

FREDDIE O'CONNELL
MAYOR



APRIL CALVIN
DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES
PO BOX 196300
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219-6300

Transition of the CoC Planning Grant and Compensation for Lived Experience Representation

Concerning compensation for individuals with lived experience of homelessness serving on Metro boards, commissions, and councils, Metro's legal framework provides clear guidance. Under Metro law, administrative bodies, including their committees, operate as voluntary entities, meaning members are not compensated for their service. This structure aligns with Metro's governance practices, which apply consistently across the more than 70 boards and commissions, many of which include committees. Exceptions to this structure, such as the Board of Equalization, are based on state law mandates, which require compensation for that specific body. However, there is no state or federal law requiring compensation for the Homelessness Planning Council or its committees, including the Consumer Advisory Board.

In November 2023, the Continuum of Care (CoC) voted to transfer the Collaborative Applicant role from the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) to the Metro Office of Homeless Services. This transition reflects our commitment to aligning local governance with the needs of the community and advancing efforts to address homelessness more effectively.

As part of this transition, the Metro Council voted on February 4 to accept the CoC Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This resolution moves the administration of the Planning Grant from MDHA to OHS. It is important to note that MDHA operates under an independent board structure and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Metro Council or the Mayor's Office.

Over the past eight months, Metro has actively explored creative solutions to address concerns regarding compensation for individuals with lived experience. This work included questions about compensation that were asked of and answered by a representative of HUD, consultations with technical assistance providers, and a thorough review of potential options. Despite these efforts, no state or federal law preempts Metro's requirements or permits compensation for these roles within the existing legal framework. For this reason, the CoC Planning Grant will no longer be used to compensate those with lived experience of homelessness effective on February 24, which is the date of the grant fund transfer.

Metro remains committed to valuing and elevating the voices of individuals with lived experience. Should HUD or another federal authority establish a legal mandate requiring compensation for these individuals, Metro will comply fully with such requirements. Until then, we will continue to work within the bounds of the law while seeking innovative ways to support meaningful participation by all stakeholders in our efforts to address homelessness.

We recognize the importance of this transition and the broader discussions surrounding it. Metro is committed to fostering transparency and collaboration as we move forward with these efforts.

For more information, contact:

Demetris Chaney
Public Information Coordinator
Office of Homeless Services
Demetris.chaney2@nashville.gov