



North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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Regional Committee Restructuring Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

As part of its ongoing efforts to ease the transition during the Regional Committee restructuring process, the Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup and Balance of State staff created this document, answering questions asked throughout the restructuring process. BoS staff will continue to cull questions asked by Regional Committees (RCs) and add them to this document over time. This is not an exhaustive list, but we hope it will help Regional Committees as they begin having conversations in their monthly meetings, meeting with their new regional partners, and developing transition plans.

Regional Committee Leadership and Operations

How does the new Regional Committee choose its leaders?

In the Regional Committee restructuring proposal, each RC is responsible for filling the following leadership positions:

- Regional Committee Lead
- Regional Committee Alternate Lead
- Webmaster
- Point-in-Time Count Lead
- Coordinated Assessment Lead
- Funding Committee Lead (who oversees the ESG application process and ensures the RC is involved in CoC funding committees)

Beyond these positions, RCs have latitude to determine other key leadership roles (e.g. county chairs or leads). RCs should develop their own process for election of their leaders that is inclusive of the entire community. In other words, every county should be able to participate in the voting process and the leaders selected should represent the full regional scope of the RC. No person should fill more than two positions at any one time. When developing an election process, RCs should create a formal written plan to which future leaders can refer back. A formal written plan helps with leadership transition and institutional knowledge. The leadership plan and election process should be part of the Transition Plan approved by each RC.

Can conference calls replace some meetings?

Yes. While developing new Regional Committees, members need to meet face-to-face as much as possible to foster new relationships. However, to encourage participation and increase access in larger regional territories, phone and video conferencing are great tools for individuals that have travel restrictions and/or low capacity.



Would there be financial resources available from the BoS CoC to reimburse for travel expenses?

No. The BoS CoC will not be able to provide financial resources to communities for travel expenses. Instead, RCs should think about ways to reduce the cost burden for their members to participate, such as conferencing calling, video conferencing, quarterly regional meetings vs. monthly regional meetings, and rotating meeting location choices.

***Will there be training opportunities/materials provided pertaining to leadership roles/responsibilities?
Will the website be updated to reflect the new reality?***

The BoS staff will update the website as new training materials become available. The BoS staff will be available for one-on-one conversations with current Regional Committees upon request during June and July 2016. BoS staff will also set up calls with Transition Committees in August 2016 to answer questions and offer feedback on emerging transition plans.

Will new Regional Committees have support from BoS staff in the form of technical assistance and outreach efforts to make this transition easier? If so, what will that support look like?

Yes. One reason the BoS staff supports restructuring RCs is to increase time invested in its support of communities, programs, and grantees. BoS staff is currently planning its long-term goals for technical assistance, training, and outreach. However, in the short term, the BoS staff will provide the following assistance during the transition:

- Publish Frequently Asked Questions document in June 2016
- Conduct one-on-one conversations at the request of current Regional Committees to answer questions, assist in transition planning, and provide information as needed in June/July 2016.
- Conduct one-on-one conversations with each RC Transition Committee to answer ongoing questions, talk about transition plans, and give feedback in August 2016.
- Facilitate 1-day workshops for Transition Committees in Greenville, Burlington, and Morganton to discuss transition and consolidation activities, provide opportunities for peer support, and prepare 100-day plans in the first two weeks of October 2016.
- Conduct on-site visits with the 13 new Regional Committees from October to December 2016.

Will current members of Regional Committees remain members of the larger Regional Committee?

Yes. The new structure for RCs will hopefully increase, not decrease, participation in the process. Having more leadership capacity by combining RCs spreads the responsibility and burden of RC leadership amongst a group of community members. HUD requires more and more from CoCs each year, and in turn, the BoS CoC requires more from RCs. In the past, much of the responsibility has fallen on Regional Leads. This is no longer sustainable, and these responsibilities must be shared. Unfortunately, under the current structure, some RCs do not have anyone else with which to share this responsibility.

Because RCs should have more capacity under the new structure and one of the main responsibilities is to create a group with diverse representation across the entire region, RCs need to be strategic in engaging and outreaching new members. A RC could elect an Outreach or Engagement Lead that can create a subcommittee or workgroup that could focus exclusively on reaching out to stakeholders and agencies that need to be at the table.

How will representatives from agencies who serve counties in multiple Regional Committees manage their participation?



The same way as they always have, except in most cases for providers like MCOs and SSVF grantees, they will have fewer RC meetings to attend under the restructuring proposal. This means that the restructuring should not increase the number of RCs any active agencies attend. In general, those agencies crossing RC boundaries have reacted very positively to the restructuring proposal.

Some Regional Committees have more territory to cover and more inactive counties to engage. How does BoS make it fair to all concerned with regard to this issue, taking into account these disparities? What are the expectations of active Regional Committees taking on counties that are currently inactive?

The Restructuring Workgroup and BoS staff worked to minimize this disparity, but it does indeed exist. Some Regional Committees have more inactive counties than others. BoS staff will work with these RCs on strategies to engage and outreach these communities, offer contacts whenever present, and advocate for exceptions with state funding agencies and BoS subcommittees, workgroups, and the Steering Committee when warranted.

The Regional Committee Restructuring Workgroup and BoS staff understand that engaging currently inactive counties will be a challenge. It is important to realize that the CoC expects the new Regional Committees to regularly and consistently engage and outreach these inactive counties in order to increase participation in the Regional Committee. We understand that it will take time to get regular, active involvement from many of these counties. The CoC will measure success with these inactive counties in small ways. Any activity in these counties is a bonus at this point. Where possible, CoC staff will assist in the Regional Committee's outreach by requesting that state partners encourage participation and by providing historical information like lists of known programs and past contacts in the area.

The CoC recommends that RCs 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 rehousing, 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.

How will we receive feedback to our responses and questions?

First, BoS staff is creating this Frequently Asked Questions document to answer all of the questions that RCs presented in the feedback. Second, BoS staff will offer one-on-one phone calls to existing RCs to answer lingering questions. Individual staff will also be available throughout the process informally to help Transition Committees as they plan for the future and connect new RCs to resources applicable to their questions and needs. Please see an outline of the ongoing support from the BoS staff on page 2 of this document.

Can we see feedback to our responses? Can we see feedback from other counties in our proposed regions? Can we see feedback from other regions?

Feedback to your responses and questions will come through this document, phone calls, and emails as requested. The best way for your RCs to hear the feedback from other RCs is to call and have conversations with current Regional Leads. For the specific proposed area, the RC should be reaching out and having conversations and meetings with those groups. The RC will likely get more detailed feedback from those conversations than the feedback shared with BoS.



What are the consequences if a current Regional Committee decides not to participate in the new structure?

If the Steering Committee approves the restructuring proposal, then the new configuration is the way the BoS CoC will operate until changes are made in the future. Current Regional Committees unwilling to participate in the new structure put their access to ESG and CoC funding at risk. For communities that currently have CoC and ESG funding, grantees must participate in the RC in order to qualify to apply for new and renewal funding.

How are Regional Leads picked?

RCs choose their Regional Leads through elections at which Regional Committee members vote. Meeting minutes documenting this election must be submitted to BoS staff. New RCs will develop an election process to elect their Regional Leads and other required leadership positions following the existing guidelines.

When choosing a Regional Lead for the RC, it is important to elect someone with the capacity and know-how to lead. This person will represent the RC at the BoS Steering Committee meeting each month, likely be asked by BoS staff to provide feedback on behalf of your community about ongoing issues, serve as the main conduit of information from the BoS CoC, and serve a wide variety of roles across the entire region of the RC. Good Regional Leads are collaborators. They know how to engage with other folks. They have a clear, honest communication style. Good Regional Leads have vision and invite others into that vision to participate. They know how to be part of a team but can also stand up and lead when necessary to get to an end goal. Regional Leads have a day job but can step back from their agency and programs to advocate for the entire RCs agencies and programs.

How do we balance and not weaken existing counties?

Focus on the strengths of each county in your RC and work together to see how those strengths can support any shortcomings that exist in each community. Every county, whether small or large, service-rich or service-poor, resource-rich or resource-poor, rural or urban, brings something to the table. Set up a system that values those perspectives and strives for fairness and equitability. Have the hard conversations early in your transition and identify the places on which you can agree. Take the time to determine your RC's shared values and vision. Take the time to plan how the RC will create balance and strengthen all communities around the table.

Will the proposal give resources for housing a website that would benefit local needs, events, fundraisers, and public awareness specific to the Regional Committee?

This resource exists now. RCs can use the NCCEH website to post their RC information. All individual RC webpages can be accessed from this page: <http://www.ncceh.org/bos/regionalcommittee/>. Currently, RCs only use their webpages to post agendas and minutes (because they are required to). However, BoS staff can have a larger discussion with RCs if interest exists to expand what they want to post to the website.

Funding

How does the new Regional Committee ensure equitable disbursement of ESG resources?



As it has in the past, each RC makes its own decisions about the process for how allocated ESG funding will be distributed in the region. The Transition Committee needs to develop a written plan for funding decisions and allocations that includes representation from each county, remains transparent, and is free from conflict of interest. Plans should have explicit instructions for the funding committee about how decisions are made (i.e. scorecard, priority lists), how funding is distributed (across the full scope of the region, whenever possible), and communication to the funded programs, programs denied funding, and the full RC. A grievance procedure for programs denied funding should be part of funding plans.

Can we be assured that individual county/program ESG funding will remain intact?

No. The BoS CoC does not make decisions of how ESG funding will be distributed. The RCs make these decisions. See the question above about how to “ensure equitable disbursement of resources” for information on how to set up a transparent and fair funding process.

RCs should make decisions about ESG funding the same way the CoC makes decisions about CoC funding. This means that funding committees should be looking at programs that use best practices, have a reasonable scope of work, have the most capacity to perform that work to meet outcomes, and collaborate with other programs in the community. Funding committees should also take service coverage into account when making decisions. This may mean that the funding committee needs to work with the best performing agencies to see if they can expand coverage to reach the entire regional area while also offering performance goals for all community agencies to work towards to receive funding.

With multiple needs, visions, and services in various counties, how would this affect ESG funding?

Whenever engaging with a new group with multiple needs and visions, it is important to ensure that every perspective is heard and that all parties are represented. With new RCs, leadership from the various communities should work together to find what visions, values, and strategies they share in common. This discussion should happen early in the restructuring process so that when harder discussions about services, practices, funding, and other topics emerge, the RC can root those discussions within the context of shared values. Plans for funding decisions need to follow the same pattern. Work to find consensus amongst a representative group of the region. Make the process transparent. Approve a plan within the consolidated RC. Evaluate the process after the Funding Committee makes decisions. Make changes that improve the process and take into account the feedback from RC members.

How will ESG funding be dispersed and will one county in each newly formed Regional Committee be responsible for the funds?

New RCs will develop the written process for the distribution of ESG funds in their communities. A good process would include representation from each county on the Funding Committee to ensure an equitable and fair distribution of resources. This being said, one entity could be chosen to be the fiscal agent for the RC and subcontract with various agencies offering services. The Funding Committee would make these recommendations to be approved by the full RC.

Regarding the ESG application, who is responsible for writing the community application?

RCs will create written plans for an equitable and fair process for funding distribution across the region. RCs will also elect a Funding Committee Lead who will facilitate discussion with their committee, creating a plan for soliciting applications, developing a scoring rubric or scorecard based on RC priorities, and choosing programs to recommend to the RC for approval and application. The Funding Committee



should decide who will write the ESG regional application and organize the submission of this application and project applications to the state ESG office.

Will communities see an increase in financial resources?

Possibly. New RCs with inactive counties or counties with low capacity have an opportunity for accessing more ESG dollars. In the past few years, inactive counties have not been accessing their allotted ESG funding. Some lower-capacity counties have not accessed all of the ESG dollars allotted for their community. Under the new RC structure, RCs can access the allotment for all counties within their geographical boundaries. This increases the amount of ESG dollars going into BoS communities and decreases the amount of money being left on the table and reallocated to other CoCs in the state.

The amount of CoC funds could potentially increase as well. With higher capacity, better collaboration, and potentially increased leverage dollars, agencies may increase their chances of receiving permanent housing bonuses through the Continuum of Care funding process, increasing permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing stock in communities.

When bringing on inactive counties, would CoC scorecards be designed to take this into account so as not to negatively affect new Regional Committee scores?

The CoC scorecard evaluates grantees' programs, not Regional Committees, and currently, the scorecard does not score the activity and performance of the entire Regional Committee; it evaluates the activity and performance of the grantee and its program.

This being said, the CoC Scorecard Committee, made up of representatives from each of the RCs, develops the scorecard each year for the CoC competition. Future scorecards may include new questions such as Systems Performance Measures of the entire Regional Committee. The BoS Steering Committee approves the scorecard. RC leadership need to stay active in scorecard discussions so that the entire BoS understands your RC's specific needs. Remember also that scorecards can also reflect a reality in your community. Just because something scores low does not mean that something will necessarily be defunded. Hopefully, with the RC input, it can illuminate a gap that needs resources so that the RC can improve its services and outcomes.

New Regional Committees taking on inactive counties could see negative effects to their outcomes. How will communities who have historically gotten extra disbursements from ESG be affected? Will these communities lose the chance for extra money?

The BoS staff have already had a discussion about the restructuring process with the state ESG office. We will continue to have this discussion and work with the state to ensure, at a minimum, a grace period for high performing communities, which have traditionally received bonus funding. Of course, this does not guarantee funding to those communities. The state ESG office changes how it distributes these dollars to communities, scorecards reflect changed priorities and rank communities differently, and budget allocations change each year. As with all forms of funding, it is a competitive process and RCs should maximize their chances by working with all members of their communities to increase outcomes, use best practices whenever possible, and prioritize the most vulnerable populations.

Are there incentives to offer inactive counties to encourage them to participate?

Financial incentives are not part of the plan at this point. However, inactive counties have many non-financial incentives to draw them into this process. Becoming active members of the new Regional Committee gives agencies access to permanent housing programs for helping individuals and families



experiencing homelessness in their communities. It gives them access to Emergency Solution Grant and HUD CoC funding that would not be available otherwise. It also gives them a chance to connect with peers doing this work, providing a support network to help them address their needs in ending homelessness.

How do we balance local supporters who want their resources/support to stay local and do not want it regionalized?

See the answer to the question on page 4 about planning and rooting the RC with a strengths-based approach. Once your committee has an agreed-upon vision and values, talk to those local supporters. Share that vision for the future and how your Regional Committee will do better work at ending homelessness if we see this as a regional rather than a local issue. If RCs can get their members enthusiastic about their vision and values, it will be easier to sell to those outside the RC structure and may provide an avenue for pulling them into the larger discussion. Invite these local supporters to come to RC meetings. Let them hear about the work that the RC is doing and how important it is to have the entire community involved in the goal to end homelessness. This is likely the work members of the RC do every day – convincing others of the value of the work at helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We are simply doing this on a larger scale.

PIT/Coordinated Assessment

How will we make the Point-in-Time Count and Coordinated Assessment systems effective?

Planning. Planning. Planning. Your RC's current plan for counting the number of individuals and families experiencing literal homelessness will need to be expanded across the larger region. Each RC must elect a PIT Lead who will lead the planning effort, while the entire RC supports the PIT activities. The PIT Lead will work with a committee of individuals from across the region to create a plan for each county. Remember that the PIT Count will not necessarily be perfect the first or even the second or third years. RCs learn how to do PIT Counts better each year. Find out what has worked well in these communities in the past and try that again. Keep a record of how the count was done, agencies that participated, places visited, and people who volunteered. Build on that in the following year.

The same can be said for Coordinated Assessment. Get started with your implementation. It will not be perfect at the start. The RC will learn and make adjustments as needed. It's important to have a plan of action, including who will participate in the process, but do not let the details get in the way of starting. Choose the RC Coordinated Assessment Lead wisely. This person needs to have a solid understanding of CA and the ability to facilitate an evaluation of the process with participating agencies. RCs will be able to build on what they have learned so far in implementing CA in their current communities.

Will we be expected to join all of our Coordinated Assessment processes into one?

Yes. The BoS CoC expects each new RC to have a new Coordinated Assessment plan submitted to the BoS Coordinated Assessment Council by April 1, 2017. While the new CA plan should have a regional scope, it does not need to have one entry point for the entire region or have constant interaction between counties. The best starting point for new RCs might be to evaluate and update existing community CA plans and then work on how these individual plans connect to one another regionally. CA plans should continue to use the standard assessment tools (Prevention and Diversion Screening Tool, VI-SPDAT, and Case Management Tool), design a system that best meets clients' needs, and assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness move into and maintain permanent housing.



Will existing single-county facilities (e.g. shelters) be expected to become regional facilities, especially since CA will be done on a regional level?

No. Agencies can make decisions about what communities they will serve. That being said, the BoS CoC hopes that new RCs will look at their slate of services as a system to determine where duplications and gaps exist and will work with programs to alter their plans over time to meet identified regional needs. The Restructuring Workgroup made decisions about regional groupings in order to give new RCs improved access to a broader range of program types like shelter, RRH and PSH, thereby creating stronger systems and more options for homeless people in these communities.

In terms of CA, plans must cover the entire area of the RC. RCs can have a separate plan for each county, but the RC must find ways for people within any part of the region who are in a housing crisis to have access to services and that the county plans interact. One way this interaction can happen is for communities who have housing resources but not shelter services to “trade” services. For instance, if a client presents in County A for permanent housing, but it takes 3 weeks to find said housing, County A can work with a shelter in County B to temporarily house this client until the program finds a housing placement. The same thing can happen for the shelter provider without permanent housing resources in their community. If County B with shelter has a client willing and able to move into County A, the shelter can work with County A to permanently house the shelter client.

RCs can effect change for the region through their funding decisions. RCs can prioritize funding to agencies and programs willing to open their services to the region rather than to a single county. The idea is for communities to work together as much as possible, collaborating to end homelessness.

In regards to Point-in-Time Count, will it be a regional committee or by-county count? Who is responsible for reporting?

RCs must provide a Point-In-Time (PIT) count for the entire region. However, the RC decides how this process will happen for the actual count. Each RC will have a PIT Lead responsible for facilitating the process, collecting the count information, and reporting for the entire region based on the regulations in place during that year’s count. Choose your PIT Lead, organize your committee, create your plan for the count, and solicit volunteers for the activities the night of the count sooner rather than later. For current single-county RCs, reach out to existing multiple-county RCs to ask them how they organize their PIT Count across a large region.

