Continuum of Care
General Membership Minutes

Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County – MI 506

OCTOBER 15, 2026 | 9:30 - 11:00 AM
In Person – Heart of West Michigan United Way

FACILITATOR:	Alyssa Anten
MEETING ATTENDEES:	**CoC Staff:** Alyssa Anten, Brianne Robach, Kate Meyer, Lana VanBuren, Maddie Martin Nelson Soto, Christina White, Cassandra Mehari, Veronica Arvizu, Kalya Hatten, Kai Salinas, Maria Williams, Jordan Brinker, Becky Diffin, Emma Slabbekoorn, Keigan Brown-Edwards, Wendie Preiss, Maranda VanZegeren, Tenisa Frye, Cheryl Wyma, Frieda Campos, Alyssa Bryan, Stacy Datena, Wende Randall, Samantha Westhouse, William Williams, Aaron Bainbridge, Erik Wolonberg, Emily Klein, Raymond King, Dan Lee, Stacie Stephens, Tony Schmidt, Catherine Landers, Emilly Hill, Regina Bradley, Tammy Vincent, Brianna Vasquez, Monique Carter
TIME CONVENED:	9:36 AM
TIME ADJOURNED:	10:47 AM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 27, 2026

MOTION BY:	Monique Carter
SUPPORT FROM:	Samantha Westhouse
CONCLUSION:	All in favor, motion carries.

FEDERAL UPDATES

DISCUSSION:

Alyssa provided an update on the FY 2026 HUD CoC Program Competition. The CoC submitted the community's Consolidated Application and Project Priority Listing to HUD on September 9, 2026. She noted that CoCs nationwide were given only 12 days to complete and submit applications, making it a significant undertaking. Alyssa thanked her CoC team and supporting community partners for their efforts in submitting a strong application and shared that the application highlighted the work of every organization recommended for funding.

Alyssa reported that the CoC was able to retain all Permanent Housing (PH) projects while also recommending new projects for funding. The CoC requested the maximum amount of bonus funding available, bringing the total request to roughly $14 million.

- HUD is required to announce awards by December 1, 2026, and the CoC is currently in the waiting period pending funding decisions.

Ongoing Lawsuit and Litigation

Alyssa provided an update on ongoing litigation related to the FY 2026 HUD CoC NOFO. Following the resumption of the competition, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) and associated plaintiffs filed an additional appeal, arguing that the NOFO is unlawful.

Alyssa provided a summary of the events leading to the current situation:

- In August, the Court ruled that HUD could not incentivize certain interventions, including Transitional Housing (TH) and Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects, through the $1.3 billion FY 2026 CoC NOFO set-aside because HUD had not completed a Notice and Comment process demonstrating the effectiveness of those interventions in ending homelessness. As a result, the Court ruled that the NOFO must be vacated. Alyssa explained that HUD cannot create new funding incentives without first demonstrating that they are evidence-based strategies for ending homelessness.
- HUD subsequently opened a public comment period on several new incentives included in the NOFO, such as funding for new TH and SSO projects, drug enforcement-related application requirements, and other new policy elements. After HUD initiated the public comment process, the Court issued a stay allowing the FY 2026 CoC NOFO competition to proceed.
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) and associated plaintiffs later returned to court and filed another appeal challenging the NOFO.

Alyssa noted that currently, the situation remains unresolved and that the next steps are uncertain. (1) There remains a possibility that the NOFO could be vacated again and replaced with non-competitive renewals, creating uncertainty for future competitions. (2) The current NOFO may also move forward, though funding levels and award outcomes remain uncertain.

Statewide Stop Gap Funding

Alyssa reported that advocacy efforts by the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) resulted in an allocation within the state budget to address potential funding gaps associated with the FY 2026 CoC NOFO. Additional information is forthcoming.

- Alyssa noted that the allocation reflects extensive statewide advocacy efforts, and encouraged meeting attendees to keep engaging in advocacy on other important matters.

Alyssa encouraged the group by emphasizing that, regardless of the outcome of the NOFO litigation, the expectation is that the community will continue moving forward together.

- Samantha agreed, and shared that she was impressed by how providers and partners came together to complete the NOFO application within a very short timeframe.
- Tammy stated that the City of Grand Rapids remains committed to supporting homelessness response efforts in a fair, housing-focused manner and continues to work closely with the CoC. She acknowledged that the uncertainty surrounding the NOFO may feel concerning to providers but emphasized that

the City is not planning to move away from that approach. Alyssa added that the CoC's strong partnership with the City of Grand Rapids has been extremely beneficial and is a relationship that many CoCs do not have with their primary municipality.

Tammy asked whether December 1 would be the start date for grant agreements. Alyssa clarified that HUD award announcements are expected by December 1, but grant agreement start dates may occur later.

WEBSITE & REBRAND LAUNCH

DISCUSSION:

The CoC staff shared a walkthrough of the newly launched Kent Homelessness Coalition website, which represents the final phase of the CoC's rebranding effort. Staff noted that the website was designed to serve as a valuable resource for community partners, providing easier access to information, resources, and CoC activities.

Some of the new features include: interactive data dashboards, accessibility features and built-in translation capabilities, multiple pathways for individuals seeking resources to get connected to help, fully online membership applications and renewals, a filterable membership directory, meeting agendas and minutes, plus a new event calendar to help you stay informed about CoC activities, a newsletter archive, explainer pages on the CoC's responsibilities with opportunities to dig deeper, and a full library of policies, service standards, HMIS resources, and more.

At the conclusion of the website presentation, Maddie opened the floor for questions and feedback regarding the new site.

- Tenisa asked how long community members would have to submit bug reports and suggestions. Maddie responded that feedback should be submitted by October 26 so any necessary changes can be implemented before the end of the website's 30-day bug-fix period.
- Tammy shared concerns about data transparency, noting that publicly available data could be taken out of context or misinterpreted by external audiences, including the media. Alyssa acknowledged those concerns and said the topic was discussed extensively during development. She explained that leadership ultimately chose to make the data available in this format on a trial basis and noted that the interactive dashboards could be removed if issues arise.
- Tammy asked when the Strategic Plan would be approved. Alyssa responded that Steering Council is actively working on the plan and expects it to be finalized by the end of the year.

ACTION ITEMS: **Group:** Share feedback on the new website with CoC staff by Monday, October 26.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT: THE SALVATION ARMY – *Samantha Westhouse*

DISCUSSION:

Samantha Westhouse provided an overview of The Salvation Army and the services it provides Kent County.

- Community Services include energy and utility assistance, an emergency food pantry, housing services, Pathway of Hope, Angel Tree, the Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC), and the Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center. Sam noted

that the food pantry serves individuals regardless of whether they have accessed other community food pantries. She also encouraged case managers to register interested clients for the Angel Tree program as early as possible due to limited availability.

- Sam shared that the Adult Rehabilitation Center includes a residential work therapy program and is supported by proceeds from local Salvation Army thrift store sales. She also highlighted the Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center's recreational, aquatics, and community programming, including partnerships with local schools.
- Emergency Disaster Services include disaster response and incident command, mobile kitchen and food service operations, disaster social services, medical first aid, spiritual care, and Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network.

ACTION ITEMS: **Group:** For questions about The Salvation Army programs or services, contact Samantha Westhouse at samantha.westhouse@usc.salvationarmy.org.

COMMUNITY PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

DISCUSSION: Wende Randall from ENTF shared information about upcoming Medicaid changes taking effect on January 1 and the work of the Medicaid Task Force.

- Wende noted that thousands of households are anticipated to lose health coverage as a result of the changes and emphasized the need for increased public awareness. She shared that many community members, business leaders, and organizations outside the social services sector remain unaware of the upcoming changes.
- The Medicaid Task Force is hosting a community leader briefing on Thursday, October 22, from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at 1534 Kalamazoo Ave. SE. The session will provide an overview of the upcoming Medicaid changes and highlight current response efforts.

Alyssa Anten shared that Nov. 13 is Wear Green Day. In partnership with the Kent County Youth Action Board (YAB) and the Youth Solutions Council, the CoC will be selling T-shirts as a fundraiser to support efforts to provide backpacks for youth. Additional information about the T-shirt sale and ordering process will be shared soon, and community partners were encouraged to watch for upcoming announcements.

Stacy Datena shared that Covenant House will host a candlelight vigil on Nov. 5 at its campus. She noted that Myracle from the YAB will be one of the speakers. The event will provide an opportunity to hear directly from young people with lived experience and to stand in solidarity with youth experiencing homelessness.

ADJOURNMENT – *Next meeting: December 17, 2026*

DRAFT