



Standing Rules

ARTICLE I. MISSION

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) is the Vermont Statewide Continuum of Care. The Mission of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness shall be to:

End homelessness in Vermont through sharing information, developing resources, and providing a forum for decision making and to promote decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all.

VCEH will achieve this mission by:

- ✚ Creating a network of organizations, service providers, advocates, consumers, concerned citizens and policy makers committed to ending homelessness.
- ✚ Fostering communication and building local Continuums and developing collaborative partnerships.
- ✚ Ensuring that all Vermonters, particularly low and moderate income persons, people with disabilities, homeless people, elders, families with children and others, have safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing.
- ✚ Encouraging resident participation and control in their housing.
- ✚ Advocating for the preservation of existing housing, protection of renters, and the development of new, perpetually affordable low and moderate income housing.
- ✚ Promoting the recognition of housing as a basic right for all Vermonters through education of the public and elected officials.
- ✚ Acting as a catalyst in the exploration and development of innovative means of preserving and increasing Vermont's affordable housing stock.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Eligibility.** Membership shall be open to individuals and organizations interested in participating in this grassroots effort. Interested individuals and organizations need to complete a membership form and submit it along with the appropriate dues.

Section 2. **Dues.** Each Continuum shall pay dues each year to remain in good standing with voting rights. Membership is automatically forfeited if dues remain unpaid one month after the due date of July 1st. The Steering Committee has the authority to waive dues in cases of financial hardship.

No part of the assets or income of the Coalition may be distributed for the financial benefits of the officers, members, or volunteers. Upon the dissolution of this Coalition, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes as agreed upon by the Steering Committee.

Due to limited funds, the expectation is to look for freely contributed donations (in-kind) to the fullest extent. As funding is available, the Steering Committee will review and decide on all requests. The following activities are eligible expenses:

- Monthly VCEH meeting space rental
- Annual membership in the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
- Supporting expert speakers invited by VCEH
- Trainings for VCEH
- Events sponsored by VCEH (including but not limited to the annual homeless vigil)
- Annual HUD McKinney/Vento grant application preparation. (Some level of money will be reserved for this annually although other state Agency of Human Service funding should be utilized first.)
- Consumer assistance for eligible conferences or trainings; a stipend for travel and training. Local continuum support of 50% of the request is expected.

The following activities are **not** eligible expenses:

- Food for meetings or events
- In-state travel

Section 3. **Fiscal Year.** The Coalition shall observe a July 1st to June 30th fiscal year.

Section 4. **Resignations.** Members in good standing may submit resignations in writing to the Secretary.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section 1. **Officers and Duties.** The officers shall be 2 Co-Chairs (with staggered terms), a Secretary and Treasurer. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these Standing Rules. All Officers shall be elected by the membership of the Coalition.

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for chairing and convening all meetings and the Steering Committee. The Secretary shall assure that minutes are taken and distributed for all meetings and be responsible for keeping the attendance records of the Coalition. The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the Coalition and report to the membership at the regular meetings on the financial condition of the Coalition.

Section 1.a. **Terms of Office.** Co-Chairs shall serve a two year staggered term. The Secretary and Treasurer shall serve a one year term and can serve consecutive terms with no limit.

Section 2. **Nominations.** A nominating committee of seven (7) members shall be elected at the January meeting, to nominate candidates for the election at the annual meeting in July. Additional nominations shall be permitted from the floor.

Section 3. **Elections and Terms of Office.** Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting in July or until their successors are elected; terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Elections shall be by ballot for any position with more than one nominee.

Section 4. **Vacancies.** A vacancy in any office shall be filled by special election at a membership meeting, with previous notice.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. **Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings shall be held on the third Tuesday of each month with no less than 10 meetings per year. Meeting information and tentative agendas shall be noticed to the membership at least one week in advance.

As a preliminary goal, meeting agendas will incorporate the following topics each quarter:

- 1st quarter (July): Annual Meeting will be held including elections. Also decide on yearly goals, and any proposed changes to the standing rules
- 2nd quarter: Legislative priorities will be discussed and voted on, planning and implementation of annual homeless vigil, and Point-In-Time preparation
- 3rd quarter: Conduct the point-in-time count, gaps analysis, housing inventory, and review/revise goals
- 4th quarter: HUD funding application and project prioritizing (may be earlier in year as appropriate).

Section 3. **Annual Meeting.** Annual meetings will be held the third Tuesday of July. Meeting information and tentative agendas will be noticed to the membership at least one week in advance.

Section 4. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings may be called with three (3) days notice by the Co-Chairs or by the Steering Committee and may be called upon written request of ten members.

Section 5. **Quorum.** Twenty-five percent of the members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V. VOTING

Section 1. **Motions.** Each item requiring Coalition approval will be formally voted upon. A motion will be made by a member of the Coalition, it will be seconded and a full vote will be taken. Minutes will reflect the motion, the second and the outcome including the number of yeas and nays. Each member will be entitled to one vote. All votes are determined by a majority of voting members present.

For unwarned or unanticipated motions, a vote may be tabled and warned for action at the next meeting upon request by any member.

Section 2. **Eligible Voters.** Each Continuum is entitled to one vote and should cast that vote in a manner they expect their Continuum majority would approve or they can abstain from the vote until they can confer with their Continuum. When voting on Balance of State Continuum of Care items, the Chittenden Continuum of Care is not eligible to participate. As appropriate, this shall be duly noted in the meeting minutes.

ARTICLE VI. STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1. **Steering Committee Composition.** The Steering Committee will be comprised of 11 members: the Coalition Officers and 7 additional members. The 7 additional members shall represent the following groups:

- State or quasi-state agencies;
- Housing providers;
- Homeless or low-income service providers; and
- At least one self-identified individual who is currently or has been homeless.

The Steering Committee members shall be nominated by a written ballot at the meeting prior to the annual meeting with elections held at the annual meeting.

In order to ensure a broad spectrum of involvement while also avoiding conflicts of interest, and to assure the goals of the Coalition are not circumvented the Steering Committee structure should be as follows:

- Steering Committee members who serve on the Committee represent the greater good of the Coalition and not necessarily the interests of one specific organization.
- To the extent possible, the composition of the Steering Committee should reflect the fact that the Coalition is a statewide organization and comprised of varying types of organizations.

Section 2. Steering Committee Duties and Power. The Steering committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Coalition between its business meetings. The Committee shall be subject to the standing rules of the Coalition, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the Coalition.

A quorum of the Steering Committee shall consist of a majority of the filled seats.

Steering Committee members may be removed from office by a majority vote of the membership at a meeting warned for that purpose.

It is required that at least one Steering Committee member must actively participate in each ad hoc committee formed under the Coalition.

Section 3. Steering Committee Meetings. Meetings of the Steering committee may be called with three (3) days notice by the Chair and shall be called upon written request of two members of the Coalition. Seven (7) members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Special Committees. Special committees shall be appointed by the Co-Chairs as directed by the Steering Committee or the Coalition.

Section 2. Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee shall serve as prescribed in Article III.

Section 3. Legislative Committee. A Legislative Committee shall exist to initially deliberate over any advocacy and/or legislative matters for consideration by the larger group. Recommendations to support or not support issues should be brought to a vote by the full Coalition. Meetings addressing legislative priorities shall be announced one meeting in advance and recorded in the meeting minutes. The next meeting notice will also include the legislative priorities to be voted upon.

Section 4. HUD McKinney/Vento Committee. The committee shall be comprised of Coalition members with experience and willingness to work on the federal grant. The VCEH looks for continued financial commitment from the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Mental Health (DMH) of up to \$5,000 each. In addition, it relies on the considerable efforts of the VT State Housing Authority's Grants Administrator and VCEH participants' volunteer input and review.

Section 5. **HMIS Quality Management Council.** This committee serves to inform and advise the Steering Committee and full membership on HMIS compliance issues, Point-In-Time data collection and reporting, data quality, and related items of interest. This committee will improve efficiency and opportunity for the homeless that the Coalition serves.

Section 6. **Ex Officio Members.** One of the Co-Chairs shall ex officio be an additional member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.

ARTICLE VIII. CONTINUUM STRUCTURE

Section 1. **Local Continuum of Care.** The following continuums are recognized by the Coalition:

1. Franklin – Grand Isle Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Franklin County
 - Covering all of Grand Isle County
2. Northeast Kingdom Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Orleans County
 - Covering the Essex County towns of: Norton, Canaan, Warrens Gore, Avery’s Gore, Averill, Lemington, Lewis, Bloomfield, Brighton, Ferdinand, Brunswick, and Maidstone.
3. Chittenden Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Chittenden
4. Lamoille Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Lamoille County
5. Caledonia Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Caledonia County
 - Covering the Essex County towns of East Haven, Granby, Guildhall, Lunenburg, Victory, and Concord
6. Washington Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Washington County
7. Addison Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Addison County
8. Windsor – Orange West Continuum of Care
 - Covering the Windsor County towns of Bethel, Rochester, and Stockbridge
 - Covering the Orange County towns of Bradford, Braintree, Brookfield, Chelsea, Corinth, Newbury, Orange, Randolph, Topsham, Tunbridge, Vershire, Washington, and Williamstown
9. Windsor – Orange East Continuum of Care
 - Covering the Windsor County towns of Barnard, Hartford, Hartland, Norwich, Pomfret, Royalton, Sharon, and Woodstock
 - Covering the Orange County town of Bridgewater, Fairlee, Strafford, Thetford, and West Fairlee

10. Rutland Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Rutland County
11. Southern Windsor – Windham Continuum of Care
 - Covering the Windsor County towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading Springfield, Weathersfield, Weston, West Windsor, and Windsor.
 - Covering the Windham County towns of Grafton, Londonderry, Rockingham, and Windham.
12. Bennington Continuum of Care
 - Covering all of Bennington County
13. South Windham Continuum of Care
 - Covering the Windham County towns of Stratton, Jamaica, Townshend, Athens, Westminster, Brookline, Wardsboro, Newfane, Putney, Somerset, Dover, Dummerston, Wilmington, Marlboro, Brattleboro, Whitingham, Halifax, Guilford, and Vernon.
14. Agency of Human Services Continuum
 - Includes all AHS Departments including Corrections, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Health, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and all others.)
15. Partners Continuum of Care
 - Includes the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs
16. Vermont State Housing Authority
17. Consumer Continuum
 - Includes all individual members who are not otherwise representing another Continuum.

Section 2. Continuum of Care Responsibilities. Each Continuum pledges to the following:

1. To designate, in June of each year, a liaison responsible for voting on behalf of their regional Continuum. To also relay information between the regional Continuum and the statewide VCEH.
2. To organize and facilitate regular regional meetings, including outreach to encourage participation in the meetings. Regular meetings shall be held no less than once every two months.
3. To ensure minutes of each meeting are recorded, utilizing the forms provided, and to maintain the minutes should the VCEH need to provide evidence of activities. The Regional Contact is responsible for these minutes and must maintain for at least three (3) years.
4. To facilitate documentation of regional efforts to provide housing and services.
5. To coordinate within their local region Homeless Day activities, and assist in organizing Homeless Day activities through the VCEH.
6. To coordinate region wide homeless data collection efforts consistent with statewide homeless efforts as needed for State and Federal grants.

7. To organize regional prioritization of projects to be presented at the statewide Coalition, and to provide updates for the Coalition.
8. To work toward the coordination of regional and statewide housing and services.
9. To encourage participation in the Continuum of Care planning process by people who have direct experience with homelessness.
10. To coordinate the regional response to State and Federal applications for homeless funding.
11. To participate in ad hoc committees as needed.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

These Standing Rules may be amended or repealed at any meeting of the members by a two-thirds vote of the Coalition with notice or a nine-tenths vote without notice.

ARTICLE X: NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Coalition that no person shall be discriminated against because of their race, sex, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or because they have minor children, or receive public assistance. The organization shall be operated in an open and democratic fashion and shall not discriminate against anyone because they are a member of one of the above groups.

Adopted: January 17, 2006
 Revised: June 20, 2006 (Article VI, §1)
 Revised: November 21, 2006 (Article I, Article II §2, Article IV §1, Article V §2, Article VII new § 4 and 5)
 Revised: February 20, 2007 (Article VII, §5)
 Revised: May 20, 2008 (Article II §2, Article III §4, Article VII §1 and 23)
 Revised: March 17, 2009 (Article III, Article IV §4, Article VII §1 and §6, Article VIII §2)