



By-laws

2024 - 2025

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Article 1. Name

- Section 1.1 The name of this organization shall be the Highland County Family and Children First Council (hereinafter called the council).
- Section 1.2 The designate service area of the council shall be Highland County, Ohio.
- Section 1.3 The principal office and place of business of the council shall be located in Highland County, Ohio, at a place designated by majority council.

Article 11. Purpose and Authority

- Section 2.1 The authority for existence and the purpose(s) of the council are those authorized under Chapter 121.37 of the Ohio Revised Code, and shall be interpreted to accomplish, but not limited to the following:
- 2.1.1 Develop and implement, subject to Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council approval, a Council Service Coordination Mechanism;
 - 2.1.2 Referrals to the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council of those children for whom the council cannot provide adequate services;
 - 2.1.3 Develop and implement a process that bi-annually evaluates and prioritizes services, fills service gaps where possible, and invents new approaches to achieve better results for families and children;
 - 2.1.4 Participate in the development of a countywide, comprehensive, coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency system for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities of delays and their families, as established pursuant to federal grants received and administered by Ohio Department of Education for early intervention services under the "Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986;
 - 2.1.5 Maintain an accountability system to monitor the council's progress in achieving results for the family and children; and
 - 2.1.6 Establish a mechanism to ensure ongoing input from a broad representation of families who are receiving services within the system.

Article 111. Vision/Mission

- Section 3.1 Mission: Highland County Family and Children First Council strives to collaborate among all community partners to provide the best service delivery to children and families.
- Section 3.2 Vision: The well-being of families, no matter how defined, and the children of all families is the first responsibility of the family and, if needed, the responsibility of the larger community. We value and respect families and recognize diversity in our community. It is our goal to provide opportunities and encouragement so that all children and families may work toward maximizing their potential. It is our goal to provide services in such a manner that will enable families to become increasingly independent and self-sufficient and ultimately leave the service delivery system with understanding of how to re-access services as needed. Highland County families will have educational and community services that are:
- High quality ❖ Easily accessible
 - Caring ❖ Creative
 - Respectful ❖ Family centered
 - Affordable ❖ Unified

Article IV. Membership

- Section 4.1 The composition of the council shall include those parties that are mandated pursuant to Section 121.37 of the Revised Code:
- a) At least three individuals who are not employed by an agency represented on the council and whose families are or have received services from an agency represented on the council or another county's council. Where possible, the number of members representing families shall be equal to 20% of the council's membership.
 - b) The director of the board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services that serves the county, or, in the case of a county that has a board of alcohol and drug addiction services and a community mental health board, the directors of both boards. If a board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services covers more than one county, the director may designate a person to participate on the county's council.
 - c) The health commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, of the board of health of each city and general health district in the county. If the county has two or more health districts, the health commissioner membership may be limited to the commissioners of the two districts with the largest populations.
 - d) The director of the county department of job and family services.
 - e) The executive director of the public children services agency.
 - f) The superintendent of the county board of developmental disabilities or, if the superintendent serves as superintendent of more than one county board of developmental disabilities, the superintendent's designee.

- g) The superintendent of the city exempted village, or local school district with the largest number of pupils residing in the county, as determined by the department of education, which shall notify each board of county commissioners of its determination at least biennially.
- h) A school superintendent representing all other school districts with territory in the county, as designated at a biennial meeting of the superintendents of those districts.
- i) A representative of the municipal corporation with the largest population in the county.
- j) The president of the board of county commissioners or an individual designated by the board.
- k) A representative of the regional office of the department of youth services.
- l) A representative of the county's head start agency, as defined in section 3301.32 of the Revised Code.
- m) A representative of the county's early intervention collaborative established pursuant to the federal early intervention program operated under the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004."
- n) A representative of a local nonprofit entity that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families.

4.1.1 Additional voting members may be added to council membership by nomination and majority vote of council members. Final approval of new membership is then voted upon by the Highland County Board of Commissioners (this will affect the number of members needed for a quorum).

Section 4.2. Council membership shall be designated by a membership agreement, to be signed annually. Membership agreements shall be renewed annually between June 1 and June 30, of each year.

4.2.1 Family representatives will also be asked to fill out an application to become a Council member. If the number of applications exceed the 20% of the full membership of the council, the council will vote on membership of the parent representatives. These will then be voted on by the Highland County Board of Commissioners.

Section 4.3 An individual member shall represent solely his/her own interests and responsibilities. An organizational or mandated member shall represent the interests and responsibilities of the organization.

Section 4.4 The membership of the council shall meet at a set time every other month; time and place to be determined by a consensus of the membership.

- 4.4.1 A simple majority of the members of the council shall constitute a quorum.
- 4.4.2 Any member of the council may call for a formal vote on issues brought before the council. In the event of a formal vote, each designated council member shall have one vote. When a quorum is present, a majority vote of those members present and voting shall prevail in the decision, except where prohibited by these by-laws.
- 4.4.3 In the event a quorum is not present and/or when time is of the essence, the council chairperson and the coordinator may jointly make decisions on behalf of the council when essential for the timely conduct of council business. Such decisions may include but are not limited to:
- Authorizing bills for payment,
 - Approving council budgets and financial reports, and
 - Action necessary to facilitate council-related grant applications.

When the chairperson and coordinator are required to make such decisions, their actions will be ratified by the council at the next meeting, or as soon as feasible. This provision shall not allow to any action requiring majority vote of the council by law such as entering into contracts or personnel actions.

- 4.4.4 The council executive committee may meet in an emergency situation for any item(s) that may need approval quickly. Their actions will be ratified by the council at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- 4.4.5 To ensure public accountability, minutes from each meeting shall be recorded by the secretary and maintained by the council coordinator. Minutes shall be disseminated to council members.

- Section 4.5 The duties of the council shall be:
- Periodic review and ratification of the council by-laws.
 - Approval of the council's service coordination plan.
 - Elect the leadership of the council, to include parent representatives.
 - Plan, implement, and evaluate the activities of the council and council committees.

- Section 4.6 Members of the council shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties, subject to the approval of the council.

- Section 4.7 Membership contributions are voluntary. Any funding received is used to offset expenses and can be used to help, support, and implement services currently being provided.

Article V. Open Meetings

Section 5.1 All council meetings are open, and council shall determine a means in which to advertise its meetings in accordance with the provisions of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Article VI. Committees

The council shall establish ad hoc committees as needed for the operation of the council. The committees may be advisory in nature, or upon direction of the council, may act with authority. The council chairperson shall appoint committee membership. Committees may be composed of council members, or individuals who are not designated members. Committees shall make decisions by consensus of members, or any committee member may call for a formal vote at the council's regular meeting.

Article VII. Officers

Composition: The council officers (executive committee) shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and any other officers deemed necessary by the council.

Section 7.1 7.1.1 Each officer shall serve for a term of two years,

7.1.2 The term of the office for all officers shall begin on July 1.

7.1.3 The Vice Chairperson shall succeed to the office of Chairperson. Other vacancies in any office of the council may be filled by the council or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Powers and Duties: The officers of the council shall have such powers and duties as generally pertained to their respective offices and such further powers and duties as from time to time may be conferred by the council, including but not limited to the following:

Section 7.2 7.2.1 Chairperson: Calls and presides at all meetings of the council; provides leadership to the council and its committees; appoints committee chairpersons and members; exercises of the authority and duties are delegated by council.

7.2.2 Vice Chairperson: Acts on behalf of the council Chairperson in their absence.

7.2.3 Secretary: Records meeting minutes and sends them on to the coordinator within one (1) week of meeting business.

Article VIII. Administrative Agent

Section 8.1 Council shall select an Administrative Agent from among its mandated members,

pursuant to Section 121.37 of the Ohio Revised Code.

8.1.1 The Administrative Agent shall serve as the council's appointing authority and ensure that all expenditures are handled in accordance with policies, procedures, and activities prescribed by state departments in rules or interagency agreements that are applicable to the council's function.

8.1.2 The Administrative Agent may enter into agreements to administer contracts with public or private entities to fulfill specific council business.

8.1.3 As determined by council, the Administrative Agent may provide financial stipends, reimbursements, or both to family representatives for expenses related to council activity.

Article IX. Coordinator

Section 9.1 The council shall appoint and employ a coordinator of the council through its Administrative Agent. The coordinator shall perform the duties assigned by the council. Service coordination shall be evaluated annually by the council.

Article X. Conflicts of Interest

Section 10.1 Recognizing that council members and participants must govern the council's affairs honestly and economically, exercising their best care, skill, and judgment for the benefit of the council, to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, the council members shall disclose to the council any situation wherein the member has a conflicting interest or duality of interest that could possibly cause that person to act in other than the best interest of the council.

Any member having conflicting interest or duality of interest in any transaction shall make a disclosure of such conflict to the other council members. Such member should not vote or use his/her influence on the matter. The minutes of the meeting should reflect the members disclosure and the abstention from voting.

Article XI. Rules of Order

Section 11.1 All meetings of the council or committees will be conducted according to generally accepted procedures for the conduct of meetings.

11.1.1 Should a procedural dispute arise, the presiding officer will seek consensus on dispute resolution among the members present.

11.1.2 If the procedural dispute cannot be resolved by consensus, Robert Rules of Order will be used to resolve the dispute.

Article XII. Amendments

Section 12.1 The by-laws and subsequent amendments may be changed by a majority vote of council members. Any proposed change must be read at two consecutive regular meetings and voted upon at second reading.

Article XIII. Liabilities

Section 13.1 Nothing herein shall constitute members of the council or its officers as partners for any purpose. No member, agency, or employee shall be liable for the acts of failure to act, or any other member, agency, or employee of the council.