



THE WAY HOME PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

TIER 1: CoC-PROGRAM PARTNER AGENCIES

As outlined in the previous Partnership Agreement, partner organizations fall into three primary tiers, each requiring a corresponding agreement. This agreement applies to **Tier 1: CoC-Program Partner Agencies**—organizations that directly contribute to The Way Home's efforts to end and prevent homelessness through the HUD CoC Program, including agencies that receive HUD CoC or YHDP funding.

If your organization qualifies for a different partnership tier, additional agreements may be required following the submission of this form.

By signing this agreement, our organization acknowledges and agrees to the following:

- ☐ **Commitment to Partnership Agreements:** Our organization agrees to complete, submit, and comply with all partnership agreements for The Way Home, including:
 - Tier 3: Community Resource Partnership Agreement
 - Tier 2: Provider Partner Agency Agreement
 - Tier 1: CoC-Program Partner Agency Agreement
- ☐ **NOFO Competition Compliance:** As a requirement for continued funding, our organization agrees to follow and comply with all HUD CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Competition requirements, understanding that funding is competitive and not guaranteed.
- ☐ **Submission of Required MOUs:** Our organization will sign and submit all required Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) necessary for NOFO Competition participation and program compliance.
- ☐ **Program Compliance & Monitoring:** Our organization agrees to actively participate in and comply with all CoC program monitoring policies and procedures, which include but are not limited to:
 - Quarterly Scorecard Reports
 - Annual Site Visits
 - HMIS Reports & Data Quality Reviews
 - Consumer Advocate Program Evaluations
- ☐ **Commitment to CoC Advancement:** Our organization agrees to participate in and lead (as applicable) workgroups, initiatives, and projects that drive program improvements, enhance the CoC, improve service delivery, and streamline efforts to end and prevent homelessness.

This Partnership Agreement remains in effect for the calendar year and may be terminated in writing by either party at any time.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This acknowledgment of this Partnership Agreement 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). These agreements shall only be valid throughout the calendar year and must be reviewed and updated annually.

Agency Name:
Signature:
Printed Name:
Title:
Date:

THE WAY HOME PARTNER PACKET

Hello, and thank you for your interest in becoming a partner of The Way Home! The Way Home (TX-700) Continuum of Care (CoC) is the homeless response system in Houston, Pasadena, and Conroe and throughout Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties in Texas.

The CoC is designed to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to provide services as they move into housing, with the goal of long-term stability. More broadly, the CoC is designed to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness; improve coordination and integration with mainstream resources and other efforts targeted to people experiencing homelessness; improve data collection and performance measurement; and allow each community to tailor its project(s) to the particular strengths and challenges within that community.

[The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County](#) (CFTH) serves as the lead agency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administrator for The Way Home. There is no fee to become a partner, and we welcome every agency that is engaged in preventing and ending homelessness in our region to be part of the impressive, nationally recognized impact that The Way Home is having in our community.

For your agency to become a Partner of The Way Home CoC, the following is required:



- The CEO/ED must sign and submit the CoC Partnership Agreement to confirm organizational alignment with The Way Home's goals and policies.
- [Click here to sign up for The Way Home CoC Connection](#) to ensure that you and your agency receive timely communications from and about The Way Home, including updates on meetings, initiatives, workgroups, funding opportunities, and more. Please ensure that all applicable staff also sign up for this email distribution list.
- [Click here to be added to our Funding Opportunities Distribution email list](#) to get notifications about the newest funding opportunities available in our CoC.

For more information on The Way Home specific to homeless service organizations, visit <https://www.homelesshouston.org/thewayhome>. For general public information on The Way Home visit: www.thewayhomehouston.org

We look forward to working with you and your agency as we work to prevent and end homelessness in our community!

Kelly Young

President/CEO

Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

PARTNERS OF THE WAY HOME

THE WAY HOME PARTNERSHIP TIERS

The Way Home is comprised of more than 100 partner agencies working collaboratively to prevent and end homelessness across our region. Agencies participate at different levels based on their role in the system and the extent to which they engage in Coordinated Entry (CE), HMIS, and programmatic activities.

TIER 3 – COMMUNITY PARTNER AGENCIES

These agencies provide services and support to individuals currently or formerly experiencing homelessness, or invest in the Homeless Response System through community collaboration and resource contributions. They do **not** actively participate in the Coordinated Entry (CE) System or HMIS.

TIER 2 – PROVIDER PARTNER AGENCIES

These partners contribute directly to programmatic work within the system. They actively participate in CE and/or operate projects within the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Their engagement is operational and directly tied to service delivery.

TIER 1 – COC-FUNDED PARTNER AGENCIES

Tier 1 agencies meet all expectations of Tier 2 and Tier 3 Partners and additionally receive funding through the HUD CoC/YHDP NOFO Competition. These agencies actively participate in all core system functions.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ALL PARTNERSHIP TIERS

Partner agencies must:

- Be a nonprofit organization, state or local government entity, instrumentality of government, public housing agency, or veterans services agency.
- Provide services within The Way Home geographic area (Harris, Fort Bend, and/or Montgomery counties).
- Serve individuals and families who are at-risk of, currently experiencing, or formerly experiencing homelessness.
- Complete and maintain a current CoC Partnership Application and Partnership Agreement.
- Have no known violations of The Way Home Partnership Agreement or CoC Code of Conduct.

BECOMING A COMMUNITY PARTNER (TIER 3)

To become a Community Partner Agency of The Way Home, an organization must meet the eligibility criteria listed above and submit an updated, complete, and signed CoC Partnership Application and Partnership Agreement to CFTH.

BENEFITS OF BEING A COMMUNITY PARTNER AGENCY OF THE WAY HOME

- Be a part of a robust network of 100+ public, private, and nonprofit members, working together to make the experience of homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring; and
- Free access to CoC Training opportunities; CoC Trainings are offered and available only to official partners of The Way Home and their staff. CoC Trainings cover a broad range of topics including but not limited to certifications for housing, case management, organizational finance trainings, and more.; and
- Free access to Technical Assistance (TA); TA is the process of providing targeted support to an organization with the focus on building skills that will improve the organization, program, and/or the services they provide; and
- Access to funding opportunities to house and serve those experiencing homelessness; and
- May be mentioned in media (blogs, social channels, etc.) about The Way Home, including occasional roundups of in-kind donation needs; and
- Can be included as a partner organization of The Way Home initiative on Volunteer Houston's website and receive additional benefits; and
- Are part of the nationally recognized homeless response system that's making homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring!

Provider Partner Agencies are defined as providers who either have or contribute to an active housing program/project/service (e.g., street outreach, CE assessors, CE hubs, etc.) in The Way Home, and are actively participating in the Coordinated Entry System and/or the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The Coordinated Entry System is designed to coordinate and strengthen access to housing for families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Coordinated Entry System institutes a consistent and uniform assessment and referral process to determine and secure the most appropriate response to each individual or family's immediate and long-term housing needs. Learn more [here](#).

The Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) is a secure data system used by homeless service providers to collect, manage, and report on client information. It allows agencies within The Way Home (CoC) to track the services they provide, measure outcomes, and better understand the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

HMIS helps ensure coordinated, efficient, and data-driven service delivery by:



- **Capturing client-level information** such as demographics, service history, and housing status
- **Supporting Coordinated Entry (CE)** by allowing agencies to share essential information (with consent) to connect clients to the most appropriate housing and services
- **Improving system performance** through accurate reporting and data analysis
- **Meeting federal requirements**, as HUD mandates HMIS participation for most funded programs

Overall, HMIS strengthens collaboration, enhances accountability, and helps communities make informed decisions to reduce and end homelessness.

PROVIDER PARTNER AGENCY REQUIREMENTS (IN ADDITION TO COMMUNITY PARTNER AGENCY REQUIREMENTS):

- Have or contribute to an active program and a completed MOU with The Way Home; and
- Must participate in the Coordinated Entry System and/or HMIS; and
- Must be trained in HMIS and/or Coordinated Entry and agree to follow the [Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures](#) and
- Must be trained and agree to the practices outlined in the CoC System Practice Standards; and
- Agree to accept referrals based upon the CoC Vulnerability criteria and waitlist; and
- Agree to enter all data into HMIS following HUD/HMIS data standards; and
- Must participate in relevant workgroups and check-ins as applicable.
- Ability to gain free access to the Homeless Management Information System; and
- Ability to participate in The Way Home workgroups, and foster greater collaboration, improve policies and practices, and make homeless services more efficient; and
- Can nominate, vote for, or possibly run as a Provider Representative for The Way Home Steering Committee; and
- May receive letters of support from the CFTH for funding opportunities; and
- May be called upon for expertise/advice in CoC planning efforts; and
- May be asked to speak to media or assist in media opportunities; and
- Identified as Coordinated Entry Program Partner on The Way Home website.

NOT SURE IF YOUR ORGANIZATION QUALIFIES TO UTILIZE COORDINATED ENTRY (CE)? PLEASE VISIT [CE WEBSITE](#) OR EMAIL JORDAN HASSENFLU [AT JORDAN.HASSENFLU@CFTHHOUSTON.ORG](#).

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CFTH AND PARTNER AGENCIES

The Way Home CoC promotes a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness; provides funding for nonprofit providers and local/state governments to quickly stabilize and re-house individuals and families experiencing homelessness; minimizes trauma and dislocation for those experiencing homelessness; promotes access to mainstream programs; and supports pathways toward increased stability and self-sufficiency.

CFTH, as the CoC Lead Agency, is responsible for:

- **CoC Planning & Governance:** Coordinating and overseeing all CoC planning efforts, with the authority to certify and submit CoC homeless assistance funding applications.
- **HMIS Administration:** Coordinating and leveraging HMIS as the data system for client-level and system-wide information, supporting coordinated intake processes, and ensuring accurate data collection for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- **Technical Assistance & Training:** Providing TA and training to provider agencies to ensure compliance with The Way Home CoC requirements and all applicable regulations, standards, and guidelines.
- **Monitoring & Oversight:** Conducting programmatic and financial monitoring of CoC-funded agencies to ensure performance, compliance, and effective service delivery.
- **Resource Coordination:** Integrating and leveraging funding and services across systems to maximize impact for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- **System Workgroups & Project Management:** Convening and facilitating The Way Home workgroups and the CoC Steering Committee, and leading activities aligned with the 5-Year Community Plan and The Way Home Charter.
- **Point-in-Time Count:** Coordinating the regional PIT Homeless Count and Survey.
- **Training & Partner Engagement:**
 - Hosting HMIS forums
 - Providing HMIS user support and training
 - Offering evidence-based trainings
 - Hosting Quarterly Provider Input Forums (PIF)
 - Hosting the annual Homeless Response System Conference
 - Hosting the annual HMIS Data Symposium
- **Lived Experience Engagement:** Supporting the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) and Youth Action Boards to ensure individuals with lived experience have meaningful roles in decision-making.

- **Communications & Advocacy:** Serving as a spokesperson for The Way Home to educate the public and media about homelessness, and advocating on behalf of service providers and those experiencing homelessness locally and nationally.
- **Coordinated Entry System:** Managing and overseeing the Coordinated Entry System to ensure equitable access and efficient connection to housing and services.

COC PARTICIPATION – TO REMAIN IN GOOD STANDING, ALL PARTNERS WILL:

PARTNER AGENCY EXPECTATIONS

- **Submit Required Agreements:**
 - Sign and submit the CoC Partnership Application and Partnership Agreement.
- **Participate in the Annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count:**
 - Agencies funded through the CoC/YHDP NOFO are required to assign **two (2)** volunteers for each designated count date.
 - Agencies not funded through the CoC NOFO must assign at least **two (2)** volunteers for **one** designated date.
 - Complete the Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) for the sheltered count, as applicable.
 - Participate in Gaps Analysis and Needs Assessment activities.
- **Steering Committee Participation:**
 - Attend at least **75%** of Steering Committee meetings held during the CoC performance year.
 - Attendance is verified by sign-in within 10 minutes of the meeting start time (or via virtual attendee reports).
- **HMIS Participation and Data Quality:**
 - Meet all HMIS user and data quality requirements, including correction plans if needed.
 - All HMIS-participating agencies must complete required trainings before gaining access and must maintain active user status.
 - Agencies interested in participating in HMIS should email hmis@cfthhouston.org.
- **Engage in CoC Planning and Strategy Activities:**

- Participate in CoC planning, policy development, and strategy discussions, including Provider Input Forums and HMIS Forums as appropriate.
- Actively engage in The Way Home workgroups, as applicable.
- **Training Requirements:**
 - Ensure relevant staff attend CoC-sponsored trainings.
- **Adherence to CoC Standards and Agreements:**
 - Follow all requirements of The Way Home Partnership Agreement and CoC Code of Conduct.
 - Comply with requirements tied to any funding received.
 - Follow all statutory, regulatory, and CoC guidelines for The Way Home and for the programs in which the agency participates.
- **Program Standards:**
 - As applicable, adhere to Coordinated Entry, case management, and best-practice standards adopted by The Way Home CoC (including TWH Practice Standards, CE-to-Housing standards, etc.).
- **Communications:**
 - Promote The Way Home in alignment with communication guidelines outlined in the Partnership Agreement.

MEETINGS & FORUMS

The Coalition for the Homeless (CFTH) hosts regular meetings for CoC member agencies, HMIS-participating agencies, and people with lived expertise. These meetings provide a space to share information, receive system updates, and offer input to the lead agency. Below is an overview of our current standing meetings.

For more information about CoC meetings, visit **The Way Home Partner Portal** or the **TWH Meetings** page.

THE WAY HOME STEERING COMMITTEE

The Way Home Steering Committee serves as the CoC's primary decision-making body. It is responsible for community-wide planning, coordination, oversight, and evaluation to ensure that the homeless response system rapidly and permanently ends people's homelessness while minimizing trauma and displacement. This includes setting system priorities, planning for HUD CoC resources, and coordinating those resources with other funding streams across the region.

Agencies receiving CoC or YHDP NOFO funding are required to attend at least **75%** of Steering Committee meetings during the CoC performance year. Coordinated Entry Program Partners and Community Partner Agencies are strongly encouraged to participate.

THE WAY HOME PROVIDER INPUT FORUM (PIF)

The Provider Input Forum is a quarterly meeting that brings together provider agencies across The Way Home to network, share updates, and discuss key developments within the CoC. It also provides an opportunity for CFTH to recognize our partner agencies through quarterly awards presented to four organizations that demonstrate exceptional commitment to our shared mission.

The PIF is open to all partnership tiers and is jointly facilitated by CFTH and the Steering Committee's Provider Representatives.

HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) MEETINGS

HMIS is the CoC's data system used to collect client-level and system-wide information on people experiencing homelessness. CFTH hosts regular HMIS trainings and forums exclusively for HMIS-participating agencies.

If your agency does not currently participate in HMIS and would like more information, please contact hmis@cfthhouston.org

MEET YOUR TEAM

FOR QUESTIONS RELATED TO COC MEMBERSHIP AND GENERAL PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION:

- Angel Garmon, Sr. Manager, Homeless Response System Planning and Performance:
 - angel.garmon@cfthhouston.org
- For questions related to the Steering Committee:
 - Caybryn Southern, Sr. Manager, Homeless Response System: caybryn.southern@cfthhouston.org
- For questions relating to CoC Programs:
 - Renee Cavazos, Vice President, Homeless Response System:
 - renee.cavazos@cfthhouston.org
- For questions relating to communications and media inquiries:
 - Catherine B. Villarreal, Vice President, Public Affairs:
 - catherine.villarreal@cfthhouston.org
- For questions about the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), including how to apply to become a user:
 - Kelita Beechum, Data Systems Manager:
 - kelita.beechum@cfthhouston.org
- TRAININGS: Learn about the different CoC training opportunities offered throughout the year. Please note that the information provided may be subject to change.
- From the National Alliance to End Homelessness: What is a Continuum of Care?
<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/>
- Information about TX-700 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:
<https://www.hudexchange.info/grantees/tx-700/>.

