

# BELKNAP COUNTY CITIZENS COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## BY-LAWS

### Article I – Title

The name of the organization shall be the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, hereinafter referred to as “the Council”.

### Article II - Vision Statement

Belknap County is a safe community where children and families can live with dignity and respect.

### Article III – Mission Statement

The Mission of the Citizens Council on Children and Families is to promote Community Justice in Belknap County so that children and families can live safely with dignity and respect. The Citizens Council will realize its mission through:

- active citizen participation;
- comprehensive planning;
- advocacy and collaboration; and
- stewardship through governance, funding and advisory roles within the County.

### Article IV – Operating Authority

Section 1: Definition – The Council shall operate under the authority of the Belknap County Commission as the Department of Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families.

#### Section 2: Responsibilities

The Belknap County Commission shall:

- a. in conjunction with the Council, supervise and evaluate the performance of the Executive Director of the Council;
- b. appoint Council members in accordance with these by-laws;
- c. endorse and support a budget appropriate to implement a county plan for children and families.

### Article V – Membership

#### Section 1: Appointments

Members of the Council shall be appointed by the County Commissioners in accordance with application, eligibility and interview criteria established by the Council.

#### Section 2: Members

Council members agree to:

- a. commit to community support on issues that affect children and families;
- b. attend and actively participate in Council meetings, and in Council sponsored activities, events, and Council sanctioned initiatives throughout the year;

- c. represent the Council at community and other public gatherings on issues pertinent to the Council, as requested by the Council Chair and/or Executive Director;
- d. provide leadership to community efforts that support children and families;
- e. advocate for appropriate community responses and best practice in service provision for children and families;
- f. serve as liaisons between the Council and their respective communities in planning and advocacy activities;
- g. demonstrate high standards of conduct when addressing children, families, providers, community groups and fellow Council members; and
- h. respect and represent the majority opinion of the Council.

### Section 3: Size and Composition

The Council shall be comprised of not less than 15 nor more than 21 members selected from eligible applicants. Every effort will be made to assure that each of the eleven communities of Belknap County is represented by at least one appointed representative to the Council. The Council encourages representation of youth and members of the County Convention who are eligible to apply along with other applicants. Such members shall have voting rights. At no time shall appointed County Convention members exceed three members of the Council.

### Section 4: Agents

When performing activities on behalf of or otherwise representing the Council, members are acting as agents of Belknap County.

### Section 5: Terms of Office

Council members shall be nominated for appointment by the County Commissioners through such process as determined by the Council.

- a. Council members shall be appointed at such time as to coincide with the Council's Annual Meeting.
- b. Council members shall be appointed to no more than two consecutive three-year terms with nomination for the second term confirmed by the Council and appointment by the County Commissioners.
- c. Former Council members shall be eligible for membership after an absence of one year from appointed Council membership.
- d. Appointments to the Council shall be staggered to assure that not more than one-third of the Council members' terms expire within any given year. To maintain the staggering of memberships, the expiration date of each membership term of office shall be fixed.
- e. New members may be added to the Council at anytime but for purposes of appointed terms, such terms shall commence at the next Annual Meeting.

### Section 6: Compensation

Council members shall serve without compensation except as otherwise authorized by Council policy. Notwithstanding any other policy relative to reimbursement for Council-related expenses, no expenses shall be reimbursed without prior authorization of the Council Executive Director.

### Section 7: Ex-Officio Members

The Council may, by majority vote, designate up to three *ex officio* members of the Council who may participate, without vote, in Council deliberations. *Ex officio* members shall not be used to comprise a quorum at any meeting of the Council or its committees.

### Section 8: Termination of Membership

The Council may recommend to the County Commission that a member's position be declared vacant when:

- a. a member has been absent from three consecutive Council meetings or any four Council meetings during a calendar year; or

- b. the Executive Committee determines that a member has failed to meet expectations of members outlined in Article V: Section 2, or Article X; or
- c. the member is removed by a majority vote of the Council at a special meeting called for that purpose or at a regular meeting so long as the notice of the meeting states that one of the purposes is to remove the member; or
- d. when the member submits written notice of resignation to the County Commission and Council Chair.

## **Article VI – Officers**

### Section 1: Positions

The officers of the Council shall include a Chair and a Vice-Chair.

### Section 2: Nominations

Nominations of officers shall be determined by a process determined by the Council.

### Section 3: Election

The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council present and voting at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

### Section 4: Terms of Office

Officers shall be elected for one-year terms. No member shall be eligible for the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

### Section 5: Role of the Chair

The Chair shall call meetings, set the agenda with the Executive Director's assistance and preside over all meetings of the Council. Special meetings may be called by the Chair as necessary. The Chair will be regarded as an *ex officio* member of all committees and work groups affiliated with the Council. The Chair shall act as liaison to the County Commission and shall report periodically to the Commission on activities of the Council and staff on an as needed basis. The Chair shall vote only to break a tie. The Chair shall also serve as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Council.

### Section 6: Role of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall serve in the absence of the Chair and shall assist in the execution of tasks necessary to carry out the business of the Council. The Vice Chair shall be a member of the Executive Committee and shall also serve as *ex officio* member of committees and liaison to the County Commission at the discretion of the Chair.

## **Article VII – Executive Director and Staff**

### Section 1: Executive Director

An Executive Director shall be selected by the Citizens Council and hired by the County Commission to support and oversee the work of the Council. The search process for an Executive Director shall include consultation with the Commission regarding critical skills and knowledge. The interview process and deliberations on the person to be hired shall include the Chair or other Council members as designated by the Chair. The Executive Director is an employee of the County and a Belknap County Department Head.

### Section 2: Responsibilities and Evaluation of the Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for the day to day operation of the Council subject to the direction of the Executive Committee and the County Commission as needed.

The evaluation of the Executive Director shall be the responsibility of the County Commission, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Council. Annually, on or about the anniversary

date of hire, the County Commission shall consult with the Council Executive Committee and request a report on the accomplishments of the Council and performance of the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall report in writing on goals and accomplishments for the prior year as well as proposed priorities for the coming year. The County Commission and representatives of the Council Executive Committee shall meet with the Executive Director to review the evaluation and set priorities for the coming year.

#### Section 3: Staff

The Executive Director shall assure that adequate and appropriate staff is available to meet the needs of the Council. The Executive Director will advertise, interview and recommend qualified candidates to the Commission. The Executive Director shall supervise and evaluate all staff placed under his/her supervision.

### **Article VIII - Council Committees**

#### Section 1: Committees

Standing committees of the Council shall be determined by the Council at its Annual Meeting. Other committees may be established by the Executive Committee, throughout the year, in order to conduct the work of the Council. Each committee shall be given a charge and members of the Council shall be designated to serve on committees. The Council may invite non-Council members to serve on the committees. Such non-Council persons shall be referred to as Council Associates and shall not have voting rights on matters pertaining to the Council business.

##### a. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair and assigned representatives of Council committees, work groups, and initiatives as determined by the Executive Committee. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a simple majority of its members.

Responsibilities of the Executive Committee will include guidance to the Executive Director, resolution of issues that arise and need action prior to the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, development of the Council's policies and procedures, oversight of the Council work plan and priorities, periodic review of the Council budget and financial records. All meetings of the Executive Committee will be recorded with actions reported for approval at the next regular meeting of the Council.

Section 2: Professional Advisory Council – The Council shall determine a process for how it will provide for ongoing interaction with the professional community of the County.

### **Article IX – Meetings**

#### Section 1: Regular Meeting Schedule

The Council shall meet no less than 10 times per year. Meetings will be convened in venues determined by the Council and be held in facilities that conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### Section 2: Notification

Meeting notices and minutes shall be posted in accordance with Title VI, Chapter 91-A of the Laws of New Hampshire.

#### Section 3: Public Comment

Each agenda shall include sufficient time for public comment as part of the regular business meeting. All meetings are subject to the Laws of New Hampshire with regard to Public meetings.

Section 4: Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the Council members. Items brought before the Council must be passed by a majority vote of the quorum present at the meeting. The Chair will only vote in the event of a tie among other members present.

Section 5: Special Meetings

Special meetings can be called by the Chair, the Vice-Chair or three or more members of the Council.

The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call or written notification.

Notification of special meetings shall be in accordance with Title VI: Chapter 91-A:2, II of the Laws of New Hampshire.

Section 6: Annual Meeting

The December meeting shall be designated the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**Article X – Standard of Conduct**

Section 1: Confidentiality

Staff and Council members shall keep information learned during the course of Council activities in confidence when the information concerns the administration and activities of the Council or other agencies which are not generally available to the public.

Section 2: Conflict of Interest

Staff and Council members shall conform to Council policy on Conflict of Interest.

Section 3: Personal Conduct

Refer to Article V, Section 2 of these by-laws.

**Article XI – New Hampshire Law**

In the event that any of these by-laws are in conflict with the Laws of the State of New Hampshire or policies of Belknap County, the Laws of the State of New Hampshire and /or policies of Belknap County shall take precedence.

**Article XII – Amendment to the by-laws**

Any Council member may propose changes to the By-laws. When such changes are proposed, they shall be submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee. Upon review by the Executive Committee, a recommendation shall be forwarded to the full Council. All changes to the By-laws shall require a 2/3 vote of the full Council.

Amendments may be voted on at the meeting following the meeting at which said amendments were introduced.

Approved: 10-30-02

Amended: 4-11-03  
1-13-04  
7-05-05  
3-17-06  
7-21-06