MARICOPA REGIONAL CONTINUUM OF CARE LIVED EXPERIENCE STIPEND POLICY & PROCEDURES

I. PURPOSE & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent framework for compensating individuals with lived experience of homelessness who participate in the governance and work of the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care (CoC).

The CoC recognizes that lived experience constitutes expertise. Individuals who have directly navigated homelessness and the homeless response system bring critical insight to policy development, system design, funding decisions, performance evaluation, and strategic planning. Meaningful participation requires not only representation, but equitable support for that participation.

This policy outlines eligibility, compensation structure, reimbursement of allowable expenses, and administrative procedures to ensure that participation is accessible, equitable, transparent, and compliant with applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

This policy governs compensation for time and expertise, as well as reimbursement of approved expenses. It does not create an employment or contracting relationship between the CoC or its Collaborative Applicant and any individual receiving compensation under this policy.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The implementation of this policy shall be guided by the following principles:

1. Lived Experience as Expertise
Participation by individuals with lived experience is not symbolic or advisory in nature; it is integral to informed and effective governance. Compensation reflects both time and expertise.

2. Equitable Access to Participation
Most CoC participants attend meetings as part of their paid employment responsibilities. Individuals serving in lived experience-designated roles sometimes do not have that institutional support. Compensation and expense reimbursement are intended to promote equitable participation by ensuring that lived experience representatives are not expected to contribute their expertise without comparable support.

3. Transparency and Consistency
Compensation categories, rates, and processes shall be clearly defined and applied consistently across eligible roles and activities.

4. Administrative Integrity and Compliance
All payments and reimbursements shall be administered in accordance with applicable funding requirements, tax regulations, and CoC financial procedures.

5. Minimization of Unintended Harm
The CoC acknowledges that compensation may affect eligibility for certain public benefits. This policy is designed to provide clarity so that individuals can make informed decisions about participation and compensation.

II. ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPENSATION

Compensation under this policy is available to individuals serving in designated lived experience roles within the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care (CoC), subject to the conditions outlined below.

A. ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

An individual is eligible for compensation when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The individual has current or prior lived experience of homelessness;
2. The individual has been formally appointed, elected, or approved to serve in a lived experience-designated role within the CoC;
3. The individual has executed and agreed to comply with all applicable CoC governance requirements, including the Participation Agreement, Code of Conduct, and Conflict of Interest policy; and
4. The individual has completed all required documentation associated with compensation under this policy.

B. PARTICIPATION IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

Individuals in a Board or committee seat representing a government agency, nonprofit organization, funder, or other entity as part of their employment are not eligible for compensation under this policy, even if they also have lived experience of homelessness.

C. PARTICIPATION OUTSIDE OF DESIGNATED ROLES

Compensation under this policy is tied to an individual's formally designated role or assignment. Individuals serving in a lived experience seat on the Board or a specific committee are eligible for compensation only for participation in the body to which they have been appointed.

Attendance at other Board, committee, or workgroup meetings as a member of the public or as a voluntary participant does not qualify for compensation, unless the individual has been formally requested or assigned to attend in a representative capacity by the Board, a committee co-chair, or the Collaborative Applicant.

D. ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

To receive compensation for a meeting or approved activity, eligible individuals must:

- Attend the full meeting or approved activity, unless otherwise authorized; and

- Participate in good faith in the work of the Board, committee, or activity to which they have been appointed.

Specific documentation requirements are outlined in the Administrative Process section of this policy.

E. SUSPENSION OR REMOVAL FROM GOVERNANCE ROLES

Eligibility for compensation is contingent upon an individual maintaining good standing in their appointed role. If an individual is suspended or removed from their governance role in accordance with applicable CoC policies, eligibility for compensation shall cease effective the date of such action.

F. VOLUNTARY ACCEPTANCE OF COMPENSATION

Participation in a lived experience role does not require acceptance of compensation. Individuals may decline compensation in whole or in part.

The CoC shall provide notice that compensation may affect eligibility for certain public benefits. Individuals are responsible for determining how compensation may affect their personal circumstances.

III. COMPENSATION STRUCTURE

Individuals eligible under Section II may receive compensation for approved participation in CoC governance roles and activities, in accordance with this policy and as funding permits. Compensation is subject to the availability of authorized funding and applicable cost principles.

A. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Compensation may be provided for participation in the following activities, when conducted in an official capacity:

1. CoC Board meetings;
2. CoC standing or strategic committee meetings; and
3. CoC ad hoc workgroups formally established by the Board or its committees.

Compensation shall not be provided for optional events, general community attendance, or activities not formally authorized under this policy.

B. COMPENSATION RATE

Individuals serving in designated lived experience seats, as outlined in the CoC Governance Charter, shall be compensated at a rate of **$50 per hour** for participation in meetings of the Board, committees, subcommittees, or other authorized bodies to which they have been formally appointed, in accordance with this policy and as funding permits.

Compensation shall be calculated based on:

- The scheduled duration of the meeting; plus
- One (1) standardized hour of preparation time per meeting.

The standardized preparation hour applies to all eligible lived experience seats and does not require separate documentation or time tracking.

Compensation, including the standardized preparation hour, is contingent upon full attendance and active participation in the scheduled meeting. In limited and reasonable circumstances, the co-chairs of the applicable body may authorize compensation for partial attendance when advance notice is provided and the circumstances warrant an exception.

Examples:

- A two-hour Board meeting shall be compensated as three (3) hours.
- A ninety-minute committee meeting shall be compensated as two and one-half (2.5) hours.

C. FLAT HONORARIA FOR DESIGNATED ACTIVITIES

In limited cases, the CoC may authorize a flat honorarium in lieu of hourly compensation for specific activities where preparation, participation, and follow-up are integrated into a single defined engagement. Examples may include formal speaking engagements, participation in focus groups or listening sessions, community feedback events, or other special activities authorized by the Board or its designee.

Flat honoraria may be provided to:

- Individuals who serve in a designated governance role when they are participating in a special activity that falls outside the scope of their regular Board or committee participation; or
- Individuals with lived experience who are not serving in a designated governance seat but are participating in a one-time or short-term engagement activity.

When honoraria are provided to individuals participating in one-time engagement activities who are not serving in an ongoing governance role, they are not required to execute the Lived Experience Stipend Agreement or complete the standard payroll documentation needed for ongoing participation, unless otherwise required by the Collaborative Applicant's financial procedures.

When a flat honorarium is authorized, the Collaborative Applicant shall propose the amount based on the scope and complexity of the activity. The proposed amount must be reasonable, defensible, and generally consistent with compensation levels previously approved by the CoC for comparable activities. The honorarium amount must be approved in advance by the CoC Board Co-Chairs and documented in meeting materials or other official written authorization prior to the activity.

D. RELATIONSHIP TO EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation under this section is separate from reimbursement of eligible expenses. Expense reimbursement shall not count toward hourly compensation totals and shall be governed by Section IV of this policy.

IV. REIMBURSEMENT OF TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

The CoC recognizes that participation in governance activities may require individuals to incur out-of-pocket expenses. To promote equitable access to participation, eligible individuals may request reimbursement for approved expenses associated with their designated role.

Expense reimbursement is separate from compensation for time and expertise and is not included in compensation reported on Form 1099-NEC.

A. ELIGIBLE TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Reimbursement may be provided for reasonable and necessary transportation expenses directly related to participation in an approved Board, committee, or authorized CoC activity, including:

- Public transportation fares (e.g., bus or light rail);
- Mileage for use of a personal vehicle, reimbursed at the prevailing federal mileage rate; and
- Parking and tolls.

Reimbursement shall be limited to expenses incurred for participation in meetings or activities tied to the individual's formally designated governance role or authorized assignment.

B. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Reimbursement requests must:

1. Be directly related to an approved governance activity;
2. Include appropriate documentation (e.g., receipts or mileage calculation); and
3. Be submitted in accordance with the CoC's administrative procedures.

Mileage reimbursement shall be calculated using the federal mileage rate in effect at the time of travel.

C. ADVANCE TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT

To reduce financial barriers, individuals may request transportation assistance in advance of a meeting, such as a transit pass or ride-share support, rather than seeking reimbursement after the expense is incurred.

Advance support must be requested in advance of the meeting and will be administered in accordance with CoC financial procedures and applicable funding requirements.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

The Collaborative Applicant shall administer compensation and reimbursement under this policy in accordance with their internal payroll and accounts payable procedures.

A. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION PRIOR TO PAYMENT

Before receiving compensation, eligible participants must:

1. Complete a Form W-9.

- The form can be downloaded from the IRS website.
- A physical (hard copy) form is preferred. A clear photo of the completed form may be accepted if necessary.
- Information must be verified and updated each December to ensure accuracy.
- Completed W-9s must be submitted to Payroll@azmag.gov.

2. Complete the Lived Experience Stipend Agreement.

No compensation may be processed until required payroll documentation is on file.

B. ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION AND SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Within seventy-two (72) hours of a completed meeting, the Collaborative Applicant staff assigned to support the applicable body shall submit the meeting attendance sheet and meeting notes to accountspayable@azmag.gov.

Compensation shall be calculated based on verified attendance as documented in official meeting records.

C. PAYMENT METHOD AND COORDINATION

The Collaborative Applicant will process and issue stipend payments minimally once per month. Participants may indicate a preference to:

- Receive payment by mail; or
- Pick up payment in person.

If a participant elects to pick up their payment or receive it at a meeting, the Collaborative Applicant staff assigned to support the applicable body must coordinate with the Finance Department to ensure proper handling and prevent automatic mailing.

D. 1099 ISSUANCE

The Collaborative Applicant shall issue tax reporting documentation in accordance with applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements.

Individuals who receive $600 or more in compensation during a calendar year through payments administered under this policy will be issued Form 1099-NEC. Form 1099-NEC will be issued no later than January 31 of the following calendar year. Participants may indicate a preference to receive their 1099 by mail or pick it up in person. However, if a Form 1099 requested for in-person pickup is not retrieved within a reasonable period, the Collaborative Applicant may mail the form to the address on file.

Participants are responsible for ensuring that their contact information and taxpayer identification information remain accurate. If a participant's name, address, or taxpayer identification information changes, the participant must submit an updated Form W-9 to the Collaborative Applicant to ensure accurate tax reporting.

E. RECORD RETENTION

The Collaborative Applicant shall maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate compliance with this policy and applicable financial procedures, including:

- W-9 forms;
- Attendance verification;
- Billing code documentation;
- Invoices and approvals; and
- Payment records.

VI. PARTICIPANT CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO COMPENSATION

Individuals receiving compensation under this policy should be aware of certain considerations related to tax obligations and potential impacts on public benefits.

A. PARTICIPANT TAX OBLIGATIONS

Compensation provided under this policy is generally considered taxable income. Individuals receiving compensation are treated as independent payees for tax reporting purposes.

As outlined in Section V of this policy, the Collaborative Applicant will issue Form 1099-NEC to any individual who receives total compensation of $600 or more during a calendar year through payments administered under this policy.

Individuals who receive compensation under this policy are responsible for:

- Reporting income received through this policy on their personal tax returns; and
- Seeking independent tax or benefits advice if needed.

The Collaborative Applicant and the Continuum of Care do not provide tax advice and are not responsible for determining an individual's tax obligations.

B. CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

The CoC recognizes that compensation provided under this policy may affect eligibility for certain public benefits, including but not limited to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), housing assistance programs, or other income-based benefits.

Compensation issued under this policy is generally considered income for purposes of benefit eligibility determinations. The impact of compensation will vary based on individual circumstances, benefit type, and total income.

The CoC and the Collaborative Applicant do not provide legal or benefits eligibility advice. Individuals are responsible for understanding how compensation may affect their public benefit eligibility.

To support informed decision-making:

- Participants will receive written notice that compensation may affect benefits eligibility;
- Participants may decline compensation in whole or in part; and
- Upon request, the CoC may provide referrals to appropriate benefits counseling or legal resources, when available.

Nothing in this policy requires an individual to accept compensation as a condition of participation in a designated lived experience role.

VII. OVERSIGHT & POLICY REVIEW

The CoC Board retains ultimate authority over this policy and is responsible for ensuring that compensation and reimbursement practices align with CoC governance priorities, available funding, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

A. OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY

The Executive Committee shall oversee implementation of this policy as part of its broader responsibility to evaluate the functioning of the CoC, as outlined in the CoC Governance Charter. This oversight includes:

- Monitoring consistency in application of compensation and reimbursement standards;
- Receiving/reviewing participant feedback;
- Assessing fiscal sustainability; and
- Recommending updates to the Board as needed.

The Collaborative Applicant shall maintain appropriate documentation to support compliance with this policy and applicable financial procedures.

B. ALLOWABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

Compensation and reimbursement under this policy must be supported by funding sources authorized by the Board and must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the performance of CoC governance activities.

When federal funds are used, payments shall be administered in accordance with applicable federal cost principles and reporting requirements. Nothing in this policy authorizes compensation or reimbursement that is inconsistent with applicable law or funding restrictions.

C. REGULAR REVIEW

The CoC shall periodically review this policy to ensure:

- Continued alignment with the CoC's governance structure and strategic priorities;
- Responsiveness to lived experience participant input;
- Fiscal sustainability; and
- Ongoing compliance with applicable requirements.

The Board may adjust compensation rates, reimbursement standards, or administrative provisions through formal amendment of this policy.

D. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this policy must be approved by the CoC Board. Material changes shall be communicated to affected participants in a timely manner.

ATTACHMENT A. DOCUMENT VERSION HISTORY & RATIONALE

This log provides a concise record of changes to the Lived Experience Stipend Policy & Procedures, including when updates were made, what was changed, and the rationale behind the revisions. This supports transparency, continuity, and onboarding of new leaders/staff.

VERSION HISTORY TABLE

Version	Date Approved	Section(s) Updated	Summary of Changes	Rationale / Reason for Update	Approved By
1.0	03/23/2026	All	Initial release of policy based on update of CoC Governance Charter.	Establish standardized lived experience stipend policy & procedures.	Maricopa Regional CoC Board