

## **WASHITA VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL SHARED DECISION MAKING**

### **Policy:**

Washita Valley Community Action Council has established and will maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents, community partners, and staff can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the program. This structure consists of a Board of Directors, Policy Council, Parent Center Committees, and a Management Team.

### **Procedures:**

- Parent center committees are established for each Head Start center, Early Head Start center, and Early Head Start Home Base at the beginning of the school year.
- Parent center committees elect a Policy Council representative and alternates. Community representatives are approved by the Executive Director and by the Policy Council.
- Policy Council subcommittees are formed to meet with Head Start program staff for input into program plans and policies.
- Program plans, policies, and other requirements are presented to the Policy Council for approval.
- Program plans, policies, and other requirements for which the board must approve or disapprove are presented to governing board for input and approval.
- Policy council and governing board members are invited to attend and participate in program staff meetings.
- A Head Start parent who is a member of the Policy Council will also serve as a member of the governing board. The Policy Council member will report activities of the two groups.
- Governance and management responsibilities of the governing board and policy council as stated in performance standards and the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 are attached to this policy and procedures.
- Community partners are invited to participate in advisory committee meetings.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEAD START POLICY COUNCILS**

### **1. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The group with legal and fiscal responsibility that guides and oversees policies which are set for the program.

- The Policy Council has no general responsibilities.

### **2. OPERATING RESPONSIBILITY**

Is the most active area of responsibility. When an individual or group has this responsibility, it does the work or activity that is necessary.

- Policy Council's only operating responsibility is to establish and maintain procedures for hearing and working with the grantee to resolve community complaints about the program.

### **3. MUST APPROVAL APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE**

The Policy Council must work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures.

- Approve and submit to board all funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Early Head Start and Head Start, including administrative services, prior to submission of the applications to HHS.
- Approve and submit to board procedures describing how the governing body and the appropriate policy group will implement shared decision-making.
- Approve and submit to board the program's philosophy and long-and short-range program goals and objectives.
- Approve and submit to board decisions about activities to support active parent involvement in supporting program operations, including responsiveness to community needs.
- Approve and submit to board decisions about Policy Council Operating Procedures including the composition of the Policy Council and procedures by which policy group members are chosen.
- Approve and submit to board criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- Approve and submit to board the annual self-assessment of the agency's progress in

carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the federal monitoring review.

- Approve and submit to board decisions about program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers.
- Decisions regarding selection of program staff with the exception of the Head Start Director, Human Resource Director, Fiscal Officer, Executive Director, or equivalent agency positions, and criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff.
- Approve and submit to board center locations.
- Approve and submit to board decisions about budget planning for program expenditures including policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities.
- Approve and submit to board the written procedures for resolving internal disputes.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANTEE BOARDS**

### **1. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The group with legal and fiscal responsibility for administering and overseeing the Head Start program, including safeguarding federal funds.

#### **The Grantee Board's responsibilities in this area:**

- All funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Early Head Start and Head Start, including administrative services, prior to submission of the applications to HHS.
- Procedures describing how the governing body and the appropriate policy group will implement shared decision-making.
- The program's philosophy and long-and short-range program goals and objectives.
- Policy Council Operating Procedures including the composition of the Policy Council and procedures by which policy group members are chosen.
- Criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- The annual self-assessment of the agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the federal monitoring review.

- Decisions about program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers.
- Establish reimbursement rates for Policy Council member's reasonable expenses.
- Ensure there are written policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing body members and that inform them of the management procedures and functions necessary to implement a high quality program.
- Ensure there are written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and policy group.
- Ensure appropriate internal controls are established and implemented to safeguard Federal funds.
- Decisions regarding selection of the Head Start or Early Head Start Director, Human Resource Director, Fiscal Officer, Executive Director, or equivalent agency positions, and criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff.
- Decisions to hire or terminate any person who works primarily for the Early Head Start or Head Start program of the agency.
- Ensure compliance with federal and applicable state and local laws and regulations.
- Activities to support active parent involvement in supporting program operations, including responsiveness to community needs.
- Adopt practices that assure active, independent and informed governance of grantee.
- Fully participate in development, planning, and evaluation of the Head Start program.
- Ensure compliance with federal and applicable state and local laws and regulations.
- Establish procedures and guidelines for accessing and collecting information required to be shared with board and Policy Council.

## **2. OPERATING RESPONSIBILITY**

The most active area of responsibility. When an individual or group has the operating responsibility, it carries out the work or activity, which is necessary, in meeting a need of the Head Start program.

- The Grantee Board must establish and maintain procedures for hearing and working with the grantee to resolve community complaints about the program.

### 3. MUST APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVE

This group is invited to be involved in the decision-making process prior to the point of seeking approval. If it does not approve, a proposal cannot be adopted, or the proposed action taken, until agreement is reached.

***The Grantee Board has several responsibilities to Review and Approve.***

- Approve procedures for program planning.
- Approve program's philosophy and long-and short-range program goals and objectives.
- Approve the program's funding applications and amendments for Early Head Start and Head Start, including administrative services, prior to the submission of the application to HHS.
- Approve the composition of the Policy Council and the procedures by which policy group members are chosen.
- Approve the written policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing body members and that inform them of the management procedures and functions necessary to implement a high quality program.
- Approve the procedures describing shared decision-making.
- Approve the written procedures for resolving internal disputes.
- Approve personnel policies and procedures, including those for hiring, evaluation, compensation, and termination of Executive Director, Head Start Director, Human Resources Director, Fiscal Officer, and equivalent positions, including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers.
- Approve financial management, accounting, and reporting policies, and comply with laws regarding financial statements, including:
  - Approve all major financial expenditures of grantee.
  - Annually approve grantee's operating budget
  - Select auditor.
  - Monitor correction of audit findings and other necessary actions to comply with laws about financial statements and accounting practices.
- Review and approve all major grantee policies including:

- Annual self assessment
- Financial audits
- ⊖ Agency progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions of its grant application, including any corrective action.
- ⊖ Review federal monitoring results and follow-up activities.
- ⊖ Adopt and periodically update written conflict of interest policies.