

# North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

bos@ncceh.org

919.755.4393

www.ncceh.org/BoS

## Regional Committee Restructuring Proposal March 2016

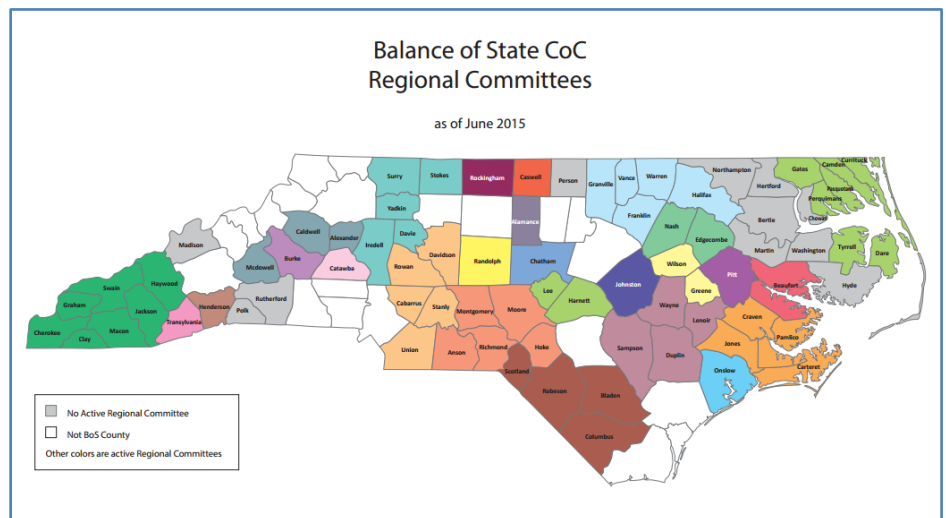
### Executive Summary

In May 2015, the Balance of State CoC Restructuring Workgroup was formed to explore a more effective model for Regional Committee structure. The workgroup met numerous times to discuss and develop specific recommendations regarding Regional Committee responsibilities, leadership, and geographic coverage. This document presents the workgroup’s proposed restructuring model, the timeline for implementation, and methods for Regional Committees to provide comments.

### Background

#### Current Landscape

The Balance of State CoC was created in 2006 to increase capacity and access to HUD funding for 79 rural counties in North Carolina. In order to organize and implement CoC responsibilities, active communities formed Regional Committees to carry out local planning and coordination for homeless services. These Regional Committees are currently responsible for a number of activities, including:



- Holding regular, public meetings and posting meeting minutes
- Recruiting local partners to address community needs for housing and homeless services
- Planning and implementing a coordinated assessment system for homeless and housing programs
- Applying for Emergency Solution Grants (ESG) funding through a local application process
- Organizing an annual Point- in-Time (PIT) Count to survey those who are homeless on a single night in January
- Participating in CoC activities:
  - Steering Committee meetings
  - BoS subcommittees and workgroups
  - CoC funding committees

As the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) legislation continues to be implemented, these Regional Committee activities will expand to include larger system-wide tasks, including:

- Monitoring and improving local performance on system performance measures as set by HUD, including:
  - Decreasing average length of stay
  - Increasing permanent housing exits
  - Reducing new episodes of homelessness
- Managing the homeless service system to address community needs:
  - Ensuring adequate and appropriate programs and services available
  - Working together to address gaps at the local level by securing new resources and expanding the eligibility criteria of current programs

Currently, Regional Committees form and self-identify their coverage areas with guidance from Balance of State CoC staff to ensure that all Regional Committees meet the criteria and requirements as outlined in the CoC governance charter and the *Regional Leads and Regional Committees Roles & Responsibilities*<sup>1</sup> document approved by the Steering Committee. A list of official Regional Committees is approved by the Steering Committee each year, and throughout the year Regional Committees can form on a tentative basis while others can become inactive. Several counties in the Balance of State CoC remain inactive due to a lack of capacity to manage a Regional Committee or due to a lack of knowledge about the CoC process.

#### **Current Challenges with Regional Committees**

As of 2015, the Balance of State CoC has 27 Regional Committees, which is three times more than other Balance of State CoCs in the country. Despite this large number of Regional Committees, there are still counties that are not active within the CoC, and the CoC continues to struggle with engaging and involving these inactive areas. With so many Regional Committees, the administrative burden to run the committees and oversee local tasks is high for local communities, CoC staff, and state partners (for example, the State ESG office).

Many current Regional Committees struggle to meet the basic requirements of being a committee and will be unable to meet more advanced expectations. In a survey of Regional Committees conducted in August 2015, committees identified that they had trouble expanding capacity in leadership roles. Regional Committees also reported that there is stagnation at the local level for groups who have been meeting for several years.

The current Regional Committee structure also poses problems for CoC administration. Regional Committees can be formed without regard to the number of homeless households or services in the area. This can lead to committees with vastly different priorities, challenges, and needs, yet each Regional Committee is given the same vote at the Steering Committee level. Also, due to the large number of Regional Committees, CoC staff capacity is currently focused on managing Regional Committee formation and changes rather than on innovating the homeless service system.

The current Regional Committee structure also means that the Balance of State CoC does not fully utilize ESG funds. Lower-capacity Regional Committees and inactive counties are not competitive in the application for ESG funding. The ESG dollars that are not applied for are recaptured by the ESG office and distributed to other CoCs.

Regional Committees identified in the 2015 survey that they would be willing to join with struggling or inactive communities to support and grow the impact of the Balance of State CoC.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncceh.org/files/3117/>

## **Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup**

### **Goals**

In March 2015, a Regional Committee Restructuring workgroup was formed at the annual Regional Lead meeting to explore options for restructuring and present recommendations to the Steering Committee. The workgroup is made of Regional Leads from across the state with representation from both small and large Regional Committees.

As the workgroup explored options, they identified several key goals that the restructuring process needed to achieve:

- Increase capacity and coverage of the Balance of State CoC by including inactive areas
- Promote best practices through cross-pollination of service providers
- Allow for easier partnership with large system partners like LME/MCOs and the VA
- Where possible, create systems within each Regional Committee that include an array of program types (i.e. each system has access to shelters, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing)
- Foster leadership and Regional Committee capacity
- Streamline CoC operations to allow more Regional Committee and CoC staff time to be used to innovate Balance of State systems

### **Principles**

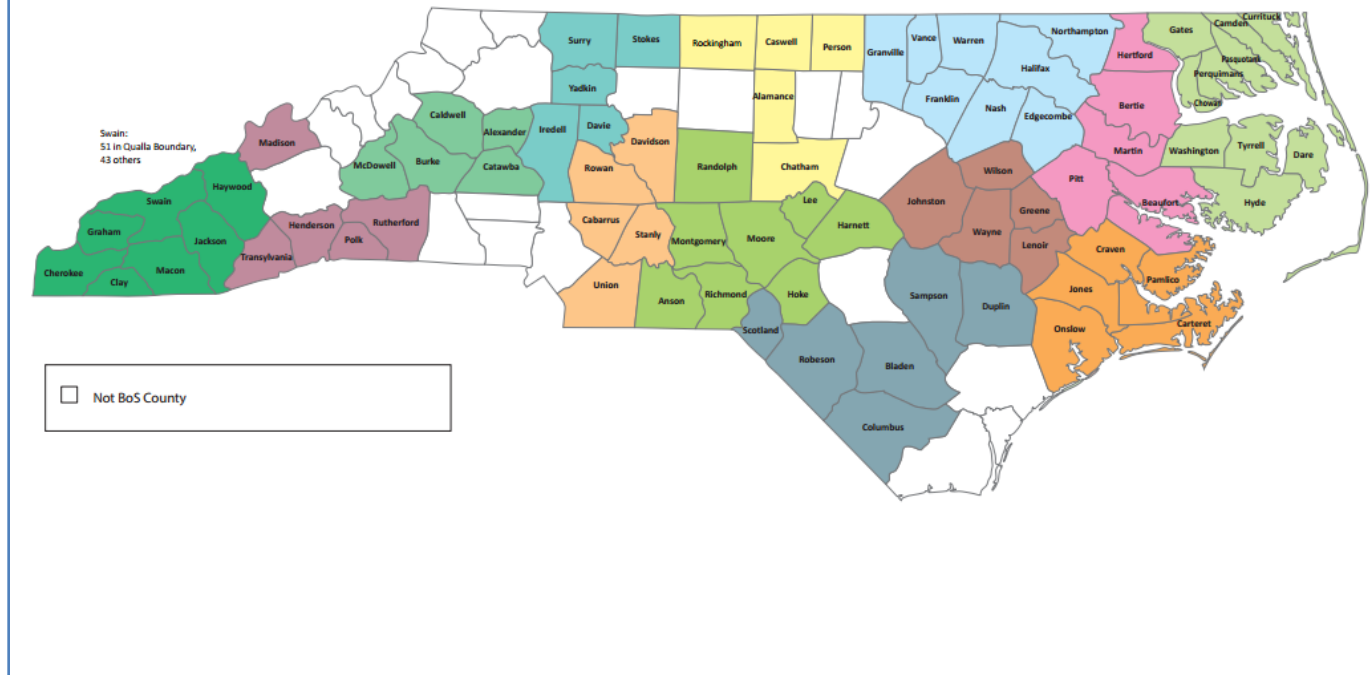
In achieving these goals, the Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup was guided by several key principles, including weighing the costs and benefits of each option for both Regional Committees and the CoC, designing a process that solicits input from all Regional Committees, and using existing or natural partnerships to create new Regional Committee boundaries. The workgroup saw that restructuring the Regional Committees was the next, natural step in the evolution of the Balance of State CoC.

## **Proposed New Regional Committee Structure**

### **New Regional Committees**

The proposal developed by the Regional Committee Restructuring workgroup combines existing Regional Committees and inactive counties to create 13 new Regional Committees.

## Balance of State CoC Proposed Regional Committees 2016



The proposed Regional Committee structure will allow for an increased number and greater array of services within most regional systems. By covering larger geographic areas, the new regions will also allow for better regional planning efforts that take into account the transient nature of households who are homeless. While some differences in services and homeless population remain, the expanded regions are closer to being equitably-sized territories with equally representative votes on the Steering Committee.

Communities that are currently inactive will be able to join existing Regional Committees, therefore simplifying the process of becoming a part of the Balance of State CoC. New Regional Committees will also be able to apply for the ESG funds for all of their covered counties, ensuring that the BoS CoC utilizes these resources to the fullest extent possible. The new regions will also allow for full CoC coverage on projects like coordinated assessment and the annual Point-in-Time Count.

Finally, reducing the number of Regional Committees will allow CoC staff to focus more time and capacity on training, technical assistance, and system innovation to keep the BoS CoC competitive for HUD funding.

### Implementation Timeline

Recognizing that developing strong relationships is key to the restructuring process, the proposed timeline for implementation allows for a 6-month consolidation phase in which existing Regional Committees will get to know their new partners and plan for expanding and creating the new Regional Committees. The goal is to have full implementation of the new Regional Committees by January 1, 2017.

Date	Task
June 7, 2016	Potential approval by Steering Committee
June 2016 - December 2016	Consolidation phase in which current Regional Committees continue to implement current tasks while getting to know new partners*
January 1, 2017	New Regional Committees begin*
January 25, 2017	Point-in-Time Count conducted within new Regional Committee structure
April 1, 2017	New coordinated assessment plans due to Coordinated Assessment Council (CAC)

\*Regional Committees that wish to consolidate on an earlier timeline may do so.

### **Implementation Expectations and Responsibilities**

In order to aid the implementation process, key expectations and responsibilities of the new Regional Committees need to be determined. The Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup proposes that the Steering Committee define these expectations as:

#### Consolidation Phase:

During the 6-month consolidation phase, Regional Committees are expected to form relationships with their new partners and plan for new roles and responsibilities. Regional Committees will use this time to:

- Visit each other's Regional Committee meetings to get to know partners and current issues facing the community
- Create Transition Committees
  - Acting Regional Committee Leads will participate with representation from all Regional Committees involved in consolidations
  - Elect co-chairs to oversee the process
  - Create the plans for consolidation and ensure that the new Regional Committee is able to meet all expectations
- Consolidate contact lists and communications
- Name the new Regional Committee
- Make plans for the regional coordinated assessment system
- Plan Point-in-Time Count for 2017

As applications for both CoC and ESG funding will be made available during the consolidation phase, Regional Committees may choose to either apply for funding as the new expanded regions or as the original smaller Regional Committees. This decision needs to be communicated to CoC staff as soon as possible in the application process.

It is also expected that CoC staff will be available to provide technical assistance and support to Regional Committees during the consolidation phase.

#### Regional Committee Leadership:

Leadership positions for the new Regional Committees will include:

- Regional Committee Lead
- Regional Committee Alternate

- Webmaster
- Point-in-Time Count Lead
- Coordinated Assessment Lead
- Funding Committee Lead, who will oversee the ESG application process and ensure the Regional Committee is involved in CoC funding committees

Regional Committees are to ensure that those who hold leadership positions are representative of their larger regions and that the same person does not concurrently hold more than two leadership roles.

Regional Committee Meetings:

While developing new Regional Committees, members will need to meet face-to-face as much as possible to foster new relationships. In order to encourage participation and increase access in larger regional territories, Regional Committees are encouraged to rotate meeting locations and include a phone option for those who have travel restrictions. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that Regional Committees seek participation from individuals who have experienced homelessness and provide transportation and phone options to allow for their participation. In order to meet system goals, larger Regional Committees will need to use leadership groups and subcommittees to coordinate projects.

Coordinated Assessment:

During the consolidation phase, Regional Committees will continue to operate their existing coordinated assessment systems while creating revised or new regional plans to be approved by the Coordinated Assessment Council (CAC).

New Regional Committee plans will be due to the CAC by April 1, 2017, and must provide coverage for all counties in the region. Current Coordinated Assessment Leads will provide leadership in creating the new plan. Existing CoC parameters around coordinated assessment will remain the same.

Engaging Inactive Counties:

Regional Committees that will cover currently inactive counties are responsible for making regular and continued outreach efforts to these communities in order to increase participation in the Regional Committee. Where possible, CoC staff will assist in this outreach by requesting that state partners encourage participation and by providing historical information like lists of known programs and past contacts in the area.

It is recommended that Regional Committees reach out to key partners in inactive communities, including: Public Housing Authorities, Departments of Social Services, homeless service agencies listed on the Housing Inventory Chart (shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing programs), domestic violence service providers, faith-based organizations, county and city officials, the local Council of Governments, Community Action Agencies, housing developers, police, local jails, victim advocate groups, food pantries, SSVF/VA providers, LME/MCOs, mental health providers, school liaisons, hospitals, veteran service officers, Legal Aid, and Social Security Administration field offices.

**Proposal Timeline**

The Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup requests feedback from Regional Committees on the restructuring proposal contained in this document. Regional Committees will have until April 30, 2016, to provide their comments and questions. All feedback will be reviewed, and workgroup members will incorporate it into the final restructuring proposal to be presented to the Steering Committee on June 7, 2016.

Date	Task
March 4	Present proposal ideas to Regional Leads at in-person meeting
April 5	Present draft proposal at BoS Steering Committee
March-April	Regional Committees discuss and send feedback on proposal
April 30	Regional Committee feedback due
May	Workgroup members incorporate feedback into final proposal
June 7	Present final proposal to BoS Steering Committee

### Questions for Regional Committees

The Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup requests that Regional Committees provide feedback by answering the following questions:

- What works best about the restructuring proposal? What do you anticipate will be the most challenging part of implementation?
- How will restructuring affect participation in your region? If you anticipate a decrease in participation, how would you change the restructuring plan to increase participation?
- Are members of your Regional Committee willing to take a leadership position in the new structure?
- Is there another grouping of counties that works better for your Regional Committee?
- What questions do you have after reading the proposal?
- What other ideas or resources do you suggest?

A Word form will be sent to all Regional Committee Leads to complete with feedback on the proposal. Please submit only one form per Regional Committee. Please follow this link to submit the form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=4a858368d0a643ebadbf7c6762da14d> .