Governance Charter of the

**Lakeshore Housing Alliance** (LHA),

a program of **Greater Ottawa County United Way** (GOCUW)

The Lakeshore Housing Alliance is commissioned by Greater Ottawa County United Way to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness.

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*The Lakeshore Housing Alliance (LHA) is a collaborative group dedicated to identifying needs, developing coordinated strategies and advocating for safe, accessible, affordable housing in Ottawa County.*

1. **Purpose**

The LHA shall coordinate efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing and to alleviate homelessness in the Ottawa County area. Its work will include data collection to document needs, education of its members and the public about affordable housing and homeless programs and needs, information sharing, advocacy about issues of mutual concern, and other tasks to promote the mission of the group.

The LHA will serve as the Continuum of Care planning body for Ottawa County and will annually design a plan for updating the gaps analysis and the Continuum of Care strategy. The LHA will make recommendations for funding allocations, and project prioritization to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), and others.

1. **Definitions**

The LHA is concerned about people in need of affordable housing. The populations in greatest need are those defined as:

* *Homeless persons*

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf>

* *Chronically homeless*

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule.pdf>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Flowchart-of-HUDs-Definition-of-Chronic-Homelessness.pdf>

* *Domestic violence (target population definition*)

In addition to Category 4 of the Homeless definition, “Domestic Violence” means the occurrence of any of the following acts by a person that is not an act of self-defense:

* + Causing or attempting to cause physical or mental harm to an intimate partner;
	+ Placing an intimate partner in fear of physical or mental harm;
	+ Causing or attempting to cause an intimate partner to engage in involuntary sexual activity by force, threat of force, or duress;
	+ Engaging in activity toward an intimate partner that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested.
* *Special Needs*

An adult person/prospective tenant with a physical (including profound deafness and legally blind),mental or emotional impairment that is of long-term duration, and, at the same time, the tenant must have a substantial and sustained need for supportive services in order to successfully live independently. In order to meet the “special needs definition,” tenants must require assistance in at least two life-skill areas, such as:

* + Ability to independently meet personal care needs;
	+ Economic self-sufficiency (capacity for sustained and successful functioning in vocational, learning or employment contexts);
	+ Use of language (ability to effectively understand, be understood and handle communication as needed on a daily and ongoing basis);
	+ Instrumental living skills (managing money, getting around in the community, grocery shopping, complying with prescription requirements, meal planning and preparation, mobility, etc.), or
	+ Self-direction (making decisions/choices about one’s day-to-day activities and regarding one’s future) **OR**
	+ The person is a recipient of SSI/SSDI.
* *Precariously Housed* persons are individuals or families at risk of becoming homeless within 30 days. Precariously housed persons include those individuals and families without resources who are living in the homes of others either in an illegal, or temporary, situation.

*Very low and low income people in need of housing assistance* will be defined using current HUD income limits. Very low income households are defined as families or individuals with incomes at or below 50% of Ottawa County median income. Low income households are defined as those with incomes between 50% and 80% of the Ottawa County median income. In general, households eligible for most housing assistance programs will be those who qualify as low or very low income.

1. **Continuum of Care**

The LHA and its member organizations will work to offer a variety of housing opportunities including:

* *Emergency Shelter or Interim Housing* provides temporary housing for up to 90 days to individuals and families in need.
* *Transitional housing* is defined as temporary housing (less than 24 months) enhanced/supplemented with supportive services to assist homeless populations to be successful in obtaining and remaining in housing.
* *Rapid Re-Housing* isa housing strategy designed to encourage long-term housing stability by providing homeless households with permanent housing as quickly as possible and surrounding the household with supportive services.
* *Permanent Supportive Housing* provides long term housing linked with supportive services for homeless individuals and families or homeless and disabled households.
* *Affordable Housing:* For housing to be affordable, a household should be paying no more than 30% of the gross monthly income for housing expenses. Opportunities are available in the county to meet the needs of renters, potential homebuyers and homeowners such as:
	+ Rental assistance for households with a sudden reduction of income
	+ Foreclosure prevention services
	+ First month’s rent and security deposit for households moving out of homelessness
	+ Purchase assistance such as down payment assistance
	+ Affordable homeownership through existing programs
	+ Educational opportunities for first time homebuyers
	+ Supportive Housing for special needs populations (see Section 3 for definition)

1. **Housing First**

Housing programs offered by the LHA member organizations will be expected, to the extent reasonably possible, to align with a Housing First philosophy. LHA’s Housing First philosophy is as follows:

*We believe that all persons deserve access to decent, affordable, safe, stable housing, and to the supportive services needed to maintain permanent housing. The housing services community should prioritize four essential activities:*

* *providing screening, crisis intervention, and emergency services to individuals and families who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness,*
* *preventing those at risk of homelessness from losing their housing whenever possible,*
* *providing interim housing to those who are homeless while assisting them with securing permanent housing as quickly as possible, and*
* *offering ongoing supportive services focused on maintaining housing stability to individuals and households in need of such services.*

 **VI. Membership**

Membership in the LHA is open to any organization or individual interested in housing needs and housing-related services in the Ottawa County area.Membership responsibilities include

* + attending at least 50% of regularly scheduled bi-monthly LHA meetings in the last 12 months and
	+ serving on at least one committee or taskforce of the LHA. Attendance at committee and/or taskforce meetings may satisfy attendance requirements.
	+ Each member or member agency is asked to sign a membership form which details roles and responsibilities of membership.
	+ Encourage inclusiveness and diversity among membership by actively seeking out new members. (See Section VII for Voting specifics)
	+ Membership continues as long as the member organization or individual meets membership requirements. An organization may formally withdraw from membership at any time.
	+ or, for organizations and individuals with little or no attendance history, by being recommended for membership by a current member and then having a majority of the membership approve the recommendation.

All organizations that attended the November 1999 inaugural meeting became charter members of the LHA.

**VII. Voting**

Consensus will be sought when formal decisions are warranted or required in the course of conducting the business of the LHA.

* All formal decisions made during a scheduled meeting shall require the presence of a quorum, defined as at least 50% of members being present.
* When formal votes are needed, each member organization or individual shall be granted a single vote.
* For a formal motion to be adopted, it must be approved by at least 51% of those present, with the exception of Governance Charter amendments, which shall require approval by at least two-thirds of those present.
* Proposed Governance Charter amendments will be submitted in writing to all members at least 30 days prior to the meeting upon which the revisions will be voted.
* Any action, with the exception of Governance Charter amendments, may be taken without a meeting if the majority of the membership consents to the action in writing, including electronic correspondence. Consent of this nature has the force and effect of a meeting vote.

**VIII**. **Executive Committee and Staff**

 The primary responsibility of the Executive Committee is to provide direction, feedback and support to the LHA Director. The EC There will be a range of five to nine members elected to serve staggered two year terms. Nominations for vacant Executive Committee members will be solicited from members of the LHA and provided to the Director of the LHA. Those nominated will be contacted by the Director and will have the opportunity to accept or reject his/her nomination. The Key Partner, United Way, will have non-voting membership on the Executive Committee.

*The Executive Committee*

* Will meet at least bi-monthly.
* will engage in planning and make recommendations pertaining to a variety of housing/LHA-related issues, including formation of ad hoc committees, requests for endorsements, and strategic planning
* Elect co-chair persons each year at the Executive Committee meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting, or other such date as designated by the membership.
* Efforts shall be made to recruit officers representing diverse geographical and service areas.
* Will present a slate of eligible and willing candidates at the LHA’s annual meeting. Member organizations and individuals will vote to fill committee member vacancies (See Section 7 on Voting procedures)

*Co-chair persons shall serve staggered two-year terms.*

* With assistance from the coordinator, respond to LHA matters that require more immediate attention including grant compliance issues.
* Establish along with Coordinator meeting schedules and agendas for Executive Committee and bi-monthly meetings.
* Co-chair persons shall chair the bi-monthly meetings,
* ensure that the committees and/or ad-hoc committees make reports, and generally coordinate the yearly activities of the LHA.
* Co-chairs may be re-elected at the discretion of the membership.

 *Lakeshore Housing Alliance Director*

* Facilitates, with LHA Co-Chairs, the creation of agendas for bi-monthly meetings of the membership and bi-monthly meetings of the Executive Committee. Complete and distribute minutes.
* Facilitate communication within the LHA; distribute/disseminate all pertinent information sent by MSHDA, HUD, etc., to LHA members..
* Work with the LHA Executive Team to create an annual LHA work plan designed to achieve goals established by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants.
* Participate in relevant trainings and informational meetings offered by HUD, MSHDA, etc.; disseminate information to LHA members as applicable.
* Represent the LHA at appropriate community meetings and events.
* Facilitate communication at the regional level.
* Write and submit the Emergency Solutions Grant Exhibit 1 document with assistance from other LHA members.
* Write and submit the HUD CoC Program Collaborative Application document with assistance from other LHA members.
* Provide advisory support to the application process for the Community Foundations homelessness prevention endowment funds.
* Provide oversight and monitoring of ESG and CoC Program grantees.

*And in the absence of a dedicated HMIS Lead:*

* Develop strategies and actions steps to accomplish countywide goals by using HMIS data.
* Work in collaboration with HMIS implementation to complete Point in Time, Housing Inventory Chart, Annual Homeless Assessment Report, System Performance Measures and other grant requirements.

**VIIII. Committees**

The following are standing committees of the LHA:

1. The members of the LHA Executive Committee are elected and the committee is responsible for
	1. providing direction, feedback and support to the LHA Coordinator
	2. planning and making recommendations pertaining to a variety of housing/LHA-related issues, including formation of ad hoc committees, requests for endorsements, and strategic planning and
	3. annually reviewing (July) the Governance Charter and recommending changes to the LHA membership.
2. The Allocation and Accountability Committee facilitates the distribution of grants funds including CoC Program Grant, Emergency Solutions Grant and the Homelessness Prevention Endowment grant by:
	1. following a strict procedure for receiving local grant applications including
		1. establishing a timeline for each grant,
		2. providing updated local grant applications,
		3. scheduling applicant presentations and,
		4. taking into consideration local priorities established by the CoC membership to make final distribution decisions.
	2. Including in the decision-making process only CoC members not applying for the specific grant funding.
3. The Homeless Management Information System Agency Administrators are responsible for managing the local homeless data and tracking outcomes.
4. Strategic Planning Work Groups create the action plans for meeting agreed upon goals and objectives. Member agencies and individuals may choose a work group to join or they may be asked to serve by the Executive Committee or the CoC Director.

The Director and/or Executive Committee shall have the ability to create and dissolve adhoc task forces and/or committees as needed. The adhoc task forces and/or committees shall report on their activities to the LHA membership at bi-monthly meetings.

**X.**  **Meetings**

* The LHA shall meet bi-monthly at a time and place determined by the membership.
* The Director will ensure notice of all bi-monthly, annual and special meetings by mail, fax, and/or e-mail to the LHA members approximately one week prior to any meeting*.*
* Co-chairs shall have the ability to call special meetings as the need arises, or at the request of three or more members.
* The annual meeting will include a review of membership and election of Executive Committee. The annual meeting shall occur in October or such other date as the membership approves.