

Designing an Advisory Board Policy

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The specifics of a CAC policy will vary depending upon the type of CAC being established. Even so, good CAC policies will contain many common components. The model components presented below include sections that might be included in a policy establishing a CAC, but every section may not be appropriate for a particular CAC.

If there are standard policies that apply to all or most CACs, a city or county may choose to adopt a generic policy covering all standard practices. It may then develop shorter, more specific policies for individual CACs, with references to the generic CAC policy as appropriate. Appendix D is a template for a policy that could be modified to work for a variety of CACs.

A CAC policy should have some or all of the following components:

1. Scope

The first section of a CAC policy broadly outlines the scope and purpose of the CAC being established. This section also asserts the governing board's authority to create the CAC and designates a timetable for reviewing the CAC and the policy.

2. Duties

Under this section, a CAC policy more specifically describes the CAC's goals and expected results. This section might also include a statement describing the role of the CAC as an extension of local government and emphasizing members' duties to represent the CAC appropriately in the community.

3. Membership

This section sets forth the criteria that will be used to determine whether an individual is eligible to serve on a CAC. It also establishes how many appointments there will be and who will make those appointments; clarifies the length of each term and the number of terms a member can serve; and outlines procedures for handling vacancies, removing members, and naming replacements.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations for individual members of the CAC are described in this section. It also outlines procedures for selecting a CAC chair, vice chair, and secretary and describes the responsibilities of each of these positions.

5. Organization

This section describes local government's role in providing basic orientation for CAC members and CAC members' responsibility to attend orientation sessions. If resources are budgeted for CAC work, this section explains what compensation and expenses are allowable. Where applicable, it also describes members' responsibilities to uphold confidentiality statements and agreements.

6. Meetings

This section describes the procedures to be followed in meetings and explains that all local government CACs must operate in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes' open meetings law. It specifies what types of meetings (for example, special, emergency, teleconference, etc.) are allowed and who may call those meetings. This section also sets forth what records (for example, meeting minutes, reports, etc.) the CAC must keep and how it will inform the local governing board of its progress, actions, and recommendations.

7. Subcommittees

In this section, the policy states whether the CAC has the authority to establish its own subcommittees. If the local governing board grants that authority, this section clarifies for what purposes subcommittees may be formed, what process will be used to form subcommittees, what membership criteria apply, and what operating standards shall be used.

8. Quorum

This section establishes the minimum number of voting members required to constitute a quorum. If necessary, this section clarifies what standards apply to quorums for statutory and optional CACs.

9. Voting

This section addresses who is allowed or required to vote and what kinds of votes (for example, proxy, ex officio, etc.) are permissible.

10. Authorized Spokespersons

This section designates the authorized spokespersons for the CAC and delineates to whom, under what circumstances, and how such authority may be delegated.

11. Conflict of Interest

This section describes relevant state laws and local policies concerning conflict of interest and assures CAC members access to local government legal counsel. It also outlines the process by which citizens can question whether a CAC member has a conflict of interest.

12. Compensation and Travel Reimbursement

If the local government offers compensation and/or travel reimbursements to CAC members, details of how reimbursements are to be approved and processed appear in this section.

13. Limitation of Powers

This section makes clear that CAC members are not authorized by the local governing board to operate outside the scope of this document. It also gives the local governing board authority to address noncompliance issues.