



**TREASURE COAST COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY  
ADVISORY BOARD (TCCAAAB)  
BYLAWS**

**Approved July 2019**

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## **ARTICLE ONE - GENERAL**

- 1.1** The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program was created by the federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, hereinafter referred to as the “Act” which is administered in Florida by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunities, for the purpose of alleviating the causes of poverty at the community level.
- 1.2** The Treasure Coast Community Action Agency Advisory Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Advisory Board,” is responsible to the St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee Counties’ Board of County Commissioners for providing oversight and recommendations to local government in its role as a public community action agency.
- 1.3** The St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners has received the designation by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunities to serve as the lead entity to receive Community Services Block Grant funds for St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee Counties.
- 1.4** The vision of the Treasure Coast Community Action Agency (TCCAA) is to work with community partners to eliminate/reduce poverty in the three county area.
- 1.5** The mission of the TCCAA is to partner with other human services organizations to aid residents in need of assistance with targeted services, resources and guidance to foster self-sufficiency and independence.
- 1.6** The Board of County Commissioners of Okeechobee County and Martin County desire to improve the availability of services to low income persons, and have agreed that St. Lucie County, as lead agency, expand its Treasure Coast Community Action Agency Advisory Board to include said counties.
- 1.7** Advisory Board members will adhere to the requirements under the Public Records Laws, and the “Sunshine Law,” Chapters 119 and 286, Florida Statutes, respectively.

## **ARTICLE TWO - PURPOSE**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The CSBG program is designed to provide a range of services to assist low income people to attain the skills, knowledge and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Types of assistance include but are not limited to transportation assistance, nutrition programs, emergency food and housing, and homeless prevention programs.

## **ARTICLE THREE - MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

### **3.1 Membership**

In compliance with the requirements mandated by Public Law 97-35, Section 675(c)(3), CSBG federal regulations, and Rule Chapter 9B-22, Florida Administrative Code, the counties hereto shall form a multi-county Advisory Board with representatives from Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie Counties. Each county shall appoint three members to the Advisory Board as follows:

- A.** One elected official, currently holding office or designated representative so specified.
- B.** A letter signed by the elected official making the delegation must be resubmitted each year the delegation remains in effect. If a public official chooses a representative to serve as a board member, that person, and not the public official, is the board member and gets to vote at the board meetings.

- C.** The Counties will complete background checks on all prospective board members to ensure that the parameters laid out in the granting agency contract are met. Records shall be maintained to ensure that the board has completed due diligence in vetting board members. This may include, but is not limited to reference checks, verification of educational credentials, in depth interviewing, criminal background screening and/or debarment check.
- D.** One representative of the low-income population chosen by a democratic selection procedure adequate to assure that they reside in the low income area and are representative of the poor in the area served. The low-income representation shall consist of no less than one (1) representative from each County. The areas served include the entire three County areas of Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie, including all urban and rural areas.

The selection of and process for electing the low-income representative shall be publically noticed. Nominations may be solicited from the organized low-income groups and associations located within low-income communities and in each respective county. Nominations may be received from diverse low-income community groups. The low-income population may be encouraged to participate widely in this democratic process. Such representatives need not be poor themselves, but, must reside in one of the low income areas served. Low-income representatives of the Advisory Board will be elected at a meeting conducted to select the low-income representatives.

- 1. This meeting will be announced through two methods:
  - a. At least one (1) public notice via media, county websites, fliers.
  - b. Posters placed in locations frequented by the low income community.
- 2. The meeting will be coordinated with one of the following:
  - a. Community or neighborhood groups whose focus is on the betterment of low-income neighborhood(s) or whose membership is composed primarily of low-income persons.
  - b. Councils or organizations, whose members represent neighborhoods or communities of low-income residents.
  - c. County Government.
- 3. The election will be held in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- E.** One representative of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare or education interests in the county so specified.
- F.** Each Board member may be represented by a designated Alternate for no more than three (3) consecutive meetings. Each member may submit to the Board the name of an alternate. Alternates shall be copied with the same correspondence that the member receives. The Alternate shall vote only in the absence of the member who appointed them. An alternate may not serve as an alternate for more than one representative and alternates may not hold office on the Commission. Voting by proxy is not permitted at Advisory Board meetings or Standing Committees.

### **3.2 Responsibilities**

The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- A.** Fully participating in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of Community Services Block Grant programs and other programs administered by the Community Action Agency.
- B.** Advising Counties on efforts or mechanisms to facilitate the reduction in poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient.
- C.** Overseeing the overall operations for and grant compliance with the Community Services Block Grant, including but not limited to applications for funding, compliance with contract, monitoring requirements and bylaws,
  - Approval of applications for funding that will be managed under the advisement of the Community Action Agency.
  - Confirm compliance with contract and monitoring requirements and adherence to board by-laws.
  - Review and approve financial reports, program operating policies and procedures, contracts (work plans, budgets, budget revisions, sub-recipient agreements, or related).
  - Set Board responsibilities.
  - Make recommendations to the County Commissions.
- D.** As the Treasure Coast Community Action Agency is a public entity with St. Lucie identified as the lead County, operation related responsibilities are managed by the County, including:
  - Human Resource policies and procedures.
  - Staff hiring, evaluation, training and management.
  - Fiscal internal controls and risk mitigation.
  - Other related functions.

### **3.3 Compensation**

Members shall serve without compensation, but may receive reimbursement from the TCCAA for reasonable and documented expenses incurred for authorized travel associated with board member training.

### **3.4 Term**

Members' terms shall be for a period of three years, except for public sector elected officials who shall serve for the length of the term the official is elected.

### **3.5 Absence**

A member who is absent from three (3) meetings within a 12 month period, without having been excused by the chairperson, is deemed to have resigned. Advanced notification to staff is required for absence to be excused. Vacancies in the membership of the Advisory Board shall be filled in the same manner provided for in the original appointments.

### **3.6 Removal of an Advisory Board Member for Cause**

- A.** Cause includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Three (3) un-excused absences in a 12-month period.
  - 2. Misuse of position or authority.
  - 3. Acceptance of gratuities from Community Service Block Grant service recipients or vendors.
- B. Removal Methodology**
  - 1. Must notify the member that his or her removal is to be discussed at the meeting.
  - 2. Removal for cause must be supported by two-thirds (2/3) vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present.
- C.** The Treasure Coast Community Action Agency is an equal opportunity provider and does not discriminate against any person or class of persons by reason of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

### **3.7 Officers**

- A.** A chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary shall be elected by the Advisory Board.
- B.** The terms of office shall be one year. When possible, officers for the advisory board should represent each of the three collaborating counties.
- C. Positions**
  - 1. Chairperson

The chairperson shall:

    - a. Chair all Advisory Board meetings.
    - b. Work closely with local government staff to coordinate the meeting agenda.
    - c. Sign minutes upon final approval by the Advisory Board.
    - d. Present all matters relating to the Advisory Board activities and requiring action by the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners.
    - e. Perform all duties incident to the office of the chairperson.
    - f. Complete other duties as may be prescribed by the Advisory Board.
  - 2. Vice Chairperson

In the absence of the chairperson, the vice chairperson shall:

    - a. Chair Advisory Board meetings.
    - b. Assume other duties as designated by the chairperson.
  - 3. Secretary

The secretary shall ensure that the minutes are properly signed and recorded after final approval of the advisory board.

### **3.8 Election**

Election of officers shall be at the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board and at the first meeting of the calendar year thereafter.

### **3.9 Vacancy**

If a vacancy exists in any of the above offices, the Advisory Board shall elect a new officer by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting of the Advisory Board to fill the incomplete term of the vacated office.

### **3.10 Financial Disclosure**

Advisory Board members shall comply with the financial disclosure requirements of laws of the State of Florida. No member of the Advisory Board shall have any financial interest or conflict of interest in the outcome of any matter coming before such a member in his official capacity.

Any member who has, or whose relative has, a substantial interest in any contract, sale, purchase or service to an organization contracting to perform a component of the CAA work program funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), shall make known that interest annually in the official Commission records and shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any manner as a Commission member in such contract, sale, purchase or service.

### **3.11 Services**

The Advisory Board shall develop and recommend the services to be provided as promulgated under the Act, and the Board of County Commissioners in the respective counties will approve those services for their respective counties.

### **3.12 Support**

Support shall be provided by the Community Services staff of St. Lucie County, Martin County and Okeechobee County. Staff shall be a liaison between the Advisory Board and the Board of County Commissioners. Staff is responsible for posting notice for official Advisory Board meetings. Staff shall attend Advisory Board meetings, prepare minutes and shall ensure that minutes are filed.

### **3.13 Minutes**

Written minutes are to be kept of each Advisory Board meeting. These minutes shall be accessible to the public in book form. The office of record is to be the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners.

### **3.14 Written Reports**

Advisory Board members shall be provided with a written report from staff support on the status of all existing projects, including funds budgeted, obligated, expended, and activity progress. This report shall also be made available to the public at Advisory Board meetings.

## **ARTICLE FOUR - COMMITTEES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD**

### **4.1 Composition**

#### **A. Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary and shall have power to act on behalf of the board in-between board meetings. Other board members can be added to the Executive Committee at the

discretion of the full advisory board, to ensure representation for each geographic area (Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie).

2. Any actions taken on behalf of the Executive Committee must be reported to the board at the first meeting of the Advisory Board subsequent to such actions.

**B. Temporary Committee**

The Chairperson or Advisory Board may appoint special committees as deemed necessary, such as finance, planning, nominating, audit, evaluation or others. Such committees may have advisory functions for as long as needed.

**C. Committee Membership and Composition**

All committees of the Advisory Board shall fairly reflect the composition of the full Advisory Board and at least one-third of the membership shall be representatives of the poor. The committees shall have a minimum of three (3) members.

**D. Meeting Notification**

Each member of any committee should be notified of the agenda, date, time and location of meetings at least forty-eight (48) hours before the committee shall meet.

**E. Quorum and Act**

A simple majority (fifty-one percent) of any committee shall constitute a quorum. Any act of the majority of a committee at which a quorum is present shall constitute an act of the committee.

**F. Minutes/Ratification**

1. Each committee shall keep a record of its actions and proceedings and, when required by the board, shall make a report of those actions and proceedings to the board. Any and all acts of any committee shall be ratified by full Advisory Board action at its regularly scheduled meetings.
2. Minutes of full board meetings (with accompanying committee reports and agenda items), draft or signed, must be submitted to the Department of Economic Opportunity within 30 calendar days of the board meeting.
3. Documentation of public notice of each CSBG board meeting and official approved minutes must be kept on file for monitoring.

**G. Dissolution**

Any such committee may be dissolved by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Advisory Board members.

**H. Members**

The members of such committees shall be elected by the Advisory Board for such term and shall have qualifications as the Advisory Board may determine.

**I. Removal**

The Advisory Board may remove any committee member with or without cause by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Advisory Board.



## **ARTICLE FIVE - MEETINGS**

### **5.1 Meetings**

#### **A. Notice of Meetings**

The Advisory Board will hold at a minimum quarterly meetings at such a date, time and location as determined by the Advisory Board, with additional meetings called as needed. All meetings shall be open to the public and notice of such meetings shall be posted in the County Administration Building Lobby of all three (3) counties in the area of the building designated for Press Postings. Additional postings shall be placed in one of the following; newspaper, county website or media. Notice of meeting shall be timely at least seven (7) days but not more than thirty (30) days prior to the date on which the meeting is scheduled. A copy will remain on file with the Recipient for inspection by the Department. It shall be the responsibility of each County to obtain the actual printed notice documenting the timely posting.

#### **B. Quorum**

A simple majority (fifty-one percent) of any committee shall constitute a quorum. Any act of the majority of a committee at which a quorum is present shall constitute an act of the committee.

#### **C. Voting**

Each member of the Advisory Board shall be entitled to one (1) vote. Proxy voting is prohibited.

1. The Advisory Board Members may be polled by letter, telephone or email for official actions by the Board, but any action must be ratified at the next Advisory Board meeting.
2. Member attendance via phone or videoconference may not be counted toward establishment of a quorum. However, once a physical quorum is established, other members attending via phone or videoconference may fully participate in meetings, including voting on advisory board/committee agenda items.
3. Advisory Board members will adhere to the requirements under the Public Records Laws, and the "Sunshine Law," Chapters 119 and 286, Florida Statutes, respectively.

#### **D. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of all meetings.**

#### **E. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the board may be called by an officer of the advisory board or by any three board members.

#### **F. Agendas**

1. An agenda of each regular or specially called meeting of the Advisory Board shall accompany the notice date, time and location of that meeting and shall be sent to all Advisory Board members.
2. Unless such items appear on an agenda circulated pursuant to the requirement of this article, no meeting, be it regularly scheduled or specially called, may address the issues of:
  - a. Removal of a member of the Advisory Board for cause.

- b. The election of officers of the Advisory Board.
  - c. The amendment or revision of these By-Laws.
- 3. Meeting agendas shall consist of:
  - a. Call to Order.
  - b. Approval of minutes of previous Advisory Board meeting.
  - c. Unfinished business.
  - d. New business.
  - e. Announcements.
  - f. Public comments.
  - g. Adjournment.

## **ARTICLE SIX - BUDGET AND FUNDS**

### **6.1 Fiscal Year**

The CAA Fiscal Year is the same as the County Fiscal Year of October 1 to September 30.

### **6.2 Allocation of Funds by County**

As the designated lead entity, St. Lucie County will receive 10% of the total allocation for the Treasure Coast Community Action Agency for expenses related to oversight and quality assurance. The remaining amount will be divided by County based on the percentages provided annually by the Department of Economic Opportunity. Sub-recipients can use up to 5% of the amount identified for administrative expenses.

### **6.3 Audit**

The Advisory Board shall review the annual audit management letter(s) and request additional information as needed to affirm the integrity of the fiscal statements.

### **6.4 Financial Reviews**

#### **A. The Advisory Board or its designated committee shall:**

- 1. Review all Community Service Block Grant proposed budgets and make recommendations for changes for subsequent Advisory Board approval, if deemed appropriate.
- 2. Assist in evaluating how monies were spent and the effectiveness in achieving goals.
- 3. Identify new sources for funding and recommend these to the Board of County Commissioners for each county.
- 4. Review all new grants and proposals for refunding of existing programs and recommend appropriate actions regarding these programs.

## **ARTICLE SEVEN - AMENDMENTS**

### **7.1 Method**

Any amendments to the bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Advisory Board and any amendments altering the relationship between the Board of County Commission's must have County Commission approval before they are effective.

The State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunities will be furnished with a complete copy of the bylaws and any amendments made thereto.

## **ARTICLE EIGHT - MISCELLANEOUS**

### **8.1 Grievances**

The Advisory Board shall hear complaints from the residents, and shall serve as an appeal board for any person who has a grievance regarding the programs identified in the Community Action Plan.

### **8.2 Petitioning Procedure**

Any private community group or representative group of the poor which feels itself inadequately represented on the Treasure Coast Community Action Agency Advisory Board may petition for adequate representation. Any such petition must be signed by fifty (50) members of the petitioning group or be sixty percent (60%) of the bonafide members of that group or organization, whichever is greater. The organization or group presenting such a petition shall be promptly afforded an informal open hearing before the Advisory Board in order that they may have a full and fair opportunity to present their request.

When petitioning a group is granted a seat on the Treasure Coast Community Action Agency Advisory Board as prescribed in this Article, that group's representative shall be promptly seated when a vacancy occurs and afforded all rights and privileges of any other member of the Advisory Board. A written statement of the Advisory Board's actions shall be submitted to the petitioning group and a copy of that statement sent to the Department of Economic Opportunities.

### **8.3 Severability**

If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of these bylaws is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portions of these bylaws.