

CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS: CREATING EFFECTIVE INTERNAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

PRESENTERS

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This workshop focuses on how a consumer advisory board (CAB) and a governing board can enhance consumer engagement and leadership in governance on behalf of consumers of the HCH project and in the community.

Different models for CABs and governing boards will be discussed, including real-life challenges and achievements.

We will also discuss how organizations can provide support to ensure the effectiveness of consumer engagement.

IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMERS ON ADVISORY AND GOVERNING BOARDS

“The only way to affect change in policy is to be part of the conversation”

- Help decision-makers understand the needs of consumers from the consumer point of view.
- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Increase consumer confidence in making a difference
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.



FEDERAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT AFFECT HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROJECTS

Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act:

- The governing board is composed of a majority of individuals being served by the center
- If your health center is a 330(h), or HCH center, waivers to the “consumer” majority rule can be requested, but consumer participation in governance is still required.

WAYS TO FACILITATE CONSUMER REPRESENTATION

- Include consumers or former consumers on the project's governing board
- Conduct consumer satisfaction surveys
- Create regularly constituted focus groups
- Create a separate Consumer Advisory Board

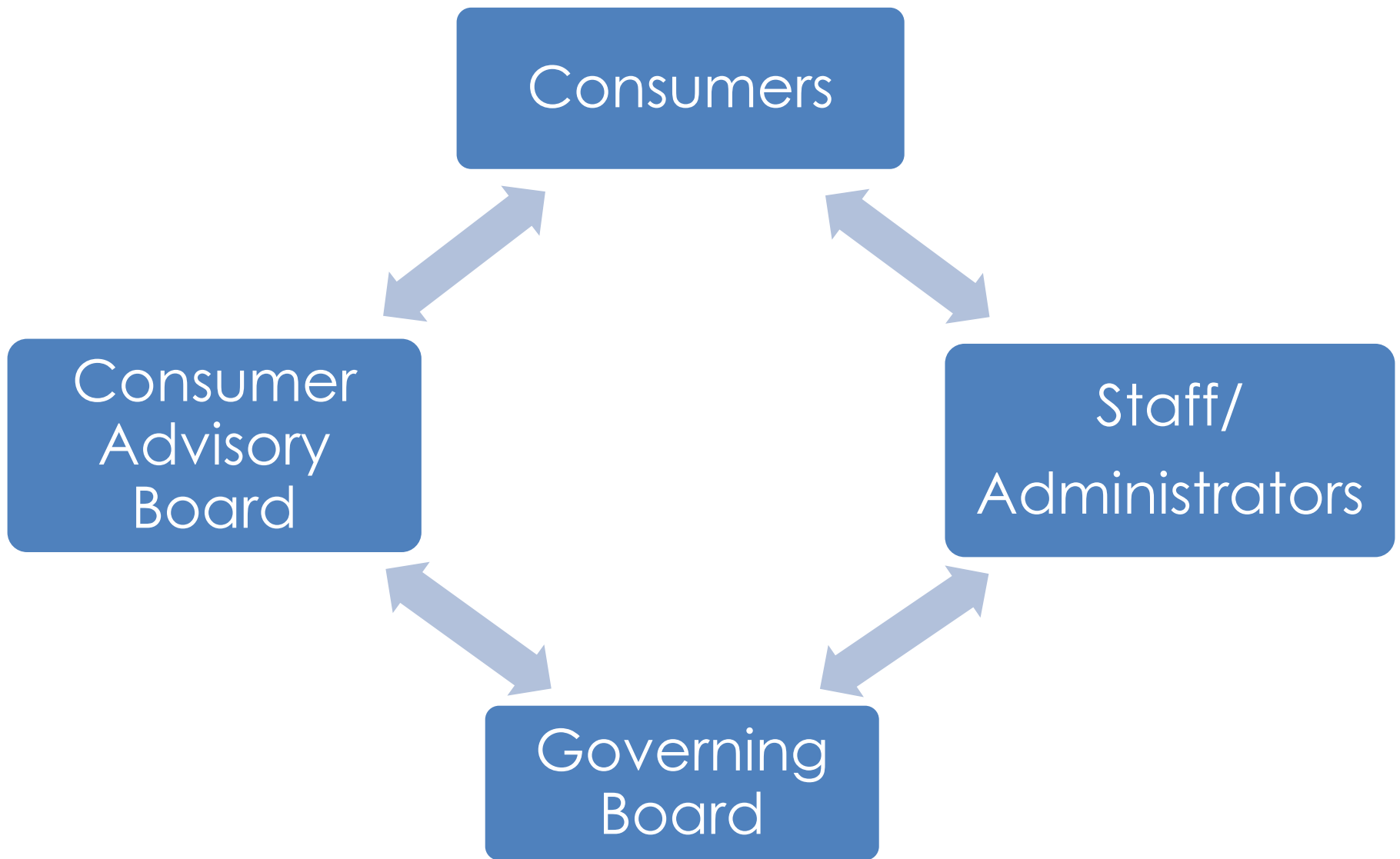
CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS

WHAT IS A CAB?

A group of homeless and/or formerly homeless individuals, advocates, providers, and community members brought together to improve services and delivery of care at their Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) project.

PURPOSE OF A CAB

- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Help the Center recognize its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in accomplishing its mission
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.
- Advocate for consumers with respect to services at the Health Center



CAB ACTIVITIES

HCH Services

- Reviews and recommends program services

Consumer Feedback

- Solicits and communicates suggestions and grievances

Education and Awareness

- Organize or speak at community events or forums

Policy

- Advocate throughout community for rights of consumers

CAB STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Name and
Purpose of
Board

Membership
and Terms

Officers and
Responsibilities

Meetings and
committees

Decision –
Making
Process

Code of Ethics

MEMBERSHIP

Important Questions

- Who is eligible for the CAB?
- How many members should be on the CAB?

Your CAB should reflect the diversity in your HCH community:

- People who are currently and formerly homeless
- People who currently or have used the clinic's services
- Recommendations from project staff and inclusive of all the project's services

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Consensus aims to find a proposal that all members can support and no member opposes. Consensus is not a majority vote. Consensus is based on compromise, and the ability to find common ground

Consensus requires:

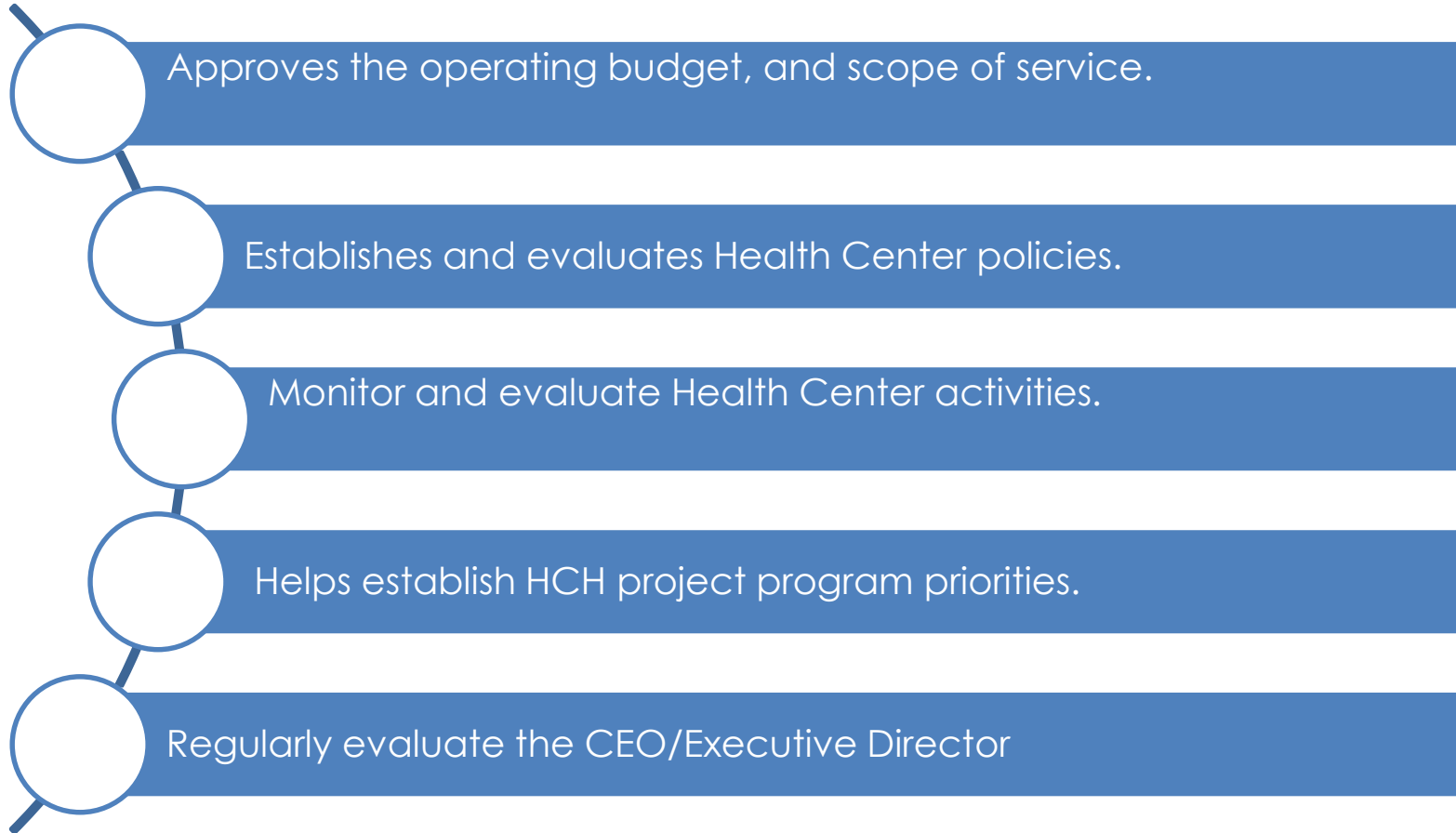
- time
- active participation of all members
- communication skills
 - listening, conflict resolution, discussion facilitation
- creative thinking and open-mindedness

ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE AT CAB MEETINGS

- Be mindful of task and process/relationship goals
- Summarize key points and clarifying understanding
- Set ground rules and guidelines for conduct
- Ensure all voices are heard
- Be aware of personal and group dynamics
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues
- Listen to understand, not to respond

CONSUMERS ON GOVERNING BOARDS

GOVERNING BOARDS



Governing Boards

Governing Board
makes decisions

Includes professional
experts, community
stakeholders and
sample of population
served

Advisory Boards

An Advisory Board
offers
recommendations
to decision-makers

Representative
sample of
population served

CONSUMERS IN GOVERNANCE

CONSUMER LEADER GUIDELINES

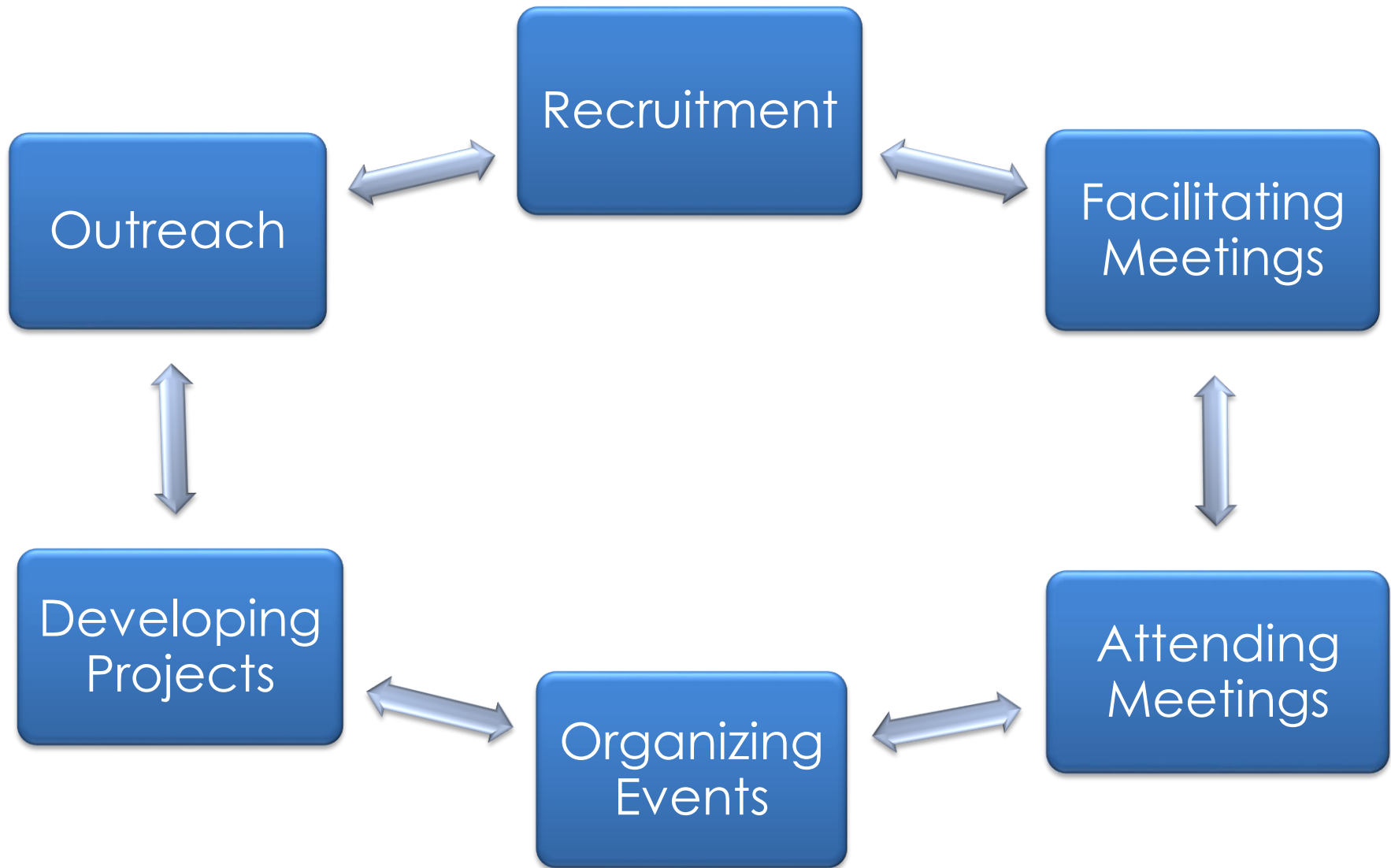
DO'S

- Know the HCH's mission, goals, programs and services
- Get all the information before making a decision
- Pitch in Enthusiastically
- Come to meetings prepared to participate

DON'TS

- Lose your sense of humor!
- Speak for anyone else
- Ask staff for special favors
- Hold grudges with other members based on voting

**CAB'S NOT ONLY PROVIDE SPACE
FOR CONSUMER INPUT BUT ALSO
OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO
DEVELOP SKILLS FOR ADVOCACY ON
PERSONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND
SOCIETAL LEVELS**



LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Interpersonal Skills

- Communication and Empathy
- Understanding and Cooperation

Creativity and Analytical Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Project Management and Delegation

Functional Knowledge

- Mission, Goals, Resource Management
- Strengths and Needs Assessment

PERSONAL GROWTH

- Empowerment through engaging with the decision making process
- Can increase confidence in our abilities to make a difference and affect change

PEER SUPPORT

- CAB's allow members to see the connection of their struggle with the struggles of others
- We can build on this empathy and understanding to better understand how we can support one another in the struggle

CHALLENGES TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Priorities of meeting basic needs
- Possible disengagement from systems
- Frustration with previous attempts to advocate
- Comfort telling your own story
- Overcoming stigma, fear and shame
- Education on policies, history and systems context

BENEFITS OF CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Authentic voices of those directly impacted

Facilitates direct conversation

Builds self-esteem, confidence, sense of worth

Instills sense of purpose and community

Demonstrates value of participation

Improves engagement with care and health

CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS FOR CABS

ONE MORE TIME.. WHY CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT?

- Honors the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness, consistent with the missions of HCH
- Grounds decisions in the realities of people experiencing homelessness based on real perspectives and information to improve services and service delivery
- Breaks down social barriers
- Satisfies funders and legal requirements

INTENTION, PLANNING, STRUCTURE, STAFFING, AND BUDGET ARE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct conversations with consumers and staff in developing the structure
- Create mechanisms for incorporating the CAB into the decision-making process
- Identify necessary organizational supports
- Gather feedback and ensure buy – in from all
- Implement and evaluate regularly

NECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS

- **Resources for meetings**
 - Consider transportation, meals, meeting space
- **Staff support**
 - Staff can share their knowledge, model trauma-informed behaviors and communication skills, and provide feedback
- **Space and resources for training**
 - Invite consumers to participate in organizational trainings or provide opportunities for clinicians to train consumers and share their skills

**CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS ARE
MEANT TO BE CONSUMER LED. IT IS
IMPORTANT FOR STAFF SUPPORT TO
GIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND SPACE
FOR CONSUMERS TO DEVELOP THEIR
OWN SKILLS, FACILITATE
DISCUSSIONS, AND ORGANIZE THE
GROUP.**

WAYS HCH PROJECTS CAN HELP CONSUMERS DEVELOP SKILLS

- Training
 - Communication, Conflict Resolution, Trauma Informed Care, Cultural Humility
- Mentoring/Peer Support
- Opportunities to practice skills
 - Organizing events, managing projects, leading groups
- Taking advantage of NHCHC resources and trainings

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

