

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HOUSING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
GOVERNANCE CHARTER**
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ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

The Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership (the Partnership) aligns and develops resources, community members, collective wisdom, and action across the greater Santa Cruz County community to promote public health and ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.

The Partnership serves as the community's designated Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) governance entity in compliance with the requirements of federal regulations governing receipt of CoC funding, 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 578. This charter was developed in partnership with staff members from the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department Housing for Health Division that currently serves as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead agency, the CoC collaborative applicant, and the HUD Coordinated Entry implementation lead. Elements of this charter that reflect federal requirements are identified with a blue parenthetical note ([CoC Requirement](#)).

ARTICLE 2: STRUCTURE

The Partnership consists of:

1. A **Policy Board** responsible for high level planning and decision-making. The Board sets overall policy direction and provides system oversight. The Board relies on guidance and support from CoC staff members and CoC general membership working groups to guide Policy Board planning and decision-making. Any group or committee created by formal Policy Board action must follow the public meeting standards of the Policy Board. See Article 3.
2. **Working Groups** provide recommendations, input and guidance on key operational issues, resource needs, and areas for policy change and improvement. Working Groups are created by CoC staff members and form as needed and change over time based on evolving community needs, priorities, and opportunities. Working Groups bring together particular individuals with roles and responsibilities relevant to a specific focus area. Working groups coordinate local efforts and provide input and advice to the Policy Board. The Governance charter outlines current CoC Working Groups. See Article 4.
3. The **General Membership** consisting of any individual or organization in the community interested in joining the collective effort to ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live. The Policy Board may request formal input or votes from the General Membership on specific topics. Membership expectations are set by the Policy Board. See Article 5.
4. **Staffing** for the Partnership is provided by the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department, Housing for Health Division (H4H). See Article 6.

ARTICLE 3: POLICY BOARD

1. Responsibilities of the Policy Board

The Policy Board has the following responsibilities:

- a. Create and/or adopt guiding principles, system objectives, equity goals and community-level plans for addressing homelessness, starting with the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework*, and including revisions and updates.

- b. Review and approve six-month work plans to implement the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Framework and subsequent revisions to the Framework*.
- c. Review and approve funding recommendations presented by CoC staff, Working Groups, or other entities.
- d. Approve applications for HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding and any funds from the State of California or other sources that require CoC oversight, management, approval, or coordination. (CoC Requirement).

 - i. Designate a Collaborative Applicant for CoC funding. The current Collaborative Applicant is H4H. (CoC Requirement).
 - ii. Designate a Ranking and Review Committee composed of non-conflicted members to review, rate, and rank CoC applications and present a final Project Priority List to the Policy Board for approval (CoC Requirement).
- e. Review and approve operational standards, policies, and high-level procedures for components of the housing crisis response system including, but not limited to, Coordinated Entry. (CoC Requirement).

 - i. Designate a Coordinated Entry Management Entity and an Evaluation Entity. H4H is the current Management Entity. (CoC Requirement).
- f. Conduct high level evaluation of the system and make high level recommendations for continuous improvement. (CoC Requirement).

 - i. Conduct high level tracking of progress towards goals and outcomes in *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz and subsequent Framework revisions* and related six-month work plans, as well as progress towards other emerging priorities and activities.
 - ii. Designate an entity to manage the HUD mandated Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and provide oversight for HMIS. The current HMIS management entity is H4H (CoC Requirement).
 - iii. Approve the methodology and publication of the results of the bi-annual Point in Time (PIT) Count. (CoC Requirement).
- g. Provide direction to staff related to high-level communications and reports to interested community members on results of investments and operations of the system and progress on Framework goals.
- h. Ensure appropriate consultation and coordination with CoC, HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and other funding recipients when such efforts are required by HUD or other funding agencies.
- i. Provide guidance to staff on how to support local jurisdictions in their completion of HUD Consolidated Plans, Annual Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPER).

2. Policy Board Membership

The Policy Board consists of 15 community leaders and partners who represent different entities and constituencies with significant experience and/or resources to address issues related to homelessness and housing instability. Slots on the Board fall into 3 categories: jurisdictional representatives, CoC member representatives, and partner system representatives. At least two members of the Board must have had lived experience of homelessness at some point in their lives.

Partners	Number of Seats	Eligible Representatives
A. Jurisdictional Representatives	9	May be filled by elected officials, government staff, or other citizens.
City of Santa Cruz	2	
City of Watsonville	2	
City of Scotts Valley/City of Capitola (alternating appointments)	1	
County of Santa Cruz	4	
B. CoC Member Representatives	3	
Adult (25 and older) with personal lived experience of homelessness in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the lived expertise action working group. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
Youth (18 – 25 years old) with personal lived experience of homelessness in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the lived expertise action group. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
Housing/Services Provider in Santa Cruz County	1	May be filled by a member of the operations workgroup. An alternate representative from this same group is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings.
C. Partner System Representatives	3	May come from non-profit, for-profit, public agencies or philanthropic entities.
Health Sector	1	
Workforce/Business/Foundation Sector	1	
Education Sector	1	

The CoC regulations require that the CoC Board must “be representative of the relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations; and include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual.” Board members will complete a brief checklist noting which organizations and groups they represent. Members may represent more than one group. All Board members will receive an orientation to the work of the CoC and their responsibilities as a Board member.

3. Appointments to the Board

HUD CoC regulations require that the process for appointing Board members will be reviewed, updated, and approved at least once every five years. Members will be appointed by an existing or to-be-created entity or body that represents that sector, as follows:

- a. Jurisdictional Representatives will be appointed by the jurisdiction’s respective elected body (City Council or County Board of Supervisors). Jurisdictional representatives may be elected officials, staff of the jurisdiction, or community representatives determined by the appointing body to represent the interests and concerns of the jurisdiction. For members appointed by the County, no more than two may be elected officials. City jurisdictions may appoint up to two elected officials.
- b. CoC Member Representatives will be appointed by their respective working groups as long as the groups remain active. If there are no active working groups for a given role, the CoC membership will nominate and elect a representative.
- c. Partner System Representatives will be appointed by entities representing the work of the designated sector and will be recruited and recommended by H4H staff. The existing Policy Board will confirm sector representatives to be added to the Board. Criteria for selection of representatives will include:
 - i. Organization brings funding or other policy/systems change levers to the collective effort.
 - ii. Organization or individual within organization is motivated and committed to taking action to ensure all county residents have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.
 - iii. Nominees represent the interests and concerns of the appointing organization and of the field of interest.

4. Board Terms

Board Members will serve two-year terms. Each appointing body may determine if they will impose term limits on their representatives. If a member leaves before their two-year term is completed, their appointing body will appoint a replacement to serve out the remainder of their term.

5. Board Member Responsibilities

Each member will sign a written set of commitments for serving as a Board member, including:

- a. A code of conduct (**CoC Requirement**), including agreement to abide by HUD (Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations {CFR} part 578.5) and Policy-Board adopted conflict of interest regulations and recusal processes for the Board, its chair(s), and any person acting on behalf of the Board.
- b. Standards for Board service including expectations for attendance, preparation, and other responsibilities.
- c. All regular Members of the Board shall strive to attend all meetings. A Member that misses more than two meetings in a given calendar year may be removed by an action of the Board. Staff shall reach out to Members that have missed two meetings in a year to confirm they want to remain on the Board for their term and to encourage regular attendance.
- d. A pre-designated alternate may be established for each Member. Alternates for a given Member must be appointed by the Member’s original appointing body. Alternates shall receive and remain informed about all meeting materials. Alternates may participate and vote only when the primary member has an unavoidable reason for not attending. Otherwise, alternates may participate in meetings as members of the public but not as primary members while in attendance.

Board members who fail to uphold their responsibilities may be removed by an action of the Board.

6. Co-Chairs

The Board will elect two co-chairs. Co-chairs may represent any of the three categories of representatives but may not both be representatives from the same category type. The co-chairs are responsible for working with staff to develop meeting agendas and to chair Board meetings. Staff will assist with meeting facilitation and the presentation of agenda items. The co-chair terms will be two years. A co-chair may be appointed for a subsequent term at the discretion of the Board. The co-chair terms will be staggered so that they do not change in the same year. To provide for staggering, one of the first two co-chair terms under this Charter will be a special one-year term; thereafter, the term will revert to two years.

7. Meetings of the Board

- a. Brown Act - The Policy Board is subject to the California Brown Act and all meetings will be conducted in alignment with those requirements.
- b. Frequency - The Board will meet at least every other month at a regularly scheduled time. Meetings may be held with more frequency as needed.
- c. Decision-Making - Board decisions and actions should strive to achieve consensus. However, in cases where consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be subject to a simple majority vote. Votes will be taken and recorded at Board meetings for decision/action items.
- d. Quorums - The Board must have a quorum to take any action. A quorum is defined as 8 or more members.
- e. Meeting Notification - A meeting notice and agenda shall be publicly posted at least 72 hours prior to each Board meeting.
- f. Public Comment and Standing Agenda Items- Each Board meeting shall include opportunities for public comment, in accordance with the Brown Act.

ARTICLE 4: WORKING GROUPS

1. Authority

CoC staff members may create Working Groups to generate recommendations, provide input and guidance on key operational issues, identify and address resource needs, enhance community collaborations, support training and educational efforts, and to generate ideas and recommendations for policy changes and improvements.

Working groups do not have the authority to approve formal CoC policy changes or funding decisions. The number and type of Working Groups will evolve over time to meet changing local needs. Several Working Groups are expected to continue over time given the nature of the work within the CoC. These groups include: (1) CoC Operations Workgroup; (2) Lived Expertise Action Group; (3) Youth Lived Expertise Action Group; (4) HMIS User Workgroup; (5) Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup.

2. Operations Workgroup

a. Responsibilities

The Operations Workgroup meets to address Housing for Health system operational issues and to draft new or updated policies and procedures for consideration by the Policy Board. At a minimum, this group should include recipients of federal CoC and ESG funding since CoC policies and procedures directly impact these grant recipients.

System Policies and Standards

- i. Develop and update DRAFT operational standards, policies, and high-level procedures for components of the system, including how people access and are prioritized for each component (CoC Requirement):
 - a. Prevention
 - b. Coordinated Entry and Housing Problem Solving
 - c. Outreach
 - d. Temporary shelter and transitional housing
 - e. Rapid rehousing and other time-limited subsidy program models (standards to include policies for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay)
 - f. Permanent supportive housing and other housing dedicated for people experiencing homelessness
 - g. Supportive services dedicated to people experiencing homelessness

Standards must include required system policies such as those required under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). (CoC Requirement)

- ii. Oversight and evaluation of the HUD mandated Coordinated Entry System (CES). (CoC Requirement)
- iii. Establish a mechanism for client and community feedback and complaints to be handled at the system level and used to make system level improvements, when appropriate.

Data and Performance Measurement

- i. Building from HUD's required System Performance measures, establish performance measures and targets for the system and its component parts, as listed above. Proposed targets to be brought to Policy Board for approval.
- ii. Evaluate the housing crisis response system and develop continuous strategies for improvement; implement Results-Based Accountability (RBA) across the system.
- iii. Develop and manage systems for collecting and managing data needed to track performance and evaluate the system, including:
 - a. Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS. (CoC Requirement)
 - b. Conduct the HUD required Point in Time Count (PIT), not less than every other year and

- with a goal of moving to annual. (CoC Requirement)
- c. Conduct a regularly updated inventory of the system and map of the resources available to respond to homelessness, including maintaining and updating the HUD required Housing Inventory Count (HIC) (CoC Requirement)
- d. Quantify system gaps and needs on a regular basis (CoC Requirement)
- e. Produce regular reports to funders (including HUD), local leadership, community members and other stakeholders as needed to understand and assess the performance of the system. (CoC Requirement)
- f. Coordinate with local jurisdictions to identify the information they need and facilitate needed data collection and sharing between organizations.
- g. Maximize data transparency between County, cities, service providers and the public.
- h. Ensure compliance with HUD HMIS requirements.
- i. Ensure consistent and active participation of agencies in HMIS including required and desired participating agencies.

b. Participants

The Operations Workgroup should have appropriate representation of key CoC housing and service providers. The size of the group may vary over time but should not be too large to preclude inclusive discussions and collaborative decision-making. Participants in the group should make commitments to remain active in the group for a period of at least two years and must represent a cross-section of expertise in program types and subpopulations as well as geographic diversity. Participants must represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless populations, such as persons with substance use disorders, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, persons who are chronically homeless, families with children, unaccompanied youth, persons with serious mental illness, and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Participants in the group will be recruited by CoC staff members to ensure active involvement among key housing and service provider organizational members of the CoC. Organizations that receive HUD CoC and ESG funding and agencies that use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be strongly encouraged to participate. Individuals from the CoC lived expertise working groups will be strongly encouraged to participate as well. CoC staff shall work to create a group with diverse perspectives, roles, and experiences according to the representation parameters described above.

The Operations Working Group shall nominate one participant and an alternate to serve on the CoC Policy Board.

c. Meetings

The Operations Workgroup shall meet at least every other month at a regularly scheduled time.

3. Lived Expertise Action Group (Group Name TBD)

a. Responsibilities

The Lived Expertise Action Group will provide advisory and decision-making support to the Policy Board and Operations Workgroup on system operations, data, evaluation, and any other topic relevant to improvement of the community's efforts to ensure stable, safe, and healthy places to live for all County residents.

b. Membership

The Lived Expertise Action Group will consist of a minimum of 5 members who are either currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in Santa Cruz County that have a diverse range of personal experiences and expertise to contribute to the group. The Group is staffed by H4H staff and consultants who will identify members through community outreach.

c. Meetings

Meetings will be coordinated by H4H staff and will be held at accessible and equitable locations. Meeting frequency will be at the discretion of the Group but will occur at least six times per year.

4. Youth Lived Expertise Action Group (Group Name TBD)

a. Responsibilities

The Youth Lived Expertise Action Group will provide advisory and decision-making support to the Policy Board and Operations Workgroup on system operations, data, evaluation for all elements of the system that impact transition age youth, and for those components funded by the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). [\(CoC Requirement\)](#)

b. Membership

The Youth Lived Expertise Action Board (Y-LEAB) will consist of a minimum of 5 members who are either currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness that that have a diverse range of personal experiences and expertise to contribute to the group. Y-LEAB members must be between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. The Y-LEAB is staffed by H4H staff who will identify members though community outreach.

c. Meetings

Meetings will be coordinated by H4H staff and will be held at accessible and equitable locations. Meeting frequency will be at the discretion of the LEAB but will occur at least twelve times per year.

5. HMIS Workgroup also known as "HMIS Office Hours"

a. Responsibilities

The HMIS Workgroup provides recommendations and advice to CoC Staff and the HMIS community administration team related to HMIS policies, procedures, training, and quality improvement efforts. The Workgroup also provides an opportunity for staff to provide updates, feedback, and brief trainings for

HMIS users and HMIS agency leads.

b. Membership

The HMIS Workgroup includes CoC staff involved with administering HMIS, staff from the HMIS software vendor team, HMIS leads from HMIS-participating agencies, and any interested HMIS users. HMIS leads from HMIS-participating agencies are required to attend these meetings.

c. Meetings

The HMIS Workgroup meets monthly virtually.

6. Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup

a. Responsibilities

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup meets to receive regular updates and information on the CoC's coordinated entry system. The meeting provides an opportunity for networking among CoC staff members and Connectors. Participants have an opportunity to provide advice and support to others in similar roles and to offer input to CoC staff members on opportunities for improving Coordinated Entry within the CoC.

b. Membership

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup includes CoC staff involved with managing Coordinated Entry and designated Housing for Health Coordinated Entry Connectors within the CoC.

c. Meetings

The Coordinated Entry Connectors Workgroup meets quarterly with smaller breakout groups by regions and subpopulations meeting more frequently.

ARTICLE 5: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

The full membership of the Partnership is open to any interested individual who wishes to join with a personal commitment to contribute to the goal of ensure stable, safe, and healthy places to live for all county residents. Members join by submitting their name and contact information to H4H staff and completing a membership participation agreement. The Partnership must issue a public invitation for new members at least once per year.

HUD regulations require that the CoC general membership is representative of a broad range of organizations, including: *“nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, and organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.”* Members will complete a brief questionnaire asking them to indicate which stakeholder groups they represent. A single member may represent multiple groups.

Members are encouraged to participate in events, trainings, special and ongoing meetings, working groups, and to attend general membership meetings.

Responsibilities of the General Membership include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying volunteers to support the annual Point in Time Count and other data gathering efforts
- Completing feedback survey(s) on efforts of the Housing for Health Partnership
- Supporting community education and outreach efforts
- Voting or providing feedback on items as requested by H4H staff, working groups, or the Policy Board

The full membership holds bi-annual meetings, with published agendas. ([CoC Requirement](#))

ARTICLE 6: PARTNERSHIP STAFFING

The County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department (HSD) Housing for Health (H4H) Division will staff the Partnership. Staffing responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of the overall vision and direction set forth in the Strategic Framework, with oversight from the Policy Board, through:
 - Developing and presenting six-month work plans for approval by the Policy Board
 - Managing funding processes (developing recommendations, applying for funds, managing grants, issuing RFPs, managing contracts)
 - Setting performance measures and tracking progress
 - Gathering and analyzing data
 - Conducting ongoing housing crisis system and program evaluation and planning
 - Developing policies and standards for programs and components that are part of the housing services system.
- Identifying and inviting participation from Partner System Representatives
- Staffing the meetings of the Policy Board, Working Groups, and General Membership meetings, including developing agendas, drafting, and presenting staff reports and other materials, taking and publishing meeting notes, and meeting logistics (scheduling, room reservations, meeting announcements, etc.)
- Providing training and technical assistance to any members who may need support to participate.
- Providing compensation and other support to members per guidance from the Policy Board
- Coordinating and aligning the work of County and city staff working on expanding housing opportunities and reducing homelessness.
- Supporting training and capacity building throughout the system.
- Maintaining an information clearinghouse on issues related to housing and homelessness in Santa Cruz County.
- Reporting and communication with the public.
- Responding to input and concerns from the public, including people with lived experience of homelessness.

ARTICLE 7: CHARTER AMENDMENTS

On an annual basis, the Policy Board in conjunction with the HMIS lead, CoC collaborative applicant, and other stakeholders, shall review and update this Charter as needed.