CoHEsion

UNITY AMONG MEMBERS

Conference Committee Handbook

September 2026

CoHEsion
Conference Committee Handbook

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1.0 COHESION CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:

1.1 STRUCTURE

- The **Conference Committee (CC)** includes:
  - Board Conference Chair and Vice Conference Chair
  - Board Director of Vendor Relations
  - Program Chair
  - Vice-Program Chair
  - Program Committee/Track Chairs (and optional Assistant Track Chairs for larger conferences or larger tracks).
  - Audio Visual/ Technical Coordinator.
- **Conference Chairs (CHs)** roles include the Board Chairs, Program Chair, and Vice-Program Chair.
- As clients and business needs change, the CoHEsion Board may revise the composition of the **CC**.

1.2 ROLE

- The **CC** is appointed by the CoHEsion **Board**.
- The **CHs** will have one meeting prior to the conference (the Conference Planning Meeting) to plan and schedule the conference sessions on site.
- The role of the **CC** is to plan and deliver a well-balanced conference program, including an agenda of sessions for the various tracks at the CoHEsion conferences. Serving on the committee does involve a commitment of both time and effort.
- See responsibilities outlined in Section 2.0.

1.3 QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE ON THE CC

- Must be a current CoHEsion member, accomplished by registering for a CoHEsion conference, or becoming a member before the conference. Note: If selected to serve on the **CC**, the registration fee for the related CoHEsion conference is waived.
- Member's institution or organization must be a Corporate Sponsor or Ellucian client.
- Has presented a session at one of the past CoHEsion Summit/Ellucian Live conferences or has demonstrated leadership abilities with conference or meeting planning experience.
- Complete the Volunteer Form/Personal Responsibility Form and submit it online at CoHEsionCentral.org.
- **CHs** commitment to attend the Conference Planning Meeting.
- Commitment to attend the CoHEsion conference.

1.4 SELECTION PROCESS

- The Board will solicit volunteers and approve all appointments to the **CC**.
- The **CHs** will solicit nominations for the **CC** and prepare a slate of appointments for Board approval, selected from the Volunteer/ Nomination Forms submitted by members.
- Whenever possible, CoHEsion attempts to balance the institution types (i.e., large/small school, community colleges, and public/private) represented on the committee. A full range of products and services should be in use at the institutions where committee members are employed.

1.5 TERM

The term of service for **CC** members is generally one year, from selection to post conference; however, they may serve for more than one year in succession.

1.6 REMOVAL

CC members may be removed from their position:

- If a member ceases to meet the qualifications prescribed in Section 1.3 above (qualifications to serve on the **CC**).
- By a two-thirds vote of the **Board** whenever, in their judgment, the best interest of the Association shall be served.

1.7 VACANCY

If a vacancy results because a **CC** member is unable to complete his/her term, the **CHs** or **Board** may appoint an individual to fill the remaining term of that vacancy, subject to **Board** approval.

1.8 COMPENSATION/COVERED EXPENSES (EXPENSE FORM)

- **Conference Planning Meeting:** All costs (travel, hotel, and meals) related to the Conference Planning Meeting incurred by **CHs** are covered by CoHEsion. Any vendor representation will incur their own expenses. A signed CoHEsion expense report with all supporting receipts must be approved by the Treasurer before payment can be made. The receipts and expense form may be the originals or scanned and sent electronically. Gratuities should be included with the service to which they pertain and not to exceed 20%. Exceptions will be determined by the Treasurer.
- **Conference:** CC members qualify for a waiver of the conference registration fee. If CoHEsion requests a committee member to arrive one or more days before the conference's normal arrival day, CoHEsion will cover the additional night(s) hotel and meal costs associated with early arrival. ***Volunteers' institutions cover travel, hotel, and meal expenses related to attending the conference.***
- **CH Members:** Board Chairs, Program Chair, and Vice-Program Chair may receive complimentary accommodations dependent on the signed hotel contract. ***Volunteers' institutions cover travel, hotel, and meal expenses related to attending the conference.***
- **CC Members:** Track Chairs may receive a complimentary upgrade or staff room rate (dependent on the hotel contract signed). ***Volunteers' institutions cover travel, hotel, and meal expenses related to attending the conference.***
- **AV Tech:** Will receive complimentary hotel accommodation for their required stay. ***Volunteers' institutions cover travel and meal expenses related to attending the conference.***

2.0 CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATORS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

2.1 PROGRAM CHAIR

- Serve as the central communication contact to the Track Chairs.
- Attend and facilitate monthly Program Committee meetings.
- Coordinate activities with the Conference Committee to prepare for the Conference Planning Meeting, which is held on-site in June or July.
- Arrive one day prior to the conference to attend the Program Committee meeting and dinner.

- Provide articles/posts for emails and to post to appropriate Listservs'/eCommunities.
- Provide email templates for Track Chairs to send 'Call for Presentations' to the appropriate Listservs'/ eCommunities.
- Assist Track Chairs in the solicitation of presentations, panels, etc.
- Monitor sessions submitted in Groupdraft; continually review, assign to track, and set status (see section 6.0 "CoHEsion Presentation Status Codes").
- Update and maintain the Guidebook with the Vice Program Chair.
- Coordinate with the CoHEsion Board Chairs to finalize the schedule of sessions and assign sessions to the appropriate meeting space.
- Assist in the solicitation of vendor participants by recommending vendor contacts to the CoHEsion Board Director of Vendors.
- Coordinate with the CoHEsion Board Chair and Vice-Program Chair to appoint Track Chairs, with **Board** approval.
- Coordinate session room assignments and maintain the session program grid in conjunction with the Vice-Program Chair and Program Committee.
- Coordinate track chairs to assist with registration on the first day of the conference. Front desk presence during conference "peak times" if needed.
- Recruit additional volunteers to man the registration desk and serve as session monitors, if needed, throughout the conference.
- Coordinate AV issues with AV track chair.
- Coordinate door prize giveaways.
- Coordinate appropriate recognition of conference presenters, moderators, and volunteers.
- Send thank-you emails to presenters (excluding vendors/exhibitors) two weeks after the conclusion of the conference.

2.2 VICE-PROGRAM CHAIR

- Assist the Program Chair in coordinating all the functions of the Program Committee as assigned by the Program Chair.
- Attend and facilitate monthly Program Committee meetings.
- Coordinate activities with the Conference Committee to prepare for the Conference Planning Meeting, which is held on-site in June or July.
- Assist the Program Chair with Guidebook updates.
- Arrive one day prior to the conference to attend the Program Committee meeting and dinner.
- Post to eCommunities – Vice-Program Chairs will be responsible for **all** eCommunities postings.
- Vendor presentations - Responsible for communication with vendors regarding their session submissions, approvals, and scheduling.
- Coordinate Dine Around Group Dinners – Coordinate group dinner reservations/cancellations, produce and manage dinner sign-up sheets and restaurant menus/information.
    - Ensure there is a table for displaying the menus and a signup sheet near the registration area.
    - Appoint a track chair to coordinate the groups gathering to go to the restaurant on-site. The track chair is not required to attend the group dinner.
    - Add to the signup sheets the track chair responsible and their cell phone.
- Manage door signage during conference**.**
- Facilitate the Presenter's meeting during the conference.

2.3 COHESION BOARD CHAIRS

- Prepare meeting agendas and minutes (can delegate to Program Chair).
- Have agendas and minutes posted to Board SharePoint.

- Prepare and manage the conference budget. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Coordinate Conference Registration – online and onsite.
- Coordinate the management of the conference with the **Board** of Directors.
- Provide communication between the **CC** and the **Board** of Directors on matters of concern to either group.
- Assist in solicitation of presentations, volunteers, etc.
- Solicit vendor participation as exhibitors, sponsors, and presenters.
- Coordinate post-conference debriefing and prepare a report for the **Board**.
- Develop and continually review the budget with the **CHs**, working to obtain the best solution – price, product, and service – within the conference budget.
- Determine if any budget adjustments are needed.
- Plan and execute the CoHEsion conferences.
- Coordinate Guidebook initial setup and rollout with **CC**.
- Create a Conference folder on **Board** SharePoint for storing all conference documents and materials. (ex: committee list, meeting minutes, budgets, F&B budget, and other pertinent documents).
- If applicable, create shared space for the **CH** to upload working documents.
- **Conclusion** of the conference: upload final budgets, BEO budget, and post-conference committee notes, per PnP bylaws.

2.4 DIRECTOR VENDOR RELATIONS

- Director of Vendor Relations is not responsible for planning, budgeting, or program planning.
- Locate the 'Vendor Guide' in SharePoint under the Vendor tab.
- Solicit current, previous, and new exhibitors.
- Discuss Sponsorship opportunities with companies.
- Work with the President for sponsor-level contracts.
- Work with Vendors to register their exhibit booths and any additional attendees.
- Send the vendor contact person's name and email to the Vice-Program Chair, who will be responsible for assigning their primary contact for submitting and scheduling their sessions.
- During the conference, interact with vendors for any issues.

3.0 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

3.1 PROGRAM CHAIR/VICE PROGRAM CHAIR

See responsibilities outlined in Section 2.1.

3.2 TRACK CHAIRS

- Post messages to appropriate Listservs soliciting suggestions for presentation topics – message templates will be provided by the Board Conference Chair or Program Chair ("Call for Topics").
- Post intermittent messages to Listservs as reminders for presentation proposals - message templates will be provided by the Board Conference Chair or Program Chair ("Call for Presentations").
- Post intermittent messages to Listservs to encourage attendance at CoHEsion conference(s). Message templates will be provided by the Board Conference Chair or Program Chair
- Recruit former presenters/attendees to present via online CoHEsion website directory.
- Help to identify missing topics of importance/interest.

- Review and comment on submitted proposals; update presentation entries as needed in the CoHEsion website. See also "Timeline of Conference Planning" below. (CoHEsion presentations and track modifications should be updated ONLY by the Program Chair; see "CoHEsion Presentation Status Codes" below).
- Maintain continuous communication with presenters in their track – this includes coordinating with the Vice Program Chair for vendor presenters. NOTE that all multi-track presenters should report to the Vice Program Chair.
- Assist in the solicitation of vendor participants by recommending vendor contacts to the CoHEsion Board Director of Vendor Relations.
- Review session presentations for quality and appearance.
- Review presentations and run spell check.
- Save presentations as PDFs and upload documents to Groupdraft or email to **CHs**.
- Assist with any conference preparation as needed the day before the conference.
- Attend the on-site committee meeting prior to the conference and the debriefing meeting.
- Facilitate the Track kick-off and Birds of a Feather session for their tracks.
- Attend presenters' meetings and Opening sessions.
- See Section 5.5 for responsibilities during the conference.

3.3 AUDIO VISUAL / TECHNICAL COORDINATOR

- Serve as the key liaison between the presenters and the AV equipment utilized.
- Main contact with onsite AV company's technical staff.
- Participate in all communications and meetings of the Program Committee.
- N**ot** responsible for recruiting session proposals.
- Assist in the solicitation of vendor participants by recommending vendor contacts to the CoHEsion Board Director of Vendor Relations.
- Prepare to arrive a day or two before the conference start date.

3.4 ASSISTANT TRACK CHAIR (OPTIONAL POSITION REQUIRES BOARD APPROVAL)

- Assist the primary Track Chair in solicitation and scheduling.
- Maintain contact with presenters assigned by the Track Chair.
- Collect and review presentations.
- Must attend the conference.
- Other duties as assigned by the Program Chair or Track Chair.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS

4.1 PRESENTATION SUBMISSION/DEADLINE

- A Call for Presentations goes out electronically via Listservs'/ eCommunities, Newsletters, and CoHEsion's website.
- Presentations are officially due prior to the Conference Planning Meeting. However, CoHEsion will continue to solicit and accept presentations if space is available.
- Presentation submissions are made electronically via the CoHEsion website.
- Submissions are received by CoHEsion and reviewed by the Program Chair and Vice-Program Chair (and available for review by the CoHEsion Board Chair and Vice Chair).

- The Program Chair reviews the submission, assigns the presentation to a Track Chair, and updates the status to PENDING.
- The Program Chair and Track Chair review session submissions for appropriateness.
- Upon receipt of a presentation submission, Track Chairs must notify the lead presenter that the presentation has been received, that the **CC** will meet and finalize the conference program, and that they will be back in touch after this meeting to confirm session approval. (Use the presentation accepted email template provided by the Program Chair).
- Session presentation deadlines are established for the CoHEsion conference by the **CA** based on the timing of the conference, the Conference Planning Meeting, etc. Generally, the deadline is **two weeks** before the conference start date. These deadlines will be distributed to the Program Committee and will be included with communications.

4.2 SESSION TYPES

Presentation proposals may be submitted via the Call for Presentations for various types of sessions that are offered by CoHEsion, including the following:

- **Presentation** – the standard type of lecture session utilizing Microsoft PowerPoint to deliver your presentation
- **BOF –** the traditional Birds-of-a-Feather type session, an open discussion format that does not require presentation materials.
- **Panel** – two (2) or more individuals discussing a particular topic.
- **Pre/Post Workshops** – training that is more detailed than a session, usually hands-on or a detailed walk-through, generally at least 3 hours in length, typically provided at a separate registration fee, and is often limited in enrollment.

4.3 HONORARIA

- **Presenter Reduced Registration:** Lead Presenters may receive a $75 reduction in registration fee.
- **Thank-You Gift**: Each lead presenter will receive one (1) thank-you gift.
- **CH & CC Members:** The Program Chair and Vice-Program Chair may receive an honorarium of $250 and a complimentary upgrade and/or complimentary accommodation (dependent on signed hotel contract).
- **Track Chairs** may receive a complimentary upgrade or staff-rate rooms (dependent on the hotel contract signed).
- **Conference Chair, Vice-Chair, Program Chair, Vice-Program Chair, and AV Tech** may receive complimentary accommodations dependent on the hotel contract signed. ***Volunteers' institutions cover travel, hotel, and meal expenses related to attending the conference.***

5.0 CONFERENCE PLANNING

5.1 CONFERENCE PLANNING MEETING

The **CH** is required to attend the Conference Planning Meeting, which is usually held on-site at the conference location. The meeting will be held at least two to three (2-3) months before the conference; these meetings generally involve traveling on Friday, meeting on Saturday, and departing on Sunday. Details will be provided once the meeting place and times are set.

Prior to the Conference Planning Meeting, the following will need to be completed:

- Presentations received will be made ready for review for the **CC**.
- Each Track Chair should identify session types listed below and in the following categories:
    - Member presentations.

    - Exhibitors.
- If similar sessions are submitted, the Track Chairs are encouraged to talk with both presenters about possibly doing a combined session.

At the Conference Planning Meeting, the tasks/agenda will be as follows:

- Review all presentations.
- Schedule the sessions into time slots, addressing:
    - Topic conflicts.
    - Presenter conflicts.
    - Mix of beginner, intermediate & advanced sessions to ensure a good balance across time slots.
- Consideration should be given to the needs of exhibiting vendors to have their sessions within exhibit days/hours of the conference.

- **Program Chair -** Update selected sessions to "APPROVED" in Groupdraft. "APPROVED" sessions will be made visible to the public.

5.2.1 AFTER THE CONFERENCE PLANNING MEETING

Program Chair: Send the 'Presenters' congratulations' email template to the Track Chairs to send to their presenters with notification of session date and time.

Track Chairs are expected to maintain regular contact with presenters. For all proposed sessions, the Track Chairs will send an email notification to the presenters with the following:

- Acceptance/denial of session proposals to presenter(s) within one week of the conclusion of the Conference Planning Meeting.
- Date and time of their presentation as determined at the Conference Planning Meeting.
- Link to the CoHEsion website (CoHEsionCentral.org) for the Presenter Handbook and PowerPoint template (under the Conferences tab, Presenters Resources).
- Indication that the schedule is subject to change as late as two weeks prior to the conference. This is important as presenters may make travel plans that could be problematic if they depart before the conference concludes and their session schedule must be changed (days and/or time).
- Ensure PowerPoint presentations are received.
- Send PowerPoint presentations, and any additional files, to the Program Chair.

5.3 SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE

- Track Chairs will verify all information needed has been provided for *Presentations Submitted*. This includes but is not limited to:
    - Session title (cannot exceed 60 characters).
    - Presenter(s) names/institutions.
    - Description (2,000 characters or less).

- The **Board Conference Chairs** will review and analyze the budget and recommend appropriate updates.

5.4 TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE

- Track Chairs will confirm they have received the presenters' PowerPoint and PDF versions of their presentations, along with any additional files.
- Track Chairs should review presentations for the appropriate template, basic content, and run spell check. If any changes are made, notify the Presenter.

- Track Chairs are to upload PowerPoint presentations to Groupdraft.
- The **Conference Chairs** will review and analyze the budget and recommend appropriate updates.

5.5 AT THE CONFERENCE SITE

- One or two days before the conference, the **CH** and **Audio Visual/Technical Coordinator** must arrive to attend a pre-conference meeting with the hotel facility management staff.
- One day prior to conference opening, you may be asked to assist with preparing registration setup.
- Track Chairs are asked to arrive one day prior to the conference start date to attend a hotel walk-through and a brief committee meeting.
- Track Chairs are required to attend the Presenters' Meeting to meet your presenters, distribute presenter ribbons and thank-you gifts, and be available to answer questions.
- **CC** members must attend all conference events, including:
    - Presenters' Meeting.
    - Opening / Welcome Session.
    - Membership Meeting.
    - Opening Dinner Event.
- **CC** members should be available for a post-conference debriefing at the conclusion of the conference.

5.6 POST-CONFERENCE DUTIES

- Program Chair: Confirm the final version of all presentations has been received. Contact the Track Chair for any missing presentations no later than two weeks after the conclusion of the conference. This excludes vendor presentations.
- Track Chairs: notify the Program Chair of any presenters who prefer not to post their presentations online.
- Thank-you cards (onsite) or emails should be provided at least two weeks after the conference from:
    - Board Director of Vendor Relations – to all Vendor/ Exhibitors
    - Program Chair – to all Presenters on behalf of the **CC** and **Board**
    - Conference Chair – to **CC**

6.0 COHESION PRESENTATION STATUS CODES (FOR USE BY PROGRAM CHAIR)

- **NEW –** status of all sessions that are newly submitted to the system.
- **PENDING** – session has been reviewed and assigned to a Track Chair by the Program Chair and has received a preliminary approval pending the Conference Planning Meeting.
- **APPROVED** – session is approved, Track Chair has contacted the presenter, and session is online for potential and registered attendees to see.
- **CANCELLED** – session status is updated to CANCELLED but will remain in the session list, so the session does not simply disappear.

7.0 TIMELINE FOR CONFERENCE PLANNING

7.1 NOVEMBER

- Solicit the Conference Committee.

7.2 DECEMBER - JANUARY

- Board Chairs are appointed for the Conference, Vice, and Vendor chair positions during a Board meeting.
- Program Chair and Vice Program Chair are discussed, and motions made for board approval during a Board meeting.
- First kick-off **CH** call with the Program Chair, Vice Program Chair, Conference Chair and Vice Chair.
- Track Chairs – Board will review and discuss volunteers for assignments. A motion will be submitted for board approval.
- Conference Chair will confirm with Program Chair and Vice Program Chair that they have been approved.
- Conference Chair will send the Program Chair the 'Committee acceptance congratulatory email' template located in CoHEsion SharePoint.
- Program Chair will notify the Program Committee that they have been approved to serve using the email template.
    - Request Program Committee send a photo for the conference website.
    - Send the Program Committee a copy of the Conference Committee Handbook.
- Board requests that the conference site be created in GroupDraft to Paley Wu (software used for submission and managing presentations)

7.3 FEBRUARY

- Schedule first Committee Conference Call.
- Create a **CC** Agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Identify monthly scheduled meetings with the **CH**. (Maybe 30 minutes before the Committee Meeting).
- Identify and schedule monthly **CC** meetings.
- Director of Vendor Relations begins to solicit Vendors to exhibit, sponsor opportunities, and to present.
- Registration opens.
- Conference committee webpage, pictures, and roles updated.
- Conference Chair provides 'Presenter email #1 – '**Call for Presentations**' email template to the **CH** for soliciting presentations.
- Program Chair – update the RED text in the email template before sending the template to the track chairs.
- Track chairs send Call for Presentations email to listserv and colleagues.

7.4 MARCH

- Call for Presentations and Registrations sent via newsletter.
- Track chairs need to solicit presentations from colleagues and associates.
- Begin discussing Pre-con/Post con ideas if applicable.
- Create a **CC** meeting agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Conference Chair provides the 'Presenter email #2 Presentation Received' template to the **CH** to send to the track chairs.
- Program Chair - update the RED text in the email template before sending it to the Track Chairs.
- Vice Program Chair – send the Call for Presentations email to the listserv and colleagues.

7.5 APRIL

- Call for Presentations and Registrations sent via newsletter.
- Create a **CC** meeting agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Begin to think about the evening event.

- **CC** Presentation training session - held during the monthly conference call on how to review sessions in Groupdraft.
- Validate everyone can log in to Groupdraft.
- Track Chairs continue soliciting presentations; use the Call for Presentations template.
- Track Chairs – remind them to send the 'Presentation Received' notice for those submitted.

7.6 MAY

- Call for Presentations and Registrations sent via newsletter.
- Create a **CC** meeting agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Track Chairs continue soliciting presentations; use the Call for Presentations template.
- Track Chairs – remind them to send the 'Presentation Received' notice to those who submitted.
- Conference Chair provides the 'Presenter email #3 Presentation accepted/not accepted template to the **CH** to send to the track chairs.
- Program Chair - update the RED text in the email template before sending it to the Track Chairs.
- Track Chairs send the Presentation accepted/not accepted email to submitters.

7.7 JUNE - JULY

- Call for Presentations and Registrations sent via the newsletter.
- Final review by the Track Chairs of presentations submitted.
- Track Chairs determine sessions to be presented.
- The **CH** approves the system after the planning meeting.
- Program Planning Meeting usually occurs in June or July: Attendees are the Board Chair and Vice Chair, Program Chair and Vice Program Chair. Diamond Sponsors representatives may also attend. During the meeting, the team will determine presentation time slots and create the initial program grid.
- After the Planning Meeting
    - Program Chair will share the grid with the group for their final review and input.
    - Conference Chair will notify the web administrator to make sessions available online for public viewing.
    - Conference Chair will provide the 'Presenter email #4 'Presentation Scheduled' template to the **CH.**
    - Program Chair - update the RED text in the email template.
    - Program Chair/Vice Program Chair will send the Presentation Scheduled email and cc the track chair.
- Create a **CC** meeting agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Schedule a meeting with **CC** to discuss program grid.

7.8 AUGUST – SEPTEMBER

- Call for Presentations and Registrations sent via the newsletter.
- Create a **CC** meeting agenda and minutes. Post to Board SharePoint.
- Review during **CC** meeting any final action items.

7.9 CONFERENCE ARRIVAL

- One or two days prior to the first day of the conference (pre-con or opening day), the following will arrive:
    - Program Chair, Vice-Program Chair, AV tech, and Board Chair and Vice Chair will meet with hotel facility management staff to review BEOs.
    - AV tech will also meet with AV staff to review AV and set up for each room and do a walk-through.
    - Pre-Con Track chair will assist with pre-con setup.

- Day before Conference Opening:
    - **CH** Committee will set up registration to open in the afternoon.
    - The Conference Chair will hold a Program Committee meeting. Final review of duties; address any concerns or issues.
    - Do a walk-through of the meeting space with the committee.
    - **CC** Dinner - The Conference Chair will host a Pizza dinner in their suite for all committee and board members.

7.10 CONFERENCE DUTIES ON-SITE

- Assist with the registration desk volunteers as time allows.
- Attend Presenters' meeting.
- Attend First-Time Attendees' meeting (if scheduled).
- Attend the Opening / Welcome Session (arrive early to sit on the front row for recognition).
- Attend Members' Meeting.
- Attend the Opening Dinner Event.
- Assist presenters with any issues.
- Contact AV Tech for any technical issues.
- Attend the afternoon debrief meeting on the last day of the conference with **CHs**.

7.11 POST CONFERENCE

- Thank-you emails/cards (see section 5.5)
- Think about volunteering again.

8.0 QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please contact the **CoHEsion** Office: admin@cohesioncentral.org