about a problem or issue and/or educates outsiders about cultural	Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Other (19-3099)	All social scientists and related workers not listed separately. (Might be most closely aligned with

PLEE ROLE	PLEE ROLE DESCRIPTION	BLS OCCUPATION	BLS OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION
	experiences and perspectives		sociologist, but not a direct fit.)
Trainer/ Researcher	Collaborates on the creation, implementation, and/or oversight of products, programs, policies, practices, and services	Training and Development Manager (11-3131)	Plan, direct, or coordinate the training and development activities and staff of an organization.

COMPENSATION RANGES

Once BLS occupations were identified, BLS state-level data was assigned to a region based on [HUD's existing ten regions](#).

To make the regional occupation ranges, the data was first grouped by region and BLS occupation. For each occupation within a region, the average was taken for each percentile data point (25th, 50th, 75th) for hourly wage. The 25th and 75th percentile points formed the lower and higher ends of the range, respectively. The data was rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Note that both Wisconsin and Connecticut were missing data for the "Statistical Assistants" occupation, and Indiana was missing data for the "Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Other" occupation. These three rows were removed from the average and median calculations for their respective regions.

This material is based upon work supported, in whole or in part, by Federal award number H-19-TA-MD-0006 awarded to Cloudburst Consulting Group, Inc by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. Neither the United States Government, nor any of its employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately-owned rights. Reference herein to any individuals, agencies, companies, products, process, services, service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not constitute or imply an endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the author(s), contributor(s), the U.S. Government or any agency thereof. Opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, HUD or any Federal agency."