



New York Children's Action Network

Operating Guidelines

I. Purpose

New York CAN is a broad-based coalition that brings together a wide range of coalitions, organizations and individuals concerned about issues affecting children and families with the goal of elevating the importance of supporting all children in New York State. The coalition's mission is to provide a unified and powerful voice to improve the lives of all New York's children, youth and families through the promotion of adequate resources and changes in policies and practices.

The coalition will employ the following principles in order to realize its vision that New York State provide every child an opportunity to become a healthy, educated, productive, and responsible adult:

- Promote accountability and action through non-partisan advocacy.
- Advance alternatives by developing state policy and funding strategies that are child, youth, and family friendly.
- Work collaboratively with others toward the common goal of improving the lives of children in New York.

II. Membership

New York CAN membership is open to any coalition, organization, or individual in New York State who shares the coalition's interest in the well-being of children and youth. The coalition offers a choice of membership levels so that no organization or individual is excluded from participation based upon their ability to pay.

Members are asked to support the coalition's advocacy agenda, to allow their name to be listed in various New York CAN documents and on the New York CAN web site, and to list their membership in New York CAN where possible including on their organization's web site.

III. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the full coalition. The Steering Committee will coordinate the work of the individual committees and will represent the coalition to the public. In addition, the Steering Committee's role is to assure that all actions taken by the coalition, its committees and individuals when acting in the name of the coalition are in the best interests of children and the coalition as a whole. The Steering Committee members will

include the co-chairs of each standing committee of the coalition, the convening organization's staff representatives, and others who are chosen for their expertise but are not committee chairs.

The Steering Committee members will select Co-Chairs for the Steering Committee. The Co-Chairs will also serve as moderators for the Coalition. The Co-Chairs will each serve staggered two-year terms and may be re-elected. The Steering Committee may invite up to eight additional people to become members of the Steering Committee who are not committee chairs. These members will be invited to participate based upon their expertise and the needs of the coalition. At least three Steering Committee members will represent child/youth/family driven organizations.

IV. Issue Committees

The Coalition will have various issue area committees as needed to represent the range of children's issues and concerns. These committees may include but are not limited to Zero to Five, Children's Health, Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare, Economic Security, Education, and Youth. Other committees may be established as needed on a temporary basis or as a standing committee.

All New York CAN committees are asked to meet in person and/or by phone a minimum of three times per year. New York CAN's vision, mission, guiding principles and goals will guide each committee's work and decisions. Each committee will keep the Steering Committee and convening organization informed of its actions and activities.

V. Chair Persons

Each committee will elect its own co-chairs who will preside over all committee meetings and will represent their committee on the Steering Committee. The co-chairs will oversee the meeting preparation and all correspondence on behalf of the committee.

Co-Chairs will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected. It is highly preferable that at least one of the co-chairs for each committee be located in Albany.

VI. Meetings of the Coalition

Meetings of the full coalition will be held on an as need basis with at least one full membership meeting per year. Meetings are open to members and non-members. Visitors may attend any meeting but may not vote.

VII. Voting

Each New York CAN member will have one vote. Decisions will be approved by a simple majority of members present and voting. New York CAN Legislative Agenda items will be brought before the full coalition based upon recommendations from the issue area committees and after approval of

the Steering Committee. Legislative agenda items must be approved by a two-thirds vote of those present

Decisions may be made by the coalition without a meeting if a majority of the members consent in writing, including electronic mail and telefax, authorizing the action.

VIII. Roberts Rule of Order

The Coalition and all New York CAN Committees will operate under Robert's Rules of Order.

IX. Confidentiality

In order to have a full and open discussions at meetings, persons attending meetings are asked not to attribute comments made by specific individuals when discussing the decisions or content of the meeting.

X. Conflict of Interest

If at some point an individual, organization, or coalition needs to have its name removed on any document or for some duration in time due to a difference with the coalition's position, that person or organization should submit such a request in writing to the convening group (SCAA) to be forwarded to the Steering Committee.

Members are asked to not publicly oppose any position adopted by the network. If they cannot do so they are asked to notify the Steering Committee.

XI. Amendments

These operating guidelines may be amended by a majority vote by coalition members at a regularly scheduled meeting.