

**LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
RULES OF FUNCTION**

Article I

AUTHORIZATION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Area Agency on Aging (AAA), consistent with 45 CFR Part 1321 of the federal regulations under the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended, shall appoint an Advisory Council on Aging for the Lower Rio Grande Valley which consists of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties.

Article II

NAME

The Area Agency on Aging Citizens Advisory on Aging shall be known as the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, Area Agency on Aging, Advisory Council. For functional purposes, it may be referred to as the "The Citizens Advisory Council."

Article III

PURPOSE

The Citizens Advisory Council's mission encompasses a commitment to assist not only the elderly, but also individuals with disabilities, veterans, their families, and caregivers. The core objective of the Council is to facilitate the creation of a comprehensive and seamlessly integrated service framework that offers a diverse array of social services to seniors requiring support. This includes a particular focus on enabling those who are capable of self-care, aided by suitable assistance services, to uphold their utmost independence and dignity within their homes. A special emphasis is placed on addressing the requirements of economically and socially vulnerable seniors, ensuring they receive the utmost attention and care.

Article IV

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION 1.

As integral members of the community, the Citizens Advisory Council strives to foster stronger unity among the elderly residents within our locality. Their mission extends to cultivating a proactive interest in overseeing and enhancing the administration and accessibility of services dedicated to the older individuals of the Lower Rio Grande Region. Moreover, the council is entrusted with the responsibility of advocating for the welfare of the elderly population, while concurrently extending support to the AAA staff. It is of utmost importance that the council's interactions with the agency remain free from personal gain or any punitive motives, focusing instead on collaborative and constructive efforts.

SECTION 2.

The duties and responsibilities of the Citizens Advisory Council will be, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Providing guidance to the Area Agency staff concerning all aspects pertaining to the formulation and execution of the adopted Area Plan.
- B. Capturing the distinctive requirements of each community within the region and referring to the composition by categories of the Area Plan.
- C. Aiding the Area Agency staff in the identification of existing and prospective resources available within the region.
- D. Evaluating suggestions put forth by the Proposal Review Committee (Ad-Hoc Committee) and submitting recommendations to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for final endorsement of all funding requests.
- E. Assessing and making suggestions on program proposals and consequential actions that impact the well-being of older individuals
- F. Carefully reviewing evaluations conducted by the Area Agency on Aging concerning the provision of services, with the intention of enhancing these programs.
- G. The Citizens Advisory Council members will utilize their expertise to support the goals and objectives of the Area Agency on Aging.
- H. The Citizens Advisory Council aims to provide valuable advice and recommendations to the Area Agency on Aging staff on matters related to program and service design, development, and oversight.

Article V

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1.

The membership of the Citizens Advisory Council will comprise representatives from program participants, elected officials, and the general public, with a specific focus on including individuals facing significant economic or social challenges in this region. The composition of the Council must align with the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, which mandates that over 50% of its members must be older persons. Furthermore, the Council shall ensure representation from various sectors, including clients of title III services, older individuals, those residing in rural areas, minority older individuals eligible for or participating in OAA programs, local elected officials, members of the general public, veterans' healthcare providers, service providers, family caregivers of minority or rural-dwelling older individuals, representatives from the business community, advocates for older individuals, healthcare provider organizations, leaders from the private and voluntary sectors, and representatives from organizations offering supportive services.

SECTION 2.

Candidates considered for membership in the Citizens Advisory Council should undergo a thoughtful selection process, ensuring their genuine dedication and concern for the well-being of the elderly. A requisite for potential members is their readiness and willingness to commit ample personal time towards participating in scheduled council meetings and engaging in designated responsibilities. Additionally, each prospective member is expected to designate an alternate possessing full voting privileges, who can step in when the primary member is unavailable to serve.

SECTION 3.

The Citizens Advisory Council is established with a membership of seventeen (17) individuals. Appointments will be based on the elderly population distribution within each county. The representation breakdown by county will be as follows: 50% from Hidalgo County, 40% from Cameron County, and 10% from Willacy County.

In accordance with 45 CFR Part 1321.61, the composition of the Citizens Advisory Council will exceed 50% representation of individuals aged 60 or older, encompassing those with the most pressing economic or social needs, older minority individuals, and participants under this part.

The remaining Council members will include representatives from the older persons' community, local elected officials, and the general public. Consequently, the Council's membership shall be structured as follows:

- 51% (9 members) - Individuals aged 60 and above as detailed
- 49% (8 members) - Other representatives as specified

The distribution across counties will be as follows:

50% - Hidalgo County: 9 total members - 60+ = 4, Other = 5

40% - Cameron County: 6 total members - 60+ = 4, Other = 2

10% - Willacy County: 2 total members - 60+ = 1, Other = 1

In total:

17 members

60+ representation: 9 members

Other representation: 8 members

This structure ensures a balance of at least 2 representatives per county or at minimum, 1 older person and 1 other member per county.



SECTION 4.

The procedure for appointing members to the Citizens Advisory Council will unfold in the subsequent manner:

A. The Citizen Advisory Council members and alternates will be chosen from the applications submitted to the council by individuals who express an interest in the AAA office.

B. The Citizens Advisory Council will evaluate the nominated candidates and present their suggestions to the LRGVDC Board of Directors, who will then make the appointments. All appointments, including the alternates, will span a duration of three (3) years, commencing from October 1st of each year and concluding one (1) day prior to the third anniversary date. Incumbent Advisory Council members may be reappointed.

Deliberations concerning any potential vacancies will occur in June, and recommendations will be formulated in August to ensure a complete assembly of members by October 1st annually. The Citizens Advisory Council, during their regular August meeting, propose a slate of officers. The Area Agency on Aging staff will seek endorsement for a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson, which will subsequently be submitted to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for approval.

Article VI

OFFICERS

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will serve a term one (1) year, or until their successors are designated. Those holding these roles may be re-elected. If the Chairperson vacates the position for any reason, the Vice-Chairperson will assume the role of Chairperson, and a new Vice-Chairperson will be chosen through the customary selection process by the Citizens Advisory Council. The Vice-Chairperson may be re-elected by the majority present.

The Vice-Chairperson will assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson when the latter is absent. In the event both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent, the remaining members will vote for a temporary Chairperson (Chairperson Pro-Tem), who will preside solely over that meeting and only as long as both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent.

The Chairperson, Vice-chairperson and other members of the council are expected to be present for at least 75% of AAA Citizens Advisory Council meetings. Failure to meet this attendance requirement will result in the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson being deemed to have resigned unless the absences are considered justifiably excusable.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson has the option to resign at any time by submitting written notice to the Director of the Area Agency on Aging. The resignation will take effect upon receipt or at the time specified in the notice, if later.

Article VII

AD-HOC COMMITTEES

The chairperson, in consultation with the Advisory Council, will have the authority to establish Ad-Hoc Committees as necessary and define their objectives and operations. Membership in Ad-Hoc Committees is reserved for Advisory Council Members.

Article VIII

SECTION 1.

The Citizens Advisory Council will convene regular meetings, scheduled monthly on the second Tuesday of each month, excluding July and November. Advanced notification of these meetings will be sent via email to all Advisory Council members, detailing the meeting's time and location. Alternatively, members who prefer receiving information through regular mail may also opt for this method.

The proposed commencement time for these meetings is 2:00 p.m., with a preferred conclusion by 3:00 p.m.

SECTION 2.

Special meetings of the Citizens Advisory Council can be convened either at the chairperson's discretion or upon the submission of a petition endorsed by at least one fourth of the Citizen Advisory Council no later than 10 days prior to the Advisory Council meeting. This petition must outline the intent of the special meeting in written form and must be submitted to the Director of the Area Agency on Aging. Upon receipt of the petition, the special meeting shall take place within a span of ten (10) days at the discretion of the Area Agency on Aging Director unless requests interferes with State mandated duties of the agency.

A council member may submit a request to the Chairperson and Area Agency on Aging Director to place an item on the agenda no later than seven (7) business days before the scheduled meeting.

For such special meetings, a notice period of no less than ten (10) days is mandated. This timeframe allows the Area Agency staff sufficient time to communicate with each member via e-mail, mail, or telephone.

SECTION 3.

For a quorum to be established, one-third (1/3) of the total membership must be present. The approval of any action by the Citizens Advisory Council necessitates a majority vote among the attending members. In the event that a meeting lacks a quorum, any business conducted becomes official only upon the subsequent approval of the minutes at the subsequent official meeting.

SECTION 4.

Any member or officer of the Citizens Advisory Council who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular or called meetings of the Citizens Advisory Council shall automatically forfeit their appointment unless the chairperson deems the absences to be reasonable and excusable.

In the case of a vacancy, the vacant position will be filled in accordance with Article V, Section 4 of the Rules of Function.

Article IX

COMPENSATION

Members of The Citizens Advisory Council do not receive any monetary compensation for their dedicated time and efforts. Reimbursement for authorized travel expenses incurred by members will be in accordance with the established travel policy of the LRGVDC policy and procedures.

Individuals whose travel expenses are covered by their own organizations will not be eligible for reimbursement from the LRGVDC.

Article X

AMENDMENTS

Any revisions to these Rules of Function must be approved by the majority of the members present from the Citizens Advisory Council and subsequently submitted in written form to the Area Agency on Aging for their assessment. After a thorough review, pertinent recommendations will then be forwarded to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for their final approval.

Disclosure: Commencing October 1, 2023, The Citizen Advisory Council meetings will transition to in-person gatherings. However, recognizing the evolving circumstances, members requiring a virtual participation option should formally submit their request and secure approval from the Advisory Council prior to the designated meeting. In order to facilitate such requests, a valid and substantiated justification must accompany the submission, ensuring that the need for virtual participation is reasonable and justifiable.

