



## **ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I – Name and Composition**

The official name of the organization is “Housing Opportunities of Southwest Washington Advisory Council”, hereafter referred to as the Advisory Council, or Council.

The service area of the Council includes the four (4) southwest counties of Washington: Cowlitz, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum.

### **ARTICLE II – Purpose and Mission**

The Advisory Council is charged with advising Housing Opportunities of Southwest Washington, hereafter referred to as the Agency, on matters relating to the development and administration of their agency plans. The Council is responsible for performing the following activities:

1. Educate the public on the needs, problems, and interests of persons in need of housing and related services.
2. Attend local meetings and public hearings to solicit information concerning housing issues and to educate the public.
3. Advocate for resources and changes to support the needs, problems, and issues concerning housing and related services.
4. Provide input on the needs for housing and related services within the agency’s jurisdiction.
5. Review and provide input on program and service data and operations.
6. Work with staff to gather, organize and review local data and information used in planning, coordination, and advocacy.
7. Review Agency expenditures and spending priorities for each county.

## ARTICLE III – Membership

### **Section 1 - Number of Members and Geographic Representation:**

The Advisory Council shall be composed of no more than seventeen (15) members with a minimum of two members from each county. Advisory Council members shall be residents of the county each represents.

**Section 2 - Membership Profile:** Membership of the Advisory Council shall include members representing the following: public, private, veterans, a diverse mix of gender and racial representation, program recipients, seniors and advocacy groups.

**Section 3 - Recruitment:** Recruitment of new members to the Advisory Council will be conducted by the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee shall solicit recommendations from local organizations and agencies and seek (with Agency staff support) new Council members through advertising in local newspapers. (Initial recruitment will be carried out by agency staff in cooperation with local partners.)

**Section 4 - Membership Applications:** Potential Advisory Council members shall submit a Membership Application to the Membership Committee for review. The Membership Committee shall submit its recommendation to the Advisory Council for approval by a majority vote at any Advisory Council meeting when a quorum is present.

**Section 5 - Term of Office:** Members shall serve a three (3) year term and may apply to serve a consecutive three (3) year term. Former members who had completed two consecutive terms may apply for membership after a lapse of one (1) year. Members are elected by a majority vote at any Advisory Council meeting when a quorum is present. Each member's term shall begin in the month he/she is appointed.

**Section 6 – Unexcused Absence:** Three (3) consecutive unexcused absences from regular Advisory Council meetings shall be cause for loss of membership status. Exceptions may be made at the

discretion of the Executive Committee. An excused absence is one where the member has notified either the Council Chairperson or the Agency staff prior to the regular Council meeting in question.

**Section 7 – Conflict of Interest:** Advisory Council members are not permitted to vote on any issue which may affect funding and/or resource allocation if that member has a conflict of interest due to being a volunteer with, employed by, or serving as a board member of any entity related to the issue.

## **ARTICLE IV – Officers and Duties**

**Section 1 – Election of Officers:** The elected officers of the Advisory Council shall be:

**Chairperson** (or Chair)  
**Vice-Chairperson** (or Vice-Chair)  
**Secretary**

These three (3) officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Advisory Council at the November meeting of the Council and shall comprise the Executive Committee. Agency staff will assist in facilitating all meetings by keeping minutes and providing oversight for the officers. The election of these officers shall be by presentation of a slate of nominees, screened by the Nominating Committee, and nominated at the September meeting of the Council. A member's motion, a second, and a majority vote of the members present close the nominations. A majority vote by secret ballot shall finalize election at the November meeting.

**Section 2 – Officers' Duties and Terms of Office:** The officers of the Advisory Council shall perform the duties described in this section. The term of office shall be one (1) year for each officer beginning in January after the November election. No officer may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in that office.

**A – Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall preside at all Advisory Council meetings. The Chair may represent the Advisory Council in State and local activities. The Chairperson shall report the activities of the Advisory Council to the Agency’s Board of Commissioners.

If the Chairperson is unable to serve the primary duties of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will act as Chairperson with the powers and authority of the Chair. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Secretary will act as Chairperson with full authority of the office. (Initially the Vice-chair of the Agency’s Board of Commissioners will serve as the Advisory Council Chairperson)

**B – Vice-Chairperson:** The Vice-Chairperson shall act in absence of the Chairperson with the full authority of the Chair.

**C – Secretary:** The Secretary (with assistance from Agency staff) shall be responsible for the recording of the Minutes of the Advisory Council meetings and recording of attendance at those meetings.

## **ARTICLE V – Meetings**

**Section 1 – Regular Meetings:** Regular meetings of the Advisory Council shall be held monthly for at least ten (10) meetings each year. The Executive Committee may make exceptions to the schedule. Written notice of regular monthly meetings shall be electronically mailed (or postal mail when necessary) to each member at least five (5) days prior to each meeting. Agency staff will assist in facilitating all meetings by keeping minutes and providing oversight to the AC officers. When available, the CEO (or designee) will give a Commissioners report at each meeting.

**Section 2 – Special Meetings:** Special meetings may be called by the Chair and one other officer, or by six (6) or more members of the Council. Notices of special meetings may be transmitted by the postal service, electronic mail, telephone, or any combination of these methods at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting.

**Section 3 – Quorum:** A quorum for a meeting shall be a simple majority of the current number of members on the Advisory Council.

**Section 4 – Attendance by Conference Call:** Members unable to attend any meeting may take part in the meeting by telephone conference attendance (teleconference), providing that notice to so attend shall be given to the Agency staff one day prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI – Committees**

One Agency staff will be assigned to each committee meeting to keep notes and assist the Chair.

**Section 1 – Standing Committees:** Standing Committees shall be permanent in nature. With the exception of the Executive Committee, they shall be appointed by the Chairperson, who shall appoint a Chair for each committee. The Chair of any standing committee shall be responsible for organizing the work of the committee and shall report the progress of the committee's work to the Advisory Council.

**A – Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the three (3) officers of the Advisory Council. The Executive Committee shall meet between regular monthly meetings of the Council to prepare an agenda for the next meeting and to prepare any materials needed at the meeting. The Executive Committee shall conduct essential business on behalf of the Council that requires attention between regular Council meetings and may conduct teleconference meetings when necessary. A quorum for the Executive Committee shall consist of two (2) members.

**B – Membership Committee:** The Membership Committee shall have at least three (3) Council members appointed by the Chairperson in January of each year. One appointee shall be designated by the Chairperson as Chair of the committee. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and investigating the qualifications of prospective members and for making recommendations to the Advisory Council. In addition, at the August meeting, the members of this committee will prepare a slate of nominees for officers of the Council at the September meeting. The committee shall prepare and present the final slate of candidates for the next meeting.

**C – Advocacy-Outreach Committee:** In January of each year, the Chairperson shall appoint at least three (3) Council members to this committee. One appointee shall be designated by the Chairperson as Chair of the committee. The members of this committee shall develop education and advocacy materials for use by AC members to address the public on the needs, problems, and interests of persons in need of housing and related services.

Maintain a list of local meetings and public hearings for members to attend to solicit information concerning housing issues and to educate the public.

**D – Veterans Committee:** All Advisory Council members who are veterans or represent veteran service providers shall be appointed to this committee. One appointee shall be designated by the Chairperson as Chair of the committee. The members of this committee shall review Agency’s veteran program plans for housing and services, fiscal, statistical, and program reports, and give recommendations for program activities and outings.

## **ARTICLE VII – Fiscal Year**

The fiscal and functional year of the Advisory Council shall be October 1 – September 30

## **ARTICLE VIII – Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any Council meeting where a quorum is present by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present. All members must be notified in writing (postal service or electronic mail) at least five (5) days prior to the meeting where the action is to be taken. Amendments must be approved by the Agency’s Board of Commissioners.

## **ARTICLE IX – Parliamentary Authority**

Parliamentary procedures for all regular and special Council meetings, and its committee meetings, shall be conducted in accordance with the latest addition of “Robert’s Rules of Order”.

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