

**Highland County  
Family and Children First Council  
Bylaws**

**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 principle 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; and
  - 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; and
  - 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 the Department of Health for early intervention services under the “Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986; and
  - 2.1.5 Maintain an accountability system to monitor the Council’s progress in achieving results for family and children; and
  - 2.1.6 Establish a mechanism to ensure ongoing input from a broad representation of families who are receiving services with in the system.

Section 2.2 The Council shall be a community collaborative to review public services currently in place for children and families, and plan and implement systemic improvement of these services.

Section 2.3 Except as provided in the Ohio Revised Code, the Council shall comply with the policies, procedures, and activities prescribed by the rules of state department participating on the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council to the extent that the Council performs a function subject to those rules.

### **Article 111. Vision/Mission**

Section 3.1 The well-being of families, no matter how defined, and the children of all families, is first the 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 if 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. 20% of the voting members of the Council are individuals that represent the interest of families as consumers of public services in Highland County. They are not to be employees of the Council members.

- b. The executive Director of the Paint Valley Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services board, or designee;
- c. The Health Commissioner of the Highland County board of Health, or designee;
- d. The Director of Highland County Department of Job and Family Services;
- e. The Director of Highland County Children Services board;
- f. The Superintendent of the Hillsboro City Schools district;
- g. A Superintendent representing all other school districts within Highland County a designated by the Clinton-Fayette-Highland Educational Service District;
- h. A representative of the municipal corporation with the largest population in the county;
- i. The Superintendent of the Highland county board of Mental Retardation and Developmental disabilities;
- j. The Chairperson of the Highland County Commissioners, or an individual designated by the board;
- k. Representative of the Highland County Community Action Head Start Program;
- l. A representative of the Highland County Early Childhood Collaborative Council;
- m. The Executive director of the Highland County Community Action Organization, Inc.;
- n. A Representative of the regional office of the Department of Youth Services;
- o. The Executive director of the Highland County Domestic Violence Task Force;
- p. The Director of Family Recovery Services;
- q. A representative of Highland District Hospital.

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 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 January 1 and January 31, 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.

4.2.2 The parent representatives who become voting members of the council will receive a stipend.

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 each month; time and place to be determined by a consensus of the membership.

A simple majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum; with current membership that equals 9 members.

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 bylaws.

In the event a quorum is not present, and /or when time is of the essence, the Council Chairperson and 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 actions 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.

To ensure public accountability, minutes from each meeting shall be recorded 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 Bylaws
- 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 serve without compensation. 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.

### **Article V. Open Meetings**

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

### **Article VI. Committees**

Section 6.2 The Council shall establish as 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 monthly meeting.

### **Article VII. Officers**

Section 7.1 Composition: The Council Officers shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice chairperson, and any other officers deemed necessary by the Council.

7.1.1 Each officer shall serve for a term of one year

7.1.2 The Term of the office for all Officers shall begin on January 01.

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.

Section 7.2 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:

- 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.

### **Article VIII**

- 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 and 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 member's 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 12.2 The bylaws and subsequent amendments may be changed by a majority vote of Council members. Any proposed change must be read at two consecutive regular monthly and voted on 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.