

WHATCOM COUNTY HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE BYLAWS

As amended 4/6/2022

NAME AND ESTABLISHMENT

NAME

Name of this organization shall be the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee (WCHAC), hereafter referred to as the Committee.

ESTABLISHED

The Committee is established by the Whatcom County governing authority per Interlocal Cooperation Agreement Between Whatcom County and the Cities of Whatcom County, Section D, and in accordance with RCW 39.34.030 (4) (a). The Committee is referenced in Whatcom County Code 3.45, 3.46, 3.47, Section 3.36.050, and referenced in RCW 36.22.178.

PURPOSE AND ROLES

PURPOSE

The Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to Whatcom County Health Department staff on all issues related to uses of funds collected under RCW 36.22.178, RCW 36.22.179, and RCW 82.14.540, RCW 82.14.530, and other related housing funds and is charged with making recommendations to the Whatcom County Executive regarding the use of these funds. The Committee shall support and promote the objectives stated in the above-noted RCWs.

COMMITTEE ROLE

The role of the Committee shall be to:

1. advise on policy decisions that ensure the utilization of funds in a manner consistent with RCWs 36.22.178, 36.22.179, 82.14.540, and 82.14.530
2. participate in the review of applications for funding if needed,
3. make recommendations regarding the use of these funds to the Whatcom County Health Department and the County Executive,
4. give guidance on the Local Plan to End Homelessness,
5. advise on priorities for the distribution of housing related funds based on the Local Plan and relevant sections of county and local government plans addressing low-income housing.

STAFF ROLE

Whatcom County Health Department staff, hereafter referred to as Staff, will:

1. provide leadership, strategic planning and program development activities in response to funding availability and the federal, state and local service environment,
2. provide program and contract management responsibilities directly related to the use of housing funds and program planning,
3. act as a resource for the Committee and support its members in the performance of their duties,
4. keep and distribute Committee meeting minutes.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES EXPECTED

The Committee shall support Staff to:

1. achieve a balance between accountability and the public benefit,
2. employ application, fund distribution and monitoring processes that are efficient, simple, short and easy to understand and in compliance with local and state law,
3. invest in quality projects that are conceptually sound and financially feasible and that respond to identified need and strategic planning within Whatcom County,
4. fund projects and programs that leverage other resources, when appropriate,
5. Fund projects that demonstrate coordination or collaboration with other Whatcom County service providers,
6. fund projects that produce intended results,
7. uniformly and consistently apply policies and procedures.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS

Committee members shall be appointed by the County Executive and will not be compensated for their participation. The Committee shall consist of 15 members. Committee membership is open to Whatcom County residents and shall strive to include representatives from diverse sectors that have relevance to the purpose of the committee. These sectors include special needs populations, social/supportive services, urban and rural housing, tribal nations, housing finance and business.

Required membership positions include:

- Homeless Advocate/person with lived experience
- Two representatives of Whatcom County (Health Department and County Executive)
- Two representatives of the City of Bellingham
- Two representatives from the Small Cities of Whatcom County

Designated membership positions include:

- Whatcom Homeless Service Center
- Bellingham/Whatcom Housing Authority

Other membership positions will include:

- Two Housing Advocate positions
- One non-profit Housing Provider
- Two Housing Industry positions
- One Tribal Nation Representative

In the event that a required or designated membership position representative is unable to attend a meeting, a designated alternate may serve as the representative.

MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each member selected will commit to attendance at the meetings.
2. If the member cannot attend, the work of the group will be trusted and the group is therefore accountable to one another and the good of the whole.
3. Be familiar with all the primary and supportive documents, as well as the appropriate federal, state and local governmental regulations concerning the provision of low-income housing and/or related services.
4. Uphold the locally established low-income housing related legislation.
5. Act in the best interest of the county as a whole and disclose potential conflicts of interest

- according to Whatcom County policy.
6. Ensure public participation, when appropriate in the application and/or evaluation process.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Committee members shall avoid conflict of interest with the activities of the Committee. If Committee members find themselves with a potential conflict of interest, they will acknowledge their conflict of interest in such a manner as to allow it to be noted in the minutes. Any member with a conflict of interest will withdraw from direct action on the issue.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for Committee members that do not represent required or designated positions shall be three consecutive years. A member may serve two full terms; a member serving a partial term shall not have that term considered as a full term. A member may serve until a replacement has been appointed and is ready to serve.

TERMINATION

Membership on the Committee shall be terminated if a member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without excuse, except for required and designated positions. At the discretion of the Committee, the member may be reinstated or the position declared vacant and a successor recommended to the County Executive. Members may be recommended for removal from the Committee upon agreement of two-thirds (2/3) vote of the remaining Committee members. The County Executive shall be advised of the recommendation and make final determination.

VACANCIES

The County Executive will fill vacancies as required.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence due to extraordinary circumstances may be granted in writing by the Chairperson upon petition by a member. If granted, the member's term will continue to run but the member relinquishes all privileges and is relieved of all obligations during the leave. The member's position will remain vacant during the period of the leave. Such vacancies shall reduce the current membership of the Committee for purposes of a quorum establishment.

REIMBURSEMENT

Members shall not be compensated for their duties as members of the WCHAC, but may be reimbursed for Whatcom County approved training and related travel costs (for example: registration fees, overnight accommodations, meals, mileage) as per Whatcom County "Employee Travel Policy".

MEETING

MEETINGS

The regular meetings of the Committee shall be conducted as required. All Committee members shall be notified of the meeting ahead of time and advised of the agenda. Election of officers shall be held during the first quarter of the year.

All Committee meetings shall be open to the public.

A Consensus Model will be used for decision-making. The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure by Alice Sturgis, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure when Committee is unable to reach consensus. If consensus is not achieved, a majority/minority report may be forwarded to the County Executive office at committee members' discretion.

AGENDA

Staff, in conjunction with the Chair, shall prepare an agenda for each meeting.

Any Committee member, community agency or county resident may request to be placed on the agenda notifying the Staff liaison 10 business days prior to the meeting. Staff, in conjunction with the Chair, will approve requests.

MINUTES

Minutes are kept and distributed to the official mailing list for those meetings in which formal Committee action may be taken. Reports and recommendations to the full Committee will act as the record of sub-committee meetings.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

QUORUM

A majority of all the current membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be required to take action and approve all formal Committee recommendations.

The formulation and adoption of recommendations, positions, and other activities shall be how the Committee works in an advisory capacity to the Health Department and the County Executive.

VOTING

Each member of the Committee shall possess one vote in matters coming before the Committee. Voting may be done in person, or through real-time communication technology, such as virtual or telephone attendance. In the event that a required or designated membership position representative is unable to attend a meeting, a designated alternate may vote in their place. Non-designated membership positions, such as housing advocates, non-profit provider, and housing industry positions may cast votes only if the appointed committee member is in attendance. A vote by a majority of the quorum present shall carry.

OFFICERS

OFFICERS

The officers shall consist of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The officers of the Committee shall be nominated and elected by a majority vote of the membership present at a pre-determined Committee meeting during the first quarter of the year and shall serve for a term of one calendar year. Officers can be re-elected for a second calendar year.

VACANCIES IN COMMITTEE OFFICES

In case the position of Committee Chairperson becomes vacant, the Vice-Chairperson shall automatically become Chairperson and a new Vice-Chairperson shall be elected. A general election shall be held within 2 months to fill the Vice-Chairperson's position.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY OF OFFICERS

CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson of the Committee shall provide general leadership to the Committee in all areas of its involvement. He/she shall preside over all meetings of the Committee and shall have the authority to sign official correspondence on behalf of the Committee. He/she may call special meetings of the Committee. At his/her discretion he/she may assign duties to the Vice-Chairperson and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume all responsibility and authority of the Chairperson. He/she shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Chairperson.

SUB-COMMITTEES

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee shall recruit the members as needed for their sub-committees from the membership and/or from the community. Sub-committee chairs must be Committee members and are elected by WCHAC.

AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be adopted and amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee membership at a regular Committee meeting. The Committee members shall receive at least 30 days prior notice of proposed by-law amendments.