

# CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS: CREATING EFFECTIVE INTERNAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

# PRESENTERS

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This workshop focuses on how a consumer advisory board (CAB) and a governing board can enhance consumer engagement and leadership in governance on behalf of consumers of the HCH project and in the community.

Different models for CABs and governing boards will be discussed, including real-life challenges and achievements.

We will also discuss how organizations can provide support to ensure the effectiveness of consumer engagement.

# IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMERS ON ADVISORY AND GOVERNING BOARDS

*“The only way to affect change in policy is to be part of the conversation”*

- Help decision-makers understand the needs of consumers from the consumer point of view.
- Monitor HCH project performance and challenge decision-makers to consider consumer-driven options for health care delivery.
- Increase consumer confidence in making a difference
- Keep governing boards focused on the needs of the special population that homeless and formerly homeless consumers represent.



# 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 REPRESENTATION

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

# CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS

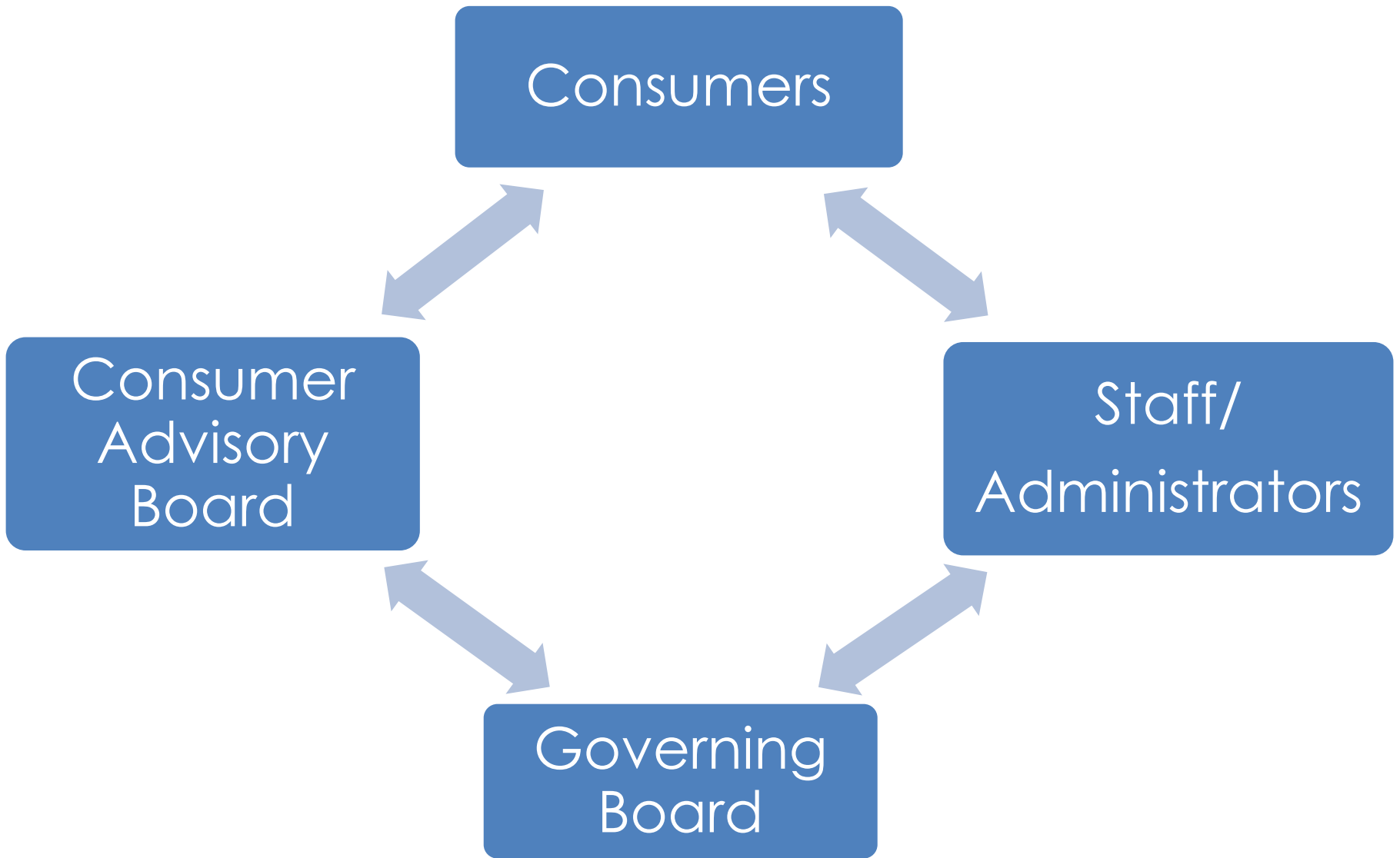
# WHAT IS A CAB?

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

Officers and  
Responsibilities

Meetings and  
committees

Decision –  
Making  
Process

Code of Ethics

# MEMBERSHIP

## Important Questions

- Who is eligible for the CAB?
- How many members should be on the CAB?

Your CAB should reflect the diversity in your HCH community:

- People who are currently and formerly homeless
- People who currently or have used the clinic's services
- Recommendations from project staff and inclusive of all the project's services

# CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Consensus aims to find a proposal that all members can support and no member opposes. Consensus is not a majority vote. Consensus is based on compromise, and the ability to find common ground

Consensus requires:

- time
- active participation of all members
- communication skills
  - listening, conflict resolution, discussion facilitation
- creative thinking and open-mindedness

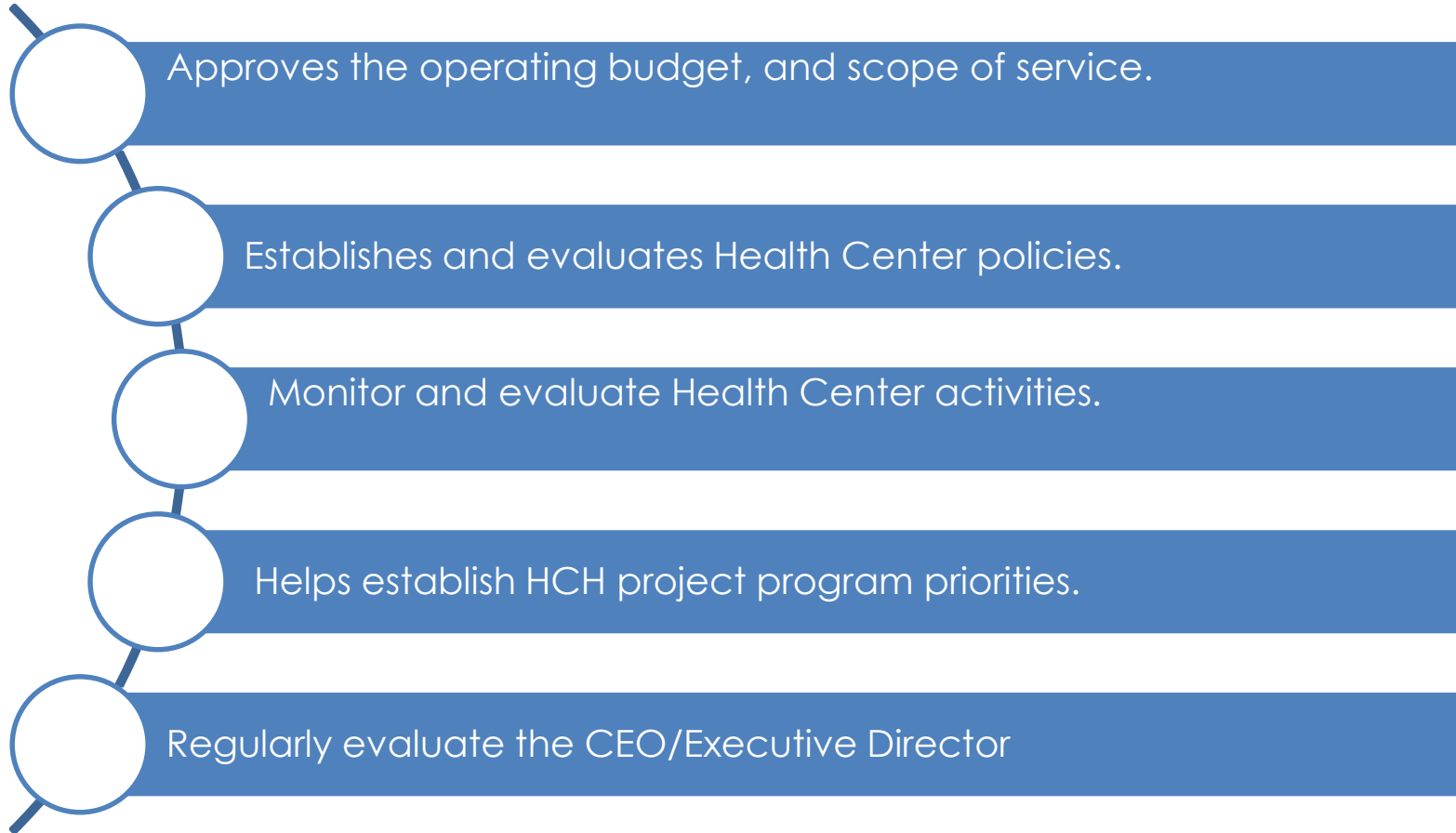
# ENGAGING THE CONSUMER VOICE AT CAB MEETINGS

- 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

# CONSUMERS ON GOVERNING BOARDS



# GOVERNING BOARDS



## Governing Boards

Governing Board makes decisions

Includes professional experts, community stakeholders and sample of population served

## Advisory Boards

An Advisory Board offers recommendations to decision-makers

Representative sample of population served

# CONSUMERS IN GOVERNANCE

# CONSUMER LEADER GUIDELINES

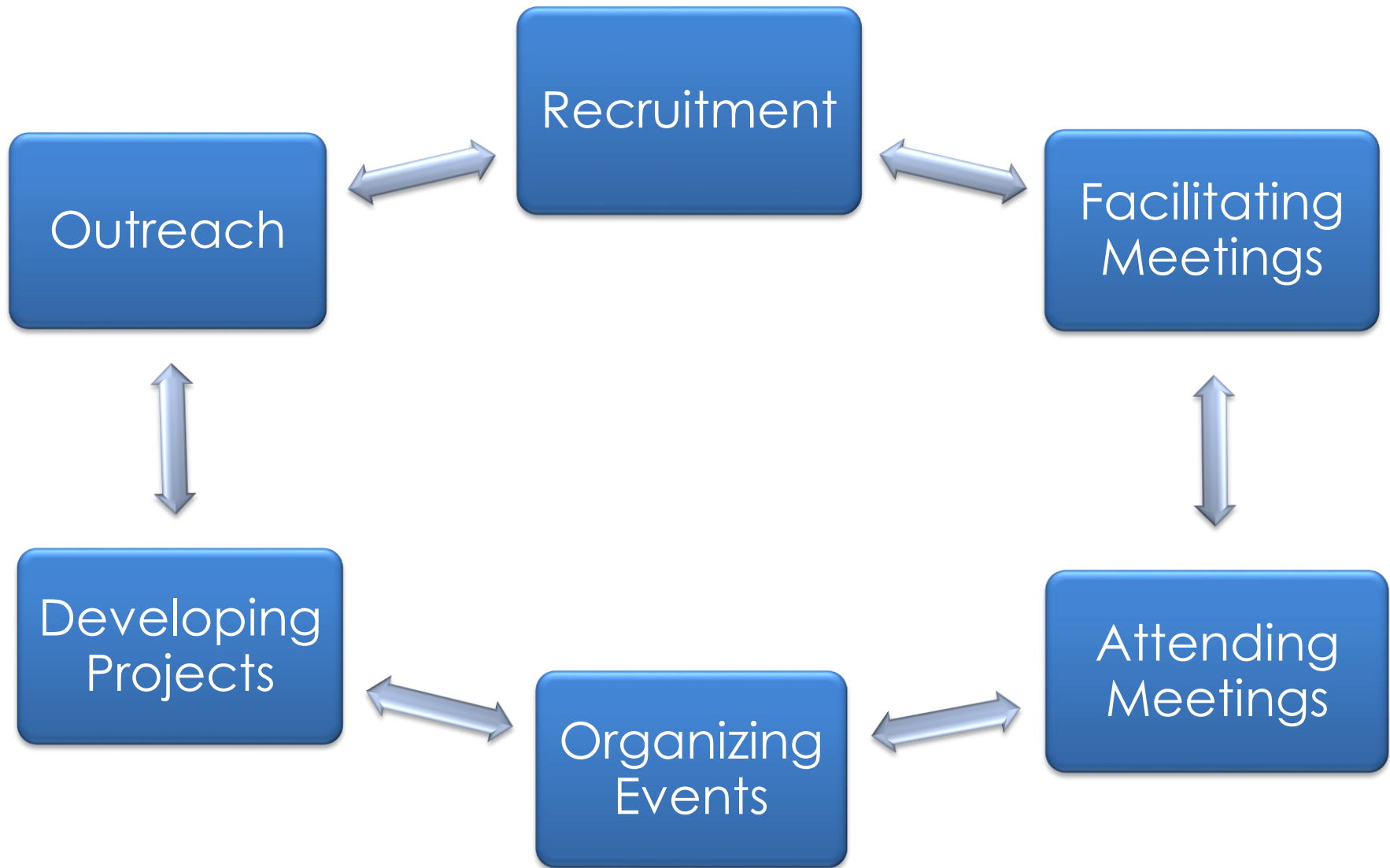
## DO'S

- Know the HCH's mission, goals, programs and services
- Get all the information before making a decision
- Pitch in Enthusiastically
- Come to meetings prepared to participate

## DON'TS

- Lose your sense of humor!
- Speak for anyone else
- Ask staff for special favors
- Hold grudges with other members based on voting

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

# CHALLENGES TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- 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 ENGAGEMENT

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

# CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS FOR CABS

# ONE MORE TIME.. WHY CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT?

- Honors the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness, consistent with the missions of HCH
- Grounds decisions in the realities of people experiencing homelessness based on real perspectives and information to improve services and service delivery
- Breaks down social barriers
- Satisfies funders and legal requirements

# INTENTION, PLANNING, STRUCTURE, STAFFING, AND BUDGET ARE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct conversations with consumers and staff in developing the structure
- Create mechanisms for incorporating the CAB into the decision-making process
- Identify necessary organizational supports
- Gather feedback and ensure buy – in from all
- Implement and evaluate regularly

# NECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS

- **Resources for meetings**
  - Consider transportation, meals, meeting space
- **Staff support**
  - Staff can share their knowledge, model trauma-informed behaviors and communication skills, and provide feedback
- **Space and resources for training**
  - Invite consumers to participate in organizational trainings or provide opportunities for clinicians to train consumers and share their skills

CONSUMER ADVISORY BOARDS  
ARE MEANT TO BE CONSUMER  
LED. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR STAFF  
SUPPORT TO GIVE OPPORTUNITIES  
AND SPACE FOR CONSUMERS TO  
DEVELOP THEIR OWN SKILLS,  
FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS, AND  
ORGANIZE THE GROUP.



# WAYS HCH PROJECTS CAN HELP CONSUMERS DEVELOP SKILLS

- Training
  - Communication, Conflict Resolution, Trauma Informed Care, Cultural Humility
- Mentoring/Peer Support
- Opportunities to practice skills
  - Organizing events, managing projects, leading groups
- Taking advantage of NHCHC resources and trainings

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

