

Division of Family and Children Services State Advisory Board Bylaws

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this Advisory Board shall be the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) State Advisory Board.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the DFCS State Advisory Board shall be to support the staff and promote well-being of this state's children.

The roles and responsibility of State Board members shall be:

- Examination of current law, rules and regulations, and policy and submit recommendation to improve the ability of the division to increase the safety of children, respond to child maltreatment, and ensure the well-being of and timely permanency for children who are referred to and involved in the child welfare systems.
- **Review and recommend** administrative changes to policies and programs that are integral to the protection of children and the welfare and public assistance functions of the division.
- **Review** caseload assignments and ratios of child protective services workers and make recommendations for reasonable expectations for such workers and the supervision and support needed to perform their jobs.
- Provide recommendations on improved collaboration among state, local, community and public and private stakeholders in child welfare programs and services that are administered by the division.
- **Review the Division Director's report in advance of meetings.**

ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

Section 1. Per O.C.G.A 49-2-19, the State Advisory Board shall consist of 20 members appointed by the Governor. The membership will be comprised as follows:

1. One representative from each of the 14 DFCS regions; and
2. Six members who are either state legislators or representatives from the fields of:
 - a. Child welfare;
 - b. Former youth in foster care;
 - c. Public health or behavioral health and developmental disabilities;
 - d. Private child welfare care provider; or
 - e. Juvenile justice

Section 2. Board members will be appointed to 3 year terms. However, initial terms will be staggered at 3-5 years to ensure board continuity and experience:

- At-large members will serve a 5-year initial term;
- Odd numbered regions will serve a 4-year initial term;
- Even numbered regions will serve a 3-year initial term.

Thereafter, terms will be 3 years in duration. Board members can be reappointed to one full term in office. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. However, a former member may be reappointed after a one-year absence from the Board.

Section 3. Member terms will begin January 1st each year.

Section 4. Members of the Board shall serve without compensation. However, they shall be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties.

Section 5. The Division Director shall participate in all **regularly scheduled** meetings and provide a report to the Advisory Board **10 working days prior** each meeting.

Section 6. Should an Advisory Board Member have a concern that relates to their role as an Advisory Board member, the following communication process is requested:

1. If related to an issue or topic covered by Board committees, a Board member should bring the concern to the appropriate Committee Chair. The Committee Chair can then bring the concern to Chair of the Board if issue cannot be resolved.
2. If the concern is not related to a committee topic but falls more broadly under operations or programming, the member is asked to bring it to the Chair. The Chair of the Board will then reach out to the Board Liaison and other Division Leadership, as appropriate.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. These officers shall be the Executive Committee for the Advisory Board.

Section 2. The duties of officers shall be those commonly ascribed to these offices. In addition, other specific duties include:

- Chairperson—Presides at Board meetings and signs all official documents that require action of the Board; signs the minutes to indicate approval.
- Vice-Chairperson—Assists the Chair and presides at Board meetings in the absence of the Chairperson with all the power and duties of the Chairperson.
- Secretary-- Responsible for taking attendance, ensuring that the minutes are properly recorded and serving as liaison between the committee chairs and the executive committee.

Section 3. Elections

Subsection A: Regular elections shall be held at the last meeting in-person of the calendar year.

Subsection B: Special elections shall be held at the second in-person meeting after a vacancy becomes known to the Board.

Subsection B: The presiding officer shall call for nominations from the Board at the inperson meeting prior to the meeting during which voting will occur. Board members are free to nominate themselves. Each nominee shall submit a brief statement of their qualifications to the Chair no less than 15 working days before the next meeting. This will be distributed along with the Division Director's report.

Subsection C: If more than one office is vacant, the offices shall be addressed in the following order: Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

Subsection D: A Board member can be nominated for more than one office but may only serve in one office at a time.

Subsection E: A roll call vote will be taken. The presiding officer shall vote last. A winner needs greater than 50% of the vote. Voting will repeat until there is a winner.

Subsection F: Each term is one year.

Subsection G: A member may serve in the same position for up to 3 consecutive terms. Subsection H: Elections require a quorum.

Subsection I: The order of succession will be as follows: The Secretary will advance to Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will then advance to Chair of the Board.

Subsection J: Officers shall assume their offices immediately following election.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

Section 1. The Advisory Board shall meet at least quarterly. **The meeting schedule shall be ratified by July 1st of the preceding year.** Additional meetings may be held as the board determines necessary to perform its duties. Meetings of the State Advisory Board shall be held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-1 et seq.

Section 2. The date, time and place of regular meetings of the Advisory Board and SubCommittee meetings must be posted and made available to the public. A notice containing the date, time and place of each regular meeting shall be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting and maintained in a conspicuous place available to the public at the regular meeting place as well as on the Division of Family and Children Service's website. Notice for all other meetings shall be given in accordance with the O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-1, as amended.

Section 3. Meetings other than regularly scheduled meetings and meetings held when special circumstances occur shall be held in accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-1.

Section 4. Prior to any meeting, the Advisory Board shall make an agenda available including all matters expected to come before the Advisory Board at such meeting. The agenda shall be available upon request and shall be posted at the meeting site as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible and shall be posted, at a minimum, at some time during the two-week period immediately prior to the meeting. The Advisory Board shall not be precluded from considering and acting upon an item not included in the agenda which it becomes necessary to address during the meeting.

Section 5. All State Advisory Board and Sub-Committee meetings are open to the public. Visual and sound recordings must be permitted during open meetings. Minutes of all Board and Sub-Committee meetings must be recorded and are legal and public records of the Board's decisions. Portions of the meeting may be closed if in accordance with guidelines found in O.C.G.A 50-14-1.

Section 6. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of appointed members. Members are expected to attend and participate in a majority of meetings in person. They may be present at the meeting by teleconference access. Attendance requirements cannot be satisfied by a substitute or stand-in.

Nonparticipation for half of the regular board meetings will result in an inquiry form the executive committee.

Section 7. Decisions will commonly be made by consensus. A formal vote shall be taken when a decision is to be forwarded to the **executive branch** or the division or administration as a recommendation. All votes shall be open to the public.

Section 8. A summary of the subjects acted on and those members present at a meeting of any agency shall be written and made available to the public for inspection within two business days of the adjournment of a meeting.

Section 9. The regular minutes of a meeting shall be promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection once approved by the State Advisory Board, but in no case later than immediately following the next regular meeting. Such minutes shall, at a minimum, include the names of the members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, the identity of the persons making and seconding the motion or other proposal, and a record of all votes.

ARTICLE VI: SUBCOMMITTEES

Section 1. Subcommittees shall be of the size necessary to carry out their assigned tasks and shall elect their own chairpersons.

Section 2. Standing subcommittees shall consist of:

- Executive Committee—composed of the officers of the Board and the Division Director. Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings shall be kept and distributed to all Board members. All decisions of the Executive Committee must be ratified at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.
- Bylaws Committee—composed of appointed members and designated Division staff. This committee shall review Bylaws on an annual basis and make recommendations to the Advisory Board as necessary.
- Other Sub-Committees--appointed by the Chairperson as needed to accomplish the purpose and directives of the Advisory Board.

ARTICLE VII: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Except as otherwise provided its Bylaws and standing rules, the Advisory Board shall be governed by **parliamentary procedure**.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Advisory Board by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted to the Advisory Board members in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.