

BY-LAWS OF THE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS
of the
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES*
of the
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

REVISED March, 2003**
by the RAC Chairs

Approved: _____

Date: _____

*Formerly the Department of Children and Youth Services

** By-laws originally prepared by Laura Morrison, April 4, 1986

Revised February, 1999 by Joseph C. Sheffey, Jr and Karen King

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Revised March 17, 2003

BY-LAWS of the REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

(Revised March, 2003)

I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Regional Advisory Council of the Department of Children and Families of the State of Connecticut.

These by-laws shall apply to the _____ Region, in conformity with all other Regions in the State.

II. HISTORY

The history of the Regional Advisory Councils of the Department of Children and Families in Connecticut has paralleled the evolution of the administrative structure of the Department itself since 1958, including re-organizational changes in 1975, 1986, and 2001, as ordered by the state legislature. (Ref. CGS 4-60n; 17-434; 17a-30;) By design, the Councils serve to inform and involve concerned citizens and private providers of human services within the Regions, in order to complement the Department's mandates to promote and protect the well-being of children and families in their own communities.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Regional Advisory Council is to advise in the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive system of services for children, youth and families within the Region. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 17a-30 (formerly 17-434) the mission of the Council shall be:

- A. To advise the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families on the development and delivery of services in the Region; and
- B. To facilitate the coordination of services for children, youth, and their families in the Region.

IV. FUNCTION

The functions of the Regional Advisory Council, as required by law and established by precedent, in conjunction with the Department, shall be to:

- A. Advocate for the design, development, and coordination of quality services to improve outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being;
- B. Promote accessibility and delivery of services through systems of care and other community collaboratives, in order to fully utilize available resources;

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Functions – cont.

- C. Assist and review data analysis for the purposes of developing a Regional profile to inform the Council's recommendations on programs and services;
- D. Strengthen ties between children and families, community institutions, and public agencies, through appreciation of cultural diversity and inclusion of underrepresented constituencies;
- E. Provide assistance and information to the Commissioner, Regional Administrator, and/or their designees, as appropriate;
- F. Review and comment annually on:
 - 1. DCF planning and policy: matters relating to services and needs including levels of availability, integration, effectiveness, gaps in service, and alternative funding resources;
 - 2. the DCF Budget: priorities, levels of funding, and allocations;
 - 3. legislative proposals

V. CALENDAR and SCHEDULE

Each Regional Advisory Council shall set its own regular meeting schedule, with each new "year" to coincide with the state's fiscal year, beginning July 1st and concluding June 30th.

VI. MEETINGS and VOTING

A. Regular Meetings

- 1. Each Regional Advisory Council shall meet at least quarterly, or more often at call of the Chair or a majority of the Council members.
- 2. Meetings shall be open to the public, but only duly appointed members may vote.
- 3. A quorum shall consist of a majority of members in good standing, but not less than six members present and voting.
- 4. Unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws, *Robert's Rules of Order* (a current edition) shall govern all proceedings.

B. Special Meetings. A special meeting may be called by the Chair, or upon petition to the Chair by five members. Special meetings must be scheduled with timely notice given to all members.

Meetings – cont.

C. Annual Regional Meeting. Each Regional Council shall designate one meeting as the Annual Regional Meeting at which time officers will be elected, and the annual report will be reviewed.

1. Annual Report. Each Council shall compile an annual report which presents an overview of activities for the year, proposed goals for the next year, a current membership list, and membership nominations.

D. A statewide meeting of all Regional Advisory Councils may be convened at the discretion of the Commissioner.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

A. Composition. Each Regional Advisory Council shall consist of no more than twenty-one (21) persons.

1. A majority of members of the Council shall be persons who reside in the Region and shall be representative of young persons, parents, and others interested in the delivery of services to children and youth, and who earn less than 50% of their salaries from the provision of human services to children, youth and their families.

2. The balance of the membership shall be employees of private providers of human services to children and families within the Region.

B. Representation

1. Council membership should reflect and represent the different geographic areas, as well as the demographic, cultural, and economic interests of the Region.

2. Members of the Council should represent familiarity and/or expertise with the Department's mandates to provide human services in the areas of child protection and family support, juvenile justice, mental and behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, prevention and rehabilitation, and education.

3. Representation shall not confer delegated responsibility from any particular organization or group.

C. Appointments and Terms of Membership.

1. Appointments to the Regional Advisory Council shall be made by the Commissioner upon recommendation by vote of the Council.
2. ~~The term of membership is three years; the appointment may be renewed once, for a limit of six consecutive years' service.~~
3. Interim appointments to fill vacancies are for the duration of the un-expired term. Vacancies may be filled as they occur.
4. Application for reappointment can be considered following a year off of the RAC.

D. Resignations. Any member who is unable to complete their term on the Council should notify the Chairperson(s) of the RAC of their resignation, preferably in writing. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings, or fifty-percent of all meetings during any calendar year, shall be deemed to have resigned.

E. Members shall serve without compensation.

VIII. OFFICERS

~~A. Each Regional Advisory Council shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson who shall act in the Chairperson's absence.~~

1. The term of office for the Chair and Vice-chair shall be two years; subject to one term renewal, for a limit of four consecutive years.

NOTE: Individual Councils may opt to elect Co-Chairs, rather than Chair and Vice-Chair, in which case it is suggested they be elected in alternate years. Authority to conduct meetings and perform other duties as Co-Chair is by mutual consent.

2. Nominees for Chair and Vice-Chair (or Co-Chair) shall be members of the Council in good standing.
3. A vacancy in any office may be filled on an interim basis by a majority vote of Council members. Officer vacancies shall be filled within sixty days.

B. Election of Officers at Annual Meeting

The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of Officers to the full Council at least ten working days prior to the Annual Meeting at which elections are held. A vote of the full membership shall be taken at the Annual Meeting and recorded.

C. Duties of Officers

1. The Chair or a designee presides at all regular RAC meetings and Executive Committee meetings and shall fulfill the duties assigned to the office, including: attending statewide RAC meetings and meetings of the RAC chairs; attending meetings of the Statewide Advisory Council and suggesting items for its agenda; transmitting to the Commissioner the actions of the Council through letters, minutes, formal reports, in-person or electronic communications; and requesting information from the Department on behalf of the Council through the office of the Commissioner, the Regional Administrator, or their designees.
2. The Chair shall oversee the preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes of meetings, compile and forward the Annual Report, and undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Commissioner and/or the Council.
3. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair or Co-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair and assume such other duties or responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chair or Council.

IX. STAFF SUPPORT

The Department of Children and Families will provide staff assistance to Council for the purpose of recording meeting minutes, mailing notices of meetings, agendas, and minutes, special studies, and making meeting arrangements. The Department shall maintain a master file of all RAC documents (membership appointments, agendas, minutes, annual reports, by-laws, special studies, and the like) at Central Office; and likewise a file for each individual RAC in the Regional Office.

X. COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

A. Executive Committee

1. **Composition.** The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the RAC, (sub-RAC chairs, if any) and may include elected members of the Council, and the Regional Administrator.

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Executive Committee- cont.

2. Duties. The Executive Committee will assist the Chair in developing the agenda for meetings and may act on urgent or emergency matters which must be addressed between regular meetings of the full Council. All actions of the Executive Committee must be submitted to the full Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting for approval.

B. Nominating Committee

1. Composition. The Nominating Committee of each Council shall consist of at least three members of the Council. Membership on the Nominating Committee shall be determined by vote of the Council membership at the Annual Meeting, and is for a three-year term.

2. Nominating Committee Reports. The Nominating Committee shall present a written report to the full membership at least ten working days prior to the meeting. The report shall indicate recommendations to the Commissioner for membership appointments. The Nominating Committee report shall be voted upon by the full Council at the meeting.

3. Duties. The Nominating Committee shall review all vacancies on the Council as they occur. A report indicating recommendations for interim membership appointments shall be submitted to Council members at least ten working days prior to the meeting at which a vote is taken on the recommendations.

4. The Chair will transmit to the Commissioner within ten days the Council's recommendations for individuals to be appointed or re-appointed to the Council.

C. Sub-committees and Ad Hoc Committees

Regional Advisory Councils may establish such committees or subcommittees as they deem necessary. The specific purposes and length of service shall be set forth in the motion to establish such committees. These committees may draw membership from the community at large, provided the Chair of the subcommittee or ad hoc committee is a full member of the RAC.

XI. BY-LAWS

A. Proposal to Amend the By-Laws

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By-Laws amendments– cont.

Two-thirds of the membership of any Regional Advisory Council may act to propose amendments or revisions to these by-laws and direct the Chair to transmit such action and proposals to the Commissioner for review and approval.

B. Commissioner's Approval

The Commissioner shall receive recommended By-Law amendments from the Chair of any Regional Advisory Council. If approved, the amendment shall be transmitted to the Chair of each RAC for reading and discussion at the next regular meeting.

C. Ratification

Ratification of amendments to the By-Laws shall occur after the favorable vote of the membership of three Regional Advisory Councils at meetings held subsequent to the initial reading of the By-Law change into the meeting record (minutes). Approval by two-thirds of the members present and voting is required for ratification.