



VOICES OF OUR YOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL BYLAWS



Antelope Valley Community Council Bylaws

1. OVERVIEW

Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) has established the Guidance Council (GC) to adhere to the organization's policies. Membership is exclusive and by invitation only. The Bylaws, developed with input from members, guide decision-making and conflict resolution for the betterment of Antelope Valley communities.

2. VISION STATEMENT

At Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC), we unite to enhance the welfare of children, families, veterans, and communities in the Antelope Valley. With a focus on inclusivity and collaboration, we address pressing issues through transparent communication and proactive solutions, aiming to create a flourishing community for all.

3. MISSION STATEMENT

Coming Soon! Waiting on input from VOYCC members.

4. HISTORY

The Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) was founded with the goal of uniting community members to advocate for positive change. We are dedicated to addressing the critical issues in our community through effective communication and solution-driven practices. Our vision is to create a better future for all.

At VOYCC, collaboration and community are at the heart of our approach. We have assembled a team of passionate individuals with diverse perspectives who are committed to making a difference. By joining forces, we can amplify our voices and work towards sustainable solutions that benefit everyone. Together, we aim to build a more equitable, prosperous, and secure future for generations to come.

5. MEETING AGREEMENTS

At Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) gatherings and events, we prioritize the importance of respecting human dignity and cultural awareness. Our main goal is to strengthen community bonds to achieve our mission.



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During our meetings, we agree to:

- Respecting everyone's time is essential, so please be punctual for our meetings. Let's make sure we allow one person to speak at a time and keep our comments concise to ensure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts.
- It's important to leave personal emotions aside when speaking and practice open-minded listening. Let's respect each other's opinions, even if we disagree, and use respectful body language and tone of voice during our interactions.
- We should also be mindful of cultural beliefs and values and consider the intent and impact of our words and actions on others. Let's evaluate how our actions benefit the community and strive to make a positive difference.
- In this safe space, we prioritize open and respectful communication, leaving aside titles, badges, and hierarchies. Comments and discussions are encouraged without fear of retribution, irrespective of one's position or title.
- Remember to silence your phones and excuse yourself if you need to take a call during our meetings. Please keep your comments focused on the topic at hand to ensure a productive conversation.
- Lastly, let's enjoy the process and use this opportunity to foster new relationships within our community.

6. VOICES OF OUR YOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (VOYCC) BYLAWS

The Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) is devoted to supporting the Antelope Valley communities by placing importance on the welfare of all its members. Our focus is on promoting inclusiveness, diversity, and equitable representation for individuals from various backgrounds, irrespective of race, beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. To uphold our mission and achieve our aims, we have implemented the following Bylaws to provide direction and coherence with our objectives.

7. PRIMARY ROLES OF THE GUIDANCE COUNCIL

As active participants in the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC), members of the Guidance Council (GC) play a vital role in shaping our community. By attending meetings, engaging in discussions, and promoting the VOYCC, they contribute to the economic and social well-

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being of youth, individuals, veterans, families, neighborhoods, and communities.

In addition to these core responsibilities, GC members take on a range of tasks to ensure the success of the Council:

- They establish committees to address the current needs of the community.
- They review and assess the work and proposals of all committees.
- They collaborate with the Council to identify initiatives and tasks, determining the most effective methods for completion.
- They address training and support needs within the Council.
- They actively engage in outreach efforts to represent the diverse community.
- They welcome new Council members and provide them with an orientation.
- They recognize and appreciate the hard work of Council members on a regular basis.

Through their dedication and commitment, GC members help create a culture that embraces diversity, prosperity, and inclusivity in our community.

8. COMPOSITION AND SIZE OF GUIDANCE COUNCIL

Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) is a diverse group consisting of youth, parents, businesses, media, educational providers, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, veteran's organizations, faith-based leaders, civic or volunteer groups, healthcare professionals, policy makers, substance abuse organizations, mental health organizations, homeless organizations, criminal justice professionals, first responders, and community members.

From this collective, a Guidance Council (GC) is formed, comprising the following positions:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Sergeant of Arms
- Alternate 1
- Alternate 2
- Alternate 3



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Following the initial meeting, VOY assigns positions for a six-month term. Subsequently, an election is held to determine whether current General Council members will continue in their roles or if new members will be elected. The inaugural election is scheduled for December 2024.

9. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE VOYCC GUIDANCE COUNCIL

To be considered for a position on the VOYCC Guidance Council, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Reside, work, or volunteer within the boundaries of the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) in Antelope Valley communities.
- Attending a minimum of 4 Council meetings within the last 6 months, while actively participating and showing dedication.
- Engage as a committed VOYCC member by contributing to discussions, completing evaluations, participating in committees, and attending additional VOYCC meetings or events.
- Complete a nomination form and participate in an interview with the Welcome Committee to ensure alignment and requirements are met, and that the candidate has a genuine commitment to VOYCC with valuable contributions to offer.
- Adhere to and support the Mission, Values, and Code of Conduct of the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC).

10. ELECTION PROCESS AND TERM LIMITS

A. GC Election Process Overview:

The electoral process includes the election timetable, candidate nomination procedures, election day protocols, candidate information dissemination, voting standards, election day procedures, and election outcomes.

Elections Timetable:

- Regular elections take place twice a year in December and June, as required.
- Special elections are conducted when two seats on the Guidance Council (GC) become vacant.



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Candidate Nomination Procedures:

- Any member of the Council interested in serving as a Guidance Council (GC) member can either self-nominate or be nominated by others.
- Nomination forms must be submitted to the VOYCC at least 90 days prior to Election Day.
- The Welcoming Committee reviews the nomination forms and interviews the nominees at least 60 days before the election to make their recommendations.
- All nominees are asked the same set of questions during the interview.
- Based on the interviews, the Welcoming Committee recommends who they feel would make the best candidates to run in the election.

Election Day Protocols:

- On Election Day, members of the Welcoming Committee who are not running for election assist in the entire election process.
- Their responsibilities include helping with member sign-in, verifying nomination forms, and organizing election materials.
- The Welcoming Committee ensures that voting and non-voting members are distinguished based on their attendance records.

Candidate Information Dissemination:

- The Welcoming Committee provides the Council with information about each recommended candidate, including their meeting attendance and any leadership roles they have held.

Voting Standards:

- Council members must have attended at least 4 meetings in the past 6 months to be eligible to cast a vote.
- Each organization within the Council has one vote, and only one member from each organization is allowed to vote.

Election Day Procedures:

- Before voting commences, all candidates are required to give a 1-minute speech introducing themselves and explaining their interest and qualifications in joining the GC.



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Election Outcomes:

- The ballots are counted by the Sergeant at Arms with the assistance of three randomly selected VOYCC members.
- Candidates with the highest number of votes in their respective categories are elected to the available seats.
- The Meeting Facilitator or Sergeant at Arms announces the election results to the Council.

B. GC Term Limits:

Guidance Council members are selected to serve a 1-year term and can be re-elected for two additional terms. After serving three consecutive terms, a member must take a one-year break before running for re-election. If there are not enough candidates during elections, VOYCC members can choose to waive the GC term limit Bylaws requirement.

Elections are held twice a year, in December and June. Those elected in December will serve from January to December of the following year, while those elected in June will serve from July of the current year to the end of June the following year. Special elections will be conducted to fill two vacant GC seats.

12. VOTING & DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A voting member is defined as an individual who has participated in at least two-thirds of the meetings held throughout the year (from January to December) preceding the voting session.

Voting members can submit their votes through email within a 24-hour period if voting members are unable to attend the meeting. Each organization or entity affiliated with VOYCC will receive these voting emails, with only one designated representative authorized to vote on behalf of their respective group. For a resolution to pass, it must garner a minimum of 51% of votes from the VOYCC and/or GC members present or voting emails submitted during the voting process.

13. PROXY

Please be aware that individuals such as youth, parents, media, volunteer groups, and community members who are part of VOYCC are



not allowed to assign proxies to represent them at meetings. However, stakeholders can choose to designate a proxy by sending a formal request via email to the Meeting Facilitator or a GC officer for approval before the meeting begins.

14. QUORUM

A quorum for the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) is achieved when a majority vote of the members is present, with at least 7 members in attendance. The General Council (GC) requires a simple majority of 51% or 4 members present to establish a quorum. In special circumstances, GC members may participate via phone if they inform the Meeting Facilitator 2-hours before the meeting starts and they obtain approval.

15. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Members of Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) are encouraged to attend all meetings and events to actively support our mission. We understand that unexpected circumstances may arise, and we have guidelines in place to accommodate special situations.

If a VOYCC voting member is unable to attend a meeting, we kindly request that you send a representative from your organization to stay informed about voting topics so you can make informed decisions.

There will be one meeting per month, totaling 12 per year. Here's how we address absences:

- General Council (GC) members can have up to 3 unexcused absences per year. On the 4th absence, a member may forfeit their seat unless absences fall under special circumstances outlined below.
- Special circumstances include family bereavement, accidents, surgeries, or serious illnesses like cancer, fibromyalgia, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, etc.
- Members must notify the Meeting Facilitator or GC Officer in advance if they know they will be absent.
- A GC member can request a 90-day leave of absence if they know they will miss more than 2 consecutive meetings, for up to 60 days.



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- Absences exceeding 90 days may result in the member relinquishing their seat, with an opportunity to reapply when their situation changes.
- If a member is absent from meetings for 2 months without notice, they may be removed from their position and lose their GC seat without warning.
- Attendance will be overseen by the Sergeant at Arms, who will handle any attendance issues through a written attendance warning letter and will also notify the GC President or a designated officer.
- Members may be excused from certain meetings for training with prior approval from the meeting facilitator.

We deeply value the dedication and commitment of our members and recognize their efforts to actively participate in our community endeavors.

16. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTION TO BECOME AN GC OFFICER

To qualify for roles such as President, Vice President, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary, or Alternate(s) within the Guidance Council (GC) of the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC), individuals must meet the following requirements:

- Remain in good standing as a member of the Council.
- Participate in a nomination interview led by peers from the Welcoming Committee prior to the final vote.
- Attain a majority of votes from VOYCC Members to be formally assigned to the position nominated for.

17. OFFICER POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities of the Voices of Our Youth Community Council:

General Council (GC) Positions:

- Attend VOYCC, GC, committee meetings, and functions.
- Actively engage in the community to raise awareness of our initiatives.
- Serve as representatives and spokespersons for the VOYCC.
- Encourage community involvement in meetings and events.
- Provide leadership and assistance during Council activities.
- Conduct introductions and welcome sessions at meetings.
- Ensure clarity on meeting purposes for all attendees.

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- Introduce the GC members during all Council gatherings.
- Facilitate announcements for information sharing.

President:

- Lead GC and Council meetings.
- Work with GC to implement VOYCC Committees resolutions.
- Develop meeting agendas and maintain the calendar.

Vice-President:

- Aid the President in agenda development.
- Take on special tasks delegated by the President.
- Be ready to assume the President's responsibilities when needed.

Sergeant at Arms:

- Maintain order during VOYCC meetings to encourage community participation.
- Ensure smooth meeting operations, keep time during meetings, and address disruptive attendees if necessary.
- Be prepared to step into the Vice-President's role when required.
- Distribute ballots and count votes during elections.
- Track and document attendance.

Secretary:

- Take thorough and accurate notes at all GC and VOYCC meetings.
- Organize and manage records effectively.
- Ensure the accuracy and integrity of records.
- Review meeting minutes for precision.
- Be ready to take over the Sergeant at Arms' duties if necessary.

Alternates:

- Ensure safety protocols are in place.
- Aid in meeting logistics.
- Collaborate efficiently with the community and GC.
- Support all GC Officers as needed.
- Coordinate tasks during and for upcoming meetings.
- Be prepared to step into GC positions if necessary.
- Assist with additional duties as requested.



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VOYCC Council Members:

- Assist with registration and materials distribution at VOYCC meetings.
- Attend as many meetings and events as possible.
- Stay informed about VOYCC's mission, policies, and programs.
- Review meeting agendas and materials prior to meetings.
- Participate in committees and special assignments.
- Advocate for VOYCC in the community.
- Suggest potential board nominees.
- Review meeting agreements.
- Distribute and collect meeting evaluations.
- Organize and plan social activities to build relationships, promote well-being. And foster connections.

18. COMMITTEES

At Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC), we understand the significance of committees in driving our mission forward. These committees, led by passionate VOYCC members, play a vital role in accomplishing our objectives. Whether they are permanent, ad hoc, study groups, focus groups, or task-oriented workgroups, each committee is crucial in uniting Council members, contractors, public officials, and other community organizations that share our vision for enhancing the welfare of communities in the Antelope Valley.

To maximize effectiveness, each committee will establish its own mission and work plan, oversee attendance, meeting frequency, and regularly update the VOYCC Guidance Council on progress. All decisions and actions taken by the committees will be subject to a VOYCC vote, with Guidance Council members having the opportunity to lead or co-lead a committee, underscoring their significance within the VOYCC framework.

We have established several committees including the Welcoming Committee, Arts & Entertainment Committee; Diversity, Inclusion, and Advocacy Committee; Fundraising & Development Committee; Military Support Committee; Wellness & Education Committee; Community Violence Intervention & Prevention Committee; and the Youth Empowerment Committee. We will also create additional or ad hoc committees as needed.



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Chair:

The Chair of the committee is responsible for providing leadership and setting the tone for the committee, overseeing all activities, and representing the committee in a professional manner. The Chair plans the schedules and facilitates meetings. They work closely with the Guidance Council to develop and implement strategic plans, make decisions and recommendations, assign tasks to committee members, and they serve as the primary spokesperson for the Committee.

Vice-Chair:

The Vice-Chair supports the President in their duties and assumes the Chair's responsibilities in their absence. They work collaboratively with the Chair and other GC members to ensure the committee's goals are met. The Vice-Chair also takes on special projects and tasks as assigned by the President.

Secretary:

The Secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of all committee meetings, including minutes and attendance. They also handle correspondence, maintain official documents, and ensure that all records are up to date and easily accessible. The Secretary ensures the dissemination of meeting minutes. The Secretary plays a key role in the committee by facilitating communication and maintaining organizational continuity between the committee and the VOYCC.

Committee Members:

Committee members are key players in the committee who actively participate in meetings, offer input and feedback, and contribute to the overall success of Voices of Our Youth's Community Council. They may be assigned specific tasks or projects to work on, and they are expected to attend meetings regularly, stay informed about the committee's activities, and support the committee leadership team in achieving the committee's mission and goals.

19. COMMITTEE FEEDBACK LOOP

A committee feedback loop is a structured process where committees provide regular updates on their progress, achievements, challenges,



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and any decisions that require input or approval from the Guidance Council and the Voices of Our Youth Community Council as a whole. The significance of the feedback loop lies in ensuring transparency, accountability, and communication within the organization. The information collected through the feedback loop serves several purposes:

Monitoring Progress:

It allows the Councils to track the progress of each committee towards their goals and objectives, ensuring that efforts align with the organization's mission and vision.

Identifying Challenges:

Committee reports can highlight any obstacles or challenges faced during the implementation of projects or initiatives, enabling the Councils to provide support or resources as needed.

Decision-Making:

Any issues requiring a decision or vote from the Councils are brought to light through the feedback loop, providing the necessary information for informed decision-making. This ensures that important matters are discussed and resolved promptly.

Engaging Stakeholders:

The feedback loop encourages active participation from committee members, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. It also emphasizes the importance of attendance at meetings to maintain a high level of engagement and productivity.

In summary, the committee feedback loop plays a crucial role in promoting transparency, accountability, and effective communication within the organization. It helps in monitoring progress, addressing challenges, making informed decisions, and engaging stakeholders to work towards the common goal of promoting the well-being of youth, families, and communities.

20. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

At VOYCC, we are dedicated to upholding the highest ethical standards to maintain the trust of our members. To ensure transparency,



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all individuals associated with our Council must disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

We have established clear parameters for what constitutes a conflict of interest, including financial interests, personal relationships, and external activities. When a conflict is identified, individuals are required to disclose the nature of the conflict, their relationship or interest, and its relevance to our Council.

Upon disclosure, the conflict of interest will be reviewed and assessed by the GC within the VOYCC. Mitigation strategies will be developed if a conflict exists, which may include recusal from certain decisions or activities, or even resignation from a position.

By following these guidelines, we demonstrate our commitment to operating with integrity and transparency, always prioritizing the best interests of our mission and community members.

Please refer to the Conflict-of-Interest Document and related forms for more details.

21. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We recognize the significance of implementing a clear and efficient conflict resolution policy to maintain a harmonious and productive Council. When faced with a conflict, it is crucial to accurately record the incident details to facilitate a just and thorough resolution process.

Our conflict resolution policy aims to address conflicts promptly and respectfully, encouraging transparent communication and empathy among all parties. We view conflicts as opportunities for personal growth and education, and we are dedicated to managing them with sensitivity and professionalism.

When documenting a conflict, it is vital to include the following information:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Description of the conflict, including involved parties and their perspectives
- Testimonies from witnesses



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- Relevant evidence like emails or messages
- Any past incidents or history of conflicts among the parties

By documenting these specifics, we can develop a comprehensive understanding of the conflict and strive towards a resolution that is fair and satisfactory for everyone involved.

Regarding the progression of disciplinary measures, our policy outlines a series of actions to be taken based on the conflict's severity and nature. These steps may involve:

Informal Resolution:

For minor conflicts, we encourage parties to resolve the issue informally through open dialogue or mediation, facilitating a mutual understanding.

Formal Investigation:

If informal resolution is not feasible, a formal investigation may be initiated to collect additional information and evidence, including interviews, document reviews, and witness consultations.

Disciplinary Action:

Following the investigation's findings, appropriate disciplinary actions will be implemented. These actions may vary from verbal warnings or written reprimands to more severe measures like suspension or termination, depending on the conflict's circumstances.

Throughout the conflict resolution process, we uphold the values of fairness, confidentiality, and respect for all parties involved. Our objective is to establish a secure and inclusive environment where conflicts can be constructively resolved, nurturing positive relationships and a strong sense of community among our members.

22. WEBPAGE

Check out the new webpage on the Voices of Our Youth website dedicated to the Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC). By clicking on the VOYCC tab at the top of the page, you can access information about the Council, its members, and the various activities it is involved in.



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Meeting minutes will also be posted on the webpage to maintain transparency.

23. MEETING LOGISTICS

The schedule for the Guidance Council Meeting will be decided by its members. Council meetings will be scheduled during business hours to ensure that members can spend quality time with their families. The timing of committee meetings will be based on the availability of committee members. The following information outlines the specifics of each meeting's details.

VOYCC Council Meetings

Meeting dates: **EVERY 3rd THURSDAY** of each **MONTH** (with some exceptions)

Meeting times: **3:00 PM to 5:00 PM** (with some exceptions)

Meeting location: **Wayside Center at 44215 10th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534**

Please note that committee meetings will be held for 30 minutes during each VOYCC monthly meeting listed above. GC meetings are TBD.

24. CLOSING STATEMENT

The Bylaws of Voices of Our Youth Community Council (VOYCC) were collaboratively developed with the dedicated members of our community, who generously shared their time, passion, and focus to ensure the significance of this effort. We are certain that our objectives and principles are clearly outlined in this document. Any required changes will be presented to the GC for approval. Once endorsed, the updated Bylaws will be presented to the VOYCC for final approval and implementation.

25. CONTACTS

Voices of Our Youth

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661-622-3223

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