

OPERATING PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

WORKING DRAFT AS OF 12-11-08

The following table covers the Commission to Study Residential Placements of Children (Commission) operating procedures. In some cases, separate documents provide details to the Commission’s operations and structure (e.g., working group charters). The guidelines once approved by the Commission will be considered part of its operating procedures.

<i>Operational Focus Area</i>	<i>Commission Guideline or Agreed Process</i>
1. General principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The purpose of the Commission is rooted in initial legislation and in subsequent documents that cover its purpose including its original report, <i>Advancing New Outcomes</i>. The work of the Commission deserves the utmost objective and in-depth attention to reach outcomes that will be beneficial and lasting in West Virginia. Every Commission member should commit the attention and time to engage fully in the work of the Commission. ▪ The Commission should be a ‘role model’ group in carrying out its purpose and in building effective working relationships that will ensure successful outcomes of its works. This includes being inclusive in its work and using effective problem-solving and decision-making processes in carrying out its mission.
2. Administrative support & technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The WV Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Children and Families (BCF) will serve as the fiscal agent and provide administrative and logistics support to the Commission. ▪ BCF will also provide technical assistance in the areas of working group support and selected administrative activities. ▪ As warranted, external resources or consultants may be asked to provide technical assistance to the Commission.
3. Roles/expectations of Commission members and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The primary leadership of the Commission will be the Chair, Martha Y. Walker, Secretary, WV Department of Health and Human Resources. ▪ A Vice-Chair may be named to support the Chair. ▪ All Commission members are expected to attend formal Commission meetings, be prepared by reviewing appropriate advance material that may be distributed, fully participate in meetings including being proactive with open contributions, promote the Commission in a positive way and most importantly be committed to carry out the Commission’s mission.
4. Commission meeting agenda development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A set agenda will be used for each of the formal Commission meetings. The agenda will be developed based on the principles and practices topics being addressed by the Commission. Special topics may be added to the agenda based on needs or surfacing circumstances at the time of the meeting.
5. Commission agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission members wishing to have an item placed on the agenda should submit such items with appropriate background information to the attention of the Chair or designated person at least ten calendar days before the regular meeting.

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6. Commission working group structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Commission will use working groups as outlined under separate documentation to carry out assessments, work on processes, make recommendations and carryout other tasks as assigned. ▪ The Commission may, from time to time, charter special task teams or working groups as needed. These will be championed by one or more Commission members, but may include non-Commission participants based on the topic and expertise needed. In some cases, a Commission member may lead a team, but it is not required. Each of these groups will have a written statement of purpose. ▪ Membership on Commission working groups is open to consumers, providers and representative groups who are willing to contribute within the guidelines of the specific working group’s charter (purpose). Working groups are expected to keep the Commission informed through progress reports and updates to the Commission’s recommendations actions plan, as warranted.
7. Process for public input and comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A process for making public feedback and comment will be developed and followed including specific protocol for both verbal and written feedback/comments to the Commission. ▪ As warranted, those present at a formal Commission meeting may request to make public comments just prior to the meeting’s ending. All comments during this time must be related to the agenda topics covered in the meeting. ▪ The Chair reserves the right to limit public comments to ensure all wishing to provide comments have time to speak and the total amount of time is reasonable. ▪ The Commission from time to time, based on its work activities or specific topic areas being addressed may hold focus groups or other events to gather specific feedback from non-Commission members.
8. Commission meeting frequency and set dates/time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Commission shall endeavor to prepare an annual calendar of Commission meeting dates. ▪ Every effort should be made to send the pending agenda and all materials relevant to the meetings to the Commission members one week ahead of Commission meetings. ▪ Although the Commission recognizes the value of in-person meetings, Commission members may, as appropriate and fitting to the agenda, use electronic means (e.g., telephone, video) to participate in Commission meetings or working group activities. ▪ The Chair can call special meetings of the Commission, if there is need based on specific situations and/or when certain action requires a different time line beyond regular meetings. ▪ From time to time, the Commission may hold meetings in different parts of the state.

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9. Ethics/conflict of interest guiding principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission members are expected to adhere to all state ethic laws and requirements including signing the conflict-of-interest statement if required and requested by the WV Ethics Commission to do so. ▪ All Commission members are to offer disclosure on any matters before the Commission that appear to be a conflict of interest or personal interests may influence discussions and/or decisions.
10. Open meetings policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Commission meetings will comply with state open meeting laws and requirements. Likewise, all standing committees and special work group meetings of the Commission shall follow open meeting practices. ▪ The Commission encourages constructive input from the public that helps the Commission be most effective and fulfill its mission.
11. Commission formal meeting minutes/ notes – how these are to be done, kept, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Bureau for Children & Families will provide assistance in capturing the basic notes of the Commission meetings to include official motions and voting outcomes. ▪ All Commission working groups and special committees should ensure a record of key discussion and actions are maintained in a work plan, action register, or notes from meetings. These should be made available to Commission members and the public. ▪ An action register will be used to note follow-up actions for the Commission, working groups or other entities. ▪ Meeting notes will be made public by being posted on the Commission’s website. ▪ As warranted, facilitation and technical assistance services will be made available to assist the Commission in its work. ▪ The Commission will designate an “official” home for all notes and records of the Commissions work. These may include the establishment and upkeep of a dedicated website for the Commission and its work.
12. Process for adding or replacing members to the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From time to time, the Commission may have a need to add one or more members. The Commission will be responsible for determining the process for selection of each new member. ▪ The Commission will develop a process to assist getting vacant seats filled on the Commission as quickly as possible and for providing prompt orientation to new members.
13. Commission member backup design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As appropriate to the position, each Commission member may name one person to serve as a designated backup to the member. ▪ Backups are expected to be fully empowered to serve on behalf of the Commission member regarding matters of the Commission’s work. ▪ Both the Commission member and designated backup will stay fully informed at all times of the Commission’s work, activity and actions. ▪ One or both may attend formal Commission meetings. ▪ Both may serve on Commission working groups.

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14. Media relations – who speaks for the Commission to media, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although the Commission cannot restrict any Commission member from making statements to the media or others related to the Commission’s work, decisions or related topics, the expectation is that the Chair of the Commission will be the official spokesperson for the Commission. ▪ Any, and all, public statements or reactions to issues regarding the Commission or its work requested of the Commission shall be made by the Chair or someone the Chair has designated for a specific issue or situation. ▪ Any other type statements by Commission members should be prefaced as being personal opinions and not that of the Commission as a whole.
15. Commission member compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members of the Commission shall serve without pay, but may be reimbursed for actual meals, lodging, and travel expenses based on West Virginia guidelines incurred while conducting Commission business. ▪ Commission members can be reimbursed for attendance at other meetings, conferences, seminars, etc., when they are representing the Commission. Such attendance shall be authorized in advance by the Commission Chair.
16. Presentations or guests at Commission meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Commission will be prudent in its meeting time and fair in incorporating formal presentations and/or guests to meetings. ▪ All requests for presentations or appearances before the Commission should be agreed to by the Commission ahead of time. When time is a consideration, the Commission Chair will make the decision as to the appropriateness of presentations or guests before the Commission.
17. Commission discussion guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issues discussed in Commission meetings should be germane to the Commission’s purpose and within the scope of the Commission and its work.