

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Economic Opportunities Commission

Board Member Orientation
2017



Alexandria's Economic Opportunities Commission



- History of the EOC
- Community Action Agency Overview
- Office of Community Services Overview
- By Laws and Policies
- All Hands on Deck

Economic Opportunity Act of 1964



Signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on August 20, 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was a critical step in Johnson's War on Poverty and Great Society program. The landmark legislation mobilized federal, state and local resources in an effort to combat conditions of abject poverty that plagued urban and rural communities for generation after generation. The objective was to help the poor by enabling them to pull themselves from the grip of poverty.

Economic Opportunities Commission



The EOC was created by the Alexandria City Council in 1966 and organized under City Ordinance 2436. The Code of Virginia and the Alexandria City Charter specify that the Commission be comprised of

- One third elected public officials or their representatives
- One third from the target population
 - One third from the private sector.

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Community Action Agency



The EOC serves as the commission to Alexandria's Community Action Agency and advises the Alexandria City Council, the Virginia State Legislature, and the Virginia Congressional delegation about legislative matters and issues affecting low-income households.

The Community Action Promise



Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Community Action Agency



Programs stress self help, self reliance and developing solutions to problems in partnership with the low-income community.

Through education, advocacy and direct service programs, Community Action aspires to eliminate barriers to self sufficiency, meet basic needs and ensure every individual has the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.

The Office of Community Services Mission Statement



The Office of Community Services believes that people can be empowered to stabilize their economic crises and improve their overall well-being.

Through compassion, dedication, and expertise we partner with individuals, families, and community organizations by providing crisis intervention, prevention, case management services, advocacy, and community coordination to improve the quality of life for at-risk populations living in the City of Alexandria

The Office of Community Services



The Office of Community Services' (OCS) programs target populations such as individuals and families experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of becoming homeless, individuals transitioning back into the community from institutions, TANF and former TANF recipients, as well as the low-income community in general.

Community and Emergency Services



- Short-term rental and utility assistance,
- Limited prescription assistance,
- Case management services,
- Rent Relief Program,
- Information and referral to community resources, medical clinics, mainstream benefit programs (TANF, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, SNAP, State Energy Assistance).

Homeless Prevention and Services



- Homeless prevention programs,
- Coordinated Assessment/ Homeless Services Assessment Center (HSAC),
- Security Deposit assistance,
- Eviction Storage assistance,
- Emergency child care for families experiencing homelessness,
- Diversion/Prevention Case Management,
- Administration of contract operations and service delivery at the Alexandria Community Shelter and Winter Shelter.

Funding



The EOC has no budget itself, and its members are appointed and serve on a voluntary basis.

Funding for OCS's programs and staff come from a variety of federal, state, and local sources.

- The Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Local general funds
- Leveraged funds from faith-based community
- Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG & HOME)
- Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care funding

Economic Opportunities Commission

By-Laws and Policies

Role of Economic Opportunities Board



Since 1968, local community action agencies have been required to have tripartite governing boards to gain and retain designation as eligible entities and to receive CSBG funding.

Effective tripartite boards reflect and promote the unique anti-poverty leadership, action, and mobilization responsibilities assigned by law to community action agencies.

Boards are responsible for assuring that agencies continue to assess and respond to the causes and conditions of poverty in their community, achieve anticipated family and community outcomes, and remain administratively and fiscally sound.

Community Services Block Grant Organizational Standards



- Category One: Consumer Input and Involvement
- Category Two: Community Engagement
- Category Three: Community Assessment
- Category Four: Organizational Leadership
- Category Five: Board Governance
- Category Six: Strategic Planning
- Category Seven: Human Resources Management
- Category Eight: Financial Operations and Oversight
- Category Nine: Data and Analysis

Consumer Input and Involvement



- Low-income individual's participation on the board, volunteer hours, and participation on other councils
- Annual reporting on customer satisfaction
- Approval of Community Assessment (every 3 years)

Community Engagement



- Document the number of volunteers and hours of services for each board member
- Annual report to the board on activities done by OCS as it related to community engagement annually

Community Assessment



- OCS and EOC conducts a Community Needs Assessment. Current data specific to poverty (qualitative and quantitative)
 - Demographic information
 - Key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty
 - Needs of community
- The Community Needs Assessment is presented to the board and requires board approval. (every 3 years)

Organizational Leadership



- Approve of OCS's Mission Statement (every 5 years)
- Board receives annual update on the success of specific strategies included in the Community Action plan
- Board assists with the interviewing of Director of Office of Community Services

Board Governance



- Establishment of By-Laws and signature (every 2 years)
- Conflict of Interest Policy (every 2 years)
- Board Training on duties and responsibilities
- OCS provides programmatic quarterly reports for board approval

Board Member Responsibilities



- Attend all board meetings, committee meetings, participate in decision-making and policy setting.
- Read materials and minutes, make sure your vote is recorded.
- Read agency literature. Participate in community needs assessment and strategic planning.
- Report at each meeting any volunteer hours you completed

Voting



- A quorum, which shall be at least fifty (50) percent of the non-vacant seats on the Commission, certified by the City Clerk, shall be required for the full Commission to transact business.
- Robert's Rules of Order

Strategic Planning



- The City of Alexandria develops the Strategic Plan, which is approved by the board. (every 5 years)
- OCS updates annually on progress made in meeting identified goals

Human Resources Management



- Whistle Blower Policy
- Board provides annual evaluation feedback on the Director of the Office of Community Services

Whistle Blower Policy



The purpose of this Administrative Regulation is to adopt a policy of the City of Alexandria that encourages whistleblowing by employees reporting in good faith a violation of any law, rule or regulation or gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, and that prohibits retaliation against City employees for engaging in any protected whistleblowing activity.

Financial Operations and Oversight



- Board receives financial reports quarterly
- Board formally receives and approves City audit
- Board approves of OCS budget annually
- Board reviews written procurement policy (every 5 years)

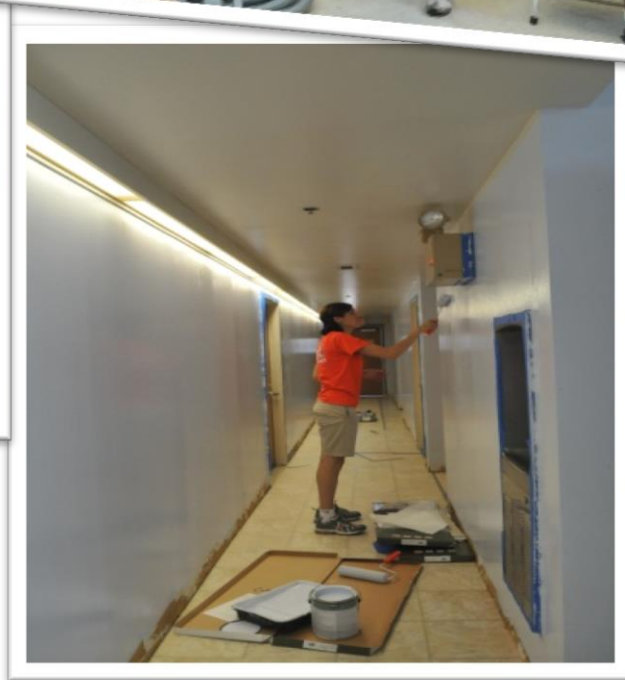
Data and Analysis

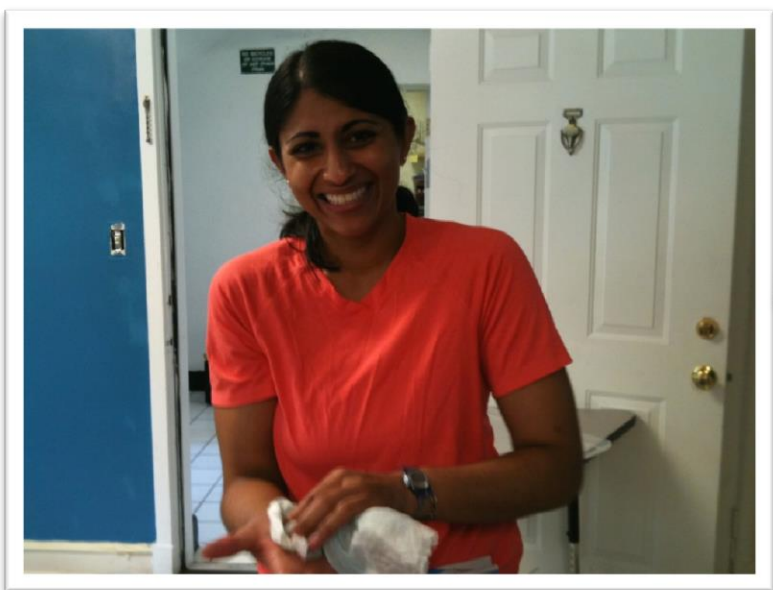


- OCS presents annual analysis of agency's outcomes and any operational or strategic adjustments.
 - Point in Time Count
 - CSBG Annual Demographic Report
 - Censuses data

Economic Opportunities Commission

All Hands On Deck





All Hands on Deck



- In 2011, the EOC initiated "All Hands on Deck," an annual community-wide project to perform a makeover of a local nonprofit facility. The first "All Hands on Deck" project focused on the Alexandria Community Shelter, the City's shelter for homeless individuals, which is managed by the nonprofit New Hope Housing.



- In 2012, the EOC membership painted the Learning Center at Community Lodgings, Inc., a transitional housing program for those experiencing homelessness.



- In 2014, the EOC researched and prepared a report titled “Ex-Offender Reentry and Employment. The report distributed to local and state legislators and advocates. After the release of the report, the Alexandria City Manager adopted a recommendation of the report, specifically by removing the “prior conviction” question from most job application (exceptions include safety positions and jobs interacting with children).