

1234 ARKANSAS PEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY

I. Definition

The Arkansas Peer Advisory Committee (APAC) serves as a key resource for the Department of Human Services/Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DHS/OSAMH) on all matters related to Peer Recovery. The APAC will include members from the DHS Office of Recovery and up to fifteen (15) regional representatives. Regional representatives will be certified Peer Workers who have extensive knowledge and experience in Peer Recovery. The APAC will be responsible for evaluating and approving proposed Continued Education (CE) hours necessary for Peer Workers to receive accreditation.

II. Mission Statement

APAC unites the skills, passions, and experiences of Peer Workers through outreach and advocating for peer services to provide career and personal development to ensure the sustainability of the Peer Recovery profession.

III. Vision Statement

To be the subject matter experts for peer services while upholding the ethical responsibilities of peer support in the State of Arkansas.

IV. Bylaws

A. Duties of the APAC

1. Act as an advisory committee to DHS/OSAMH on all Peer Recovery related topics.
2. Approve CE hours to be used for certification and recertification of Peer Workers.

B. Membership

1. APAC is divided into five (5) regions, ensuring equal representation throughout each region of the state.
2. Up to three (3) representatives from each region shall serve as APAC members.
3. Each member must have an Advanced Peer Recovery Specialist (APRS) Certification under the Arkansas Model of Peer Recovery through the DHS approved accrediting entity.
4. Each member must work in the role of a Core Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) or higher.
5. APAC can waive the certification requirement for membership and accept a registered Core Peer Recovery Specialist if it is deemed by the committee that the Region lacks Certified Peer representation.
6. The positions of Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary shall be appointed by the DHS Office of Recovery.

C. Length of Term

1. Each region shall internally select a member to relinquish their seat annually, except when an individual has been a member for less than one (1) year due to a previous resignation.
 - a. This rotation of members occurs at the July APAC meeting each year.
 - b. A call for applicants begins two months prior to the end of the term for each region.

2. If a committee member steps down before the term ends, applications for their seat are opened immediately and are voted on at the following APAC meeting.

D. Attendance

1. Members are strongly encouraged to be at all scheduled meetings. If for some reason they are not able to attend a scheduled meeting, members must notify the Secretary no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting (if possible).
2. Absences are tracked by the Secretary. No member will be allowed to miss more than two (2) unexcused meetings within a calendar year beginning in January of each year. Excused absences are limited to:
 - Facilitating or attending peer trainings
 - Family, medical, or transportation emergencies
 - Previously scheduled vacations
 - Previously scheduled court appointments
3. Unexcused absences greater than two (2) will result in removal from the APAC regional seat.

E. Election and Appointment Procedures

The committee completes a vetting of each potential new member. The committee then completes a secret ballot stating whether they are voting yes or no for the potential member. The Secretary then counts the votes, and the Chair announces the results of the voting at the meeting. If multiple applicants apply, whoever receives the highest majority of “yes” votes will be awarded the seat. In the event of a tie, the DHS Office of Recovery, by way of the Chair, will break the tie with a “yes” vote of an applicant.

F. Officer Duties

1. Chair
 - a. Call regular meetings.
 - b. Attend and preside over meetings.
 - c. Review and approve final agenda and previous meeting minutes before distribution to members.
 - d. Share all available information with committee members to allow them to make an informed recommendation to the DHS Program Director.
 - e. Ensure succession process for members is followed.
2. Co-Chair
 - a. Attend all meetings.
 - b. Will be responsible for all Chair duties in the event the Chair is unable to attend the meeting.
3. Secretary
 - a. Create an agenda for all meetings.
 - b. Record all minutes.
 - c. Submit draft of minutes to Chair for approval within one (1) week after the meeting.
 - d. Provide committee members with approved minutes no later than two (2) weeks after the meeting.

- e. Track membership absences and report any attendance violations to the Chair for review and consultation.
- f. Track membership rotation and notify Chair no later than two (2) months prior to a seat becoming vacant.
- g. Other duties required by the Chair.

G. Meetings

1. The APAC meets every two months for a total of six (6) meetings per calendar year. APAC meetings are scheduled for two (2) hours and may run shorter or longer depending on the agenda. Meetings are held on the second (2nd) Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m.
 - a. Three (3) meetings are in person. Those meetings are in January, May, and September each year.
 - b. Three (3) meetings meet virtually. Those meetings are in March, July, and November each year.
2. The Chair may call a special meeting at any time with at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice.
3. Quorum will be set at sixty (60) percent of voting members. No voting can take place if there are not at least sixty (60) percent of voting members in attendance for the meeting.

H. Voting

1. Each regional seat has one (1) equal vote.
2. DHS/OSAMH represents one (1) vote. This group only votes in the event of a tie.
3. Any other attendee of APAC is considered as a non-voting member.
4. These guidelines apply to voting within APAC subcommittees.
5. Certifying votes:
 - a. APAC seat applications must be passed by a unanimous vote. These are proposed via a secret ballot.
 - b. All other decisions must be passed by a majority vote.
 - c. Proxy voting is done by email.

I. Amendments

Any amendments to the by-laws must be brought to the committee to be discussed as a group and passed unanimously.

V. Regions

- A. Region One consists of the following counties: Benton, Boone, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison, Marion, Newton, Pope, Searcy, Sebastian, Scott, Van Buren, and Washington Counties
- B. Region Two consists of the following counties: Baxter, Clay, Cleburne, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, White, and Woodruff Counties
- C. Region Three consists of the following counties: Conway, Faulkner, Grant, Hot Spring, Jefferson, Lonoke, Perry, Pulaski, Saline, and Yell Counties

- D. Region Four consists of the following counties: Calhoun, Clark, Columbia, Dallas, Garland, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Polk, Sevier, and Union Counties
- E. Region Five consists of the following counties: Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Lee, Lincoln, Monroe, Phillips, Prairie, and St. Francis Counties

VI. APAC Continued Education Subcommittee

A. Purpose

This subcommittee aims to uphold the Arkansas Peer Recovery Program credential standards by evaluating continued education for skill development, education, training, knowledge, and proficiency, therefore providing Peer Workers in Arkansas with the best possible training to assist them in developing necessary skills to thrive.

The Continued Education Subcommittee will be composed of volunteers currently serving as members of APAC. This stipulation is intended to ensure that individuals engaging in subcommittee work have a foundational understanding of the APAC's objectives and responsibilities. By limiting volunteer participation to those who are current APAC members, DHS aims to enhance the effectiveness of the subcommittees while maintaining a cohesive framework for collaboration and decision-making within the committee.

This subcommittee must comprise a minimum of three members. If voluntary membership falls below this threshold, a representative from DHS or the DHS-approved accrediting entity may be permitted to serve as an additional member to ensure sufficient participation. This provision is designed to promote effective functioning and continuity within the subcommittee, allowing it to fulfill its responsibilities even in circumstances of diminished membership.

B. Application Process

Individuals/agencies seeking approval for a training/conference are required to complete an application from DHS. The application must be complete and include all required documents. Applications must be submitted to DHS a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the date the training/conference will take place and then are distributed to the subcommittee for approval. The subcommittee then reviews the submission and votes accordingly. Once a decision has been reached, DHS will contact the applicant. If a submission is approved, it will be noted in the APAC meeting minutes and added to the approved APAC continued education list.

C. Evaluation of Continued Education

1. Education Criteria

- a. Information presented is relevant to the Arkansas Peer Recovery Program.
- b. Training/Conference provides education consistent with peer scope of work.
- c. Training/Conference provides education consistent with peer ethics.
- d. Training/Conference presenter is knowledgeable of the Arkansas Peer Recovery Program and information to be presented.

2. Voting Procedure

- a. Each subcommittee member reviews submissions to determine if the submission meets the criteria and votes accordingly.

- b. Votes can be submitted in writing or in person.
- 3. Notification of Decision
 - a. If approved by the subcommittee, DHS is notified of the decision and DHS notifies the applicant of the decision.
 - b. If denied, DHS will notify the applicant of the decision and include an explanation for the denial.
- D. Appeals
 - 1. Eligibility to Appeal

Any individual or entity directly affected by a decision made by the APAC Education Subcommittee may appeal.
 - 2. Grounds for Appeal
 - a. Appeals must be based on one or more of the following grounds:
 - 1. Procedural errors occurred during the APAC Continued Education Subcommittee evaluation.
 - 2. New information has come to light that was not originally presented with the original application.
 - 3. Submitting an Appeal
 - a. Appeals must be submitted to DHS to notify APAC.
 - b. The written appeal should include:
 - 1. The name and contact information of the appellant.
 - 2. A clear statement of the decision being appealed.
 - 3. The specific grounds for the appeal.
 - 4. Any supporting evidence or documentation.
 - 4. Review of Appeal
 - a. The appeal is reviewed by DHS and APAC which consists of members not involved in the original decision.
 - b. DHS acknowledges receipt of the appeal within ten (10) business days of receiving.
 - 5. Hearing
 - a. APAC may hold a virtual hearing to gather additional information or to allow the appellant to present their case.
 - b. Appellants are notified of the date and time of the hearing at least seven (7) business days in advance.
- E. Decision Process
 - 1. DHS and APAC decide based on the review of the appeal and any hearings conducted.
 - 2. The decision is communicated to the appellant in writing within thirty (30) business days of the appeal submission.
 - 3. If training occurs before the appeal hearing takes place and appeal is granted, APAC will acknowledge approval of CE submission.
- F. Finality of Decision
 - 1. The decision made during any hearing by DHS and APAC is final and binding.

2. There are no further appeals allowed following the decision of DHS and APAC.

G. Documentation

All records related to the appeal and approval processes will be documented and retained according to organizational policies.

H. Confidentiality

All evaluations and related proceedings are handled according to organizational policies to protect the privacy of those involved.

I. Pre-Approved Continued Education List

After ensuring programs meet the criteria for CE credit under the Arkansas Peer Recovery Program requirements, the Continued Education Subcommittee may propose to the APAC certain events and vendors for inclusion on a pre-approved CE program list. The APAC will evaluate the programs and if approved, the events and vendors will be added to the pre-approved CE list, which is maintained and regularly updated by the subcommittee. The list is published quarterly to ensure that individuals in the peer recovery field have access to relevant and high-quality educational opportunities that support their professional development.