

## **LCAO Governance and Procedures**

### **Name, Purposes, and Mission**

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the wellbeing of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

The purpose of the LCAO is to foster communication and resource sharing among its member organizations, to serve as a source of information about issues affecting older persons, to initiate joint advocacy strategies as appropriate, and to provide leadership and vision as America meets the challenges and opportunities presented by its aging society.

All members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations are dedicated to:

- advocating to strengthen both the public and private sector response to meeting the needs of America's older population;
- promoting thoughtful and rational policy changes where such changes are necessary, recognizing that state and local level activities are important both to the generation and implementation of public policy;
- seeking dialogue with leaders of both the public and private sector;
- working with all of society's institutions—political, social, economic, religious—to ensure that they welcome and support full participation by America's older population;
- working to ensure that no older person is a victim of discrimination based on age, gender, race, or ethnic origin; and
- recognizing the diversity of America's older population, which includes the most vulnerable and frail elderly in need of a range of services, as well as older persons who are contributing to their communities through work-related pursuits and volunteer service.

### **Membership**

Criteria for all membership: In considering applications for membership in LCAO, the following criteria will be taken into consideration:

1. The organization must have as a *primary* purpose the welfare of older persons.
2. The organization must be national in scope and/or membership and is expected to participate on an ongoing basis in LCAO activities. The organization must be willing and able to travel to Washington, DC as needed.
3. The organization must represent or be comprised of:
  - (a) older persons, OR
  - (b) individuals/groups whose primary function is to serve older persons, either directly or indirectly, OR
  - (c) individuals/groups whose primary function is to generate or advance knowledge of older persons and aging.
4. The organization must have an identified unit concerned with national policy affecting older persons.
5. The organization must be nonprofit, shall not be a sub-unit or affiliated entity of a for-profit enterprise, and the organization's membership must be composed predominantly of individuals or nonprofit organizations.
6. The organization must have been in existence for a minimum of 2 years and have an established track record with broad involvement in the field of aging.
7. The organization must have the independent authority to make policy decisions for itself and not for a coalition of organizations.
8. The organization must embrace the mission, purpose, and principles of LCAO, and will advance the mission of LCAO.
9. Members are required to pay \$200 annual dues.

**Procedure for Considering New Members:** Not less than twice per year the Membership and Governance Committee will assess the organizational makeup of the LCAO and consider whether to invite additional members who may help to enhance and advance the mission and goals of the LCAO. The Committee will be guided in the process by the approved criteria for membership. The committee shall determine, by a 60 percent vote of committee members, whether to recommend to LCAO the approval or disapproval of any organization for membership. LCAO members shall be notified of such a vote at least one week in advance.

**Procedures for approving members:** The Membership and Governance Committee shall present any recommendation regarding new membership to the LCAO at the first monthly meeting following its deliberation. LCAO shall determine by a 60 percent vote of members present and voting whether or not to approve the organization for membership.

**Roles and responsibilities of membership:** Upon accepting the invitation of membership and annually thereafter, LCAO members and prospective members who wish to be considered active members and have voting rights agree to:

1. Attend a minimum of half of all LCAO general meetings and at those meetings participate in discussions, contribute to consensus decision- making, and vote when necessary;
2. Be willing to sign on to public statements of LCAO policy, positions, principles and letters, although members may choose not to be so credited with respect to positions that they cannot support;
3. Serve on LCAO committee(s) and/or task force(s); and
4. Pay annual membership dues within 60 days of billing, currently at \$200/year.

Organizations that do not meet the above criteria (e.g. attend less than half of LCAO general meetings) can remain part of the coalition as "supporting" members subject to review and approval by the governance committee and payment of the annual membership dues. Supporting members do not have the power to vote for purposes of determining if there is sufficient support for sign on letters or letters from the Chair sent on behalf of the coalition. (See section below for procedures for these letters) Supporting members may still sign on to letters and participate in all LCAO activities.

The Chair shall review the participation of all members annually. An organization thus can on a yearly basis change from supporting member to full voting member by meeting the participation requirements above (i.e. attending at least half the meetings, signing on to a letter or principle, serving on a committee and paying dues).

While each organization has its own specific areas and issues of expertise and concern, it is expected that LCAO member organizations will support the broader spectrum of critical issues that impact the quality of life of people as they age.

### **Termination of Membership**

Organizations that have not paid dues within 60 days of billing are subject to termination. A notice shall be sent by the Secretariat alerting the organization that their membership status is in jeopardy. Organizations that have otherwise not met the responsibilities of membership also are subject to termination. Termination of an organization requires a vote of 60 percent of active LCAO members present and voting at the monthly meeting. LCAO members shall be notified of such a vote at least one week in advance.

### **LCAO Secretariat**

Any organization that has been a member of LCAO for a minimum of five (5) years, may serve as secretariat. It should be noted that there are considerable responsibilities and costs associated with this position. Organizations that wish to serve as a convening organization will be added to the end of the rotation list.

The roles and responsibilities of the LCAO secretariat include the following:

1. Taking and preparing meeting minutes;
2. Preparing and copying meeting agenda/handouts;
3. Making arrangements for speakers;
4. Sending/faxing alerts, draft letters, meeting information;
5. Organizing press conferences;
6. Maintaining LCAO roster;
7. Maintaining LCAO archives;
8. Maintaining and updating the LCAO website in a timely manner;
9. Handling all correspondence and calls (from and to LCAO);
10. Maintaining a media list;
11. Developing brochures, transition books, and policy documents;
12. Handling calls from the Hill in response to LCAO letters;
13. Providing money or up front costs for special events, e.g., receptions, briefings;
14. Billing membership dues at beginning of term;
15. Preparing a "Year in Review" report at the conclusion of term; and
16. Contacting members who are not meeting the responsibilities of membership.
17. Conducting an annual survey of members to assess the effectiveness of LCAO and to ascertain the level of interest that members have in specific policy issues.

The term of the convening organization shall begin at the conclusion of the meeting in June and conclude the following June.

Two months before the end of its term, the secretariat shall prepare a report on the participation of LCAO member organizations. This report will be forwarded to the Membership and Governance Committee for review and any necessary action.

### **Committees**

There currently are four standing committees: Health, Income Security, Community Services, and Governance. A new committee can only be added with the approval of 60 percent of LCAO members present and voting. Committees are empowered to manage the issues within their jurisdictions. All requests for LCAO letters and activities should be funneled through the appropriate committee, with the committee making a recommendation back to the full body.

### **Appointment of Committee Chairs:**

Each incoming LCAO Chair shall select individuals to chair each of the standing committees. To encourage maximum membership involvement, when feasible, Committee Chairs should not be persons representing one of the convening organizations. However, such a person may serve as a co-chair of a committee. The terms of the committee chairs shall coincide with the term of the LCAO chair.

### **Task Forces**

Task Forces are established to address specific time-limited issues or activities. They can be established at the discretion of the LCAO chair or by a 60 percent vote of LCAO members present and voting. The term of the Task Force shall coincide with the term of the current Convening Chair. However, the incoming chair can choose to continue the Task Force during his/her tenure.

### **Meetings**

LCAO meetings shall be held the first Wednesday of each month. The secretariat may change this with the approval of 60 percent of present and voting members. Rules of procedure in the meetings shall be those of Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition). The agenda for each LCAO meeting shall have time devoted to reports from the Committee and Task Force chairs.

### **Dues**

LCAO membership dues are currently \$200. Dues are billed annually by the Secretariat at the beginning of that organization's tenure as Secretariat. Dues are made payable and sent to the current Secretariat.

### **Sign on letters**

As a general rule, sign on letters are expected to originate from one of the LCAO committees. They are to be circulated to all LCAO members prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed. It is recognized that situations may arise that necessitate a timelier response and therefore a letter may, at the discretion of the LCAO chair, be circulated at the meeting or electronically.

LCAO letters that take a policy position and are accompanied by a list of endorsing organizations require approval by 40 percent of the total active LCAO membership. Although supporting members are not included in the determination of whether there is a sufficient number of organizations to send a letter on behalf of LCAO, supporting members may still sign on to a letter if they wish.

LCAO principles and letters sent "on behalf of LCAO," but not listing individual organizations, require approval of 60 percent of non-abstaining active members (non-vote is an abstention).

### **Voting**

Each active organization shall have one vote. A non-vote is considered an abstention. Supporting members do not have voting rights.

Changes in membership and governance rules and procedures require the approval of 60 percent of LCAO members.

*Approved June 2, 2010*

*Updated May 7, 2025*