



DRAFT Policies and Procedures Manual For Council Members

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Overview

The Developmental Disabilities Councils were founded in 1970 as a result of the passage of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. Councils were created to promote capacity building and systemic change through advocacy activities. Councils are committed to the development of an individual and family-centered, individual and family-directed comprehensive system, and a coordinated array of culturally competent individualized supports and services. This system will be designed to promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of community life for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Council is composed of people with developmental disabilities, family members of people with developmental disabilities, and representatives of state and other agencies that are concerned with people with disabilities. All Council members are appointed by the Governor. Councils have the responsibility to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance. The Council identifies the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and their families by soliciting public input and develops and implements a state plan to promote positive, systemic change to address those needs.

The Council is funded by the Federal government through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). The Council is also a member of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) which provides information and technical assistance to member Councils from a national perspective and advocates for disability issues on the national level. Council members and staff attend regional and national meetings sponsored by AIDD and NACDD.

Mission and Values

The mission of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education is to create change that improves the lives of Alaskans with disabilities. The Council provides a constructive process that connects the public with policymakers to ensure the thoughtful development of an efficient and seamless service delivery system that meets the needs of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan.

Values in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights (D.D. Act)

- Individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with the most severe developmental disabilities, are capable of self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, but often require the provision of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance;
- Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have competencies, capabilities, and personal goals that should be recognized, supported, and encouraged, and any assistance to

such individuals should be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of such individuals;

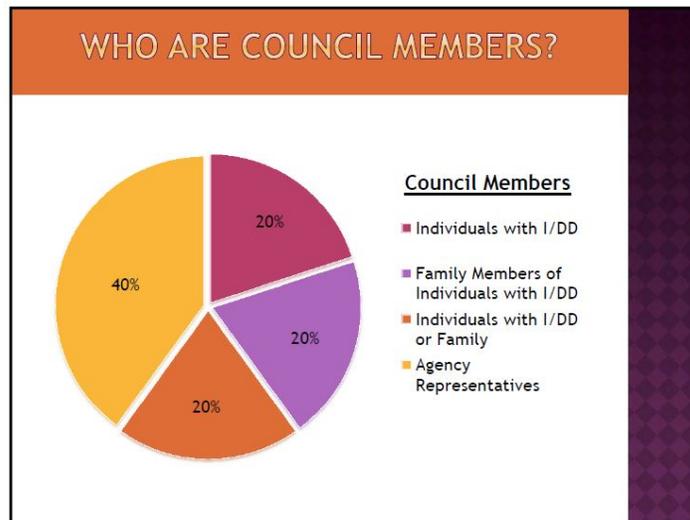
- Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are the primary decision makers regarding the services and supports they receive, including where they choose to live from available options, and play decision making roles in policies and programs that affect their lives;
- Services, supports, and other assistance should be provided in a manner that demonstrates respect for individual dignity, personal preferences, and cultural differences;
- Communities are enriched by the full and active participation and contributions of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families; and
- Specific efforts must be made to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds and their families enjoy increased and meaningful opportunities to access and use community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance available to other individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- The Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (the Council) is committed to enhancing employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities as a priority. In support of this goal, the Council will actively recruit, hire, promote, and retain qualified applicants and current employees who have a disability. The Council will also encourage contractors and suppliers with which it does business to actively recruit, hire, promote, and retain qualified applicants who have disabilities. All things being equal, the Council will prefer doing business with those who recruit, hire, promote and retain qualified applicants who have disabilities. Periodically we will reach out to our contractors and suppliers to ask, educate and assist them to identify how they are achieving that goal.

About the Council

The Governor’s Council (hereby, the “Council”) is a group of at least 26 citizens of Alaska, appointed by the governor, who come together monthly via committees and work groups. Each Council member is expected to join at least one committee or work group, document of which can be found on our webpage: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Pages/default.aspx> The Council is staffed by eight (8) employees: an Executive Director, a Planner (supervisor), a Research Analyst, three Program Coordinators, and two front desk staff. Please [click here](#) to access the current Council organizational chart, which may help explain who staff members are and how all the committees of the Council fit together. As you can see, the staff each work on a variety of initiatives and committees and these staff assignments are subject to change.

Council Membership

Council membership is defined in the by-laws, located [here](#). The Council must consist of the following agency representatives and primary and secondary consumers:



Council members duties include developing, implementing, and monitoring the State Plan; setting annual priorities and developing workplans; monitoring state systems such as regulations, policies, and procedures; evaluating the Council activities and outcomes; focusing resources and activities on priorities; developing leaders and advocates; hiring, supervising, and evaluating the executive director.

The full Council membership gathers three times per year to review the progress made toward achieving the goals and objectives in the Council’s Five Year Plan. After gathering input from the public, the plan is developed by members to assist Alaska in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Council members are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate in Council meetings; notify the Chair or staff if unable to attend a meeting, have to leave early, or will be arriving late; actively participate in at least one Council committee or work group; complete tasks and respond to email in a timely manner; keep track of your travel expenses and turn in required receipts promptly; learn about different service systems and issues in your community, seeking stakeholder input on priority issues; and participate in public policymaking activities. Council members may not represent or speak on behalf of the Council without permission.

Council Ethics

The Council members are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. Misuse of the position, improper gifts, disclosure of information, or representation are prohibited. Council members may not influence the use of state grants, contracts, leases, or loans. Council members may also not become state employees for two (2) years after leaving service on the Council. Please [click here](#) for more information on ethical restrictions.

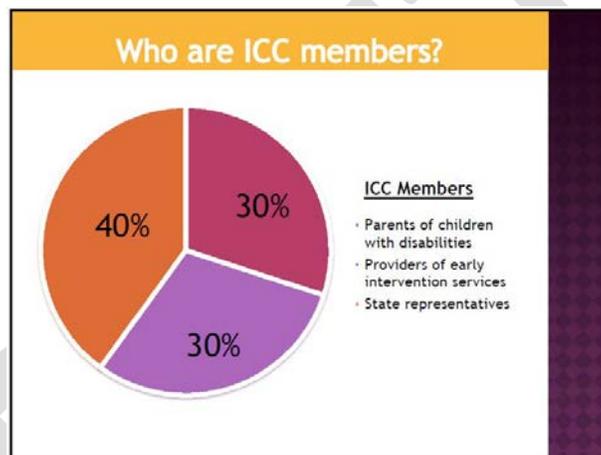
The Council represents the interest of persons with disabilities at the collaborative planning efforts of state agencies and organizations, the Alaska Legislature, and public events considering policy, funding and law. The Council serves a variety of federal and state roles, combining expertise and experience of many stakeholders throughout the state into one unique Council.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Under the D.D. Act, the Council serves as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. In Alaska, the Council is also responsible for interdepartmental planning and coordination of services to persons with disabilities. The Council delegates the day-to-day work to the Developmental Disabilities Committee (DD).

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Council serves as the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities which advises and assists Alaska's statewide Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (ILP). The day-to-day functions of the ICC are delegated to the Early Intervention Committee (EIC). ICC membership must consist of:



The ICC must advise on unmet needs; review and comment on rules and regulations; identify program supports and services; promote interagency agreements; assist in the transition of toddlers to preschool; report annually on the status of early intervention programs; and advise other agencies about the integration of services.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Under IDEA, the Council also serves as Alaska's Special Education Advisory Panel which advises and assists Alaska's statewide Special Education program, administered through the Department of Education and Early Development. The day-to-day functions of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) are delegated to the Education Committee (ED). SEAP membership must consist of:



The SEAP most advise on unmet needs within the state; comment publicly on any rules, regulations, or due process hearing findings; and advise on developing evaluations, corrective action plans, and the coordination of services.

Governing Body of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA)

Some Council members of the Council can also serve on the governing board for the Special Education Service Agency (SESA), which is a non-profit organization that supports the effective education of students with low incidence disabilities throughout Alaska. The SESA mission is to provide consultation and training to support the unique educational needs of individuals and the Alaskan communities that serve them. SESA programs are for low incidence disabilities and includes the Alaska Autism Resource Center, the Educational Transition Support Project, Alaska Deaf Blind Project, and the Guiding and Investing in New Special Educators (GAINS) programs.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Advisory Board on Developmental Disabilities

As defined by statute, the Council serves as one of the four governor-appointed advisory boards to “the Trust.” The Council is responsible for planning services for Trust beneficiaries and advising the Trust on issues and funding relating to Alaskans with developmental disabilities. Trust beneficiaries are those Alaskans with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chronic substance abuse, Alzheimer’s and related dementia, and those with brain injuries. The Trust focus areas include housing and beneficiary projects, disability justice, workforce development, beneficiary employment and engagement (BEE), and alcohol abuse. The “Trust” is a perpetual trust, like a private foundation that works on the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan and Program. The other three advisory boards include: the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and the Alaska Commission on Aging.

Council Membership Procedures

Prior to vacancies, the Council publishes an announcement seeking applications for Council membership on its website, the State of Alaska Boards and Commissions website, and asks other organizations to also solicit applicants. Persons interested in Council membership must submit a completed application

available from the Council office, the Council website, or Boards and Commissions website. Applications can be mailed or faxed to the Governor's Boards and Commissions office, or completed online at the [Boards and Commissions website](#).

After appointment by the Governor, a newly appointed Council member begins service on the Council. The term of membership of a Council member is three years, or until replaced by the Governor. Members may reapply for additional terms, at the Governor's discretion. These are the same procedures for filling unexpected vacancies due to resignation.

Persons not selected for Council membership are sent a letter informing them of such. Their applications are kept on file and they are contacted the following year to ascertain their continued interest in membership, should any new vacancies occur.

New Council members receive an orientation to the Council in several ways. First, Council staff provide information packets. Staff may call Council members and walk them through the materials to answer any questions. Secondly, an orientation session is held annually for new Council members at a Council meeting. Thirdly, existing Council members may be asked to serve as mentors for new Council members. Lastly, some orientation materials can be [found on our website](#).

Council Member Responsibilities

Each Council member shall:

- Attend Council three (3) meetings held in the winter (Juneau in January or February), Spring (usually in Anchorage in April or May), and Fall (usually Anchorage in October) of each year. Council meeting locations are subject to change. A Council member must be present for the business/voting portion of the meeting in order to be considered present at that meeting.
- Prepare for Council and committee meetings by reading the agendas and supporting materials.
- Vote on matters during the Council and committee meetings.
- Adhere to and advocate for the Council's mission and philosophy of self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities in the community.
- Be accessible to legislators and policymakers for information on issues affecting the lives of persons with disabilities.
- Represent the Council at events, forums, meetings, etc. in their respective communities.
- Represent their respective communities at the meetings of the Council and share relevant information.

- Serve on various Council ad hoc committees and work groups (all Council members must participate on *at least* one Council committee or work group).
- Participate in the development of the Council's Five Year State Plan.
- Participate in orientation and training sessions held in addition to regularly scheduled Council meetings.
- Participate in the development of Council positions on matters of public policy and legislation.
- Consult with Council staff, as needed.
- No member shall represent his or her personal opinion as that of the Council.

In all cases where a Council member is speaking on behalf of the Council they will adhere to positions sanctioned by the Council membership. Officer duties are provided in the Council by-laws. The outgoing Chairperson shall provide the incoming Chairperson with guidelines and information for fulfilling responsibilities for the Council Chairperson position.

Council Meetings

The Council is committed to conducting its meetings in a manner characterized as appropriate, efficient, effective, and accommodating. To this end, the Council shall implement and periodically evaluate and refine procedures to ensure high quality meeting practices are followed that meet the procedural obligations of the Council and satisfy participants. The Council shall hold meetings 3-4 times per year to conduct the business of the Council.

Council Meeting Procedures

Council meetings are normally held over a two or three-day period. The agendas for Council meetings are drafted by Council staff, with input from committee chairs, and then approved by the Executive Committee. Meetings contain leadership reports from the Executive Director and the Council Chair, committee work plan progress reports, and updates from other state division directors, commissioners, and partner organizations. There is always a public testimony/community gathering event, usually held in the evening of day 1. These events often have a focus or topic of discussion, although the public are free to comment on any issue related to disabilities. The Fall meeting also has a new Council member orientation, and the Juneau meeting has meetings with legislators on day 2 and/or day 3. The Spring meeting also has time allotted for Committees of the Council to discuss the year's priorities and set their work plans for the rest of the year.

An announcement of Council meetings is emailed to the Council member and a list of interested persons, posted on the Council's website, and announced in monthly Committee meetings. In accordance with the state Open Meetings Law, the Council meeting agenda is also posted at least 10 days in advance of the meeting to the Alaska Online Public Notice system. The public testimony

flier/advertisement is circulated via GovDelivery, our website, Facebook, Committee email lists, and among our public members and other partner organizations. Staff encourage Council members and public members to post these fliers around their communities.

The staff emails a packet of materials in accessible PDF format to Council members for their review prior to each Council meeting and posts the materials on the Council's website. Staff prepare printed binders of Council meeting materials for each member and accommodate any member's requests for alternately formatted materials.

The Executive Director and all Council staff shall attend Council meetings. Council staff provide information to Council members, develop and assist with committee reports, and assist individual Council members, as needed.

Committees, Ad hocs, and Work Groups

The Council shall have committees to address the objectives of the plan and functions of the Council. The duties and membership of the committees are addressed in the Council's by-laws. Committees, ad hocs, and work groups of the Council will conduct meetings as necessary, usually monthly, via teleconference and held in the Council office. All Committee, ad hoc, and work group meetings will follow the **Democratic Rules of Order**.

All Committees and ad hocs consist of at least five Council members, but no more than 11, and several public members. Committees have a Chair, appointed by the Council Chair, and may also choose to appoint a Co-Chair. Work groups do not have to elect Chairs or Co-Chairs as they are more informal in nature. Public members of Committees, ad hocs, and work groups may be elected as "voting members." If a public member has not been elected specifically to serve as a voting member, they do not have a vote in official business.

Council staff work in collaboration with the Committee Chair to create agendas for all Committee meetings. Agendas and other meeting documents are emailed to Committee members 5 business days prior to the meeting. All committee meetings that have more than 3 Council members are public and therefore shall be posted to the Alaska Online Public Notices system 5 business days before the meeting, according to the Open Meetings Act. Work groups tend to have fewer Council members, so they may be exempt from the Open Meetings Act if 3 or less Council members sit on that work group.

A quorum at a committee meeting, standing or ad hoc, is a simple majority of the currently appointed Council members. Work groups do not need to make quorum to conduct business. Sign language Interpreters and reporting are provided at every Committee meeting, as needed. Interpreters will also be provided for work group meetings as needed, but third-party reporting and transcription will not be provided at work group meetings. Instead, notes will be taken by Council staff at work group meetings. Minutes are posted to the Council's website, to the appropriate committee's webpage. Each committee and work group meeting will clarify the date and time of the next meeting. Committee meetings are usually on a set day of the month, and recur monthly. Work groups are more fluid and may not have set

scheduling; Council staff will work with the work group members to set the date/time of the following meeting.

The Council has established the Education (ED), Early Intervention (EIC), Developmental Disabilities (DD), and Legislative (LC) Committees as standing committees that function under the policy direction of the Council. The chairs of these committees also serve on the Executive Committee of the Council. Additional committees and/or work groups may be created, at the discretion of the Council to meet the goals and objectives of the Council's State Plan. As of 2015, the Council also has an Employment and Transportation ad hoc, Telepractice ad hoc, Medicaid ad hoc, an Autism ad hoc, and an FASD work group. As a result, the committee and work group structure may change from year to year in order to reflect the objectives and activities. Each standing committee, ad hoc, and work group develops an annual work plan that identifies key issues and priorities, which are determined at the Spring Council meeting (usually held in April or May).

Education Committee (ED)

Council members may select to be on the Ed Committee or they may be appointed by the Council Chair. The Chair of the Ed Committee shall be appointed by the Council Chair as established in Article IV, 3, A, 5. The Ed Committee Chair will serve a two-year term that coincides with the term of the Council Chair. The Ed Committee shall consist of no less than five and no more than eleven Council members who closely reflect areas of representation required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Education Committee is delegated day-to-day responsibilities for the Council's role as the Special Education Advisory Panel, as described below:

Duties & Responsibilities

- A. Establish an annual work plan which identifies priorities and key issues related to the areas of Special Education for the Council;
- B. Represent the Council's education priorities before the State Board of Education and the State Systematic Improvement Plan (SSIP);
- C. Review and comment on regulations to determine the effect of the proposed regulation on students in special education;
- D. In collaboration with the Legislative Committee, monitor the progress of legislation and proposed regulations that would affect students in special education;
- E. Assist the Executive Committee in the preparations and submittal of reports, letters, and position papers to the Legislature, as needed;
- F. Conduct federally mandated requirements as Alaska's Special Education Advisory Panel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by advising the state regarding the unmet educational needs of students with disabilities as well as in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with

disabilities;

G. Help govern the Special Education Service Agency (SESA), a non-profit organization, to ensure SESA meets its statutorily mandated responsibilities; and

H. Perform other duties in accordance with the orders and resolutions of the Council.

Early Intervention Committee (EIC)

Council members may select to be on the EIC or they may be appointed by the Council Chair. The Chair of the EIC shall be appointed by the Council Chair as established in Article IV, 3, A, 5. The EIC Chair will serve a two-year term that coincides with the term of the Council Chair. The EIC shall consist of no less than five and no more than eleven Council members who closely reflect areas of representation required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Early Intervention Committee is delegated the day-to-day responsibilities for the Council's role as the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities as described below:

Duties & Responsibilities

- A. Establish an annual work plan which identifies priorities and key issues related to the areas of early intervention and infant learning for the Council;
- B. Represent the Council's priorities before the Infant Learning Program (ILP) office and the Alaska Infant Learning Program Association (AILPA);
- C. Review and comment on regulations to determine the effect of the proposed regulation on infants and toddlers with special needs;
- D. Monitor the progress of legislation and proposed regulations that would affect infants and toddlers with special needs;
- E. Assist the Executive Committee in the preparations and submittal of reports, letters, and position papers to the Legislature, as needed;
- F. Meet federally mandated requirements as Alaska's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ; and
- G. Perform other duties in accordance with the orders and resolutions of the Council.

Developmental Disabilities Committee (DD)

Council members may select to be on the DD Committee or they may be appointed by the Council Chair. The Chair of the DD Committee shall be appointed by the Council Chair as established in Article IV, 3, A, 5. The DD Committee Chair will serve a two-year term that coincides with the term of the Council Chair. The DD Committee shall consist of no less than five and no more than eleven Council members. The composition of the DD Committee must match that of the Council as outlined in Article III 1 B. The DD Committee is delegated the day-to-day responsibilities for the Council's role as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, as described below:

Duties & Responsibilities

- A. Establish an annual work plan which identifies priorities and key issues related to the areas of early intervention and infant learning for the Council;
- B. Represent the Council's priorities before the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Key Coalition, and the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD);
- C. Review and comment on regulations to determine the effect of the proposed regulation on persons with developmental disabilities;
- D. In collaboration with the Medicaid ad hoc, review and comment on regulations related to changes in the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waiver system and/or Medicaid expansion;
- E. Monitor the progress of legislation and proposed regulations that would affect persons with developmental disabilities;
- F. Assist the Executive Committee in the preparations and submittal of reports, letters, and position papers to the Legislature, as needed; and
- G. Perform other duties in accordance with the orders and resolutions of the Council.

Legislative Committee (LC)

Council members may select to be on the LC or they may be appointed by the Council Chair. The Legislative Chair will serve a two-year term that coincides with the term of the Council Chair. The LC chair is selected by the Council at its Spring meeting. The LC shall consist of no less than five and no more than eleven Council members. The LC is delegated the day-to-day responsibilities for preparing and advocating Council positions before governmental entities such as the legislature and Congress, as described below:

Duties & Responsibilities

- H. Establish an annual work plan which identifies legislative priorities and key issues related to the areas of responsibility for the Council;
- I. Represent the Council's legislative priorities before the Alaska Legislature, Administration, and Governor's office;
- J. Request and review legislation to determine the effect of the proposed legislation on people with disabilities or students in special education;
- K. Monitor the progress of legislation and proposed legislation that would affect people with disabilities or students in special education;
- L. As directed by the Executive Committee or Council, prepare proposals to change present laws;
- M. Assist the Executive Committee in the preparations and submittal of reports, letters, and position papers to the Legislature, as needed; and
- N. Perform other duties in accordance with the orders and resolutions of the Council.

Ad Hoc Committees and Work Groups

As outlined in the Council by-laws, ad hocs are standing committees created by the Council or the Executive Committee for a limited period of time. These groups are usually limited in scope and timeframe, to be disbanded by the Council or Executive Committee when their work is completed. Ad hocs report directly to the Council and Executive Committee. Ad hocs also require 5-11 Council members. Ad hocs must follow the **Democratic Rules of Order**, and have a quorum to conduct business. The work plan of an ad hoc gets federally reported on the Program Performance Report (PPR). Ad hocs also require official minutes to be taken, often from our third-party transcription service. Ad hocs are subject to the Open Meetings Act, requiring public notice of meetings and documents be made at least 5 business days before the ad hoc committee meetings. Because ad hocs require more staff time and resources, the Executive Director needs to confirm that we have sufficient funding to form an ad hoc and identify how it shall be staffed.

In contrast, a work group is an informal group created by a standing committee. The work group reports to that standing committee, which also decides when the work group is to be disbanded. Work groups must have less than 7 Council members, and if they have 3 or fewer members, the work group is not subject to the Open Meetings Act. Work groups do not need to follow the Rules of Order, make quorum, approve agendas, or take official minutes. Staff taking notes during a meeting is sufficient and since work groups require less Council resources, their formation does not require approval from the Executive Director. The work plan of a work group may or may not be reported federally on the PPR.

The distinction between a committee/ad hoc and a work group is further summarized below in Table 1.1 (pg 13).

Table 1.1. Distinction between committees/ad hocs and work groups at the Council.

Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education	
Ad hocs and Standing Committees	Work Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are formal committees created by the Council or the Executive Committee • Report to the full Council and Executive Committee • Must have 5-11 Council members on committee • Must make quorum to conduct business • Needs to follow Roberts Rules of Order • Must approve agenda, minutes, etc. before business can start • Need work plans • Work plans become part of federally mandated PPR • Needs official minutes/transcriptions/court reporting that cost money • Is subject to the Open Meetings Act, requiring public notice of meetings, dissemination of documents beforehand, etc. • Requires more staff time and Council resources, so the ED must confirm that we have sufficient funding to form an ad hoc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are informal groups created by a standing committee • Report to the standing Committee that formed the work group • Does not have Council member requirements • Does not need quorum of members • Does not need to follow rules of order • Does not need to approve agenda or minutes from last meeting • Need work plans • Work plans do not need to be part of PPR • Can have informal minutes taken by staff person • If less than 4 Council members on work group, it is not subject to Open Meetings Act • Requires less staff time and resources, so do not generally require ED approval

Role of Council Staff

The Council staff is here to support you in the work that you do. Each committee and workgroup has at least one staff member assigned to help the members carry out tasks. Council staff can conduct research, summarize documents, and help you draft comments and letters. The Council staff takes suggestions and ideas from the committee or workgroup, but does not do the work for them. Ultimately, the Executive Director is responsible for giving direction, dividing up work tasks, and supervising the staff. Although it is the Executive Director’s job to be sure the Council is adequately staffed, the reality is that there may be staff vacancies at any given point in time, which may affect the workload that staff can take on or maintain. It may sometimes be the case that a Council member requests staff time for a task, but the Council lacks adequate resources to do so. Staff capacity to complete required and mandatory tasks should be considered by Council members when making requests for extra tasks. Council staff are to be given the same respect and consideration that is due to skilled, professional personnel. Any complaints or problems with staff should first be resolved with the staff member directly, if that does not work then issues may be taken to the Planner III or Executive Director.

Council Member Travel

Council members often travel to advocate on behalf of the Council and/or to attend Council meetings or conferences. Council members traveling out-of-state should begin submitting travel forms and planning materials two (2) months before the date of travel because there are additional approvals required by the commissioner. In-state travel and travel for Council meetings requires one (1) month of plan time.

1. Members wishing to travel for a conference or other event (non-Council meeting) need to tell a staff person two (2) months ahead of travel dates. Staff will work on getting the appropriate approvals by drafting a travel memo for the executive director (ED) to approve, who then sends it on to the director of SDS, and/or commissioner of DHSS for additional approvals.
2. Travel to a Council meeting needs to be confirmed one (1) month before the meeting dates by notifying the Council travel planner whether they are attending the meeting or not.
3. Once travel has been approved, Council members need to submit to the travel planner, via email, several forms. He sends these forms out to all Council members one (1) month before a Council meeting. Council members are expected to complete these forms and send them back in to him within 5 days:
 - Travel Worksheet – this details dates of travel, preferred plane seating, room accommodations, and other items that the travel planner needs to make travel plans. Travelers must fill out your date of birth, because TSA requires it for setting up flights. Please also include your frequent flier mileage program number, as you get to keep any miles earned on state travel.
 - Authorization Form – A signature is required to authorize the Council to make these arrangements for you. Travelers are also agreeing to the requirement that they submit receipts to the travel planner within 5 days of completion of travel.
 - Non-Employee Travel Agreement – Required to get your per diem advance (\$60/day). The state of Alaska will send you 80% of your per diem amount *before* travel begins. It can take 20 days to receive this check (or direct deposit) so it is a good idea to get this turned in early. After travel, you will be reimbursed for the remaining 20% of your per diem allotment.
 - Personal Care Attendant Estimate Form (if needed)
 - If traveling to a conference, the registration link should also be sent to the travel planner.
4. Once the travel planner receives these forms, he will send a preliminary itinerary. Council members need to approve or suggest changes to this itinerary within 24 hours so that the travel planner can finalize the arrangements. Once finalized, the travel planner sends Council members a final itinerary for approval that includes hotel, transportation, conference registration confirmation, etc. Travelers must review the final itinerary for accuracy and let the travel

planner know ASAP if they find a discrepancy. Council members may wish to print out these documents and bring with them for their travel.

5. On the week in which travel is scheduled to begin, the travel planner will send Council members a reminder email and their itinerary information one last time.
6. After travel has occurred, Council members need to turn in all receipts except food, such as the boarding pass (must be a paper copy), hotel invoice, and any transportation receipts to the travel planner within five (5) business days of returning. Council members may submit these receipts to the travel planner in several different ways: scanned and emailed (preferred method), dropped off to the Council office, faxed to 269-8995, or mailed to the Council office at 3601 C St, Suite 740, Anchorage, AK 99503.
 - a. Please note, there are several items that the state will not reimburse including lost or stolen articles; alcoholic beverages; damage to personal cars, clothing, or other items; movies charged to hotel bills; fines, parking tickets, traffic citations, or towing charges; entertainment expenses; tips and gratuities; personal phone calls or faxes. Please be sure there is no tip on your taxi receipts!
 - b. If travelers owe the state money they will need to write a check payable to the State of Alaska and send it to the travel planner. The state also accepts cash as payment but it must be in the exact amount. If travelers do not pay the amount due to the state, they could lose their privilege to travel.
7. Once these receipts are processed, Council members will receive the remaining 20% of their per diem. These checks can take up to 30 days to process, and if you do not receive yours within one month, please contact the travel planner to track it. Because of errors in cutting checks or mail system failures, the preferred repayment method is direct deposit. To set up direct deposit, please contact the travel planner for the form.

Council members should contact our travel planner at 269-8990 or via email for any questions and to receive copies of any of these forms. Please also note, that if you are bumped off your flight and the airline gives you a travel voucher, money, or other compensation, you must return this compensation to the state; you do not get to keep it.

Requests for Letters of Support

Partners have occasion to request Letters of Support (LOS) from the Council for funding as well as for other purposes. In order to ensure that the Council has appropriate information upon which to draft a letter of support (LOS) and can do so in a timely manner, the following describes the Council's policy regarding LOS and the procedures that must be followed by external partners in requesting LOS.

The Council staff reserve the right to not provide a letter of support if the request does not conform to the submission guidelines outlined in this policy, or if the proposed project or partner agency's mission and work is not consistent with the Council's policies and priorities.

Timeline

Requests should be received by the Council Executive Director or Planner a minimum of 7 business days prior to the date for when the requesting agency must receive the final letter. Partners are encouraged to submit requests well in advance of deadlines to allow adequate time for processing. Partners may not ask for letters from any other staff member.

Procedures

The requestor must submit a written request to the Council Executive Director or Planner which clearly identifies the purpose for the request, including:

- a) The purpose of the letter and deadline
- b) The proposed RFP (request for proposals), funding mechanism, grant-making entity, and the applicable funding announcement titles, numbers, and links should be included
- c) Proposal abstract or other material that describes the project/program/award
- d) Any special requirements (forms, formatting, etc.)
- e) A draft letter in Microsoft Word as an attachment. Partner agencies requesting letters must submit a draft of the letter that they would like sent. The Council reserves the right to make changes, but the draft should comply with the required guidelines for the letter and include addressee contact information, introductory paragraphs that give an overview of the agency, and how the partner has worked with the Council in the past. The Council will not consider providing an LOS unless a draft letter has been submitted along with the request.
- f) Contact information for one person at the agency with whom to follow-up

The Council staff will respond to the requesting agency within three business days after the request is received. If the Council grants an LOS, a signed letter will be returned to the requesting agency in electronic format (protected PDF) no later than 7 business days after receipt of the original request.

Decisions to provide LOS are made by the ED and Planner in conjunction with the Council Chair. If two organizations are requesting LOS for the same funding, the staff or chair can choose which one best embodies the mission, values, and work of the Council or they can decide to not to write a letter for either organization. The Council will not provide LOS to more than one organization for the same RFP. All LOS from the Council must receive two appropriate signatures (Council Chair and/or Executive Director and the committee chair[s]), depending on the nature of the letter. If possible, the Executive

Committee will approve the letter before it is submitted. If timing does not allow for this, all LOS will be submitted at the next Executive Committee meeting for their records.

Acronyms

Council staff and members often use acronyms to abbreviate agency names or programs. For new and seasoned members alike, these can often be confusing and difficult to remember. Although we should all strive not to extensively use acronyms in our committee or Council meetings, these will be used from time to time. It may be useful to review some of these [commonly used acronyms](#) or to look them up when someone uses them. Also, please do not be afraid to ask staff or Council members to explain what their acronyms mean when they are speaking!

Grievance/Complaint Procedure for Council Members and Staff

It is expected that all Council members will treat each other, the staff, and the general public with respect, tolerance, and acceptance of other people's viewpoints. If a conflict arises that cannot be resolved, a complaint can be filed with the Council. A complaint which comes before the Council must be based on facts which allege a violation of federal law (e.g., the ADA or the DD Act), state law or authority (e.g. Council Enabling Statutes), or Council policy (as outlined in this document).

A public or Council member may register a formal written (or otherwise recorded) complaint regarding **another Council member or staff** to the Council Chair for review. These matters will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. The Council Chair may, after review of the matter:

- 1) Ask the Executive Committee to investigate the complaint and make recommendations,
- 2) Refer concerns regarding staff to the Executive Director, or
- 3) Take other action as determined necessary.

A Council member may register a formal written (or otherwise recorded) complaint regarding the **Council Chair** to the Executive Director. These matters will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. The Executive Director may, after review of the matter:

- 1) Ask the Executive Committee, excluding the Council Chair, to investigate the complaint and make recommendations, or
- 2) Take other action as determined necessary.

A Council member may register a formal written (or otherwise recorded) complaint regarding the **Executive Director** to the Executive Committee. These matters will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. The Executive Committee will investigate the matter in Executive Session. The Executive Committee may, after review of the matter:

- 1) Write a letter of corrective action to the Executive Director, or
- 2) Take the matter before the full Council for recommendations, or
- 3) Take other action as determined necessary.

The Executive Committee may resolve the issue themselves or present the issue to the full Council, with all documenting and supporting evidence. The Executive Committee may ask the Council for recommendations on corrective actions in a full Council meeting (with public members excused during such investigative sessions). Corrective or other actions voted on in a Council meeting must obtain a super-majority vote. Once an action is decided upon by the Council, the Executive Committee will send a letter of corrective action to the Executive Director. If the Council is unable to resolve a complaint or a corrective action letter is ignored by the Executive Director, then the matter can be further escalated. The Executive Committee will send a written complaint about the Executive Director, with all documenting evidence, to the Commissioner of Health and Social Services. This letter can request specific corrective action or the termination of the Executive Director.

Expectations for the Executive Director

A major task of the Council is to hire and supervise the Executive Director (ED), and the ED hires and supervises all other Council staff. There is some guidance about the role of the Council members on the hiring and supervising of the ED in the Council by-laws, but this section serves to further clarify the ED's roles and provide a clearer outline of the evaluation procedure to be conducted.

In addition to the expectations of the Executive Director (ED) outlined in the by-laws (pg 10), The ED shall also:

1. Implement the State Plan activities by:
 - a. Supervising staff activities and/or partnering with outside agencies to accomplish outcome measures and performance targets;
 - b. Assuring that annual program performance report (PPR) accurately reflects the activities of the Council;
 - c. Reporting to Council work groups on State Plan implementation progress; and
 - d. Operating within the plan activity budget approved by the Council.
3. Direct the management of the Council by:
 - a. Providing the necessary accommodations to give Council members the opportunity to participate fully in Council and related activities;
 - b. Assuring the adequate number, qualification, and supervision of staff, who work as a team to support and provide technical assistance to the Council, its committees, work groups, and other ad hoc committees it establishes;
 - c. Maintaining a sufficient number of task forces, coalitions, associations, advisory groups, and/or advisors to assist in management responsibilities; and
 - d. Being responsive to Council members to assure full and active participation in Council meetings or related activities.

4. Represent the Council by:

- a. Speaking on behalf of the Council within the parameters set forth in the policies and by-laws approved by the Council;
- b. Developing communication with those in the media;
- c. Authorizing staff or Council members to represent or speak on behalf of the Council;
- d. Monitoring and providing information to public policy makers on issues which impact people with disabilities and their families;
- e. Supporting the Council Chair in his/her capacity as liaison between the Council and the Governor and other state, federal, or local officials as the Council may determine;
- f. Providing information and/or technical assistance to Council officers, Committee Chairs, and work group representatives as may be required or requested; and
- g. Monitoring the Division of Senior and Disability Services, the Department of Education and Early Development, the Infant Learning Program, state Medicaid system, and other state agencies funding and programs for people with disabilities as these impact the issues or activities identified in the State Plan.

7. Adhere to a code of ethics adopted by the Council.

8. Stay within the bounds of the Executive Committee-approved Council budget.

9. Express the opinions adopted by the Council in interactions with other agencies.

10. Engage only in advocacy activities that have been adopted by the Council.

11. Stay within deadlines established by the Council or federal/state agencies.

12. Assist the Council and staff in creating or amending policies and procedures. However, the ED does not assume a policy-setting role for the Council.

Evaluation Process for Executive Director

The Executive Committee shall recommend to hire, supervise, and evaluate the Executive Director, supervise implementation of the Council State Plan, and assure that the Council fulfills its duties and responsibilities. The Executive Committee shall evaluate the Executive Director six (6) months from date of hire for an abbreviated, modified evaluation. This evaluation will only include Council members, the Executive Director, and staff. Thereafter, on an annual basis (from the date of hire) the Executive Committee will commence a 360-degree evaluation process as follows:

1. The Executive Committee develops a position description for the Executive Director for the approval of the full Council;

2. The Executive Committee develops an evaluation survey instrument, which is based upon the position description. This evaluation survey requires approval by the full Council. The following points shall be applied to each job responsibility in the survey:

Exceeds Expectations (4) Meets Expectations (3) Needs Improvement (2) Unsatisfactory (1)

3. The Executive Director reviews and agrees with the responsibilities outlined in the position description and the evaluation survey;

4. Every twelve months (from date of hire) the Executive Director compiles relevant information and organizes it according to the responsibilities in the position description;

5. For each annual evaluation, the Chair, or designee, will use the 360-degree evaluation model to solicit input from all Council members, staff, the Executive Director, and selected individuals from outside the Council on the Executive Director's performance, using an anonymous survey. Council members will have the option to self-identify;

6. The Chair and Vice-Chair compile the survey responses;

7. The Chair and Vice-Chair meet with the Executive Committee to discuss and complete a draft written summary based on the evaluation results;

8. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and at least one other member of the Executive Committee meets with the Executive Director to discuss preliminary evaluation results, where the Executive Director can provide input;

9. The Chairperson will provide a summary of the evaluation results to the Executive Committee, who finalizes the report; and

10. The Executive Committee presents a summary of the evaluation results at the next full Council meeting.

Executive Director Succession Procedure & Transition Plan

A change in executive leadership is inevitable for all organizations. An executive transition is a time of both uncertainty and opportunity. It is a period in an organization's history when Council members, the Executive Committee, and the Council Chair must increase their level of engagement. It is also a time when some may seek assurance of the organization's mission, viability, and long-term sustainability.

A succession procedure and transition plan for the Executive Director position is a routine risk management and sustainability planning tool. The procedure ensures organizational sustainability by providing a proactive, orderly plan for executive leadership transitions.

To that end, the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education (GCDSE) is adopting this succession procedure and transition plan for purposes of:

- Focusing Council attention on leadership team development through annual communications between the Executive Director and Council about the depth of staffing and succession plans for Management Team positions, and
- Establishing principles, role clarity, and procedures to support positive leadership transitions that foster good endings, transitions, and beginnings with departing and arriving leaders, and build organizational capacity when a planned or unplanned executive leadership change occurs.

The Council Chair and the Executive Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this procedure and any related procedures, and for ensuring that the procedure is periodically reviewed and updated as needed.

In the event of a planned or unplanned leadership transition, the Executive Committee shall plan and manage the transition, including the search for a new Executive Director.

Guiding Principles

- The Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education is open to and will consider both internal and external candidates when filling the Executive Director position. A competitive search will be conducted unless the Council concludes that a current staff member is appropriate, qualified, and available for the job. Such an individual could meet these parameters through job performance or facilitated mentorship by the current Executive Director.
- In organizations such as the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education, the Executive Director’s position is often shaped by the incumbent’s talents, expertise, and areas of specialized interest. That person’s departure might necessitate other organizational changes including the creation of new positions and/or realignment of current positions.
- The preeminent goal of a transition to a new Executive Director is maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education’s mission-related work.
- In conducting the executive search and hiring process for the Executive Director position, the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education will follow the job posting and recruitment procedures of the Councils’ designated state agency, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), as applicable to this specific situation. Those procedures may include training of the interview team on search, recruitment, interview, or other related processes as determined by the needs of the Council members involved.

Lines of Authority

1. The selection of the Executive Director is the responsibility of the Council. The selected candidate is then submitted for approval to the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services.
2. The current Executive Director has the responsibility to continuously identify, encourage, and help develop the leadership potential of staff within the organization so that they are qualified and able to meet current and future leadership needs.
3. The current Executive Director has the responsibility to plan for the orderly transition of all leadership positions on the Council and Council staff.

Emergency Backup Plan

- a) Related to the position of Executive Director: To be prepared at all times for a leadership transition, the organization shall maintain an up-to-date Emergency Backup Plan with guidelines for the planned or unplanned, short-term and long-term absence of the Executive Director. This plan is approved by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Council and should be reviewed annually. The plan can also serve as the Transition Plan when there is a vacancy in the Executive Director position.
- b) Related to Leadership Team Positions: To be prepared at all times for any leadership transition, the Executive Director shall maintain an up-to-date Emergency Backup Plan with guidelines for the planned or unplanned, short-term and long-term absence of members of the Management Team. Those plans are approved by the Executive Director with input from the Council Chair and Executive Committee and shall be made available to the Council.

Council Action in the Event of Vacancy in the Executive Director Position

- a) Organizational Assessment: The Executive Committee shall take time to assess the leadership needs of the organization before the search for a new Executive Director is conducted. The assessment shall include a review of the Council's Five Year Plan, all committee and work group work plans, and the current Executive Director Position description. The assessment will be designed to help assure the selection of a qualified and capable leader who fits well with the organization's mission, vision, values, culture, goals, and objectives, and who has the necessary skills to lead the organization. The Executive Committee will also determine an appropriate outreach strategy to recruit qualified applicants with skills necessary to carry out the organization's mission, vision, values, goals and objectives.
- b) Option of Appointing an Acting or Interim Executive Director: To assure the organization's operations are not interrupted while the Council assesses the leadership needs and recruits a new Executive Director, the Executive Committee may determine to appoint an Acting Executive Director from among the current staff or hire an Interim Executive Director from outside the organization.
- c) Duties of the Acting/Interim Executive Director: Among such duties will be to ensure that the organization continues to operate without disruption and that all organizational commitments previously made are appropriately executed, including but not limited to: financial monitoring and reporting, program reports, speaking engagements, coordination and support for meetings of the Council and Committees, and other obligations to Council Members, beneficiaries, state agencies, the TRUST, and other stakeholders.
- d) Simultaneous transitions for the Executive Director and Senior Leadership Positions: Should the Executive Committee determine to appoint an Acting or Interim Executive Director from within, the Council may make other temporary leadership appointments from among other staff, external hires, or whatever combination of those options best assures continuity in leadership and program success through the transition period and afterwards.

Preparation Time Frame for Replacement of the Executive Director

- a) The optimal period for the Executive Director to announce his/her departure from that role – or proposed commencement of a new role in the organization – is at least six to twelve months before the date of departure.
- b) The Council understands that the time required for successfully completing a planned leadership transition is approximately eight to twelve months.

Role of the Outgoing Executive Director in Planned Transitions

The departing Executive Director, unless otherwise directed by the Transition Committee, will be involved in some transition-related activities such as communicating with Council members, state agencies, the Mental Health Trust Authority, and other stakeholders, as well as briefing the incoming Executive Director. The departing Executive Director's role during the transition and after the new Executive Director starts shall be developed in consultation with the Council Chair and/or Transition Committee and communicated to the Council.

Initial Implementation of the Transition Plan

- a) Within fifteen (15) days of the announcement of a planned departure, the Council Chair shall make recommendations to the Executive Committee for the membership of a Transition Committee. The Executive Committee shall make the final determination of membership of the Transition Committee and the appointment of that committee's chair. The Transition Committee shall be comprised of at least two Executive Committee members and three council members. Other Council members, staff, and a representative of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, or other persons with needed expertise may be recruited to advise or assist the Committee at the discretion of the Council Chair, Transition Committee Chair, and Executive Committee.
- b) The Executive Transition Committee shall be responsible for implementing this transition plan and further developing the plan based on Alaska state processes as needed. The responsibilities of this committee include:
- c) Plan and oversee the Executive Director transition process including determining the need for, contracting with and supervising the work of any external search or transition consultant(s).
- d) Work with the Executive Committee to review and revise the executive director job description and qualifications to ensure they reflect the GCDSE's current and future leadership needs, including:
 - Minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position.
 - Education and experience requirements.
- e) Work with the Executive Committee, the Department of Health & Social Services, and any other appropriate authority to review, and if necessary, update the Executive Director's salary range.
- f) Ensure that a robust pool of candidates is developed for the Executive Director position.
- g) Coordinate or conduct the interview and selection process and, in a timely fashion, bring a recommended candidate to the Council for ratification.

- h) Provide support and counsel to the Acting or Interim Executive Director; the Acting or Interim Executive Director reports to the Council Chair, but receives advice and counsel from the Transition Committee as it relates to the transition process and preparing the organization to work effectively with the next Executive Director.
- i) Determine the role and substantive involvement of staff in the transition planning process and how they may be consulted in the selection process.
- j) The Transition Committee may also be given additional direction by the Executive Committee. The Transition Committee will sunset upon completion of the on-boarding process of the new Executive Director, and is expected to be on or before 90 days after the new Executive Director's start date.
- g) The Transition Committee, or a subset of its members, will serve as the Interview Panel in accordance with the State of Alaska and Council procedures. Composition of the Interview Panel shall include, at a minimum, the Council Chair or Vice Chair as the hiring manager and at least two other Council members. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, Council staff may be included on the Interview Panel to give staff input on the Executive Director selection. The Interview Panel's responsibilities include:
 - h) Developing the job posting and determining the length of posting.
 - i) Developing the interview questions, application screening matrix, and job simulation exercise as appropriate.
 - j) The Alaska Open Meetings Act allows discussions concerning certain personnel matters, including discussions to deliberate the appointment or employment of employees, to be held in a closed meeting.
 - k) Pursuant to federal and state statutes establishing the GCDSE, the Council shall be responsible to recruit and hire the Executive Director, when the position becomes vacant, and to supervise and evaluate the Executive Director while employed. Council recruitment and hiring shall be conducted in a manner consistent with Federal and State nondiscrimination laws, and consistent with State of Alaska personnel policies.
 - l) The Executive Transition Committee and/or Committee Chair shall coordinate with the Department of Health and Social Services or other appropriate authority concerning training on job posting and recruitment procedures and an orientation for the entire selection team.
 - m) The Interview Panel will identify a recommended finalist who will be considered for appointment to the Executive Director position by the Council in an open meeting.
 - n) As needed, the Council Chair shall authorize an organizational assessment and schedule a Council Executive Committee or full Council Retreat to review and refresh the organization's long range plan and strategic direction.

Commitment Regarding Diverse Candidates and Staff Leadership Development

1. In order to provide career advancement for staff, the Council shall encourage the professional development of current Council staff/employees.
2. In order to support the Council's due diligence and ensure that the best possible candidate is hired, the organization shall implement a search and selection process that is open to internal and external candidates.

3. In order to develop a finalist pool that is reflective of the community, the organization shall work proactively to develop a diverse pool of candidates for the Executive Director position.
4. The Council shall fully comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations.

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