

Housing Alliance Decision Making Process  
Approved, August 29 2016  
Revised, January 2021

## **Background**

The Oregon Housing Alliance unites organizations and individuals who are dedicated to increasing resources to meet our housing needs. We believe every Oregonian deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. To achieve our goals, Oregon needs a strong and unified voice to advocate for better policies and more resources to help Oregonians have a place to call home.

Since 2004, housing advocates in Oregon came together to address a crisis — a lack of affordable housing. The Housing Alliance brings together advocates, local governments, housing authorities, community development corporations, environmentalists, service providers, and others concerned about the lack of affordable housing and the devastating impact of the shortage on Oregon families and individuals. We have different interests and approaches, but we agree that the time has come to act boldly and creatively to meet the full range of housing needs in our communities.

Every year, the Housing Alliance comes together as a membership to discuss the most pressing housing issues facing our state, and discuss and advance policy proposals to address those issues. We prioritize new resources for affordable housing to meet the needs in our communities.

Historically, the Housing Alliance has operated on a modified consensus decision making model. Housing Alliance members discuss issues and potential proposals, and vote together as a membership. If a member votes no, the issue historically has not moved forward. Members voting no have committed to work with the proponents of the proposal.

We are considering changes to this decision making model to help the Housing Alliance continue to be an effective voice for housing in the Oregon Legislature. The issues we work on together are increasingly complex, and our coalition is getting bigger and stronger. We are bringing new voices and expertise to the table, and diversifying our membership. We need to consider changes to our decision making model to make our coalition more effective, more responsive, and to continue to be a significant voice on affordable housing needs in Oregon.

## **Agenda setting process, 2017 - 2021**

As a membership, we strive for consensus and agreement on the substance of our policy proposals. We seek to propose these consensus solutions across the housing continuum – from homelessness to homeownership and everything in between.

## **Empowering Issue Workgroups:**

- A. Identifying three workgroups which have convened around issue areas. The workgroups are: Homelessness and Tenant Protections; Development, Land Use and Preservation; Homeownership and Asset Building.
- B. Each workgroup will have two to three workgroup Co-Chairs to help provide leadership and subject matter expertise, and help direct legislative strategy with assistance from Housing Alliance policy staff and lobbyists.
- C. Workgroups meet monthly during an agenda setting period to:
  - a. Identify problems and potential solutions, and potential proposals for action;
  - b. Identify issues to monitor for administrative changes and implementation;
  - c. Identify issues for future legislative changes; and
  - d. Present proposals for approval to the membership.

Our goal is to reach consensus, both as workgroups and as a membership. However, if consensus cannot be achieved, at least two-thirds of workgroup members must vote yes to move forward agenda items to the membership.

### **Membership Votes**

Agenda items which workgroups have voted (on a two thirds or greater vote) to forward to the full membership will be voted on by the full membership at membership meetings. At least two-thirds of the voting members present at that membership meeting must vote yes to place the item on the Housing Opportunity Agenda. Individual Housing Alliance members are no longer be able to block an item from the agenda with a single vote. Organizations that are current, dues paying members of the Housing Alliance are entitled to vote. Each organization will get one vote. Organizations can vote yes, no, or to abstain on any item.

### Responsibilities of the membership in the agenda setting process:

Members are expected to monitor discussion and progress on items which concern them, and to ask for information and support as they need it. The membership will participate in workgroups that meet with their issue area interest as much as possible. Members will receive updates on the activities of each workgroup through:

- Attending workgroup meetings by phone, video, or in person;
- Reviewing notes of the workgroup meetings;
- Reviewing the “Issue Overview” list of all of the issues being discussed by the workgroups;
- Contacting or meeting with NP staff with questions, comments, or for updates;  
or
- Attending membership meetings.

Staff and lobbyists, or other representatives of members representing a constituency, network, and/or partners are expected to serve as liaisons between their constituency, network, and/or partners and the Housing Alliance. This includes raising up concerns and questions in a timely manner, and sharing updates and calls to action.

**Members will raise concerns about any agenda item as soon as possible with NP staff or with the workgroup co-chairs. Members with concerns will be asked to attend workgroup meetings to discuss issues of concern with stakeholders.**

### **Finalizing the Housing Opportunity Agenda**

Once the agenda items have been voted onto the agenda by the membership, the membership will assist in prioritization, with input from Housing Alliance staff and lobbyists. There will be a recommendation made about which issues will be considered “priority” and “endorsement” items. The final agenda, with “priority” and “endorsement” designation, will be presented to the membership for review and ratification.

#### Neighborhood Partnerships staff, as convenors of the Housing Alliance, will:

- Support the working groups and the Co-Chairs with meeting logistics, facilitation, notes, background research, meeting with subject matter experts, and other support as needed;
- Set meeting dates and times of the workgroups and the membership meetings and publicize them to the membership;
- Strive to help members be informed and up to date about working groups and issues, including by making meeting summaries available, particularly during the proposal development phase. *NP staff will not provide notes on legislative strategy discussions.*

#### During the Legislative Session:

- Once the membership has determined its agenda items, and categorized items as “priority” and “endorsement”, working groups will begin discussing strategy. Working groups will discuss and attempt to the extent possible to set strategy prior to session. Working groups will discuss possible negotiating positions and trade-offs.
- The Housing Alliance will hold its weekly meetings in Salem for lobbyists who represent members of the Housing Alliance. This meeting will continue to be focused on discussing the legislative proposals under consideration by the legislature, discussing strategy, and making assignments for work items to move the proposals forward. This weekly strategy session is the primary way that work happens during session.
- In addition, the Housing Alliance will hold regular strategy meetings for workgroup co-chairs.
- During session, Co-Chairs will lead strategy and negotiations on their agenda items. Co-Chairs will be supported by NP staff, Housing Alliance lobbyists and other member lobbyists. Working group co-chairs will be expected to either participate in regular meetings or maintain weekly check ins by phone with Neighborhood Partnerships staff during session.

#### Communications during session:

- Workgroups will continue to meet regularly during session to receive updates on how session is going, and what’s happening in Salem.

- NP staff will send out regular, weekly email communication to the membership, and will respond to telephone and email inquiries.
- NP staff and working group Co-Chairs will keep working group members informed about strategy discussions, progress, and negotiations.