



*To connect, collaborate, and coordinate the delivery of services to ensure homelessness is brief, rare, and non-recurring in Calhoun, Cherokee, Dekalb, and Etowah counties.*

**HCNEA CoC AL-505**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**November 20, 2025**

**Welcome**

The November HCNEA Board of Directors meeting convened on Thursday, November 20, 2025. April LaFollette, presiding Board Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**Members Present**

April LaFollette, Craig Scott, Paula Hillan-McLaury, Stacy Parris, Kyle Bryan, Leia Cook, Lori Floyd LaKeeshia Sandlin, La Sha' Robinson, Joseph Weaver, Shannon Jenkins.

**Guests Present**

Kenneth Free, City Manager of Anniston.

**Quick recap**

The board approved a new meeting schedule and evaluated various programs, including Project Homeless Connect events and their recent summit, while also discussing potential expansion to new counties. The group reviewed HUD funding opportunities and requirements, including a \$1.3 million grant application process and new funding allocation priorities that favor transitional housing and other services over permanent supportive housing. The conversation ended with discussions about upcoming grant opportunities and requirements, including the need for policy compliance and program coordination, while planning future workshops and board member outreach.

**Meeting Schedule Updates**

The board discussed and approved a new meeting schedule for 2026, moving to quarterly full membership meetings and monthly board meetings. Board meetings will continue on Thursdays, and the next full membership meeting will be on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025. They also evaluated the effectiveness of Project Homeless Connect events in different counties, considering potentially expanding to outlying areas like DeKalb or Cherokee. The group reviewed the success of their recent summit, which had good attendance and positive feedback, and decided to continue hosting it annually while potentially moving it to a different county. Craig Scott has on the calendar June 24<sup>th</sup> in Etowah County for Project Homeless Connect. A Motion to accept the calendar was made by La Sha' Robinson to accept the calendar and Craig Scott seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed.

### **HUD NOFO Planning and Strategy**

The meeting focused on discussing the HUD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and planning next steps for applying. Participants, including Shannon Jenkins and Craig Scott, highlighted the importance of supportive services and transitional housing, as emphasized by HUD, while noting a shift away from the "housing first" model. The group discussed eligible activities, funding amounts, and the need to collaborate and coordinate services effectively. Kenneth clarified that organizations could apply for up to \$1.3 million, including COC bonus and domestic violence bonus funds, and recommended breaking down projects into manageable pieces to address service gaps and allocate responsibilities among organizations.

### **Grant Allocation and Community Services**

Kyle Bryan discussed the allocation of a \$1.3 million grant, recommending a spreadsheet to track specialty areas and ensure all categories are covered for future renewals. He emphasized the need to be mindful of potential policy shifts, suggesting a balanced approach while navigating the current challenging environment. Kyle also outlined eligible activities for the grant, including domestic violence projects, coordinated entry, and supportive services, and highlighted the importance of addressing childcare needs in the community. He proposed organizing a mental health triage meeting in December with various stakeholders to foster collaboration and discussed the possibility of finding a new operator for the recently closed childcare facility.

### **ESNAP Funding Application Process**

The meeting focused on the upcoming ESNAP funding application process, with Kyle explaining that organizations need to create ESNAPs profiles and submit applications by January 14th, though the application itself hasn't opened yet. Kyle clarified that the process involves two profiles - one for each organization and one for HCNEA as the lead agency - and explained that the Rank and Review Committee will review and rank applications before submitting a consolidated application to HUD. The discussion also covered HUD's new funding allocation priorities, which limit permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing to 30% of funding, while transitional housing and other services will receive the remaining 70%.

### **COC Funding Workshop Planning**

The meeting focused on planning a workshop to inform members about a new funding opportunity. Shannon suggested involving HUD to provide technical assistance, as this COC has been unfunded for years and needs help to secure its first funding. Craig proposed holding the workshop before the December membership meeting, which was already scheduled as a Zoom event. The group discussed the importance of meeting new requirements for the COC board composition, which could earn up to 4 points. They agreed to start reaching out to potential board members, including elected officials and representatives from the business community and law enforcement.

### **Housing and Healthcare Funding Requirements**

The group discussed funding opportunities and requirements, with Craig expressing shock at the funding availability under the current administration. Lori Floyd highlighted the need for letters of housing and healthcare resources, emphasizing the importance of including permanent supportive housing, transition housing, and healthcare services. They also discussed the

requirement for a policy prohibiting campaign and illegal drug use across the geographic area, as well as the need for 40 hours of services per client in transition housing programs.

## **Program Policies and Grant Planning**

The meeting focused on discussing the 40-hour requirement for a program aimed at achieving self-sufficiency, with concerns raised about how participants could balance work and program hours. Kyle suggested coordinating with Gadsden State's skills division to offer GED and certificate programs, starting December 2nd, to help participants enhance their skills. The group also discussed the need to ensure policies are consistent across their geographic area and addressed the challenges of engaging participants who may face barriers to completing the program. Additionally, they reviewed upcoming grant opportunities, emphasizing the importance of aligning with new administration policies and removing content from websites that could disqualify applications. The conversation ended with plans to organize a grant review workshop in early December and to communicate further with the membership about the grant application process.

A motion was made by Kyle Bryan to adjourn the meeting, and Lakeeshia Sandlin seconded the motion.

## **Action Items**

- Grant Workshop for the HUD grant.
- Board requirements for representations from elected officials, law enforcement for additional points for the grant.
- Shannon - Send out the proposed 2026 meeting schedule to all members
- Shannon - Send out the side-by-side NOFO comparison from the National Alliance to end Homelessness to all members
- Kyle - Coordinate and schedule a grant application workshop in early December, inviting all potential applicants and relevant stakeholders (including HUD if possible).
- All organizations intend to apply for HUD funding: Create or update eSNAPS profiles if not already done.
- Board - Begin outreach to secure required board representation (3 elected officials, 1 person with lived experience, 1 business community member, 2 law enforcement officers and confirm their participation before the application process.
- Board - Ensure letters of support/commitment from housing and healthcare partners
- Ken - Coordinate a mental health triage meeting with law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, defense, and stakeholders in early December and send out a poll or find a suitable date.
- Review opportunity zones and determine if service locations qualify, to maximize points on the application
- Board - Develop or adopt a policy prohibiting camping and illegal drug use across the entire geographic area for the COC, as required by the NOFO
- Craig - Contact Gadsden State about potential coordination for GED/short-term certificate programs to fulfill 40 hours/week service requirement for transitional housing clients.
- All Member organizations – Review and, if necessary, update websites and mission statements to remove language that could disqualify applications (e.g. DEI, Housing First, etc.) and ensure alignment with the new HUD priorities.
- Kyle – Establish and communicate the process/timeline for the Rank and Review Committee once the application is open

- Board – Monitor for the opening of the ESNAPs application and communicate the timeline to members once available.
- All organizations that are planning transitional housing projects: Plan for and document how 40 hours/week of services will be provided to clients, including coordination with education providers as needed.