

# BYLAWS: LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

Santa Clara County

*The purpose of these bylaws is to describe how the Lived Experience Advisory Board (the “Board”) functions. Bylaws outline the Board’s purpose and operations, who may participate, and expectations of members and leaders.*

## MISSION

The Board is a leadership development body consisting of members with current or past experience of homelessness. Members use this platform to learn about and evaluate the system of care and to make recommendations for improvement.

## LEADERSHIP

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

#### **Two Co-chairs**

Responsibilities: Establish meeting agendas, and lead meetings or designate those who do so. Coordinate membership in establishing Board goals and actions. Monitor Board size and initiate recruitment efforts when needed.

Length of Tenure: 1 year

Number of Terms: Up to 2 consecutive terms (and may be voted back for additional non-consecutive terms in the future)

Co-chairs are encouraged to ensure that at least one co-chair position turns over per year.

#### **Secretary (optional, for use as desired by the Board):**

Responsibilities: Takes minutes and distributes them to the group and/or stores them in designated place. Tracks member attendance. May create agendas for meetings, informed by co-chair(s). Note that meetings could be staffed by non-Board member support staff to cover these duties.

Length of Tenure: 1 year

Number of Terms: No limit

#### **Liaison (optional, for use as desired by the Board):**

Responsibilities: Acts as voice of the Board to coordinate or communicate with the Santa Clara County homelessness organizing body, the Continuum of Care (CoC) or other groups. May be for a specific issue or general representation for any matters. For example, the Board may designate a Liaison to participate in the CoC Review & Rank Panel Committee to help decide which local programs are recommended for funding during the annual CoC competition.

Length of Tenure: 1 year

Number of Terms: No limit

### *Election of Leaders*

In order to be a candidate for a vacant or soon-to-be-vacant leadership position, a member will be nominated as candidate. Any member can nominate another member, and members may self-nominate.

If only one candidate is nominated for a position, they need to receive a majority vote of members present in favor to be placed in the position. If more than one candidate is nominated for a position, then each voting member will cast a single vote; whichever candidate receives more votes will be placed in the position.

Candidates do not participate in the vote and must be out of room while voting takes place. Vote should be kept confidential among those present to preserve integrity of the vote.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### *Number of Members and Eligibility*

The Board will consist of 11 to 13 members. To be eligible to serve on the Board, members identify themselves as having an experience of homelessness, past or present. This experience may have taken place in Santa Clara County or elsewhere, and the member does not need to have utilized services in Santa Clara County.

### *Diversity Mechanism*

In the interest of representing a broad range of opinions and proficiencies, and to bring voices to the table that might otherwise be left out, the Board will strive to include a person who represents each of the categories listed below. Even without achieving membership diversity across all categories, the Board may continue to function.

- Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Queer
- Transgender
- Parenting/Family
- Substance use experience
- Disabled
- Veteran status
- Immigrant experience
- “Dreamer”
- Former foster care
- Use of mental health services
- Use of Cold Weather Shelter Program or rotating church shelter

- Use of County/Office of Supportive Housing systems
- Youth or elderly
- Live in South County
- Live in North County
- Live in East County
- Currently experiencing homelessness
- Housed and connected to homeless services
- Jail/Prison/Reentry experience
- Gang affiliated, present or former

### *Becoming a Member*

The initial launch of the Board will consist of those who attended Board pre-planning meetings who express interest in being members, plus either (a) all eligible applicants, if this would result in a Board of 13 or fewer members, or (b) eligible applicants chosen according to the process outlined below for becoming a member.

On an ongoing basis as membership spaces open up, new members will be chosen based on application for membership. Current members will review any application materials and vote by majority of those present to approve applicants. Approvals to fill open vacancies may not exceed the maximum number of 13 total members.

### *Maintaining Membership*

Resignation: If a member chooses to voluntarily resign from the Board, the member should provide notice to the other members as soon as possible in writing.

Attendance-Based: If a member misses three meetings in a row, then that missing member can be presumed to have resigned and be dismissed. In this situation, a majority vote of members present can dismiss the missing member. Before dismissing such a member, other members should attempt to get into contact with the individual and resolve the situation in a manner in line with the missing member's desired outcome if possible.

Period of Membership: Members are encouraged to serve for 15 months total. This includes 12 months of service and 3 months to continue to serve while also recruiting applicants for a replacement member. When possible, members are encouraged to stagger turnover of membership in order to create continuity for the Board.

Removal: A member may be removed from the Board through vote to remove by 2/3 of all current Board members. The member at issue does not participate in the vote and must be out of room while voting takes place.

### *Member Meetings*

Regular meetings will be held monthly or as established by co-chairs. Subcommittees and any other subgroups may meet as frequently as desired.

### *Non-Member Attendance and Participation*

In order to keep open lines of communication, enhance collaboration, and support the Board's work, non-members may be invited to attend member meetings and participate in ways as allowed by Board members. For example, CoC representatives and staff may be asked to attend Board meetings for purposes of bringing information or opportunities to the Board.

## **QUORUM AND DECISION MAKING**

### *Quorum*

Quorum describes the number of members who need to be present for decisions to be made or activities to occur.

For a vote to be held, a majority (more than half) of existing members must be present. Remote attendance, such as calling in by phone, qualifies as being present for purposes of quorum and voting.

No quorum is needed to hold a meeting, but quorum is needed to make decisions affecting the whole group.

### *Majority Vote to Make Decisions*

Membership on the Board gives the right to vote. To bind the Board in any decision, a majority vote of those present and entitled to vote is needed. Note that this means a tie vote is not approved.

### *Voting Procedures*

Recognizing that discussions are as important as voting for collaboration, at points of decision the Board encourages respectful discussion and coming to a majority vote.

Any person may call for a vote on a matter that is being discussed in any way that effectively communicates with those present that a vote is taking place. No formal rules need be followed for voting to take place.

One method of discussion and voting that *may* be used, called “Robert’s Rules of Order,” uses motions and certain vocabulary in decision making. This method is described here as an option for Board members to use as one way to communicate during discussion and voting. Board members are welcome to use some form of the guidelines below but do not have to go by them.

- 1) One member states a desired outcome by making a motion, saying, “I move that...”
- 2) Another member can second the motion to agree, saying, “I second the motion.” If no one seconds the motion, no vote is taken at that time, though the motion and vote could be brought up again at another time.
- 3) If a member does second the motion, the co-chair or person leading the meeting makes space for discussion by saying, “It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?”
- 4) During discussion, the person who made the motion is allowed to speak first. Then, everyone else is allowed to speak as well. Each person should be able to speak at least once, and the leader may alternate between those who are for and against the motion.
- 5) After discussion, the leader initiates voting by saying, “Those in favor of the motion that... say “I approve.” Those opposed say “I don’t approve.” Votes may be taken verbally or by show of hands.
- 6) After votes are counted, the leader announces either that the motion is passed or that it did not pass.

### *Conflict of Interest Policy*

Conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which decisions made in a person’s official capacity may result in personal benefit or harm.

A member who has a conflict of interest should disclose the potential conflict to the other members and must abstain from participating in any vote or decision making that implicates the conflict.

### *Revising Bylaws*

These bylaws may be revised by Board members through vote to approve by majority of all current Board members. Bylaws should be reviewed and revised by Board members as desired, not less than once every two years.

## SUBCOMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Board recognizes multiple ways for members to initiate work and take action as part of the Board. Subcommittees are one way of doing this, and another way is to participate in other CoC committees and working groups.

For instances in which all members of the Board do not want or need to work on a particular issue, smaller groups can be created to work independently. At any meeting, members may vote by majority to establish a Subcommittee on any topic that will further the work of the Board. Ad hoc Subcommittees, which are formed for a specific task or objective and dissolved after achieving their objective, are also encouraged to further the work.

Those who are part of Subcommittees should plan to report back to the Board at the next full meeting of the Board to update the group and get feedback and direction on their work.