

2025 Hidalgo County Head Start
Program Revised ByLaws



Hidalgo County Head Start Program Policy Council Agenda

DATE: August 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of 2025 Hidalgo County Head Start Program Revision of ByLaws.

RATIONALE/NEED: The Hidalgo County Head Start Program is required to amend the Bylaws to include a parent representative of Early Head Start. Parents and Community Representatives must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States, and complete a Policy Council Volunteer folder that will include completing a criminal history check and a sex offender registry check in accordance with 1302.90(b)(i-ii).

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDED: 2025 Revised Hidalgo County Head Start Program ByLaws

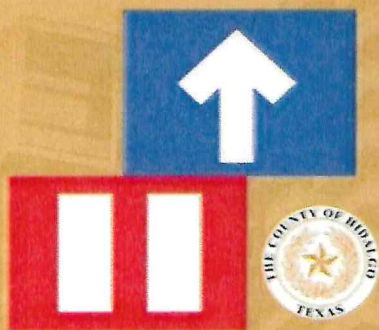
INITIATED BY: Irma Peña, Executive Director 

REVIEWED BY: Ricardo Gonzalez, Hidalgo County Head Start Program Attorney

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:  _____

POLICY COUNCIL

ByLaws



**HIDALGO COUNTY
HEAD START PROGRAM**

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Article I

Name:

The name of this organization is the Hidalgo County Head Start Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as the Policy Council.

Vision Statement:

To improve the well-being of children, empower families and strengthen communities.

Mission Statement:

To provide high-quality education and comprehensive services to children and families in a safe and respectful environment that builds a foundation for life-long learning.

Article II

Purpose: 45-CFR-1301.3 & HS Act Sec. 642(c)(2)

The purpose of the Policy Council ByLaws shall be to assist in the implementation of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act of 2007. In general, the Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the Head Start Program at the agency level, including program design and operation, and long and short term planning goals and objectives, taking into account the annual community wide strategic planning and needs assessment and self-assessment.

Article III

Responsibilities, Duties and Functions 45-CFR-1301.3(c) & HS Act Sec.642.(c)(2)

1. **Responsibilities:** The Policy Council shall approve and submit to the governing body decisions about each of the following activities:
 - A. Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Head Start agency is responsive to community and parent needs;
 - B. Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities;
 - C. Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for programs under this subchapter, prior to submission of applications described in this clause;

- D. Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities;
 - E. ByLaws for the operation of the Policy Council;
 - F. Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, consistent with paragraph (1)(E)(iv)(IX) of the Head Start Act of 2007 as amended (the “Act”) and 45-CFR 1302.90(c)(i-v), including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff;
 - G. Developing procedures for how members of the Policy Council of the Head Start agency will be elected; and
 - H. Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies.
2. **Duties:** Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and the Policy Council, about program planning, policies, and Head Start agency operations, including:
- A. Monthly Financial statements, including credit card expenditures;
 - B. Monthly program information summaries;
 - C. Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports;
 - D. Monthly Reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture;
 - E. The financial audit;
 - F. The annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment;

- G. The community wide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates;
- H. Communication and guidance from the Secretary; and,
- I. The program information reports (PIR)

3. **Functions:** The Policy Council will perform the following functions;

- A. Serve as link to the Parent Committees, grantee agency governing bodies, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve.
- B. Assist Parent Committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and the opportunities available in Head Start, and to encourage their participation in the program.
- C. Assist Parent Committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff, and ensure that funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities.
- D. Coordinate the efforts of parents and committee representatives to work together to serve the best interests of all children enrolled in the Head Start Programs.
- E. Recruit volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations and mobilize community resources to meet identified needs.

Article IV Composition of Membership (CFR1301.3(b)(2) & HS Act 642(c)(2))

1. Composition

- A. The Policy Council shall be elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start and Early Head Start Program of the Head Start agency.

- B. The Policy Council shall be composed of:
1. Parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start and Early Head Start Program of the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who shall constitute a majority of the members of the Policy Council; and,
 2. Members at large of the community served by the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency), who may include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in the Head Start program of the agency.
- C. The Hidalgo County Head Start Policy Council shall be comprised of a total of six (6) Parent Representative members and two (2) Alternates for each parent representative member. One parent representative member and the two alternates for such parent representative member shall be elected from the each of six (6) service areas in the County, and (5) members who are representatives of the community “Community Representatives” shall be appointed by the Commissioners Court of Hidalgo County (Governing Body). At least fifty-one percent (51%) of the membership shall be parents of children currently enrolled in the Hidalgo County Head Start program unless otherwise specified in these ByLaws, all members are voting members.
- D. Eligibility: The eligibility of the Policy Council members shall be as Follows:
1. Parent Representative Members shall have children currently enrolled in the Head Start and Early Head Start campuses they represent, and shall be eligible to be elected officers of the Campus Parent Committee.
 2. Community Representative members shall be representative of the community, civic or professional organizations which have a concern for children of low income families. Former County or Head Start employees are eligible to be recommended to serve as Community Representatives after at least one (1) year from date of resignation or terminated their employment.

3. Employees of the Head Start Program, employees of Hidalgo County, and any immediate family members of such employees are not eligible to serve as members of the Policy Council. Under these ByLaws, an “immediate family” means: wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandparents, and grandchildren, partner sharing a home, or relative by the third degree of affinity to an employee of the Head Start Program. Volunteers and temporary employees substitutes are not considered “employees” for the purpose of this section.
4. Parents and Community Representatives must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States and complete a Policy Council Volunteer Folder that will include completing a criminal history check and a sex offender registry check in accordance with 1302.90(b)(i-ii).

E. Voting Rights: Each Parent and Community Representative has one vote. All Representatives may vote on any matter that comes before the Policy Council and may hold any office. The Chairperson of the Policy Council does not vote except to break a tie vote.

Article V Election of Parental Members and Terms of Office for All Members 642(c)2(b)

1. The Head Start and Early Head Start Campuses will be divided into six (6) Service Areas in the County and each area will elect a parent representative from the Parent Committee officers. The parents of each campus will elect the Parent Committee officers consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian. In order for a parent to be eligible to serve on the Policy Council he/she must be elected to one of these positions at the campus level, and maintain that position throughout the year.
2. The Parent Committee Officers of each service area will caucus at the Governance Institute in September of each year to elect one (1) parent per service area to serve on the Policy Council. At the caucus, each Parent Committee Officer will be eligible to be elected to the Policy Council and will have one (1) vote.

3. In addition to the Parent Representatives, two (2) Alternates, 1st and 2nd Alternates, will also be elected from each service Area Parent Committee Officer. The Alternates should not be from the same center within the service area as the elected Parent Representative and will be available to serve when the Parent Representative is absent, resigns or abandons his/her position.
4. Formal installation of new Policy Council members shall be carried out at the first Policy Council meeting after the Governance Institute and election of Parent Representatives.
5. The members of the Policy Council shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian after the installation of the Policy Council members.

Article VI Terms of Office (CFR 1301.3)

Policy Council members shall serve for a term of one (1) year. No member shall serve on the Policy Council for more than five (5) one-year terms.

Article VII Conflict of Interest (CFR 1301.3)

The Program shall ensure members of the Policy Council, and of the policy committee at the delegate level, do not have a conflict of interest pursuant to sections 642(c)(2)(C) of the Act. Staff may not serve on the Policy Council except parents who occasionally substitute as staff.

Article VIII Standards of Conduct and Confidentiality

1. Standards of Conduct:

Each volunteer member of the Policy Council has an obligation to observe and follow Hidalgo County Head Start's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times in accordance with Article XIV of these ByLaws. If an individual's behavior interferes with orderly and efficient operations, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken up to and including removal from the Policy Council.

2. Confidentiality:

Every member of the Policy Council is bound by the Confidentiality Policy that ensures that confidential information shared in the Policy Council Meetings remains confidential. Every Policy Council member shall respect the confidentiality of matters brought before the Policy Council in Closed Session.

3. Communication:

The Chairperson and /or his/her designee, is solely responsible for communication relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Policy Council. The Executive Director and/or his/her designee, is solely responsible for communicating relating to the operations of the Program.

Article IX Resignation or Removal of a Member

1. Resignation/Termination

A member of the Policy Council may be removed by a majority vote of the Policy Council at which a quorum is present, if absent for three (3) regular meetings without having such absences officially approved by the Policy Council. A member of the Policy Council may also be removed if the member violates the Standards of Conduct and/or Confidentiality Policy for program staff, consultants, and volunteers. A member may resign from the Policy Council by submitting a written letter to the Chairperson of the Policy Council. Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt of such notice by the Chairperson.

2. Vacancy

When a vacancy is created by a **Parent Representative**, the 1st and 2nd Alternate will fill the vacancy, respectively. If no Alternates are available, then the Campus Parent Committee shall elect a new parent member and 1st and 2nd alternates, as appropriate, to the Policy Council from a given area.

When the vacancy is created by a **Community Representative**, the vacancy will be filled with a nomination from the appropriate Commissioners Court (governing body) member. Community Representatives shall continue to serve until a replacement is appointed and approved by the appropriate Commissioners Court (governing body) member. If the Governing Body member's term expires, the newly elected member may recommend a new Policy Council Representative.

Article X Officer/Duties/Committees

1. Officer/Duties

Officers of the Policy Council shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian. Officers shall be elected at the first Policy Council meeting of the new school year in October.

Chairperson: Present at all Policy Council meetings; assists the Executive Director in preparing the agenda; calls special meetings and appoints committees; and chairs the Executive Committee.

Vice-Chairperson: Assumes the Chairperson's duties in case of absence; serves on the Executive Committee; performs other duties deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

Secretary: Calls the roll of members to establish a quorum; takes minutes, ensures a sign-in sheet that records the names of meeting participants and works closely with Head Start Staff responsible for preparation, securing and storing of the minutes.

Treasures: Collaborates with the Chief Financial Officer to review and provide guidance in conducting fund raising activities at the campuses.

Parliamentarian: Shall verify voting eligibility and ensures Robert's Rules of Order are followed during Policy Council meetings.

2. Committees:

Committees are appointed by the Policy Council Chairperson. The purpose of these committees is to review related information and present recommendations to the Policy Council for consideration. All committee information is confidential.

Executive Committee: The five officers of the Policy Council are automatically members of this committee. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to promote discussion and make recommendations regarding operations of the Policy Council and its policies and procedures. Revisions of ByLaws is one of the primary functions of this Committee. The Executive Director or designee works directly with this Committee.

Finance Committee: This Committee includes at least three (3) members who participate in the grant/budget and budget amendment review process. The Committee will discuss concerns of all budgetary matters and will make recommendations to the Policy Council. The Chief Financial Officer works directly with and provides required information to this Committee.

Personnel Committee: This Committee includes all Policy Council members and will review the proposed hiring/termination of staff and will make recommendations to the Policy Council for consideration. The Administrator for Human Resources provides information and works directly with this Committee.

Article XI Meetings

1. Regular Meetings:

Regular meetings of this Policy Council will be held monthly on the third Wednesday of each month at the Administration Building located at 1901 West State Hwy 107, McAllen, Texas beginning at the designated time approved by the Policy Council

2. Special/Called Meetings:

Special Called Meetings of the Policy Council may be called when there is a need, and all special meetings shall be called by the Chairperson. The Executive Director, upon instruction from the Chairperson, shall notify Policy Council Members at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of any meeting of the Policy Council.

3. Quorum:

A simple majority of Fifty-one percent (51%) of the members of the Policy Council must be present to constitute a quorum in order to transact business for regular or special meetings. The Chairperson may contact absent Policy Council members by telephone call or virtual to achieve a quorum.

4. Conduct of the Meeting:

Robert's Rules of Order shall guide the Policy Council actions, which shall be consistent with Head Start Performance Standards.

Article XII Amendment of Bylaws

These ByLaws may be amended, revised, or repealed and new ByLaws may be adopted at any meeting of the Policy Council by an affirmative vote of 75% of the duly constituted quorum, providing:

- A. Changes have been introduced, entered, and read into the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Policy Council;
- B. Mailed to each member at least five days prior to the meeting at which the final action is to be taken.

Article XIII Impasses Procedures 45- CFR, 1301.6 (a)

1. To facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the Governing Body and the Policy Council, each agency's Governing Body and Policy Council jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes between the Governing Body and Policy Council in a timely manner that include impasses procedure. These procedures must:
 - A. Demonstrate that the governing body considers proposed decisions from the Policy Council and that the Policy Council considers proposed decisions from the governing body;
 - B. If there is a disagreement, it is required the governing body and the Policy Council to notify the other in writing why it does not accept a decision;
 - C. Describe a decision-making process and a timeline to resolve disputes and reach decisions that are not arbitrary, capricious, or illegal.
2. If the agency's decision-making process does not result in a resolution and an impasse continues, the governing body and Policy Council must select a mutually agreeable third party mediator and participate in a formal process of mediation that leads to a resolution of the dispute;

3. For all programs except American Indian and Alaskan Native programs, if no resolution is reached with a mediator, the governing body and Policy Council must select a mutually agreeable arbitrator whose decision shall be final. The arbitrator should be familiar with the Head Start Federal Standards and the Head Start Act of 2007.

Article Code of Conduct

1. Hidalgo County Head Start Program Policy Council Members:
 - A. Will respect and promote the unique identity of each child, family, employee, Council Member and Commissioners Court (governing body) member and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
 - B. Must uphold the Hidalgo County Head Start Program’s confidentiality guidelines stated as follows:
 1. No information regarding children and families of children enrolled with Hidalgo County Head Start Program is to be discussed outside of the work setting or Policy Council meetings.
 2. Information is to be discussed within the work setting and at Policy Council meetings only as is necessary and related to program operations/business or decision-making.
 3. No information learned at Policy Council meetings or while conducting Policy Council business may be discussed or used in any way outside of Policy Council activities.
 4. No information reviewed or discussed during “Closed Session” may be discussed outside the “Closed Session”.
 - C. Will support and participate in a teamwork approach to decision making.

- D. Will demonstrate professional respect and courtesy toward parents, staff, fellow members of the Policy Council, the Commissioners Court (governing body) and others affiliated with the Hidalgo County Head Start Program while participating on the Policy Council or representing the Hidalgo County Head Start Program within the community.
- E. Must have an interest and concern for children and their families.
- F. May not accept gifts and/or gratuities as stated in the Hidalgo County Head Start Program Personnel Policy Manual.
- G. Is prohibited from using his/her position on the Policy Council for purposes which are or give the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for himself/herself or others, such as those with family, business, or other ties.
- H. Must not make public statements under the auspices of the Policy Council, the Commissioners Court (governing body), or the staff without the approval of the Executive Director.
- I. Will not organize or meet with or contact other Policy Council members to conduct the business of the Program outside the scope of these ByLaws.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties herto have caused their names to be affixed hereto this _____ day of _____ 2025.

Policy Council Chairperson

Hidalgo County Judge

By: _____

By: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

ATTEST:

Hidalgo County Clerk

ByLaws approved _____ by Hidalgo County Head Start Program Policy Council Members

Approved _____ by Hidalgo County Commissioners Court