



First Steps

BY-LAWS
First Steps Council of Southern Indiana
**(Clark, Crawford, Dubois, Floyd, Gibson, Harrison, Orange, Perry,
Pike, Posey, Scott, Spencer, Vanderburgh, Warrick & Washington)**

I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be First Steps of Southern Indiana Local Planning and Coordinating Council (LPCC), herein referred to as the “Council” or “LPCC”.

II. MISSION

The First Steps of Southern Indiana Council is a coordinated effort to provide family-centered, comprehensive services for infants and toddlers and their families.

III. PURPOSE

The Council is a coordinated system recognized by the State of Indiana as the authentic voice for children and families birth to age 3 who are at risk of a disability or diagnosed with a disability. The Council shall embrace a process through which the community works together to improve the lives of infants, toddlers, and their families residing in Southern Indiana.

- A. The Council shall serve as the governing body of First Steps of Southern Indiana.
- B. The Council shall serve as a link between public and private organizations, providers, families, the community, and state and local government.
- C. The Council shall develop, monitor and evaluate a countywide and cluster wide plan of systems development.
- D. The Council shall identify and promote activities that facilitate collaborative service delivery system.
- E. The Council shall determine county and cluster priorities and quality assurance guidelines.
- F. The Council shall follow the established referral procedures to insure coordinated, accessible services are available to children with disabilities and their families.
- G. The Council shall coordinate the provision of and assist in child find activities.

IV. AUTHORITY

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the First Steps plan and application as required by the State, within the parameters of state and federal law and policies. Once a local First Steps Grant application has been approved by the local council and the State, revisions must be approved by the local Council and the State before any changes in the application can be implemented.

V. PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

First Steps of Southern Indiana is responsible for the planning, development, implementation, design, and evaluation of the First Steps process within the cluster. The Council recognizes State policy in upholding decisions made and properly documented when decisions are made in accordance with local application criteria, State and Federal laws, regulations and policies.

VI. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Fiscal program and service delivery accountability is the responsibility of the designated fiscal agent which contracts to receive grant funds. All cluster expenditures will be in accordance with the annual budget and no expenditures shall be made in excess of budget amounts except with the approval of the council. All amendments to the budget must be approved by the Cluster Council prior to being submitted to the state.

Fiscal Agent will:

Receive and disburse funds.

Provide fiscal oversight of the program.

Provide administrative monitoring of funds.

Provide an updated report to the Council.

VII. RECORD KEEPING

First Steps of Southern Indiana Council shall maintain files which contain minutes of the Council and subcommittee meetings, task force minutes and reports, Council operating procedures and procurement policies that document compliance with State and Federal laws, regulations and policies. The Council Coordinator shall be responsible for the maintenance of all cluster Council records.

VIII. CONSUMER COMMENT AND APPEALS POLICIES

First Steps of Southern Indiana Council shall follow State consumer comment and appeals policies and procedures. These are made available to the consumer through “Parents Always Have Rights” brochure, the Family Handbook, and the procedural safeguards handbook.

IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All voting members of the First Steps of Southern Indiana Council shall disclose any areas in which they, their spouse or their business organizations might financially benefit from an action or recommendation of the Council. No Council member may vote on any issue before the Council in which the member or his/her business organization may benefit financially.

If any Council member feels that an issue is in direct conflict of interest with himself or any other Council member, he shall abstain and/or request the conflicting member abstain from voting on the issue. If the conflicting member disagrees, the Council shall vote to decide if a conflict of interest exists. Specifically, the First Steps LPCC Coordinator, SPOE personnel, and employees of the Fiscal Agent shall not vote on approval or retention of the Coordinator, SPOE, or Fiscal Agent, nor shall candidates for these functions vote in the selection of these positions.

No Council member may solicit or accept gratuities or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.

X. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This process applies to the actions of the Council members acting on behalf of the Council or during council sponsored activities. It is understood that any questionable behavior by a service provider in the execution of her/her duties is under the purview of the State Lead Agency and should be reported to the appropriate representative of said agency for action by following the standard procedures for complaints and concerns.

- The Council shall follow any specific guidelines on conflict resolution set forth by the lead agency.
- Allegations of questionable behavior and action issues shall be forwarded to the LPCC Coordinator, in writing within thirty days of the alleged incident.
- Written allegations may come from several sources including, but not limited to, Council members, Council officers, collaborative entities, professional organizations, community members or families.
- Once this potential issue has been presented to the LPCC Coordinator, the Coordinator shall simultaneously notify State staff if appropriate, following complaint and concern log procedures.
- Written notification of the allegation and pending investigation shall be given to the agency for which the accused party works, when applicable. They shall be afforded the opportunity to respond.
- Any actions enforced shall be communicated to the appropriate county, state, or federal agencies as required, if applicable.
- Further problems involving issues or actions that cannot be resolved by this method will be referred to those said agencies.

XI. MEETINGS

The LPCC calendar year will be from July 1 to June 30 each year. The LPCC will establish a calendar of meetings each year. The meetings may be adjusted as needed by the Council members. The council will meet once a quarter. The times and location of meetings will be published in the family handbook, the cluster website and in emailed meeting reminders to members. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the LPCC. A Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair during the Chair's absence.

XII. MEMBERSHIP

The Council shall be composed of persons representative of the cluster's unique cultural, demographic, ethnic, and service population. Any First Steps family or former First Steps family with a child under the age of 12 years who resides in Southern Indiana, provider of services to First Steps children and families, and others interested in First Steps may participate as Council members. Council and subcommittee meetings shall be open to the public.

The Council shall consist of consumers, business and service providers of Southern Indiana who provide a broad spectrum of views. Required membership as identified by State regulation will be solicited for membership on the Council. Ideally two people from each county will sit on the cluster council fulfilling the following state mandated membership:

- (2) Parents of a child with special needs
- (1) Health Representative
- (1) Education Representative
- (1) Social Service Representative
- (1) Early Intervention Provider, All agencies required to participate
- (1) Head Start Representative
- (1) Childcare Representative

Mileage reimbursement will be given to *parents only* at a rate of 37 cents per mile to ensure his/her continued involvement. A mileage log will be turned in following each LPCC meeting and a check will be sent once the mileage is approved. This only applies to parents who will not otherwise be reimbursed for their travel.

XIII. VOTING RIGHTS

Upon completion of the enrollment packet members will be granted voting privileges. In order to maintain voting status a member must, on a quarterly basis:

- Attend Council meetings regularly (as outlined in the membership agreement) or
- Participate in a local or cluster public awareness or child find activity, or
- Attend committees meetings such as Transition or Data or
- Send a proxy in the member's absence

Any parent attending a meeting will be eligible to vote regardless of prior meeting attendance. A parent will also be able to vote regardless of number of people representing a particular county.

If a participant is unable to attend a meeting, a proxy should be sent who has read the minutes and has been updated on council activities and requirements. It is the member's responsibility to ensure the proxy has the information needed to fully participate at the council meeting. The proxy's name should be sent to the LPCC Coordinator no later than the day before the meeting.

If the member participates by one of the methods above, voting rights may be maintained.

Participation on the Council will also include email communication and any other form of communication that serves to keep members informed of all decisions, recommendations, and general business of the council. Communication participation is expected, but not solely sufficient to maintain voting rights.

Paid staff will not be eligible to vote.

XIV. QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of those eligible voting members who attend the meeting. The Council and its committees will make decisions on consensus in its meetings and will follow parliamentary procedures to formalize decisions that are required by the state.

XV. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

Input will be sought from First Steps families through consumer satisfaction surveys, issues relayed through Service and Intake Coordinators, LPCC Coordinator, SPOE Supervisors and Managers, or letters to the Council, as well as, Council membership. The Intake and Service Coordinators shall be responsible for informing families of the opportunity for Council membership and other methods of providing input to the Council.

XVI. MANAGEMENT

The Council shall have and exercise all the necessary authority to vote, conduct business, authorize grant requests, and allocate funds on behalf of First Steps of Southern Indiana.

XVII. COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Committee members shall be developed and appointed by the Council as deemed necessary to achieve the mission and purpose of the Council.

- A. Executive/Oversight Committee
 - 1. Shall fulfill the responsibilities of the Council when action is required prior to the next scheduled meeting. In addition, an electronic vote may be required to meet deadlines.
 - 2. Members shall include the chairperson, and at least five LPCC members from the cluster council.
 - 3. The Executive Committee must maintain voting rights on the cluster council and monitor activities as needed.

- B. Transition Committee (East and a West Committee)
 - 1. Meets quarterly
 - 2. Shall help develop and monitor the Council’s Transition Plan as it pertains to First Steps, each local Public School System, Head Start, private rehabilitation, and other local resources.
 - 3. Members shall include a representative from each local Public School System, Head Start, First Steps, and any other vested party.

- C. DATA Committee (East and a West Committee)
 - 1. Meets quarterly
 - 2. Shall review and monitor the Cluster Performance Plan and other data provided by the SPOE to address the quality of the program.
 - 3. Members shall include any interested party vested in First Steps.

XVIII. MEMORANDA OF AGREEMENT

Memoranda of Agreement shall exist between the Council and the Fiscal Agent, to include SPOE agent and the First Steps LPCC Coordinator.

A transition Plan and Agreement shall exist between the Council, the Local Education Agency, and Headstart.

Agreements and MOAs shall be reviewed annually and modified as appropriate. Reviews and modifications must be approved by the Council.

XIX. ACCOMPLISHMENTS REVIEW

Annually the Council shall review its operation and achievement of outcomes as an initial step in developing new outcomes for the upcoming period. A review of the BY-LAWS shall be included in this review. Amendments to the BY-LAWS may be made by the Council during this review or at other times as deemed appropriate by the Council.

Council Chair

Date

LPCC Coordinator

Date

President/CEO

Date



First Steps

Conflict of Interest Statement 2013

By signing this document I agree to adhere to the following conflict of interest requirements as outlined in the First Steps of Southern Indiana By-Laws. I understand that the council insists on the highest level of integrity on the part of its members and agree that this is a necessary philosophy in order to assure high quality services to the children and families of Southern Indiana.

- (1) All voting members will disclose any areas in which they, their spouse, or their business organization might financially benefit from an action or recommendation of the LPCC.
- (2) A voting member will abstain from any vote in which a conflict of interest exists.
- (3) All members will divulge any areas of conflict to the council before discussion of the issue begins.

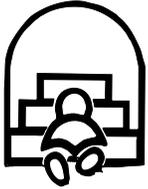
It is the council's intent to assure that all decisions are made in a fair and honest manner which reflects the best interests of First Steps and the families and children that it serves.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



First Steps of Southern Indiana

2013 Membership Agreement

First Steps

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

- I request membership to the First Steps of Southern Indiana Council.
- I agree to follow the requirements listed below.
- I understand that non-compliance with these requirements could lead to the Council making a recommendation that my membership be revoked.

Requirements:

1. Follow the guidelines set forth in the Southern Indiana Cluster Council By-Laws.
2. Attend meetings on a regular basis. Missing two consecutive meetings without sending a proxy may result in removal from the council.
3. Inform First Steps LPCC Coordinator of any conflict of interest as it related to issues before the Council.
4. Perform general public relations duties. Inform other providers and/or families of First Steps.
5. I will perform my duties as an LPCC representative for my county to best of my ability which includes adhering to the above.

Signature

Date

LPCC Coordinator

Date