

# ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE

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# GOALS OF THE WORKSHOP

- Discuss the importance of, and various ways of incorporating consumer feedback into HCH governance
- Describe Consumer Advisory Boards (CABs) and how they not only are a tool for feedback but also an opportunity to develop leaders
- Discuss aspects of consumer advocacy

# WHY CONSUMER FEEDBACK?

Help decision-makers understand the needs and experiences of consumers from the consumer point of view.

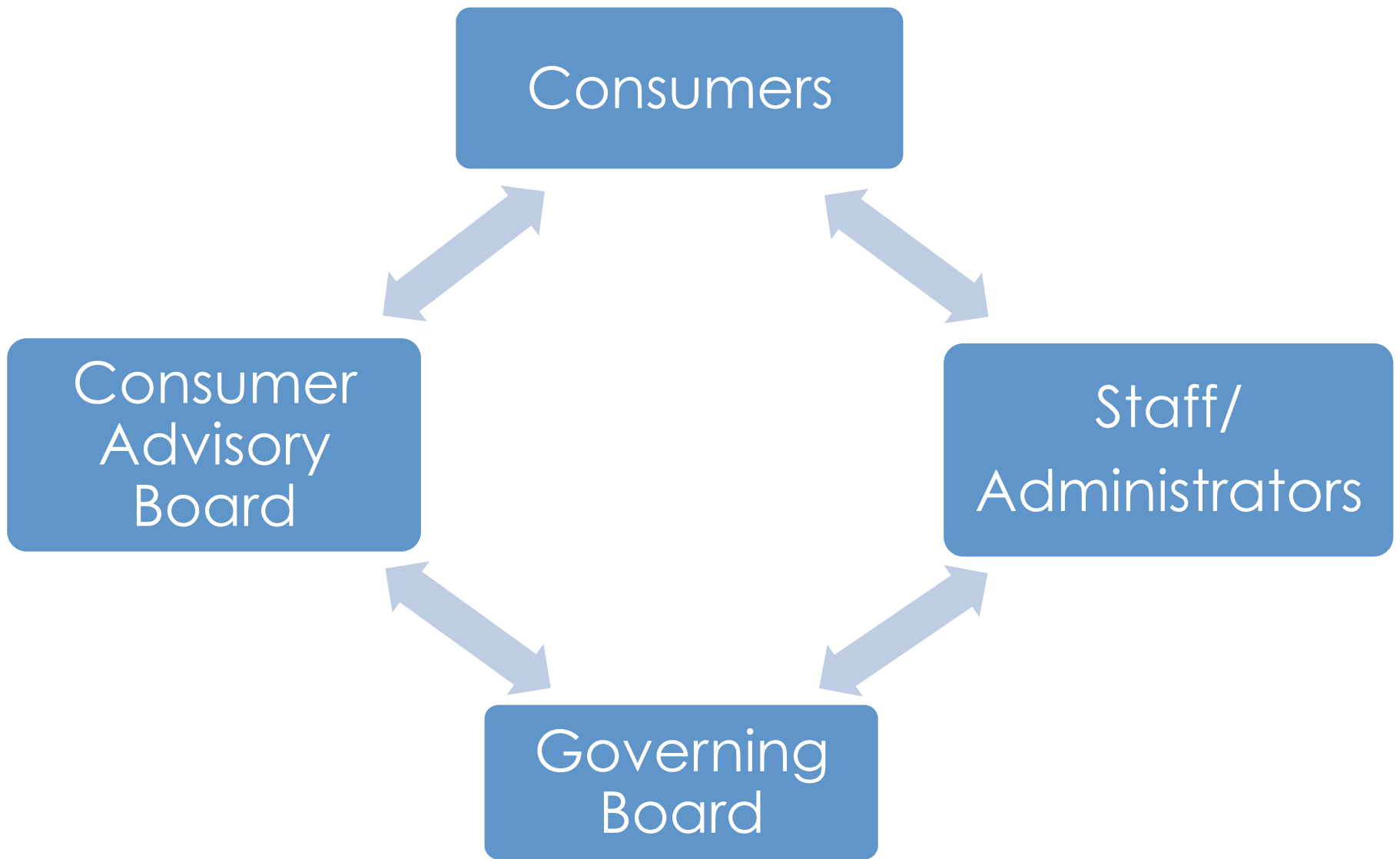
# FEDERAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS THAT AFFECT HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROJECTS

## Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act:

- The governing board is composed of a majority of individuals being served by the center
- If your health center is a 330(h), or HCH center, waivers to the “consumer” majority rule can be requested, but consumer participation in governance is still required.

# WAYS TO FACILITATE CONSUMER FEEDBACK

- Conduct consumer satisfaction surveys
- Create regular focus groups
- Include consumers or former consumers on the project's governing board
- Create a separate Consumer Advisory Board



# WHAT IS A CAB?

A group of homeless and/or formerly homeless individuals, advocates, providers, and community members brought together to improve services and delivery of care at their Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) project.

# PURPOSE OF A CAB

- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Help the Center recognize its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in accomplishing its mission
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.
- Advocate for consumers with respect to services at the Health Center



# CAB ACTIVITIES

## HCH Services

- Reviews and recommends program services

## Consumer Feedback

- Solicits and communicates suggestions and grievances

## Education and Awareness

- Organize or speak at community events or forums

## Policy

- Advocate throughout community for rights of consumers

# CAB STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Name and  
Purpose of  
Board

Membership  
and Terms

Roles and  
Responsibilities

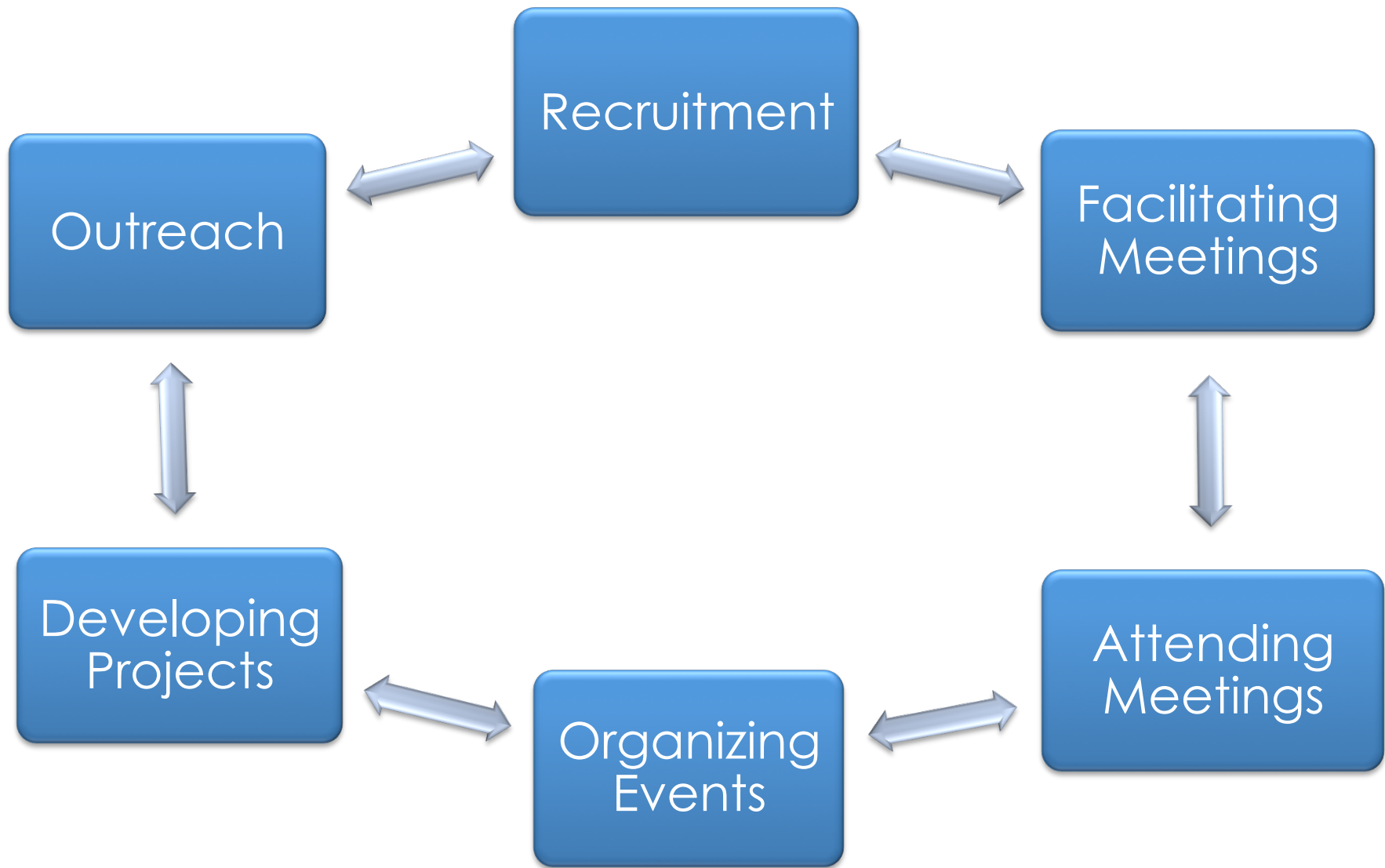
Meetings and  
committees

Decision –  
Making  
Process

# ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE AT CAB MEETINGS

- Be mindful of task and process/relationship goals
- Summarize key points and clarifying understanding
- Set ground rules and guidelines for conduct
- Ensure all voices are heard
- Be aware of personal and group dynamics
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues
- Listen to understand, not to respond

CAB'S NOT ONLY PROVIDE SPACE  
FOR CONSUMER INPUT BUT ALSO  
OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
DEVELOP SKILLS FOR ADVOCACY  
ON PERSONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL,  
AND SOCIETAL LEVELS



# LEADERSHIP SKILLS

## Interpersonal Skills

- Communication and Empathy
- Understanding and Cooperation

## Creativity and Analytical Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Project Management and Delegation

## Functional Knowledge

- Mission, Goals, Resource Management
- Strengths and Needs Assessment

# PERSONAL GROWTH

- Empowerment through engaging with the decision making process
- Can increase confidence in our abilities to make a difference and affect change

# PEER SUPPORT

- CAB's allow members to see the connection of their struggle with the struggles of others
- We can build on this empathy and understanding to better understand how we can support one another in the struggle



KEY SKILL  
=  
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

# FUNDAMENTALS: PERSONAL EXPRESSION

- **Understand the purpose and intent of your message.**
  - Know who you are communicating with, or to.
  - Ask yourself what outcome you want to achieve and the impression you want to leave.
- **It's not always what you say, but how you say it.**
  - Watch your tone. Make eye contact. Be aware of your body language.
- **Aim for understanding, not agreement.**
  - Once you give your message, be open to feedback
  - Ensure your message has been received as intended and you resolve any questions or concerns

# FUNDAMENTALS: ACTIVE LISTENING

- Listen to understand – not to respond.
- Don't interrupt or cut the speaker off.
- Give them your full attention.
- Ask clarifying questions if you need.



# DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Disagreements will and should happen

- Don't react – respond
- Respect others opinions and feelings
- Remember the goals
- Work to find common ground
- Don't personalize

# WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy simply means speaking up for  
your rights!

# SELF ADVOCACY

- Self-advocacy refers ability to maneuver within a system in order to achieve your own interests, desires, needs, and rights
- Examples include:
  - proving you deserve assistance benefits
  - getting housing systems to respond to you
  - maintaining your space on wait lists for services
  - advocating for services that meet your needs in a manner you are comfortable with

# SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

Systems advocacy occurs when individuals call for social change to the systems that are difficult or

Advocacy represents the strategies devised, actions taken and solutions proposed to influence decision-making in order to create positive change for people and their environment.

# WHY IS ADVOCACY IMPORTANT

- Changes attitudes and misconceptions
- Hold service providers and systems accountable and ensure transparency in their actions
- Helps individuals and communities regain control
- Recognition of the rights of people
- Ensures people's voices will be heard



# IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING CONSUMERS IN ADVOCACY

- Real Life Experience + Knowledge = Credibility
- Intense awareness of injustice and the issues that impact them
- Strong desire and need to be heard, seen, and respected

# YOUR STORY IS THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL YOU HAVE

- Real experiences humanize the academic/policy/bureaucratic explanations
- Challenge stereotypes and misconceptions to change public perception
- Draw awareness to the socio-economic policies and practices that cause/ exacerbate problems

# CHALLENGES TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT WITH ADVOCACY

- Priorities of meeting basic needs
- Possible disengagement from systems
- Frustration with previous attempts to advocate
- Comfort telling your own story
- Overcoming stigma, fear and shame
- Education on policies, history and systems context

# BENEFITS OF CONSUMER ADVOCACY

- Authentic voices of those directly impacted
- Facilitates direct conversation
- Builds self-esteem, confidence, sense of worth
- Instills sense of purpose and community
- Demonstrates value of participation
- Improves engagement with care and health

# QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

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