

Feedback on Downsizing the Homelessness Planning Council

Discussion Regarding Downsizing at the February 27, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting

Members reviewed the feedback from the General Membership and HPC Retreat. Members suggested to draft recommendations for downsizing to streamline the conversation at the HPC meeting.

Based on the average size of CoC Boards at peer cities and to ensure an odd number for voting purposes, members suggested that the HPC be downsized to 15 voting members. **Executive Committee members suggested that the 15 voting members be made up of 11 elected by General Membership and 4 appointed by the mayor.** Metro Council representatives would not be included among the 15 voting members, due to recent legislation that deemed them “non-voting”. The Executive Committee suggested that there be **2 Metro Council representatives.**

The Executive Committee noted that there should be ideal backgrounds and expertise that should be represented on the HPC, however, they cautioned to have specific demographics outlined. Liz Mallard noted that the Nominating and Membership Committee has already been planning to engage the General Membership again to identify important sectors, skillsets, etc. that are needed for this year’s HPC election. The Executive Committee also suggested that the All Chairs meeting could function as the working group to identify key backgrounds.

The Executive Committee brainstormed how the attrition of members could work. OHS staff noted that there are currently two vacancies (one elected and one appointed) and three elected members with terms ending this summer. The Executive Committee also suggested to look at attendance records and approach members with poor attendance to see if they have an interest in stepping down.

The Executive Committee noted that the current makeup of the HPC requires at least 5 members with lived experience. At this time, there are 7 members with lived experience. A member suggested that the minimum requirement be reduced to 3 people with lived experience to maintain the current ratios. Other members emphasized that people with lived experience have already fought hard to have a seat at the table and reducing the number represented would be disheartening. Members noted that the number of people with lived experience is solely a minimum and this past year nearly half of the people included on the slate for the General Membership had lived experience, many of which also were leaders in their field.

Members asked what the process would look like to change the HPC Ordinance. CM Courtney Johnston shared that the change to the ordinance would have to be made by Metro Council. CM Johnston shared that this type of legislation works through the Council best when all the kinds have been worked out beforehand. The language will need to be fully cleaned up before Council’s 2nd reading. The legislation has to go through three readings, which takes approximately one month if there are no hiccups.

Responses from the July 2024 CoC General Membership Meeting

What size feels appropriate?

- Downsize to 13 – 15 people (submitted by 4 people)
- Downsize to 12 – 18
- 10-12 board members
- 20 (submitted by 4 people)
- 17-19 members so that there is an odd number for voting purposes.
- 25 is fine if people show up – emphasize the attendance requirement

How should the HPC be broken down by CoC elected, mayor/vice mayor appointed?

- Decrease # of appointees
- Remove political appointees – CoC elected only
- CoC elects 13 and vice mayor/mayor appoint 7 = 20
- VM (1), mayor (4), CoC (8-10)
- If downsizing to 20, 15 elected by the CoC, 3 from the mayor, 2 vice mayor. Mandate attendance.
- Reduce the number of members appointed by the mayor/vice mayor. No more than 20.

Which year should we start the attrition process?

- Start 2024-2025
- No sooner than 2025
- In starting attrition, who wants to drop off proactively?
- Define before started actual decision making process

What demographics are essential?

- Minimum of 15% with lived experience of homelessness with no less than 2 members. “Those closest to the problem are often closest to the solution.”
- Representation from actual encampments that are currently homeless or have been housed in the last 5 years. Divide into regions like the PIT Count.
- Lived experience, landlords, mayor’s office, street outreach, OHS, housing navigators, faith-based, CoC.
- Frontline staff representation. Those in the daily trenches often have a unique perspective and can help ground the vision.
- Law enforcement, legal sector
- The mayor and vice mayor appointees should have vetted experience in the homeless arena. Large corporations that reside in Davidson County should be excluded.
- Individuals with lived experience, individuals of color, philanthropic leaders.
- Lived experience, youth, veterans, law enforcement, legal aid
- People with lived experience, community service providers, emphasis on people doing the work

- What does broad representation look like on HPC?
- There has to be representation from individuals with lived experience.
- Demographics reflecting the range of people experiencing homelessness in Nashville, such as survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, etc.
- Focus on representation of the community (, business sector, gov, lived experience, housing, non profits)
- All demographics that fall under the poverty line
- All demographics are important
- Lived experience, service providers, property management, affordable housing developers

Additional feedback

- People that don't show up for reasons other than emergencies should be cut.
- Can we look at numbers for attendance vs whether appointed by mayor, vice mayor, or CoC?
- Other CoCs in the country have large CoC Governance Boards, but they found ways to outline how business decisions are shared with the Executive Committee. What are some of those models?
- Look at HPCs across the country that are doing well and find out what size they tend to be.
- Folks are asking what HUD "requires" on HPC – that kind of info may need to be highlighted to inform voters.
- Before downsizing I think you hold members accountable to attendance. We need to ensure people who are on it are committed.
- Nominating committee needs to keep diversity of the candidates front and center
- Designate an ad hoc committee with representation of people of PC, Gen CoC, and political to make sure diversity of rep in decision.
- The process needs full transparency – especially flowing with Standards of Care and all committees communicating.
- This group delays every decision. We need to have a protocol and vote accordingly. Accountability.
- How do we ensure that OHS understands that they are not making final decisions on the CoC business & CoC members understand they are not Metro?
- How do we ensure that we emphasize the division of Metro and the CoC?
- Can there be some sort of requirement that members of this board also be required to attend or participate in CoC meetings or committee meetings?
- How do we tie HPC more closely with committee work and tasks?
- I personally feel this could have been an open discussion. This feels closed and its assuming that folks at each table were open to brainstorming together.
- Accountability to attendance. What are the requirements? Emphasize that if folks don't show up they cannot be a member.