

**BY LAWS  
OF THE  
MILWAUKEE CHILD WELFARE  
PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL**

**ARTICLE I.**

**AUTHORITY**

**SECTION 1.01. Authority.** The Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council (Council) is created by s.15.207(24), Wis. Stats. Pursuant to s.15.03, Wis. Stats., the Council is attached to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Council is a state designated Citizen Review Panel and is expected to meet the requirements of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) 42 U.S.C. s. 5106a(c).

**ARTICLE II.**

**POWERS AND DUTIES**

**SECTION 2.01. Powers and Duties.** Pursuant to s. 48.562, Wis. Stats., the Council shall do all of the following:

- (a) Formulate suggested policies and plans for the improvement of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County and make recommendations with respect to those policies and plans to the department and the legislature.
- (b) Formulate suggested measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County, including outcome measures, and make recommendations with respect to those measures to the department and the legislature.
- (c) Formulate suggested funding priorities for the child welfare system in Milwaukee County and make recommendations with respect to those funding priorities to the department and the legislature.
- (d) Identify innovative public and private funding opportunities for the child welfare system in Milwaukee County and make recommendations with respect to those funding opportunities to the department and the legislature.
- (e) Advise the department in planning, and providing technical assistance and capacity building to support, a neighborhood-based system for the delivery of child welfare services in Milwaukee County.

Pursuant to s. 15.09(5), Wis. Stats., the Council shall advise the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, and shall function on a continuing basis for the study, and recommendation of solutions and policy alternatives, of the problems arising in the child welfare system in Milwaukee County.

### **ARTICLE III.**

#### **MEMBERS**

**SECTION 3.01. Membership.** Pursuant to s. 15.09 and 15.207(24)(a), Wis. Stats., the Council shall consist of the following members:

- (a) Three members of the Milwaukee County board nominated by the Milwaukee County executive and appointed by the Governor.
- (b) One representative to the assembly appointed by the speaker of the assembly.
- (c) One representative to the assembly appointed by the minority leader of the assembly.
- (d) One senator appointed by the president of the senate.
- (e) One senator appointed by the minority leader of the senate.
- (f) Ten members who are residents of this state, not less than six of whom shall be residents of Milwaukee County and appointed by the Governor.
- (g) Two members who are nominated by a children's services network established in Milwaukee County under s. 49.143(2)(b) and who are residents of the geographical area established under s. 49.143(6), Wis. Stats., that is served by the children's services network and appointed by the Governor.

**ARTICLE IV.**  
**ORGANIZATION**

**SECTION 4.01. Chairperson.**

- (a) **Chairperson appointment.** Pursuant to s.15.207(24)(b), Wis. Stats. , the Governor shall designate one of the members referenced above in Article III, section 3.01(f), as chairperson of the Council.
- (b) **Chairperson tenure and term.** The chairperson’s term may be renewed for successive years by the Governor.
- (c) **Authority and duties of the chairperson.** The chairperson shall call and preside over all Council meetings. The chairperson may also call special meetings. The chairperson shall give notice of each Council meeting as set forth in these bylaws.
- (d) **Standing invitations by the Chairperson (Associate Members).** The Chairperson may issue a standing invitation to a member of the public to attend and participate in meetings of the Partnership Council. Such invitations shall issue when it is determined that the person’s particular position or expertise will positively contribute to a full consideration of issues coming before the body. Persons participating through a standing invitation shall be Associate members and are not entitled to vote. The Chairperson shall determine if and when the reason for the standing invitation no longer exists, and shall inform the participant.

**SECTION 4.02. Council Members.**

- (a) **Member tenure and term.** Pursuant to s. 15. 207(24)(c), Wis. Stats., the members of the Council appointed under section 3.01(a), (f), and (g), shall be appointed for 3-year terms. Fixed terms shall expire on July 1.
- (b) **Authority of members.** Council members shall have the authority to attend and participate in all Council meetings, to vote on any matter before the Council, to participate in standing committees and vote on any matter before the standing committee if the Council member is a member of that standing committee.
- (c) **Resignation.** Any member may resign at any time. Such resignation shall be made in writing to the Governor, with a copy to the chairperson of the Council, and shall take effect at the time specified therein. If no time is specified, it shall take effect on the date of its receipt by the chairperson of the Council, who shall record the resignation noting the date. The acceptance of a resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

**(d) Attendance requirement.** Members are expected to personally attend Council meetings, and meetings of the standing committees to which they belong. If they cannot attend a meeting, they are expected to notify the committee chair or the Division’s administrative office in advance of the meeting. For purposes of this provision, attendance by a designated representative shall constitute attendance by the member. If the member, for whatever reason, cannot attend enough meetings to be an effective member of the Council, they are expected to notify the Division or the committee chair. If the Council member misses two or more Council meetings in a calendar year, the chairperson will contact the member regarding their willingness to continue on the Partnership Council. If a member has two or more unexcused absences from Council meetings and/or standing committee meetings or any combination thereof in a year, and if the member does not submit a letter of resignation, the chairperson may send a letter to the Governor recommending that the absent member be removed from the Council and replaced by a new appointment. Determination of excused and unexcused absences shall be at the discretion of the Chairperson.

**(e) Designated Representatives.** A Council member may send a representative in that member’s stead to attend any meeting. Such a representative does not have the authority to vote in Council proceedings but may participate in discussions on the member’s behalf.

**SECTION 4.03. Meetings.** The Council shall meet four times annually, and shall also meet at the request of the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and may meet at other times on the call of the chairperson of the Council or a majority of its members. The Council shall meet at such locations as may be determined by it unless the head of DCF determines a specific meeting place. Pursuant to s. 19.83(1), Wis. Stats., every meeting of the Council shall be preceded by public notice and shall be held in open session except that the Council may meet in closed session as permitted by s. 19.85(1), Wis. Stats.

**(a) Frequency:** The Council will meet four times annually to provide education on child welfare issues; to receive reports from the standing committees; to hear from individuals and organizations from the community, through community forums, about their concerns or recommendations on ways to continue to improve the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services; to receive reports on the programs, policies and operations and budget of the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services and related developments in the Department of Children and Families; and to exercise any of the powers and duties set forth in Article II, Section 2.01 of these bylaws.

- (b) **Special meetings.** The Council chairperson, the Secretary of DCF, and/or a majority of the Council members may call special meetings, as needed.
- (c) **Annual Meeting.** The Council’s annual meeting shall take place at a meeting so designated by the Council each year, at which time it will receive an annual report of the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services.
- (d) **Telephone conference calls.** A member of the Council may, if necessary, attend a Council meeting by conference call provided that the call is broadcast in such a way as to provide the public with an effective means to monitor the caller’s statements. This may be accomplished by broadcasting the conference call through speakers.

**SECTION 4.04. Quorum.** A majority of the membership of the Council constitutes a quorum to do business, and a majority of a quorum may act in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Council.

**SECTION 4.05. Voting and Manner of Acting.** The act of a majority of the members of the Council present at a Council meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Council. Council members may cast votes in person or by telephone. Members must participate in the full discussion of an agenda item in order to cast a vote.

The Council shall keep a record of the motions and roll call votes at each Council meeting. If a member of the Council requests that the vote of each member on a particular matter be recorded, a voice vote or vote by a show of hands is not permissible unless the vote is unanimous and the minutes reflect who is present for the vote.

**SECTION 4.06. Location And Conduct of Meetings.** All Council meetings shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and shall be open to all citizens at all times, except as provided in section 4.03 above.

**SECTION 4.07. Contract Partner Agencies.** Lead contract partner agencies for case management and safety, as well as other contract agencies as requested by the Council will be required to attend relevant committee meetings and all Council meetings. Relevant Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services management will also be required to be present at committee meetings and all quarterly Council meetings.

**SECTION 4.08. Committees.** Council committee structure will assure that all issues are documented, follow up is assured, and response is communicated. The committees will play an important role in system quality assurance. Committees may also hear reports from Bureau Directors, Section Chiefs, or Program and Policy Analysts in committees’ specific area of focus. Committees will play a role in efforts to further improve system services and reports.

Council committees will consist of Standing Committees and, from time to time, Special Committees. The organization, authority and procedures to be used by these committees are as described in Article V below.

**SECTION 4.09. Bylaws.** The Council shall operate according to its bylaws, and the bylaws may be amended at any time by a simple majority vote of the Council.

**SECTION 4.10. Council Consideration of Committee Issues.** When a standing or special committee has an issue for consideration by the full Council, it shall notify the Council chairperson before the next Council meeting that it wishes to have its matter placed on the agenda for the meeting.

## ARTICLE V.

### STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**SECTION 5.01. Standing and Special Committees.** The following are Council standing committees: Health and Education Committee; Critical Incident Committee and Out-of-Home Care Committee;

(a) **Out-of-Home Care Committee.** The Out-of-Home Care Committee shall address issues relating to services for children who have been removed from their homes, recruitment, licensing, support and training of Foster care and placement resources. This Committee shall also address issues related to adoption.

(b) **Health and Education Committee.** The Health and Education Committee shall address issues related to the physical, mental and dental health of children served by the Division, and issues related to the education of children served by the Division.

(c) **Critical Incident Committee.** The Critical Incident Committee shall review child fatalities and near fatalities in accordance with 42 U.S.C.A. § 5106a(c)(4)(A)(iii)(II). It shall also review recommendations of the DCF Independent Review Team (IRT) following any death or egregious incident review. The Committee shall follow DMCP's progress in addressing these recommendations.

**(d) Special Committees.** Special committees may be formed from time to time as deemed necessary by the Council, for the purpose of developing policy or examination of specific issues which are not within the province of any existing standing committee. These special committees shall have a specific purpose and shall cease to exist once they have accomplished that purpose.

**SECTION 5.02. Membership.** Standing committee membership, including the position of chairpersons for those committees, may consist of community representatives serving in addition to Council members and Associate members. Standing committee total membership shall be determined by the Council as needed, but should consist of an odd number of members in the event that issues must be decided by a vote.

**(a) Designated Representatives.** A standing or special committee member may send a representative in that member's stead to attend any committee meeting. Such a representative does not have the authority to vote in committee proceedings but may participate in discussions on a committee member's behalf.

**SECTION 5.03. Nomination and Appointment of Members.** The Chairperson shall appoint standing and special committee members, subject to approval of the Council. Appointed members may serve in a temporary capacity until such time as the Council votes on the appointment.

**SECTION 5.04. Chairperson.** For each standing and special committee, the Chairperson shall appoint committee chairpersons, subject to approval of the Council. Appointed chairpersons may serve in a temporary capacity until such time as the Council votes on the appointment. While preference for the position of standing or special committee chairperson should be given to members of the Council, the standing or special committee chairperson need not be a member of the Council.

**SECTION 5.05. Authority.** The standing committees, and any special committees when active, shall report to the Council at the meetings on the issues, concerns, and recommendations before them.

**SECTION 5.06. Meetings.** Standing committees, and special committees when active, shall meet monthly or at intervals otherwise determined by committee goals and membership. The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services will staff all standing and special committee meetings. All standing and special committee meetings shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public. Pursuant to s.19.83(1), Wis. Stats., every meeting of standing and special committees shall be held in open session, except that the committee may meet in closed session as permitted by s.19.85(1), Wis. Stats.

**(a) Telephone Conference Calls.** A member of the standing or special committee may, if necessary, attend a committee meeting by conference call provided that the call is broadcast in such a way as to provide the public with an effective means to monitor the caller's statements. This may be accomplished by broadcasting the conference call through speakers.

**SECTION 5.07. Notice.** All meetings of the Council standing and special committees shall be preceded by notice to the public similar to that which is required for Council meetings. The chairperson of the each standing and special committee shall be responsible for giving notice of the committee meetings.

**SECTION 5.08. Quorum.** A majority of the membership of the standing or special committee constitutes a quorum to do business, and a majority of a quorum may act in any matter within the jurisdiction of the standing or special committee.

**SECTION 5.09. Voting and Manner of Acting.** The act of a majority of the members of the standing or special committee present at a committee meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the standing or special committee. Committee members may cast votes in person or by telephone.

The standing or special committee shall keep a record of the motions and roll call votes at each meeting. If a member of the committee requests that the vote of each member on a particular matter be recorded, a voice vote or vote by a show of hands is not permissible unless the vote is unanimous and the minutes reflect who is present for the vote.

**SECTION 5.10. Procedure.** The standing or special committee chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the committee. Each standing or special committee may fix its own rules and procedures, which shall not be inconsistent with these bylaws.

## ARTICLE VI.

### ANNUAL REPORT

**SECTION 6.01. Annual Report.** The council will put out an annual report to the community, to the legislature, and to the Governor. The report will be presented by the Council chairperson to the appropriate legislative committees and local bodies.

## ARTICLE VII.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

**SECTION 7.01. Conflict of Interest.** Council members are required to abstain from any conflict of interest in exercising their duties as Council members. Council members are required to abide by the State of Wisconsin Code of Ethics set forth at Ch. ER-MRS 24, which is hereby incorporated by reference into the by-laws of the Council.



**ARTICLE VIII**  
**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**SECTION 8.01. Confidentiality.** Consistent with Wis. Stat. §§ 48.78 and 48.981(7), council members, associate members and invited guests shall keep in confidence all confidential information received and reviewed pursuant to the Council’s duties as a Citizen Review Panel.

**SECTION 8.02. Agreement.** Council and Associate Members are required to sign and abide by a confidentiality agreement. The agreement will be signed annually. Violation of the confidentiality agreement may subject the member to penalties set forth in Wis. Stat. § 48.981(7)(f). The Council chairperson shall recommend removal to the appointing authority of any member who violates the confidentiality agreement.