

Accounting For Growth Work Group Charter

DRAFT January 2012

Process

To ensure balance, equity, consensus building, and a structured approach to the process and individual meetings, rules of engagement including Member and Support Team roles, responsibilities, decision-making protocols, and other important elements of the effort have been established. This Charter supports flexibility, forward thinking, respect and innovation among Work Group Members and Support Team as well as providing a productive working environment.

Work Group Principles

The Members of the Work Group and Support Team unanimously agree to abide by the following principles:

- Work to achieve outcomes that serve the best interests of Maryland's economy, environment and its citizens.
- Abide by the concept that disagreement does not equal disrespect and treat all other Members of the Work Group and the Support Team, as well as all others participating in the process, with respect, honor, fairness and dignity.
- Bring any and all matters falling within the purview of the Work Group, as described herein, to the Work Group for consideration and resolution prior to pursuing the matter in other venues, including the media.
- Maintain an open mind and consider all perspectives before reaching a conclusion on a Work Group matter.
- Consider and strive to develop recommendations that meet the "Guiding Principles" set forth by the participating government agencies with responsibilities related to the Accounting for Growth Program.

Responsibilities

The Members of the Work Group unanimously agree to meet the following responsibilities:

Between meetings:

- Review and be prepared to discuss all relevant topic and agenda information including all meeting materials and other communications delivered before each meeting.
- Maintain all provided information in a binder provided to each Work Group Member.
- Contact a member of the Support Team as soon as you discover that you are unable to attend a meeting.

During Meetings:

- Always act in accordance with Work Group Principles.
- Be on time and committed to engage and participate in meetings.
- Work to follow the agenda and process of each meeting.

Work Group Meeting Procedures

The following meeting procedures shall guide the Work Group's activities:

- A quorum of Members is necessary to hold Work Group meetings. A simple majority of appointed Work Group Members shall constitute a quorum.
- Work Group decisions shall be made as follows:
 - Members shall work together to reach a recommendation on each topic and Members may offer a position on any matter before the Work Group.
 - Recommendations shall be made through a consensus building process where mutually acceptable and beneficial conclusions are first sought.

- A “straw poll” (a facilitator–conducted verbal survey of Work Group Members in attendance) may be used to assess the degree of preliminary support for issues before the Work Group finalizes recommendations. Straw polls may lead to subsequent work by the group to revise the text of a recommendation and continue to explore ways to reach consensus.
- If consensus decision methods are not feasible and/or consensus cannot be achieved on an issue, the meeting summaries will capture common ground achieved and all disparate opinion(s), along with the proffered rationale for each opinion(s), on matters considered by the Work Group.
- Work Group Members may bring others to assist them, but only Work Group Members and Support Team members shall be seated at the table.
- Other attendees will have an opportunity to provide comments to the group during a designated time at the end of each meeting.
- Meetings will be open to the public and posted on the MDE website.

Support Team

A Support Team, comprised of personnel from Council Fire, MDE, MDA, DNR, DBED, MDP and EPA has been established and will conduct the following activities in support of the Work Group process:

Council Fire Team will:

- Facilitate the Work Group by ensuring adherence to agendas and this Charter, and promoting an exploration of the diversity of member opinions. Council Fire Facilitator will help the group discover ways to identify common groups and build consensus around issues and topics.
- Allocate meeting time to accommodate discussions; prepare and distribute meeting agendas, meeting summaries and working documents; arrange for meeting space; and secure necessary materials and/or resources for meetings.
- Assist in the communications and logistics between Work Group Members and constituents, as appropriate.

MDE, DNR, MDA, MDP, DBED, EPA and advisors will:

- Prepare and present the Guiding Principles for the Work Group process.
- Provide technical support, information and consultation regarding technical issues.
- Participate in discussions and provide perspective when appropriate.
- Interpret the Guiding Principles and provide context as needed.

Work Group Process Goal

The Work Group’s objective is to produce a set of recommendations by June for Accounting for Growth regulations to participating agencies that are created in a manner consistent with the processes and procedures set forth in this Charter.

The Accounting for Growth Work Group’s recommendations will be submitted to the relevant agencies and for consideration by the Bay Cabinet.