Who Does What in the Continuum of Care?

A Plain-English Guide to the July 2024 Governance Charter

San Bernardino City and County Continuum of Care (CA-609)

The one-sentence explanation

The CoC membership is the wider community partnership. The CoC Board is the main decision-making group **for duties the membership gives it.** Lead agencies run major systems and do the daily work. Committees study issues, carry out assigned tasks, and report back.

Public-facing draft based on the Governance Charter adopted July 24, 2024.

This guide explains the charter. It does not replace the charter, HUD rules, state law, or legal advice.

Start Here: What Is the CoC?

A Continuum of Care, or CoC, is a local partnership that plans and coordinates housing and services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It includes service providers, government, people with lived experience, housing groups, schools, health systems, businesses, faith based groups, advocates, and other community members.

Think of it as a community team

The membership is the whole team. The Board is the team's governing/oversight group. The Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, and CES Lead are the main operating agencies. Committees are smaller groups that focus on one subject.

Three Responsibility Words Used in the Charter

Charter word	Plain meaning	Question to ask
Authority / Oversight	Authority means the group formally approves or votes. Oversight means the group receives reports and checks the work.	Who approves, and who checks?
Lead	The group charged with organizing and carrying out the work.	Who owns the job?
Support	A group that helps with facts, expertise, staff work, participation, or implementation.	Who helps the lead?

Caution regarding combining "authority" and "oversight" in ordinary explanations

Because authority and oversight are not the same (authority approves; oversight watches and checks) we are recommending that they be separated wherever possible.

The Main Parts of the CoC

Community Stakeholders

Anyone in the county who has an interest in homelessness. They may attend public meetings, give input, and apply to become members.

General Membership

Registered organizations and individual members. Voting members elect or ratify Board members, approve the Board selection process, approve charter changes, and act on other matters reserved to the membership.

CoC Board

The primary decision-making body for the CoC. It approves and oversees policy and **direction for responsibilities delegated by the membership**.

Collaborative Applicant / Administrative Agent

The legal entity that applies for HUD funds provides administrative support and may also manage state funds as the State Administrative Entity. In July 2024, this is the San Bernardino County Office of Homeless Services.

HMIS Lead Agency

The agency responsible for the shared homelessness data system, HUD data reports, data quality, privacy, security, and system operations. In July 2024, this is the San Bernardino County Office of Homeless Services.

CES Lead Entity

The entity responsible for operating the Coordinated Entry System used to assess, prioritize, and connect people to housing and services. In July 2024, this is Inland SoCal United Way 211+.

ESG Jurisdictional Recipients

Local governments that receive Emergency Solutions Grant funds directly from HUD and must coordinate those funds and standards with the CoC.

Committees and Workgroups

Smaller groups were created to handle continuing subjects or short-term tasks. Their power depends on the charter or the action that created them.

Who Has Final Authority?

Decision	Final authority	Who prepares or supports it
Establish the CoC	Official voting membership	Community stakeholders and Collaborative Applicant
Approve the written Board selection process	Official voting membership	Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, Board, staff
Elect provider and at-large Board members	Official voting membership	Nominating Committee and Collaborative Applicant
Ratify appointed Board members	Official voting membership	Appointing organizations and Nominating Committee
Approve changes to the Governance Charter	Official voting membership	Membership Committee, Board, Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead
Designate the HMIS and ratify the HMIS Lead	Official voting membership	HMIS Lead recommendations; Board and Collaborative Applicant consultation
Approve policy and direction delegated by membership	CoC Board	Committees and lead agencies
Approve the final HUD CoC application and priorities	CoC Board	Collaborative Applicant and grant-review process
Approve system performance actions	CoC Board	Performance Oversight and Review Committee, HMIS Lead, staff
Operate HMIS	HMIS Lead Agency under Board oversight	Participating agencies and HMIS groups
Operate coordinated entry	CES Lead Entity under Board oversight	CES partners and committees
Submit the HUD application	Collaborative Applicant after Board approval	Project applicants, HMIS Lead, committees

Simple test

For every task/duty, the public should be able to find three names:

- who approves it,
- who leads the work, and
- who checks the results.

General Membership

Membership is open to organizations and individuals who care about homelessness and want to take part in collaborative planning. There are no dues. New members apply through the Collaborative Applicant and first enter as non-voting members.

How a member gains and keeps voting status

- Complete the membership application and required acknowledgments.
- Complete the new voting-member orientation.
- Attend three CoC or regional meetings during the prior 12 months, including at least one full membership meeting.
- To remain in good standing, attend at least three qualifying meetings each calendar year, sign the Code of Conduct and conflict acknowledgment each year, and complete required training.
- Each organization has one vote. An individual member also has one vote. Approved alternates may vote when the primary delegate is absent.

What the membership does

- Holds at least three full membership meetings each year, including an annual meeting.
- Elects or ratifies Board members.
- Approves charter changes and the Board selection process.
- Helps coordinate the countywide housing and services system.
- Joins committees, workgroups, the Point-in-Time Count, and gaps-analysis work.
- Provides information about community needs, service gaps, and emerging problems.

Important Brown Act distinction

The charter says the general membership is a community forum and is not a Brown Act legislative body. Its meetings are still open to the public and use published agendas. The Board and standing committees are treated differently.

CoC Board

The Board represents the membership and is the CoC's primary decision-making body for powers delegated to it. The July 2024 charter calls for 17 to 21 members: 19 voting seats and two non-voting seats.

Board makeup in simple terms

- Six designated government seats.
- One appointed consumer seat through the Youth Action Board.
- Five or six elected at-large seats.
- Five or six elected service-provider seats.
- Two non-voting seats: a senior representative of the Collaborative Applicant and the immediate past Chair for one year.
- At least two consumer representatives with lived experience are included among the at-large seats, including the Youth Action Board appointee.
- The Board should reflect the county's regions and a broad mix of systems, services, identities, and experience.

What Board members must do

- Attend, prepare, ask questions, and vote independently.
- Represent the whole CoC and the constituency of the seat, not merely one employer.
- Serve actively on at least one committee or workgroup.
- Complete onboarding and training.
- Disclose conflicts and recuse when required.
- Follow the Brown Act, public-record rules, the Code of Conduct, and meeting rules.
- Review performance, policies, funding recommendations, and required plans.

Board authority is delegated authority

The Board is powerful, but it is not unlimited. It acts within the powers the voting membership delegates it through the charter.

The Three Main Operating Agencies

Entity	Main job	Reports to / oversight	What it should not do alone
Collaborative Applicant (for Federal CoC funds) / Administrative Agent (for State of California funds)	Apply for and administer federal CoC funds; provide records, notices, meeting support, grant coordination, reporting, and state-fund administration when designated.	Board oversight; membership retains reserved powers. The designation is valid for no more than three years before review/renewal.	Make final policy, elect Board members, approve its own performance, or submit an unapproved CoC application.
HMIS Lead Agency	Operate HMIS; manage privacy, security, data quality, training, participation, and HUD Data Exchange reports.	Board and membership oversight; coordination with users and committees.	Set all CoC policy merely because it controls the data system.
CES Lead Entity	Operate the approved coordinated-entry process; train partners; monitor access, prioritization, referrals, and compliance.	Board oversight; coordination with membership, providers, ESG recipients, and committees.	Change major CES policy without the required CoC approval process.
(ADD FULL MEMBERSHIP)	Responsible for ensuring ….(list from Chapter 2)	Is responsible to HUD through	Independently establish priorities that impact ESG use.

Current entities named in the July 2024 charter

- Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead: San Bernardino County Office of Homeless Services.
- CES Lead Entity: Inland SoCal United Way 211+.
- The Collaborative Applicant also supplies the Board Secretary and holds a non-voting Board seat.

Committees and Workgroups

Committees make the large CoC workable. But each committee must have a written purpose, membership rules, reporting path, and clear statement of whether it advises or decides.

Two kinds of committees

Type	What it may do	Public-meeting rule
Decision-making committee	May make a final decision only when the charter or Board clearly gives it that power.	Brown Act procedures apply.
Advisory committee	Studies issues and gives recommendations. The Board or membership makes the final decision.	Standing advisory committees are treated as Brown Act bodies under the charter; ad hoc groups follow the rules assigned to them.

Standing bodies listed in Chapter 8

Body	Role	Plain-English job
CoC Governance Board	Decision-making	The CoC Board described in Chapter 3.
Membership Committee	Advisory to the CoC	Reviews governance and membership practices, recruits members, improves orientation, and helps restore lapsed members.
Performance Oversight and Review Committee	Advisory	Reviews system and funded-program performance, data outcomes, policy access, and corrective or strategic recommendations.
Regional Steering Committees	Advisory	Bring local needs, priorities, service gaps, and funding ideas from the five subregions to the countywide CoC.
Youth Action Board	Advisory, with a Board appointment role	Brings youth and young-adult lived experience into policy and funding recommendations and appoints one consumer Board member.

Keep temporary work temporary

Use an ad hoc committee or task group for a short project. Do not create a permanent committee unless the subject truly needs continuing oversight.

How Work Should Move Through the CoC

Step	What happens	Who is usually involved
1	A need, risk, or opportunity is identified.	Members, people with lived experience, regions, providers, lead agencies, or the public.
2	The correct committee or lead agency gathers facts and listens to affected people.	Advisory committee, HMIS Lead, CES Lead, Collaborative Applicant, or task group.
3	A written recommendation identifies the decision needed, legal authority, cost, lead, deadline, and measure of success.	Committee or lead agency.
4	The correct authority approves, rejects, changes, or sends it back.	Voting membership for reserved powers; Board for delegated powers.
5	The named lead carries out the decision.	Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, CES Lead, committee, or another assigned entity.
6	Results are reported and checked.	Board, membership, performance committee, and public as appropriate.

A common governance ambiguity

A committee discusses an issue, staff begin acting, and nobody can point to the formal approval. The cure is simple: every action item should name the authority, the lead, the deadline, and the report-back date.

Quick Responsibility Chart

Duty	Approves	Leads the work	Supports	Reports to
Membership records and voting status	Charter rules / membership	Collaborative Applicant / Secretary	Membership Committee	Membership and Board
Board elections and ratification	Voting membership	Nominating process	Collaborative Applicant	Membership
Governance Charter changes	Voting membership	Membership Committee / Board process	CA and HMIS Lead	Membership
HUD CoC application	Board approves	Collaborative Applicant submits	Applicants, grant reviewers, HMIS Lead	Board, membership, HUD
HMIS operations	Board/member policy authority as stated	HMIS Lead	HMIS users and committees	Board
Coordinated Entry operations	Board policy authority	CES Lead	Providers, ESG recipients, CES partners	Board
Project and system performance	Board acts	Performance committee and staff	HMIS Lead, funders, recipients	Board and membership
Point-in-Time Count	Board oversight	Collaborative Applicant and PIT Count Committee	HMIS Lead, regions, volunteers	Board, membership, HUD
Annual gaps analysis	Board oversight	HMIS/planning leads	Members, providers, lived-experience groups	Board and membership
Regional needs and priorities	Board receives/acts	Regional Steering Committees	Local partners	Board and membership

What the Public and New Members Need to Know

How the public can participate

- Attend Board, standing-committee, membership, and regional meetings that are open to the public.
- Read agendas and supporting materials before meetings.
- Give public comment and submit written information.
- Apply for individual or organizational membership.
- Complete orientation and attendance requirements to gain voting status.
- Apply for open Board or committee positions when eligible.
- Ask for meeting minutes, policies, reports, and other public records.
- Use the complaint or grievance process when conduct or conflict rules may have been violated.

Seven questions every member should be able to answer

- What body am I serving on?
- Does this body advise, oversee, or make final decisions?
- Who has the final vote on this issue?
- Who will do the work after approval?
- When must the work be completed?
- How will results be measured and reported?
- What must I do if I or my organization has a conflict of interest?

Plain-Language Glossary

Term	Meaning
Authority	The power to approve or decide by formal vote.
Oversight	Receiving information, checking performance, and holding the lead accountable.
Lead	The entity that organizes and carries out the work.
Support	A person or group that helps the lead.
Collaborative Applicant	The legal entity that applies for HUD CoC funding and performs required application and administrative duties.
Administrative Agent	The entity that performs both Collaborative Applicant and State Administrative Entity functions.
HMIS	The shared Homeless Management Information System.
CES	Coordinated Entry System: the community process for access, assessment, prioritization, and referral.
ESG	Emergency Solutions Grants.
PIT Count	Point-in-Time Count of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.
Recusal	Not taking part in discussion or voting because of a conflict.
Quorum	The minimum number of voting members needed to conduct formal business.
Standing Committee	A continuing committee with an ongoing subject or fixed meeting schedule.
Ad Hoc Committee	A temporary committee created for a specific task.

Recommended Public-Facing Replacement for the Spreadsheet

The existing responsibility spreadsheet is hard to follow because one duty is spread across many entity columns. The public version should use one row per duty and only the columns below.

Duty	Final authority	Oversight	Work lead	Support	Report / product	Timing
Charter review	Voting membership	Board	Membership Committee	CA and HMIS Lead	Proposed amendments and vote	Every year
Board election	Voting membership	Membership	Nominating Committee	CA / Secretary	Election and ratified roster	Every year
HUD application	Board	Board	Collaborative Applicant	Applicants, HMIS, reviewers	Approved and submitted application	Every funding cycle
HMIS	Membership/Board as charter assigns	Board	HMIS Lead	HMIS users	Policies, data reports, compliance report	Ongoing / annual review
Coordinated Entry	Board	Board	CES Lead	Providers and ESG recipients	CES reports and policy updates	Ongoing / annual review
Performance review	Board	Board	Performance Committee / staff	HMIS Lead and recipients	Findings and corrective recommendations	At least yearly
PIT Count	Board	Board	CA / PIT Count Committee	HMIS, regions, volunteers	Count and HUD submission	Yearly locally
Regional priorities	Board or membership, depending on action	Board	Regional Steering Committees	Local stakeholders	Needs and funding recommendations	Regularly

Committee Review Checklist

- Confirm every duty names one final approving body.
- Separate authority from oversight in the chart.
- Confirm each lead agency has a written agreement, performance measures, and reporting schedule.
- Match committee names and powers exactly to Chapter 8.
- Identify which committees are Brown Act bodies.
- Confirm that membership-reserved powers are not accidentally delegated to staff or the Board.
- Confirm that the Collaborative Applicant's non-voting Board and Secretary roles are described accurately.
- Confirm that conflicts are screened before grant, contract, performance, or funding discussions.
- Add dates and version numbers to every public chart.
- Review the charter and chart together at least annually.

Source Note

This guide is based on the San Bernardino City and County Continuum of Care CA-609 Governance Charter adopted July 24, 2024, especially Chapters 1 through 10. It is designed for education and orientation. When this guide and the charter differ, the charter controls.