



**The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations**

TACIR



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard
Executive Director

DATE: 18 September 2025

SUBJECT: Public Chapter 445, Acts of 2025 (Continua of Care)—Panel

Each year, thousands of Tennesseans are left homeless, with many more at risk of becoming so. And across the state there are numerous organizations that try to help, many of them small, local nonprofits working to provide people who have become homeless with needed services and housing. But the resources and capacity of individual organizations are always limited, and while those serving in this field all share a common goal of resolving homelessness, they may not always align in their strategies or priorities. To better combine and coordinate their efforts, the federal Continuum of Care (CoC) program under the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides community forums for different homelessness services organizations. Yet not every service organization participates in its local CoC; there are some other federal programs related to homelessness services that operate separately from CoCs; and while some local governments in Tennessee participate directly in their CoCs, at present the state government has no formal relationship with any of the CoCs. Moreover, just like homelessness service organizations in general, CoCs are confronting enormous challenges with finite resources.

This year, Public Chapter 445 requested a commission study of the Continua of Care in Tennessee, how they might be improved, and how they might compare to Continua of Care in other states. There are 10 Continua of Care in Tennessee, their coverage areas ranging in size from one to 23 counties.

CoCs are broad groups whose members include nonprofits of all sizes, including faith-based institutions, and sometimes state and local governments. They seek to coordinate

outreach, assess the needs of clients who are experiencing homelessness and refer them to appropriate agencies for services (or what is referred to as “Coordinated Entry”), and organize nonprofits’ applications for federal funding. Additionally, CoCs are charged with collecting data on homelessness to help better inform needs and policymaking, including both conducting an annual Point-in-Time count of how many people may be homeless on a given night and maintaining a Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) database.

As part of the staff’s research, several key stakeholders have been identified who are knowledgeable about Continua of Care and homelessness in Tennessee. Today, you will hear from four panelists:

- Scott Foster, Executive Director, The Journey Home
- Neru Gobin, Director, Office of Housing and Homeless Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Victoria Lake, Director of Community Health Institute, West Tennessee Healthcare, for the TN-507 Continuum of Care
- Erin Read, Executive Director, Knoxville-Knox Office of Housing Stability, for the TN-502 Continuum of Care