

**PROCESS FOR AMENDING THE GOVERNANCE CHARTER OF  
THE CHICAGO CONTINUUM OF CARE  
Unanimously Approved by Resolution of the  
Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Implementation  
October 1, 2015**

On June 25, 2014, the membership of the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) ratified the Chicago Continuum of Care Governance Charter (“the Charter”). The Charter states that the CoC’s mission is to “prevent and end homelessness” in the City of Chicago and to do so by “fostering shared responsibility, collaborative planning and aligning the stakeholders and resources essential to implementing the strategic priorities of Plan 2.0, Chicago’s plan to prevent and end homelessness.”

The new Charter is simultaneously exciting and scary. It represents a dramatic shift from the CoC’s previous modus operandi by codifying, for example, how the CoC operates through its various committees and commissions, how it interacts with the Collaborative Applicant, how the Board of Directors conducts itself, and the composition of different groups within the CoC. Most members agree that it is helpful to have the Charter as a guide in outlining how various aspects of the CoC operate, yet the unknown aspects associated with new processes can be overwhelming and appear to be rigid.

2015 is a year of change for the CoC, as it transitions from its previous governing methods to those that are compliant with the Charter, which is effective January 1, 2016. To assist with this transition process, the previous Governing Board appointed the Ad-Hoc Charter Implementation Committee (CIC).

The Charter is prescriptive and detailed. Yet, despite being so, many questions and concerns have been raised about the practicality of certain portions and how they will be implemented. Some of these include, but are not limited to the following:

- The ability to meet and to sustain committee and commission composition requirements
- How dues will be collected and to whom they should be paid
- The functions of newly-formed committees that are an amalgamation of several committees under the previous governing documents
- The separation of authority and duties between the Board of Directors and various committees
- How Committees of the Board (§7.3) differ from other types of Committees (§7.4 & §7.5)
- How the Cooperative Applicant should be evaluated
- The legal status of the CoC itself

The CIC recognizes that change can test even the strongest of bonds. The CIC acknowledges that the bonds between and amongst various governing bodies, constituencies, participants and contracted entities of the continuum are not as strong as they need to be. In addition, as the transition year progresses and the January 1, 2016 implementation dates draws closer, there is a

growing sense of elevated urgency about the need to be “Charter compliant” by the implementation date.

To address the implementation questions and the sense of urgency, the CIC acknowledges the following:

- Implementation of a new governance structure based on a comprehensive document is not an easy task, especially when so many different individual and collective constituents are involved and—understandably—feel a sense of ownership of the CoC process and those experiencing homelessness whom they serve
- While the Charter is complex, prescriptive, and detailed, it outlines the *ideal* methodology for governance
- While the CoC must make every effort to live up to and hold itself accountable for the mandates of the Charter and the spirit behind them, that of promoting the CoC’s mission (§1.1), values (§1.2), and goals (§1.3), it is unrealistic to expect that the Charter will be perfectly implemented on January 1, 2016
- The Charter is not a perfect, infallible document. When the Charter was composed, it was neither humanly possible to comprehensively envision the different ways in which its various parts would enact with one another once implemented, nor was it possible to know exactly how much time it would take to implement

*Thus, the CIC recognizes that there are parts of the Charter that will most likely need to be amended.* However, it recommends that no amendments be made to the Charter until—at the earliest—the fall 2016 All Continuum meeting. Although the Charter is the standard toward which the CoC is moving, it has yet to have any full-time, continuous experience attempting to operate by its mandates. It seems imprudent to amend a document until the CoC actually has experience “living it.”

The CIC recommends the following process for amending the Charter during the first year of its existence as the governing document (2016). It is important to remember that the proposed process has two distinct parts. The first part of the process should identify *what* needs to be amended, with the second part—except in the case of deletions—addressing the content of the amendments. The proposed process assumes that the CIC will continue to function until the end of March of 2016.

Charter amendments can fall into one or more of three different categories:

- (1) Changes to current Charter language which may alter how current priorities and processes are implemented, such as the composition of committees.
- (2) The deletion of current language, such as striking out sections, articles, etc.
- (3) The addition of new language that reflects the addition of different priorities or processes as have been identified as needed but lacking in the current Charter

The recommended process is as follows:

1. All suggested topics or areas to be amended (the *what*, as noted above) shall be submitted to Co-Chairs of the CIC before January 31, 2016, via the following link: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2360523/Chicago-CoC-Charter-Amendment-Submissions>. All suggestions should be accompanied by a thoughtful and soundly reasoned rationale as to why it is important that the topic be addressed, as well as by an analysis of how the current Charter's handling of the topic (or lack thereof, in the case of additions) impacts (1) the different stakeholder groups recognized by the Charter and (2) the ability of the CoC to efficiently fulfill its mission and goals
2. As suggestions are received, the CIC will start to prioritize them, based on its own experience and knowledge gained from guiding the transition efforts, as well as input from Continuum members
3. At the February 2016 meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board should establish a Charter Amendment and Interpretation Committee (CAIC). The Committee should be composed in a manner that is in compliance with the Charter (§7.2), and it is suggested that at least 50% of its members have served on the current CIC
4. In February 2016, the CIC will convene a meeting open to all members of the CoC. At the meeting, the CIC will present its prioritized list of the topics to be amended, received to date. At the same meeting, members will be able to propose additional amendment topic areas, *as long as they are accompanied—in written form—by the same rationale and analysis outlined in number one above*. These topic areas will be added to the CIC's list. Each member present will be allowed to vote on what it believes are the five most important topic areas to be amended. **Reminder:** This process is not to address the content of the amendment or how the Charter will be amended, but only the topics to be amended.
5. At the next meeting of the Board of Directors, the CIC will formally recommend to the Board of Directors the top five proposed amendments. After this presentation, the CIC will be disbanded.
6. After March 3, 2026 the CAIC will develop (1) language to address the subject of the top five priorities and (2) develop and implement a process for seeking member feedback on those amendments from members and do so in time for those amendments to be voted on by the Board of Directors and presented to the full membership in time for approval at the fall, 2016 All Continuum Meeting.