

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

What do you and/or your organization get from CT BOS that is helpful?

- **CoC Application**
 - Securing funding
 - Technical support for applicants, including guidance on how best to position project applications to increase success
- **Compliance Support**
 - Updates on changes to federal policies
 - Help for projects to understand and ensure they are following HUD requirements
 - Policy templates
- **Professional Development**
 - Trainings and recordings
 - Experience in the CoC Process
- **Communication**
 - CT BOS team is responsive and we love the support and information we get.

How can the CT BOS CoC better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness? How can we ensure that projects we fund provide what people need?

- **Engagement of and Feedback from People with Lived Experience of Homelessness (PLEH)**
 - PLEH need more support to understand the role and scope of CT BOS.
 - Need to identify other avenues for PLEH to use their expertise, including opportunities that are not just sitting on a Board (e.g., opportunities at provider and partner agencies, local face-to-face opportunities)
 - Build more connection between CLIP and Community Representatives and other voting Steering Committee members
 - Create opportunities for CLIP and Community Reps to serve on CAN Leadership body
 - Summarize open-ended participant survey responses
 - Provide TA to support use of client surveys for Coordinated Entry
 - Convene focus groups and interviews to better understand people's experience and improve system performance
- **Flexibility**
 - Ability to serve those who don't meet chronic homelessness or Dedicated+ definitions
 - More flexibility with the funding (e.g., rental insurance)

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

- Identifying gaps for if funding opportunities become available in the future
- Filling gaps in funding to support unique needs (e.g., support animals)
- **Affordable Housing Availability**
 - Increase number of available units
 - Do more advocacy
- **Unmet Needs**
 - **Prevention**
 - Prevention services/care coordination for high acuity clients that have a risk of returning to homelessness
 - Resource education - a lot of people enter into homelessness because they do not know where to look for help
 - **Shelter**
 - Keep warming centers open longer especially in the spring when it's cold
 - **Showers**
- **Other**
 - Warm hand-offs when what is needed is not available at a particular program
 - Ensure safety in low-barrier projects
 - More support for staff on working with high acuity clients, including those with suicide risks and co-occurring SMI/SUD
 - Reduce gate keeping by providers who are protecting scarce resources
 - Continue project monitoring and evaluation

How can CT BOS better meet the needs of grantees, providers and partners?

- **Staff training & retention**
 - Clients have very high acuity and are aging; staff are not equipped to deal with the aging population, especially those with dementia
 - Frequent, in person Housing First Trainings
 - More in-depth trainings on best/promising practices.
 - Peer learning opportunities on best practices, landlord engagement and housing search
 - More training and support for supervisors:
 - how to support staff who are themselves dealing with trauma and housing instability
 - strategies for staff retention

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

- Forums to network, share best practices and support one another
- More resources for employee assistance programs
- Engaging staff who have lived experience with homelessness and/or housing instability as trainers
- Continue to provide sessions on policies and procedures
- **TA for...**
 - new agencies and programs
 - lower performing programs
- **Minimize documentation**
 - Cross-walks for DDAP, HMIS, and Provider Electronic Health Records
- **Data tools**
 - Need an easier way to identify data quality problems that impact renewal evaluation
 - Funding from BOS to improve data transfers (e.g., from provider Electronic Health Record, to HMIS, Acuity Indexes upload to DDaP).
- **Governance**
 - Provider representation amongst the chairs (e.g., creating a provider designated chair position)
- **Communication**
 - Communicating decisions to people that don't attend a meeting without relying on the CAN rep (e.g., bulleted quick summary that can be shared)
- **Alignment with ODFC on...**
 - best practices
 - policies & procedures related to rating/ranking, NOFO, and reporting for lower performing agencies

What do you and/or your organization need from CT BOS that you don't get?

- More funding
- More work groups
- More opportunities for PLEH to sit at different tables, state boards, committees, etc.
- Examples of what other Balance of State CoCs are doing
- More advocacy for flexibility from HUD (e.g., DV PSH as an eligible activity)
- More clarity around the performance measures included in Renewal Evaluation

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

- Using planning dollars to pilot different things - collaborate with CT CAN End Homelessness to elevate ideas that can be funded.
- Transparency on how planning funds are distributed and spent
- More collaboration with ODFC
- Meeting in person to increase opportunities for relationship building with colleagues - perhaps biannually or quarterly
- Opportunities to engage the public on the needs of PEH – without a street PIT count opportunities for engagement are no longer available

Is there anything else you want to suggest?

- A Steering Committee directory with information about who the representatives are and where they are from
- Sometimes BOS feels very routine, the votes and meetings feel performative, and it doesn't feel like there's an actual way for folks to provide feedback.
- The ways that funds are distributed from CT BOS is based on historic metrics (211 CAN appointments) but that may not accurately look at the actual needs. Revisiting the lines of the CANs may be worthwhile. The 9 and 91 corridor connecting Meriden to the MMW and New Britain makes more sense in terms of where people are residing.
- Would be helpful as a resource tool to document a. The CAN coverage areas b. The way funding is broken down across regions via BOS
- Allow people with lived experience to have a larger voice in making decisions
- Would like to see providers' support in working with PLEH

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

Proposed Action Items (7/1/24 – 6/30/27)

Leadership Opportunities for PLEH & BIPOC

- Gather information on leadership opportunities for PLEH (e.g., serve on Advisory/Provider Boards, work as trainers, etc.) - FY25
- Expand and re-bid CLIP for operating year that starts 7/1/25 (e.g., expansion might include a monthly meeting just for Community Reps; increased collaboration between CLIP and Community Reps; support and stipends to serve on other bodies such as HMIS Board, CAN Leadership, local CAN Committees; summarizing open-ended participant survey responses, convening focus groups and interviews with PLEH – include exploration of specifics around the reported gap in employment services & around race inequities in service provision; conducting client surveys for Coordinated Entry; rebuilding the YAB; etc.) – FY26
- Proactively recruit BIPOC to serve on CLIP, the CT BOS Steering Committee and in CT BOS Chair roles – FY25, FY26, FY27

Governance and CoC Coordination

- Establish and implement next steps to strengthen coordination between CT BOS and ODFC – FY25
- Conduct the Steering Committee meeting in person at least annually – FY 25
- Identify opportunities to reduce documentation burdens by streamlining and making requirements consistent across funders – FY25 and FY26
- When rolling out new initiatives or making significant updates to protocols, always consider if a provider/PLEH work group would be helpful and ensure significant BIPOC representation on work groups– FY25, FY26, FY 27
- Ensure ongoing evaluation of CoC governance structures, policies, and procedures to achieve the centering of race equity practices across the CoC – FY25, FY26, FY27
- Develop and maintain a Steering Committee directory on the CT BOS website – FY 25
- Distribute minutes shortly after each Steering Committee meeting, rather than at the next meeting – FY 25
- Conduct an analysis of CoC funding by CAN, develop recommendations for adjustments as needed to address geographic equity, and implement recommendations – FY25, FY26, FY27
- Share more info on Planning Grant spending with the Steering Committee – FY25, FY26, FY27

Program Model Improvements

- Explore opportunities to strengthen efforts to move PSH participants whose eligibility for PSH cannot be documented or who no longer need intensive services on to other suitable, affordable permanent housing - FY25, FY26
- Explore feasibility of centralization of CoC rental assistance administration in each CAN to enhance landlord engagement, expedite exits to housing, reduce administrative burdens for provider agencies and strengthen efficiency and compliance – FY 25, FY26

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

- Convene a work group with Department of Labor, providers, and PLEH to identify opportunities to improve employment outcomes for PLEH – FY26

Training

- Provide and/or link to professional development opportunities on a range of topics, including those listed below – FY25, FY26, FY27
 - Housing First and safety in low-barrier projects
 - Working with aging and other high acuity clients (e.g., how to access and coordinate with Home Care services in PSH, opportunities for providers to share best practices in working with high acuity clients,)
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Unconscious Bias, & Cultural Humility
 - Sessions for supervisors (e.g., supervisory supports for staff working with high acuity clients, peer-to-peer learning sessions on best practices for staff support and retention)
 - Peer learning opportunities
 - Other training topics
- Work with partner agencies that also deliver training to the CT Homeless Response System workforce to minimize duplication of effort, strengthen coordination, enhance impact and ensure user-friendly access to available trainings. – FY25, FY26, FY27

HMIS

- Through a re-bidding process ensure ongoing strategic leadership and that HMIS continues to evolve to meet the needs of the sector – FY25, FY26, FY27
- Establish strategic priorities in collaboration with the HMIS Governance body – examples listed below – FY25, FY26, FY27
 - Enhanced tools for providers (e.g., to identify data quality problems that impact renewal evaluation)
 - Implementation of a portal that enables participant access to their data

Coordinated Entry

- Explore opportunities to better integrate CHFA/LIHTC units set aside for people experiencing homelessness into the CAN process to ensure that people who have experienced homelessness for the longest periods and who have intensive service needs are prioritized for those units – FY25
- Through a CAN evaluation/monitoring initiative, ensure that the CAN system continues to evolve to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, that CANs are identifying and resolving inequities in coordinated entry services and outcomes, and that there is consistent alignment with best practices, statewide CAN policies and HUD requirements – FY26, FY27

BOS Strategic Planning Break-out Discussions Summary & Draft Action Items for 7/1/24-6/30/27

Monitoring & Adherence to CoC Requirements

- Limit monitoring only to items that involve significant recapture risks or impact housing and service quality for participants - FY25, FY26, FY27
- Reallocate resources to focus more on provision of training, guidance and TA supports to help agencies to understand the requirements and correct findings from HUD and State monitoring- FY25, FY26, FY27
- Convene a work group to inform how best to restructure the monitoring program and explore what training, guidance and TA supports would help agencies to avoid and correct findings on the prioritized items - FY26
- Work with partner agencies that also conduct program reviews to minimize duplication of effort and burden on providers, strengthen coordination, and enhance impact -F Y25, FY26, FY27