

Head Start of Washington County Inc.,

Policy Council By-Laws

It is the responsibility of each Policy Council member to become familiar with the contents of the By-Laws

ARTICLE I-INTRODUCTION

Section-1: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Head Start of Washington County, Inc., Policy Council.

Section-2 Address

The principle operating address for this council shall be 325 West Memorial Blvd., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

Section-3 Annual Review

These By-Laws, once adopted, should be reviewed by the By-Laws sub-committee annually for revisions and updates.

ARTICLE II-PURPOSE & FUNCTION

Section-1 Purpose

The Head Start of Washington County Inc., Policy Council outlines the major management functions connected with the Head Start program at the grantee level, whether it be a community action or limited purpose agency, and the degree of responsibility assigned to each participating group as outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards and/or Head Start Act.

In addition to those listed functions, the council shall:

- a. Serve as a link between public and private organizations, the Head Start parents, the Grantee Board of Directors and the community it serves.
- b. Have the opportunity to initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements and to receive a report on action taken by the administering agency with regards to its recommendations.
- c. Assist staff to, plan, coordinate, and organize agency-wide activities for all enrolled parents.

- d. Assist in communicating with parents and encouraging their participation in the program.
- e. Recruit volunteer services from parents, community residents, community organizations and mobilize community resources to meet identified needs.
- f. Establish and maintain procedures for working with the grantee agency to resolve community complaints about the program.
- g. Oversee Policy Council funds.
- h. Elect the following Policy Council Officers; Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary.

ARTICLE III-ELECTIONS/VOTING

Section-1 Parent Elections

All members of the Policy Council shall be elected by their peers. When it is deemed safe to meet in person, all parent representatives and alternates to the council shall be elected (except Policy Council officers) during the annual parent orientation meetings held in August of each program year. Replacement council members are elected on an “as needed” basis if there is no seated alternate parent representative available to fill the open seat. Parent/Legal Guardians can be nominated by their peers or nominate themselves. After telling about themselves they are asked to leave the room to be voted on by a show of hands. All those elected will be invited to the September Policy Council meeting. All those not elected will be placed on a waiting list for an open seat.

When unsafe to gather, Parents/Legal Guardians will share their interest and contact information with the Program Governance Coordinator (PGC). PGC will invite all interested Parents/Legal Guardians to the September Policy Council meeting to observe the outgoing Policy Council members hold a meeting. Those still interested in serving will be voted on by their peers via electronic voting. The link to the voting will be shared on Class Dojo.

Section-2 Community Representatives

All potential Community Representatives shall be voted in by the newly seated Parent Representatives during the in-person meeting or virtual meeting in the month of October.

Section-3 Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present at any meeting to make the proceedings of the meeting valid. For the purpose of the

Policy Council for Head Start of Washington County, Inc. meetings, it shall be half (1/2) of its total number of members, plus one (1) to conduct business.

Section-4 Voting

Time sensitive materials can be voted on verbally and/or electrically (via text or email). A voting form with the accumulation of votes will be compiled and kept with the original mail. A copy of the return email/text will be printed out and attached to the voting form for future reference.

Section-5 Limitations

- a. No one employed by the Head Start Program or any member of an employee's immediately family shall be eligible to become a member of the Policy Council. The Head Start definition of "family" is defined in the agency's Personnel Policies under Nepotism, Section 1.5.
- b. No one shall be denied membership for reasons of gender, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, race, creed, economic status or disability. No membership fee shall be required.
- c. Only one voting member per household shall be seated on the Policy Council.
- d. A former Head Start/Early Head Start staff member must wait for one year after leaving the employment of Head Start of Washington County, Inc before they can be elected to serve on the Council as a voting member.
- e. Membership on the Policy Council shall not exceed a total of five (5) years/60 months.
- f. For any Executive Office (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer), first chance will be given to parents of currently enrolled children. If no parent of a currently enrolled child is interested in a position, Community Members (this includes past parents) will be welcome to run for office.

ARTICLE IV-GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Section-1 Composition of the Policy Council

The membership of this council shall consist of the following (1) Parents of currently enrolled children of HSWC Inc., (2) Representatives from the community agencies and/or former HSWC Inc., parents. The percentage will be at least 51% current parents and no more than 49% community representatives. The precise number and method of composition of the Policy Council shall be discussed and approved by the Board of Directors.

Section-2 Qualifications

This council must consist of members representing two general categories:

- a. Parent Representation-The membership of this council shall have representation from each program option. Members shall be parents or legal guardians of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program and elected by the other parents.
- b. Community Representatives/Former Parents (1) Members are representatives of the community or professional organizations which have a concern for Head Start families and contribute to the development of the program. Former parents may be selected as community representatives. Community Representatives shall comprise no more than 49% of the Policy Council. The Head Start Executive Director shall recommend community representatives to the Policy Council for approval. (2) Process: at any time Policy Council members may present suggested names of individuals or agencies from which representation is desired to the Executive Director. At any time, the Executive Director can, on his or her own, select community representatives and approve or disapprove the suggested representatives by Policy Council. All community representatives must then be presented to the Policy Council for approval or disapproval prior to being seated. As stated in the Performance Standards, each community representative must be selected annually.

Section-3: Duties

- I. **All individuals accepting a position to the Policy Council shall:**
 - a. **Parents:** Serve as a liaison between their child's program option and the Policy Council. Therefore it is necessary for the representative to attend the Policy Council meetings, as well as other parent events/functions where parent in-put can be gathered.
Community Representatives: Serve as a liaison between the agency represented and the Policy Council.
 - b. Understand the quorum requirement and attend regularly scheduled meetings. Communicate with the Staff member assigned to coordinate Policy Council in case of absence. If a member is absent for 2 meetings without contact he/she will automatically be removed from the council membership. This includes the Executive Committee (Officers) participants. A letter notifying the member of their removal will be mailed and/or emailed to the member in question.

- c. All meetings shall be recorded by a voice recorder. All voice recordings will be kept until the minutes have been approved, then the voice recording will be erased from the device.
- d. Read, sign and adhere to the Head Start Standards of Conduct, which includes the Confidentiality Policy.
- e. Review all materials in the monthly Policy Council packets that are sent out via email, U.S. mail or sent home with the child (dependent upon members request for receipt of materials) prior to the council meeting.
- f. Participate in Head Start's annual self-assessment, volunteer to serve on the various Policy Council sub-committees and various Head Start advisory committees as needed.

II. Officers (Executive Committee):

a. Chairperson:

- 1. Develop agenda
- 2. Reside over each meeting and keep speakers on subject.
- 3. Keep members informed.
- 4. Allow full discussion so that people are clear about the issues.
- 5. Serve as a moderator and only take sides to vote in case of a tie
- 6. Attend Board of Director meetings.
- 7. Sign all letters for the group when applicable.

b. Vice-Chairperson:

- 1. Substitute for the Chairperson in his/her absence.
- 2. Assist the Chairperson as needed.
- 3. Keep attendance log and document excused absences; notify Policy Council of quorum presence at any time necessary throughout meeting.

c. Treasurer:

- 1. Keep accurate records explaining finances to the members and present a financial report to the membership regarding Policy Council funds.
- 2. Serve as parent spokesperson on the Finance Committee

d. Secretary:

- 1. Start the tape recorder at the start of each meeting.
- 2. Take minutes of meetings and prepare them for presentation at the regularly scheduled Policy Council meetings.
- 3. Help the Chairperson follow the agenda-write down and read motions when they are needed.
- 4. Record all votes taken at the meeting and summarize all reports briefly.
- 5. Write all letters for the group when applicable.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to meet once a month outside of the Policy Council meeting to review/update needed material/policies for the next Policy Council meeting. During the Executive Committee meeting; minutes are reviewed, treasurers report updated, attendance updated, agenda formed along with any other policies/procedures/documents that need reviewed.

Section-5 Conflict of Interest

- a. No member of the Policy Council or any member of a Policy Council member's immediate "family", as defined in the agency's Personnel Policies under Nepotism, Section 1.5, shall have any conflicts of interest with Head Start be it financial or other (ex. vendors, donors, employees).

Section-6 Removal of Policy Council Representative

- a. Members failing to attend two (2) consecutive meetings with no contact will have their membership revoked. This includes Executive Committee (Officers) participants. In the case of a Parent Rep, the alternate from their representing site will serve out their remaining term. If a Community Rep, other Community Representatives will be considered to replace them (the only exception to this attendance policy shall be in the event of the "no show" of pre-arranged transportation paid for by Head Start (i.e. taxi service no show).
- b. Any officer of the Council who fails to perform the duties as outlined in the by-laws can be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee.
- c. Any member found in violation of the signed Standards of Conduct and Confidentiality Policies can be removed by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee.
- d. Any member of the Policy Council can also be removed for any other good cause shown, not in violation of Section 3, subsection e, by unanimous vote of the Executive Committee.
- e. Appeal of termination: If a Council member disagrees with the decision of the Executive Committee, they may appeal to the Council during the next regularly scheduled meeting. They may appeal either in person, or by letter. The decision of the entire Council will be final.

Section-7 Voluntary Resignation:

- a. A member may voluntarily resign from office by either in-person, written, or electronic notification to the Chairperson or Staff member assigned to coordinate Policy Council. The preferable method of resignation would be in written form (hard copy or email).

Section-8 Replacement of Members

- a. Parent members: in the event that there are no alternates available to fill a vacant seat the parent committee shall elect a new parent member to the Policy Council. This election will take place at the earliest date possible. For the sake of time and in order to carry out Policy Council business, the Policy Council reserves the right to fill a vacancy by electing a representative to the Council from the pool of interested parent candidates identified at the Parent Orientation Meetings.
- b. If a representative changes sites before the conclusion of their term, they could continue to serve their elected site if: 1) if there is no open seats at the new site/program option or 2) there would be no representation at their original site.
- c. Community Representatives: Community Representatives can be approved by the Council at any time during the year; however, the total number of Community Representatives can never exceed more than 49% of the voting membership.

ARTICLE V-MEETINGS

Section-1 Meetings

Meetings will be held on the third Monday of each month unless it falls on a Holiday, then it will be held on the second Monday of the month. Meetings will begin at 5:00 PM. Regular meetings will be held September-June. July and August will be used to update Policy Council policies and procedures, By-Laws and Policy Council budget.

- In-person meetings will be held at the Sargent Shriver Center located at 837 Spruce Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740. When meeting in-person transportation (if needed), child care (for children living in your household) and a meal will be provided to members of the Policy Council. The cost of these items will come out of the Policy Council budget.
- Virtual meetings will be held via the GoToMeeting platform when it is unsafe to meet in-person due to a building issue (example: water, heating or air condition issues) or COVID-19 health concerns.

Section-2 Notice of meetings

Written notices shall be emailed to each member at least seven (7) days prior to the date of each regular meeting. A copy of the agenda for the meeting will also be enclosed. If the meeting is held virtually the meeting link will be emailed with all meeting attachments at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. The link will also be emailed the day of the meeting to serve as a reminder.

ARTICLE VI-AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by sending a copy of the proposed amendment to each Policy Council member at least one (1) week before the meeting. The Policy Council may debate an amendment before adoption. All amendments must be approved by the members of the Policy Council.

Updated: 8/23

Approved by the PC: 09/18/2023

Approved by the BOD:

**HEAD START OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, INC.
Policy Council By-Laws Received**

I, _____, a member of the Policy Council for Head Start of Washington County acknowledge that I have received a current copy of the By-Laws.

I have read and understood the contents of the By-Laws and will act in accordance with these policies and procedures as a condition of my role as a member on the Head Start of Washington County Inc.'s governing body.

Along with the By-Laws I have received and signed the Confidentiality Policy, Standards of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy and the Roles of a Policy Council Member. A copy of my signed forms is in a binder with the Program Governance Coordinator.

I understand that at any time I have a question in regards to any of these documents I can contact the Program Governance Coordinator or the Executive Director for clarification.

Signature of Policy Council Member

Date