

Steering Council Meeting Minutes

AUGUST 21, 2026 | 8:30 - 10:30 AM
In Person – Heart of West Michigan United Way



FACILITATOR: Tenisa Frye

MEETING ATTENDEES: **Council Members:** Tenisa Frye, Samantha Westhouse, Mark Contreras, Thelma Ensink, Chris Palusky, Elizabeth Stoddard, Monique Carter, Casey Gordon, Lauren VanKeulen, Piper Wilbanks (Tanise Clipper), Alonda Trammell, Gustavo Perez, Raymond King

Public: Christie White, Marissa Lee, Anna Diaz, Alex Kontras, Becki Postma, Brian Elvie, Nelson Soto

CoC Staff: Alyssa Anten, Kate Meyer, Maddie Martin, Lana VanBuren, Courtney Myers-Keaton

TIME CONVENED: 8:35 AM

TIME ADJOURNED: 10:35 AM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – AUGUST 21, 2026

MOTION BY: Elizabeth Stoddard

SUPPORT FROM: Thelma Ensink

CONCLUSION: All in favor, motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 17, 2026

MOTION BY: Lauren VanKeulen

SUPPORT FROM: Raymond King

CONCLUSION: All in favor, motion carries

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM *(limit 3 min. each)*

DISCUSSION: N/A

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION BY: Lauren VanKeulen

SUPPORT FROM: Chris Palusky

CONCLUSION: All in favor, motion carries

CoC UPDATES

DISCUSSION: **COORDINATED ENTRY EVALUATION**

Alyssa Anten provided an update on the Coordinated Entry (CE) Evaluation, which was previously presented at the July Steering Council meeting. Since that time, eight

proposals have been received in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP), and the workgroup has identified both a preferred candidate and a secondary option to conduct the evaluation. The primary barrier to moving the project forward remains securing and finalizing funding.

DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

Becki Postma provided an update on the RFP for an HR agency to support the national CoC Director search. Final edits were due by noon on August 21, and once incorporated, the RFP is expected to be posted through CoC and United Way channels within the next one to two weeks.

REBRAND & WEBSITE

An update was provided on the new CoC website, which is scheduled to be unveiled at the CoC General Membership meeting in October. Steering Council members are encouraged to attend the meeting to learn more about the new site.

- To support the website launch, Alyssa requested that Steering Council members complete a Microsoft Form, which Maddie Martin will distribute on August 24, to submit a professional biography for inclusion on the website.

ACTION ITEMS: **Maddie Martin:** Distribute Microsoft Form to Steering Council members.
Steering Council Members: Complete the Microsoft Form sent by Maddie Martin by Friday, August 28.

NOFO UPDATES

DISCUSSION: Courtney Myers-Keaton provided an update on the FY2026 CoC NOFO from HUD.

- The FY2026 NOFO from HUD was supposed to be posted by June 1st, with funding awards no later than December 1st, 2026, per congressional order. However, the FY2026 NOFO that was released was also deemed unlawful by federal courts.
- As of August 7th, the FY2026 CoC HUD NOFO has been vacated and is null and void. All local program competition activities have been paused.
- HUD appealed the judge's ruling and requested an emergency stay. The district court denied HUD's request. HUD took their request to a higher court, and the rule for that appeal will be no later than Thursday, Aug. 27.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is pushing CoC's nationwide to advocate for noncompetitive renewal again, similar to what happened with the FY2025 CoC HUD NOFO.

Because the NOFO is on pause, the local project priority listing has not been shared. The Executive Committee is reluctant to release the rankings until the pending litigation involving HUD is resolved. A revised NOFO could alter eligibility requirements and potentially create an unfair advantage for current applicants over organizations that chose not to apply because their projects were not eligible under the current requirements. Courtney acknowledged the significant time and effort that was invested

in the process, noting that the work completed by service providers was a response to circumstances the CoC should not have had to navigate.

- Thelma asked whether applicant scoring could be shared to provide feedback, particularly for first-time applicants interested in understanding their rankings. Courtney noted that the Executive Committee considered this option but ultimately decided against it due to concerns that sharing scores could create an unfair advantage.
- Courtney reiterated that the project priority listing and project scores are not being permanently withheld and will be shared once there is greater clarity regarding the HUD litigation and the status of the NOFO.

Courtney shared [FY2026 CoC Funding Scenarios](#) and potential considerations of what might happen following the litigation.

- Monique asked whether noncompetitive renewals would mean that currently HUD-funded projects would simply receive renewed funding. Courtney confirmed.

Discussion returned to when project application scores should be shared with project applicants.

- Lauren and Chris expressed support for releasing scores, noting the significant time and resources organizations invested in their applications and the value of feedback for future planning, budgeting, and collaboration.
- Tenisa asked what applicants would gain from receiving scores now, given that feedback will be shared eventually. Executive Committee members explained that their concern is not whether scores will be released, but when, as early release could create an unfair advantage if the NOFO changes. Elizabeth noted the Executive Committee could revisit the discussion and remains committed to transparency.
- Casey asked if there was any concern if scores were released that the organizations denied would go the independent application route. Courtney said that was not a concern.
- Monique supported releasing scores, noting that tight timelines limited opportunities for collaboration during the application process. Given Courtney's comments that projects performed well, she felt sharing scores could provide positive feedback and boost morale for service providers who invested significant time and effort into their applications.
- Lauren voiced her suggestion that scores could be released without allowing applicants to edit their submissions. She added that timely feedback could help the community identify opportunities for collaboration and inform the development of future projects.
- Casey suggested waiting until the appeal decision is issued on Tuesday, August 25 before deciding, and the group agreed.

Alyssa Anten shared that she would be the new contact for NOFO-related matters moving forward.

ACTION ITEMS: **Alyssa Anten:** Add project application feedback discussion to the next Executive Committee agenda.

NOFO DEBRIEF

DISCUSSION: The CoC Executive Committee and Staff invited Steering Council to share feedback and insights on the NOFO process through a series of questions.

HAVING GONE THROUGH TWO NOFO'S, WHAT DECISIONS NEEDED TO BE MADE? WERE THE RIGHT PEOPLE INVOLVED, CONSULTED, AND INFORMED?

- Project prioritization, including which projects to prioritize, convert, and rank
- How to prioritize Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects
- Ranking methodology and use of project performance data beyond standard metrics
- Consideration of populations served when evaluating projects
- Funding allocation decisions
- Strategies to minimize displacement
- Process decisions, including office hours and applicant support
- Balancing NOFO scoring opportunities with community values, equity goals, and policy priorities
- Deciding the decision-makers and whether the appropriate stakeholders were involved, consulted, and informed throughout the process. Monique feels that conversations in the past were biased because service providers that received this funding were at the decision-making table.

WHAT INFORMATION DID WE NEED TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS THAT WE WISH WE HAD BEFOREHAND?

- Project-specific information, including project type (e.g., site based vs. scattered-site), project descriptions, populations served, PSH project characteristics, funding history, project performance data, spending trends, cost per household served, and other key details needed to support values-based decision-making.
- Potential repercussions and impacts of funding and ranking decisions
- Community gaps and unmet needs
- Greater clarity regarding decision-making authority and who holds ultimate responsibility for final decisions (CoC Staff vs. Funding Review Committee vs. Steering Council)

WHAT EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT PRINCIPLES/VALUES GUIDED (OR WE WANT TO GUIDE) OUR DECISION-MAKING?

- Thelma observed that maintaining as many Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) opportunities as possible appeared to be a primary driver of decision-making. She expressed a preference for future decisions to be guided more directly by the CoC's vision, values, and long-term objectives.
- Monique questioned whether decisions were truly guided by what was best for the community, noting that the group had not clearly defined what that principle means in practice.

- Lauren and Chris reflected that preserving the status quo appeared to be a significant factor in decision-making. Both expressed interest in a greater willingness to pursue change and system improvement, while Thelma noted an underlying assumption that moving away from the status quo could result in people losing housing or being displaced.
- Elizabeth emphasized the importance of grounding future decisions in positive outcomes and measurable community impact.
- Piper shared that many unhoused youth are unaware of the full range of available service providers and resources in the community. She suggested that funding decisions should consider what resources the unhoused youth are aware of.

The conversation shifted to a broader discussion about the importance of establishing shared community values to guide future funding decisions. Thelma emphasized the need to define these values proactively so that future decision-making is more consistent and less reactive, including creating clear expectations for involvement in the homeless response system. Tenisa agreed.

- Lauren suggested engaging the Youth Action Board (YAB) and Veterans Action Board (VAB) in the values-development process.
- Members expressed a desire for stakeholder groups across the CoC to identify and align around shared values that can inform funding decisions and future NOFO processes.
- Thelma also noted that the ongoing Vision/Traction Organizer (V/TO) discussion presents a timely opportunity for the Steering Council to do this work.

Gustavo commended the group's response to the NOFO, acknowledging that members were working under significant pressure and still accomplished important work.

The Steering Council thanked Courtney for her work on leading the NOFO.

ACTION ITEMS: **Alyssa Anten:** Add an issue to the Issues List regarding the development of a centralized resource containing project types, key project information, and performance data.

STRATEGIC PLANNING NEXT STEPS

DISCUSSION: Lauren introduced the Steering Council to the upcoming Vision/Traction Organizer (V/TO) work.

- A V/TO is essentially a 2-page strategic plan for organizations that run on EOS.
- Having a finalized V/TO is essential to understanding where the CoC is going next. The goal is for the V/TO to be close to finalized by the end of September's Steering Council meeting.

Lauren, Alyssa, Kate Berens, and Becki worked to combine Steering Council and CoC Staff's V/TO's. Steering is expected to come to the September meeting with their feedback and thoughts on the documents provided.

Lauren recommended the “What the Heck is EOS?” book by Gino Wickman & Tom Bouwer. The CoC has a copy if a council member wishes to borrow it.

ACTION ITEMS: **Steering Council Members:** Review V/TO’s and gather thoughts & feedback and complete everything on the provided to-do list before the next Steering Council meeting on September 18.
Maddie Martin: Share an edit-able version of the V/TO homework document with the Steering Council.

ANY OTHER MATTERS BY STEERING COUNCIL MEMBERS

DISCUSSION: Sam requested an update on CHC 2.0. Tenisa shared that Community Rebuilders and the Executive Committee have had discussions to clarify outstanding questions, but the project remains paused until those questions are resolved.

Thelma shared that Degage Ministries was approved of its offer on another Complex Care building.

Gustavo is submitting a request asking Kent County to cover the match for their ESG and asks for Steering Council support.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER *(limit 3 min. each)*

DISCUSSION: N/A

ADJOURNMENT – *Next meeting: SEPTEMBER 18, 2026*