



Our Children Our Future- Allen County System of Care Policy

Purpose:

Our Children Our Future is Allen County's System of Care body and exists to support Allen County's plan to expand and sustain a System of Care in Allen County. The primary directive of the group is to promote overall wellness and to address any related needs of the community so that services and resources are available for every child, youth, young adult and their families in Allen County.

System of Care:

The System of Care members will execute functions and activities according to the following guiding principles:

- *Mission/Vision:* Our Children Our Future is a collaborative community-based network focused on increasing access to services and resources which improve emotional, behavioral and social wellness for individuals, youth and families.
- *SOC Definition:* The local community takes responsibility for building a comprehensive system that leads to sustainable success for individuals, youth and families. The system is characterized by:
 - o Respect, compassion and values throughout the system;
 - o Efforts to be responsive and tailor effective services and supports to the unique, whole person;
 - o Services and supports are created and maintained based upon community data by multiple, varied stakeholders who work in committed, visible partnerships characterized by honest communication, a shared philosophy and approach and shared resources;
 - o The community recognizes that stakeholders include youth and families in the creation and maintenance of the system; and
 - o A community-based infrastructure plans, coordinates, implements and sustains the system through accountability, evaluation and quality assurance.



SOC Function & Responsibilities:

The purpose of the System of Care is to provide a forum for governance, oversight, community support, quality review, process improvement and education for Allen County's System of Care. The System of Care responsibilities and core activities shall include the following:

- 1) Identify SOC and delivery system issues that may require broad policy development recommendations or interventions to affect process improvement or change that will result in more positive outcomes for youth and families served.
- 2) Develop Ad-hoc subcommittees to engage in time-sensitive and/or concentrated work on SOC or quality improvement issues.
- 3) Provide support and oversight for the subcommittee activities.
- 4) Continually assess the progress of Allen County's current system building and service delivery efforts to ensure a broad array of culturally and linguistically competent services are available and accessible to youth and families.
- 5) Review access, utilization, and outcomes.

SOC Member Representation:

The System of Care as a whole (voting and non-voting supporting members) is comprised of youth and family members, advocacy groups (i.e., youth, family and special populations), community and agency mental health providers, other family and youth serving agencies, administrators, and other stakeholders.

The SOC meetings will be open to the public for attendance and sharing of opinions and concerns. However, final SOC decisions will be made by a consensus of the voting members.

The SOC voting membership will not exceed a total of 20 members and will be comprised of the following member types:

- 1) Youth
- 2) Family Members
- 3) Youth and Family-Serving Agency Members

System of Care Voting Membership:

The voting SOC membership will be comprised of a well-informed and invested collection of community stake-holders with decision-making authority for those whom they represent; including diversification in the following areas:

- a) Geography (area within the county)
- b) Child/Family Serving Specialty
- c) Race/Ethnicity/Culture/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/Diverse Abilities

- 1) Representation of the members will strive to be comprised of the following:
 - a) Local SOC coalition members
 - b) Department of Child Services
 - c) Juvenile Justice/Probation/Courts
 - d) Local Education Agency
 - e) Advocacy groups (i.e., youth, family and special populations)
 - f) Community and agency mental health providers/administrators
 - g) Special needs service providers (e.g., intellectual and developmental disabilities)
 - h) Substance abuse/Addiction service providers
 - i) Other healthcare providers
 - j) Residential treatment providers
 - k) Law enforcement/Corrections/Detention facilities
 - l) Prevention and intervention providers (early childhood, substance use/abuse, mental health, etc.)
 - m) Spiritual/faith-based or philanthropic organizations/supports in the community
 - n) Other youth-service agencies
 - p) Division of Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services

- 2) The following shall apply to the SOC Voting Membership:
 - a) The local SOC Coordinator is responsible for appointing all voting members with consent of the current voting members board. This will occur only after a meeting of the current voting members to assess the *SOC Voting Member Appointment Request* forms that have been submitted.

 - b) Voting members will be appointed to a two (2) year term with the following provisions:
 - i) At the conclusion of the first term of appointment, the individual may elect to re-apply for appointment as a voting member.
 - ii) Should the individual be approved by the SOC Coordinator for re-appointment as a voting member, the individual may serve a second 2-year term as a voting member.
 - iii) An individual may serve only a maximum of two (2) two (2) year terms as a voting member. After which time, the individual may continue involvement as a non-voting supporting member for a minimum of one year then re-apply for appointment as a voting member.

 - c) Individuals interested in requesting appointment as a voting member must attend at least one (1) SOC meeting and submit a *SOC Voting Member Appointment Request Form* to the SOC Coordinator, or designee for consideration.



- d) Voting Member appointments will be based upon the following criteria:
- i) Candidate's experience/skills that will enhance the group's diversification and decision-making.
 - ii) Candidate's endorsement of SOC philosophy and principles, as well as SOC expansion plan.
 - iii) Candidate's advocacy for youth and family involvement in system of care.
 - iv) Current representation of child and youth service populations and/or diversity in the voting member's group and the need to fill an empty seat in regards to need for that representation and perspective (e.g., geography, ethnicity/culture, area of child-service agency representation, etc.).
 - v) Ideal candidates for voting membership will have strong influence or decision-making influence over the area they represent to increase their impact on making changes that support SOC expansion.
 - vi) While there may be multiple persons representing an agency at the monthly SOC meetings, only one (1) agency member will be considered a voting SOC member, per represented agency.

3) The appointment as a voting member links the individual to their representing agency; therefore, any change in employment status results in the individual needing to reapply as a voting member with their new agency.

4) The SOC voting membership will not exceed 20 seats.

5) A voting member may be asked by the SOC Coordinator to resign due to any of the following:

- a) Attendance at the monthly meetings is expected. Attendance record of less than 11/12 scheduled meetings for organizations and 9/12 for individuals (with absences being accompanied by no prior notification or substitution) may result in removal as a voting board member from the board.
- b) Development of a major conflict of interest.
- c) Conduct during a meeting which is considered by the board members as disruptive and not conducive to effective, professional discussions and the performance of business.

6) SOC voting members have the right to terminate participation on the Voting Members board at will, without discrimination or adverse consequences through written request submitted to the SOC Coordinator.



Voting Member Expectations:

Voting SOC members are expected to be enthusiastic and active participants in SOC activities and strong advocates for SOC expansion efforts through the following:

- 1) Regular attendance at the monthly SOC meeting that includes actively participating in meeting activities (e.g. providing input, sharing SOC successes and challenges, etc.). Regular attendance shall consist of 11/12 monthly meetings for organizations and 9/12 for individuals.
- 2) Sharing of SOC initiatives, policy and outcomes with peers and community in order to encourage SOC expansion work and coordination of efforts.
- 3) Advocate for the infusion of SOC values through modeling of SOC principles and values within the member's respective area(s) of representation.
- 4) Promote and advocate for youth and family involvement in all SOC expansion activities.
- 5) Meet on an as needed basis to discuss and vote on relevant topics as well as remain responsive to SOC email votes and signature requests.

SOC Meeting Structure:

The System of Care will meet as a collective group at least monthly to achieve the group's identified function and responsibilities, as outlined in this policy. The structure of the SOC meetings shall be as follows:

- 1) The meetings will be facilitated by the appointed local SOC Coordinator, or his/her designee.
- 2) Recommendations will be discussed in scheduled meetings, and if needed, an ad hoc subcommittee of members will be created for more intensive study and work towards the resolution of an identified system issue. Additional subcommittee members may be requested to join the committee.
- 3) The frequency of subcommittee meetings will be dictated by the subcommittee members in order to deal with specific projects or time-sensitive matters. The subcommittee members will present updates and the outcomes of the sub-committee meeting(s) to the SOC.
- 4) Process improvement or policy adoption and recommendations will be made based upon a consensus of the voting SOC members.
- 5) Meeting notes will be recorded and distributed to members for review prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- 6) Lines of communication with all members will be fundamental to the success of the SOC and its actions, quality improvement strategies and outcomes. To facilitate easy access and efficient communication between members, the following methods will be used, as needed and dictated by the type/urgency of the information being shared:
 - a) Meetings
 - b) Conference calls

- c) Website postings on Basecamp
- d) Email
- e) Formal bulletin or public documentation
- f) Any combination of the above, as needed to facilitate quick communication and member access

Quorum Procedures:

Each voting agency will have one vote. If the original designees are not available to attend, he or she may appoint another member from that agency as a proxy to vote on the agency's behalf. A voting agency that is unable to attend a meeting may assign its proxy to another voting agency, or the voting agency may email its vote and/or input on a particular issue of concern to the SOC Coordinator prior to the meeting. Voting members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority of a quorum is required for action by the system of care, except to modify these Bylaws or to elect a new member when a two-thirds (2/3) majority is required. Electronic voting is permissible in lieu of an in-person meeting when previously discussed and approved by consensus.

Confidentiality:

Each System of Care representative will sign the Oath of Confidentiality stating that:

"I understand that I may come in contact with confidential information during Our Children, Our Future meetings. As part of the system of care, I will keep in confidence any sensitive information regarding clients, employees or business of Our Children, Our Future or any other organization that comes to my attention while at the system of care meeting. I will do this in accordance with any applicable laws, including those that require mandatory reporting."

System of Care Coordinator:

The System of Care Coordinator, or the assigned designees, shall be the facilitator of the SOC meetings. The Coordinator has the responsibility of administering Our Children Our Future SOC in accordance with these policies. The SOC Coordinator has the authority to do those things necessary and proper for that purpose.

The Coordinator is authorized on behalf of the SOC to:

- 1) Sign documents on behalf of Our Children Our Future
- 2) Represent the System of Care in community and state meetings and forums
- 3) Facilitate meetings of the System of Care