

BYLAWS OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD (DSSAB)

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this Organization shall be the Arlington County Department of Social Services Advisory Board, hereinafter referred to as the DSSAB.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE, POWERS & DUTIES

Purpose. The DSSAB has been established by the Arlington County Board (“County Board”), pursuant to § 15.2-835 of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of providing input to the Arlington County Department of Human Services on policy issues and to serve as a resource for the County Board on behalf of residents of Arlington County in identifying and addressing social services needs throughout the community.

Powers and Duties. As required by Virginia Code § 63.2-305, the powers and duties of the Board shall be:

- (a) To serve in an advisory capacity to the senior leadership of DHS (comprised of the Director of Social Services, the Deputy Director of Social Services, the Director of the Department of Human Services, the Finance and Information Systems Division Director, and the Aging and Disability Services Division Director) who supervise the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) programs (hereinafter referred to as DHS Senior Leadership), in accordance with § 15.2-835; To take an active interest in all matters affecting the social services and public assistance benefits of the people served by Arlington County Government;
- (b) To monitor the formulation and implementation of public assistance benefits programs;
- (c) To meet with the Director, or their designee (a member of the DHS Senior Leadership Team) at least four times a year for the purpose of making recommendations on policy matters;
- (d) To collaborate with the Director to promote stakeholder engagement and input to promote equity-informed planning and service delivery;
- (e) To make an annual report to the County Board concerning the administration of the public assistance and social services programs; and
- (f) To submit to the County Board, from time to time, other reports the DSSAB deems appropriate.

The ideas, decisions, and actions of the DSSAB will impact the lives of children, families, and vulnerable members of the Arlington community. Therefore, the business of the HSAB will be handled with the utmost respect, seriousness, and commitment.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF OFFICE, AND TRAINING

Appointment/Composition of the DSSAB. The membership of the DSSAB is constituted in accordance with the Code of Virginia (§ 63.1-305). The membership of the DSSAB shall consist of at least five (5) voting members who are appointed by the County Board. The Director of the Department of Human Services, or their designee, is an *ex-officio* member without voting privileges. The voting members shall be residents of Arlington County. The membership shall be broadly representative of the diverse backgrounds of County residents and all geographical areas of the County based upon the following core recruitment principles:

Diversity. To ensure that decisions and outcomes benefit from a range of insights, there shall be proactive recruitment of a diverse membership representative of different races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, ages, socio-economic statuses, educational backgrounds, and disability statuses. Additionally, recruitment efforts shall strive to ensure that the membership reflects the demographic profile of those served by VDSS programs, with intentional focus on underrepresented and underserved groups, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Lived experience. A person with lived experience is someone who has lived, or is currently living, with the issues their community is focusing on, and who can offer their perspective about the system as it is experienced by those who have received social services. The insights of persons with lived experience are invaluable inasmuch as they will inform program planning, education, and policy decision-making, thereby contributing to improved outcomes and enhanced well-being of social services clients. Persons with lived experience possess expertise that comes not from formal education or training, but instead from direct experience with the system, process, or issue being addressed.

Term of Office. As required by Virginia Code § 63.2-305, members shall be appointed initially for terms of one to four years, so as to provide for the balanced overlapping of the terms of the membership thereon. Subsequent appointments shall be for a term of four years, except for appointments to fill vacancies that occur during terms shall be for the remainder of the unexpired terms. Appointments to fill unexpired terms shall not be considered full terms, and such persons shall be eligible to be appointed to two consecutive full terms. No person shall serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms.

Resignations and Vacancies. If a member cannot serve or resigns from office, then the Chairperson or the County support staff coordinator shall advise the Clerk to the County Board of the vacancy in writing. DSSAB members' vacancies shall be filled for unexpired terms in the same manner as original appointments.

Holdovers. If a member completes their term of office, remains qualified to serve as a member, and the County Board has not reappointed that member to another term or appointed a successor member, that member may continue to serve until such time as the member is reappointed or a successor member is appointed.

Suspension/Removal. As set forth in Virginia Code § 63.2-308, members may be suspended or removed for cause by the County Board.

Training. Within the first ninety (90) days of their term, DSSAB voting members are required to sign and submit the Pre-Service Agreement and complete both the online Board Member Training and at least one of the monthly Regional Director's Q&A Sessions. Other recommendations for new DSSAB members within ninety (90) days of appointment include the following:

- (a) Participate in the Onboarding Orientation with the DSSAB Chair, Vice Chair, and Director of Human Services (or the Director's designee);
- (b) Read the Local Board Member Handbook;
- (c) Visit the VDSS website;
- (d) Complete Introduction to VDSSS e-learning and other mandated trainings; and
- (e) Review the Local Agency Profile.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS OF THE DSSAB AND THEIR DUTIES

Elections. The DSSAB shall be served by two Officers: A Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson shall be elected in accordance with the voting provisions of Article V by the DSSAB voting members annually and such election shall be scheduled at the first meeting of each fiscal year. At least one (1) month prior to the election meeting, a slate of candidates for Chairperson shall be nominated during a meeting held pursuant to Article V. After nomination, each candidate shall be polled on their willingness and ability to serve as Chairperson. At the election meeting, the Chairperson shall be elected from among the willing nominees in accordance with the voting provisions of Article V. As soon as possible after the election of the Chairperson, but no later than next DSSAB meeting, the Chairperson shall nominate a Vice-Chairperson. After nomination, the candidate shall be polled on their willingness and ability to serve as an officer. The Vice-Chairperson shall then be elected in accordance with the voting provisions of Article V. The Officers of the DSSAB shall serve in their office for a one-year (1-year) term. Officers may serve additional terms, not to exceed three (3) consecutive terms in the same office.

Chairperson. The powers and duties of the Chairperson shall be as follows:

- a. To preside over DSSAB meetings
- b. To rule on procedural questions;
- c. To report official communications at Board meetings;
- d. To certify minutes as true and correct;
- e. To request assistance from County staff supporting the DSSAB;
- f. To appoint standing and special committees; and
- g. To carry out other duties as required.

Vice-Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson at a meeting, the Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chairperson. If neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson is available, the member present with the longest tenure on the DSSAB shall act as Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform any other duties assigned by the DSSAB or Chairperson.

Replacement Officers: If an office becomes vacant for any reason, it shall be filled by an election at the next regular meeting having a majority of members present. The newly elected officer shall complete the unexpired term of the officer succeeded. Prior to the election of any replacement officer, all members shall be provided with notice of the proposed election before the meeting at which the replacement is elected.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

VFOIA. All meetings shall be open to the public except as provided under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code § 2.2-3700 et seq., as amended (“VFOIA”). Pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3701, “meeting” or “meetings” means the meetings including work sessions, when sitting physically, or through electronic communication means pursuant to § 2.2-3708.2, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) as many as three members or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any public body. The DSSAB may hold public hearings and report its findings to the County Board regarding issues that affect the public interest.

Notice and Agenda: Notice and the agenda of all meetings shall be provided as required under the VFOIA. All meetings shall be preceded by properly posted notice stating the date, time, and location of each meeting. Notice of a meeting shall be given at least three working days prior to the meeting. Notice of emergency meetings, reasonable under the circumstances, shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to DSSAB members. Notices of all meetings shall be provided to the County's Communications and Public Engagement Team for posting at the Bozman Government Center, on the County website, and at such other locations as County policy may require. All meetings shall be conducted in public places that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Frequency: The DSSAB shall meet at least six (6) times a year and may meet additional times when convened by the Chairperson. Meetings shall be held at a time agreed to by a majority of the DSSAB's members, and at a place arranged by the County support staff.

Voting: A quorum is necessary for a vote. A majority of the voting membership of the DSSAB shall constitute a quorum. In making any recommendations, adopting any plan, or approving any proposal, action shall be taken by a majority vote of DSSAB members present and voting. All votes of DSSAB members shall be taken during a public meeting, and no vote shall be taken by secret or written ballot or by proxy.

Procedure. Except as otherwise provided by Virginia law or these Bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, and except as specifically authorized by the VFOIA and County policy. Meetings will be conducted in-person or virtually and will be recorded

Public Access. For any meeting, at least one copy of the agenda, all agenda packets, and, unless excepted under the VFOIA, all materials furnished to DSSAB members, shall be made available for public inspection at the same time such documents are furnished to the DSSAB members. Pursuant to the VFOIA, any member may photograph, film, record, or otherwise reproduce any portion of a meeting required to be open, but such actions may not interfere with any DSSAB meetings.

Records: The Chairperson, with the aid of County support staff, shall ensure that minutes of meetings are recorded as required under the VFOIA. Minutes shall include: (1) the date, time, and location of each meeting; (2) the members present and absent; (3) a summary of the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided; and (4) a record of any votes taken. Such minutes are public records and subject to inspection and copying by citizens of the Commonwealth or by members of the news media. The County support staff shall maintain records and minutes of the meetings and other DSSAB business under the direction of the Chairperson and in consultation with DSSAB legal counsel as needed.

Attorney-Client Privilege: Records containing legal advice from counsel to the DSSAB, and advice provided in closed session by legal counsel to the DSSAB, are protected by the attorney-client privilege and from disclosure under the VFOIA. Any such records or advice should not be disclosed by members of the DSSAB to any third party, or the privilege against disclosure may be waived. Questions regarding the handling of records or advice subject to attorney-client privilege should be directed to the DSSAB's legal counsel.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

Standing. The Chairperson may appoint standing committees and a chairperson for each with the consent of a majority of the ASSB members present and voting.

Special. The Chairperson may appoint special committees and a chairperson for each with the consent of a majority of the ASSB members present and voting.

Committee Meetings. All meetings of any such committees shall comply with the notice and other requirements of the VFOIA and County policy. To the extent practicable, any such committee shall be composed of at least three (3) members. Committee meetings may be held at the call of the DSSAB Chairperson, a committee chairperson, or at the request of two committee members, with notice to all committee members.

ARTICLE VII: CONDUCT, PARTICIPATION, DISCIPLINE

Conduct. DSSAB members shall demonstrate a high level of professionalism, commitment, sensitivity, and sound judgment, and shall function in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical behavior. DSSAB members' conduct shall be guided by the DSSAB purpose described in Article II and the core principles described in Article III.

Attendance/Participation: Any voting DSSAB member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings or more than half of the scheduled meetings within a 12-month period, or who fails to participate in the work of the DSSAB without good cause acceptable to a majority of the other voting DSSAB members, may be asked to resign from the DSSAB. The Director of the Department of Human Services, serving *ex officio*, may designate one or more Department officials to appear for meetings in the Director's stead as necessary.

Notification to County Board. The DSSAB may request that the County staff coordinator notify the Clerk to the County Board in writing when a member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings, when any member resigns, or when any website, staff, or contact information changes.

Removal. Any DSSAB member may be recommended to the County Board for removal from the DSSAB for cause, by a two-thirds majority vote of all the DSSAB members. The members' authority to recommend removal under the Bylaws neither limits nor waives the County Board's authority to remove members from the DSSAB as provided by law.

ARTICLE VIII: PREVAILING AUTHORITY

In the event of any conflict between a provision of these Bylaws and Virginia Code § 63.2-305 or any successor provisions, the provision of the Virginia Code shall supersede such Bylaws provision. Additionally, if any Virginia Code Section cited herein is amended subsequently to the approval of these Bylaws, references to these Code sections shall be interpreted to be references to the most recently amended version of these Code sections.

ARTICLE IX: COMPLIANCE WITH LAW AND ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICY

The DSSAB shall comply with all Virginia laws, including, but limited to, the VFOIA, and the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3100 *et seq.*, with all County ordinances, and with all County policies concerning the activities of its boards, authorities, and commissions. In case of a conflict between a provision of these Bylaws and any applicable ordinance or law, the provisions of the applicable ordinance or law, as the case may be, shall control.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the DSSAB by adopting the proposed amendment(s) and by presenting those proposed changes for approval to the County Board. Any such amendments to the Bylaws shall become effective upon approval by the County Board.