

# Chicago Continuum of Care Implementation Structure Glossary of Terms

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Homelessness is a multifaceted problem that stems from a lack of social protection and the failure of many systems. Homelessness cannot be solved by individual people or agencies alone. Rather, ending homelessness requires collective community action. In Chicago, the [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC) leads our efforts to prevent and end homelessness. In 2019, the Continuum of Care adopted the Implementation Structure (IS), formerly known as the Action Agenda, to enact the strategic vision of the CoC.

## Implementation Structure

The Implementation Structure (IS) of the CoC refers to the organization of the community's work and goals. The IS aligns the work of the CoC with clearly established objectives and actions needed to prevent and end homelessness. It fosters collaboration and communication while allowing the Continuum to make targeted decisions and receive collective feedback. The work of the IS is currently led by All Chicago and includes efforts from Community Lead Agencies, Lines of Actions, Affinity Groups, and People with Lived Experience.

## Lead Agency

Lead Agencies carry out duties on behalf of the CoC to support Chicago's relationship with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Their work is governed by Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the CoC Board of Directors. Lead agencies are selected by the CoC to push for progress in preventing and ending homelessness and are accountable to the System Operations and Performance Committee (SOPC) of the CoC Board.

## Memorandum of Understanding

The Continuum of Care uses several Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to inform and guide system work. MOUs outline the roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures for each Lead Agency, as established by the continuum. The [Homeless Management Information System](#) (HMIS) and [Coordinated Entry System](#) are governed by a MOU. The Implementation Structure operates as a provision of the MOU All Chicago holds as the Lead Agency and Collaborative Applicant for the CoC.

## Collaborative Applicant

All Chicago is elected to be the Collaborative Applicant for the CoC, leading decision making for the Continuum and soliciting feedback to inform and improve Chicago's efforts to prevent and

end homelessness. As the Collaborative Applicant, All Chicago has dedicated staff, resources, and the community informed voice to make responsive decisions and to share and solicit input on a widescale.

## Lines of Action

A Line of Action (LOA) centralizes and coordinates collective work to solve complex problems; they advance the CoC's strategic direction and address priority areas. LOAs are formed around issues that require coordinated stakeholder involvement and a significant amount of system change. LOAs may also be established in response to large amounts of new resources or develop out of the work of an Affinity Group. Lines of Action depend on broad community input and leadership to be successful. LOAs are accountable to the [CoC Board Executive Committee](#), and each line is led by a Leadership Team.

## Line of Action Leadership Teams

Leadership Teams represent stakeholder perspectives and help LOA's determine how to accomplish objectives. Leadership Teams help recruit workgroup members and promote community voices. Leadership Teams are also tasked with setting the strategic plan for each LOA and providing guidance to the Project Managers.

## Affinity Groups

Affinity Groups typically form around shared interest or investment in a specific population. They utilize the collaborative work of similar systems and organizations to address the needs and responsibilities of the CoC and help identify burgeoning concerns in the community. Affinity Groups are staffed by community members and stakeholders, working in partnership with a designated All Chicago staff liaison to answer questions and ensure the visibility of the group. Affinity Groups can be established to handle to the maintenance of former LOA work, as Lines of Actions are transitioned and adapted to address current priority areas. Affinity Group work can also become a Line of Action when the group decides that more significant resources are required to address specific challenges in the homelessness system.

## People with Lived Experience

Those who have received services from Chicago's homeless system, who were formerly homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless, referred to as People of Lived Experience, direct and drive the work of the CoC IS. They meet through the Lived Experience Commission (LEC)

and Youth Action Board (YAB) and play integral roles in all aspects of the CoC. Both the LEC and YAB have representatives who serve on the CoC Board and are supported by All Chicago staff.