

CONTINUUM OF CARE BOARD
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

January 18, 2024

(as approved by the Board)

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Board as an entity represents the community of Multnomah County, the City of Portland and the City of Gresham. The Board has an important voice in the public discussion about homelessness policy. These guidelines describe how and when the Board will use that voice to inform and influence the broader public conversation.

1. Scope of Public Statements

1.1. The Board may make public statements specific to its role in administering funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Board also may make public statements about broader homelessness policy and funding.

1.2. The Board's public statements will be grounded in evidence from respected sources. Such sources include: local and state housing authorities, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Low-Income Housing Coalition, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, Justice in Aging, National Coalition for the Homeless, Children's Institute and other respected subject matter experts identified by the Board.

2. Process for Development of Public Statements

2.1. The Board may form standing or ad-hoc communications committees with responsibility to develop public statements for consideration of the Board.

2.2. The Board will make decisions to approve or reject public statements proposed by a communications committee using the same decision-making process it uses for other decisions.

2.3. When the Board approves a public statement by less than full consensus, the public statement will disclose that fact.

3. Participation by Ex-Officio Board Members

3.1. The Board may make public statements that are not in full agreement with, or that may directly criticize, positions taken by the jurisdictional members of the CoC.

3.2. Ex-officio Board members (employees of Multnomah County, the City of Portland, Home Forward and the City of Gresham) may be constrained by their employer's policies with respect to positions they can publicly communicate.

3.3. Ex-officio members may choose to not participate in Board discussions to develop certain public statements or they may abstain from Board decisions to approve or reject a proposed statement.

3.4. Public statements by the Board will include a disclaimer stating that the Board's position does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the jurisdictional members of the CoC.

4. Form of Public Statements

4.1. The Board may communicate publicly through written statements approved by the Board, such as press releases, op-ed publications and open letters.

4.2. The Board also may designate spokespeople who are authorized to speak publicly on behalf of the Board. Such spokespeople will make their remarks consistent with the written talking points approved by the Board.

5. Individual Statements

5.1. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to limit the rights of any individual Board member to make public statements expressing their own knowledge or opinion about homelessness policy.

5.2. When making personal public statements about homelessness policy, individual Board members may represent that they are a member of the Board, but must clarify that they are expressing personal views and are not speaking on behalf of the Board or the CoC.