

CONNECTICUT COALITION to
END HOMELESSNESS

CONNECTICUT CAN END HOMELESSNESS

Organizational Structure

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to share the organizational structure for the CT CAN End Homelessness initiative, the first step in developing a comprehensive statewide plan to end and prevent homelessness in Connecticut.

This organizational structure is derived from the extensive feedback from sector stakeholders across Connecticut we received over the summer and early fall. Over a three-month period, CCEH hosted 20 listening sessions and met with close to 300 individuals representing nongovernmental and governmental agencies, community and shelter providers at all levels, and people with lived experience of homelessness. These discussions yielded valuable insight into the successes and shortcomings of the now retired Reaching Home Campaign and recommendations on how to build a comprehensive, data driven, and collaborative program to eradicate and prevent homelessness. The input we received serves as the foundation of the CT CAN End Homelessness initiative that follows, and sets the course for Connecticut's Plan to End Homelessness. We believe this publicly informed approach will serve our state well as we move forward.

The Structure

This structure intends to be a bold re-envisioning, re-imagining, and re-inventing of our collective approach to preventing and ending homelessness. By definition, it requires us to change our systems, beginning with replacing the top-down structure and providing greater opportunity for inclusion of BIPOC staff members, staff at all levels of employment in the homeless response system and the voices of people with lived experience.

Statement of Commitment to Racial Equity and Inclusion

CCEH recognizes that there remain inequities and discrimination in housing, and that they extend to our homeless response system. We are committed to eradicating inequities and discrimination and replacing it with a more equitable and inclusive homeless response system. However, we cannot create equity solely by ending an inequitable system. Social change can come only if we incorporate racial equity and inclusion at the very core of our work. Therefore, CCEH is committed to centering racial equity and inclusion in CT CAN End Homelessness.

Our goals are:

- * Recognize and address the inequities in our homeless response system;
- * Strengthen the voices of the people from our most vulnerable communities;
- * Demonstrate that race equity strategies can be used effectively by all agencies, organizations, and providers within these communities.

CCEH and the Connecticut CAN End Homelessness Plan, in partnership with other organizations that share our commitment to racial equity and inclusion, will work to ensure the equitable treatment and safety of those experiencing homelessness, especially those who are disparately impacted by both homelessness and COVID-19. We will identify racial disparities that exist in our programs, address these disparities, and retool our system to eliminate these disparities.

Informing the Structure of CT CAN End Homelessness Plan

The Listening Sessions produced valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the recently retired Reaching Home Campaign. This feedback informed the foundational structure on which the CT CAN End Homelessness Plan rests and will guide the work we undertake towards achieving our mission of preventing and ending homelessness

Identified Strengths

- *Brought a number of voices to the table which gives the sector strength*
- *Provided opportunities to share ideas to end homelessness*
- *Provided some coordination of having a plan in place*
- *Provided a structure to disseminate information*

Identified Weaknesses

- *The decision-making structure was upside down*
- *Unclear how decisions were made*
- *Needed to be more strategic about where we were going as a system and how we would get there*
- *Sometimes got stuck in granular detail and idealistic thinking*
- *Concerns about collective impact*
- *Not inclusive of front-line provider participation*
- *Too many working groups led to confusion*
- *How this feedback informed our work*

Feedback from the Listening Sessions was factored into the development of the structure we've created for our re-envisioned approach to preventing and ending homelessness in Connecticut. The new structure is intended to guide the activities and actions we collectively undertake, establish accountability all along the way, and clarify how and by whom decisions are made.

STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The Organizing Council

System Operations Committee

Policy and Advocacy Committee

HMIS and Data Leadership Committee

Funding Committee

Youth and Young Adult Sub-committee

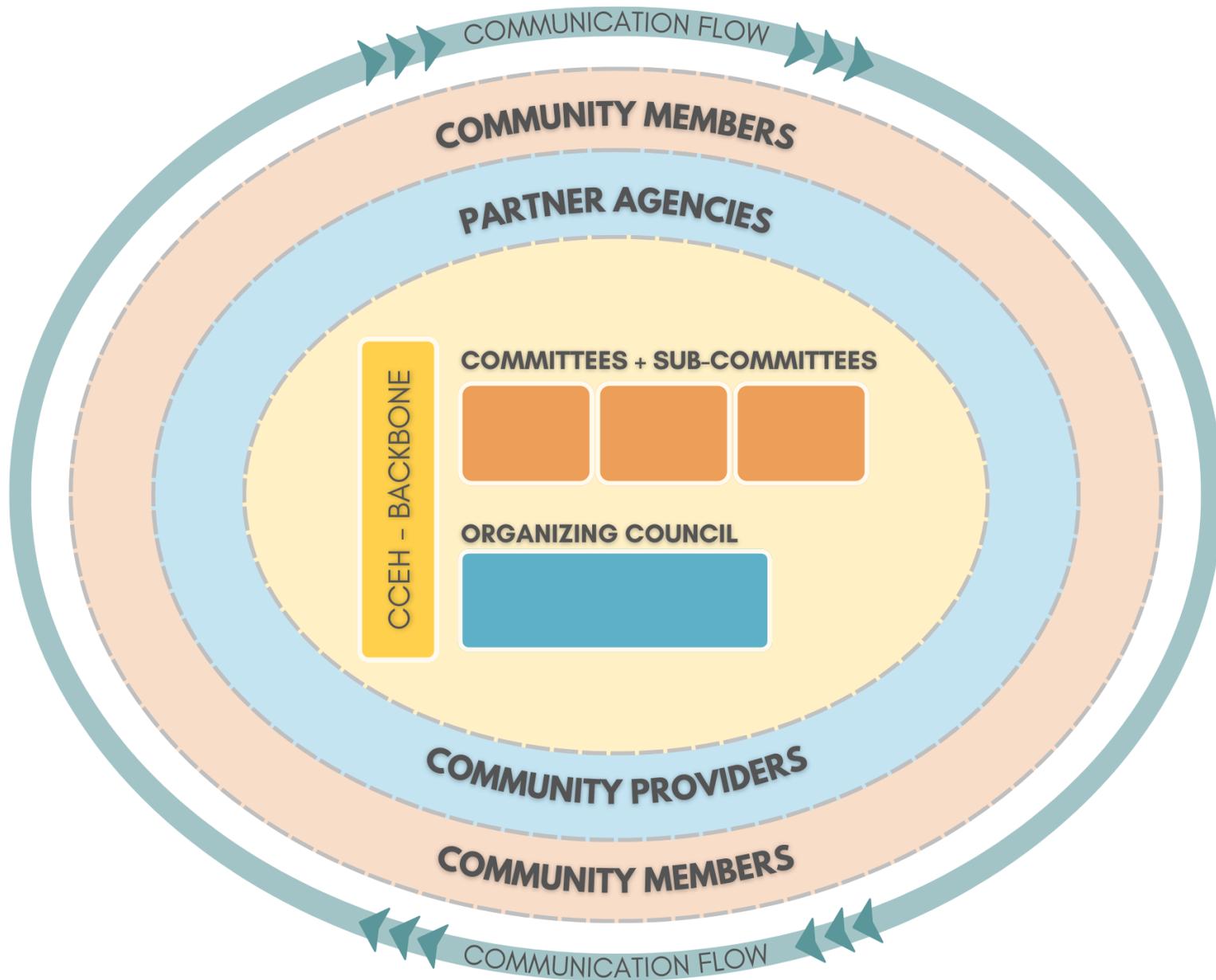
Outreach and Engagement Sub-committee

Entry Sub-committee

Exit Sub-committee

Legislative Leads

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Operationalizing the Structural Framework

The success of the CT CAN End Homelessness Plan depends on the full participation of our CAN partners. We are asking each CAN to nominate and elect representatives to serve on each of the committees and sub-committees identified in this plan.

Ensuring Representation Reflects Our Communities

CAN Committee representatives should be drawn from all levels of staff and representative and inclusive of the organization and the communities served. Providing opportunities to ensure that staff at all levels can participate in the Organizing Council and on committees and subcommittees is a vital to creating a decision-making structure that is more effective and representative of your organization and the communities you serve. The Committee and Subcommittee work will drive the decisions. All Committees and Subcommittees will set their own agendas in alignment with the established goals, schedule quarterly and annual goals and meet monthly. Chairs of the Committees and Subcommittees will be ex-officio members of the Organizing Council and will present monthly reports updating the Organizing Council on progress and action items.

The Nominating Process

Connecticut has a well-established CAN system. This system is the basis for populating the membership of each committee. Each CAN will nominate people to serve on the committees (specified in each committee description), reaching deep into the staffing structure of providers, as well as nominate people with interest and expertise in the various areas. Committee members can serve on only one committee. The goals of this structure are to be inclusive of staff; provide opportunities for staff development; and to decentralize the decision-making process.

Organizing Council

The Organizing Council, together with the Committees and Subcommittees, will establish the goals for each committee; oversee the work, provide guidance and support; and assist all committees in meeting their goals, thus creating greater accountability in the Homeless Response System.

Organizing Council Membership and Structure

- The Organizing Council has 16 members, two of whom are the CEO and COO from CCEH;
- Two representatives from each CAN with leadership experience, elected by each CAN;
- State government and non-governmental partners serving as ex-officio members;
- Co-Chairs selected by the Council membership charged with the responsibility for conducting meetings, establishing agendas, and maintaining minutes with support from CCEH staff;

Responsibilities

- Develop with the Committees the broad vision, strategy, and goals to advance the homeless response system's collective mission to prevent and end all forms of homelessness;
- Secure input and feedback from the Committees and Sub-committees;
- Identify and integrate clear strategies to include racial equity in all decision-making, policies, and practices of the homeless response system;
- Develop partnerships with other systems of care and make the necessary connections within the structure and overall plan to end homelessness; and
- Support and monitor progress of all Committees and Sub Committees to ensure accountability to the CT CAN End Homelessness plan, CCEH membership and our key stakeholders.
- Hold monthly meetings that are open; and
- Report quarterly to the CCEH Coalition Membership on decisions, progress, results, and any news or information relevant to the CT CAN End Homelessness plan.

System Operations Committee

System Operations Committee (SOC) will identify and address regional needs to effectively respond to the causes of homelessness in each region, implement proven methods to divert people from homelessness, the best means to quickly match people to housing and improve outcomes for the unsheltered homeless. This work will inform and drive the work of all other committees.

Committee Membership and Structure

- The Committee has 15 members including the CCEH Director of Training, Technical Assistance and Community Impact;
- Two members elected from each CAN who have frontline, direct provider-to-client experience;
- Co-chairs will be elected from and by its membership; and
- State government and nongovernmental partners to serve as ex-officio.

Responsibilities

- Identify the lead causes of homelessness, effective prevention strategies and rapid exit strategies;
- Develop a robust coordinated homeless response system that standardizes practices for all CAN regions;
- Improve and standardize coordinated entry;
- Enhance system flow from diversion, shelter and exit to housing;
- Address system operations for regions (CAN);
- Monitor critical data to ensure effective function of crisis response;
- Analyze and propose funding needed to end homelessness;
- Address shelter capacity and cold weather protocol;
- Plan agendas, maintain minutes and report to Organizing Council;
- Meet monthly;
- Hold open meetings; and
- Coordinate with all Subcommittees; and
- Report monthly/quarterly to the Organizing Council.

Subcommittees

Homeless Youth and Young Adult Subcommittee:

Membership of no more than 25 consisting of experts in the sector serving homeless youth to make recommendations to SOC. Co-chairs shall be elected from and by the membership. Purpose is to focus on ending youth homelessness. Shall determine their quarterly and annual goals and objectives; set agendas, maintain minutes. CCEH staff support upon request.

Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee:

Membership of no more than 25 consisting of outreach staff to make recommendations to the SOC. Co-chairs will be elected from and by the Subcommittee membership. Purpose is to identify, engage and house all unsheltered individuals and families using a coordinated approach across the state. Shall determine the quarterly and annual goals and objectives; set agendas and maintain minutes. CCEH staff support upon request.

Entry Subcommittee:

Membership of no more than 25 consisting of frontline staff to make recommendations to the SOC. Co-chairs will be elected from and by the Subcommittee membership. Purpose is to improve coordinated entry and to quickly provide households access to appropriate services and shelter. Shall determine the quarterly and annual goals and objectives; set agendas and maintain minutes. CCEH staff support upon request.

Exit Subcommittee:

Membership of no more than 25 consisting of frontline staff to make recommendations to the SOC. Co-chairs will be elected from and by the Subcommittee membership. Purpose is to increase exits to housing, decrease length of time homelessness and reduce returns to homelessness. Shall determine the quarterly and annual goals and objectives; set agendas and maintain minutes. CCEH staff support upon request.

HMIS and Data Leadership Committee

The HMIS and Data Leadership Committee will set a vision, develop a strategy, and establish goals for the use of HMIS and data to support CT's Homeless Response System. It will oversee effective HMIS and data usage throughout the homeless response system. This Committee will coordinate closely with the Systems Operation Committee.

Committee Membership and Structure

- The Committee has 15 members including the CCEH Director of HMIS and Strategic Analysis;
- Two representatives from each CAN with HMIS and/or data experience and expertise;
- Nutmeg serves as an ex-officio member;
- State government and nongovernmental partners serve ex-officio;
- Co-Chairs will be elected from and by the membership; and
- CCEH will provide staff support from HMIS and Data Teams.

Responsibilities

- Develop strategic plan for improved use of technology and data in the Homeless Response System;
- Streamline data and make data more accessible and responsive to needs of the front-line providers, partners and public;
- Encourage and implement innovation;
- Plan agendas, maintain minutes and report to Organizing Council;
- Meet monthly;
- Hold open meetings; and
- Report monthly/quarterly to the Organizing Council.

Policy and Advocacy Committee

The Policy and Advocacy Committee, in partnership with the newly hired CCEH lobbying firm, will lead the development of policy and advocacy efforts of the Homeless Response System throughout the calendar year.

Committee Membership and Structure

- The Committee has 15 members including the COO from CCEH;
- Two representatives from each CAN with experience or expertise with policy and advocacy;
- State government and nongovernmental partners serve ex-officio;
- Co-chairs elected from and by its membership;
- Will receive staff support from CCEH.

Responsibilities

- Develop and finalize the 2023 Legislative Agenda by December 12th;
- Conduct annual Legislative Listening Sessions;
- Implement and support the 2023 Legislative Advocacy Plan;
- Form Legislative Objectives with the Committee members and with Lobbyist;
- Encourage those with lived and frontline experience to share their stories with policy makers at all levels of government, including testifying at public hearings;
- Launch and oversee a Legislative Leads* initiative, with CCEH provider-members;
- Review current state and national policies focused on preventing and ending homelessness; and
- Plan agendas, maintain minutes, report to Organizing Council.
- Meet monthly;
- Hold open meetings; and
- Report monthly/quarterly to OC.

Legislative Leads

Each provider shall elect a Legislative Lead. The role of Legislative Lead is to build relationships with their legislators, local elected officials, and community members.

Funders Committee

The Funders Committee meets quarterly with Coalition Membership to advise on state and federal funding opportunities. Membership of the Committee will include state and federal agencies with funding opportunities for the homeless response sector.

Where the Work Starts

Achieving our goal to prevent and end homelessness starts with a clear understanding of the current state of homelessness in Connecticut. As such, the first course of action is to develop reliable data that clearly identifies the number of people in CT who are homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless. All Committee work will initially center on this task. Once we have identified a reliable number, our next step will be to define what it means to end homelessness in CT.

Currently, Connecticut lacks an agreed upon and accepted definition of what ending homelessness means or looks like. Arriving at singular understanding will empower us to act decisively and intentionally to end homelessness. Every committee, subcommittee, CAN and provider will participate in formulating this definition.

Next Steps

- Secure agreement on the structure of the CT CAN End Homelessness initiative.
- Develop a timeline for implementation of organizational structure, including dates by which Committee members are to be elected, dates for kick-off meetings and critical decision points.
- Schedule first committee meetings.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who participated in our Listening Sessions during the summer of 2022. It is because of your willingness to be candid, share your expertise and your vision for CT's Homeless Response System that we were able to encapsulate your feedback into CT CAN End Homelessness. All who are a part of CT's Homeless Response System play a critical role in preventing and ending homelessness in our state.

In July 2022 the Partnership for Strong Communities retired the Reaching Home Campaign to concentrate their efforts on increasing affordable housing opportunities in CT. It has been an honor to work alongside our colleagues at the Partnership for Strong Communities over the past 18 years. Together, with all our statewide partners we launched the Coordinated Access Network system, one of the first statewide collaborations in the nation aimed at ending homelessness rather than simply managing it. As a result, the number of people using the homeless response system has decreased more than 60% between 2012 and today. Our accomplishments are a testament to a collective and concerted effort to give people a home. Through our work, we have proven that with the right plan, necessary resources, and unwavering resolve, we can end homelessness in Connecticut.

Thank you again for your continued commitment, and your feedback creating the vision for the work going forward. Together we will put the final touches on this plan and together we will end homelessness.