

Policy and Procedure for Democratic Selection of Consumer Sector Board Members:

Background:

In order to keep its designation as a Community Action Agency (CAA) and to receive Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding, a CAA must comply with the requirements of the federal CSBG Act, which requires that the organization be governed by a tripartite board. Specific requirements of the CSBG Act can be found at 42 U.S. Code section 9910. In March 2005, the Federal Office of Community Services (OCS) issued Information Memorandum No. 82 (IM 82) to provide OCS's interpretation of some of the CSBG Act's board requirements and recommendations on how CAAs can meet those requirements. The intent of this policy is to fully comply with the requirements of the CSBG Act and IM 82.

It is not sufficient for the CAA board (or its nominating committee) alone to choose low-income sector (referred to as Consumer Sector in our by-laws) representatives. There must be some low-income community involvement in the selection process. Low-income sector board members should not be staff of another organization providing services to low-income people unless they are somehow democratically selected by members of the low-income community.

Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.'s by-laws require the Board of Directors to approve a policy and procedure for the democratic selection process of Consumer sector board members. This policy may be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the agency and its low-income constituents without necessitating an amendment to the by-laws.

Policy:

In accordance with ARTICLE IV, Section 5.2 of the by-laws, at least one-third of the Directors shall be representatives of low-income individuals. Consumer Sector Directors shall be appointed by the board in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that the individuals selected represent the low-income population in Cortland County. One seat is allotted to Head Start Policy Council.

Procedure:

Consumer Sector Directors may be selected to serve on the Board of Directors through any of the following three (3) selection procedures, either separately or in combination, at the discretion of the Board Development committee.

- (1) Selection at a meeting or conference of low-income persons where date, time, and place have been adequately publicized. Notice of such meetings shall be made public via free widely distributed media, such as Penny savers, and various other methods, including announcements at agency service locations. A record of attendance at such meetings shall be maintained, including a statement by attendees indicating that they consider themselves to be persons of low-income. Individuals who reside in our service area and are interested in serving on the board shall be given the opportunity to explain to the attendees the basis on which they consider themselves qualified to represent low-income families on the board. Attendees will, by vote, select an individual to serve on the board. Following selection, the Board Development

committee may, at their discretion, meet with the individual to fully explain the role and responsibilities of board service prior to recommendation to the full board for ratification.

- (2) Selection of a representative of the Head Start Policy Council. One seat in the Consumer Sector is reserved for a representative of the Policy Council. The Head Start Policy Council, which is comprised of at least 51% elected adult members of currently enrolled Head Start families, shall elect a representative to serve on the board. Following selection, the Board Development committee may, at their discretion, meet with the individual to fully explain the role and responsibilities of board service prior to recommendation to the full board for ratification.
- (3) Selection may be accomplished via a petition process whereby a low income resident or a representative is nominated by other low-income residents to serve on the board. A low-income resident or representative interested in serving on the board may submit a petition including the signed endorsement of not less than 20 low-income residents to the nominating committee for consideration. The petition form shall include a statement indicating that the individual interested in serving on the board is a resident of Cortland and that the individual considers him/herself to be a person of low-income, or a representative for the low-income community. The petition form shall also include a statement indicating that the endorsement signatures are of residents who consider themselves to be persons of low-income. The Board Development committee may, at their discretion, meet with the individual to fully explain the role and responsibilities of board service prior to recommendation to the full board for ratification.

All Directors selected for membership on the Board of Directors must be ratified by a resolution of the full board following a review by the Board Development committee to ensure that the individuals meet all of the CSBG Act's requirements.

Pertinent documentation shall be maintained in the board member's file to provide evidence of compliance with these procedures.