Family&Children FIRST COUNCIL

Defiance County Family & Children First Council
By-Laws and Rules of Operation

Article I
Name and Authority

Section I Name

The name of this collaborative shall be the Defiance County Family & Children First Council hereinafter called the Council.

Section II Authority

The Defiance County Family & Children First Council was established pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37.

Article II
Membership

Section I

A. Council membership will include those members mandated by the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37 as well as a comprehensive representation of parents, advocates, community leaders, and agency representatives within Defiance County who serve, support, and/or advocate for children and their families.

B. Mandated Members

   Defiance County Health Commissioner or Designee

   Defiance County Juvenile Court

   Director of Children's Services

   Executive Director of Defiance County Job & Family Services

   Executive Director of the Four County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services or Designee

   Help Me Grow Project Director

No Less Than Three Family Representatives

Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission Representative

Ohio Department of Youth Services Representative

President of the Defiance County Commissioners or Designee

Representative of the City of Defiance

Superintendent of Defiance City Schools

Superintendent of Defiance County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Superintendent of Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center or designee

United Way of Defiance County

C. At-Large Members

Any eligible agency, organization, school system, or parent/family representative that passes a resolution and/or submits a letter endorsing the mission statement, agreeing to cooperate in the development and implementation of the Council goals and agreeing to abide by these By-Laws shall be eligible to apply for membership to the Council. At-Large members are approved by Council vote. If approved, at-large members shall serve one year in an advisory capacity, after which Council may approve them as voting members. At-large members may be dismissed after four consecutive unexcused absences from scheduled Council meetings.

Section II Terms of Office

A. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, there are mandated members.

B. At-large members shall be included on the Council for terms not to exceed three years. Steering Committee shall review at-large members at the end of their three-year terms. There shall be no limit on the consecutive number of terms at-large members may serve.

C. Terms will follow a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

D. Members may resign by submitting a letter to the Council.

Section III Voting Rights

A. Each member of the Council shall be allowed one vote.

B. A minimum of 8 members of Council, either mandated or at-large, constitute a quorum.

C. Members need to be present to vote. Simple majority rules.

Section IV Functions of Council

A. Identifying service gaps in local community resources and developing strategies to assist children and their families.

B. Develop and update a strategic community plan and service coordination plan.

C. Promote the development of programs and projects to encourage coordinated efforts to improve the services provided for Defiance County families.

D. Review program reports at each council meeting.

E. Create necessary committees needed to carry out the planning, coordination, and provision of services to families and children and, monitor the committees' work, and give direction to the committee chairs.

F. Advise and make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly regarding the provision of programs and services for families and children.

G. Appoint a fiscal agent, which shall receive and dispense funds pursuant to board resolutions and which shall maintain all financial records in accordance with state approved accounting practices.

H. Monitoring annual operating budgets.

I. Review, ratify and make application to the Ohio Family & Children First Cabinet Council for an exemption from any rules adopted by a state department participating on the Cabinet Council if an exemption is necessary to implement programs and services for families and children. The application shall describe the proposed program and specify the rules from which an exemption is necessary.

J. Hold meetings at such times and places as may be prescribed by Council procedures and maintain records of such meetings.

Article III
Committees

Section I Steering Committee

A. Membership will be comprised of the Council chair, vice chair, secretary, the Council coordinator, the Help Me Grow Project Director, and the fiscal agent (county commissioner or designee). These six steering committee members will select one at-large member of council, one family representative, and up to three additional council members to serve on the steering with approval by council.

B. The purpose and responsibility of the steering committee is to administer the operation of the Council (such as issues related to public awareness, implementation of policy, strategies for programs and services, etc.) by means of but not limited to:

1. Make recommendations regarding the administration and staffing of Council. Provide direction to the Council coordinator regarding operations of the Council.

2. Monitor the implementation of the strategic community plan and the service coordination plan.

3. Addressing and recommending resolutions to policy issues/concerns identified by Council.

4. Resolving service disputes referred from family team meetings and/or families.

5. Make recommendations to apply for, administer, and coordinate grants for services for children and families.

6. Identify regulation and policy waiver requests necessary for the implementation of Council plans and strategies.

C. Each member of the steering committee shall follow the applicable confidentiality procedures when exercising the committee's responsibilities. All members and parties shall maintain the confidentiality of case records.

Section II Committees

A. The Council by resolution may authorize and empower such standing committees as may be deemed necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose and mission of the Council. Help Me Grow is one such standing committee.

B. The Council by resolution may authorize and empower work groups for a specific task and for a limited time. The nominating committee is one such work group.

C. The steering committee may appoint ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

D. Committees shall appoint a chairperson. The chairperson shall make written reports back to the council.

E. Committee members may include council members, non-council members who represent community service providers, family advocacy groups, community leadership, and family representatives. All committee memberships shall be approved by council.

F. The committees will meet on an as needed basis.

Article IV
Officers

Section I Officers

A. The leadership of the Council shall consist of a chair, vice chair, and secretary.

B. The chair, vice chair, and secretary shall be elected for a two-year term, commencing July 1.

C. All of the officers serve on the steering committee.

D. The responsibilities of the chair shall include but not be limited to: signing council meeting minutes, signing grant reports, signing grant proposals, running the Council meetings, running the steering committee meetings, working with the coordinator on Council meeting agendas, calling special steering committee meetings, serving on the nominating committee, coordinating Council operations with the coordinator, etc.

E. The responsibilities of the vice chair are to fulfill the chair's responsibilities in the chair's absence.

F. The responsibilities of the secretary include taking minutes at the Council meeting, turning in the minutes to the coordinator for distribution, and making sure the chair and coordinator sign off on the minutes.

Section II Nominations

The Council shall appoint a nominating committee, in January, biennially, to propose a slate of officers. The nominating committee shall include the Council chair, vice chair, a family representative, and a minimum of two other Council members. The slate shall be presented to the Council at least 30 days prior to a vote. Election will take place in March with assumption of the office on July 1.

Article V
Meetings

Section I

The Council shall meet on a quarterly basis with the steering committee retaining the option of calling additional meetings as needed.

Section II

The steering committee shall meet on a monthly basis with the chair retaining the option of calling additional meetings as needed**,** or canceling meetings with the agreement of the Council Coordinator.

Article VI
Confidentiality

All matters referred to the Council shall be handled confidentially according to the standards set forth by member agency policies, state and federal laws and professional ethics. Each member of the Council shall follow the applicable confidentiality procedures when exercising its responsibilities. Nongovernmental parties to state or Council proceedings shall maintain the confidentiality of case records.

Article VII
Amendments

Section I By-Laws

The By-Laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of all of the members of Council present.

Section II Procedure

Members of Council will be provided with a written copy of the proposed amendments at least 30 days prior to a scheduled vote on said amendments.

Article VIII
Conflict of Interest

Members of Council and its committees shall be prohibited from using their position on Council or their relationship to the council for personal or financial gain. Members shall avoid situations where their personal affiliations or relationships could have or give the appearance of having influence on their judgment on matters being considered. When such situations occur, members shall disclose their relationship and excuse themselves from participation.

Article IX
Meeting Procedure

Council meetings will be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

Article X
Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Council shall not condone or permit any discriminatory policies or practices in respect to age, race, religion, gender, ethnic groups, or disabilities in fulfilling its stated purpose.

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