

By-laws of the Clark County Community Action Advisory Board

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Clark County Community Action Advisory Board (“CAAB” or “Advisory Board”). The Advisory Board is a broadly representative body advising the Clark County Councilors (“Councilors”), and Clark County Community Services (“CS”), which administers the Community Action Program (“CAP”) in Clark County.

ARTICLE II – COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Clark County Community Services recognizes past and present injustice and we work to heal it. We believe that everyone deserves to live a healthy and safe life. We have a moral obligation to support all members of our community who are underserved and underrepresented.

To achieve more equitable services, we must be inclusive and work in partnerships within our community. We use our commitment to equity to inform everything we do to address disparities. We actively listen to and center the voices of those who have been historically underrepresented in order to challenge structural and institutional racism and discrimination. We honor and respect the experiences and perspectives of the people we serve. We look inward to challenge our own beliefs and barriers. We engage and support diverse communities so that they thrive.

We celebrate our community becoming more diverse and hold that our journey and success are intertwined with each other.

ARTICLE III – OBJECTIVES OF CAP

The objectives of the Clark County Community Action Program are to:

- Promote institutional and community changes which address the causes of poverty and to remove barriers to self-sufficiency faced by low-income and underrepresented communities, families and individuals.
- Reduce the impact of poverty on communities, families, and individuals by providing resources for services which are responsive to their needs.
- Promote innovative approaches to addressing the causes and impacts of poverty in the community.

- Serve as a catalyst for community efforts to leverage additional resources which address the causes and impacts of poverty.
- Make recommendations or take other action on any other subject as referred by the Councilors.

ARTICLE IV – PURPOSES, OBJECTIVES, AND POWERS OF THE CAAB

- I. The Advisory Board’s purposes and objectives shall include:
 - A. Making recommendations regarding local government funding that is intended to serve basic and essential welfare, housing, health, and safety needs or to remove obstacles to self-sufficiency faced by low-income communities, families, and individuals.
 - B. Establishing long range goals and guidelines for developing CS’s objectives, planning its programs, and evaluating performance of its programs.
 - C. Maximizing the extent and quality of participation by low-income and underrepresented communities, families and individuals in the programs of CS, in other county and city government, and in other civic affairs throughout Clark County.
 - D. Sustaining and strengthening a community tradition of caring for one another through integrated, cooperative efforts of local volunteers and service organizations.
 - E. Increasing low-income communities’, families’, and individuals’ awareness of, involvement in, and access to the wide ranges of services and opportunities available. Special attention should be provided to increasing awareness for people who face obstacles because of their race, sex, age, creed, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, ability, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, Veteran status or other vulnerability.
 - F. Encouraging ongoing evaluation and enhancement of community service efforts to ensure appropriate responsiveness to changes within disadvantaged populations.
 - G. Aligning efforts to the greatest extent possible with other CS and county advisory boards and with other community organizations that serve the same populations.
 - H. Establishing a legacy that increases equitable access, preserves human dignity and responds to basic human needs.
2. In pursuing these purposes and objectives, the Advisory Board shall have the following specific powers:
 - A. To determine the priority needs of Clark County's low-income population, cooperating with other CS and county advisory boards and with other community organizations that serve the same population.

- B. To consider the current Community Needs Assessment and outcome reporting when making priority recommendations.
- C. To evaluate the progress of Community Action Programs through regular review of program outcomes.
- D. To advise the Councilors on the allocation of funds that provide human services or improve self-sufficiency administered by CS and are not subject to other advisory boards.
- E. To act in an advocate role in the public and private sectors in the interest of low-income and underserved populations of Clark County, as cooperatively as possible with other organizations that serves the same populations.
- F. To establish rules and procedures and select officers and committees for this Advisory Board.
- G. To exercise any other responsibilities that are or may be prescribed by federal or state law governing Community Action Programs, or that are delegated by Councilors, or by CS.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERS

SECTION I. Composition

The Advisory Board shall be composed of at least fifteen (15) members:

- 1. At least five (5) shall be Public Official Representatives, preferably elected public officials currently holding office, or appointive public officials if there are not enough elected officials available and willing to serve. One Public Office Representative will be held by a Vancouver City Council member.
- 2. At least five (5), and at least one-third of the total members, shall be low-income representatives; persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to ensure they are representative of those who are low-income in the areas served. Low-income representatives must be nominated by an organization representing individuals who are low-income in Clark County or by a group of individuals who are low-income living in Clark County. This process may include election by ballot or at a community meeting, or an individual designated by a low-income policy or advisory board. Proof of the selection process will be requested.
- 3. Up to five (5) shall be Community Representatives drawn from major community interests such as labor, business, health, education, faith based, Black/African American, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) agencies or social service groups.
- 4. If an individual who is low-income, or group that serves people who are low-income, considers the Advisory Board to be underrepresenting their interests, they may petition the Advisory Board for a seat on the Board. County staff will facilitate an Advisory Board review in response to the petition and notify the petitioner of the outcome.

SECTION 2. Selection and Appointment

Prospective Members shall apply in writing to the Advisory Board staff. Staff will facilitate Advisory Board review of all complete applications and shall convey the Advisory Board's recommendation to the County Manager for appointment. Members shall assume office after having been accepted by the Councilors. Members shall not receive financial compensation from the County for their participation.

1. Public Official Representatives

These Members shall be elected public officials to the extent possible, otherwise appointive public officials. To the extent possible, at least one should be drawn from each County Council district. Recommendations for membership will be solicited from public agencies within the district where a vacancy exists.

2. Low-Income Representatives

A. In accordance with US Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant [Information Memorandum #82 Tripartite Boards](#), Low-Income representatives must be representative of low-income individuals and families in the service area AND must live in the service area. To the extent possible, at least one shall reside in each County Council district and additional low-income representatives shall be in proportion to the distribution of the County's low-income residents among those districts.

B. Recruitment shall include social media posts, advertisements in community newspapers, postings at locations where low-income persons are served, and direct solicitation from organizations composed of or representing low-income persons.

C. Low-income representatives may be reimbursed for reasonable transportation costs, childcare expenses, and other costs that may be barriers to board participation as identified by the member and approved by County staff.

3. Community Representatives

These Members shall represent diverse community interests and be representative geographically, demographically, and culturally. To the extent possible, at least one shall reside in each County Council district.

Each new member will receive an orientation by county staff, to include an overview of Community Action and the roles and responsibilities of the board.

SECTION 3. Period of Service

Members shall serve three-year terms which will commence on January 1, or in the case of Members who fill mid-term vacancies, immediately upon appointment by the Councilors, through December 31 of the third year following appointment. Members shall re-apply at the end of each term. No person may serve as a Member for more than three (3) consecutive full terms, or a total of nine (9) consecutive years, regardless of whether they are a Public Official, Low-Income, and/or Community Representative. A person may be reappointed as a Member after they have been off the Advisory Board for at least two (2) full years.

An individual nominated by a Low-Income Organization to serve as a representative shall so serve only while they continue to be associated with an organization that nominates that individual.

SECTION 4. Absence and Vacancies

1. A Member will be deemed absent if they miss more than 25% of a regular meeting, without prior notification.
2. In the event a Member is absent for two (2) regular meetings, without prior notification to county staff, the board chair shall contact the Member to discuss participation in the Advisory Board. If no resolution is made, their position shall be declared vacant.
3. Resignations shall be submitted in writing to the Advisory Board and a vacancy will be considered to exist on the effective date of the resignation.
4. Vacancies shall be filled following the same procedures specified above in this Article.

SECTION 5. Nondiscrimination

Clark County is committed to providing equitable opportunity for board membership, offices and committee membership. This commitment recognizes people of all races, color, religion, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, ability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation and gender identity. Upon request by any applicant or Member, the Advisory Board shall provide reasonable accommodations that is necessary to allow full participation.

SECTION 6. Exclusion

No position on the Advisory Board may be filled by a current employee of Clark County Community Services.

ARTICLE VI – CODE OF CONDUCT

SECTION I. Conflict of Interest

1. Persons who are an officer or employee of an organization contracting to perform a component of the Community Action Program must state their conflict and recuse themselves from a vote that will impact their organization.
2. No Member of the Advisory Board shall be counted in determining a quorum for, or shall vote on, any matter if:
 - A. They or a family member has a personal or pecuniary interest,
 - B. The vote could benefit any organization in which they or a family member is an officer or employee.
3. Each Member shall voluntarily disclose the existence of any such interest and shall recuse themselves prior to the quorum count or vote. Each Member shall also voluntarily disclose their membership or other position in any organization that the vote could benefit in accordance with Conflicts of Interest – Code of Ethics, RCW 43.160.040.

4. Members of the Advisory Board are not precluded from receiving Community Action Program-funded services for which they are eligible, e.g., energy assistance. However, a Member must recuse themselves from any vote in which the Member's eligibility or benefits could be directly affected.
5. Each Member is asked to sign a Conflict of Interest statement at orientation and at the first meeting of the year. An opportunity to disclose conflicts of interest will be available in the document. Should a conflict of interest occur at any point, Members will inform county staff as soon as possible.

SECTION 2. Appearance of Fairness

When reviewing applications, all members of the Advisory Board will avoid any partiality. A Member shall abstain from voting on any competitive funding application if they have a personal interest in an organization that directly supports one application for funds over others. This includes any affiliation or relationship by marriage or through family membership, any business or professional partnership, close personal friendship, or any other relationship that you think might tend to affect your objectivity or judgment or may give an appearance of impropriety to someone viewing it from outside the relationship.

SECTION 3. Confidentiality

Members of the Advisory Board must exercise the maximum discretion in all matters of official business. Any information received on a confidential basis must be maintained in strict confidence in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local law.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS

SECTION 1. Positions and Duties

The Advisory Board shall have at least three Officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. The Officers shall include at least one Low-Income Representative. The duties of the officers are as follows:

1. The Chairperson is the Advisory Board leader subject to such policies and directives as the Advisory Board may establish. The Chairperson shall preside at Advisory Board meetings; sets the agenda; provides recommendation to the County Council for board appointment as approved by the review committee; and (subject to approval at the next meeting of the Advisory Board) may appoint other officers when a vacancy exists; appoint committees; serve as spokesperson and establish methods of organization through proper means.
2. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson, temporarily assume the duties of the Chairperson when that person is absent, unable to serve, or when that office becomes vacant, and perform other duties as assigned by the Advisory Board.
3. The Secretary, either directly or through a CS staff member, shall keep accurate permanent records of all proceedings of the Advisory Board; timely notify Members in advance of all special and regularly scheduled meetings; promptly notify Members who are delinquent in attendance as described in Section 4 of Article V; and perform other duties as assigned by the Advisory Board.

SECTION 2. Elections

At the last meeting of the year, nominations for officers may be made by a nominating committee or from the floor. The election will be held, and newly elected officers will be installed at the first meeting

of the year. In the event of an officer leaving prior to the end of their term, a special election may be held at the next scheduled meeting.

SECTION 3. Period of Office

The term for all officers shall begin at the first meeting of the year and shall end at the first meeting of the following year. No officer may serve more than three consecutive terms in the same position.

ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Annual Meeting

The first meeting of the year shall be the annual meeting and shall be considered a regular meeting for conducting business. The meeting will be held at such time and place as set by the Advisory Board to maximize participation and understanding of roles and responsibilities of Members.

SECTION 2. Regular

1. The Advisory Board shall set the calendar for the year’s meetings at the annual meeting. Meeting dates, times, and locations will be published annually and as otherwise useful to maximize participation by underserved and low-income residents. In case of emergency or extreme necessity, the officers or members may cancel or postpone meetings but shall give notice that is reasonable under the circumstances.
2. Regular meetings shall be held in person or via an electronic method such as Skype, conference call, webinar, etc., or a combination of both. In person meetings are preferred.

SECTION 3. Special

1. Special meetings of the Advisory Board may be called by the County Councilors or their designee, by the Advisory Board Chairperson (with or without request from Community Action Program or other county staff), or by written request of a majority of the Advisory Board Members, provided that each member of the Advisory Board, the public and any others who have communicated their interest, have advance notice of the time and place of the meeting.
2. The items of business (agenda) to be considered in a special meeting must be limited to those for which the meeting was called.

SECTION 4. Notices

Notices declaring meetings and the agenda for those meetings shall be sent to Advisory Board Members and to any others who have communicated their interest to the Advisory Board in writing not less than five days prior to the scheduled meeting day. If an electronic meeting, the notice shall include how to access the meeting such as telephone number, website address, etc.

SECTION 5. Agenda and Governance

The agenda for all scheduled meetings shall observe the adopted order of business. All meetings of the Advisory Board and of its committees shall be conducted using Robert’s Rules of Order, newly revised edition, as a guide except where this conflicts with the by-laws.

SECTION 6. Quorum

A simple majority of non-vacant positions is the minimum required for a quorum of the Advisory Board or for any committee.

SECTION 7. Public Access and Notification

1. All regular and special Advisory Board meetings and committee meetings shall be open to the public. All meetings are subject to applicable provisions of the Open Public Meetings law, RCW Chapter 42.30.
2. Notifications of meetings, special Advisory Board meetings and committee meetings will be communicated to the public on the Community Action [website](#), by e-mail to each member of the Advisory Board and to any others who have communicated their interest to Advisory Board staff.
3. Members of the public are welcome to attend the regularly scheduled meetings as guests. Guests will have the opportunity to briefly address the Advisory Board during Open Forum at the end of each meeting. If a member of the public needs additional time to address the Advisory Board, they will need to contact County staff at least two-weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting to request time in the agenda.
4. A discussion held by a quorum of Advisory Board Members is considered a meeting and must comply with the Open Public Meetings Act.

SECTION 8. Vote

1. Each member shall have one vote either in person or by email. Votes cast by email must be provided to Advisory Board staff prior to, and will be read aloud at, the meeting where the vote is taking place.
2. Proxy votes shall not be permitted.
3. No Advisory Board member shall vote when a conflict of interest is present, as is stipulated in Article VI, Section 1.2.
4. Except as required in Article X, Section 1, it requires a majority of votes cast to pass a motion. Roberts Rule's of Order will be used to break a tie.
5. Election of Officers shall be by an affirmative simple majority vote.

ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Officers of the Advisory Board.
2. The Executive Committee shall take actions that are consistent with policies and positions established by the Advisory Board. In emergencies, the Executive Committee is authorized to make decisions and to take action. An emergency is when it is not reasonably possible to assemble or to obtain opinions from the full Advisory Board. Any decisions or actions taken by the Executive Committee must come before the full Advisory Board for ratification at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The Executive Committee may advise CS or the Councilors on such policy or program matters as the full Advisory Board may delegate. The Advisory Board Chairperson shall serve as Chairperson for the committee.

3. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall include:
 - A. Overseeing the work of all other committees.
 - B. Acting on behalf of the Advisory Board in matters that require action before the full Advisory Board can be convened.
 - C. Monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the by-laws and convening an ad hoc By-laws Committee to review and recommend changes as deemed necessary.

SECTION 2. Other Committees

The Advisory Board may establish additional standing or ad hoc committees or work groups that it decides are necessary for its effective functioning.

1. Committees should generally have not less than three Advisory Board members and to the extent possible should include representatives of each type and may include non-Members.
2. Advisory Board members shall volunteer for any committees or work groups. A chairperson for each committee or work group will be selected during the first scheduled meeting. In the event there are not enough volunteers, the Chairperson may appoint additional Advisory Board members.
3. The committee chairperson is responsible for providing updates on the progress of the committee or work group to the full Advisory Board at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE X - LIMITATIONS

SECTION 1. Amendment

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Advisory Board Members at any meeting that occurs at least seven (7) days after all Members have been provided with copies of the proposed amendments. Amendments will become effective upon adoption but cannot be retroactive.

SECTION 2. Superior Rules

If any of these by-laws conflict with County, State or Federal statutes, regulations, guidelines, or instructions, the latter shall prevail.

SECTION 3. Previous By-laws

These by-laws shall supersede all previous by-laws.