

Homeless Service  
Providers Coalition  
Fall River, Massachusetts

**By-Laws**



# Table of Contents

<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b> .....	Pg. 1
<b>PURPOSE</b> .....	Pg. 1
<b>ORGANIZATION</b> .....	Pg. 2
<b>Membership</b> .....	Pg. 2
Process .....	Pg. 2
Representation .....	Pg. 2
Officers .....	Pg. 2
Annual Evaluation .....	Pg. 4
Vacancies and Resignations .....	Pg. 4
Dues .....	Pg. 4
Meetings .....	Pg. 5
Voting Process and Quorums .....	Pg. 5
Committees .....	Pg. 5
<b>Homelessness Surveys</b> .....	Pg. 6
<b>Homeless Management Information System</b> .....	Pg. 6
<b>Goals/Logic Models/Performance Measures</b> .....	Pg. 7
<b>Continuum of Care Application Process</b> .....	Pg. 7
Lead Agency .....	Pg. 7
Sponsors .....	Pg. 8
Renewals .....	Pg. 8
New Projects .....	Pg. 8
Selecting and Prioritizing Projects .....	Pg. 9

### **Mission Statement**

The Homeless Service Providers Coalition's (HSPC) mission is to work towards eradicating homelessness (both chronic and in general, families and individuals), to improve access to mainstream resources to assist in the transition through the Continuum of Care, to provide supportive services to help maintain housing, to prevent discharge to the streets and to employ a quality Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that accurately tracks and counts the homeless. The HSPC seeks to provide quality of life to the formerly homeless and empower them to live as independently as possible.

### **Purpose**

The City of Fall River and the Continuum of Care, more specifically Fall River's Homeless Service Providers Coalition (HSPC), share the common goal of creating a quality Continuum of effective, coordinated services and safe, decent and affordable housing that will transition homeless people from instability to independence. The various affiliates that make up Fall River's HPSC are well-representative of the community. By utilizing existing relationships and accessing other community groups and business leaders, Fall River's COC strategy to end and prevent chronic and other homelessness has strengthened. The providers work diligently to access state and federal funds to address Fall River's needs identified in Fall River's Five Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans.

The City and the HSPC establish appropriate goals and actions to address the identified issues. Specific committees/task forces are formed to examine each issue and propose potential solutions. Performance measures are used to ascertain the impacts of services on clients and the community and to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs.

The HSPC Code of Conduct has been developed to set standards for decision-making process, allocation of funding and other resources and to effect fair and impartial policies and procedures. It also establishes the responsibilities of the HSPC and its members to accomplish the focus of the HSPC's mission.

## **Organization**

### **Process**

The Fall River Homeless Service Providers Coalition (HSPC) is open to anyone with an interest in becoming involved in addressing and working to diminish the problem of homelessness in Fall River.

### *Membership Agreement*

A signed pledge of commitment to the HSPC's mission is distributed to current participating agencies in February of each year. This pledge maintains an agency's active membership and reserves its right to vote. (The voting process is discussed in Section II.) The signed pledge is to be returned to the HSPC by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Membership is held by an organization, agency, institution or consumer group rather than individually by employees or members of those entities.

### **Membership**

The membership strives to include a variety of people to represent homeless service providers, faith-based groups, administrative staff of the City of Fall River, local businesses, substance abuse and mental health service providers, law enforcement, schools, hospitals and other healthcare providers, elected officials, consumers and/or former consumers, real estate professionals, and representatives of specific populations such as veterans, elderly, and youth.

### **Officers**

The HSPC holds elections for the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Recording Secretary every other year at the Annual Meeting held every other June. The presiding Chair will appoint a nominating committee.

Officers duly elected to the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer will serve a term of two years. The Chair and Vice-Chair must represent the public and private sectors at the same time. An individual may not serve as officer for more than two consecutive terms (four years).

### *Chair*

The Chair of the HSPC shall be responsible to:

- Preside over all HSPC meetings;
- Work with the Vice-Chair in all matters of the HSPC;
- Represent the HSPC at any community or public event where such representation is requested, or designate someone to represent the HSPC;
- Represent the views of the consensus of the HSPC's membership in public and in the media;
- Designate a member of the HSPC to preside over an HSPC meeting in the case of the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair; and
- Communicate any issues of the Administration to the HSPC.

### *Vice-Chair*

The Vice-Chair of the HSPC shall be responsible to:

- Preside over all HSPC meetings in the absence of the Chair;
- Work with the Chair in all matters of the HSPC;
- Represent the HSPC at any community or public event where such representation is requested in the absence of the Chair;
- At the request of the Chair, represent the views of the consensus of the HSPC's membership in public and in the media; and
- Communicate any issues of the Administration to the Chair and the HSPC.

### *Treasurer*

The Treasurer of the HSPC shall be responsible :

- For All fiscal matters as related to the HSPC; and
- To work with the Executive Committee.

### *Recording Secretary*

The Recording Secretary of the HSPC shall be responsible to:

- Record the minutes of each meeting and submit to the Chair or Vice-Chair for review;
- Maintain and update the membership roster;
- Distribute the agenda and the prior month's minutes to all HSPC members at least seven days prior to the next meeting (unless another member volunteers his/her services); and
- Maintain the "Services for Homeless Families and Individuals" resource pamphlet (unless another member volunteers his/her services).

**Bi-annual evaluation**

Bi-annually, a committee is formed to:

- Review current membership of the HSPC and to clarify who represents and is affiliated with which organizations;
- Send letters to members with low attendance to confirm their intent to participate on the HSPC;
- Provide suggestions to encourage active membership by recruiting community leaders from various focus groups; and
- Evaluate how to best reflect the diversity of membership and close working relationships between the administration, public officials, service providers and other stakeholders in the community.

**Vacancies and Resignations**

Vacancies and resignations of any general HSPC member may be filled by the member organization at its own discretion.

Elected positions are considered to be represented by an individual, not an organization. Vacancies and resignations of elected positions shall be brought before the HSPC, and a new election will be held within sixty days to fill the vacated position.

**Dues**

The HSPC may decide by a majority vote to collect annual dues from its members to cover the HSPC's expenses.

*Per member*

Dues are to be paid by each organization, agency or institution. The amount of dues is to be determined when the HSPC members vote to collect dues, and a deadline to accept the membership dues will be set.

*Waiving fees*

The HSPC may vote to waive annual dues for anyone for which it creates a hardship. The HSPC may also vote to waive fees for the year for all agencies if the HSPC has sufficient income to cover expenses.

*Eligible expenses*

HSPC may expend funds collected as dues for expenses such as the following: mailing costs, printing, operations, advertising, equipment, space, and beverages and light fare to be served at presentations sponsored by the HSPC. Expenses are to be approved by the HSPC prior to expenditure by a vote of all participating membership organizations.

**Meetings**

HSPC meetings are held the fourth Thursday of every month at 9 a.m.

Written notice of regular meetings shall be made no less than one week prior to the meeting and shall be delivered personally, by fax, by mail or by electronic mail. Written notice of the Annual Meeting shall be made no less than two weeks prior, by same delivery methods.

**Voting Process and Quorums**

Voting is based upon membership, where membership is held by an organization, agency or institution, rather than individually by employees or members of those entities. Each member agency/group is entitled to one vote.

All HSPC Officers and Members must refrain from voting on matters where there is a conflict of interest, such as decisions concerning awards of grants or provision of financial benefits to such member or its organization.

A minimum of ten active members shall constitute a quorum.

**Committees/Task Forces**

Committees/task forces are formed on an as-needed basis to research specific issues and present possible solutions to the HSPC. The committee/task force sets specific goals. Committee membership is on a volunteer basis.

Committees should report progress to the HSPC.

## **HOMELESSNESS SURVEYS**

The CoC counts the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless families and individuals in Fall River at a given point in time. The survey recognizes year-round beds, overflow and seasonal beds, the number of persons turned away from the shelters, Fall River versus non-Fall River residents, the chronic homeless population, other subpopulations and outreach to street homeless.

The survey is conducted for a period of 24 hours (i.e., from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on a day agreed upon by the HSPC members) during the third week of January (per HUD) and the third week of July.

The following data sources are consulted: HMIS, street outreach team, street outreach workers, emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, domestic violence shelters, supportive service providers, healthcare facilities, HIV/AIDS facilities, food pantries/ food kitchens and law enforcement.

## **HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

There is a Congressional directive to improve data collection and analysis regarding homelessness. The end goal is to have all appropriate homeless service providers in Fall River reporting in HMIS. Currently all McKinney-Vento funded projects must participate and report in HMIS, except domestic violence programs.

### **Contracts**

There must be formal, written contracts between CDA and each HMIS participating agency. There must be a formal, written contract between CDA and the agreed-upon HMIS vendor.

### ***Policies and Procedures***

There must be policies and procedures in place for, but not limited to, the following:

- Privacy Policy;
- Client Consent;
- Interagency Data Sharing;
- Security Measures;
- Continuum-wide standard forms.

(See HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual for more detailed information.)



### **GOALS/PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

McKinney-Vento funded programs must link their goals and performance measures to the CoC's CoC Action Plan, *Opening Doors* and Fall River's Annual Action Plan. The programs will be held accountable for performing as directed in their contracts, and their impacts will be measured by uniform standards.

All grantees and subrecipients will be held accountable by evaluating their programs using these standards. The grantees and subrecipients will have the opportunity to provide input as to what is used as performance measures to evaluate their programs.

### **CONTINUUM OF CARE APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) releases the CoC application/SuperNOFA (Notice of Funds Availability) annually. The nation's CoCs are invited to submit applications by the deadline provided by HUD for competitive funding to be used for housing and supportive services for the homeless, as well as HMIS costs.

The City of Fall River, through the Community Development Agency, coordinates the CoC application process. The application is completed by a subcommittee of the HSPC and submitted by the City of Fall River. The McKinney-Vento funds received through this process are used to service and house Fall River residents only.

### **Lead Agency**

Beginning application year 2003, the City of Fall River, through the CDA, became the grantee on all new projects. Since then, the City has also become the grantee on all renewal projects.

### **Sponsors**

The sponsor is the program's operating agency. CDA works closely with a service provider (sponsor) to develop new projects, evaluate renewal projects and apply for funding through the CoC application.

**Renewals**

Any agency with a homeless program currently funded through the McKinney-Vento grant and up for renewal in the next application round must provide the HSPC with a Letter of Intent in order to be considered for renewal funding.

Letter of Intent must provide a specific description of the project and its accomplishments to date, the proposed project term, project budget and possible leveraging sources. The sponsor agency of the renewal project must participate and report in HMIS. It is required that the projects chosen for funding must actively participate in the application process. The most recent Annual Performance Report will be reviewed for program efficiency.

**New Projects**

A public invitation or Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued, and any agency with a project serving the homeless in Fall River or intending to serve the homeless in Fall River may respond with a Letter of Intent.

A Letter of Intent must identify a need not being adequately met by the Continuum, provide a specific description of the program that will address this need, demonstrate the capacity of the responding organization to implement the program, and provide a proposed budget, proposed project term and possible leveraging sources. It is required that the projects chosen for funding must actively participate in the application process. It is also noted in the RFP that all future projects funded through the CoC application will be required to have HMIS in place in conjunction with program services.

### **Selecting and Prioritizing Projects**

The Letters of Intent are presented at a planning meeting. A Selection and Prioritization Task Force is formed to evaluate all proposed projects and present recommendations to the HSPC. The proposed projects are evaluated based on:

- Goals and priorities of the CoC;
- The Annual Gaps Analysis Chart;
- The project's APR (if a renewal);
- The project's overall strategy in addressing chronic and other homelessness issues;
- The feasibility of the project;
- The capacity of the agency to implement the program;
- The overall budget of the project and whether the budget fits into the year's pro rata; and
- Whether it is a permanent housing project.

The Task Force may require presentations by the proposing agencies to assist in the selection. The Task Force is also responsible to prioritize the projects as directed by HUD.

The Task Force presents their suggestions at the next HSPC meeting. Votes to select projects are cast by a show of hands in favor of each project. Each member agency/group may cast one vote. The HSPC also has the opportunity to review and accept or re-prioritize the slate of projects.

As per HUD's recommendations, permanent supportive housing projects and projects serving the chronically homeless are given highest priority. High-performing renewal projects are also given the precedence.

Agencies submitting a proposal must abstain from voting.

## NOTES

## NOTES

Homeless Service Providers Coalition  
Fall River, Massachusetts

**By-Laws**

Prepared by Mary D. Camara  
with assistance from  
Michael Dion, Reverend Donald Mier and Bonnie Paiva  
for the  
City of Fall River  
and the  
Fall River Homeless Service Providers Coalition  
**June 2013**