



Establishing and Maintaining a Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB)

Benefits of a LEAB

Lived Experience Advisory Boards (LEABs) offer agencies and organizations serving unhoused individuals and families an informed and representative perspective for service provision. LEABs are intended to guide the development, implementation, and execution of policies and services at a local level, to improve coordination and service outcomes.

Implementing a LEAB will:

- ▶ Center the perspective and expertise of those with lived experience to guide decision-making and strategic planning on issues directly impacting the community
- ▶ Foster professional and personal development amongst LEAB members
- ▶ Shift the narrative about houselessness; equates someone's lived experience as expertise
- ▶ Provide an opportunity for service provision improvements

Best Practices for For Forming a LEAB

Based on extensive research including both quantitative and qualitative data, the following are recommended best practices for forming a LEAB.

- ▼ **Provide a Baseline Structure of Governance**
 - ▶ Create a stable yet amendable baseline structure via a Charter. Charter must be flexible enough to allow for amendments as LEAB members see fit
 - ▶ Charter should include a mission statement, dedicated seats for subpopulations, leave room for subcommittees, and establish a quarterly reporting schedule
 - ▶ Hire a paid staff to act as liaison between the City/CoC and the LEAB
- ▼ **Establish Flexible and Stringent Rules and Regulations**
 - ▶ Rules regarding attendance, participation, and self-identification should be established but remain lenient
 - ▶ Rules around interpersonal conduct pertaining to safety, opportunity, and inclusion should be more direct; e.g. codes of conduct and harassment policies
- ▼ **Membership Should be Diverse & Representative**
 - ▶ Accept open call applications and request nominations by service providers
 - ▶ Seriously consider nominations by providers and conduct trauma-informed vetting processes for board members
 - ▶ Recruiting a diverse group of members should be the goal (including but not limited to BIPOC, disabled, families, LGBTQ+, older adult, youth)
 - ▶ Size of the Board should be reflective of that diversity

- ▼ **Provide Board Member Compensation**
 - ▶ Provide monthly stipends for LEAB members in the form of Visa gift cards. The amount should consider livable wage according to jurisdiction.
 - ▶ Provide transportation support
 - ▶ Provide technology as needed to facilitate member participation
- ▼ **Establish One-Year Term Commitments**
 - ▶ Implement one-year commitments to ensure sustainability, stability, and trust amongst members.
 - ▶ One-year commitments can inspire greater member investment as well as foster strong rapport and relationships internally within the Board, and externally, with stakeholders.
- ▼ **Provide Opportunities for Professional and Personal Development**
 - ▶ Membership in LEAB should involve mentorship, support, and professional and personal development opportunities
 - ▶ Members should be offered relevant and ongoing training throughout their tenure
- ▼ **Get Buy-in from Leadership**
 - ▶ Support from CoC Board members and City leadership is imperative

Other Opportunities for LEAB Participation

- ▼ Provide opportunities for LEAB members to present at City Hall and other community events
- ▼ LEAB members to conduct site visits to shelters and other service provider facilities to ensure accountability of services
- ▼ LEAB members to lead trainings for service providers & outreach workers regarding compassionate response in service provision as well as learning to identify accurate needs of unhoused individuals

Sources & Additional Resources

Abas, A., Broder, H., Horshin, M., Michel, A., and Sakaguchi, Y., Rep. *Creating a Lived Experience Advisory Board for the City of Long Beach Homeless Services Bureau*, 2022.

"Resources to Form a Lived Experience Advisory Board." Lived Experience Advisory Board. Accessed May 7, 2022. <https://leabsv.org/resources/>.

"SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for Trauma-Informed Approach." (2014). SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4884.pdf>