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2017 Orientation Booklet



**Hudson County
HIV/AIDS Services
Planning Council**

**HUDSON COUNTY HIV SERVICES PLANNING COUNCIL
VOTING MEMBER**

Description of Responsibilities

Summary: The voting members provide the vehicle through which the Planning Council conducts its business.

Essential Responsibilities:

1. Attendance at meetings. Required by Bylaws: no more than three unexcused absences.
2. Be a member of at least one [1] Planning Council Committee -- required by Bylaws
3. Appointment of a reliable alternate to attend and vote if the need to miss a meeting arises.
4. Develop an awareness of the needs of PLWA's in Hudson County.
5. Have an interest in assuring high quality and comprehensive services to the PLWH/A's in Hudson County.
6. Assist in the development and implementation of a mandated Comprehensive Plan for Hudson County.
7. Assist in completing a mandated needs assessment every three years.
8. Assure the continued viability of the Council by bringing in new members.
9. Serve on at least one committee of the Council.
10. Be prepared to vote on issues raised at the meetings.
11. Disclose a potential conflict of interest before a matter is voted on.
12. Participate in Council educational, information gathering, or advocacy proceedings.
13. Educate the community about the PLWH/A and their unique and common needs.
14. Develop a working knowledge of the By-Laws of the Planning Council and the Ryan White federal regulations.

Meeting Ground Rules

Each member of the Planning Council is asked to agree to adhere to the following ground Rules throughout meetings and other proceedings:

1. Every member will treat everyone else with respect -- as an intelligent person with a legitimate right to be a part of discussions and decision-making. This means that all members/participants in meetings will have the opportunity to speak -- and to be listened to, without interruptions.
2. The chair will establish procedures for discussion, and may limit the length of individual presentations and set reasonable time limits on debate. A parliamentarian or timekeeper may be selected to assist with this process.
3. Decision-making will occur in an agreed-upon manner -- whether majority rule, some form of "super majority" (e.g., two-thirds vote), or consensus, etc. -- with agreement about the process made before discussion occurs. Unless otherwise determined, decision-making will be by majority vote, or by super majority where required by bylaws.
4. There will be no personal attacks on anyone; disagreements will focus on issues, not individuals.
5. Every member of the group will accept and support decisions made in the agreed-upon manner, regardless of his/her personal position.
6. Information presented in confidence will be held in confidence, not discussed outside the meeting.
7. Members will behave in a manner which reflects recognition of their responsibility to present and consider the concerns of specific communities or population groups, and at the same time consider the overall needs of people living with HIV disease and act on their behalf, not to benefit themselves.
8. All members will speak positively about the planning body in public; problems will be addressed within the group, and not with outsiders.
9. Any member who feels s/he cannot support the mission, goals, strategies, programs, and/or leadership of the planning body as agreed upon by the members should leave the planning body.
10. Every member will take responsibility not only for abiding by these ground rules personally, but also for speaking out to assure that all other members abide by them.

Prepared by Emily Gantz McKay, President, Mosaica, April 1994; revised August 1996.

CONDUCT AT HIV PLANNING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Participating in

It is expected that all members will arrive on time so that meetings may begin on time.

Members who report for meeting who are obviously under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol to the point that their thought process is affected, will be asked to leave.

Meetings

Good communication skills are among the most important factors in effective meetings.

Consider some basic communication skills that can help members to participate more effectively in planning council meetings.

Remember: The Chair is in charge of the meeting. Therefore, he/she has the authority to uphold Robert's Rules and to limit discussion of issues and/or problems so as to assure that the meeting remains focused and efficient.

Listening

Listening is a basic communication skill, yet one of the most difficult to master. Many people tend to half-listen - they are preoccupied with their own ideas or how they are going to respond instead of paying attention to the speaker. When people don't listen, they interrupt each other, jump from one subject to another, or repeat what has already been said. This slows the process and can lead to misinformation, wasted time, and frustration. Some techniques to improve listening include:

Concentrate on listening, not on what you have to say. Reflect on what has been said before you speak. If you listen carefully, you may identify aspects of the issue you had not considered.

Listen to all that is being said. Do not interrupt as soon as someone says something to which you object; give the speaker the opportunity to complete his/her statement, and wait until you have heard the entire idea before judging. Allow fellow members to express opinions or discuss issues without becoming belligerent or disrespectful.

Listen actively. Look at the speaker. Take notes; this can help you focus if you have trouble paying attention, and recall what was said.

Speaking/ Contributing

Communicate your ideas in a clear and logical way. Consider the following techniques to improve oral communication:

Do not use agency or individual names when pointing out problems or deficiencies.

Speak in ways that promote listening (not too fast or slow, using an appropriate sound level and tone). Speak briefly until you gain confidence. If you are nervous, share quick ideas or reactions before attempting a major presentation.

- * *Build on others' ideas.* Connect previous speakers' remarks with your own - by summarizing their views or using their thoughts as a springboard. This shows respect for the speaker and helps members follow the discussion. If someone else has spoken and shares your view, support his or her strong points and add ideas he or she may have missed.
- * *Don't give uncertain information.* Become informed and then speak.
- * *Don't dominate the conversation.* Participate, but let others talk as well.
- * *Always appear reasonable.* Keep a sense of humor. If you "lose your cool," you will probably lose the argument.

Disagreeing

Knowing how to disagree is vital to an effective group/meeting process. Disagreement almost always occurs in substantive discussions. However:

Disagree with respect. Do it without making a person defensive or resentful. Avoid offensive comments. Be especially careful about statements that might be taken as sexist, racist, homophobic, or insensitive to any group involved in AIDS activities. Don't personalize what is said; separate the disagreement from the person with whom you disagree. Direct, personal criticism may make some members afraid to speak again, or they may act out feelings of anger or rejection by undermining group activities.

Disagree non-judgmentally. Keep strong emotion toned down. Don't question people's motives or intelligence.

Be sure you understand the point before you state your disagreement. Start by asking a few questions to clarify the other person's point. You may be able to clear up a misunderstanding before it becomes a disagreement.

Be specific and constructive in your remarks. Do not just criticize, be ready with an alternative. If you agree with part of the suggestion, recognize this before pointing out differences.

Additional Tips

Be prepared. Think about the meeting ahead of time.

Look at the agenda; read background materials. Decide what contribution you would like to make. Write down your thoughts and some things you would like to say.

Look confident and interested. If you feel anxious or unsure, particularly if you are uncertain about the subject being discussed, -take some deep breaths and relax. Ask questions, or suggest that the chair provide background information on the topic for new members or guests.

Consider where you sit. Where you sit can affect people's response to you and whether you feel part of the group. Sit near the key players; avoid sitting at the far end of the table or in the back of the room. This may make you appear (and feel) as if you are not part of the group.

SELF-APPRAISAL FORM

Using the following guidelines, please indicate your appraisal of each item

Never a Problem 1	Seldom a Problem 2	Increasingly a Problem 3	Now a definite Problem 4			
			1	2	3	4
1. Am I able to attend regularly scheduled meetings?						
2. Do I arrive on time for meetings?						
3. Is my schedule flexible enough to attend emergency sessions?						
4. Does my career conflict with my position on the council?						
5. Am I able to discuss controversial topics effectively?						
6. Do I review support materials prior to all meetings, when received?						
7. Am I tense and hostile during candid exchanges of opinion?						
8. Do I work easily with other council members and our administrator?						
9. Am I able to keep an open mind on issues?						
10. Do I confine my discussion to agenda items only?						
11. Do I make at least one positive contribution to each council meeting?						
12. Do I have a high level of commitment and interest in our organization?						