

## Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) Charter

(Date of County Board action to adopt or update Charter)

**Introduction:** The Arlington County Emergency Preparedness Advisory Commission (EPAC) is a group of community members who advise the County Board on issues pertaining to emergency preparedness. The Commission was created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

EPAC serves as the de facto Citizen Corps Council (CCC) and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

**Mission:** EPAC's mission is to support the safety, readiness and resilience of Arlington County by providing policy and implementation advice to the County Board and liaising with the whole community—residents, businesses, schools, volunteers, community organizations, visitors and others—to ensure community resources are leveraged and emergency preparedness efforts meet community needs that are inclusive, comprehensive, and coordinated.

### Governing Documents:

- *Arlington County Advisory Group Handbook*
- *Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986*
- *Federal Emergency Management Agency's Citizen Corps Program*
- *Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3707 of the Virginia Code*

**Primary Functions and Scope:** The EPAC shall carry out the following functions.

1. Policy and Implementation Advice
  - a. County Budget – Perform annual review of the County Budget and periodic review of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget to identify strengths, gaps and needs that pertain to emergency preparedness, and make recommendations to the County Board.
  - b. Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) – Perform periodic reviews of the CEMP and provide observations and advice to staff and County Board.
  - c. Policy, Implementation, and Research – Conduct independent research and routinely review policies, implementation, plans, risk assessments, practices, and resources to identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and needs that pertain to emergency preparedness, and share insights with staff and the County Board.
2. Outreach, Coordination and Integration
  - a. Plan EPAC outreach and communication activities.
  - b. Be emergency preparedness ambassadors in the community by serving as liaisons to various organizations (e.g., schools, businesses, volunteer organizations, civic associations, commissions) to understand community preparedness needs. Facilitate community inclusion into County emergency preparedness, feedback and improvement efforts.
  - c. Host an annual Preparedness Forum to engage community groups and offer opportunities to be involved and improve individual and organizational preparedness.
  - d. Coordinate with the Fire Department to ensure the County meets the requirements of the *Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986*, which includes hosting the annual LEPC meeting.
  - e. Work cooperatively with County staff as strategies, ideas and proposals are developed.
3. EPAC Strategy and Administration
  - a. Conduct EPAC Strategic Planning.
  - b. Manage projects and EPAC operations.
  - c. EPAC member coordination and onboarding.
  - d. Participate in Emergency Preparedness leadership activities.

**Membership:** The EPAC shall be comprised of twelve to seventeen Commission members who shall be appointed for three-year terms by the County Board. All members serve at the pleasure of the Board.

Commission members shall include:

- 7-12 members – At-Large
- 1 member – representing the National Capital Region of the American Red Cross
- 1 member – representing the Civic Federation
- 1 member – representing the Chamber of Commerce or Arlington NVBIA/NAIOP/AOBA
- 1 member – representing the Arlington School Board
- 1 member – representing Virginia Hospital Center – Arlington

At-Large members must be Arlington County residents. The Arlington County Advisory Group Handbook will be followed for member recruitment, application, appointment and orientation. Preference will be given to candidates who have attended at least one EPAC meeting and volunteered with an EPAC Committee.

EPAC members are expected to serve a liaison function to interested parties in Arlington including any group who has formally submitted their name for membership. A member of the Commission who fails to attend three (3) EPAC meetings in a single year without notice or explanation to the Chair, or staff, may be asked to resign his or her remaining term on the Commission. The Commission Chair, after consultation with the County Board liaison, shall notify the member if such an action is warranted. Should a vacancy arise mid-term, the County Board may appoint a replacement to serve out the remainder of that departing member's term.

In addition, local, state or federal organizations with an interest in Arlington emergency preparedness may, upon request, receive notice of meetings and designate a liaison (non-voting) to EPAC. Similarly, EPAC may designate Committee members as liaisons to other Arlington County Commissions, Committees and/or local, state or federal emergency preparedness organizations.

Members are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities relating to Arlington's wide array of potential emergencies. The EPAC shall keep the County and community leadership apprised of issues and actions regarding the preparedness and resilience of Arlington to potential natural and man-made disasters. The Commission will self-monitor its activities and progress in fulfilling this mission.

**Chair and Committee Membership:** *The County Board shall appoint a Chair.* The Commission will choose the Vice Chair to serve when the Chair is not available. The EPAC may create committees to accomplish specific Commission missions. The Chair shall appoint committee leadership. Committee membership may include persons who are not on the Commission with approval from the Chair.

**Staff Liaison:** The County Manager shall appoint a member of staff from the Department of Public Safety Communications and Emergency Management (DPSCM) to serve as liaison to the EPAC.

**Meetings:** The EPAC will meet as needed to adequately fulfill its role and responsibilities outlined in this charter. The EPAC will meet at least quarterly. All meetings will comply with Virginia Open Meeting requirements and the Freedom of Information Act. All meetings of the full Commission will be advertised on the County-maintained website of the Commission, with meeting time and location, and are open to the public. All materials distributed to the Commission members, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes will be made available to the public in a timely manner through publication on the Commission website.

The Advisory Group Handbook provides additional information on the conduct of meetings as well as communication protocols that should guide all members in their advisory group work.

**Reporting to the Board:** The EPAC will provide recommendations to the County Board about emergency preparedness. The EPAC will at a minimum submit an annual report to the County Board after consultation with the Board Liaison. EPAC may, from time to time, be asked to provide comment at a regular Board meeting or Board work session. This may include, but is not limited to, testimony on budget and capital spending priorities. The Chair will consult with the staff liaison and review the published public hearing schedules.

**Update of this Charter:** From time to time, EPAC shall review this charter to assure that it meets current needs. Any requests for changes must be processed through the Board Liaison.