

# Northlake Homeless Coalition

## Bylaws

### ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be Northlake Homeless Coalition (herein referred to as the “Coalition”). It shall be a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Louisiana.

### ARTICLE II – MISSION AND PURPOSE

*Section I – Mission:* The mission of the Coalition is to eliminate and thereafter prevent homelessness in Region IX.

Region IX consists of St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Livingston, Washington and St. Helena Parishes.

*Section II – Purpose:* The purpose of the Coalition is to serve as the Continuum of Care (CoC) for Region IX and perform the three main functions of a CoC as outlined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

- Operating a functional Continuum of Care, including a coordinated assessment system;
- Managing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and
- Strategic planning for the Continuum of Care and preparation of the annual application for funds.

The objectives of the Coalition are strategically aligned with HUD’s stated purpose of the CoC program to:

- Provide a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- Provide funding for efforts to quickly re-house individuals and families who are homeless, which minimizes the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness;
- Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs; and
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

*Section III – CoC Governance Charter:* This document will serve as the CoC Governance Charter and will be reviewed by the Coalition annually. Any proposed changes to the governance charter will be brought for a vote during the Coalition’s annual meeting.

### ARTICLE III – NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

This organization shall be non-partisan and non-sectarian, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, physical or mental disabilities, sexual orientation or national origin.

## ARTICLE IV – COALITION MEMBERSHIP

*Section I – Membership:* The Coalition shall be comprised of homeless or formerly homeless individuals, public and private agencies, governmental entities and any individual whose interest is serving the homeless population and ending homelessness.

*Section II – Role of the Coalition:* As the designated Continuum of Care for Region IX, the Coalition is designed to coordinate and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. To accomplish its mission, the Coalition shall elect a Board of Directors (herein referred to as the “Board”), the governing body of the Coalition, and provide recommendations to the Board.

*Section III – Proceedings:* It is the responsibility of the Coalition to adopt such rules and operating procedures as it deems necessary to carry out its responsibilities under local, state and federal regulations.

*Section IV – Meetings:* The Coalition will meet on a monthly basis. The Executive Director of the Coalition shall provide a report at each of these meetings. All meetings are open to the public.

*Section V – Invitation for New Members:* The Coalition will issue a public invitation for new members within its geographic area at least annually.

*Section VI – Quorum:* It is the responsibility of the Coalition Members to attend monthly meetings. A quorum shall consist of those present.

*Section VII – Voting:* Coalition Members shall have the right to vote for the Board. The Coalition will adopt and follow a written process to select the Board. The Coalition will review, update and approve the selection process annually during the Coalition’s annual meeting.

*Section VIII – Annual Meeting:* The Coalition will hold an annual meeting during which the Board will be elected and the CoC Governance Charter and the corresponding HMIS Governance Charter will be reviewed, updated and approved. The date and location of the annual meeting, to be held during the first quarter of the following year, will be determined by the Board and advertised to the Coalition and the public at least one month in advance of the meeting.

## ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Section I – Responsibilities:* The Board will serve as the governing body of the Coalition and will be responsible for the planning and operations of the CoC, which consists of the following functions:

- Development of a plan for a coordinated housing and service system that meets the needs of individuals, unaccompanied youth and families experiencing homelessness. At minimum, the system will consist of outreach, engagement, assessment, shelter, housing, supportive services and prevention strategies.
- Plan and conduct an annual point-in-time count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and conduct an annual gaps analysis of homeless needs and services.
- Participate in Consolidated Plans.

- Consult with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) grant recipients to plan for allocation of ESG funds and report and evaluate performance of ESG grant recipients/subrecipients.
- Evaluate performance of HUD-funded programs:
  - Establish performance targets in consultation with recipients/subrecipients that are appropriate to the program type and population served. Performance targets will be aligned with performance measures outlined in the HEARTH Act.
  - Monitor recipient/subrecipient performance.
  - Evaluate outcomes and report to HUD.
  - Take action against poor performers, including but not limited to: technical assistance, improvement plans and reallocation of funding.
- Establish and operate a coordinated access and assessment system that will:
  - Provide an initial and comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals/families requesting assistance.
  - Cover the full CoC geographic area.
  - Be accessible and well-advertised to individuals/families seeking assistance.
- Establish and consistently follow written standards for providing CoC assistance, in consultation with the recipients of ESG program funds. These standards must determine:
  - Eligibility and prioritization criteria (beyond minimum HUD regulatory requirements) for transitional housing, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing resources.
  - Levels of rapid rehousing assistance and participant rent contribution across projects.
- Designate and operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and manage the following HMIS functions (further outlined in the Northlake Homeless Coalition HMIS Governance Charter):
  - Designate a single HMIS for the CoC geographic area.
  - Designate a HMIS regional lead and a statewide HMIS lead to manage the HMIS.
  - Ensure that HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.
  - Review, revise and approve HMIS privacy, security and data quality plans on an annual basis.
  - Ensure the consistent participation of recipients and subrecipients in the HMIS.
  - The Coalition will review, update and approve the HMIS Governance Charter annually during the Coalition's annual meeting.

*Section II – Composition:* The Board will be comprised of not less than seven and not more than fifteen members. In accordance with HUD regulations, the Board will be: (1) representative of the relative organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations; and (2) include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual. Additionally, the Board will consist of a minimum of two representatives of CoC funded agencies and one representative of an ESG recipient agency.

The Coalition will make a concerted effort to assure that at least one representative of the following groups is included on the Board:

1. An agency representing persons with disabilities
2. A representative of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
3. Government agencies throughout Region IX
4. Public housing agencies
5. Faith-based and other community-based organizations

6. Housing developers
7. Housing service providers
8. Private businesses
9. Law enforcement
10. Funding providers

*Section III – Term of Office:* Board Members shall serve a term of two years beginning on the date of election during the Coalition’s annual meeting. A full two-year term shall be considered to have been served upon the passage of the annual meeting two years following their election. Board Members shall take office immediately following the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected. No Board Member shall serve more than three consecutive two-year terms. Fulfilling an incomplete term is not considered part of the term limit. Board Members shall serve staggered terms to balance continuity with new perspective. Board Members shall not be paid for their services.

*Section IV – Election of Board Members:* The Coalition will vote and elect Board Members. During even numbered years, one-half plus one of the Members shall be elected and during odd numbered years, the other one-half of the Members shall be elected.

*Section V – Vacancies:* Should a Board vacancy occur at any time, it shall be filled by a majority vote of the Coalition for the unexpired portion of the term.

*Section VI – Meetings:* The Board shall meet on at least a bi-monthly basis. A regular meeting schedule shall be adopted by the Board indicating the time and place of meetings. Special meetings will be held upon call of the Board President or upon request of one-third of the Board.

*Section VII – Quorum:* For voting purposes, a quorum will consist of two-thirds of the Board.

*Section VIII – Voting:* While the Board will strive to achieve consensus, the affirmative vote of a majority of Members shall be required for the approval of any matter. A Member or his/her representative must be present to vote and shall be entitled to one vote. At the discretion of the President, in limited circumstances, a vote by phone or email may be taken and recorded for all Members.

*Section IX – Non-Voting Membership:* The Board shall have the authority to establish and define non-voting categories of membership.

*Section X – Record of Meetings:* The Board shall keep a written record for each meeting, including a record of votes on all motions.

*Section XI – Resignation and Removal:* Resignation from the Board must be received in writing by the Board President. In the event of resignation of the Board President, the resignation must be submitted in writing to the Vice-President.

Any Member of the Board who misses three consecutive Board meetings without good cause or violates the Code of Conduct outlined in Article VII may be removed by majority vote of the Board. The Board will allow a representative to serve in his/her place in the event of an absence.

## ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE BOARD

*Section I – Positions:* The Board shall elect the following officers to comprise the Executive Board: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

*Section II – Criteria for Nominations:* Officer Nominees must be a Member of the Board.

*Section III – Election of Officers:* The Board of Directors will vote and approve Officers for the Executive Board during the Coalition’s annual meeting.

*Section IV – Officer Duties:*

**President:** The President shall preside at all Board meetings and supervise the affairs of the Coalition in conjunction with the Coalition’s Executive Director. The President shall appoint such subcommittees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the Coalition. The President shall also be an ex-officio member of all subcommittees.

**Vice-President:** The Vice-President shall act in the capacity of the President in his/her absence or disability. In the event the President position becomes vacant prior to completion of the term, the Vice-President shall succeed to the President position for the duration of the unexpired term. The Coalition shall elect a new Vice-President at the earliest regular Coalition meeting upon a vacancy in the position. In keeping with Article V, Section II, the President and Vice-President elected to fill the vacant positions will serve a full term in their respective positions upon completion of the vacated term.

**Secretary:** The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Board actions, including oversight of the taking of minutes at all Board meetings, sending out meeting announcements and distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each Board Member.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall serve as the financial officer. The treasurer shall make a report at each Board meeting and assist in the preparation of the budget, help develop fundraising plans, and make financial information available to Board Members.

## ARTICLE VII – CODE OF CONDUCT

*Section I – General Conduct:* No employee officer, agent, volunteer or affiliate of this organization will engage in activities resulting in financial gain from monies or benefits from funding contracts or agreements with this organization. No employee, officer, agent, volunteer or affiliate of this organization may accept gifts of money, goods, services or gratuities from any person receiving services from this organization or from persons performing services for the organization. All employees, officers, agents, volunteers or affiliates of this organization are required to acknowledge having read and understood the NHC Code of Conduct Policy by signing a certification which is kept on file for their duration of tenure with the organization.

*Section II – Board of Directors:* The Board of Directors are entrusted with specific responsibilities related to use of public funds invested in homelessness. Board Members are expected to observe the highest standards of ethical conduct in the execution of these responsibilities. In the performance of their duties, Board Members are expected to carry out the mission of the

Coalition to the best of their ability, and to maintain the highest standards of integrity for actions with other Board Members, Coalition Members, service providers, and members of the public. Board Members are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and respect, without harassment, or physical or verbal abuse.

*Section III – Protection of Confidential Information:* The Board and the Coalition Members have a responsibility to protect the security of any confidential information provided to, or generated by, the activities of the Coalition.

*Section IV – Public Statements and Media Response:* The Board and Coalition Members will make clear whether they are speaking in their own name or if the Board has empowered them to speak on the Coalition’s behalf when making public statements or speaking to the media.

*Section V – Investigating Violations of the Code of Conduct:* Any allegation of misconduct should be reported to an officer of the Executive Board. When an allegation of misconduct is received by the Executive Board, an Ethics Review Ad Hoc Committee will be assembled. The President will appoint persons to serve on the Ethics Review Ad Hoc Committee. In the event that the allegation of misconduct presents a conflict of interest for the President, the Vice-President will appoint persons to serve on the Ethics Review Ad Hoc Committee. This Committee may not exceed 5 members, and must include a minimum of two Board Members. The Ethics Review Ad Hoc Committee will report its findings to the Executive Board. The Executive Board will make recommendations to remediate any findings of misconduct. The Board will vote to approve and implement the recommendations of the Executive Board.

## ARTICLE VIII – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Board of Directors are required to acknowledge having read, understood and accepted the Conflict of Interest Policy by signing a certification which is kept on file for their duration of service on the Board. In any issue or matter in which a Board Member may have a conflict of interest, he/she shall abstain from voting on said issue or matter. The Member may still participate in the discussion if they fully disclose the nature of their conflict of interest and the majority present vote to allow their participation. Any Member with a conflict of interest may answer any questions posed during the discussion.

## ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

The Board shall establish committees as deemed necessary. The Board President shall appoint all Committee Chairs. The composition of these committees shall reflect the composition of the Coalition. Committees will provide recommendations to the Board and keep the Coalition apprised of their progress.

ARTICLE X – DIRECTOR AND STAFF

Section I – Executive Director: The Executive Director is hired by the Board and oversees day-to-day responsibilities for the Coalition, including carrying out the Coalition’s goals and policies. The Executive Director will attend all Board meetings, report on the progress of the Coalition, answer questions of the Board Members and carry out the duties set forth in the job description. The Board may designate other duties as necessary.

Section II – Staff: Subject to budgetary constraints approved by the Board, the Executive Director may appoint and employ professional and support staff necessary to serve the Coalition.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds majority vote of those in attendance at any regular or special meeting of the Coalition with two weeks advance notice.

CERTIFICATION

WHEREAS, these bylaws have been duly proposed, offered, seconded and adopted at a special meeting of the Northlake Homeless Coalition, this document then supersedes any prior bylaw document adopted by the Northlake Homeless Coalition.

These bylaws were approved at a meeting of the Coalition by a two-thirds majority vote on July 7, 2014.

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Co-Chair, Public Sector

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Date

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Co-Chair, Private Sector

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Date