

Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. s. 300x-3, the federal government has required that each state establish a mental health planning council. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), through the block grant has encouraged states to combine both mental health and substance abuse into one application. The same rationale has been applied to the Planning Council. In light of this, Florida has taken the opportunity to bring both substance abuse and mental health to the Planning Council.

In the U.S. Code, the planning council is given three duties:

- To review the block grant plan, and to submit any recommendations for modification to the state;
- To serve as an advocate for adults with a serious mental illness, children with a severe emotional disturbance, and other individuals with mental illness or emotional problems; and
- To monitor, review, and evaluate not less than once each year, the allocation and adequacy of mental health services within the state.¹

The composition of the Planning Council is to include:

- The principal state agencies for mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation, criminal justice, housing, social services, and the agency responsible for the development of the state Medicaid plan;
- Public and private entities concerned with the need, planning, operation, funding and use of mental health and related support services;
- Adults with serious mental illnesses who are, or have received, mental health services; and
- Families of consumers.²

Additionally, the membership is to be balanced such that parents of children with serious emotional disturbances is adequate to provide representation; and not less than 50 percent of the membership are neither state employees nor service providers.³ There is no additional statutory, regulatory, or administrative guidance as to the function, frequency, or operation of the planning council.

Florida's Planning Council will represent the voice of the consumer. This provides an opportunity for consumers, former consumers, and their families to participate in the process.

To provide a basis for Florida's Planning Council, the following guidance is developed as to the operation, form, and function of the council. For the Department, this will be supported by the implementation of an operating procedure, to generate sufficient institutional capacity.

This guidance shall supersede all prior Department or planning council documents.

¹ 42 U.S.C. s. 300x-3(b).

² 42 U.S.C. s. 300x-3(c)(1).

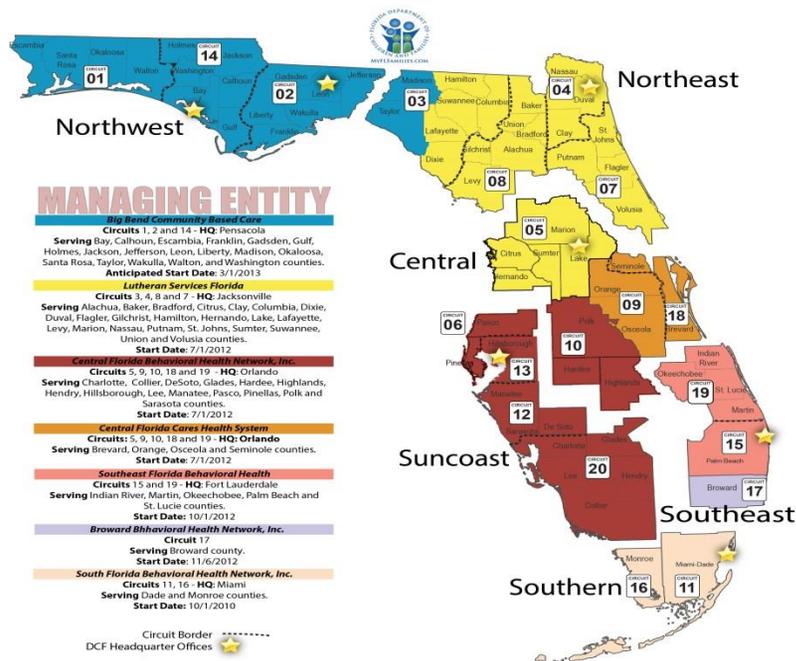
³ 42 U.S.C. s. 300x-3(c)(2).

Membership and Composition

To allow the Planning Council to be effective, and meet the statutory requirement, membership will be comprised of the following:

- Two members per managing entity area, representing consumers and their families;
- Members from the statutorily required participants of state agencies;
- Members from statewide advocacy organizations; and
- A Department representative.

The following map shows the managing entities that have contracted with the Department for the administration and management of behavioral health services in Florida.



As of July 1, 2013, there are seven managing entities in Florida. Because these agencies are the Department’s vehicle to implement the block grant, the regional composition of the Planning Council is based on this geographic division of the state.

Managing Entity	Members
Big Bend Community Based Care	2
Lutheran Services Florida	2
Central Florida Cares Health System	2
Central Florida Behavioral Health Network	2
Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network	2
Broward Behavioral Health Coalition	2
South Florida Behavioral Health Network	2

Members from statewide advocacy organizations, may include:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness Florida (NAMI)
- Mental Health America (MHA)
- Peer Support Network Coalition of Florida
- Voices and Choices

- Youth M.O.V.E.
- Disability Rights Florida
- Florida Council for Community Mental Health (FCCMH)
- Florida Partners in Crisis (FLPIC)
- Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA)

Member Selection

Membership is by application, with approval from the executive committee within the Planning Council. The applications can be located as attachments I and II to this guide.

Membership shall be for a period of three years, with the opportunity to renew for an additional three year term, upon approval by the executive committee of the council and the Director.

The executive committee will be selected by membership through a voting process with final approval through the Director. The executive committee members shall serve for two years, and shall be selected from the self-identified consumer and family membership of the council. The executive committee shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. The Department representative will serve on the Executive Committee as a nonvoting member.

No officer shall serve in the same office for more than two consecutive terms, a term being two years.

The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council and perform all such duties relative to the office including duties in the volunteer agreement.

The vice-chair shall act as chair in the absence of the chair. In the event of resignation, incapacity, or death of the chair, the vice-chair shall serve as chair until the Council elects a new chair. The vice-chair shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the chair.

The secretary shall be responsible for assuring that minutes of meetings, attendance records, official correspondence and transactions of the Council are prepared, and maintained. In the event the chair and vice-chair are absent, the secretary shall preside.

For representatives of the principal state agencies for mental health, education, vocational rehabilitation, criminal justice, housing, social services, and the agency responsible for the development of the state Medicaid plan – the Department will maintain a list of the person who represents this agency at each of the meetings.

Under no circumstances will the Department post the personal details of members online. However, it should be noted that the Department operates in compliance with ch. 119, F.S., and as such any written correspondence may be requested under the sunshine law.

All members must sign the Volunteer Agreement form, which is part of the application. If a member cannot fulfill their duties as outlined in the Volunteer agreement form, their seat may be terminated by the Chair or Director. If a member of the council cannot maintain their membership, they may submit in writing, a withdrawal of service to the Chairperson and Director.

Meetings

The primary duty of the council is to review the plan, and to monitor the allocation and adequacy of funding. To achieve this, the council shall meet in person at minimum twice a year. Additional meetings shall be subject to the annual appropriation. The meetings shall be held in:

- January or February– in Tallahassee, FL. To allow the council to participate in the Legislative process.
- August – in Orlando, FL. This will be prior to the annual FADAA conference.

The Department will fund the travel expenses for the members of the council, excluding state agencies, for the purposes of meeting. This will be done in accordance with the statutory and regulatory provisions that oversee state employee travel. To make sure that consumers and their families are able to travel, the Department will make arrangements.

In addition to the in person meetings, the Department will arrange either phone or video conference meetings.

The executive committee, led by the Chair, shall establish the agenda, and ensure that members have the opportunity to raise issues that they would like to see addressed. The agenda will be distributed by the Chair at least seven days ahead of the meeting.

Minutes will be provided following the meeting, as will answers to any questions raised. These will be posted on the Department maintained website.

Regional Monitoring

For a council member to complete their responsibility of council representation, they must be willing to travel within their managing entity's catchment area. This will be to meet with managing entity staff, attend meetings, visit with providers, and advocate for consumers.

To ensure that this does not become a burden, the Department will reimburse regional travel, based on mileage. This will be subject to the annual appropriation.

Training for this will be provided by both the Department and other council members. The Department will also provide letters of introduction for members who would like them. The purpose of regional monitoring will be to ensure that there is consumer representation at the managing entity level.

To ensure the effectiveness of this, the executive committee and Director shall establish performance outcomes, and the scope of monitoring for the period of the chair's term.

The Department will develop a reporting template for members that would like guidance for this task.

General Provisions

- The council shall not be permitted to represent that their membership allows them to expend Department resources.
- The Department shall oversee any expenditure related to the council, and will manage this within the annual appropriation. The fund source shall be expense, which means that there shall be no contracts entered into.
- The Department shall ensure that council members are afforded sufficient time to review and comment on the draft plan each year.