
**Greater Bristol County/
Attleboro/Taunton
Coalition to End
Homelessness (GBCATCH)
*MA-519
Attleboro/Taunton/Bristol
County Continuum of Care***

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

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1. Organization

The name of this unincorporated organization is The Greater Bristol County/Attleboro/Taunton Coalition to End Homelessness (hereinafter referred to as GBCATCH). HUD refers to this CoC as the MA-519 Attleboro/Taunton/Bristol County Continuum of Care (CoC).

2. Geographic Area

GBCATCH carries out its activities throughout a portion of Bristol County, Massachusetts, including Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Easton, Fairhaven, Freetown, Mansfield, Norton, North Attleboro, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport. This CoC covers all cities and towns in Bristol County with the exception of Fall River and New Bedford which each have their own CoC.

3. Purpose

The purpose of GBCATCH is to:

- Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and local governments to re-house homeless individuals and families rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness;
- Coordinate a region-wide systematic approach to helping vulnerable residents move from homelessness to permanent housing.
- Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

4. Responsibilities

GBCATCH is responsible for fulfilling four major duties, as follows:

4.1. Operation of GBCATCH

- Hold meetings of the full membership, with published agendas, at least quarterly;
- Issue a public invitation annually for new members to join within the geographic area;
- Adopt and follow a written process to select a CoC Board and review, update, and approve the process at least once every 5 years;
- Appoint additional committees, subcommittees, or workgroups;
- Adopt, follow, and update annually a governance charter in consultation with the collaborative applicant and the HMIS lead;
- For CoC and ESG grants, establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and sub-recipients, then monitor recipient and sub-recipient performance, evaluate outcomes, take actions against poor performers, and

report to HUD;

- Establish and operate a centralized or coordinated entry system in consultation with recipients of CoC Funds; and
- Establish priorities for the distribution of CoC funds

4.2. Designation and operation of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Designate a single HMIS for its geographic area and an eligible applicant to manage its HMIS;
- Review, revise, and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans;
- Ensure consistent participation of recipients/sub-recipients in HMIS;
- Ensure that the HMIS is administered in compliance with HUD requirements; and
- Ensure that agencies providing services in the area sign the HMIS agreement developed by the South Coast Regional Network HMIS Committee.

4.3. Continuum of Care Planning

- Coordinate implementation of a housing and service system;
- Conduct, at least every other year, a Point-in-Time count of homeless persons that meets HUD requirements;
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of homelessness needs and services;
- Prioritize the needs based on the HUD expectations as outlined in the Hearth Act;
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s);
- Consult with State and local ESG recipients in the geographic area on the plan for allocating ESG funds and reporting/evaluating performance of ESG programs.

4.4. Preparation of a CoC Application for Funds

- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve submission of applications in response to a CoC Program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA);
- Establish priorities for funding projects;
- Designate the Collaborative Applicant to submit the application;
- The Collaborative Applicant must collect and combine the required application information from all projects within the geographic area and will apply for funding for CoC planning activities.

5. CoC Membership

5.1. Open Membership and New Members

Membership in GBCATCH is open to all stakeholders in the cities and towns represented in Bristol County, with the exception of Fall River and New Bedford, (herein stated as Bristol County), 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.

Annually, GBCATCH shall issue a public invitation for any interested person in Bristol County to become a member of the CoC. The invitation will be sent to relevant organizations in Bristol County and published in a daily newspaper with wide circulation in Bristol County.

New members may enroll at any time during the year by providing to the CoC their names, contact information, and any relevant affiliations.

5.2. Responsibilities of Members

Most of the responsibilities of GBCATCH will be carried out by its Board/Membership (herein stated as the Board), with the following exceptions:

- Members will vote directly to approve the governance framework set forth in this Governance Charter and any subsequent changes or additions to the Governance Charter;
- Every five years following initial approval of this Governance Charter, members will review, update, and approve changes to the Governance Charter;
- Unless the Board/Membership selection process is changed by a subsequent amendment to the Governance Charter, membership will vote annually to elect directors to available offices.

5.3. Membership Meetings

The full membership of the GBCATCH shall meet bi-monthly. The bi-monthly meetings shall include a report on the CoC's activities, funding, and progress toward meeting goals. All GBCATCH members shall be notified of the date and location of membership meetings.

The final meeting of the year will be the Annual Meeting. The agenda for the Annual Meeting will include:

- The election of officers;
- A review of any proposed changes to the GBCATCH CoC Governance Charter followed by a vote on those changes; and
- Any other business the Board/Membership chooses to put before its members.

5.4. Notice of Meeting

Notice of the place, date and time of each Membership Meeting, including the Annual Meeting, shall be sent to members by email or other reasonable means of communication at least five business days before the meeting date, along with the agenda for the meeting.

5.5. Quorum and Voting

A simple majority of the average attendance of the members present over the course of one year's quarterly meetings from the prior year of GBCATCH members shall constitute a quorum. This number is tracked by an annual review of the attendance sheets collected by the Collaborative Applicant and will be announced at the Annual Meeting. At the beginning of the meeting it will be determined if a quorum has been met in order to take any votes on issues before the GBCATCH. If a quorum is not reached for that meeting, an announcement will be made by the Chair, or their designee, and any votes will be delayed till the next scheduled meeting of the full GBCATCH. In an emergency, an email can be taken. Issues presented to GBCATCH members for a vote will be decided by simple majority of the votes cast. For each agency represented, only one vote can be cast. For example, each city will have one voting member; each homeless provider will have one voting member, etc. Additional members may attend the meetings but each agency is responsible for choosing the one member at the meeting who will be the voting member.

6. Board

GBCATCH shall be governed by its membership which constitutes the Board, and will provide oversight and accountability for all GBCATCH's responsibilities.

6.1. Responsibilities of the Board

The Board will act on behalf of the GBCATCH to fulfill the regulatory duties of a Continuum of Care (CoC) set forth in 24 CFR § 578. The Board/Membership shall be responsible for approval and implementation of all CoC policies and procedures.

6.2. Board

6.2.1. Composition

The Board must be representative of the stakeholder organizations identified in paragraph 5.1 and must include a representative of the CoC Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, as well as representatives of each of the following four groups:

1) Government; 2) Nonprofit Homeless Service Providers; 3) Consumers and Advocates; and 4) Community Stakeholders. The Board must, at all times, include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. Examples of each of the four categories are provided below.

- Local Government Representatives from the various departments working on issues related to homelessness from the:

- City of Attleboro
 - City of Taunton
 - Town of Raynham
 - Town of Seekonk
 - Town of Dighton
 - Town of Rehoboth
 - Town of North Attleboro
 - Town of Norton
 - Town of Berkley
 - Town of Mansfield
 - Town of Swansea
 - Town of Acushnet
 - Town of Westport
 - Town of Dartmouth
 - Town of Freetown
 - Town of Somerset
 - Town of Fairhaven
 - Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
 - Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
 - Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
 - Massachusetts Department of Correction
 - McKinney Vento Liaison Committee
 - Bristol County Sheriff's Department
- Nonprofit Homeless Assistance Providers
 - Collaborative Applicant
 - McKinney Homeless Providers
 - Domestic Violence Services provider
 - Local Housing Authority (ies)
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) provider
 - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) provider
 - Veterans Services provider
 - HMIS Provider
 - Other providers
- Consumers and Advocates
 - Homeless/formerly homeless person
 - HIV/AIDS Consumer Steering Committee
 - Community advocacy agency
 - Taunton Emergency Task Force
 - Attleboro Area Self Sufficiency Coalition

- Community Stakeholders
 - South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness- Joint CoC-Network to End Homelessness Family Committee; Individual Committee; HMIS Committee; Unaccompanied Youth Committee; Veterans Committee
 - Regional funders - United Way of Greater Attleboro/Taunton
 - Bristol Workforce Investment Board/Career Centers
 - Attleboro Area Interfaith Collaborative dba Attleboro Area Council of Churches
 - Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Attleboro/Taunton
 - Regional hospitals-Morton Hospital; Sturdy Hospital
 - Public Safety Officials
 - Public School Officials

6.3. Officers

6.3.1. Officers

The officers of GBCATCH shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary.

6.3.2. Nomination and Voting

Each year the GBCATCH will solicit recommendations from CoC members and develop for membership approval a slate of candidates as Officers of the Board. The membership will vote for open positions at the Annual Meeting.

6.3.3. Election and Term

Each officer shall hold office for a term of one year or until their successors have been elected and qualified. No person may hold more than one office.

6.3.4. Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair is responsible for scheduling meetings of GBCATCH, ensuring that GBCATCH meets regularly or as needed, and for setting the agenda for meetings in collaboration with the Steering Committee. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair assumes the duties of the Chair.

6.3.5. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep accurate records of the acts and proceedings of all meetings of the CoC Steering Committee, or designate another person to do so at each meeting, including documenting all actions taken without a meeting. Such records will include the names of those in attendance. The Secretary shall give all notices required by law and by these Regulations. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as G B C A T C H may designate, and shall chair GBCATCH meetings in the case of the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

6.3.6. Resignation of Officers

Unless otherwise provided by written agreement, any officer may resign at any time by giving written

notice to the Chair or the Secretary. Any such resignations shall take effect at the time specified within the written notice or if the time be not specified therein upon its acceptance by GBCATCH.

6.3.7. Officer Vacancies

Vacancies among the officers may be filled for the remainder of the term by a vote of the majority of GBCATCH membership at any meeting at which a quorum is present.

7. Rules of Governance for the Board

7.1. Quorum and Voting

A simple majority of the average quarterly attendance of the members present (see section 5.5) at any properly announced meeting of GBCATCH members shall constitute a quorum of the Board for the transaction of business at any meeting.

At all meetings, business items may be decided by arriving at a consensus. If a vote is necessary, all votes shall be by voice or ballot at the will of the majority of those in attendance at a meeting with a quorum represented. Each representative seat shall have one vote. No member may vote on any item which presents a real or perceived conflict of interest.

7.2. Proxies

Board members may have non-voting proxies attend meetings in their place.

7.3. Action without a Meeting

Any action that may be taken at any meeting of GBCATCH may be taken without a meeting if that action is approved, in writing (e.g. letter, email) by a majority of all GBCATCH Board members who would be entitled to vote if a meeting was held for such purpose.

8. Committees and Working Groups

GBCATCH will carry out its responsibilities through the work of a number of Committees and Working Groups. All CoC members may participate on Committees and Working Groups, with the exception of the Steering Committee. Policy decisions made by Committees and Working Groups must be approved by the Board before taking effect.

8.1. Standing Committees

GBCATCH shall have four standing committees, as follows:

8.1.1. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall set agendas for Board meetings and shall carry out the work of GBCATCH between bi-monthly Membership meetings. The Committee shall be made up of: the representative of the Collaborative Applicant, the Board Chair, the Vice Chair, the Secretary, and Chairs of all Committees/Working Groups.

8.1.2. Performance and Outcomes Committee

The Performance and Outcomes Committee will collaborate with the CoC Collaborative Applicant, CoC-funded entities and CoC Membership to:

- Review PIT and HIC data, conduct a gaps analysis, and make recommendations for Board approval the priorities to be used in ranking requests for CoC funding;
- Establish performance targets appropriate for population and program type in consultation with recipients and sub-recipients, then monitor recipient and sub-recipient performance, evaluate outcomes, and recommend to the Board actions to be taken against poor performers;
- Develop performance measures to evaluate GBCATCH’s overall success in eliminating homelessness, using guidance available from HUD and making changes over time as necessary to incorporate new regulations or guidance available from state or local authorities;
- Establish written standards and performance measures for ESG assistance and providers;
- Evaluate outcomes of projects funded under the ESG and CoC Program, and provide outcome data to the Collaborative Applicant to report to HUD; and
- Consult with state and local government agencies, homeless service providers, private funders, and other relevant entities and organizations to evaluate available resources and reach agreement about how those resources can be allocated most effectively to implement plans to eliminate homelessness.

8.1.3. CoC Application Committee

The CoC Application Committee will:

- Work with the Collaborative Applicant to design and implement a collaborative process for developing a consolidated application for Attleboro/Taunton/Bristol County programs and projects seeking CoC funding;
- Review findings of the Performance and Outcomes Committee, the program priorities established by the Board, and the applications for new programs or projects, and make recommendations to the Board about which programs/projects to include in the annual CoC application, and rank projects for the application; and
- Develop and oversee operation of a grievance process for agencies whose applications for funding have not been selected by the CoC.

8.1.4. HMIS/Data/Coordinated Entry Committee

The HMIS/Data/Coordinated Entry Committee is regional and functions as a committee under the South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness (SOCO) and will work with the HMIS Lead to:

- Develop, annually review, and, as necessary, revise for Board approval a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS, as well as any other HMIS policies and procedures required by HUD.
- Develop for Board approval and implement a plan for monitoring the HMIS to ensure that:
 - Recipients and sub-recipients consistently participate in HMIS;
 - HMIS is satisfying the requirements of all regulations and notices issued by HUD;
 - The HMIS Lead is fulfilling the obligations outlined in the GBCATCH HMIS Governance Charter and Agreement with the CoC, including the obligation to enter into written participation agreements with each contributing HMIS organization.

- **Oversee and monitor HMIS data collection and production of the following reports:**
 - Sheltered point-in-time count;
 - Housing Inventory Chart;
 - Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR); and
 - Annual Performance Reports (APRs).
- **Work with the CoC and the Coordinated Entry Lead in conjunction with the HMIS Lead to carry out the Coordinated Entry Process (see attached Coordinated Entry MOU)**

8.2. Joint Committees: South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness (SOCO)

GBCATCH collaborates with the South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness Network to coordinate services, improve intake and assessment, share best practices, create innovative responses, and review state and local discharge planning policies through four population-specific committees and the regional HMIS/Data Committee. These collaborative committees shall be considered to be standing committees of GBCATCH. However, no decision of a Joint Committee shall bind the CoC unless the decision is approved by the CoC membership.

8.2.1. Individual Services Committee

The Individual Services Committee works on and strategizes about efforts to prevent and end homelessness for individuals. Regional meetings bring together outreach, housing, shelter, and service providers from multiple agencies, as well as the New Bedford and Fall River COC's to perform group triage and coordinated assessment and placement. The Individual Services Committee is also responsible for reviewing the state discharge planning policies for Corrections, Mental Health, and Health facilities in collaboration with provider agencies in the CoC.

8.2.2. Family Services Committee

The Family Services Committee works to coordinate and strategize about efforts to prevent and end family homelessness.

8.2.3. Unaccompanied Youth Committee

The Unaccompanied Youth Committee works to coordinate and strategize about efforts to prevent and end homelessness for youth under 18 who are not living with parents or other adults. This Committee is also responsible for planning for counting of youth in the annual Point-in-Time count, and for reviewing and implementation of the state discharge planning from foster care in collaboration with provider agencies in the CoC.

8.2.4. Veterans Services Committee

The Veterans Services Committee works to coordinate and strategize about efforts to prevent and end veteran homelessness.

8.2.5 HMIS Committee

The HMIS Committee functions on a regional level under SOCO; See 8.1.4 above.

8.3 Other Committees and Working Groups- The CoC may establish ADHOC committees or working groups as it deems necessary.

9. Appointment of Agents and Designation of HMIS

9.1. Collaborative Applicant

Community Counseling of Bristol County, Inc. (CCBC) serves as GBCATCH's Collaborative Applicant. Community Counseling of Bristol County, Inc. is authorized to apply for designation as a Unified Funding Agency.

9.2. HMIS Lead

Caseworthy serves as GBCATCH's HMIS Lead.

9.3. HMIS Designation

GBCATCH designates the Caseworthy system as the single Homeless Management Information System for its geographic area.

9.4. HMIS Governance Charter

The duties and responsibilities of GBCATCH, the HMIS Lead, the HMIS/Data Committee and Contributing HMIS Organizations are set forth in further detail in the GBCATCH HMIS Governance Charter, approved simultaneously with this GBCATCH Governance Charter.

10. Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

10.1. Conduct and Attendance

Officers, Board members, committee members, and other GBCATCH agents and employees must exercise care, diligence and prudence when acting on behalf of the GBCATCH. These individuals must timely complete work they have agreed to undertake on behalf of GBCATCH. In addition, they must attend Board and committee meetings and be prepared to discuss matters presented for their deliberation.

10.2. Conflict of Interest

10.2.1. Rules Regarding Conflict

Officers, Board members, committee members, and other GBCATCH agents and employees must abide by the following rules in order to avoid conflicts of interest and promote public confidence in the integrity of the CoC and its processes. Failure to honor these rules will be grounds for removal from the Steering Committee and any of its committees.

- Officers, Board members, committee members, and other GBCATCH agents and employees may not participate in or influence discussions or resulting decisions concerning the award of a grant or other financial benefit to:
 - Any organization that they or a member of their immediate family represents; or

- Any organization from which they or a member of their immediate family derives income or anything of value.
- Whenever GBCATCH officers, members, committee members, agents, employees, or any of their immediate family members have a financial interest or any other personal interest in a matter coming before the Board or one of its committees, they must:
 - Fully disclose the nature of the interest; and
 - Withdraw from discussing, lobbying or voting on the matter.

10.2.2. Disclosure

At the beginning of every meeting of the Board or committees, members must disclose if they have any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest regarding any business included in the meeting's agenda.

10.2.3. Abstention from Decision-Making

Any matter in which Officers, Board members, or GBCATCH committee members have an actual or potential conflict of interest will be decided only by a vote of disinterested individuals. In addition, the minutes of any meeting at which such a vote is conducted must reflect the disclosure of interested Officers, Board members, and committee members' actual or potential conflicts of interest and their abstention.

10.2.4. Annual Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement Form

GBCATCH Officers, and Board members, and GBCATCH committee members must sign a conflict of interest form annually, affirming that they have reviewed the conflict of interest policy and disclosing any conflicts of interest that they face or are likely to face in fulfillment of their duties as directors.

10.2.5. Conflict Of Interest for CoC Application Committee

No person with a conflict of interest may serve on the CoC Application Committee. For the purpose of this section only, a conflict of interest exists if:

- You are now, or within the last year have been, or have a current agreement to serve in the future as, a Board member, staff member or paid consultant of an organization making a proposal for funding; or
- Your employer or an organization on whose Board of Directors you sit, now has, or within the last year has had, a contractual relationship with an organization making a proposal for funding. However, under this second definition of "conflict of interest," no conflict exists if your employer, or the organization on whose Board of Directors you sit, is a funding entity or organization whose mission includes providing services and/or funding to other service providers; or
- Any other circumstance exists which impedes your ability to objectively, fairly and impartially review and rank the proposals for funding.

11. Approval of Governance Charter and Subsequent Amendments

This Governance Charter and every subsequent amendment to it must be approved by a majority of GBCATCH members following the voting rules set in Section 5.5 of one vote per agency. In consultation with the Collaborative Applicant and the HMIS Lead, the Board will review the Governance Charter annually and recommend to the Members changes to improve the functioning of GBCATCH and maintain compliance with federal and state regulations. In addition, every five years, the Board will invite interested CoC members to participate in a review and discussion of the Governance Charter. Based on consensus achieved in that discussion, the Board will ask GBCATCH members to ratify the existing Governance Charter or approve proposed changes to the Governance Charter at their next Annual Meeting.

Att: Membership Agreement

Annual Conflict of Interest Form

Regional HMIS Agreement/Governance Charter

Organizational Chart

Coordinated Entry MOU