THE WAY HOME PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

I. THE WAY HOME CONTINUUM OF CARE CODE OF CONDUCT

As a partner of The Way Home Continuum of Care (CoC) and/or affiliated committee, we agree to represent ourselves, our clients, our organization, our county, our region, and/or our state in a professional manner by adhering to the guidelines laid out in the Code of Conduct of The Way Home; shown below.

Commitment, professionalism, and equity are vital to creating and maintaining an effective and efficient CoC process that will benefit each partner of The Way Home and the people experiencing homelessness they serve. Each is integral to creating and sustaining a strong continuum in which collaboration and services can grow.

Obligations:

1. Partners commit to represent in a fair, honest, and respectful manner, their organization, and the people experiencing homelessness that they serve or represent; and

2. Partners commit to being informed about the purpose of The Way Home CoC and its role in the CoC process; and

3. Partners commit to promote community-wide goals to end and prevent homelessness; and

4. Partners commit to promote access to CoC and community resources as well as improve self-sufficiency among people experiencing homelessness; and

5. Partners commit to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organization and the services they provide, including but not limited to utilizing culturally relevant approaches; and

6. Partners commit to comply with The Way Home Conflict of Interest policy and avoid any personal, financial, or other interests that might hinder their capability or willingness to perform their duties within the continuum and serve clients; and

7. Partners commit to promote open and honest communication; and

8. Partners commit to treating all clients with respect and dignity; and
9. Partners commit to staying up-to-date on CoC strategies and planning by participating in CoC meetings/forums/trainings and by ensuring staff are signed up for the CoC Connection and other communication outlets; and

10. Partners are expected to clarify their professional roles and obligations, exercise reasonable judgment, and take precautions to ensure that any potential biases or conflicts of interest do not unjustly affect the CoC process, partners of the CoC, or those they serve; and

11. When conflicts occur among partners, they should attempt to resolve these conflicts responsibly and respectfully; and

12. Leaders have the extra responsibility of setting an example through their performance and attitude that convey honest, respectful, and ethical values; and

13. Partners should consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of those they represent.

As a partner of The Way Home CoC and/or affiliated committee, we agree to the guidelines laid out in the Code of Conduct of The Way Home CoC.
II. THE WAY HOME SHARED VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As a partner of The Way Home CoC and/or affiliated committee, we are committed to the following values and principles, as laid out in the 2021-2026 Community Plan:

Ending Homelessness

- The Way Home CoC is committed to ending homelessness in Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties and the cities of Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe.
- “Ending homelessness” means preventing it when possible and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time when not preventable.
- Ending homelessness requires coordination across public and private sectors and for systems, organizations, and programs to align their goals and strategic actions.
- Ending homelessness must include the following:
  - preventing entries into homelessness; and
  - providing adequate outreach and crisis services; and
  - ensuring that low-barrier emergency shelter or bridge housing options are accessible to all people; and
  - connecting people to permanent housing with appropriate financial support and services to ensure their success.

A Person-Centered Approach

- We must rebuild the homeless response system to be anti-racist. Racist policies impact those who experience homelessness, and these policies must be dismantled as we work to address homelessness.
- Ending homelessness must include active engagement of people with lived experience.
- Crisis services and housing supports must be delivered in a human-centered, trauma-informed manner that respects the inherent value and honors the dignity of every individual regardless of race, ethnicity, age, disability status, gender identity, familial status, or citizenship status, or if they are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking.

Accountability

- The voices of people with lived experience of homelessness are critical and included in every aspect of planning, decision-making, and activities undertaken by the Continuum of Care. We as a system must be accountable for this input because it is a key to our success.
- The Way Home CoC’s Action Plan will align with existing plans created by other regional partners. The Way Home CoC’s Action Plan will be adjusted as necessary to reflect changing needs and resources.
III. THE WAY HOME CONTINUUM OF CARE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As a partner of The Way Home CoC and/or affiliated committee, we acknowledge that we have read and agree to The Way Home CoC Code of Conduct and are committed to The Way Home’s shared values and guiding principles, as laid out above and in the 2021-2026 Community Plan.

Please check each of the following boxes in acknowledgment of each statement below.

☐ Our organization would like to be a partner of The Way Home (TX-700) Continuum of Care (CoC) – the homeless response system in Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe and throughout Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties in Texas.

☐ We will agree/abide by The Way Home CoC Code of Conduct and shared values and guiding principles. The Lead Agency reserves the right to revoke the partnership of any entity should there be reasonable evidence that such entity violates the partnership agreement or code of conduct or does not adhere to The Way Home’s shared values and principles.

☐ Our organization will provide staff volunteers for the annual Point-In-Time Homeless Count & Survey (“PIT Count”) conducted annually in January by:
  o Dedicating agency staff to perform the unsheltered count (at least two (2) agency representatives per day for agencies with more than 20 employees. For Agencies with 20 staff or fewer, one (1) agency representative per day is required)
  o Completing the Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) for the shelter count
  o Participating in Gaps Analysis and Needs Assessment

☐ Our organization understands that if we do not meet the PIT Count Partner Requirements, our organization will no longer meet the requirements as a partner in good standing; and if applicable, may be docked points during HUD’s CoC NOFO competition or in other funding opportunities our organization applies for within the program year.

☐ Our organization understands that to remain in good standing and receive points on the Annual (or Special) CoC NOFO (if applicable), a representative from our organization will participate in at least 75% of CoC Steering Committee meetings held in the CoC performance year. Read the official memo for more information.

☐ Our organization will ensure our colleagues sign up for The Way Home CoC Connection so that members of our agency receive timely communications from and about The Way Home’s meetings, initiatives, trainings, workgroups, and more.

☐ Communicating with the media (e.g., news outlets, journalists, reporters, etc.) regarding the CoC and system-level homelessness programming are managed by the Coalition for the Homeless, the lead agency to The Way Home CoC. Partner organizations shall defer all system-level media inquiries about the CoC to Catherine Villarreal, Director of Communications at the Coalition, at
cvillarreal@homleesshouston.org. Organizations may/are encouraged to talk about their partnership with The Way Home CoC in their own independent media engagements.

☐ If our organization chooses to participate in competitive private and/or governmental funding opportunities and/or request letters of support for funding opportunities, we understand that our organization must actively participate in The Way Home CoC for a minimum of one (1) year before the request and for the duration of funding, as well as meet all partnership agreement requirements listed in this agreement and within the funding opportunity.

☐ If our organization chooses to participate in competitive private and/or governmental funding opportunities and/or request letters of support for funding, we understand that our organization must be good stewards of that funding and follow any written standards, requirements, and policies related to the funding opportunity and The Way Home for the duration of funding.

This Partnership Agreement shall continue throughout the calendar year provided only that it may be terminated in writing by either of the parties.

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Note: This acknowledgment of the CoC’s Partnership Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Values and Principles must be signed by the CEO/President/Executive Director of the organization (or if a statewide or national organization, the most senior member of the local office).

As indicated in The Way Home Partnership Agreement, the Lead Agency reserves the right to revoke the partnership of any entity should there be reasonable evidence that such entity violates the partnership agreement, code of conduct, or does not adhere to The Way Home’s shared values and principles.