**Maine Continuum of Care - MCOC**

**Governance & Structure**

**Revised June 2016**

**Article 1. Organization**

1. This affiliation is established by and in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations.
2. The name of this affiliation shall be the Maine Continuum of Care, hereinafter referred to as “MCOC.”
3. MCOC covers the entire State of Maine except the City of Portland.
4. MCOC will establish a Collaborative Applicant (CA) that is responsible for the general coordination, oversight, and planning efforts of MCOC for the purpose of submission of the funding application. The CA shall have the authority by the MCOC to certify and submit the annual HUD Homeless Assistance Grant funding application on behalf of the MCOC.
5. The Business address for MCOC will be maintained by the identified CA. See addendum.
6. The CA cannot hold a Chair position of the MCOC.
7. The MCOC is governed by the HUD Continuum of Care Board of Directors (CoC Board). The CoC Board serves as the oversight body for the Maine Continuum of Care and Portland Continuum of Care. The CoC Board serves the geographic area of the entire state of Maine (ME 500 CoC and ME 502 CoC), and exists to:

* Coordinate a statewide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
* Approve CoC funding recommendations for ending homelessness;
* Promote access to, and effective use of mainstream resources by homeless individuals and families; and
* Promote housing retention, stability, success, and optimize self-sufficiency in the community for people who have experienced homelessness.

The CoC Board shall assume and carry out duties as detailed by the HUD Continuum of Care Board of Directors Bylaws.

**Article 2. Purpose and Mission**

The mission of MCOC is to plan and coordinate an inclusive system that helps Maine people avoid or exit quickly from homelessness, and to address the underlying causes of homelessness. MCOC shall accomplish this mission by conducting the following activities:

1. MCOC develops and manages the annual Continuum of Care (CoC) Application process to ensure that MCOC receives the maximum amount of federal McKinney-Vento funding from HUD.
2. MCOC fosters and promotes comprehensive, cohesive and coordinated approaches to housing and community resources for people and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless through:
   1. Diversion and prevention
   2. Outreach and engagement services
   3. Emergency shelters and supportive services
   4. Transitional housing
   5. Permanent housing
      1. Permanent supportive housing
      2. Rapid rehousing
      3. Market rate and affordable housing
   6. Linkages to mainstream and community resources.
3. MCOC identifies and prioritizes the housing and service needs of people who are homeless, and supports a system of intervention, assessment, referral, direct care and aftercare for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
4. MCOC identifies and addresses service gaps and risk factors in the community. MCOC develops specific priorities and action steps to address homelessness throughout the service area.
5. MCOC participates in planning activities supporting Maine’s Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness with the following:
   1. The CoC Board;
   2. The Statewide Homeless Council;
   3. The Regional Homeless Councils ;
   4. The Portland Continuum of Care (PCOC); and
   5. Local groups, alliances, and coalitions.
6. MCOC collaborates with community providers and stakeholders regarding continuum specific goals and objectives related to ending and preventing homelessness in Maine.
7. MCOC advocates for necessary funding at the state and federal level to develop needed housing and services for people who are homeless in Maine.
8. MCOC develops and supports public policy to assist people who are homeless and advocates for systems change to help end and prevent homelessness in Maine.
9. MCOC educates and helps advocate for people experiencing homelessness in Maine.
10. MCOC educates and helps advocate for entities that help people who are homeless.

**Article 3. Meetings:**

1. MCOC shall hold scheduled meetings of the general membership at a time and place agreed upon by the membership.
2. All meetings of the MCOC are open to the public and an invitation to join the MCOC is posted publicly at least annually.
3. Notice of meetings will be provided to the full MCOC membership by the CA.
4. A quorum must be present to hold a vote or conduct business at regular MCOC meetings. A quorum shall be 51% of the number of eligible voting members, and determined prior to the start of each meeting. If a quorum is not present at a meeting, discussion may still take place, but business and voting will not be conducted. The CA shall track attendance and voting member status to determine quorum status for meetings.
5. Committee meetings shall not require a quorum with the exception of the Steering Committee for the purposes of conducting business and voting on behalf of the MCOC (refer to Article 8 - Steering Committee).
6. Voting shall be conducted as outlined in Article 5 for general meetings.
7. If at any time there is a conflict of interest whereby an organization or individual will have a direct interest in the funding, scoring, ranking, or policy decision making, then that organization, representative of the organization, or individual may recuse themselves or abstain for the process in order to mitigate any perceived conflict of interest. The recusal or abstention may be oral or written. In addition, the MCOC may request an organization, representative of organization, or individual to recuse themselves from any activities.
8. In all procedural matters not otherwise specified in this document, MCOC shall be guided by the provisions of [*Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (11*th *ed.)*](http://www.robertsrules.com/) *– Simplified and Applied* (A Webster’s new World Book © 1999 by Robert McConnell Productions).

**Article 4. Membership:**

Each member of MCOC is a vital link in a collaborative community network, and as such, shares in ideas, concerns and decisions regarding the development, and deployment of resources to address the needs of people who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

1. MCOC has open membership for all individuals and/or organizations within the service area that have an interest in and subscribe to the mission and policies of MCOC, and who, through their participation, will contribute to MCOC’s ability to carry out its mission.
2. There is no membership fee.
3. MCOC membership and participation is **required** for all agencies actively receiving MCOC funds. At a minimum, participation shall be defined as maintaining voting eligibility at regular meetings.
4. Regular meeting attendance will be recorded and maintained by the CA. The CA will provide MCOC Chairs with attendance tracking sheets prior to the regular scheduled MCOC meetings for the Chairs to determine voting eligibility as defined in Article 5.

**Article 5. Members General Voting Rights:**

1. There shall be one vote per Agency, Association, or Individual in attendance and eligible to vote on all MCOC matters that come up at general MCOC meetings.
2. Participation by conference call or other electronic means shall count as attendance and eligible members may vote by electronic means.
3. For voting purposes: An Agency is defined as “an IRS Corporate Entity.” Therefore, if a person receives a 1099 as a consultant or a W-2 as an employee they are a member of said Agency. An Association is defined as a group of people who voluntarily enter into an agreement to establish an organization to accomplish a specific purpose. An Individual shall be defined as anyone who has no formal or informal relationship to any Agency or Association otherwise recognized by MCOC.
4. If an agency, association or company holds different corporations, it is the intention of Article 5 that only the parent agency and not the separate corporations may cast a vote. It is the responsibility of said agency, association, parent company, or corporation to determine who will vote on their behalf.
5. An Agency or Association shall be considered in attendance if they are represented by any member of their organization (it need not be the same person at all meetings).
6. A member must have attended at least 50% of the meetings in the previous 12 months to be eligible to vote.
7. Committee meetings will not be included for voting or quorum calculation purposes.
8. All items placed for voting must be made by motion and seconded. Motions may be made and seconded by anyone in attendance (you need not be eligible to vote in order to make or second a motion).
9. A simple majority (at least 51%) affirmative vote by those in attendance and eligible to vote shall determine the outcome of the vote. If specified in the motion, a vote may be taken by roll call or by written ballot, and/or via electronic means.

**Article 6. Officers & Elections:**

1. MCOC will have three Chairs, who will each serve for a three-year term.
   1. Chairs shall be responsible for planning and conducting general and Steering Committee meetings.
   2. Any Chair may act as the designated signatory for MCOC correspondence.
2. One new Chair shall be nominated and elected by MCOC on an annual basis. Nominations for a new Chair will be taken prior to and at the *October* MCOC meeting. Elections shall be held at the *January* meeting. Any eligible voting member may stand for nomination. The new Chair will begin serving upon election.
3. Term of Office shall be three years. There is no limit on terms, but all Chairs must be re-nominated and re-elected to serve another term once their initial term has expired.
4. Officers may resign in writing during their term and shall, to the best of their ability, give at least one-month notice of such resignation. Any vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term by nomination and election at the next regular meeting.

**Article 7. HMIS:**

1. The purpose of this article is to address the HUD requirement that both the Portland CoC and the Maine CoC have and agree to use the same HMIS lead agency and therefore both CoC’s governance’s must also reflect that agreement and address any issue which may arise regarding HMIS and its governance.
2. The HMIS governance, which has been accepted by both PCOC and MCOC, will remain the governing document unless and until both PCOC and MCOC jointly agree on any changes which are directed by HUD and or requested through either MCOC or PCOC.
3. The MCOC and PCOC will establish a HMIS advisory committee with equal representation from each COC to meet with the HMIS lead agency on a (minimum) quarterly basis to address HMIS issues and or concerns along with review of HUD changes or requirements which may need to be adopted into the HMIS governance.

**Article 8. MCOC Committees**

1. The committees detailed below shall be Standing Committees of MCOC. In addition to the duties detailed below, Committees may investigate other topics or perform other tasks as assigned by MCOC.
2. With the exception of the Steering Committee, each committee shall elect co-chairs annually after the January meeting of the MCOC. These Co-chairs are responsible for planning, calling, and conducting committee meetings.
3. Co-chairs from each Standing Committee shall participate on the Steering Committee.

Committees shall not make any policy or funding related decisions. Committees may make recommendations to MCOC, which may be presented for voting approval to the MCOC.

1. All Standing Committees shall designate a Secretary to record minutes of the meetings and make them available.

**Steering Committee –** The committee will be comprised of: The three MCOC chairs; Co-Chairs from each of the other Standing Committees; the chair of the Statewide Homeless Council (regardless of being a MCOC Chair or a Co-Chair on a MCOC Standing Committee); at least one representative from DHHS (regardless of being a MCOC Chair or a Co-Chair on a MCOC Standing Committee); at least one representative from MaineHousing (regardless of being a Co-Chair on a MCOC Standing Committee); and the CA.

1. The Steering Committee will coordinate with the Standing committees to ensure that information is disseminated to MCOC.
2. The MCOC Chairs and/or the Collaborative Applicant may call may call a Steering Committee meeting at any time to address immediate needs.
3. Recommendations from the Steering Committee shall go to MCOC to be voted on at the next regular meeting.
4. For immediate, emergency, or time sensitive decisions regarding the COC Application Process, or for other specific decisions as assigned by MCOC, the Steering Committee has the authority from MCOC to make appropriate decisions. In all other matters, the Steering Committee can only make recommendations to MCOC.
5. Votes taken by the Steering Committee related to immediate, emergency, or time sensitive decisions, as detailed above, shall be governed similarly to Article 5, Members General Voting Rights. For Steering Committee votes, a member must have attended at least 50% of the Steering Committee meetings in the previous 12 months to be eligible to vote.
6. Any such decisions made by the Steering Committee shall be reported back to the MCOC at the next regular meeting and by email or posting on the Homeless Planning Website.
7. The ‘One Agency- One Vote’ rule shall also apply to the Steering Committee. Therefore, as many agencies and individuals as possible should be encouraged to participate as Chairs on various committees.

**Project Committee –** This committee will oversee the processes and methodologies used to monitor Renewal Projects that receive ongoing funding through MCOC and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipient(s).

*Monitoring Process for CoC-Funded Projects:*

1. Develop and refine the Monitoring Questionnaires and methodology used to monitor and evaluate ongoing program performance. The Monitoring Questionnaires will be presented for approval by MCOC prior to the start of the Monitoring process.
2. Once approved, the Monitoring Questionnaires will be provided to all projects up for renewal in the current funding round, along with a request for the project’s most recent E-snaps APR and the most recent HMIS-generated APR.
3. The Project Committee will monitor project performance which results in a threshold score. If an agency fails to meet threshold, as determined by the MCOC, they will be put on a Performance Improvement Plan which will be reviewed as needed, annually at minimum, and with technical assistance from the appropriate MCOC committee(s) will be required to demonstrate performance improvement. The Project Committee will also offer and/or refer agencies to appropriate assistance and training if available.
4. This Committee then prepares the information collected and presents their recommendations to the Steering and the MCOC membership for processes of prioritization and performance improvement and the Selection Committee for scoring and ranking.

*Monitoring Process for ESG Recipient(s):*

1. Develop and refine the Monitoring Questionnaire(s) and methodology used to monitor and evaluate ESG program performance. The Monitoring Questionnaires will be presented for approval by MCOC prior to the start of the Monitoring process.
2. Once approved, the Monitoring Questionnaires will be provided to the ESG recipient(s).
3. The Project Committee will monitor project performance which results in a threshold score. If an agency/program fails to meet threshold, as determined by the MCOC, they will be put on a Performance Improvement Plan which will be reviewed as needed, annually at minimum, and with technical assistance from the appropriate MCOC committee(s) will be required to demonstrate performance improvement. The Project Committee will also offer and/or refer agencies to appropriate assistance and training if available.
4. This Committee then prepares the information collected and presents their recommendations to Steering and the MCOC membership for processes of prioritization and performance improvement.

**The Scoring Template Committee** – This committee will establish the criteria and protocols used to score and rank projects seeking funding through MCOC.

*Scoring Template Process and Criteria*

1. Develop and refine the Scoring Templates, methodologyand protocols used to score and rank project applications seeking funding through the MCOC annual Collaborative Application to HUD.
2. This Committee will work closely with other committees to determine appropriate criteria for the separate scoring templates for new and renewal projects, and HMIS applications. Scoring Templates will be based on priorities established by MCOC and by HUD and will be reviewed and adjusted annually at least at the start of the NOFA to account for HUD changing priorities.
3. This Committee will establish a list of protocols and instructions to be provided to the Selection Committee who utilize the scoring templates.
4. The scoring templates, protocols and instructions shall be presented for to MCOC for approval, copies of the approved forms will be provided to the Selection Committee and to all new, and renewal projects including HMIS project applicants prior to the Selection process.

**Data Committee** – This committee works to collect information on homelessness throughout the MCOC area and to improve data collection techniques and data analysis methods for use in the MCOC Application and to better inform MCOC members, and the general public regarding homelessness in Maine.

1. Reviews data obtained through the annual Point-in-Time count of sheltered and unsheltered persons and the annual Housing Inventory of shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing in the MCOC area.
2. Evaluates best practices, new guidance, and emerging approaches on data collection, methodology, sharing, and analysis.
3. Reviews and makes recommendations pertaining to HMIS data quality and completeness for all HMIS participating projects within the MCOC.
4. Coordinates with the other Standing Committees to ensure that they have the information they need to properly perform their functions.
5. As MaineHousing is also the statewide HMIS Lead Agency, the MCOC Data Committee will include at least one member of the MaineHousing HMIS Team.

**Resources Committee** – This committee is an action oriented group that will engage the community and the MCOC. The committee collects, organizes and shares information on homelessness in the state of Maine.

1. Works to recruit and orient new members to MCOC and its Committees to involve the broader public including private businesses, landlords, law enforcement, educators, citizens, faith-based organizations, and persons who are homeless or were formerly homeless in the Continuum of Care planning activities.
2. Plans and implements training opportunities for members and other providers.
3. Assists in resource development strategies to access new funding sources and improve connections with other agencies and organization.
4. Engages with the community and supports local initiatives to reduce and end homelessness throughout the MCOC area, particularly in our rural communities.
5. Seeks to educate and inform MCOC member organizations and the general public on issues regarding homelessness and availability and access to mainstream and other resources.
6. Plans and organizes the annual Point in Time (PIT) count for the MCOC.

**Selection Committee** – This committee is responsible for the selection, scoring, and ranking of projects to be included in the annual MCOC Collaborative Application according to the Selection Process outlined below in Article 9.

1. The Selection Committee shall consist of agencies and/or individuals not competing for project funding during the current round of the MCOC application process.

**Policy Committee** -This committee is a Joint Standing Committee of the MCOC, PCOC, and the Statewide Homeless Council, formally known as the Maine Homeless Policy Committee. This committee is an action oriented group that collects, organizes, and shares information regarding numerous, ongoing policy initiatives. This committee advocates on the local, state, and federal levels for resources and funding for homeless services necessary to fulfill the mission, goals, and objectives of the Continuum of Care.

1. Disseminate information on a regular basis pertaining to current and upcoming policy initiatives relating to homelessness at the regional and statewide levels so Maine presents as a united front around homeless policy;
2. Serve as an informative liaison to the Statewide Homeless Council, Regional Homeless Councils, both Continuums of Care, and other local committees and coalitions regarding local, state, and federal legislation as it pertains to homelessness;
3. Advocate for fully funding McKinney Vento so that the HEARTH Act can be properly implemented; Advocate for adequate Section 8 funding; Advocate for funding for the National Housing Trust Fund; Advocate for the continuation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, including ensuring support for the continuation of the Community Reinvestment Act;
4. Maintain contact with the State and Federal Delegations, acting as a resource for information pertaining to homeless services in Maine; Advocate for federal resources for homeless services and affordable housing; Advocate for state resources for homeless services and affordable housing;
5. Advocate for local/municipal resources for homeless services and affordable housing;
6. Advocate for a sustainable state budget to protect homeless services; Maintain Maine’s Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness as a local priority; Engage with the community and support local, state, and federal policy initiatives to reduce and end homelessness.

**Veteran Committee** – This committee, formally known as The Maine Homeless Veterans Action Committee (MHVAC) is a Joint Standing Committee of the MCOC and PCOC. It was formed in collaboration with several Maine agencies and organizations. This committee is an action oriented group that collects, organizes, and shares information regarding all homeless Veterans in Maine. We work to ensure that Veterans are immediately identified, have access to shelter, are assisted in developing an active housing plan, and permanently housed as quickly as possible. This committee shall:

1. Actively engaged in the Maine’s Coordinated Entry System with the COC.
2. Update COCs on BNL progress (as agreed upon by all parties).
3. Prioritizing and matching Veterans to housing and services.
4. Manage and update Veterans By-Name-List (BNL).
5. Actively participate in local COC meetings.
6. Ensure privacy, release of information, and consent protocols are in place to project Veteran information as contained on the BNL (per individual agency and organization requirements).
7. Stay abreast of current initiatives pertaining to ending and preventing homelessness for Veterans.

**Article 9. Selection Process**

1. MCOC shall provide information and materials to all committee members to familiarize them with the purpose and responsibilities of the committee.
2. Applications, Scoring Templates, and all other relevant materials will be given to the Selection Committee members for review prior to scoring.
3. All projects shall be scored using the appropriate approved Scoring Template.
4. Ranking of applications will be based on scoring results and adjusted as appropriate to address MCOC and HUD priorities and to maximize potential funding.
5. The Selection Committee shall draw up a slate of project applications in ranked order of prioritization to be recommended to MCOC for inclusion in the Application.

**Article 10. Appeals Process**

1. The original decision or action being appealed shall remain in effect throughout the Appeals Process unless or until a Final Decision is reached. Timeframes may be adjusted in order to expedite the CoC Application Process. However, MCOC makes no assurances that an appeal will be resolved within any timeframe other than that outlined below or as prescribed by HUD.
2. STEP ONE APPEAL: An appeal must be submitted in writing to the CA within five (5) working days from the date of the decision or action the individual or agency is appealing. The appeal should include the date of the filing of the appeal, the specific decision or action the individual or agency is in disagreement with, suggestions about possible ways to resolve the situation, and must include how the individual or agency can be reached. (Send attention to: Maine Continuum of Care, using CA info as outlined in Appendix 1.)
3. Within ten (10) working days, the CA shall convene all available members of the group responsible for the decision or action to review and respond in writing to the Step One Appeal.
4. If the individual or agency is not satisfied with the outcome of the Step One Appeal, the individual or agency may appeal again within five (5) working days from the date the individual or agency received the Step One Decision by filing a written Step Two Appeal to the CA. If there is no Step Two Appeal or if the issues are resolved in Step One, the Step One Decision shall be Final.
5. STEP TWO APPEAL: Within ten (10) working days, CA shall convene all available members of the Steering Committee to review, investigate and respond in writing to the Step Two Appeal.
6. If dissatisfied with the Step Two Decision, the individual or agency may submit a Step Three Appeal to the CA, requesting that the issue be reviewed by an ad-hoc Appeals Committee of the Maine COC. The written Step Three Appeal must be sent within five (5) working days from the date the individual or agency received the Step 2 decision. If there is no Step Three Appeal or is the issue is resolved in Step Two, the Step Two Decision shall be Final.
7. STEP THREE APPEAL: Within ten (10) working days, the CA shall convene an ad-hoc Appeals Committee to review, investigate and respond in writing to the Step Three Appeal. The Appeals Committee may request an extension of an additional five (5) working days, if necessary, to prepare a Final Decision. Any decisions will be in writing.
8. The above steps outline the MCOC Appeals Process. However, in the event the project does not agree with the MCOC decision, the agency may send a complaint / appeal to the MCOC HUD representative.

**Article 11. Code of Conduct**

1. All members of the Maine Continuum of Care have the responsibility for maintaining high standards of honesty, integrity, courtesy, respect, and ethical conduct in all MCOC activities. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner while carrying out the business of MCOC and to:
   1. Advocate on behalf of all people experiencing homelessness, or at imminent risk of homelessness, with respect, concern, courtesy, compassion, and responsiveness.
   2. Exercise reasonable care, good faith. and due diligence in all MCOC business and act within the boundaries of his or her authority regarding MCOC business.
   3. Carefully prepare for, regularly attend, and actively participate in MCOC meetings, committees, and other assignments.
   4. Accept personal responsibility to be informed of emerging issues and to administer MCOC business with professional competence, fairness, efficiency, and effectiveness.
   5. Approach MCOC activities with a positive attitude and constructively support open communication, cooperation, creativity, dedication, and collaboration.
   6. Respect and value the work done by, and the diversity of, opinions expressed by, other members of MCOC, and our partnering agencies and organizations, and to formally register dissent or disagreement only in an appropriate and professional manner.
2. Members have an obligation to conduct MCOC business within guidelines that prohibit actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest and to serve in a manner as to avoid inappropriate personal gain resulting from the performance of MCOC duties.
   1. An actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest occurs when a Member is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that Member, a relative, or an entity with which the member is associated. Personal gain may result from financial interest, a substantial gift, or any form of special consideration.
   2. MCOC members are expected to identify any conflicts prior to any activities where that would be an issue.
   3. No MCOC member may participate in any decision on any MCOC Application if that member has a direct or indirect interest in any entity that is a party to the application or that has a financial interest in the project.
   4. All members must respect and protect privileged information to which there is access in the course of MCOC duties and may not divulge or profit from the confidential information learned while performing MCOC duties.
3. Any concerns regarding Code of Conduct or Conflict of Interest matters must be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee who will consider all facts and will make a recommend to the full MCOC what further action, if any, should be taken.

**Article 12. Adoption and Amendment of Governance Document**

1. This Governance document shall be adopted and thereafter amended at a regular MCOC meeting by a simple majority (at least 51%) affirmative vote of the members present and eligible to vote.
2. Proposed amendments must be in written form and distributed to the members of the MCOC prior to the presentation and vote.
3. The MCOC can choose to fully revise the governance policy to include an agreed upon change or an Amended Article may be added for insertion into the existing document.

Addendum 1 for MCOC Governance

MCOC business address is:

Maine Continuum of Care (MCOC)

MaineHousing

353 Water Street

Augusta, Maine 04330-4633