



**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES ADVISORY**  
**COUNCIL**

**BYLAWS**

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## **Article I – Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Snohomish County Community Services Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Advisory Council, which was established by the County Council in 1986, per Snohomish County Code (SCC) 2.420. This Advisory Council is a broadly representative body advising the Snohomish County Executive, County Council, and the Human Services Department, hereinafter referred to as the Department. This Advisory Council exists due to Snohomish County Human Services Department's designation as a Community Action Agency (CAA). CAAs are nonprofit private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty.

## **Article II – Mission of the Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council's mission is to make Snohomish County more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing both government and non-governmental resources, and creating greater institutional sensitivity through education and advocacy.

### **Article III – Purposes and Powers of the Advisory Council**

The purpose of the Advisory Council is to engage the Snohomish County community in assessing local needs and working to address the causes of poverty. A comprehensive approach should be undertaken, including, but not limited to, developing financial and/or non-financial partnerships with other community organizations, advocating at the local, state and, federal level on poverty related issues and activities aimed at having “a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in the community.”<sup>1</sup> These efforts should serve as guidelines for the development of Department objectives, program planning, and evaluation of performance, on ways to reduce or eliminate the causes of poverty and to meet the needs of individuals and families who are low-income in Snohomish County. The Advisory Council shall have the following specific purposes and powers:

#### **Section 1      Duties**

- A. Conduct studies, investigations and public hearings to determine the priority needs of Snohomish County’s low-income and minority populations, in both rural and urban areas, including special studies of significance to human service issues.
- B. Act in an advocate role in the public and private sectors by helping educate the public on matters affecting the poor, educating public policy makers on the impact policies have on the poor, seeking and fostering different ways of addressing needs and funding critical services in the community. This will be done in the interest of low-income and minority populations of Snohomish County. No funds may be used for working for or against ballot measures or for or against the candidacy of any person for public office.
- C. Review and recommend an annual Priorities Plan for the Community Services Block Grant program to the Human Services Department. The Priority Plan will be selected from the identified priorities needs from the current Community Needs Assessment. Once developed, this Plan will be presented to the County Council, to help create awareness and educate the County Council on the needs of low-income Snohomish County residents.
- D. Recommend Community Services Block Grant program strategies that are responsive to the Priorities Plan to “support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives.”<sup>2</sup> As much as possible, these strategies should utilize community partnerships and work to leverage additional resources.
- E. Assess the progress of Community Services Block Grant programs through quarterly review of performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 210(a), Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, as amended, 42 USC2790(a).

<sup>2</sup> Section 676, Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

- F. Advise the County Executive and County Council through the Human Services Department on the allocation of Community Services Block Grant funds and quarterly progress reports.
- G. Maximize the extent and quality of low-income participation in the programs of the Housing and Community Services Division.
- H. Establish rules and procedures and select officers and committees for this Advisory Council.
- I. Exercise all the responsibilities delegated to this Advisory Council.
- J. Review Funding Applications
  - 1. Review funding applications, determining appropriateness of proposed projects and making funding recommendations, will be a key responsibility of Advisory Council members.
  - 2. Council members will work with county staff to help draft and coordinate the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and/or Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This may include developing application materials, collecting background information and/or data needed, reviewing applications for eligibility and determining funding amount for applications.

County staff will coordinate presentation meeting place, time and will provide the needed resources, information and education to ensure proper evaluation of each project's merits.

## **Article IV– Membership**

### **Section 1      Composition of the Advisory Council**

The Community Services Block Grant program must be administered through a community-selected tripartite board. This “tripartite” board governance is a feature unique to Community Action Agencies (CAA) and is a critical element in differentiating CAAs from other community-based organizations. The makeup of the board results in plans and approaches that bring unconventional combinations of skill-sets together to solve local problems. The tripartite board governance also helps to empower those who have direct experience of the barriers to economic security to participate directly in the development of effective alternatives.

The Advisory Council shall make efforts to have each County Council legislative district represented through membership and shall consist of at least 12 and not more than 24 members. The Council will be comprised of the following:

- A. At least one-third of the members are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that these members are representative of low-income individuals and families, living in the county district served; members of this sector shall be termed Low-Income Representative.
- B. The balance shall be drawn from:
  - 1. Individuals in the private sector including businesses, non-profits, faith-based groups, charities and civic organizations, or other major groups and interests in the community served; members of this sector shall be termed Community Representative.
  - 2. Elected public officials currently holding office or their representatives, or appointive public officials if there are not enough elected officials available; members of this sector shall be termed Elected Official Representative.

### **Section 2      Selection and Appointment of the Advisory Council**

Members of the Advisory Council shall be selected and appointed as follows:

- A. Low-Income Representatives
  - 1. Members of this sector shall be representatives of the low-income residents in Snohomish County.
  - 2. Representatives of low-income residents may be low-income themselves or they may work with community organizations, whose purpose is to serve low-income

individuals. In either case, they must be selected in a manner which assures that they truly represent low-income residents.

3. The Snohomish County Executive shall appoint the representatives, with concurrence from a majority of the County Council.

B. Elected Official Representatives

1. The Snohomish County Executive shall select and appoint elected public officials, or appointive public officials if necessary, to the Advisory Council with concurrence from a majority of the County Council.

C. Community Representatives

1. Members of this sector shall be drawn from a broad and represent a range of major community interests as is possible.
2. The Snohomish County Executive shall select and appoint representatives of the community with concurrence from a majority of the County Council.

**Section 3**     **Recruitment**

Recruitment of candidates will be accomplished by Human Service's staff and Advisory Council members by various means. Examples could include newspaper advertisements in community papers, direct solicitation through community organizations, email and word of mouth. Candidate applications will be received and reviewed by County staff and submitted to the Advisory Council for recommendations. The recommendations of the Advisory Council will be conveyed to the Snohomish County Executive and County Council by Department staff for final approval.

**Section 4**     **Period of Service**

Except as provided in the following subsection, all members of the Advisory Council shall be appointed to serve a three (3) year term, which will commence upon County Executive and County Council approval and action. No member may serve on the Advisory Council for more than two (2) consecutive terms, regardless of which group or combination of groups the member represents. After having an absence of one (1) year from the Advisory Council, a person may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms again.

**Section 5**     **Vacancies**

- A. Resignations shall be submitted in writing or via email to the Advisory Council and a vacancy will be considered to exist on the effective date of the resignation.

- B. In the event a vacancy occurs, selection and appointment procedures specified in Section 2 of this Article will be followed to fill the vacancy.

### **Section 6      Petition Process**

Any organization, interest group or individual has the right to petition the Advisory Council for representation on the Advisory Council in by submitting a petition with 25 signatures from adult residents of Snohomish County. The petition must contain the following information:

- Name or designation of group and statement of purpose.
- Number of current members
- Names and addresses of officers and spokes-person
- Copy of operating bylaws, including frequency of meetings, if group is formally organized
- Statement outlining the reason and justification for requesting membership on the Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council shall grant the group a public hearing, which shall be scheduled as part of the next regular Advisory Council meeting, so that the agency or group may present its case. The Advisory Council shall then determine the validity of the petition and the qualifications required for the vacant position. If there is a vacancy in the appropriate sector of the Advisory Council at the time of petitioning, the petitioner will be considered for immediate seating on the Advisory Council. If all Advisory Council seats in the petitioner's appropriate sector are filled, the petitioner will be notified of the next appropriate vacancy. The Advisory Council will submit recommendations to the Department and the Snohomish County Executive concerning representation by the petitioners on the Advisory Council, in keeping with Section 4.C of the Article. Subject to County Council approval, the determination by the CSAC with a two thirds (2/3) majority vote, shall be final.

### **Section 7      Recall**

- A. Upon missing two (2) consecutive meetings without at least one excused absence, the Advisory Council member will be notified in writing that his or her membership is in jeopardy and that failure to appear at the next meeting will result in his or her position being declared vacant.
- B. A motion to recommend recall of any member must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total filled positions on the Advisory Council. Upon approval of the recall motion, a recommendation to remove the member must be submitted to the Snohomish County Executive for approval and action.

### **Section 8      Resignation**



Resignations by members shall be submitted in writing to the Advisory Board chair and staff. They will forward a copy of the resignation to the County Volunteer Services Coordinator and the board of commissioners.

**Section 9**      **Nondiscrimination**

Membership on the Advisory Council, its committees, or Advisory Council officers, shall not be denied or based upon any individual's race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, age or physical ability.

**Section 9**      **Exclusion**

No position on the Advisory Council may be filled by a current public official or employee of Snohomish County Government, except when such representation is required by state or federal law.

## Article V – Code of Conduct

### Section 1      Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a member has a direct or indirect private or personal interest sufficient to appear to use their position for purposes that primarily benefit themselves or others with whom they have family, business, or other ties. A financial interest may not be a conflict of interest if the Executive Committee or the general membership so decides through a majority vote.

- A. Advisory Council members are expected to declare a conflict of interest prior to consideration of any matter causing a potential or actual conflict.
  
- B. A potential conflict of interest exists when an Advisory Council member takes an action that reasonably could be expected to have a financial impact on that member, a relative, or a business with which the member or member's relative is associated. The Advisory Council member may participate in an action after declaring the potential conflict and announcing its nature, if so decided by the Advisory Council by a majority vote.
  
- C. An actual conflict of interest exists when an action is reasonably certain to result in a special benefit or detriment to the Advisory Council member, a relative, or a business with which the member or member's relative is associated. The member will declare the actual conflict and announce its nature. The member must then refrain from taking any official action.
  
- D. Examples of potential or real conflicts of interest include:
  - 1. Advisory Council member is a past or present board member of a participating agency;
  - 2. Advisory Council member has a past or present fiduciary responsibility to a participating agency;
  - 3. Advisory Council member serves as a funder or conduit for funding for a participating agency;
  - 4. Advisory Council member has produced a letter of recommendation or support for a specific participating agency or agency project; and/or
  - 5. Advisory Council member has served in a consultant role for a participating agency project.

- E. It shall be the obligation of each member to voluntarily disclose the existence of such interests on the part of that member of any other member present when a proposition is considered.
- F. Serving as an Advisory Council member does not preclude low-income individuals from receiving program services for which they are eligible, e.g., energy assistance, housing or mental health counseling. However, motions before the Advisory Council may involve a conflict of interest when the eligibility or benefits of a member would be directly affected.
- G. In the case of a conflict of interest, said Advisory Council member should:
  - 1. Not participate in the presentation for funding of said agency;
  - 2. Not participate in any discussions or deliberations relating to said agency's application;
  - 3. Not vote on said agency's application; and
  - 4. Recuses them self and leave the room during the presentation, discussion, scoring and deliberations during said agency's application time.

**Section 2**      **Appearance of Fairness**

- A. All business of the Advisory Council, its actions and its deliberations, will be conducted in open public meetings.
- B. All members of the Advisory Council will avoid bias in their deliberations.

**Section 3**      **Confidentiality**

Members of the Advisory Council 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 state law. Council members should not discuss funding applications or the competitive bidding process outside public meeting time.

## **Article VI – Officers**

### **Section 1**      **Positions and Duties**

The Advisory Council officers will consist of three positions: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. The duties of the officers in these positions are as follows:

- A. The Chairperson is the Advisory Council leader and is subject to such policies and directives as the Advisory Council may establish. Their role is to provide that leadership; the Chairperson is given the authority to make appointments to committees, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee or of the Advisory Council; to preside at Advisory Council meetings, to propose methods or organization through proper means; to preside at Executive Committee meetings.
- B. The Vice-Chairperson will assist the Chairperson and assume the duties of the Chairperson in the Chair's absence or inability to serve.
- C. The Secretary is responsible, either directly or through Department staff, for keeping accurate permanent records of all proceedings of the Advisory Council; for providing advance notification to Advisory Council members of all special and regularly scheduled meetings; for prompt notification to Advisory Council members delinquent in attendance; and for other duties as assigned by the Advisory Council.

### **Section 2**      **Election of Officers**

At the November meeting, nomination of officers will be made from the floor. The Advisory Council shall either vote on them at that time or at the next regularly scheduled meeting. A motion to recommend any member for election as an officer must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the total filled positions on the Advisory Council. The officers elected will be installed at the January meeting of the Advisory Council, or as needed, and shall serve for the upcoming calendar year, or the remainder of the year, as appropriate.

### **Section 3**      **Terms of Office**

The term of office for all positions shall be twelve months or the remaining months in that term. No officer may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

## **Article VII – Meetings**

All business of the Advisory Council, its actions and its deliberations, shall be conducted in open public meetings. Each member is expected to attend and participate in all regularly convened, full Advisory Council meetings. Members are asked to notify county staff in advance if they cannot attend meetings.

### **Section 1**      **Regular**

The Advisory Council shall hold a regularly scheduled meeting at least every two months at the time and place designated by the Advisory Council to maximize low-income participation. In case of emergency or extreme necessity, a meeting may be cancelled or postponed by action of the Chairperson or of the Executive Committee.

### **Section 2**      **Annual**

The annual meeting shall be held at the time identified in the CSAC Planning Calendar document, at such time and place as set by the Advisory Council to maximize low-income representative participation. The purpose of this meeting is to review bylaws, annual legislative priorities of various stakeholders in Snohomish County and for Community Action, as well as, determine funding priorities for the following year's RFP and complete the Planning Calendar for the upcoming year.

### **Section 3**      **Special**

- A. Special meetings of the Advisory Council may be called by the Snohomish County Executive or the designee of the Executive, the Advisory Council Chairperson, or by written request of a majority of the members of the Advisory Council, provided that each member of the Advisory Council and local media have advance notice of the time and place of the meeting. The Community Services Division staff shall call the Advisory Council Chairperson to request a special meeting, when such a meeting is necessary.
- B. 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 Council members not less than five days prior to the scheduled meeting day.

### **Section 5**      **Agenda and Governance**

The agenda for all scheduled meetings shall observe the adopted order of business. All meetings of the Advisory Council and of its committees shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised edition, except where they conflict with the bylaws.

In the event that no elected officials are present at a CSAC meeting, the Chairperson will poll the Advisory Council to identify a current member to facilitate the meeting in their absence, as needed and when necessary.

## **Section 6**      **Quorum**

A simple majority of the filled positions on the Advisory Council is the minimum required for a quorum at an Advisory Council meeting. The same quorum rule shall apply to all committees of the Advisory Council.

## **Section 7**      **Public Access and Notification**

- A. All regular and special Advisory Council meetings and committee meetings shall be open to the public, except those portions concerned with personnel matters or consultations with legal counsel.
- B. Local media shall be notified in advance of Advisory Council meetings by postings on the Department's website and as required by State Law and Snohomish County Ordinance.
- C. To the extent possible, all meetings shall be held at a time and place most convenient to the low-income representatives. Every effort will be made to assure that all positions on the Advisory Council dedicated to low-income representatives are filled. Furthermore, additional financial burdens for child care, transportation and parking costs when attending Advisory Council meetings can be reimbursed on a case by case basis as determined appropriate by Department policy. This is intended to alleviate any barriers that might inhibit or prevent said members from participating on the Advisory Council.

## **Section 8**      **Records**

- A. The Secretary is responsible, either directly or through Department staff, for taking minutes during meetings, and either emailed or mailed to the council one week prior to the monthly meeting for council members to review. Meeting minutes will be made official by a motion from the council.
- B. Department staff will set the agenda, with input from council members. If a council member has a specific issue or topic they would like addressed at a meeting, said item will be communicated to county staff to include in meeting agendas.

- C. Official records of council agendas, minutes, handouts, funding applications and bylaws will be kept up-to-date by Department staff. Copies of these documents can be made available through a written request to the Human Services Department.

**Section 9**      **Voting**

- A. Each member shall have one vote, with the exception of the Chairperson, who may vote only to break a tie or a roll call vote or to make a quorum. If a tie still occurs or a critical decision needs to be made at the meeting, an exception will be made and the Chairperson may vote.
- B. No Advisory Council member will be able to vote when a conflict of interest is present, as is stipulated in Article V.
- C. Except as required in Article III, Section 6, and in Article VIII, Section I, a simple majority of the votes cast on any motion made and seconded in an Advisory Council meeting shall decide the motion.
- D. Polling via email or phone call outside of the public meeting is prohibited as it violates the open public meeting requirement.

## Article VIII – Committees

### Section 1      Executive Committee

- A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Advisory Council.
- B. The Executive Committee shall take actions that are consistent with policies and positions already established by the Advisory Council. In emergencies, the Executive Committee is authorized to make decisions to take action when there is not time to assemble the full Advisory Council. Any decisions or actions taken by the Executive Committee must come before the full Advisory Council for ratification. The Executive Committee is empowered to advise the Department on such policy or program matters as may be delegated. The Advisory Council Chairperson shall serve as Chairperson for the committee.
- C. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall include:
  - 1. Overseeing the work of all committees;
  - 2. Acting on behalf of the Advisory Council in matters that require action before the full Advisory Council can be convened; and
  - 3. Monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the bylaws; convene an ad hoc Bylaws Committee to review and recommend changes as deemed necessary.

### Section 2      Committees

Committees may be established by the Advisory Council as necessary for the effective functioning of the Advisory Council. The purpose or function of the committee will be as identified by the Advisory Council.

- A. Committees shall have not less than three Advisory Council members to the extent possible, proportionate to the three categories of Advisory Council membership; non-Council members may be appointed to committees by the Advisory Council Chairperson.
- B. The Advisory Council Chairperson shall appoint the membership and Chairperson of all committees, who will serve for one-year terms which may be renewed, if it is a standing committee. If the committee is based on the completion of a specific item or project, the Advisory Council will set the duration of said committee.



## **Article IX- Limitations**

### **Section 1**      **Amendment**

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Advisory Council present at any regular meeting, with the stipulations that all members of the Advisory Council be provided with copies of the proposed amendments ten days before the vote is to be taken on approval. Amendments will be effective upon adoption but cannot be retroactive.

### **Section 2**      **Superior Rules**

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

### **Section 3**      **Previous Bylaws**

These bylaws shall supersede all previous bylaws.