

North Central Florida Continuum of Care

The North Central Florida Continuum of Care covers a five county area (Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Putnam). Currently, membership of the North Central Florida Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless also serves as the CoC. Current board membership of this joint organization includes the following: Theresa Lowe, Executive Director, Theresa Beachy, Peaceful Paths Director, serves as Chairman of the Board, Sam Mutch serves as Treasurer and Lisa Feagin with the VAMC serves as secretary. Blu Forgarty, Eric McLarthy, and Brendan Shortley are at large members.

Best/Good Practices

- CoC Board should have at least one member who has been or is homeless (this is the one inviolable rule)
- No constituency, including homeless service providers, has more than 35% of CoC Board seats
- Chair of COC Board should not be a homeless assistance provider
- Lead agency and collaborative applicant should not be a homeless assistance provider
- In all votes by the CoC Board, “conflicted members should recuse themselves
- Clarity about authority and roles, especially vis a vis CoC Board
- Lead agency and COC board should have different members to avoid the appearance of improprieties
- Have written documents
 - ✓ Governance Charter
 - ✓ Code of conduct
 - ✓ CoC standards (e.g. coordinated entry, ESG assistance, prioritization for housing)
 - ✓ Priorities
 - ✓ MOU between backbone agency and COC
 - ✓ MOU between CoC and HMIS Lead
 - ✓ Processes for funding that flows through the backbone agency and the COC

Barriers to a good CoC Governance

- COC isn't broad enough
- CoC Board is dominated by a specific interest group (e.g. homeless providers, local government)
- Concerns about liability
- Resistance to change
- Too many people wanting to be involved in decisions micromanaging
- Weak committees
- Lack of transparency

- Too much or too little influence of the back bone agency
- Insufficient administrative capacity and funding
- Too many meetings not enough leadership

The term Continuum of Care is used many different ways and can refer to the planning process, the collection of stakeholders involved in the planning process, the geographic area covered by the CoC, or the actual grant received from HUD.

The CoC planning process is typically organized by either a local government agency or a large community-based nonprofit. *Locally it is organized by the Alachua County for the Homeless and Hungry DBA the North Central Florida for the Homeless and Hungry.* The geography covered by a CoC can vary, covering an entire city, state, or a collection of counties. The goal of the CoC process is to create an annual plan to address homelessness. The CoC process involves compiling information about homelessness in the community, including information about homeless populations and inventories of homeless assistance resources. This information is used to develop a list of priorities for funding, which helps determine how much funding a community will receive and for what projects. Currently the local COC is in the process of expanding its membership.

In recent years, HUD has required coordination between CoCs and local planning bodies that are preparing ten-year plans to end homelessness. Ten-year plans are intended to provide community-wide strategies for ending homelessness, including use of McKinney-Vento funding, but also including use of funding from other HUD programs such as Section 8, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, or the HOME Investment Partnerships program, as well as other federal, state, and local funding.

North Central Florida Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry Member Agencies

Agency Name
ACORN Clinic
Alachua County Housing Authority
Alachua County Library District
Alachua County Social Services
Alachua County Veterans Services
Another Way Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center
Bread of the Mighty Food Bank
Catholic Charities Gainesville
Catholic Charities Palatka
CDS
Community Outreach Relief Effort
Early Learning Coalition
Family Endeavors
Family Promise
Florida Department of Children and Families
FloridaWorks
Gainesville Community Ministries
Gainesville Housing Authority
Gainesville Opportunity Center
Good Neighbor Society
Helping Hands Clinic
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Heart of Putnam/Palatka Christian Center
Home Van Pet Care Project
Lazarus Restoration Ministries
Lee Conlee House
LSF Health Systems
Meridian Behavioral Healthcare
North Central Florida Baptist Association
Partnership for Strong Families
Peaceful Paths
PFLAG
Rahma Mercy Clinic
St. Francis House
St. Francis Pet Care Clinic
The Salvation Army
Three Rivers Legal Services
Trinity United Methodist Church
United Way
VA Hospital
Value Options
Vetspace
Volunteers of America