

**Bridges  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Charter**

This Charter applies to the creation, organization, and operation of the Bridges Advisory Council (Council).

- I. Creation.** The Council is operational under this Charter from the effective date noted herein until June 30, 2018.
- II. Purpose.** The Council is to evaluate and make recommendations for statewide implementation of sections 5101.1411 and 5101.1412 of the Revised Code (Program).
- III. Authority.** The Council identifies challenges, opportunities, and solutions related to the extension of the benefits available under Title IV-E programming to eligible youth ages 18 to 21 years of age (Young Adults). The Council shall not have independent policy-setting or decision-making authority and shall report to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) through the Office of Families and Children (OFC).
- IV. Objectives.** To carry out its purpose, the Council shall:
  - A. Create an environment whereby all members feel they are an important part of the partnership and are advancing the purpose of the Council.
  - B. Develop a framework for identifying challenges, opportunities, and solutions related to the Program.
  - C. Encourage innovation and sharing of information.
  - D. Strive to establish an understanding of, and respect for, all opinions and positions on issues.
  - E. Base its recommendations on the goal of implementing a system that:
    1. Includes the young adult as an active participant in the development of their "life plan." The young adult is considered an expert and used as a resource during their involvement with Bridges.
    2. Encourages young adults to have and maintain employment that meets their financial needs.
    3. Promotes an educational foundation.
    4. Guarantees that safety, permanency and well-being are in the forefront of program development and implementation.
    5. Ensures that adult supporters that work with the young adults are trauma informed.
    6. Encourages healthy family relationships.
    7. Guarantees that young adults reside in safe, stable and secure housing.
    8. Links young adults to appropriate services to address physical and behavioral health needs.

9. Makes sure young adults have the daily living skills essential to life-long self-sufficiency.
10. Builds skills for self-advocacy.
11. Ensures that Bridges is data informed and will be enhanced based on regular review of the data.

## **V. Responsibilities.**

Council members agree to:

- A. Offer recommendations for program design, development and improvement.
- B. Provide information relevant to policies and practice which impact the Young Adults and Program.
- C. Facilitate cooperation and communication between the Program and professional communities.
- D. Support the Program by helping to raise its profile and visibility.
- E. Provide regular status updates to peers about the activities of, or information shared by, the Council.
- F. Serve as a liaison with peers to facilitate the open exchange of information between peers and the Council.
- G. Facilitate expanded participation of peers in activities that promote the objectives of the Council, through focus groups, surveys or other activities established by the Council.
- H. Serve on panels and presentations intended to promote the objectives of the Council as feasible and practical.

ODJFS agrees to:

- A. Host and staff Council meetings.
- B. Facilitate the participation of appropriate state program staff as needed.
- C. Identify tasks for the Council as necessary and appropriate.
- D. Assign staff to support the purpose of the Council.
- E. Respond in writing, when requested by the Council, to any recommendation that is put forth by the Council. The written response is to include rationale for response and be completed within a reasonable time frame.

**VI. Organization.** The Council shall operate under the following provisions:

- A. Charter. By its second meeting, Council shall have reviewed this Charter and:
  - 1. Made any revisions.
  - 2. Affirmed and agreed to the provisions of the Charter by majority vote.
  
- B. Membership:
  - 1. Size. The Council shall consist of at least fifteen, but not more than twenty-five, members.
  - 2. Diversity. Membership should:
    - a. Be broad based and multi-disciplinary so as to represent a cross section of interests related to the issues of the Program and Young Adults.
    - b. Include individuals with lived experiences of being in foster care and aging out.
    - c. Represent the gender, racial, ethnic, demographic, and geographic diversity of Ohio.
  - 3. Terms. Members serve until the dissolution of the Council.
  - 4. Chair. The Council shall be chaired by two members appointed by the OFC Deputy Director:
    - a. A representative of OFC.
    - b. A current or former foster youth.
  - 5. Appointment. Council members are appointed by the OFC Deputy Director
  
- C. Meetings. The Council shall establish a meeting schedule through June 30, 2018 and convene at least six times a year.
  
- D. Attendance.
  - 1. A Council member shall make a good faith effort to attend each Council meeting.
  - 2. Should a Council member miss three consecutive meetings, the member will be asked to relinquish his or her seat on the Council.
  - 3. The Council may, under unique circumstances, have a special vote to maintain the member.
  
- E. Agenda, Minutes and Reports.
  - 1. Co-Chairs are responsible for establishing the agenda for meetings with input from council members. The agenda and relevant materials shall be distributed to members prior to the next meeting.
  - 2. Minutes shall be kept at every meeting of the Council and distributed to its members for review prior to the next meeting.
  - 3. Minutes for each meeting shall be approved by vote of the Council at the subsequent meeting.

**VII. Voting.**

- A. There shall be a quorum when a majority of Council members are present.
- B. The Council may take action by affirmative vote of a majority of the members when a quorum is present.
- C. Proxy votes shall not be permitted.
- D. An electronic vote may be:
  - 1. Called at request of a Chair.
  - 2. Scheduled at a meeting of the Council.

**VIII. Work Product; Publications.**

- A. The work product of the Council is a public record and the property of ODJFS.
- B. The Council shall not produce publications under the title of the Council without the express permission of ODJFS.

**IX. Dissolution.** The Council may be dissolved at any time before June 30, 2018 upon the written request of the Council if the Council is no longer productive or has met the purpose for which it was created.

**X. Effective Date.** This Charter is effective January 26, 2017.