

FMCoC Lived Experience Advisory Board

LEAB Framework

The purpose of this framework is to describe how the Lived Experience Advisory Board (the “Board” or “LEAB”) will function. The LEAB framework is managed by the LEAB for their review, revision, and approval. The LEAB is a Standing Committee of the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC). The CoC’s Governance Charter is available [here](#).

The Role of the LEAB:

- The Lived Experience Advisory Board is an advisory body intended to ensure the leadership and inclusion of those with current or past lived experience of homelessness within the FMCoC. The Board amplifies the voices of lived expertise in FMCoC policymaking and fosters a trusting feedback loop between members with lived experience and the system of homeless and housing services in Fresno and Madera counties, and to engage that expertise in decision-making.
- The LEAB members will utilize the LEAB platform to share their experiences and knowledge, make recommendations for improvement, and participate in FMCoC decision-making processes.
- The CoC Interim Rule requires at least one CoC Board Member to have lived experience, but the LEAB is intended to ensure more meaningful integration. Through the formation of the LEAB the CoC seeks to develop a mechanism to engage people with lived experience in continuous improvement processes, evaluations, and decision-making. The LEAB will also inform policy development to improve the quality and effectiveness of services provided.
- The FMCoC will engage members of the LEAB to serve on Request for Proposal/Review and Rank panels, to assist with focus groups to obtain feedback for the annual Coordinated Entry System Evaluation, to sit on and provide updates to the CoC Board, and to assist with formation of a Youth Advisory Board.

Membership Requirements of the LEAB:

- The LEAB should have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 12 members. The term length for each member is a maximum of 2 years at a time. Members will be up for re-election at the meeting that occurs two years after their last term began, or the next meeting in which the LEAB has time on the agenda for elections. Incumbent members asking to be re-elected will have their attendance record made available for LEAB member review during the election process. LEAB members should be prepared to speak about their interest in continuing on the Board. The vote should take place without the incumbent LEAB member present in the room.
- All members of the LEAB should have lived experience of homelessness, past or present.

- This includes people in any housing situation: who have been housed for years, who are newly housed, and who are still experiencing homelessness.
- At least a third of the LEAB (4 Members when at the maximum LEAB capacity of 12) should be “currently homeless” at the start of their LEAB member term.
- Most LEAB members should have lived experience of homelessness within the past five years.
- Board members should have lived experience of homelessness within Fresno and/or Madera Counties.
- The LEAB should strive to represent the population being served by the Fresno Madera CoC (using PIT data).
 - When doing outreach for LEAB members, outreach will be intentional to ensure this representation.
 - The LEAB should discuss how to ensure marginalized groups want to or are willing to join the LEAB.
 - In the interest of representing a broad range of opinions and proficiencies, and to bring voices to the table that are historically and presently marginalized, the Board will strive to include a person who represents each of the categories listed below (one person may represent more than one of these categories). The Board may function without complete representation across all categories, while continuously striving to achieve membership diversity:
 - Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC)
 - Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Survivor
 - Family with Minor(s)
 - Immigrant Experience or “DREAMer”
 - Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ)
 - People with a Disability
 - Jail/Prison Reentry
 - Senior/Aging Adult
 - Transitional Age Youth (Ideally from Youth Advisory Board to ensure coordination and collaboration)
 - Veterans
 - Geographic Diversity: LEAB Members from rural areas and from communities outside of the Fresno metro area.
- On an ongoing basis as membership spaces open, new members will be chosen based on application for membership. Current members will review any anonymized application materials and vote by majority of those present to approve applicants. Approvals to fill open vacancies may not exceed the maximum number of 12 total members.

- The LEAB is unlikely to consider membership applications from employees of local homeless housing or service providers, even those with lived experience.

LEAB Leadership:

- The LEAB may have a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
 - o **Chair Responsibilities:**
 - Set LEAB meeting agendas with support of CoC Board
 - Facilitate LEAB meetings
 - Attend CoC Board and General Membership meetings and bring LEAB recommendations to the CoC Board and provide written or oral updates, as requested, to the CoC
 - Monitor Board size and initiate recruitment efforts when needed
 - Lead updates to the LEAB Framework and Membership Application
 - Manage LEAB email address
 - Anonymize applications for LEAB member voting if CoC staff is unavailable to do so
 - o **Vice Chair Responsibilities:**
 - Send reminders to LEAB members at and before meetings to encourage LEAB attendance
 - Receive and respond to membership applications
 - Facilitate LEAB meetings if Chair is unable to attend
 - Take on duties as delegated by the Chair
 - o **Secretary Responsibilities:**
 - Draft agendas, take and distribute meeting summaries
 - Ensure LEAB tab on CoC website is updated within required timeframes, including with agendas and meeting summaries
 - Take on duties as delegated by the Chair
- Officers should make an effort to actively participate in LEAB meetings.
- Officer elections will occur at the first meeting of each calendar year. Officers will be nominated by and elected by the members of the LEAB. Candidates for nominations to Officer positions must have attended at least three (3) LEAB meetings. Officers serve two-year terms and are eligible for re-election.
- The LEAB appoints the Homeless or Formerly Homeless CoC Board Seat, which per CoC Governance, should be the LEAB Chair or Immediate Past Chair.

LEAB Meetings:

- The LEAB sets its own meeting frequency (subject to budgeting constraints for stipends), and has decided to meet twice every month for 1.5 hours on a recurring meeting schedule. Both a virtual and in-person meeting component will be offered

and the CoC will work with the LEAB to ensure meetings are accessible, especially for currently homeless LEAB Members.

- Membership on the Board gives the right to vote. At least 50% of LEAB Members must be in attendance for a LEAB Meeting to take place (this does not apply to other meetings and Panels that only some Members of the LEAB may participate in). A meeting quorum of 50% plus one member is required to vote. Once quorum is achieved, to bind the Board in any decision, a majority vote of those present and entitled to vote is needed.
 - o Conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which decisions made in a person's official capacity may result in personal benefit or harm. A member who has a conflict of interest should disclose the potential conflict to the other members and must abstain from participating in any vote or decision-making that implicates the conflict.
- In order to keep open lines of communication, enhance collaboration, and support the Board's work, non-members may be invited to attend member meetings and participate in ways as allowed by LEAB members. For example, to present informational items, to seek specific focus group feedback, to answer questions at the request of the LEAB, etc. The CoC will also make available a representative to meet with the LEAB Chair/Co-Chairs prior to each monthly LEAB meeting to assist with setting the agenda and, to attend the LEAB meetings and take meeting notes, assist with facilitation, and perform other duties as requested by the Officers.
- Per CoC Governance, LEAB agendas should go out to members and be posted on the CoC website at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. LEAB meeting summaries should be posted on the website within 3 weeks after the meeting.
- LEAB members will also be asked to attend CoC meetings, serve on funding panels, participate in focus groups, etc.
- The LEAB will work to create ways for members to provide feedback outside of the meetings during off hours or in other flexible ways.
- For in-person meetings (a maximum of once a month), members may request that the CoC provide transportation to and from a central meeting location. This should be arranged through FMCoC staff or the FMCoC Treasurer.
- Members may also submit requests to FMCoC staff or the FMCoC Treasurer for additional assistance in resolving other meeting barriers (virtual or in-person) that affect the member's ability to fully participate in LEAB meetings (for example, a request that the FMCoC pay for childcare during the meeting so the member can attend/focus).

Meeting Recording: For virtual meetings, only the portions of LEAB meetings that contain trainings or third party feedback presentations will have the option to be recorded. The rest of the meeting that includes standard LEAB business (voting on

member applications, closed meeting discussions, etc.) will not have the option to be recorded. If a LEAB member would like a portion of a LEAB meeting recorded (and the trainer or presenter consents to being recorded), then all LEAB members in attendance must agree to record the meeting. Even if all members agree to the recording, any LEAB member at any time may mandate that the recording be paused before they speak. LEAB meeting recordings may be made available upon request. A request to CoC staff and the LEAB Chair should be made to request access to a LEAB meeting recording. The person who receives the meeting recording may not share the meeting recording with anyone else (including other LEAB members) and should not distribute the LEAB meeting recording to anyone else (this includes making the meeting available for viewing). There is a zero tolerance policy if a LEAB member distributes a meeting recording or lets a non-LEAB member watch a meeting recording and that LEAB member will be immediately removed. LEAB members may not allow other people to listen in on LEAB meetings during virtual meetings without the unanimous consent of all members (with the exception of minor children under a LEAB member's care). If LEAB members need headphones to listen to meetings in a shared living environment to keep meetings confidential, then those should be requested as part of a technology request.

LEAB Use of CoC Technology/Equipment:

All FMCoc LEAB members who have attended at least three LEAB meetings can request LEAB technology/equipment (laptop, internet access devices/hotspots/mifi devices, technology licenses, accommodations technology, etc.) from CoC staff and/or the CoC Treasurer. When provided with technology/equipment, LEAB members will be asked to sign a form agreeing to use CoC technology/equipment in accordance with the below policy.

The availability of this technology is subject to change based off the CoC's budget and is subject to the conditions in this Use of Technology Agreement. If LEAB technology items become limited, access will be prioritized for LEAB Officers. Requests for technology must be made to and approved by the CoC Treasurer. Only active LEAB members can utilize the CoC's LEAB technology items. **When members are no longer part of the LEAB, they must return the LEAB technology promptly, within one week, of resignation or removal from the LEAB.**

The CoC reserves the right to discontinue the use of any technology items made available to the LEAB at any time, without notice, for any reason. The LEAB member in whose name technology is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. The CoC expects all LEAB members to use the technology items responsibly and primarily for LEAB-related purposes:

- Any incidental personal use of LEAB technology should be appropriate and align with the LEAB Code of Conduct. Technology will be used in accordance with its

design and its use will conform to all applicable laws. LEAB members agree not to allow the use of equipment for illegal purposes.

- Laptops will come with a warranty and/or protection plan and malware software. However, LEAB members should not download additional software onto LEAB computers without first consulting with the CoC Treasurer.
- LEAB members shall take care when downloading items onto LEAB technology and be conscious of malware and phishing scams.
- LEAB members shall not share their assigned online account or license information or passwords.
- LEAB members shall take care not to leave LEAB technology in cars when possible, or in other areas where LEAB technology could be at risk for loss or theft.
- Since the use of CoC technology is intended for use for LEAB purposes, no LEAB member should have any expectation of privacy in any use of LEAB technology items.

Other Technology Use Policies:

- Altering or Defacing: LEAB members shall not alter, disfigure, or cover up any numbering, lettering, or insignia displayed on the equipment.
- Maintenance and Repair: The FMCoC agrees to keep equipment in good repair and operating condition. The FMCoC has the right at any time to inspect the equipment and will be given free access to equipment as requested. If a technology device is not working properly, or if LEAB members are having an issue with LEAB technology, they should make CoC staff or the CoC Treasurer aware immediately and make the technology available for diagnostic review and repairs immediately upon request.
- Loss or Damage: if any item of equipment is damaged, stolen, or lost, the CoC Treasurer and CoC staff will be informed immediately.
- Title: title to the equipment will at all times remain with the FMCoC unless transferred to the LEAB Committee member by sale. LEAB Committee members will give the CoC Treasurer or CoC staff immediate notice of any claim, levy, lien, or legal process issued against the equipment.
- Assignment or Subletting by LEAB Committee Members: LEAB committee members will not assign this Equipment Use Agreement or any equipment under this policy, or any interest in the Equipment Use Agreement or equipment, without FMCoC's written consent.
- Surrender of Equipment at End of Equipment Use Agreement: LEAB committee members agrees on separation/termination of this Equipment Use Agreement (when the member is no longer a LEAB member) or at the request of the FMCoC to deliver the equipment in good condition, allowing for reasonable wear and tear, and free and clear of impediments, to 1900 Mariposa Mall, Suite 100 or to such other location as FMCoC may designate which would not increase the cost of delivery.
- The CoC is not responsible for financial obligations arising from unauthorized use of any technology items. Violation of these policies may result in revocation of

LEAB technology items and access at any time.

The FMCoC will provide a brief tutorial that reviews how to operate and use the technology/equipment once it is received. Any questions regarding the above policies and use agreement should be asked during this tutorial.

LEAB Conference Attendance:

The FMCoC tries to make funds available annually for people with lived experience and LEAB members to attend conferences related to the LEAB and CoC's purpose. LEAB members who attend conferences are expected to bring back materials and knowledge gained from the conference for the benefit of other LEAB members. LEAB members may be asked to present on their conference experience at a LEAB meeting.

Not all LEAB members can attend every conference. Conference attendance will be prioritized as follows:

- Members who are interested and available to attend, then,
- Members who have not yet attended a conference paid for by the CoC (otherwise receiving a scholarship to attend a conference does not count as "being paid for by the CoC"), then
- Members with the longest tenure on the LEAB.

Members must have attended at least 6 meetings to attend a conference.

Code of Ethics:

- Applicability:

This Code of Ethics applies when Board members are:

- Representing the Board with members of the community, partners, or the public;
or
- Participating in Board projects, meetings or activities; or
- Attending Board meetings and events.

LEAB members take great pride in representing something bigger than themselves. The Board holds itself to a standard of excellence and expects members to honor the LEAB's mission. Out of respect and consideration for our fellow unhoused neighbors, peers, and colleagues, members should be prepared and organized, so they can be present and engaged when participating in meetings and activities. The LEAB meets members where they are in their journey and will provide the necessary support to enable members to show up meaningfully.

Antiracism Policy:

- The Board is dedicated to advancing antiracism in all Board or Board-sponsored activities. Antiracism is a collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. Antiracist policies produce or sustain racial equity between racial groups. Antiracist ideas are those that suggest racial groups are equals in all their apparent differences – that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group. Antiracist ideas argue that racist policies are the cause of racial inequities.
- All Board Members are understood to be in various stages of learning and applying antiracism, and will be expected to strive to that ideal. If a member(s) is believed to be promoting or applying racism, racist policies, or racist ideas, every effort should be made to respectfully identify this to the member(s) at issue by other member(s), and learning opportunities should be offered.
- If the member(s) at issue continue to promote or apply racism, racist policies, or racist ideas or are unwilling to engage in opportunities for education, the LEAB Officers will add an item to the next regular LEAB meeting agenda for LEAB discussion. Following a discussion of at least 2/3 of current LEAB membership, the below Removal policy may be enacted.

Zero Tolerance for Physical Violence and/or Harassment Policy:

- The Board is committed to a safe and respectful experience for all members at all Board and Board-sponsored activities and will have Zero Tolerance for physical violence and/or harassment of any kind (towards other LEAB Members or to anyone else while carrying out LEAB-related duties/while representing the LEAB).
- The Board defines harassment as any unwanted physical or communication-based conduct that offends or humiliates the recipient, that interferes with their ability to participate and learn or leads to adverse participation-related consequences, and that any reasonable person ought to have known would be unwelcome. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, racial or sexual slurs, name calling, racist or sexist jokes, negative stereotyping, physical assault, bullying, threats, demeaning pictures, posters and graffiti, texts, emails or social media posts shared with the Board.
- Harassment includes the following categories of behavior, whether the behavior occurs once or many times:
 - o Discriminatory behavior: Discrimination refers to treating people differently, negatively, or adversely because of one or more of the following prohibited grounds of discrimination: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, or criminal conviction.

- Personal harassment: Personal harassment includes objectionable conduct, comment, or display made on either a one-time or continuous basis that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment on the part of the recipient. It may or may not be linked to discriminatory behavior.
- Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment refers to any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature, whether on a one-time basis or a series of incidents, that might reasonably be expected to cause offense or humiliation or that might reasonably be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment, an opportunity for training or promotion, receipt of services, or a contract. Examples of behavior that can constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - unwanted touching, patting or leering
 - sexual assault
 - inquiries or comments about a person's sex life
 - telephone calls with sexual overtones
 - gender-based insults or jokes causing embarrassment or humiliation
 - repeated unwanted social or sexual invitations
 - inappropriate or unwelcome focus/comments on a person's physical attributes or appearance
- Bullying: Bullying consists of behavior to attack and diminish another by subjecting the recipient to unjustified criticism and trivial fault-finding, humiliating the recipient (especially in front of others), and/or ignoring, overruling, isolating and excluding the recipient.
- Poisoned environment: A poisoned environment is characterized by an activity or behavior, not necessarily directed at anyone in particular, that creates a hostile or offensive environment. Examples of a poisoned environment include but are not limited to: graffiti, sexual, racial or religious insults or jokes, abusive treatment of a member, and the display of pornographic or other offensive material.
- Physical violence or perceived harassment by a LEAB member should be reported to the LEAB Officers. When physical violence and/or harassment is reported, the Chair will add an item to the next regular LEAB meeting agenda for LEAB discussion. The person accused of physical violence and/or harassment should be put in a virtual "breakout room" or should not be physically present for the discussion and voting related to the incident. Following a discussion of at least 2/3 of current, non-conflicted LEAB membership that determines physical violence and/or harassment occurred, the below Removal policy will be enacted.

Removal and Replacement of LEAB Members:

- Resignation: If a member chooses to voluntarily resign from the Board, the member should provide notice to the other members as soon as possible in writing.
- Attendance-Based: If a member misses two meetings in a row, an Officer will reach out to the Member to see if they still want to be on the LEAB. If the member then misses three meetings in a row with no contact to the Officers or CoC staff, then that missing member can be presumed to have resigned. Before considering the member as resigned and after the first two meetings are missed, other members should attempt to get into contact with the individual and resolve the situation in a manner in line with the missing member's desired outcome if possible.
- Removal: A member may be removed from the Board through vote to remove by 2/3 of all current Board members. The member at issue does not participate in the vote and must be out of the room while voting takes place.
- The CoC Board also has its own Standing Committee Membership Removal process in the CoC Governance.

CoC Support of LEAB - Stipends

- Regardless of whether compensation is a major factor in someone's decision to participate on the LEAB, it is imperative that participants' time and expertise is respected. Compensation for participation is one method communities use to recognize the valuable skills and experience of people with lived expertise of homelessness. At the same time, compensation can have implications for LEAB participants. (For example, in many public benefit programs, stipends are considered "income" and may impact eligibility for essential benefit programs, e.g., CalWORKS, CalFRESH, Medi-Cal, or SSI). The FMCoC has tried to craft flexible compensation options that are best suited to ensure LEAB members benefit and are not harmed by participation. However, LEAB members, with the support of the CoC, will have to determine whether stipends will negatively impact their eligibility for other essential programs. All of members of the LEAB who do not already receive compensation for their time participating in LEAB meetings and other LEAB activities (i.e., via an employer) are eligible for compensation.
- **How stipends will be funded and administered**: The FMCoC will fund the LEAB with stipends from CoC Member dues or allocations from other CoC funding sources. The flexible fund will pay stipends in cash or as gift cards. The Fresno EOC will administer the stipends as the FMCoC Treasurer. When participants first join the LEAB the FMCoC Treasurer will work with Fresno EOC and LEAB members to determine whether they want their stipend by mail, pick up at Fresno EOC, or direct deposit and to fill out associated paperwork.
- **Flat Fee Amounts**: The stipends will be administered in flat fee amounts.
 - o For each 1.5 hour LEAB meeting a LEAB member will be entitled to a \$30 flat fee for participation.

- An additional flat fee will be provided for members who are involved in the following activities known to be requesting LEAB participation:
 - Department of Housing and Development Review and Rank Panel (CoC Chair) and Appeals Panel (2 members),
 - Local/State Funding Review and Rank Panels (HHAP-5),
 - Authentic Engagement of People with Lived Experience Training and LEAB Panel for CoC
- For 2024, an additional flat fee will be provided for up to ten hours of work each month for each LEAB member to work on approved CoC initiatives, subject to member interest and availability. The following CoC initiatives/projects may be included in this 10 hours of work each month:
 - CoC Standing Committee/Workgroup meetings (Homeless Management Information System Users Committee, Coordinated Entry Committee, Advocacy Workgroup, etc.).
 - Shared Housing Initiative/Committee
 - New Coordinated Entry Standardized Assessment Tool or Survey Committee/Initiative
 - Bridge Learning Management System Committee/Initiative
 - Youth Advisory Board Outreach/Youth Initiatives
 - Jurisdictional Funding Panels and Jurisdictional Funding Committee Work
 - LEAB members who have not served on a funding panel previously will be prioritized for funding panel requests.
 - Coordinated Entry Evaluation Implementation
 - Coordinated Entry Lived Experience Feedback Process Development
 - CoC-Mandated Training Support
 - Point in Time County Planning and Point in Time Count Participation
 - Other activities approved by the CoC upon LEAB member request.
- Notwithstanding the above limits, the FMCoC Board may determine that a special initiative project would benefit from an increased amount of LEAB member participation and increase the maximum amount of compensation per month as necessary. That determination shall be made in a written notice identifying the special initiative, the effective date and duration of the increased stipend eligibility, and the temporary maximum amount.
- After each LEAB meeting the LEAB Chair will send a list of attendees to the FMCoC Treasurer for stipend payment. If preferable, the FMCoC Treasurer can also attend each LEAB meeting to do a “roll call” for stipend issuance. Fresno EOC processes stipend payments once a week, so if the LEAB meets or attends a feedback meeting on a Tuesday, the stipend will be issued on Friday. If the LEAB meets later in the

week, the stipend will be issued the following Friday. EOC will track the amount and type of stipends issued to each LEAB member.

- **Limitations of LEAB Compensation:** There are several limitations that are associated with compensation for LEAB members. These include:
 - Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Reporting Requirements: If cash payments to an individual are equal to or exceed \$600 in one calendar year, IRS rules require that the income be reported to the IRS. If an individual receives more than \$600 in cash stipends, the FMCoC will need to report the LEAB member's income and the LEAB member will need to complete a W-9 IRS form. The FMCoC will not take taxes out of the stipends when they are issued. However, the IRS requires the FMCoC to file a 1099 for each person who received \$600 or more worth of cash stipends during a calendar year. In January or February following the year the stipends are received, the FMCoC will file a Form-1099 for each individual LEAB member who received a total amount of cash stipends that equal \$600 or more. **The requirement to report income to the IRS may have tax implications for LEAB members.** The IRS filing could impact their household's tax returns, independent contractor agreements, requirements to provide work eligibility documentation, potential wage garnishment, etc. If a LEAB participant is entitled to \$600 or more in stipends and does not want to fill out a W-9, then the participant should not request more than \$599 in cash stipend payments.
 - Public Benefit Program Eligibility: In many public benefit programs, stipends and other forms of compensation for participation are counted as "income" for eligibility purposes for the months they are received. Even stipends provided through gift cards are considered income. Offering stipends, therefore, can impact a LEAB member's eligibility for important benefit programs that they rely on to pay for housing, food, and other household needs. The rules about what is counted as income, how often payments are received and counted, or the timing when a payment is counted are different in each of the programs. Each individual LEAB participant likely receives a different set of benefits. The different program rules and the different individual eligibility makes it difficult to develop a blanket policy that adequately addresses how stipends may impact an individual's benefits.
 - For example, for CalFresh and CalWORKs, most stipends count as available unearned income during budgeting if they are recurring payments that can reasonably be anticipated to be received every month. This could result in a decrease to a CalFresh or CalWORKs benefit. The exception to this is if the participant decides to receive their stipend in the form of a gift card to a store (gas, grocery, retail

stores) rather than as cash or as a credit card company gift card (VISA cards, etc.).

- Given these benefits nuances, the FMCoC does not want to have compensation for LEAB participation negatively impact a member. Thus, the FMCoC should provide all LEAB participants with information about their stipend options and their associated potential impacts on benefits. The topic of compensation should occur as part of the initial conversation when a participant is deciding whether to join the LEAB so they can be supported in their understanding of the potential impacts of their decision of whether or how to participate.
- The FMCoC would benefit by having an eligibility specialist available for consultation as participants make decisions about how to receive their stipend, whether to participate without compensation, or whether to not participate in the LEAB at all.