

The Way Home

I. The Way Home Continuum of Care Partnership Agreement

Please check each of the following boxes in acknowledgement of each statement below.

- Our organization would like to be a partner of the TX-700 The Way Home Continuum of Care (“The Way Home CoC”), a broad base of community partners that work diligently to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties.
- We have received and read the New Partner Packet.
- Our organization understand(s) that The Way Home CoC speaks as one voice and succeeds through mutual support and recognition of each partner as part of a larger whole. The community is better able to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and foster the systematic change necessary to break the cycle of homelessness, by responding to the needs of the community.
- Our organization will work as a part of The Way Home CoC to plan, develop, and implement collaborative services designed to provide needed care and create systematic change within the community to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- Our organization recognizes that communicating with the media regarding the Continuum of Care and system-level homelessness programming is managed by the Coalition for the Homeless, lead agency to The Way Home CoC; and partners organizations shall defer all media inquiries about the CoC to Catherine Villarreal, director of communications at the Coalition, at cvillarreal@homelesshouston.org. Organizations may/are encouraged to talk about their partnership with The Way Home CoC in their own, independent media engagement.
- If our organization chooses to participate in competitive private and/or governmental funding opportunities and/or requests letters of support for funding, we understand that it is our organization’s obligation to actively participate in The Way Home CoC for a minimum of one (1) year before, and for the duration of funding. This includes active participation in 75% of The Way Home CoC Provider Input Forums (PIFs), active participation in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or comparable DV database (when applicable), providing staff volunteers for the annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count (“PIT Count”), and a proven track record of adhering to Housing First and HUD best practices. (Examples of typical funding opportunities affiliated with The Way Home CoC include but are not limited to: HUD’s annual CoC Notice of Funding Availability or Opportunity (“NOFA” or “NOFO”), Department of Health and Human Services/Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG), Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA), Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), etc.)

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- Our organization will designate up to three (3) staff members of our agency/organization to serve as representatives for CoC meetings/forums and whose attendance will count for any minimum participation requirements. We understand it is our organization's sole responsibility to ensure these representatives are updated yearly and/or upon staff turnover to maintain good standing.
- We will encourage our colleagues to sign up for The Way Home CoC Connection to ensure that members of the agency receive timely communications from and about The Way Home regarding meetings, initiatives, workgroups, and more.
- As applicable, our organization will complete and receive certification for housing, case management, LGBTQ+ competency, etc.; and adhere to case management and practice standards as adopted by The Way Home's Steering Committee, including but not limited to: Housing First, Harm Reduction, non-discrimination based on LGBTQI status, racial equity, CoC Housing Models and outcomes and Coordinated Access to housing.
- Our organization will agree/abide by The Way Home CoC Code of Conduct and shared values and principles. The Lead Agency reserves the right to revoke partnership of any entity should there be reasonable evidence that such entity violates the partnership agreement or code of conduct, or does not adhere to The Way Home shared values and principles.

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II. The Way Home Continuum of Care Code of Conduct

Commitment and professionalism are vital to creating and maintaining an effective and efficient Continuum of Care (CoC) process that will benefit each partner of The Way Home CoC and the people experiencing homelessness they serve. Both are integral to creating and sustaining a strong continuum in which collaboration and services can grow.

Obligations:

1. Partners should strive to represent in a fair, honest and respectful manner their individual organization and the people and families experiencing homelessness that they serve or represent.
2. Partners should be informed about the purpose of The Way Home CoC and its role in the CoC process.
3. Partners should strive to stay up to date on CoC strategies and planning by participating in CoC meetings/forums and by signing up for the [CoC Connection](#) and other communication outlets.
4. Partners are expected to uphold professional standards of conduct, exhibiting respectfulness, fairness, and honesty.
5. Partners should clarify their professional roles and obligations, exercise reasonable judgment, and take precautions to ensure that any potential biases or conflicts of interest do not unjustly affect the CoC process or other partners of the CoC.
6. When conflicts occur among partners, they should attempt to resolve these conflicts in a responsible fashion.
7. Leaders have the extra responsibility of setting an example by their personal performance and attitude that convey honest, respectful, and ethical values.
8. Partners should consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of those they represent.

As a partner of The Way Home CoC and/or affiliated committee, we agree to represent ourselves, our organization, our county, our region, and/or our state in a professional manner by adhering to the guidelines laid out in the Code of Conduct of the CoC.

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III. The Way Home Continuum of Care Shared Values and Guiding Principles

The Way Home CoC is committed to the following values and principles, as laid out in the 2021-2026 Community Plan:

Ending Homelessness

- The Way Home CoC is committed to ending homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery Counties and the cities of Houston, Pasadena and Conroe.
- “Ending homelessness” means preventing it when possible and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time when not preventable.
- Ending homelessness requires coordination across public and private sectors and for systems, organizations, and programs to align their goals and strategic actions.
- Ending homelessness must include the following:
 - preventing entries into homelessness;
 - providing adequate outreach and crisis services;
 - ensuring that low-barrier emergency shelter or bridge housing options are accessible by all people; and
 - connecting people to permanent housing with appropriate financial supports and services to ensure their success.

A Person-Centered Approach

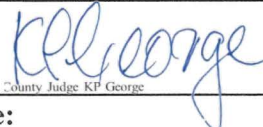
- We must rebuild the homeless response system to be anti-racist. Racist policies impact those who experience homelessness, and these policies must be dismantled as we work to address homelessness.
- Ending homelessness must include active engagement of people with lived experience.
- Crisis services and housing supports must be delivered in a human-centered, trauma-informed manner that respects the inherent value and honors the dignity of every individual regardless of race, ethnicity, age, disability status, gender identity, familial status, or citizenship status, or if they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking.

Accountability

- The voices of people with lived experience of homelessness are critical and included in every aspect of planning, decision-making, and activities undertaken by the Continuum of Care. We as a system must be accountable for this input because it is a key to our success.
- The Way Home CoC’s Action Plan will align with existing plans created by other regional partners.
- The Way Home CoC’s Action Plan will be adjusted as necessary to reflect changing needs and resources.

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This Partnership Agreement shall continue in perpetuity provided only that it may be terminated in writing by either of the parties.

Agency Name: FORT BEND COUNTY
Signature:  <small>County Judge KP George</small>
Printed Name: KP GEORGE
Title: COUNTY JUDGE
Date: MAY 24, 2022

Note: This acknowledgment of the CoC's Partnership Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Values and Principles must be signed by the President/Executive Director of the organization (or, if a statewide or national organization, the most senior member of the local office).