



CoC Implementation Structure – 2021 Community Conversations Summary

The [CoC Implementation Structure](#) is the way the Chicago CoC organizes collective work around preventing and ending homelessness. It is imperative that all CoC members and collaborators understand the CoC Implementation Structure (CoC IS). Read more about the [CoC IS](#) on the CoC's page on the All Chicago website where you can access the [CoC IS Glossary of Terms](#) and the [Community Guide](#).

Collaboration throughout the CoC Implementation Structure (CoC IS) requires a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and the decision-making process. To help us create this shared understanding, All Chicago held a series of Community Conversations in 2021:

- July 21 – Meeting Standards and Norms
- August 12 – All Chicago's Role in the CoC
- November 3 - Decision Making, Participation, and Influence

Recordings can be accessed on the [CoC IS's website](#). This document summarizes the key points from these conversations as well as opportunities for how the CoC IS can implement these ideas. All Chicago as the CoC IS Lead, will work on the implementation opportunities identified below among other things captured in the Community Conversations.

Implementation Opportunities

- Create additional tools to help people understand the CoC IS, including:
 - A diagram or chart that shows how all components intersect;
 - A decision-making framework that members and leaders within the CoC IS can follow;
 - Documented CoC IS operational standards for pre-, during, and post-meeting operations and other issues such as managing through conflicts of interest and communication expectations;
 - Data dashboard on the CoC's system goals.
- Schedule an Affinity Group Checkpoint to help Affinity Group leaders and members understand how to best influence and operate within the CoC IS.
- Reframe Leadership Team workplans and agendas toward decision making to aid the CoC in understanding what decisions are upcoming and where/ when decisions are being made.

Collective Impact Model and All Chicago's Role

- Tensions will exist due to different perspectives when working in a collective impact model.
- All Chicago is a 501©3; All Chicago is *not* the CoC.
- All Chicago has many roles; including:

- Serve as the Lead Agency for HMIS and Collaborative Applicant (through MOUs with CoC Board);
- Leads the CoC Implementation Structure (formerly known as the Action Agenda);
- Staffs the CoC Board and Committees; and
- Administers programs as part of the CoC.
- All Chicago staff's jobs are to not remain neutral but to ensure there is a diverse and equitable distribution of voices that are contributing to conversations. All Chicago staff should contribute to conversations.
- All Chicago is the CoC's Collective Impact (CoC IS) backbone agency and therefore should perform the six functions that backbone agencies typically do in Collective Impact approaches:
 - Guide vision and strategy;
 - Support aligned activities;
 - Establish shared measurement practices;
 - Cultivate community engagement and ownership;
 - Advance policy; and
 - Mobilize resources.
- Organizations, Affinity Group Members, and CoC Members should participate in the CoC by:
 - Joining an affinity group;
 - Participating in Leadership Teams for Lines of Action;
 - Listening and learning at CoC Board Meetings;
 - Looking at data and research, and share ideas at meetings; and
 - Pay dues and become members of the CoC.

Decision Making, Participation, and Influence

- Large, strategic, system-wide decisions should ensure time for plenty of feedback.
- The CoC IS could benefit from a framework that outlines how decisions are made.
- All Chicago as CA and HMIS Lead uses a consultative approach, but retain ultimate decision-making authority.
- The CoC Board uses democratic decision making.
- Leadership Teams, committees and work groups generally use consensus-based decision-making approach.
- We need to strengthen Affinity Groups and their relationship to Leadership Teams so they can exert influence and know what decisions are anticipated.
- CoC IS Project Managers should clarify for groups the authority of that group, what decisions they can decide, what has already been decided.

Communication

- Communication best practices show that repeated sharing of the same information is effective but providers share that this can be overwhelming.
- The CoC needs concise information sharing with the audience in mind.
- Slack.com can be a useful tool as it allows polling features. It is underutilized right now.

Meeting Standards and Norms

- Pre-Meeting Standards:

- Line of Action Project Managers or lead staffers develop the agenda.
- There should be an opportunity to add agenda items before the meeting, even if it means checking in at the beginning of the meeting for anything that should be added.
- Agendas should be sent as far in advance as possible, with possible voting or decision items marked.
- The CoC's Values should be incorporated into all meeting agendas.
 - The CoC Charter states: The Chicago Continuum of Care carries out its Mission through a set of Core Values that guide its governance:
 - Clear and logical governance processes;
 - Transparent decision making;
 - Open, accessible, inclusive CoC;
 - Compliance with federal requirements;
 - Communication;
 - Flexibility to respond to emerging ideas;
 - Diversity and equity in programs and funding; and
 - Housing First and other evidence-based practices.
- During Meeting Standards
 - Voting participants should be limited to CoC Members and those who regularly attend the meetings.
 - Meetings should be facilitated in a way that draws out information from as many members as possible, not just from the ones that speak.
 - The CoC should identify tools for non-talkers to get their opinion in a meeting.
 - The CoC should identify when it is necessary to use Roberts Rules.
 - Topics that are raised that are not part of the agenda should be kept track of, and either connected to the meeting where that is relevant, or followed up offline with the person asking the question.
 - Non-committee members can participate in the discussion, but it should be defined.
- Post-Meeting Standards
 - Meeting notes should be circulated after the meeting, ideally within seven business days after the meeting.
 - A variety of platforms should be used to communicate information after meetings.