January 19, 2023

Governance Technical Assistance

Portland Multnomah County CoC

Agenda

Introductions

CoC Program Overview, Governance, and Responsibilities of the Homelessness Response System

Evolution of the Continuum of Care Program

Upcoming TA

Introductions and Prior TA Efforts

CoC Program Overview and Governance

Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

Created by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act), enacted into law on May 20, 2009 consolidated three separate homelessness programs into a single grant program – Continuum of Care.

The purpose of the CoC Program (per the CoC interim rule):

- Promote **community-wide commitment** to ending homelessness;
- Provide federal **funding** to quickly rehouse individuals and families;
- Promote **access to and effective use of mainstream** programs by individuals and families experiencing homelessness; and
- Optimize **self-sufficiency** among those experiencing homelessness.

The “Continuum of Care” (or “CoC”) is the structure mandated by HUD to fulfill these purposes at the local level.

What is a CoC?

- A **group of representatives** of relevant organizations within a defined geographic area to carry out the responsibilities listed in the CoC interim rule.
- **In plain language**: A planning body that coordinates the community's policies, strategies, and activities for preventing and ending homelessness (with a particular focus on federal funding).

Continuum
NEXT EXIT
CoC Workgroup
CoC Board
Community Stakeholders
HMIS Lead
Collaborative Applicant
CoC Workgroup
Grant Recipient
Grant Recipient
Grant Recipient

1. Operate the CoC

- Conduct semi-annual meetings of the full membership
- Issue public invitation for new members at least annually
- Adopt and follow written process to select board
- Appoint additional committees, subcommittees, or workgroups
- Develop, follow, and update annually a governance charter
- Consult with CoC and ESG project recipients/subrecipients to establish performance targets, monitor performance, evaluate outcomes, and take action against poor performers.
- Evaluate and report ESG and CoC outcomes to HUD
- Establish centralized or coordinated assessment system
- Establish and follow written standards for providing CoC assistance

2. Designate/Operate the HMIS

- Designate a single HMIS and select an eligible applicant to manage the HMIS
- Monitor recipient and subrecipient participation in the HMIS
- Review and approve privacy, security, and data quality plans
- Ensure HMIS complies with HUD regulations

3. CoC Planning

- Coordinate implementation of a housing and service system within the geographic area
- Conduct an annual Point-in-Time Count
- Conduct annual gaps analysis of needs and services
- Provide information required for the Consolidated Plan
- Consult with ESG recipients regarding allocation of funds and evaluation of performance of ESG recipients/subrecipients

4. Apply for Funds

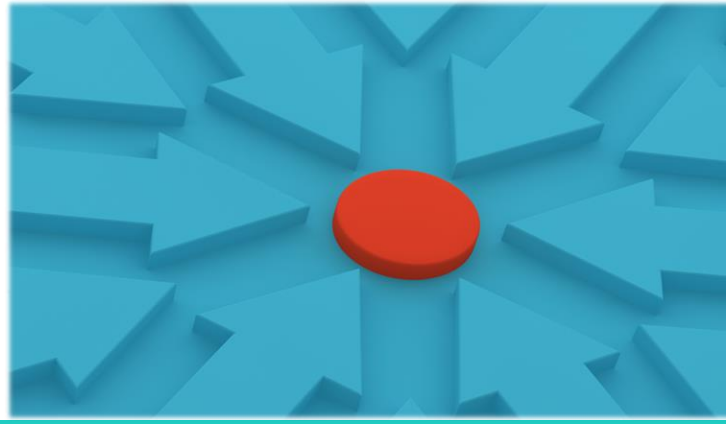
- Prepare and oversee an application for CoC Program funds including:
  - Determining the collaborative process
  - Prioritizing projects (requires creation of a non-conflicted panel)
- Collaborative Applicant applies for Planning Grant

CoC Membership

- Requirements not specific
- Membership should ensure:
  - Community-wide commitment to preventing and ending homelessness
  - Representation of relevant organizations within area served by CoC
- Examples: non-profit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based groups, governments, businesses, advocacy groups, PHAs, school districts, social service providers, mental health providers, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, veterans service providers, persons currently or formerly homeless
- Must call for new members at least annually

What is “Governance”?

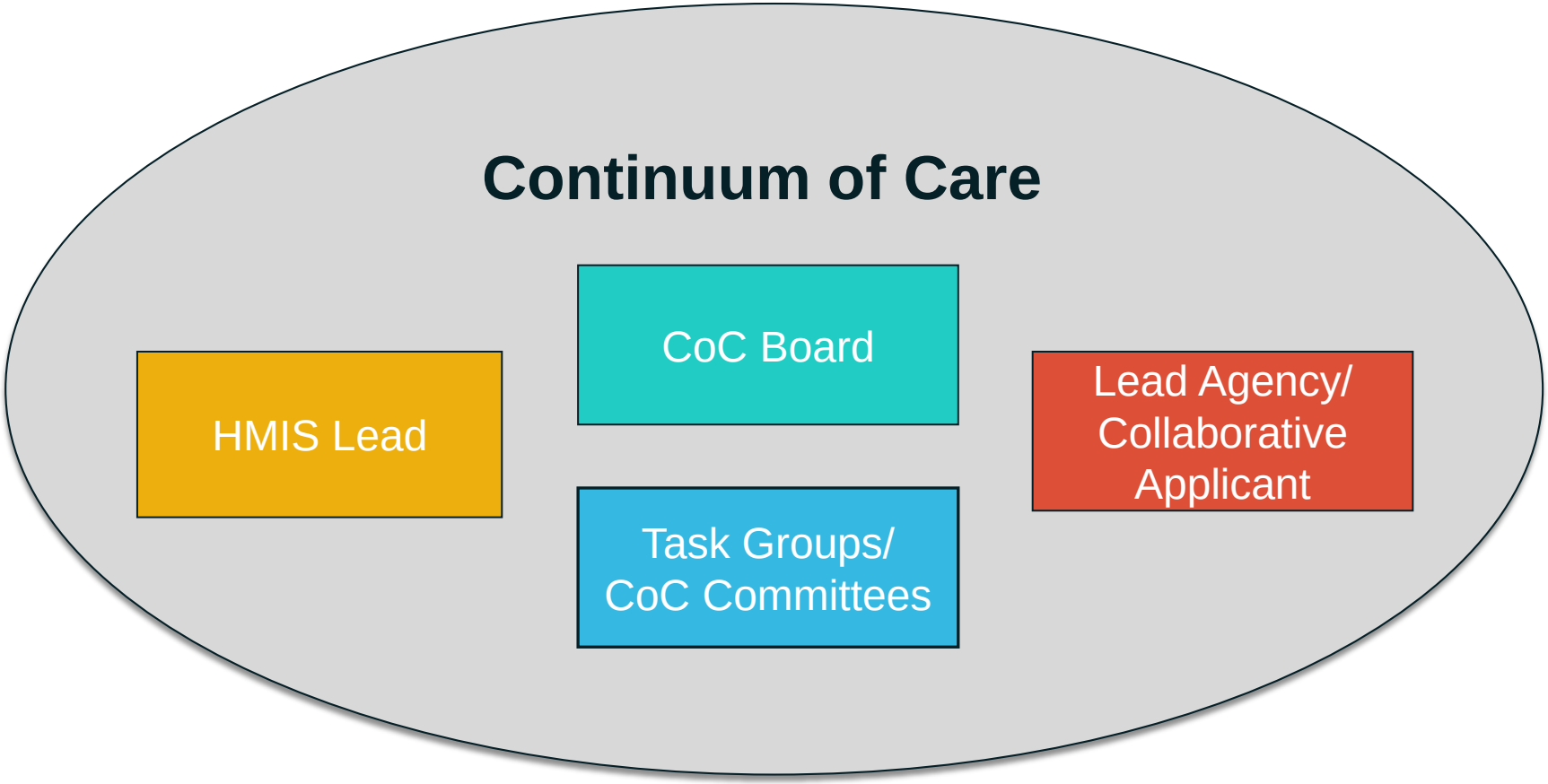
- Governance is how groups organize to make decisions
- Governance determines who…
  - Has decision-making authority
  - How stakeholders make their voices heard
  - How decisions are implemented
- The HEARTH Act and CoC Interim Rule define basic CoC governance responsibilities



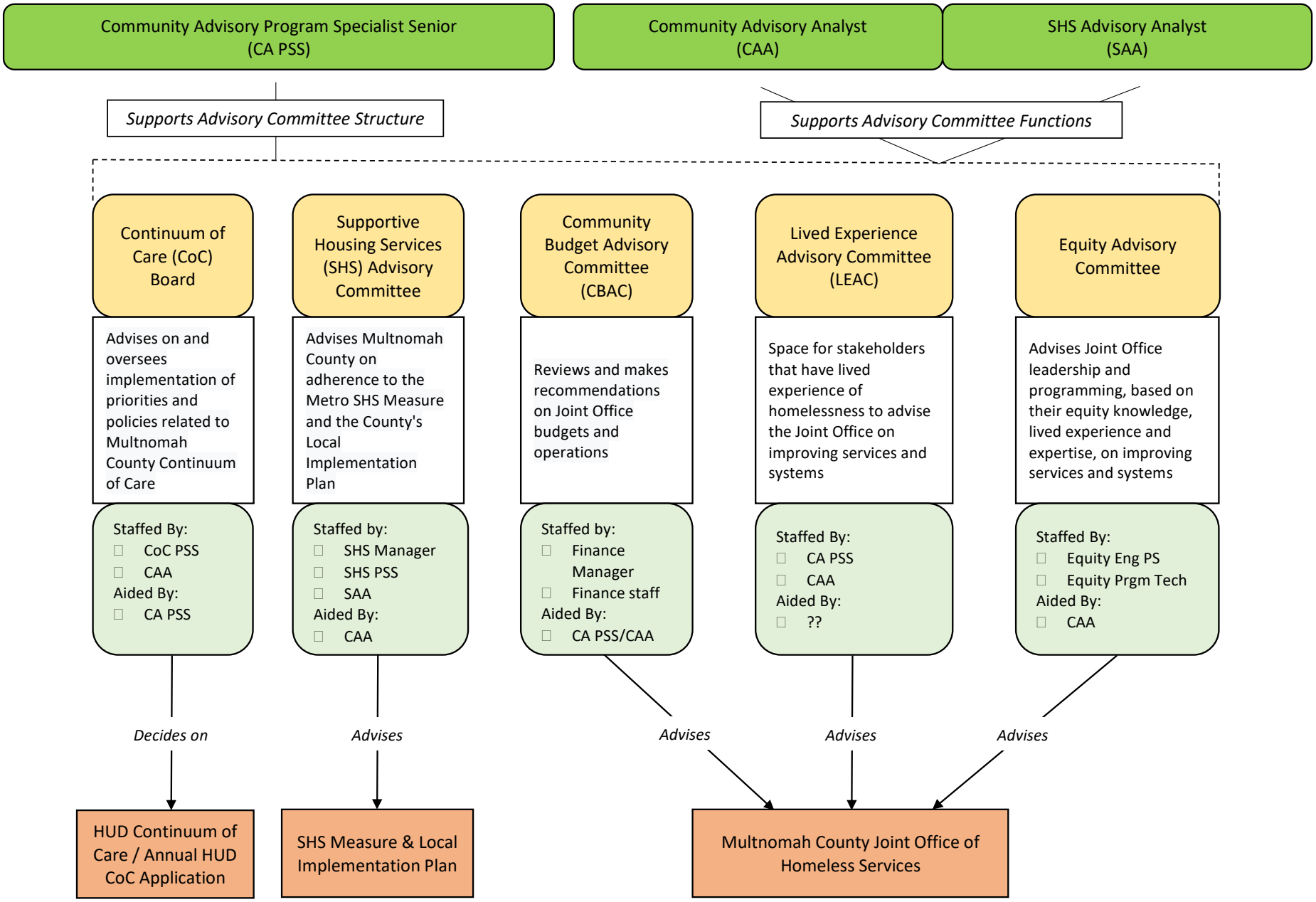
Governance Requirements

- Have at least one homeless or formerly homeless representative
- Invite new members at least annually
- Hold meetings of the full CoC at least semi-annually
- Adopt board selection process and review/approve every 5 years
- Appoint committees and workgroups
- Annually update governance charter in coordination with Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead

CoC Governance Structure



JOHS Community Advisory Structure



CoC Board

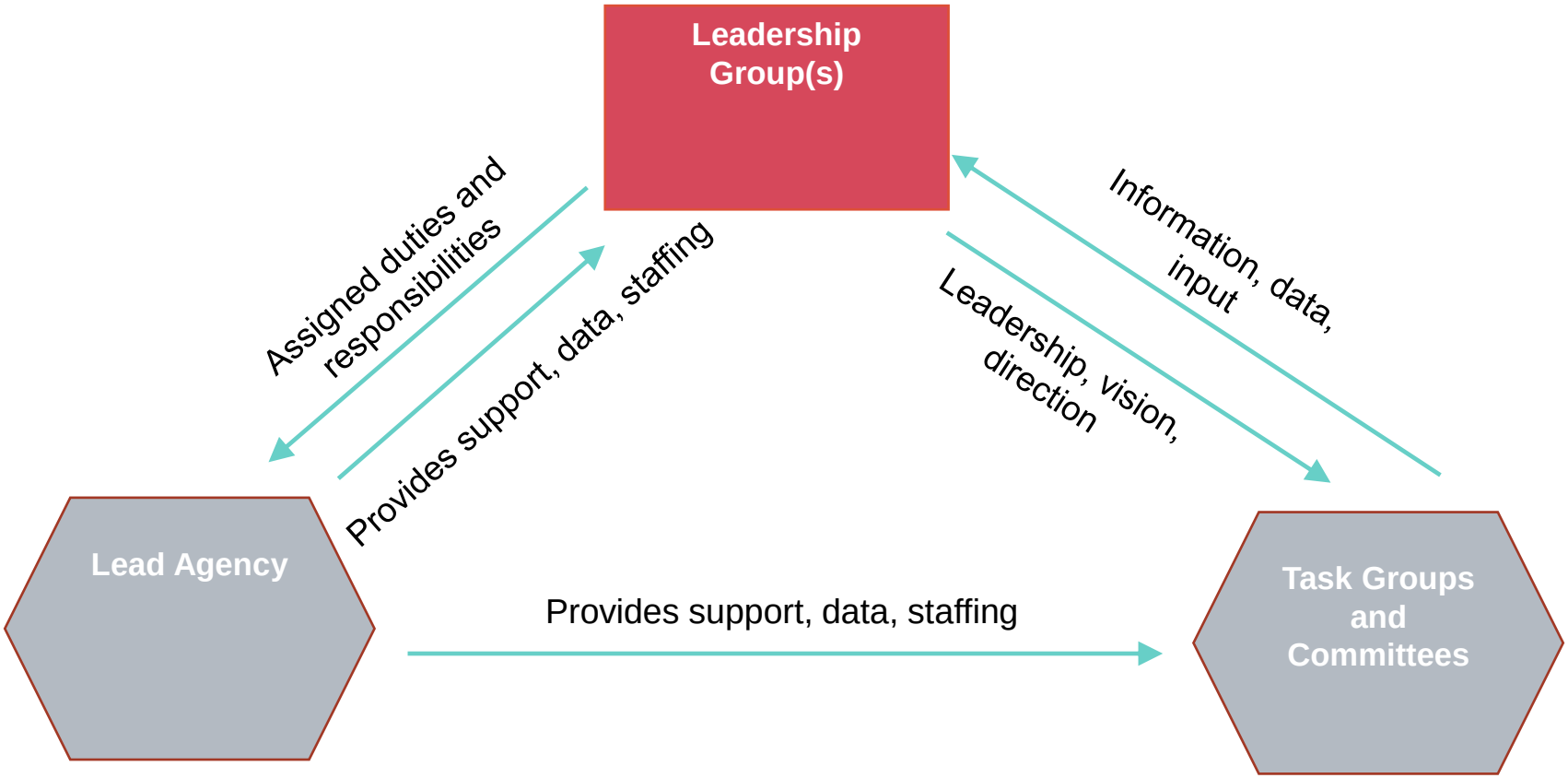
- Must be appointed by the CoC to act on behalf of the full CoC
- CoC Board designates an HMIS lead agency and Collaborative Applicant to act on its behalf.
  - **HMIS Lead** is an agency that manages the HMIS for the CoC
  - **Collaborative Applicant** is an agency designated by the CoC to collect and submit the required CoC Application information for all projects selected for funding.
- Board responsibilities should be documented in the CoC's governance charter.

Questions?

Homebase

Evolution of the CoC

Leadership Structure



4 types of CoC's Found

Large Leadership Group

Option 1: Broad Consolidated Model

- Build out Governance Council to be able to take on roles of plan implementation effectively
- CoC Board has responsibility for all strategic planning implementation and try to grow necessary membership and participation.

Advantages: One place to make decisions, uniform policies across the CoC

Disadvantages: May not be possible if other funders won't participate, issue of houselessness may be too large for one group.

Example: Austin, TX

4 types of CoC's Found

Small Leadership Group

Option 2: Narrow Consolidated Model

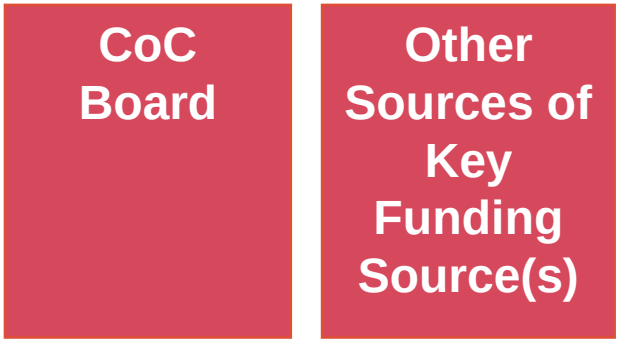
- CoC Board has a narrow membership and participation to key roles, allowing focus to be on strategy and accountability, with some current tasks moving to committees.
- Frequently membership is limited to more senior staff or even elected officials

Advantages: Leadership on issues can be possible, allows for issue of homelessness to be taken out of City Council, etc.

Disadvantages: May lack best practice knowledge, can stifle broad participation.

Example: Houston, TX

4 types of CoC's Found



Option 3: Parallel Model

- Separate out roles into 2 (or more) separate, parallel bodies.
- CoC Board operates the funds it controls and attempts to create alignments with other sources of funding where possible.

Advantage: Allows CoC Boards to focus on the areas they control while attempting to be the main coordinating voice in the community.

Disadvantage: Duplication of Services, overlap of duties, possibility for program overlap and mismatch of program models.

Example: New York City

4 types of CoC's Found

Option 4: Consolidated Model

- Roll Up leadership
- Comprised of funders
- Very few examples of this, but oftentimes elected officials have a large role on the leadership council

Advantages: Can centralize the discussion and policy making process of the unhoused away from multiple forums, way to integrate elected officials into the process

Disadvantages: Increased bureaucracy; can be unwieldy, mixed results

Example: Sonoma County, California

Case Study Takeaways

1. **No one structure is universally best.**
2. Executive and outside voices allow for tough decisions to be made, but may not have these decisions be informed by on-the-ground realities
3. A high-level model can allow for additional funds to be brought into the process by involvement of elected officials and foundations
4. Lower-level leadership groups will struggle to make tough decisions, often voting for the status quo
5. Lower-level leadership groups are more in touch with the reality of the situation and the impact of their decisions
6. High level will meet less frequently, lower level more frequently
7. Politics and personalities will play a larger role in high level

Questions?

Homebase

Upcoming TA Efforts