



KITSAP COUNTY COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP GUIDELINES

Purpose of Advisory Groups

Kitsap County Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees serve the citizens of Kitsap County by gathering information, reviewing options and submitting recommendations for consideration to the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. In order to assure the maximum input from and attention to the needs of Kitsap County communities, Kitsap County government encourages collaboration with community groups. The goal of this county/community collaboration is to work together to build a strong sense of community, address important issues, plan for the future, and maintain and/or enhance the livability of unincorporated Kitsap County communities. This collaboration is formalized through the affiliation between community advisory groups and Kitsap County and provides assurance to the public that Kitsap County and its community advisory groups are operating in a democratic and inclusive manner.

Community Group Responsibilities

Each officially recognized county/community advisory group will:

- Develop an organization which will maintain itself and further the stated purpose/mission of the group.
- Establish, with assistance from the community and the county, the geographic boundaries of the community advisory group
- Represent community opinion and concerns before public bodies and agencies.
- Describe your community, identifying strengths and resources as well as concerns and needs.
- Establish a communication system that includes well-publicized meetings to disseminate information and gather input from area residents.
- Encourage public participation and welcome citizen attendance and input at community advisory group meetings. Public comments are encouraged and accepted verbally or in writing. Anyone who wishes to voice an opinion or present information or concerns may attend meetings or contact county staff, members or officers in writing or by e-mail. Time will be allotted at meetings to assure broad public participation.
- Participate in any other nonprofit, community service activities in which community advisory group members may decide to engage.
- Adopt a set of bylaws which identify how community representatives will be selected and govern rules of procedure. Provide a copy of these bylaws and any amendments to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.
- Comply with laws affecting advisory group activities and County Policies 300.1 and 300.3 pertaining to advisory groups. Refer to the ***Kitsap County Advisory Group Handbook***.

County Responsibilities

Kitsap County will:

- Assist with organizing the county/community advisory group.
- Maintain public records including meeting minutes, copies of electronic communications and Evaluation/Work plans of the community advisory group for dissemination to the public and for legal and historical purposes.
- Appoint or approve members according to group bylaws.
- Communicate Board of County Commissioners' goals and policies to community advisory groups.

Once a county/community advisory group is formally established, the county shall provide the following considerations, subject to the availability of resources as determined by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners:

- Assign a county staff person to act as the liaison between the County and the community advisory group; to conduct research and provide information; to communicate community advisory group recommendations to the BOCC; and to assist the group in organizational development and project implementation.
- Give timely notice of proposals concerning planning and zoning which may affect the community.
- Solicit community advisory group input and encourage public participation on issues reasonably expected to affect the community.

Standards for Establishment of a County/Community Advisory Group

A county/community advisory group shall meet and maintain the following minimum standards for recognition:

1. A purpose and mission statement which is reviewed annually.
2. A set of bylaws which govern rules of procedure, membership selection, frequency of meetings, and organization and duties of officers.
3. A roster of advisory group members on file with the county Volunteer Services coordinator.
4. Define the boundaries of the community represented by the advisory group.
5. Foster communication between community residents and elected and appointed county officials.
 - Publicize the dates, times, places, and principal topics of discussion for community advisory group meetings in the local paper and on the group's county web page (at least two weeks notice is recommended).
 - Maintain minutes of all advisory group meetings and copies of electronic communications and share these documents with the assigned county staff person who will maintain these records for historical purposes and make them available for public inspection.
 - Allocate time on meeting agendas for questions, input and dialogue with community members.

Procedure for Establishment of a County/Community Advisory Group

After informal meetings with county staff and representatives of the community, a request including the purpose/mission statement, boundaries of the community and membership structure will be forwarded with a staff recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Once the group has been established by a Board of County Commissioners resolution, the county will look to the county/community advisory group for community input and recommendations from that area of the county. Bylaws, boundaries and membership will be approved by this process and may in the future be amended by the same procedure.

Resources:

- **County Staff Liaison assigned to your Community Advisory Group**
- **County Volunteer Services Coordinator**
(360) 337-4650 or rpirtle@co.kitsap.wa.us

***Web Resources at www.kitsapgov.com/boards**

1. Sample Bylaws Language
2. Advisory Group Handbook
3. Advisory Board Evaluation/Work Plan
4. Advisory Group (member) Application
5. Community Advisory Group Orientation
6. RCW 42.30 Open Public Meetings Act
7. RCW 42.17 Public Records Law
8. Resources on becoming a 501 (c) (3) Tax Exempt Organization
9. "Parliamentary Procedures" from 2007 Board training by Kelly Sills from Clark County WA
10. "Meeting the Challenges" from 2007 Board training by Kelly Sills

*Subject to update as needed or requested