# Engaging People with Lived Experience of Homelessness
# Example Community Models

*This document was co-developed with the Housing Equity Strategist*. Their insight and feedback was instrumental in building out this guiding resource.*

Below are examples of different community models for PWLEH engagement and partnership. Communities should determine the structure that is best for their current circumstances and needs (*which may be different than what is below*). At the very minimum, we are expecting communities to have people with lived experience of homelessness at your **design and decision-making tables**. While communities may not have a full PWLEH engagement strategy when you join the Cohort, you should have a way to engage PWLEH as you begin to structure and design your team and as you determine what model works best for your community.

| Example Model/Structure | Things to Consider |
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| **Structure: Independent Advocacy Organization made-up of/led by PWLEH**<br>Some communities have an independent organization made up of PWLEH, meaning they have their own revenue (and may not receive any funds from HUD or municipal agencies). They provide paid services and/or receive philanthropic dollars. They determine which members participate on specific initiatives/committees (this would include the HSLC Core Team).<br><br>**Support/Needs from the HSLC Team/Coordinator:**<br>HSLC Local Coordinator (or designee) would need to coordinate with the PWLEH reps and ensure they are briefed and prepared for meetings. | Allows for a diverse group of voices to be able to engage at many different levels of the community in both formal and informal ways that is based on the interest/structure of the PWLEH organization themselves. |

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| **Structure: Community has a <u>formal</u> PWLEH Advisory Board (or YAB/other committee)**<br>Several communities have created formal Boards/Committees for PWLEH. These are often part of the CoC governance structure and have designated seats and decision-making power at CoC and other homelessness related work tables. They designate a certain number of reps to participate on specific initiatives (such as the Core Prevention Team) on behalf of the group (the group identifies who & how many members participate on the Core Team).<br>*Examples: Seattle/King County Lived Experience Coalition (LEC); Chicago's Lived Experience Commission.*<br>**Support/Needs from the Team/Coordinator:** Generally they have committee chairs or staff that are responsible for coordination, etc. Budget to sustain payment of a larger body may come from CoC funds or other community-designated funding, but the HSLC Team may need to identify additional dollars to support work on the Cohort (including the Core Team).<br>HSLC Local Coordinator (or designee) will need to coordinate with the PWLEH reps and ensure they are briefed and prepared for meetings, including potentially providing the technology and/or transportation to participate in meetings. | Moves closer to ensuring people with lived expertise are involved at all levels of planning and decision-making and are engaged in a way that is authentic and driven by those with lived experience. May be harder to form in smaller communities. Often is a larger committee which requires more funding, sustainability planning and oversight. |

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| **Structure: PWLEH reps have seats on all CoC + Homeless-related committees (i.e. CoC board, other committees + workgroups), including on the Core Team, but do not have a separate, structured committee (such as a YAB or Lived Experience Coalition)**<br>Community standards generally outline that, at a minimum, 2 PWLEH seats/reps are on any committee; may be the same people on multiple committees or different people on each committee.<br><br>**Support/Needs from the Team/Coordinator:** Will need to recruit, engage and support PWLEH as members of the Core Team, including securing funding to pay PWLEH for their participation. HSLC Local Coordinator (or designee) will need to coordinate with the PWLEH reps and ensure they are briefed and prepared for meetings, including potentially providing the technology and/or transportation to participate in meetings. | This structure can allow for a diverse perspective/input on the various committees/initiatives and ensures there is PWLEH voice at all tables (designated groups/decision-making spaces), however there can be high turn-over and the need for ongoing recruitment/onboarding that would fall on the coordinator/team. |
| **Structure: Community recruits PWLEH representatives specifically for the initiative (no other structure or PWLEH groups already in place)**<br>For a community who does not already have a PWLEH engagement structure in place, this would likely be the place to start. At minimum the community needs to ensure 2-3 representatives are full members of the Core Team and any other committee/decision-making body during the Cohort.<br><br>**Support/Needs from the Team/Coordinator:** Will need to recruit, engage and support PWLEH as members of the Core Team, including securing funding to pay PWLEH for their participation. HSLC Local Coordinator (or designee) will need to coordinate with the PWLEH reps and ensure they are briefed and prepared for meetings, including potentially providing the technology and/or transportation to participate in meetings. | Can be hard to keep consistent participation; may require ongoing recruitment and on-boarding. If this is where you are starting, ideally this would just the initial step you take to develop a more robust and comprehensive PWLEH strategy. |

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| **Example Model/Structure** | **Things to Consider** |
| **Structure: Hiring PWLEH in staff roles**<br>Some communities have leveraged existing staff with lived experience or explicitly hired PWLEH to serve in these roles, in addition to other roles, to piece together a full-time salaried position. Their role is to serve on committees/workgroups, as well as to focus on recruitment of advocates to form an Advisory Board and participate in providing qualitative feedback about the system. If this is the model, the community must still ensure at least 2-3 PWLEH are on the Core Team and any other committee/decision-making body during the Cohort.<br><br>**Support/Needs from Team/Coordinator:** Ensure intentionality so that there is not just one staff person with previous LE asked to represent all PWLEH and/or that all PWLEH-related projects are not falling onto that one person. Also need to ensure there is adequate training, support, and professional development built in. | Consider the need for professional development and support of someone in this role who may need help understanding how to navigate the CoC and to bring some continuity to their role if they are pulled in many directions on various special committees, workgroups etc. |