

# **THE NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY ALLIANCE**

## **FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

### **BYLAWS**

#### **ARTICLE I: NAME, MISSION, PURPOSE**

##### Section 1: Name of the Entity

The name of this organization is the Northern Shenandoah Valley Alliance for Children, Youth, and Families, and referred to by the acronym “NSVA” or “the Alliance.”

##### Section 2: Mission

The mission of the NSVA is to provide a collaborative, community-wide, strength-based system of care to achieve better outcomes for at-risk children and youth, and their families in Frederick and Clarke counties, and Winchester, Virginia. We engage with children, youth, and their families to strengthen relationships, community ties, and maintain the youth and children in their community whenever possible and appropriate.

##### Section 3: Purpose

The purpose of the NSVA is to engage children, youth, their families, and the community in the development of policies and procedures which promote best practices and fidelity to the System of Care model, conduct community education, and strengthen working relationships between member agencies.

##### Section 4: Shared Values; Statements of Belief

Members ascribe to the following fundamental beliefs as they work together:

- a) *Safety*: Safety of the child, youth, family, and the general public is paramount in all planning and delivery of services;
- b) *Maximum parental involvement, decision-making and responsibility*: Parents are the most crucial component in resolving the challenges facing their family and are doing the best they can, given their present life circumstances;
- c) *Least restrictive community-based wraparound approach*: Maintaining the child or youth within the family, school, and community with added wraparound supports and services offers the best opportunity for addressing the short and long term needs of the child, youth, and family. This principle requires a graduated system and continuum of care in which there is an array from which to select from low intensity and restrictiveness to high intensity and restrictiveness;

- d) *Prevention and early intervention:* Education and knowledge are fundamental components to support positive outcomes for children, youth, families, and the community. The earlier a challenge can be identified, the earlier an intervention can be implemented to promote positive outcomes at the lowest cost;
- e) *Evidence-based practices (EBP):* There are proven models of care that demonstrate high rates of success with positive outcomes. The use of EBPs is more likely to produce expected and desirable outcomes for children, youth, and families;
- f) *Cultural competency:* Children, youth, and families have the right to be understood and served within the context of their own traditions, history, and culture. Policies, structures, practices, and services should be responsive to the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and racial diversity of children, youth, families, and the communities in which they reside;
- g) *Strength-based:* Every child, youth, and family has strengths. Collaborating with them to discover and build upon these strengths improves engagement and outcomes;
- h) *Evaluation and mutual accountability for outcomes:* Shared outcomes, continuous quality assurance, and improvement processes increase mutual accountability among the collaborative stakeholders and the children, youth, and families served;
- i) *Flexibility to implement creative solutions:* Every child, youth, and family is unique. Flexible and creative service system design and delivery supports individualized approaches to maximize positive outcomes; and
- j) *Culture of non-competitive collaboration:* Shared public, private, and community partnerships improve service delivery and positive outcomes. Collaboration is demonstrated by open communication, active participation, and cooperation among stakeholders across all sectors and jurisdictions.

#### Section 5: Principles of our Systems of Care

Members are guided by the following principles as they engage children, youth, families, and the community and deliver services:

- a) *Family Voice and Choice:* Family and youth/child perspectives are intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the wraparound process. Planning is grounded in family members' perspectives, and the team strives to provide options and choices such that the plan reflects family values and preferences;
- b) *Natural Supports:* The team actively seeks out and encourages the full participation of team members drawn from family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The wraparound plan reflects activities and interventions that draw on sources of natural support;
- c) *Community-Based:* The wraparound team implements service and support strategies that take place in the most inclusive, most responsive, most accessible, and least restrictive manner possible and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life;

- d) *Collaboration*: Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a single wraparound plan. The plan reflects a blending of team members' perspectives, mandates, and resources. The plan guides and coordinates each team members' work toward the team's goals;
- e) *Team-based*: The wraparound team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and committed to them through informal, formal, and community support and service relationships;
- f) *Culturally competent*: The wraparound process demonstrates respect for and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of the child, youth, family, and their community;
- g) *Persistence*: Despite challenges, the team persists in working toward the goals included in the wraparound plan until the team reaches agreement that a formal wrap around process is no longer required;
- h) *Outcome-based*: The team ties the goals and strategies of the wraparound plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress in terms of these indicators, and revises the plan accordingly;
- i) *Individualized*: To achieve the goals outlined in the wraparound plan, the team develops and implements a customized set of strategies, supports, and services; and
- j) *Strength-based*: The wraparound process and the wraparound plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child, youth, family, their community, and other team members.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1: Members

- 1.1 Membership in NSVA is voluntary and will be derived from the following:

Children, Youth, and Families  
26<sup>th</sup> Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court  
26<sup>th</sup> District Court Services Unit  
Clarke, Frederick, and Winchester Departments of Social Services  
Northwestern Community Services Board  
Clarke, Frederick, and Winchester Public Schools  
Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) Representatives  
For- profit and Nonprofit Service Providers  
26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Guardian *ad Litem*s and Attorneys  
Health Department  
Law Enforcement  
Faith Communities  
Elected Officials  
Advocacy Groups  
Community Members

1.2 Membership from public and private agencies will come from the director or executive management level, their designee, or from those who have been delegated the authority to commit their agency to a course of action.

### Section 2: New Members

The NSVA is open to anyone interested in joining who is ready to commit to the shared values and can attend regularly. New members can self-refer or be nominated by existing members by submission of their name, contact information, and affiliation with NSVA activities.

### Section 3: Attendance

3.1 Regular attendance is necessary for conducting the business of the NSVA. Members must notify the Chair in advance if they are unable to attend.

3.2 A member missing three consecutive meetings without sending a designated alternate will be considered to have resigned from the NSVA, unless they have communicated an acceptable reason for the temporary absence.

3.3 Participation by phone or web conference will be counted as present.

## **ARTICLE III: GOVERNANCE**

### Section 1: Officers and Terms

1.1 The NSVA shall have the following officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

1.2 The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary shall be elected every two years by the members of NSVA for terms that coincide with the state fiscal year.

1.3 The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary may serve up to two consecutive terms.

### Section 2: Duties of Officers

2.1 The Chair will facilitate agenda development in conjunction with the Committee Chairs and will lead the meetings, and insure parliamentary procedures are generally followed.

2.2 The Vice-Chair will act on behalf of the Chair when the Chair is absent.

2.3 The Secretary shall have minutes prepared, approved, and retained; and issue membership-wide notices and other communications.

### Section 3: Committees

3.1 Members shall be encouraged to participate on the committee(s) of their choosing. Participation on a committee does not require NSVA membership. Members are encouraged to

recommend non-members to committees to add expertise or broaden participation by the community.

3.2 The NSVA shall have the following standing committees:

- a) Executive Committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Standing Committee Chairs): to govern the overall functioning of the membership's efforts and fiscal responsibilities. A sitting Judge of the 26th Judicial District Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court shall be an Ex Officio voting member of the Executive Committee unless s/he is: (a) elected to the position of Chair; (b) elected to the position of Vice-Chair; or (c) not available to serve;
- b) Training and Best Practices: to promote a broad-based community understanding and buy-in of systems of care philosophy and practice achieved through training and support.
- c) Service Array: to insure the System of Care provides a full continuum of individualized services to children, youth, and their families that are effective, affordable, accessible, diverse, and culturally competent;
- d) Outcomes and Evaluation: to develop activities that identify, measure, analyze, and share data to help members improve practice;
- e) Youth and Family Involvement: to successfully engage children, youth, and families at the practice, program, and policy levels; and
- f) Membership and Community Outreach: to implement and regularly review an ongoing marketing plan to increase community awareness, education, and ownership of the NSVA's mission, shared beliefs, vision, and principles of our Systems of Care.

3.3 The NSVA will create such Ad Hoc committees as are needed to conduct the business of the group.

3.4 Creation of an Ad Hoc committee may come from a vote of the Executive Committee or by request of the Chair.

3.5 Ad Hoc committees will have a specific purpose as defined by the Chair and will be dissolved when the project or purpose has been fulfilled.

#### Section 4: Committee Chairs

4.1 Each committee will designate a Chair to sit for two fiscal years.

4.2 Committee Chairs may be re-appointed for up to two terms.

4.3 Committee Chairs must be members in good standing of the NSVA.

4.4 Committee Chairs will: develop an agenda, convene and facilitate meetings, ensure minutes are recorded, and report to the NSVA on a regular basis.

4.5 Elections of Committee Chairs shall be staggered to alternate with the election of officers.

#### Section 5: By- Laws Review

By-laws shall be reviewed on an annual basis, or as needed. By-laws may be amended upon 30 days notice, review by NSVA, and full quorum acceptance of any proposed amendments.

### **ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS**

#### Section 1: Regular Meetings

1.1 Regular meetings shall be held, at minimum, every other month or more frequently if called by the Executive Committee, on dates designated at the first meeting of the year. The routine location and times will also be established at that time. Members will be notified of changes in meeting date, times, or locations at least one week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.

1.2 Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee to handle time sensitive matters, by providing a one week notice to the membership. Efforts shall be made to schedule such meetings at a convenient location and time.

#### Section 2: Quorum

A majority of voting members present (51%) at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

#### Section 3: Decision Making and Voting

3.1 Consensus is the preferred way for all decision-making. However, when consensus cannot be achieved, voting shall be used.

3.2 Each representative member shall have one vote. If more than one member is from an agency/system or network/group, multiple members within that agency/system or network/group shall agree to what their one collective vote will be.

3.3 Notwithstanding Article IV, Section 3, item 3.2 above, children, youth and families shall be considered individual members, shall each have one vote, and are not subject to the agency/system or network/group voting rule.

3.4 In all instances of voting, the majority shall rule.

3.5 Members unable to attend a meeting at which a vote will be taken may send a delegate with their proxy. A written proxy will also be accepted.

3.6 Electronic voting shall be utilized with time sensitive matters and the Secretary shall retain copies of all such electronic correspondence. If a matter is voted on electronically, it shall be re-affirmed at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Non-responses will be deemed as agreement.

## **ARTICLE V: MATTERS CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP INTERESTS**

### **Section 1: Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts pertaining to the working of the NSVA may occur and should be resolved through open and honest communication with all parties present. Principles of Systems of Care shall be applied where possible. We are responsible to resolve our differences amongst ourselves. Unresolved conflicts among members may be presented by a member in writing to the Executive Committee. If this does not resolve the issue, mediation may be performed by the Executive Committee.

### **Section 2: Conflict of Interest**

On any matter before the NSVA, all members are obligated to disclose their conflict of interest prior to discussion. Such members shall abstain from voting and may be asked to leave the room during voting if the NSVA deems it necessary.

### **Section 3: Current Court Involvement**

Children, youth, and families with a current or pending case in the 26th Judicial Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court are precluded from membership to abstain from any conflict of interest.

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