

# **Morris County Continuum of Care Lived Experience Advisory Board Committee Governance Charter**

At the meeting dated September 22, 2022, the Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee approved the integration of the Lived Experience Advisory Board Committee as a standing subcommittee of the Morris CoC. The Advisory Board Committee was created to obtain and include stakeholder's feedback from individuals with current and/or previous lived experience in the CoC's efforts to end homelessness in Morris County. This entails building working relationships with individuals with current and/or past lived experience on policies, procedures, and standards development and consultation on improving the quality and types of services provided.

## **NAME**

The technical name of this committee is the Morris County Advisory Board Committee, hereinafter referred to as the "Advisory Board" or "ABC".

## **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document will frame the Committee's purpose and operations, who may participate, and expectations of members and leaders.

## **PURPOSE OF THE ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEE**

- The Advisory Committee will function in an advisory capacity to the CoC Board.
- Review written standards for service provision and recommend changes to the Executive Committee
- Identify gaps and barriers to services and make recommendations for system improvements to the Executive Committee
- This committee has no direct policymaking authority but may make recommendations to the CoC Board on matters within its purview.
- This committee is intended to ensure that the voices and perspectives of individuals with current and/or past lived experience of homelessness are heard and considered in the decision-making process of the CoC Board and provides a way to share recommendations and feedback on the CoC and its programs and services.
- The Advisory Committee may be called on to collaborate with and/or support other Committees of the CoC Board for the purposes of evaluation and systems improvement.
- Recruit members and/or facilitate collaboration with organizations who serve populations not engaged in services or who provide services that are underutilized by the homeless population

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Advisory Board Committee is key to developing a homeless response system that provides fair and effective services to those most vulnerable in our population. The Advisory Board Committee will be responsible for making recommendations for improvement, providing input on development, and sharing feedback on improving the quality and types of services provided.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Board Committee include:

- Supporting the development of policies and procedures which impact homeless services in Morris County.
- Ensuring that the CoC is supporting programs, policies and procedures that are mindful of and take into consideration the expertise of people with lived experience.
- Creating forums and other meetings to engage persons with lived experience in the community.

## **CHAIR**

The Advisory Board Committee will be chaired by the CoC Executive Committee member elected to serve in the seat designated for individuals with lived experience or formerly homeless.

### **Responsibilities of the Chair:**

- Establish meeting agendas.
- Facilitate and coordinate meetings of the Advisory Board Committee in collaboration with the CoC
- Carry forward recommendations from the Advisory Board Committee to the Executive Committee

## **MEMBERSHIP**

To be eligible to serve on the Advisory Board Committee, interested individuals must identify themselves as having an experience of homelessness, past or present, be a community activist/advocate or an expert. Ideally, this experience should have taken place in Morris County.

The ABC aims to build a diverse and inclusive Board. As such, the membership of the Advisory Board Committee should also be representative of the different regions within Morris County and subpopulations experiencing homelessness. The following representation within the Advisory Board Committee is highly desirable:

- Individual who experienced homelessness within the Service Planning Area
- Individual who experienced homelessness as part of a family (household with minor child)
- Individual who represents BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color)
- Individual who served in the Armed Forces (veterans) and experienced homelessness
- Individual who is ages 18 to 24 (Transitional Aged Youth) and experienced homelessness
- Individual who experienced homelessness because of Domestic Violence
- Individual who represents the LGBTQ community and experienced homelessness
- Individual who represents behavioral health or disabling conditions

## **PARTICIPATION**

### **Member Meetings**

Regular meetings will be held weekly or as established by chair. Subcommittees and any other subgroups may meet as frequently as desired.

### **Non-Member Attendance and Participation**

In order to keep open lines of communication, enhance collaboration, and support the Board's work, non-members may be invited to attend member meetings and participate in ways as allowed by Board members. For example, Advisory Board members may be asked to attend Board meetings for purposes of bringing information or opportunities to the Board

Advisory Board members are responsible for carrying out responsibilities as outlined in part by the Executive Committee and consistent with other Morris CoC subcommittees. Board members demonstrate their commitment by regularly attending Morris County CoC Board meetings and participating on at least one committee. Morris CoC Board members serve without compensation, but Advisory Board members may be provided a stipend to support their participation; this is still TBD pending DCA's RFP.

## **QUORUM**

For a vote to be held, a majority (more than half) of existing members must be present. Remote attendance, such as calling in by phone, qualifies as being present for purposes of quorum and voting.

No quorum is needed to hold a meeting, but quorum is needed to make decisions affecting the whole group.

## **MEMBERSHIP VOTE TO MAKE DECISIONS**

Membership on the Board gives the right to vote. To bind the Board in any decision, a majority vote of those present and entitled to vote is needed. Note that this means a tie vote is not Approved.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

Conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which decisions made in a person's official capacity may result in personal benefit or harm.

A member who has a conflict of interest should disclose the potential conflict to the other members and must abstain from participating on the Board as this may implicate conflict.

It is the policy of the Advisory Board Committee to avoid any conflict, or the appearance of a conflict between the CoC's Advisory Board entity and the organizations receiving grant awards. Every member of the greater Continuum shall abstain from discussing and voting on projects and/or matters in which they or their agency have a financial or potential financial interest.

The below listed are known Continuum funded agencies, subject to change. No person(s) shall participate on the Advisory Board Committee if they are employed by or receive compensation from.

- Edge
- Family Promise of Morris County
- Homeless Solutions
- JBWS
- Mental Health Association
- Visions and Pathways

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Applicability**

This Code of Conduct applies when Board members are:

- Representing the Board with members of the community, partners, or the public.
- Participating in Board projects, meetings, or activities.
- Attending Board meetings and events.

Advisory Board Committee members take great pride in representing something bigger than themselves. The Board holds itself to a standard of excellence and expects members to honor the Lived Experience Advisory Board's mission and community norms. Members should strive to develop themselves professionally and personally. Out of respect and consideration for our fellow unhoused neighbors, peers, and colleagues, members should be prepared and organized, so they can be present and engaged when participating in meetings and activities. The Advisory Board Committee meets members where they are in their journey and will provide the necessary support to enable members to show up meaningfully. However, members should clearly communicate when they are unable to follow through with commitments.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR HARASSMENT POLICY**

The Board is committed to a safe and respectful experience for all members at all Board and Board sponsored activities and will have Zero Tolerance for harassment of any kind.

The Board defines harassment as any unwanted physical or communication-based conduct that offends or humiliates the recipient, that interferes with their ability to participate and learn or leads to adverse participation-related consequences, and that any reasonable person ought to have known would be unwelcome. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, racial or sexual slurs, name calling, racist or sexist jokes, negative stereotyping, physical assault, bullying, threats, demeaning pictures, emails, or social media posts shared with the Board.

Harassment includes the following categories of behavior, whether the behavior occurs once or many times:

a) Discriminatory behavior

Discrimination refers to treating people differently, negatively, or adversely because of one or more of the following prohibited grounds of discrimination: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, or pardoned criminal conviction.

b) Personal harassment

Personal harassment includes objectionable conduct, comment, or display made on either a one-time or continuous basis that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment on the part of the recipient. It may or may not be linked to discriminatory behavior.

c) Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment refers to any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basis or a series of incidents, that might

reasonably be expected to cause offense or humiliation or that might reasonably be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, an opportunity for training or promotion, receipt of services, or a contract.

d) Bullying

Bullying consists of behavior to attack and diminish another by subjecting the recipient to unjustified criticism and trivial fault-finding, humiliating the recipient (Especially in front of others), and/or ignoring, overruling, isolating, and excluding the recipient.

f) Poisoned environment:

A poisoned environment is characterized by an activity or behavior, not necessarily directed at anyone in particular, that creates a hostile or offensive environment. Examples of a poisoned environment include but are not limited to sexual, racial, religious insults or jokes, abusive treatment of a member, and the display of pornographic or other offensive material.

Perceived harassment by a Board member should be reported to the Advisory Board Committee Chairperson. When harassment is reported, the Advisory Board Committee will add an item to the next regular meeting agenda for discussion. Following a discussion, if determined by at least 2/3 of the current members that harassment occurred, the below Removal policy may be enacted.

Removal: A member may be removed from the Advisory Board Committee through vote to remove by two-thirds of all current Advisory Committee members. The member at issue does not participate in the vote and must be out of the room while voting takes place.

## **REMOVAL & RESIGNATION**

### **Removal**

Members of the Board may remove a Board member who is absent for four, consecutive regularly scheduled Board meetings in any three-month period. Unexcused absence from special meetings will generally not be considered in this calculation but may be included as appropriate. Before considering removal, other members should attempt to get into contact with the individual and resolve the situation.

Board members may also be removed by a 3/4 vote of the Board then-seated for cause including but not limited to:

- Failure to perform Board duties
- Failure to comply with the Charter, Bylaws, and/or applicable policies
- Engaging in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest

### **Resignation**

Unless otherwise provided by written agreement, any member of the Board may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair. Any such resignations will take effect at the time specified within the written notice or if the time be not specified therein upon its acceptance by the Board.

## **MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP**

**Non-Discrimination**

The members of the Advisory Board will be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, family composition, or other federal, state or locally protected group.

Members shall comply with the provisions of all Federal, State, and local laws prohibiting discrimination in housing and provision of services on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, familial status, age, or physical or mental handicap, including Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (Public Law 88- 352); and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended (Public Law 90-284); and Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-3620).

**Members**

The Advisory Board Committee will be conducting regular outreach to recruit members. Each member will be required to review any materials, will be asked to review the Advisory Board Governance Charter and the Morris County CoC Bylaws before serving as an Advisory Committee member. The Board is committed to creating opportunities for individuals to get involved at every level and recognizes the time commitment involved in participating as a member.

**Revising Bylaws**

These bylaws may be revised by Board members through approval by majority of all current Board members. Bylaws should be reviewed and revised by Board members as desired, not less than once every year.