

VIOLENCE PREVENTION COALITION OF GREATER LOS ANGELES CHARTER

PURPOSE, PRIORITIES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Purpose:

The members of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles pledge themselves and their organizations to eliminate violence as a threat and impediment to safe, vibrant communities and human life by assuring through every means possible that rigorous public health principles and approaches become the accepted norm in all government and community institutions.

Priorities:

The Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles (hereinafter, "VPC") has set the following priorities:

- To advocate, promote, and publicize:
 - Community-driven and youth-driven violence prevention efforts
 - Limitation of access to firearms
 - Programs and policies that improve health, education, and economic development
 - Increased and sustainable funding for community-based organizations engaged in creating peaceful and healthy communities

Guiding Principles:

The VPC commits itself to operate under the following guiding principles and values:

- A. Commitment to Nonviolence and Peace
- B. Commitment to Tolerance and Recognition of the Value and Power of Diversity.
- C. Community Focused
- D. Mutual Respect
- E. Nonhierarchical Structure
- F. Open Communication
- G. Transparent and Consensus-Driven Decision Making
- H. Ethical Practice
- I. Excellence
- J. Outcome Driven

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VPC

Authority of Representatives of Voting Member Agencies:

Voting Member Agencies of the VPC must appoint a representative of their agency to have full authority to represent the agency at VPC meetings and to vote on official actions of the VPC. The procedures for appointing and/or changing an agency representative are described below:

- A. Only individuals officially appointed by a Voting Member Agency via written notification to the VPC are authorized to make official decisions or speak on behalf of their respective Voting Member Agency to the VPC. Comments from and actions of any other individual from the same Voting Member Agency are deemed to be on behalf of that individual alone and are not deemed to be on behalf of the Voting Member Agency.
- B. Voting Member Agencies may also designate alternates to represent their agency in place of the officially-appointed representative, in case the representative is unable to represent the agency at a meeting or in an official VPC action. However, only one person may speak or make decisions on behalf of a Voting Member Agency at any one time.
- C. If a Voting Member Agency would like to change their representative to the VPC, they must do so via written notification from an authorized representative of the agency (e.g., the Executive Director).

Commitment of Voting Member Agencies to the VPC:

Voting Member Responsibilities to the VPC:

Voting Member Agencies must commit to the following as a Member of the VPC:

- A. To at least three year's participation in the VPC.
- B. To the purpose, priorities, and guiding principles of the VPC.
- C. To attend VPC General Meetings. If a Voting Member misses two meetings in a year, the Member's voting eligibility will be reviewed by the Internal Relations Committee.
- D. To participate in at least one Action Group.
- E. To provide input and consultation on VPC activities and plans.
- F. To attend at least one event per year of another VPC Member.
- G. To fully support the agency's representative to VPC (i.e., by giving the representative time and support in attending the meetings, covering meeting expenses, giving the representative authority to voice opinions and make votes on behalf of the agency to the VPC, etc.).

Voting Members Dues:

Voting Members must contribute yearly dues to the VPC, based on the annual schedule of dues as set by the Internal Relations Committee. Voting members are divided into four categories: individuals, youth, nonprofit or other tax-exempt organization, and for-profit organization. Dues are determined by one's membership category.

The Internal Relations Committee may grant exceptions to the annual schedule of dues (including a complete waiver of dues), in the following circumstances:

- i. If the Member offers in-kind donations (i.e., materials, resources, staff, volunteer work, etc.) to the VPC in lieu of dues. The value of in-kind donations will be determined by the appropriate Committee and/or Action Group that is receiving the in-kind donation, with the approval of the Internal Relations Committee.
- ii. If a group fits between the categories in the schedule of dues, the Internal Relations Committee will determine the required dues for that organization.
- iii. If the Internal Relations Committee determines that a financial hardship exists for the Member.

Voting Members Support of Official Actions of the VPC:

All Voting Members of the VPC are deemed to be in support of all official actions of the VPC, unless they submit a Letter of No Support to the VPC. If a Voting Member submits a Letter of No Support for a particular action, that Member will not be listed as one of the supporting organizations/individuals of that particular action.

Commitment of Individual Voting Members to the VPC:

Individuals who are Voting Members of the VPC must maintain the same commitments (as outlined above) as a Voting Member Agency of the VPC.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Governance Mechanisms:

The VPC will be organized into Officers of the VPC, the Steering Committee, Standing Committees, Action Groups, Ad Hoc and Special Project Committees, and the Voting Membership.

Officers of the VPC:

The Officers of the VPC are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Officers have a term of office of 2 years.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for determining the direction of the VPC following the mandates established by the VPC Voting Membership.

The Steering Committee will meet at least monthly and will include a minimum of 7 VPC Voting Members, with that number to be reviewed as needed by the VPC Voting Membership. Steering Committee membership shall include:

- At least one member from all other standing committees and from all action groups, elected by that committee or action group
- The Officers of the VPC
- Members-At-Large, elected by the VPC Voting Membership.

The Steering Committee will be responsible for the VPC's financial health and integrity and will make decisions on behalf of the VPC, as long as they are consistent and guided by the actions of the VPC Voting Membership.

Standing Committees:

Standing Committees are committees of the VPC whose functions are essential to the overall operation of the VPC and therefore are always active. The VPC will maintain the following Standing Committees:

- A. External Relations – Responsible for communicating with the media and the public regarding any official actions of the VPC and instances of violence or violence-related programs or policies in Greater Los Angeles that require an immediate response.
- B. Internal Relations – Responsible for communicating regularly with the VPC Membership, accepting and eliminating VPC Voting Members as needed, orienting new Voting Members to the VPC, setting Voting Membership dues, granting exceptions to the dues schedule when appropriate.
- C. Governance and Implementation – Responsible for periodic evaluation of the VPC, for future planning, and for coordination with Community Partners to ensure any necessary technical assistance and to ensure compliance with financial and contractual obligations.
- D. Data Committee – Responsible for collecting data regarding incidents of violence and violence prevention strategies to present to the VPC for its consideration in developing projects and planning advocacy efforts.
- E. Training Committee – Responsible for providing training on skills and subject matter related to the VPC's stated purpose, priorities, and guiding principles.

The Steering Committee or VPC Voting Membership may create new Standing Committees as the need arises. The VPC Charter will be adjusted to reflect any Standing Committees added to or deleted from the VPC, as the change occurs.

Action Groups:

Action Groups will be formed by the Steering Committee or the VPC Voting Membership to address specific violence prevention issues and areas of practice. On at least a yearly basis, the Action Groups will be evaluated by the VPC to assess each group's effectiveness and whether or not to continue that Action Group into the next year.

Ad Hoc and Special Project Committees:

Ad Hoc and Special Project committees may be developed by the VPC or by the Steering Committee as needed. These committees will report their findings to the Steering Committee and to the VPC membership.

Voting Membership:

Voting Membership is described more fully below in the VPC Membership section of this Charter.

Decision-Making Mechanisms:

Decision-Making of the Steering Committee:

VPC policy will be set by the Steering Committee, as long as it is consistent and guided by the actions of the VPC Voting Membership. The Steering Committee will follow the decision-making procedure described below.

Only official spokespersons of the VPC may speak publicly on behalf of the VPC. To be an official spokesperson, the VPC member must complete a media training and be designated by the Steering Committee as a spokesperson.

Decision-Making of the VPC:

The following consensus-driven decision-making procedure applies to all committees of the VPC, including the Steering Committee, to the Action Groups, and to the Voting Membership.

- A. A quorum is defined as more than 50% of the members.
- B. A quorum must participate in a VPC decision for it to be official (e.g., for the entire Voting Membership to make an official decision, more than 50% of the Voting Membership must participate in the decision; for a committee, more than 50% of the committee's members must participate in the decision).
- C. A member may be a part of a quorum without being present at a meeting; however, for business to be transacted at a VPC meeting, 1/3 of the members must be present.
- D. Decisions will be made by consensus.
- E. When consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote of at least more than half of the members is required to make an official decision.

- F. Members not present at a meeting may vote by fax, a letter, e-mail, or other electronic means of communication.

VPC General Meetings:

- A. VPC General Meetings will be held quarterly.
- B. The meetings will focus on planning and decision-making.
- C. The meetings will include the following:
 - i. Reports from Standing Committees
 - ii. Reports from Action Groups
 - iii. Reports from Ad Hoc and Special Project Committees
 - iv. Reports from the Field
 - v. Other Issues of Import to the VPC
 - vi. Networking Opportunities
 - vii. Trainings and Resource-sharing
 - viii. Development of Collaborative Proposals
- D. Meetings are open to non-members and members alike.
- E. Meeting procedure will follow the established standing rules of the VPC as developed by the Steering Committee, or, where gaps exist, will follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Behavioral Mechanisms:

All VPC Members must remain committed to the shared vision of the VPC as well as to open communication to resolve conflicts as they occur. The VPC will promote positive relationships and cooperative work skills to this end.

If conflicts arise that cannot be resolved amicably, the conflict will be resolved by a mediator agreed upon by all involved parties.

Amendments to VPC Charter:

Amendments to the VPC Charter can be made by a 2/3 majority vote of the Steering Committee members present and voting at a meeting or by 2/3 majority vote of the VPC Voting Membership voting and present at a meeting.

AMBASSADORS COUNCIL

The Ambassadors Council of the VPC will include members of the community who can champion the causes of the VPC and promote its activities to the community. They will be called upon to use their resources to provide support to the VPC and to raise its profile in the community. The Internal Relations Committee will be responsible for making regular communications with the Ambassadors Council. The Ambassadors Council will serve at the will of the VPC Voting Membership.

VPC MEMBERSHIP

The VPC Membership is open to all members of the public. Members may become Voting Members of the VPC. Only Voting Members can participate in the official decision-making of the VPC or serve as Officers or Committee Chairs of the VPC. Voting Members receive a discounted rate for events, activities, and special publications of the VPC. A Voting Member may be an individual or an agency represented by an individual.

To become a Voting Member, an individual or agency must follow the application process as described below:

- A. The prospective Voting Member must submit an application to the Internal Relations Committee.
- B. The application must identify the prospective Voting Member's interest in the VPC, what he or she hopes to contribute to the VPC, and how the prospective member supports the shared vision of the VPC, as stated in the purpose, priorities, and guiding principles.
- C. If the prospective Voting Member is an agency, the agency must explain how it will support the representative of the agency to the VPC (i.e., by giving the representative time and support in attending the meetings, covering meeting expenses, etc.).
- D. The Internal Relations Committee will meet at least one week prior to each General Meeting to review Voting Member applications. There is no limit to number of individuals/agencies that the Internal Relations Committee may select.
- E. Upon selection, new Voting Members will receive notification of membership status and an orientation packet from the Internal Relations Committee.
- F. If an agency is approved as a Voting Member, the agency must make its initial appointment of an agency representative to the VPC via written notification.
- G. Upon receipt of notification of one's acceptance as a Voting Member of the VPC, the Voting Member may participate in the official decision making of the VPC.
- H. If the Voting Member is not satisfactorily complying with Voting Member responsibilities as described above, Voting Members may be eliminated by a 2/3 vote of the Internal Relations Committee.

ROLE OF STAFF

Staff of the VPC will be hired by and will report to the Steering Committee.

One (1) full-time Project Manager

Job Description: Handles day-to-day operations of the VPC under the direction of the Steering Committee

One (1) full-time Project Assistant

Job Description: Assists the Project Manager

APPENDIX A. HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

The Violence Prevention Coalition (VPC) is a joint venture of community-based organizations, individuals, and public institutions and agencies in the Greater Los Angeles area to prevent violence using a public health approach. The Coalition was initiated by the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Public Health.

The Coalition was previously formed by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health Services in May 1991. The Coalition had grown to over 900 members, serving as an informal network for community service providers and a strong advocacy force, producing informational resources, events and effectuating policy issues.

APPENDIX B. FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

Community Partners will serve as the fiscal sponsor to ensure regulatory and legal compliance, provide financial and administrative support and technical assistance.

Regulatory and legal compliance

- Tax-exempt designation by the Internal Revenue Service and the Franchise Tax Board
- Tax filings with IRS and FTB as part of unified Community Partners annual tax returns.
- **Financial and administrative support**
 - Administration, record-keeping and reporting of project finances, including cash receipts and disbursements
 - Employment by Community Partners of all project staff under a uniform set of personnel policies with salaries and wages, federal and state taxes, workers compensation, employee benefits, and other project expenses paid from project funds
 - All Community Partners' fringe benefits, including health, dental and life insurance, extended to project staff and paid from project funds
 - Payroll and tax accounting for all staff, and a unified year-end audit
 - Access to Community Partners' general liability insurance policy
 - Negotiation and administration of contracts and grants.
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Budgeting, finance and related administrative assistance for key project personnel
 - Regular skill development and training workshops for all sponsored projects
 - Coaching and strategic counsel on program planning, fundraising and communications
 - Direct feedback on program effectiveness