

**LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL****Criminal Justice Advisory Committee  
Bylaws****ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of the Committee shall be the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC).

**ARTICLE II - AUTHORITY**

The CJAC is hereby created by the LRGVDC under the authority of the LRGVDC Bylaws. The CJAC shall furnish policy guidance to the LRGVDC Board of Directors and shall recommend programs to reduce crime and improve the Criminal Justice System throughout the region.

**ARTICLE III - FUNCTIONS OF COMMITTEE**

The CJAC shall carry out the following:

1. Participate and or review the LRGVDC Strategic Plan to reduce crime and improve the Regional Criminal Justice System.
2. Maintain a continuous planning program to identify criminal justice problems, determine regional needs, analyze existing Criminal Justice Systems and available resources; and establish goals and priorities.
3. Act as a catalyst in the development of new services and provide information and programs to create more realistic approach toward criminal justice issues.

The LRGVDC is a liaison for the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (CJD). The CJAC is a subcommittee of the LRGVDC Board of Directors. The CJAC's function is to prepare Regional Criminal Justice Plans. The Regional Criminal Justice Plans are a compilation of local grants that will bring the most benefit to their communities in the area of crime prevention, victim services, juvenile justice delinquency, law enforcement technology, and law enforcement training. The CJAC scores and prioritizes grant applications submitted to CJD. Recommendations are then sent to the LRGVDC Board for review and approval. Funding sources under the CJAC Committee are;

- General Victim Assistance - *Direct Services Programs*;
- Violent Crimes Against Women Criminal Justice and Training Projects - *Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and Stalking*;
- Criminal Justice Programs; and
- General Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Programs.

**ARTICLE IV - PROCEDURES, MEMBERSHIP, AND RECORDS**

The following rules shall govern the procedures, membership, and records of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC).

**Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the CJAC in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the CJAC may adopt.

**Officers**

The officers shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Parliamentarian/Secretary. The election for the officers shall be conducted at a regularly scheduled CJAC meeting and approved by the LRGVDC Board of Directors biennially.

Officers will serve a two (2) year term which will begin November 1<sup>st</sup>. These officers shall constitute the CJAC Executive Committee. Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties shall each have a representative on this committee.

In the event of the Chairperson's vacancy, the Vice Chairperson will ascend to Chairperson and the Parliamentarian/Secretary will ascend to Vice Chairperson thus creating a vacancy of Parliamentarian/Secretary who will be nominated from the corresponding county. In order to ascend officers must attend all meetings.

In the event that neither the Vice Chairperson or the Parliamentarian/Secretary accept the automatic ascension to Chairperson, nominations of CJAC members who have served for two (2) or more years on the CJAC may be submitted and voted into office by members.

**Membership**

Total CJAC membership shall be twenty-eight (28) persons appointed for a term of two (2) years by the LRGVDC Board of Directors. No single group/discipline may not constitute more than one-third (1/3) of the CJAC *and must be a representative of the three (3) counties.*

The CJAC membership must have a multi-disciplinary representation of members from the region. The CJAC's membership must include individuals from the following groups/disciplines:

- citizens or parents
- substance abuse prevention
- education
- juvenile justice
- law enforcement
- mental health
- nonprofit organizations
- prosecution/courts
- victim services

The CJAC's members' terms will begin November 1<sup>st</sup>. Vacancies shall be filled by the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee to complete an unexpired term as a replacement from the same county, not to exceed the (1/3) membership rule. All persons nominated by the CJAC shall be submitted for approval to the LRGVDC Board of Directors. LRGVDC staff shall offer an annual CJAC training for members, new members and assigned alternate/proxy. An Ex-Officio Liaison will be appointed by the LRGVDC Board of Directors as a liaison to the CJAC with no voting powers. A signed Biennium Commitment Statement will be included as a requirement of all CJAC members before they can participate in any official proceedings. This acknowledgement will be signed biennially by all CJAC members and will explain the Two (2) Consecutive Absences rule.

#### Professional Conduct

CJAC members should maintain objectivity and professionalism when carrying out business of the CJAC. In the event a CJAC member acts in a manner which is not objective or professional, it shall be the responsibility of the LRGVDC Board of Directors to address the incident with the appointing member of the LRGVDC Board of Directors.

#### Vacancy

A vacancy occurs when:

1. A member's term expires and the member is not reappointed;
2. A member resigns (resignations shall be in writing to the LRGVDC staff and the CJAC Chairperson);
3. A member may be removed upon recommendation of three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the CJAC's quorum;
4. A member no longer meets the discipline requirements as listed under membership or attendance; or
5. A member dies.

#### Alternates

- 1) CJAC Member shall name up to two alternates at the time they sign the Biennium Commitment Statement.
- 2) Alternates shall, insofar as possible, represent the same functional discipline as primary Criminal Justice Advisory Committee members subject to applicable regulations and guidelines outlined in Article III (Memberships) of these bylaws.
- 3) Only primary Criminal Justice Advisory Committee members or their designated alternates shall have voting privileges during any committee meeting.
- 4) Prior to any scheduled CJAC meetings the primary member must provide training to their alternate(s).
- 5) During the grant priority process alternates cannot have voting privileges unless the alternate(s) was present during the grant category that is being presented.

Voting

- 1) Each member of the CJAC or his/her alternate shall have one (1) vote.
- 2) Each member or his/her alternate must be present to cast a vote.
- 3) The Member or Alternate who is present at rollcall shall be the only one authorized to vote on any action items for that meeting.
- 4) For the prioritization meeting(s), the Member or Alternate who is present at rollcall shall be the only one authorized to vote on any action items for that category.

Officers Duties

- a. The Chairperson shall preside at all CJAC meetings.
- b. In the absence of the Chairperson the Vice Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson or in the event of the Chairperson inability or refusal to act, shall have the powers of, and shall perform the duties of the Chairperson.
- c. In the absence of both Chairperson and Vice Chairperson the Parliamentarian/Secretary shall assume the duties of the Chairperson. The Parliamentarian/Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, minutes of the meetings and the records of the CJAC; attest the signatures of the CJAC officers; certify orders or matters of the minutes of meetings; and see that notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or required by law.

Quorum for Business

The quorum for transaction of any business shall be fifty-one percent (51%) of the voting membership present.

Attendance

**Consecutive Absence Rule.** Members who fail to attend two (2) consecutive meetings shall be subject to removal from the CJAC. After the first absence, the LRGVDC staff will notify the CJAC member to advise him/her of the two (2) Consecutive Absence Rule. On the second consecutive absence, the member will be notified by regular and electronic mail to inform him/her of the attendance provision. After the second consecutive absence, a member will be subject to removal, and a letter, signed by the LRGVDC Executive Director will be sent to the member informing him/her of their possible removal. The member will be allowed to appeal to the membership subcommittee their removal from the CJAC. The membership subcommittee will make a recommendation on the appeal to the CJAC at the next scheduled meeting. Throughout the entire process, the LRGVDC staff will keep the LRGVDC Board of Directors informed by providing updates on the Criminal Justice Division Status Reports.

An absence from any subcommittee meeting is exempt from the Consecutive Meeting Absence rule.

Meetings

Regular meetings will be held to review and modify the bylaws, policy manual and membership for a new grant cycle, for a training session regarding scoring procedures prior to new grant cycle, and to prioritize grant applications set forth upon receipt of the CJD's grant application schedule. Special meetings will be called to orient new members about the function of the CJAC and to address other business that the CJAC deems necessary. The Chairperson shall announce the meeting and provide written notice of the date, hour, place and subject of the meeting via the LRGVDC staff. This notice will be submitted electronically and at least (72) hours in advance of the meeting date. This notice shall be submitted at least (72) hours in advance of the meeting date, in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. When specifically authorized by a majority of the CJAC members, the CJAC may conduct business via conference call and/or electronic transmissions, with any actions taken by the CJAC being placed on the next regularly scheduled meeting for ratification by the board.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the staff of the LRGVDC Criminal Justice Department.

Temporary Subcommittees

The Chairperson of the CJAC shall be responsible for the designation of the membership of any standing and temporary subcommittees as may be required from time to time. Standing subcommittees shall be created to improve the quality of service provided by the CJAC.

The subcommittees are comprised of the following categories:

**Membership Subcommittee** which will be assigned with:

- 1) Reviewing and recommending new appointments to the CJAC;
- 2) Review and recommend nominees to the Executive Board; and
- 3) If a member appeals their removal from the CJAC based on the consecutive absence rule, the committee will consider the appeal and make the recommendation to the CJAC board.

**Bylaws Subcommittee** which will be assigned with reviewing and recommending any revisions of the bylaws on an annual basis.

**Policies and Procedures Subcommittee** which will be assigned with reviewing and recommending any revisions the policies and procedures on an annual basis.

**ARTICLE V - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THESE BY-LAWS**

The following rules shall govern the procedures for the adoption and amendments of the bylaws contained herein.

**Adoption of Amendments**

These bylaws may be adopted by the Board of Directors of the LRGVDC. An Amendment to these procedures may be proposed by a majority vote of the CJAC present and voting. A proposed amendment passed by the CJAC shall be submitted for approval to the LRGVDC Board of Directors one week prior to a regular monthly meeting of the LRGVDC Board of Directors.

*Disclosure: Bylaws implemented at the local level can only be superseded by the State of Texas, Criminal Justice Division guidelines.*