

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
CRP- RAC

REGION SIX
CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL -REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

BY-LAWS

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Adapted from the Region Four Advisory Council Membership Committee Bylaws

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I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Citizens' Review Panel- Regional Advisory Council (RAC) of the Department of Children and Families of the State of Connecticut.

II. HISTORY

The history of the Area Advisory Council 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, 2004 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. An Act Concerning a Regional Structure for the Department of Children And Families, effective July 2011, repealed Sec. 9. Section 17a-30 of the General Statute. These amended by-laws reflect the substituted language of Sec. 9. Section 17a-30 of the General Statute.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of the RAC is to advise in the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive system of services for children, youth and families within the Regions. In addition, it is to assure that children and families in the community are provided the best possible service within the context of available resource and that children are protected from maltreatment.

Section 106(c) (4) (A) (i) and (ii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), a federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect and Connecticut General Statute 17a-30 the mission of the Council shall be to insure the broader community

- A. Understands and has a voice in evaluating and assessing the child welfare system
- B. Advocates for the effective discharge of the responsibilities of the Child Protective Services (CPS) system and those of the other community agencies that support the child welfare system,
- C. Promote quality CPS practice
- D. Advocates for the strengthening of and necessary resources for CPS services agencies
- E. Recommends and advocates for policies and procedures that promote the highest quality CPS practices and emphasizing cross-system problem-solving involving both formal and informal support agencies, groups and individuals and the development of mutual goals and the desire to enable effective changes
- F. Advises the Commissioner and the Regional Administrator of the Department of Children and Families on the development and delivery of services of the Department in the Region; and
- G. Facilitates the coordination of services for children, youth, and their families in the Region.

IV. FUNCTION

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

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- 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 collaborative, in order to fully utilize available resources; RAC By-Laws
- C. Assist and review data for the purpose of developing an area 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 Regional Administrator, and/or his/her 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
- G. Submit an annual report each year to the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families and the state's Governor documenting work activities and progress toward the achievement of statewide outcomes

V. CALENDAR and SCHEDULE

The RAC 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. The Region Six RAC shall meet at least quarterly, or more often at call of the co-Chairs 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 office, but not less than six members.
- 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 Co-Chairs or upon petition to the Co-Chairs by five members. Special meetings must be scheduled with timely notice given to all members.

C. Annual Regional Meeting

Each RAC 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 RAC 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. Statewide meeting

A statewide meeting of all RAC may be convened at the discretion of the Commissioner.

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VII. MEMBERSHIP

A. Composition

Each RAC 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 area 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 services to children, youth and their families.
2. The balance of the membership shall be private providers of human services to children and families within the area.

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. The Regional Administrator shall make a good faith effort to ensure that, to the extent possible, the membership is qualified and closely reflects the gender and racial diversity 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. The Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, shall appoint one third of the representatives of each group (see A.1 and A.2).
2. The Regional Administrator, upon recommendation by vote of the Council, shall make appointments to the RAC.
3. All subsequent appointments to replace those who resign, will be filled as the vacancies occur.
4. The Regional Administrator, or a designee of the Regional Administrator, shall be an ex-officio member of the council without the right to vote
5. Members shall serve without compensation.

D. Resignations

1. 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.
2. 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.

OFFICERS

A. Co-Chairs

Each RAC shall elect Co-Chairs, and may elect to have Tri-Chairs upon approval by a majority of the RAC members.

1. The term of office for the Co-Chair shall be two years. When there are Tri-Chairs, the term shall be for three years. Subject to one term renewal, **for a limit of four (or six)** consecutive years.

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2. Each Co-Chair shall be elected in alternate years.
3. Nominees for Co or Tri-Chair shall be members of the Council in good standing
4. Authority to conduct meetings and perform duties as Co-Chair is by mutual consent.
5. 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.

NOTE: The Council may opt to elect Tri-Chairs, rather than Co-Chairs, in which case, they shall also be elected in alternate years. Authority to conduct meetings and perform other duties as Tri-Chair is by mutual consent.

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 Co-Chair or a designee presides at all regular RAC meetings and Executive Committee meetings and shall fulfill the duties assigned to the office, including:
 - i. Attending statewide RAC meetings and meetings of the RAC chairs;
 - ii. Attending meetings of the Statewide Advisory Council and suggesting items for its agenda;
 - iii. Transmitting to the Area Administrator the actions of the Council through letters, minutes, formal reports, in-person or electronic communications; and
 - iv. Requesting information from the Department on behalf of the Council through the office of the Regional Administrator, or their designees.
2. The Co-Chairs shall oversee the
 - i. Preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes of meetings,
 - ii. Compile and forward the Annual Report, and
 - iii. Undertake such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Regional Administrator and/or the Council.
3. In the absence of a Co-Chair, the remaining Co-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair and assume such other duties or responsibilities as assigned by the Chair or Council

VIII. 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 area offices.

IX. 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.

2. Duties.

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The Executive Committee will assist the Chairs 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 voting of the Council membership at the Annual Meeting, and is for a three-year term.

2. The Chair

Transmit to the Regional Administrator within ten days the Council's recommendations for individuals to be appointed or re-appointed to the Council.

3. Duties

The Nominating Committee shall

- i. Submit a written report to the full membership at least ten working days prior to the meeting
- ii. Submit recommendation to Area Administrator for membership appointments
- iii. Review vacancies on the Council as they occur
- iv. Submit to the Council members a report indicating recommendations for interim membership appointments at least ten working days prior to the meeting at which a vote is taken on the recommendations.

4. Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee report shall be voted upon by the full Council at the meeting.

C. Sub-committees and Ad Hoc Committees

RAC may establish such committees or subcommittees, as they deem necessary. The specific purposes and length of services 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

X. BY-LAWS

A. Proposal to Amend the By-Laws

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

B. Regional Administrator's Approval

The Regional Administrator shall receive recommended By-Law amendments from the Co-Chairs of any RAC. If approved, the amendment shall be transmitted to the Co-Chairs 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 RAC 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.