Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care

Board Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2026

This meeting was conducted in person and virtually.

MEMBERS	ATTENDANCE
Tamara Bridwell, Maricopa County	Virtual
Tim Burch, Co-Chair, City of Tempe	In-Person
Councilmember Wally Campbell, City of Goodyear	Not Present
David Crummey, PNC Bank	Virtual
Elizabeth da Costa, AHCCCS	Virtual
Jason Flam, City of Mesa	Virtual
Friend Kenny, Youth Action Board	Not Present
Emma Garcia, Valley of the Sun United Way	Virtual
Councilmember Doreen Garlid, City of Tempe	Virtual
Vice Mayor Kesha Hodge Washington, City of Phoenix	Not Present
Gabriel Jaramillo, Vitalyst Health Foundation	Virtual
Benjamin Jeffrey, MACV Foundation	In-Person
Matthew Kelly, Co-Chair, Mercy Care	In-Person
Tianna Matthews, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office	Virtual
Rachel Milne, City of Phoenix	Virtual
Gabe Priddy, Phoenix Rescue Mission	Virtual
Arianna "Nikki" Ramirez, Copa Health	Virtual
Amy Schwabenlender, Keys to Change	Virtual
Nathan Smith, CASS	Virtual
Amy Sullivan, City of Peoria	Virtual
Charles Sullivan, Arizona Behavioral Health Corporation	Virtual
Maria Wildey, Community Bridges, Inc.	Present

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care (CoC) Board was called to order by Co-Chair Burch at 1:30 pm. Roll call was taken to confirm a quorum of members was present.

Co-Chair Burch welcomed David Bridge, the new MAG Community Initiatives Planning Manager supporting the Continuum of Care Board.

2. Call to the Audience

Co-Chair Kelly asked MAG staff whether any public comments had been received. MAG staff confirmed that there were no public comments received and no one had offered public comments at that time.

3. Informational Items

Co-Chair Burch noted that item 3A, the Consolidated Application Strategy Crosswalk Update, was on the agenda for information only and asked if any members had any questions or would like to request a presentation on the item. None were noted.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Co-Chair Kelly stated that Item 4A was on the Consent Agenda, which is the General Membership Agenda Update. Co-Chair Kelly asked if any board member had questions, comments, or wished to request a presentation on the item. None were noted.

Co-Chair Kelly requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda item. David Crummy moved to approve Consent Item 4A, and Ben Jeffrey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following members voting in favor: Tamara Bridwell, Co-Chair Tim Burch, David Crummey, Elizabeth da Costa, Jason Flam, Emma Garcia, Councilmember Doreen Garlid, Gabriel Jaramillo, Benjamin Jeffrey, Co-Chair Matthew Kelly, Tianna Matthews, Rachel Milne, Gabe Priddy, Nikki Ramirez, Amy Schwabenlender, Nathan Smith, Amy Sullivan, Charles Sullivan, and Maria Wildey.

4A. General Membership Agenda Update

The Board approved by consent the agenda update.

5. NOFO Interview Questions

Co-Chair Burch introduced Item 5 and noted that any board member with a conflict of interest must recuse themselves from the discussion and vote. Non-conflicted members were provided with an attestation to sign. In-person conflicted members were asked to leave the table and sit in the audience; virtual conflicted members were asked to remain muted for the duration of Item 5.

Senior Planner Natalie Davenport provided background on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) as the primary mechanism by which the community receives federal funding for the regional homelessness system. In previous years, the community received $52,000,000, funding a wide portfolio of projects, the majority of which is permanent housing. Davenport described the local competition process: applicants submit applications to the local portal; a Rank and Review Committee reviews and scores applications; the CoC combines scored applications with regional narrative responses to create the consolidated application; the consolidated application is submitted to HUD; and HUD reviews and announces awards.

Davenport noted that three items the board typically approves related to the local competition are scorecards, interview questions, and project ranking recommendations. The scorecards and project ranking recommendations were approved at a previous meeting; the interview questions are the final item needed to conduct the local competition. The local competition opened July 1 and closes July 24; after July 24, the Rank and Review process begins.

Davenport provided a reminder on NOFO scorecards, noting they should be considered together with the interview questions as a package used by the Rank and Review Committee. Davenport described notable changes to the scorecard structure, including a standard point structure across shared categories, response to HUD's new requirements for objective and performance-based criteria, expanded financial capacity review for new projects, narrative responses for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and renewal projects, expanded partnership criteria, workforce development and relationship criteria, addition of a new Supportive Services Only (SSO) Coordinated Entry (CE) scorecard, new terminology consistency, and shifts responding to changes between FY25 and FY26. Following the June 29, 2026, board meeting, several items were added to the scorecards: substance use treatment engagement points requiring participant engagement in substance use treatment services as a condition of continued participation (with a three-point and a two-point option); a system-level commitment for additional leverage to respond to a consolidated application measure; and opportunity zones, which were moved to the system level. All updated scorecards are available on the CoC website.

Davenport explained the distinction between new project interview questions and renewal project interview questions. For new projects, five points from the 70-point

total are dedicated to the interview process. For renewal projects, the interview questions are not explicitly scored but may inform performance discretionary points under scorecard item B13. For renewal projects, 60 to 61 of 70 points are drawn from Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) reports validated by staff and scored automatically; 9 points are narrative; and 4 of those 9 points are discretionary points concerning performance measures (B13), which can be informed by interview responses. HUD has heavily emphasized objective criteria for renewals, which is why the explicit interview point allocation is structured differently for renewals versus new projects.

Davenport presented the three interview questions applicable to all new projects, both brand-new and transition grants: (1) How does this project's housing or service model promote participant privacy, choice, and safety? (2) What is your agency's approach to trauma-informed care practices when serving participants, and how is this approach implemented in day-to-day operations? (3) How does your agency plan to effectively serve members of vulnerable populations, specifically survivors of domestic violence, older adults, individuals with complex medical needs and behavioral health conditions, and individuals with substance use disorders?

Davenport presented two additional questions applicable to new projects only, not transition grants: (4) How will this project address specific system-level gaps in housing inventory and service provision, and in what ways will it integrate into and enhance the overall regional homelessness response system? (5) If funding is awarded, what timeline does your agency anticipate for full implementation, and how will your established staffing and financial oversight capacities support that timeline? Davenport noted the NOFO Workgroup's emphasis on Questions 4 and 5: Question 4 addresses new applicants' awareness of the system and where gaps exist; Question 5 addresses the depth of understanding of an agency's capacity needed to assess project viability, particularly for applicants who have not previously administered federal grants or complex operational requirements.

Davenport presented two interview questions applicable to transition grants only: (1) How will this transition change your service model, and what adjustments will be made to staffing and internal systems to successfully implement this new project? Please provide detailed information where available. (2) Describe your transition plan, including key activities the agency will undertake, partnerships that will support the

transition, anticipated challenges, and how you will ensure the continuity of services for current program participants.

Board members indicated the questions were straightforward and well put together and David Crummey moved to adopt them. Natalie Davenport noted the renewal questions had not yet been presented; Co-Chair Kelly confirmed there was more to cover. The presiding officer tabled the informal motion and indicated it would be revisited after the full presentation.

Natalie Davenport proceeded to present renewal project interview questions. Two scored questions already embedded in the scorecards were: (1) Why were full points not received on performance items? (2) What will be done moving forward to improve current project performance? Three unscored clarifying questions were: (1) Is your project proposing any significant programmatic or operational changes for the upcoming grant year in response to the current NOFO? If yes, briefly describe those changes. (2) What factors influenced your decision to submit this project as a renewal project versus a transition project? (3) What distinguishes your project from other projects beyond the project score that supports its placement in Tier 1? Davenport summarized that interview questions are designed to supplement rather than duplicate scorecards; new project questions are scored; renewal questions may inform discretionary points; and both new and renewal projects will have an opportunity for Rank and Review Committee members to ask clarifying questions.

Davenport then presented a local application strategy update and described the Tier 1 and Tier 2 structure, noting that Tier 1 is at 60% of the grant portfolio, which is dramatically different from past years when it was typically around 90%. This change, combined with a $1.3 to $1.4 billion federal set-aside for transitional housing and Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects, means that Tier 2 projects that are not transitional housing or SSO are unlikely to receive HUD funding.

Davenport announced that the team had explored and confirmed the ability to allow agencies to submit dual applications for their renewal projects. Under this framework, an eligible renewal project could submit both a standard renewal application and a new transition grant application simultaneously. If the renewal application does not achieve Tier 1 ranking, the separately submitted transition grant application could still be evaluated and potentially funded. Davenport characterized this as a pivot mechanism to give applicants maximum flexibility in a highly uncertain federal funding environment without compromising the fairness of the local competition. The team settled on this

option after completing viability checks and reviewing policy, and will communicate the option to all applicants immediately upon receiving affirmative board feedback.

There was a question about fairness, and staff responded that the team would ensure all applicants are informed of the option immediately upon board approval. David Crummey asked whether family renewal applicants could be encouraged to submit dual applications so that if they score highly and are funded in Tier 2 as a transition grant, additional permanent supportive housing slots for individuals might be preserved in Tier 1. Staff responded that applicants would be encouraged to review their recent performance data and scorecard information to assess their competitive position and determine whether a dual application is appropriate for their project type.

Elizabeth Da Costa raised two concerns: the timeline — noting that applications are due in approximately 11 days and that rapid dissemination of the dual application guidance is critical — and the Rank and Review Committee's capacity to handle additional applications, including interviews and discretionary points for dual submissions. Staff addressed the capacity concern by describing the transition from a single-track to a two-track interview process implemented in response to the prior year's workload, noting that the prior year saw a 160 to 200% increase in applications, and by noting the availability of a third track if needed. Staff also noted that the new scorecard is predominantly objective HMIS data, reducing the per-reviewer burden even as the total number of applications increases.

Gabe Priddy asked whether dual applications had ever been used before and whether any negative pitfalls or unintentional biases had been observed. Staff confirmed this is the first time dual applications have been considered, directly attributable to the Tier 1/Tier 2 changes in the current NOFO and acknowledged that unique challenges may arise but expressed confidence in the team's ability to adapt.

Co-Chair Kelly raised a procedural concern about whether additional prioritization guidance needs to be provided to the Rank and Review Committee for dual application scenarios, noting that the prioritization list was developed based on the assumption of single applications. Staff responded that the existing board framework is a sufficient base and that operational guidance will come from staff; the board cannot earmark funding or telegraph preferences for specific providers or projects. Co-Chair Kelly noted that in past cycles, insufficient direction to the Rank and Review Committee had resulted in ambiguity. Staff confirmed that operational guidance from staff will facilitate the process and that the board's existing framework is appropriate.

Elizabeth da Costa proposed that a policy statement be added to document the board's decision on how the renewal-to-transition-grant flip would be handled — specifically, that a project's transition grant application would be considered if the renewal application does not make Tier 1. Staff indicated the team would take that note and follow up with a written analysis. Staff noted the existing Rank, Review, and Reallocation Policy has a section addressing projects straddling the Tier 1/Tier 2 line and offered to strengthen language further if board members prefer.

MAG staff provided a clarifying statement that no additional policy language is needed because the ranking process already addresses the Tier 1/Tier 2 transition: projects first compete for Tier 1, and anything that does not fit in Tier 1 automatically falls into Tier 2 under the existing framework.

Co-Chair Kelly confirmed no further hands were raised and called for the motion. Co-Chair Kelly requested a motion for the agenda item. David Crummey moved to approve the proposed 2026 NOFO interview questions, and Amy Sullivan seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following members voting in favor: Tamara Bridwell, Co-Chair Tim Burch, David Crummey, Elizabeth da Costa, Emma Garcia, Councilmember Doreen Garlid, Gabriel Jaramillo, Benjamin Jeffrey, Co-Chair Matthew Kelly, Amy Sullivan, Tianna Matthews, Rachel Milne, Gabe Priddy, and Maria Wildey. Nathan Smith, Amy Schwabenlender, Jason Flam, and Nikki Ramirez recused from the vote. No members voted against the motion.

6. NOFO Advancing Recovery Policy

MAG staff announced the transition to Item 6 and invited all members who had recused themselves from Item 5 to return to the conversation for the remainder of the meeting. MAG staff read the agenda paragraph, noting that the FY26 CoC Program NOFO includes an optional opportunity for CoCs to earn up to 10 preference points by adopting a policy prohibiting illicit drug enablement in CoC-funded housing projects. MAG staff identified Natalie Davenport, Senior Planner, as the presenter of the recommended policy.

Natalie Davenport opened the Item 6 presentation by indicating they would first provide an overview of the consolidated application strategy and scoring snapshot to contextualize the importance of the Advancing Recovery Policy, before presenting the policy itself. Davenport noted that a great deal of the strategy work occurs at both the

staff team level and the NOFO Workgroup level, and invited board members who wish to engage more deeply to contact MAG staff.

Davenport then introduced the Advancing Recovery Policy as the second actionable bonus point category. This policy would bring the CoC's estimated score to 156 out of 202 points. Davenport described the four core policy prohibitions identified by HUD: (1) the CoC will not operate drug injection sites or safe consumption sites; (2) the CoC will not distribute drug paraphernalia on or off property; (3) the CoC will not knowingly permit illicit drug use on property; and (4) the CoC will not conduct any of the above under the pretext of harm reduction. HUD provides for partial credit — 50% of points — if a CoC adopts some but not all elements, with full points awarded for full adoption; a proposed fully compliant policy was included in the board packet. HUD's additional requirements were described: CoCs must also describe remedies for violations, encourage substance use disorder treatment, and not prohibit sobriety requirements in programs; the proposed policy addresses all of these elements.

Davenport described the NOFO Workgroup's review of the policy, noting that the workgroup had a substantive discussion about how the policy aligns with community values and how the community adapts to HUD's changing priorities. The workgroup recommended that the board approve the policy. A key factor in the workgroup's recommendation was a 2025 Dear Colleague letter issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which HUD confirmed as the reference standard for determining allowable versus unallowable activities under this policy.

Davenport described the allowable activities under the HHS Dear Colleague letter, which include: life-saving overdose prevention and response services such as Narcan and naloxone, substance use test kits, lock boxes, medication disposal kits, and overdose reversal training; common-sense public health approaches focused on prevention, treatment, and long-term recovery; advancing community and school substance use prevention knowledge; expanding access to evidence-based treatment; enhancing recovery support services; raising awareness of overdoses and associated tools; and increasing distribution, training, and use of naloxone and similar life-saving interventions. Unallowable activities — those that may not be funded with federal CoC dollars under this policy — include safer smoking kits, syringes, needle exchanges, and other items associated with facilitating drug use. Davenport emphasized that because allowable activities include Narcan and naloxone, the workgroup's recommendation for

approval was made in consideration of both competitiveness and the guidance received from HUD.

Davenport summarized the policy's effect: it increases restrictions for agencies on certain activities, includes remedies the CoC would need to take for violations, but preserves space for activities aligned with the HHS Dear Colleague letter. The policy as drafted refers specifically to CoC-funded housing projects throughout, consistent with the NOFO language. Regardless of whether the Dear Colleague letter is directly referenced in the policy text, the MAG team is able to transmit the letter alongside the policy.

Board member discussion was substantive. Elizabeth da Costa raised a concern that the HHS Dear Colleague letter and the allowable/unallowable table shown in the slide deck are not referenced or attached in the actual policy document, and suggested attaching the table to the policy to clarify the definition of paraphernalia for providers. Benjamin Jeffrey asked whether adoption of the policy at face value — which applies only to housing projects — could put the CoC at risk in other CoC-funded project types such as street outreach, particularly if partner organizations or outreach efforts include items on the not-allowed list. Natalie Davenport responded that the policy as written refers specifically to CoC-funded housing projects and is designed to meet the NOFO requirements as directly as possible; any inclusion of other project types would be beyond the current policy's scope and beyond what the CoC currently funds.

David Crummey asked whether any current CoC recipients operate outside the proposed rules. The presiding officer noted that some recipients may not directly engage in prohibited activities but may partner with or allow organizations to come onto their campuses to offer those services, which under the amended language would not be allowed.

Amy Schwabenlender clarified that her prior question in the NOFO Workgroup concerned harm reduction vending machines funded through a county correctional health subcontract and confirmed those machines do not contain items on the not-allowed list. Schwabenlender also confirmed that to her knowledge, no funded permanent supportive housing programs use federal dollars to purchase not-allowed items. Schwabenlender emphasized the importance of clarifying that the policy applies to CoC-funded housing projects specifically, and that adopting it does not mean the board believes no project anywhere in Maricopa County should engage in activities in the not-allowed column.

Emma Garcia asked how the Dear Colleague letter could be referenced in or alongside the policy to provide guidance to agencies, expressing concern that providers might self-censor or incorrectly assume their services are ineligible. Members agreed about not embedding detailed specifics that could become outdated, but advocated for some form of reference to the letter to reduce the risk of inadvertent non-compliance. Staff responded that it would be straightforward to add a reference to the Dear Colleague letter in the policy; if the guidance changes in the future, the team would bring the matter back to the board through a consent item or presentation. The MAG team is able to transmit the Dear Colleague letter alongside the policy when the policy is transmitted to the community.

Co-Chair Kelly requested a motion for the agenda item. David Crummy moved to adopt the policy as presented with no changes, and Amy Schwabenlender seconded the motion. The presiding officer noted the motion and second were on the floor and clarified for the record that staff had indicated they would transmit the Dear Colleague letter alongside the policy regardless of whether it is directly referenced in the policy text.

The motion passed unanimously with the following members voting in favor: Tamara Bridwell, Co-Chair Tim Burch, David Crummey, Elizabeth da Costa, Jason Flam, Emma Garcia, Councilmember Doreen Garlid, Gabriel Jaramillo, Benjamin Jeffrey, Co-Chair Matthew Kelly, Tianna Matthews, Rachel Milne, Gabe Priddy, Amy Schwabenlender, Nathan Smith, Charles Sullivan, and Maria Wildey.

7. Request for Future Agenda Items

Co-Chair Kelly asked if any members had requests for future agenda items.

Benjamin Jeffrey requested that a future agenda item be added regarding the anticipated August deadline for 211 live operator services in Arizona, specifically Maricopa County, describing it as a significant hit to the live operator system. Jeffrey noted that approximately 30 days prior, a domestic violence presentation in another setting had referenced an active state stakeholder meeting on this issue, and expressed concern that no updates had been received in the intervening weeks given the proximity to the deadline.

MAG staff acknowledged the request and indicated the team is currently monitoring the situation; no updates are available to share at this time, but the team will bring information back to the board once updates are received. The presiding officer noted

that monitoring is also occurring at the jurisdiction level; indicated that a letter of official response has been requested from relevant parties regarding their plans; and noted that 211 online will continue and that most case managers navigating with clients use the digital tool, providing some continued support. The presiding officer committed to bringing updates back to the board when available.

8. Board Roundtable

Co-Chair Kelly asked if any members had items to share for the Board roundtable.

Emma Garcia provided an update on the 211 live operator situation, noting that their team attended a meeting with the Governor's office and partner organizations. Garcia reported that the Governor's office is actively looking for funding to continue 211 services for a period of time while the state reconsiders the service overall. The takeaway from that meeting was that partner organizations would collaborate with United Way Worldwide to identify models working in other cities and proactively share best practices, including how services are funded, with further local conversations to follow about future options. Garcia noted that it is reassuring that additional funding appears likely to be provided to continue 211 services, and offered to return to the board with more information or to work with the MAG team to identify a presenter for a future board meeting.

Adjournment

The presiding officer announced that the next meeting of the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Board will take place on July 27, 2026. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

These meeting minutes were initially drafted using artificial intelligence (AI) and have been reviewed, edited, finalized, and verified for accuracy by MAG staff.