

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Employment Services



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By-Laws **District of Columbia Commission on Poverty**

ARTICLE I - Name

By legislation, the Council of the District of Columbia has established a Commission on Poverty.

This Commission shall be called “the Commission on Poverty,” as specified in D.C. Code sec. 3-641.01.

ARTICLE II -Purpose

Section 1.

a. The purpose of the Commission is set forward in D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02. The functions of the Commission are set forth in D.C. Code sec. 3-641.0, including “Serve as District leaders in advancing policies and initiatives aimed at elevating the needs of persons in poverty.”

b. The Commission will advise each District agency, board and commission regarding poverty reduction policies as may be appropriate from time to time. The Commission is authorized to comment on actions of the Council of the District of Columbia, the Executive branch of the District Government, independent agencies, and other entities.

Section 2. The Commission will present its view to any Federal agency, as necessary.

Section 3. The Commission may initiate its own proposals for District Government action. Any proposal submitted by the Commission will bear the signature of the chairperson and the Executive Director.

Section 4. On or before November 30 of each year, the Commission shall file an annual report for the preceding fiscal year with the Council of the District of Columbia and the Mayor. Such

report shall include but shall not be limited to:

- a. Summaries of important issues identified by the Commission,
- b. Recommendations for actions to be taken by the District Government,
- c. Recommendations for improvements in the operation of the Commission,
- d. Financial reports,

e. Summary of Commission activities.

ARTICLE III -Members

Section 1. Membership on the Commission is specified in D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02. That section prescribes the number of voting, appointed members; the number of non-voting ex officio members; and their respective, required qualifications.

Section 2. Terms. The terms of service of appointed members are specified in subsection (b)(4) of D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02.

Section 3. Compensation. Appointed members of the Commission shall serve without compensation; except, that expenses incurred by the Commission as a whole, or by an individual member when the expense was duly authorized by the Chairperson of the Commission, shall be reimbursed pursuant to section 1108(d) of the District of Columbia Government Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-139; D.C. Official Code § 1-611.08(d)). D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02 (5).

ARTICLE IV. General Rules.

Section 1. As specified in D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02(f), the Commission shall develop its own operating rules and procedures.

Section 2. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Commission's meetings and deliberations in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with these By-Laws and any special rules of order the Commission may adopt.

ARTICLE V. Meetings; Listening Sessions; special meetings; joint meetings.

Section 1.

The Commission shall hold its regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

If the meeting is canceled due to a holiday, emergency, etc., the meeting shall take place within a fifteen (15)-day period.

Section 2. Public meetings.

- a. Pursuant to the provisions of S742(a) of the District of Columbia Self-Government
- b. and Government Reorganization Act, all meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public. Public Meetings shall be held at one centrally located meeting space unless such a location is unable to be secured. In the event a fixed location is not available the Commission may hold meetings in varied locations spread geographically across the city. In addition, Public Meetings of the Commission shall be available live online.
- c. At least seven (7) days' notice shall be given by the Commission of its meetings or convocations by posting written notices in at least two conspicuous places, including but not limited to its website, except when shorter notice for good cause is necessary in the case of an emergency.

Section 3. Quorum. As mandated by D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02(e), a quorum of the Commission shall consist of a majority of the voting members.

Section 4. Attendance, Minutes and Records.

- a. The Commission as well as each commissioner of the Commission shall maintain a record of attendance of the members. Commissioner's' absence from meetings will be indicated as excused or unexcused. Such records shall be forwarded to the Commission's² secretary for recordation and shall be available for public inspection.
- b. All meetings of the Commission should be recorded and kept for one year until such time when the compilation of all information for the District Government (budget) has been made. Minutes shall be transcribed and copies provided to all commissioners within a reasonable time after meeting dates.

- c. The secretary or Commission staff shall be responsible for the preparation of the minutes for all meetings of the Commission and for the distribution of copies of minutes to all members of the Commission pursuant to forthcoming amendments. In addition, the secretary and Commission staff shall be responsible for maintaining records of all activities
- d. In the preparing of minutes, reports, etc., the secretary shall have the assistance of the Commission staff, when necessary.
- e. The secretary and Commission staff shall serve as a central repository of copies of minutes of all standing, special, administrative committees, and shall issue notices of meetings and conduct the general correspondence of the Commission

Section 5. Listening Sessions. At least 4 meetings annually shall be Listening Sessions as mandated by D.C Code sec. 3-641.04. The listening sessions shall be in communities with a high concentration of people in poverty. The testimony to be sought, and the purpose of the Listening Sessions, are set forth in the statute.

Section 6. Special meetings. Special meetings of the Commission can be called by the chairperson or by the Executive Committee or by written request of one-sixth of the Commission membership. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice and no other topic may be discussed at that meeting. Reasonable notice shall be given in writing.

Section 7. Joint meetings.

- a. The Commission may hold joint meetings with other Commissions to deal more effectively with or respond to similar concerns and issues which transcend and affect the areas of the Commissions, jointly meeting and for informational purposes.

- b. Joint Commission meetings may be held only after the Commission votes by a ' majority to participate in such joint meetings and discuss such matters as have been given to

each participant Commission in a meeting held prior to each such joint meeting.

c. The Commission members shall reflect but not necessarily be bound by the views of the Commission. The Commission members attending the associated Commission shall have no power other than what their Commission shall have agreed upon.

d. All associated meetings of Commissions shall be open and at least 14 days' notice shall be given by posting written notices in at least two conspicuous places.

e. Voting at joint meetings shall be limited to the Commission members. The host's bylaws shall prevail.

ARTICLE VI. Voting.

Section 1. All members eligible to vote shall have equal voting rights following the principle of one person, one vote.

Section 2. There shall be no voting by proxy.

ARTICLE VII. Officers.

Section 1. The Commission shall elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, secretary, and such other officers as may be necessary from among the Poverty Commission members.

Section 2. The election of officers shall take place in January of each year on a date specified by the Commission.

Section 3. The election process shall take place at a Commission meeting no later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the terms of officers. Nominations shall be made by Commission members at such meeting. There shall be no limit as to the number of nominations except that each nomination must be seconded.

Section 4. A quorum for the election shall be one-half plus one of the Commission membership,

A. The chairperson shall attempt to hold elections at times when all commissioners can be available considering deaths and natural disasters.

B. The chairperson will give at least a fourteen (14) day notice to all Commissioners informing

of election date, time, and place.

Section 5. Each candidate for office shall be nominated from the floor.

A. A candidate may nominate himself or herself but may not second the nomination.

B. A nomination speech of two minutes may be made.

C. Each nomination must be seconded, but no seconding speech will be permitted.

D. After nominations are closed, each candidate may make a two-minute speech.

Section 6. When nominations are closed, the election shall be conducted by the secretary of the Commission or such other person appointed by the Executive Committee, who has not been nominated, shall certify the returns. The members who have received the most votes shall be elected.

Section 7. Voting on each office shall occur before the floor is opened for nominations for another office.

Section 8. The elected officers shall be elected to serve for one year or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office shall commence at the close of the regular meeting at which they are elected. In the event of a vacancy, the officer filling the vacant position shall only serve out the term of the officer he/she replaced.

Section 9. A simple majority shall be required for election of officers. If there is not simple majority after the first ballot, there shall be an election between the two candidates receiving the most votes.

Section 10. In case of vacancies among officers, the Executive Committee shall appoint interim officers from among Commission members. A special meeting shall be called for the purpose of nominating and electing officers to fill vacancies.

Section 11. The chairperson shall serve as a convener of the Commission and shall chair the Commission meetings.

Section 12. The chairperson may rule on procedural questions from the chair and such rulings may be overturned by a majority of the Commission.

Section 13. The vice chairperson shall provide such assistance to the chairperson as is requested and shall perform such duties as may be delegated by the chairperson.

Section 14. In the chairperson's absence, or when the chairperson wishes to give up the chair, the vice chairperson shall act as the chairperson.

ARTICLE VIII. Executive Committee.

Section 1. There shall be established an Executive Committee of the Commission.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall consist of, and be limited to:

A. Chairperson

B. Vice Chairperson

C. Secretary

D. And any other position deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

Section 3. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall have the authority to establish special committees.

Section 4. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall have the power to act with the full authority of the Commission in emergency situations providing an attempt is made to contact individual commissioners on the issue.

A. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be subject to the approval of the full Commission at a later meeting.

Section 5. Vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be promptly filled, using the procedure, and maintaining the composition outlined in these Bylaws.

Section 6. The Executive Committee may recommend the removal of a member of the Executive Committee for sufficient cause that is detrimental to the Poverty Commission: but removal must be by majority vote of the Commission.

Section 7. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for executive meetings.

ARTICLE IX. Standing and Special Committees.

Section 1. There shall be two categories of committees:

A. Standing committees - Those created permanently with the concurrence by majority vote of the Commission.

B. Special Committees - Those created temporarily by the Commission and/or the Executive Committee of the Commission. Such committees may include citizen representation. Each Commission may involve representatives of other neighborhood groups in the work of its standing or special committee.

Section 2. Each standing committee shall be chaired by a DC resident or a commissioner.

Section 3. The Executive Committee of the Commission shall have the power to recommend the appointment or removal of standing committee chairpersons.

Section 4. The standing committees shall also elect or appoint such other officers as are needed.

Section 5. The composition, manner of selection and duties of all special committees shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the Commission, with the concurrence of the Commission.

Section 6. Any special committee created by the Commission may become a standing committee with the concurrence of the Commission.

Section 7. Upon transformation of a special committee into a standing committee, the Commission members serving on, and purpose of the committee, shall remain the same; except that the Executive Committee of the Commission may make such changes as are necessary, with the concurrence of the Commission.

Section 8. The time and regularity of Executive Committee, standing and special committees. meetings shall be established by the respective committees themselves.

A. Each committee shall have the power and the responsibility to develop attendance. requirements for the committee and its sub- committees. The chairpersons of the committees have the authority to remove non-participating members.

Section 9. As authorized by D.C. Code sec. 3-641.02(g), the Commission may establish committees that address specific issues or populations.

Section 10. Each standing committee shall be chaired by a commissioner. The chairperson of

each such committee or task force shall be appointed by the Commission as shall be the members to that task force or committee.

ARTICLE X. Reports and recommendations.

Section 1. The Commission shall approve a poverty-reduction plan as mandated by D.C. Code sect. 3-641.06, within 365 days after at least 13 of the appointed members of the Commission have been appointed, and every 5 years thereafter, by majority vote, and shall submit it to the Mayor and the Council. The requirements for the first poverty-reduction plan are specified in that Code section.

Section 2. In addition: Within 30 days of receiving notification from the District Government of proposed actions or proposal final policy decisions or guidelines, the Commission shall forward its written recommendations with respect to the proposed actions to the Council of the District of Columbia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, and the appropriate agency, board, or commission.

Section 3. If with respect to the proposed action, the Commission does not have a recommendation, it shall indicate same in writing within the required time.

Section 4. District residents' views will be incorporated in positions taken by the Commission.

Section 5. The Commission may establish such mechanisms as will insure the broadest dissemination of information with respect to the Commission meetings, positions, and actions.

Section 6. The Commission shall make good-faith efforts to involve all segments of the District's population in its deliberations regardless of race, sex, age, voting status, religion, or economic status.

ARTICLE XI. Annual Budget request.

Section 1. The Poverty Commission staff and the Commission Members shall develop an annual fiscal year budget request report to be provided to the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

Section 2. A draft form of the Commission's proposed budget will be available no later than

February 28th of each year.

Section 4. A final budget shall be submitted to the Council of the District of Columbia and to the Mayor on or before April 30th of each year, if submission of any different dates may be required to conform with the District of Columbia budget schedule.

Section 5. Commission actions, except for amending these By-Laws, shall be approved by a simple majority of those Commission members present and voting.

Section 6. In the case of a tie vote, the motion for Commission action shall fail.

ARTICLE XII. Miscellany.

Section 1. Any Commission member may institute a legal action in the courts of the District of Columbia or in the Federal courts, but the Commission itself shall not have such power.

Article XIII. Amendment of By-Laws.

Section 1. The Commission shall file an update of each to these By-Laws with the Council of the District of Columbia within seven (7) days of initial adoption.

Section 2. Revision of these By-Laws requires a two-third vote of the entire Commission with at least two weeks' prior notice to each Commission member that the rules will be recommended for change. Such notification shall include the suggested changes.

Section 3. These By-Laws shall be consistent with all Congressional and District of Columbia legislation and other applicable laws regarding DC Commissions and Boards. Any inconsistencies are to be held null and void.

Section 4. These By-Laws shall be open to the public.