



Seattle-King County Continuum of Care Board Application

Please complete the entire form and email to coc.questions@kcrha.org.

Board Member Expectations and Commitment

Board members are required to attend one regular monthly meeting, as well as one committee or workgroup meeting each month, in addition to any special meetings that necessitate a Board vote. Members are also expected to review and respond to emails and phone correspondence, and to complete other administrative duties as needed, for an estimated commitment of up to 15 hours per month. Applicants must be prepared to serve a minimum term of two years.

| General Information | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Full Name & Pronouns: | Sheriff John Urquhart (ret.) |
| Phone: | |
| Email Address: | |
| Zip Code: | 98040 |
| Are you able to commit up to 15 hours a month for the 2-year duration? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Please indicate which seat you are applying for: <input type="checkbox"/> Elected Public Official <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Business Community | |
| Please indicate the King County region you primarily represent. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional (King County – non-specific) <input type="checkbox"/> Seattle <input type="checkbox"/> North King County <input type="checkbox"/> South King County <input type="checkbox"/> East King County | |

Application Questions

1. Please describe your understanding of a Continuum of Care (CoC).

Continuum of Care is essentially a process to involve community members and solicit their analysis of what they need as far as a response from NGO's and government to the homelessness crisis in the community. In addition, CoC asks the community to identify what they think the priorities should be and then help to allocate resources to those priorities.

To be successful, the community at large needs to be involved, and especially those who are homeless.

I see Continuum of Care similar in many ways to the theory of "community policing" which has been tried and tested for nearly 20 years. Again, the concept involves police departments--and especially "cops on the street"--working with the community to determine what their needs are, and to help prioritize what crime problems they think should be addressed.

The opposite of Community Policing is the attitude of "we're the cops and you're not. Don't tell us how to do our jobs." That attitude does not work. Either in policing or solving homelessness.

Both CoC and Community Policing are an effort to involve those who know the most about what is needed to solve or at least ameliorate community problems. While it seems so logical to do this, resistance in both areas has been extreme, and the typical fallback position has been "we've always done it this way, and we know best!"

Continuum of Care recognizes what works.

2. What motivates you to be on the CoC Board? Please share your specific field of interest related to the CoC.

After 43 years as an urban police officer, including 5 years as the elected King County Sheriff, I have seen the effect that drug addiction, mental health issues, and homelessness (many times in combination) have done to the most vulnerable in our community. I believe government and their elected leaders have an obligation to put forth programs to tackle these problems.

I have also seen, historically, those who made their way into the criminal justice system have not always been prioritized by the Continuum of Care and therefore have had little access to shelter or housing resources, including mental health and substance abuse resources. They have "fallen through the cracks" and therefore can't get out of the system.

Therefore, my goal as a CoC board member would be to advocate for those who might have been under-represented and bring a very experienced criminal justice view to the Board.



3. Describe your vision or understanding of a successful CoC Board.

A successful CoC Board, first and foremost, must have the support of the community at large and its elected representatives, as well as the governing board of the KCRHA.

That credibility must extend to the unhoused community as well. The Board needs to be seen as listening and working with that community. The Board should not dictate solutions but must be collaborative in finding solutions.

Secondly, the CoC needs to make sure funding and policy decisions align with the stated values in the Governance Charter, including, but not limited to a cross-sector and regional approach, transparency, inclusiveness, and make decisions that reflect the diversity of people experiencing homelessness.

The role of the CoC takes on acute importance in the Trump era and the defunding of homelessness efforts beginning in 2026.

4. Describe your leadership experiences and style.

My leadership style is generally described as "transformative." I like to be inclusive in my decision-making and encourage subordinates to come up with solutions they can either make on their own or bring to me. I tend to lead by example.

I believe I have been a leader all my life, whether in high school, college, the business world, or eventually my five years as the King County Sheriff. In that endeavor I led and organization of nearly 1200 employees and an annual budget of \$175 million.

As Sheriff, I led efforts to legalize marijuana in Washington and other states, the only sheriff in the United States to do so. I advocated for the passage of Ref. 74 which legalized same-sex marriage in Washington. I lobbied the Legislature to remove the prohibition of Green Card holders in Washington to become police officers. I advocated for outside investigation of officer-involved use of force, including shootings. I reduced limited the criteria where sheriff's deputies could be involved in vehicular pursuits. I was a strong supporter and advocate for the LEAD program, to help arrestees get the substance abuse help they needed to avoid jail. Finally, I pledged to the King County Council I would not fight their efforts to fund community welfare programs over the Sheriff's Office.



5. Reflecting on the Theory of Change, please describe one way you incorporate this framework in your professional or personal life. Additionally, explain how you would integrate the Theory of Change into your work on the Board and how you intend to advocate for and support the communities you represent.

KCRHA Theory of Change:

If we create a homeless response system that centers people with lived experience, then we will be able to focus on responding to needs and eliminating inequities, in order to end homelessness for all.

I think it is too easy for the "people in charge" to believe that they have all the answers. When this happens, those that have the real experience--and most often have the real answers as well--are excluded.

I fully embrace the principles of racial equity and social justice, not only in my police profession, but in my personal life as well. If we are to make "homelessness...rare, brief, and non-reoccurring," we must believe and act on these principles, listening to the "voices of the people as well. Only then can we be successful.

6. Do you require any accommodations or support to fully participate as a member of the CoC Board?

- Yes
- No

