



## Lead-Free NJ Operating Procedures

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The Operating Procedures outlined below explain how Lead-Free NJ, a collaborative initiative of many diverse organizations, will function.

This is a living document that will adapt to the needs of its members and their shared purpose (process outlined in section 8).

The guiding principles informing these operating procedures are:

- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Representation
- Distribution of power
- Adaptability

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**1. Collaborative Purpose Statement and Goals**

- a. The main purpose of the Lead-Free NJ collaborative is to ensure that New Jersey’s children are free from lead poisoning and that our environment is lead-safe by advocating for changes to state and local policy. The collaborative seeks to eliminate racial and economic inequities by focusing on legacy lead hazards in low-income communities and/or communities of color, while also creating the conditions for children to be free from lead poisoning statewide.

**2. Shared Values/Code of Conduct**

- a. Collaboration, cooperation, communication, and mutual respect are core tenets of Lead-Free NJ.
- b. We acknowledge the inequitable and disproportionate effect of lead hazards on low-income communities of color. We are committed to substantial representation of these affected communities at all levels of the collaborative. Decision-making and leadership are equally shared between affected communities/community representatives and other stakeholders. (See “Desired Steering Committee Membership” in section 3.)
- c. We acknowledge the impact and the importance of systemic change in state and local laws, regulations, programs, and spending that affect the achievement of a lead-free environment and children who are unburdened by lead poisoning.

**3. Member Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. Members:  
Lead-Free NJ is a collaborative initiative comprised of individual and organizational members. Members agree to:
  - i. Scope
    - 1. Support and uphold the LFNJ shared purpose and goals
    - 2. Support Lead-Free NJ advocacy efforts that align with their values
  - ii. Look for opportunities to collaborate and/or champion lead-free efforts

Any interested party may become a member by signing up online at <https://www.leadfreenj.org/members/> and agreeing to the terms above.

- b. Steering Committee:  
Lead-Free NJ is led by a Steering Committee that includes a diverse group of policy advocates, practitioners, and community organizers. They coordinate Lead-Free NJ

activities, provide strategic guidance to staff and committees, and serve as representative voices of the collaborative. Members agree to:

- i. General Responsibilities
  1. Define the shared vision and goals of the collaborative.
  2. Guide the collaborative efforts of Lead-Free NJ.
  3. Represent and reflect the needs of the members of the collaborative and of the communities the collaborative aims to serve.
  4. Monitor strategy and policy implementation.
  5. Review member requests and recommendations and will prioritize subsequent actions.
  6. Set standards for the processes of collaborative work.
  7. Additionally, at least one member or members of the Steering Committee will lead or co-lead all other standing committees.
- ii. The Steering Committee provides these major deliverables to the membership:
  1. A yearly collaborative-wide work plan.
  2. Other necessary outputs, as requested by members and agreed upon by the steering committee.
- iii. To become a Steering Committee member, persons:
  1. Must be an active member of Lead-Free NJ
  2. Must be nominated to backbone staff who will collect information regarding representation, balance, life experience and relevant expertise.
  3. All nominations and pertinent findings will be shared with the co-chairs [or nominating committee] who may then interview the nominees.
    - a. Co-chairs [or nominating committee] make an official recommendation to the steering committee via email.
    - b. Steering committee makes a final decision regarding the incorporation of new members to the steering committee.

<i>Desired Steering Committee Membership</i>	
Policy-oriented individuals/org representatives	50%
Community oriented individuals/org representatives with a deep grassroots connection	50%
People of color	At least 40%
Directly affected individual (lead poisoned self/child)	at least 1
Individual/org representative with a constituency focused on mobilization	at least 1

- c. Up to 5 business days are allowed for final feedback from steering committee members. Approval will be assumed if there are no objections within 5 business days.
      - d. Steering committee member appointments will have a term of 2 to 3 years, initially staggered to provide stability. After this period, if the member wants to continue to be part of the steering committee, they will go through the regular nominating procedure.
    - i. The terms and replacing of a Steering Committee Co-chair are as follows:
      - 1. The term of the co-chairs is 2 years. If a co-chair of the steering committee comes to the end of their term or leaves at any point for any reason, any steering committee member can nominate a new co-chair from the pool of steering committee members. An ad hoc nominating committee will be formed to review recommendations and propose a new (or continuing) co-chair to the Steering Committee. Steering committee members will have a five-day review period. Approval will be assumed if there are no objections within 5 business days.
    - ii. The role of Steering Committee co-chairs are to:
      - 1. Work closely with the steering committee and backbone staff to design and lead steering committee meetings and membership meetings.
      - 2. Confirm and/or select committee/subcommittee chairs.
      - 3. Work closely with subcommittee/committee chairs to make decisions on actions that support collaborative's mission.
  - c. Committees, subcommittees, and ad-hoc groups:

Lead-Free NJ committees are a group of members with relevant expertise, technical knowledge, and/or subject matter interest that share information and actively engage in the work of the initiative; subcommittees are a specialized group within committees that focus on a particular topic/action; and ad-hoc groups may temporarily convene to investigate or research a topic or issue of urgent interest. Members agree to:

    - i. Scope:
      - 1. Help advance the collaborative's yearly objectives and long-term goals.
      - 2. Provide specialized technical assistance, life experience, research, recommendations, strategies, projects, training, and other activities.
    - ii. Major Deliverables include:
      - 1. A yearly committee work plan.
      - 2. Any and all other outputs, as assigned by the steering committee.
    - iii. A new committee can be established by the Steering Committee based on the stated goals and annual work plan.
- Process:
- iv. Any committee may create subcommittees or ad hoc groups.
  - v. The procedure to become a committee co-chair is as follows:

1. Members that wish to become a committee or subcommittee co-chair must follow the same procedure required for becoming a steering committee member.
- vi. The procedure to become a committee member is as follows:
  1. Persons must first be a member.
  2. Persons must contact backbone staff to be added to committee communications.
  3. Backbone staff will notify committee co-chairs of any committee member changes.
  4. The steering committee and backbone staff will conduct outreach to ensure diversity, balance, and life experience/expertise among committee members, and recommend additional committee members as needed.
- d. Community Hubs:

Lead-Free NJ Community Hubs are local grassroots organizations that help advance the collaborative's yearly objectives and long term goals. Community Hubs' specific plans are tailored to the needs of their distinct communities. Members agree to:

  - i. Scope
    1. Lead local education and advocacy efforts in affected communities.
    2. Provide local perspectives at the statewide membership and steering committee tables.
    3. Request support from and make recommendations to the steering committee for specific advocacy efforts.
  - ii. Major Deliverables
    1. Deliverables will be defined by the terms of their respective grant(s).
    2. A summary yearly work plan provided to the steering committee for distribution to the general membership.
    3. A summary yearly report with the efforts, needs and successes to be submitted to the steering committee for distribution to the general membership.
  - iii. Becoming a Community Hub
    1. *See process for establishing a committee.*
- e. Backbone staff:

New Jersey Future serves as the backbone organization for Lead-Free NJ. It coordinates the activities of the participating organizations and individuals in support of the shared purpose. More specifically staff works to:

  - i. Scope:
    1. Facilitate the day-to-day operations of the collaborative.
    2. Facilitate engagement from the Steering Committee and general LFNJ membership.
    3. Support the Steering Committee in guiding the collaborative's vision and strategy.
    4. Leverage assets and work to increase investments at both the collaborative and community level.

5. Support and/or arrange for technical assistance and training.
  6. Provide administrative support for meetings and activities, as needed.
  7. Manage financials, internal and external communications, collect data and analyze trends and coordinate consultants and contractors as necessary
  8. Support community hubs and committees as needed
- ii. Major Deliverables
    1. A yearly work plan summarizing all collaborative and administrative work.

#### 4. Meeting purpose, structure and schedules

- a. **Quarterly membership meetings** will:
  - i. Celebrate progress
  - ii. Update members on collaborative work
  - iii. Obtain input from members on major decision items
  - iv. Review the proposed annual work plan
  - v. Receive feedback from members on the overall functioning of the collaborative
  - vi. Backbone staff assists with the creation of meeting agendas with the steering committee co-chairs and incorporates input, then coordinates all aspects of scheduling, planning, communication, etc.
- b. **Bimonthly steering committee meetings** will include:
  - i. Strategy Updates – Related to shared purpose, goals and outcomes
    1. Monitoring of shared purpose, goals and scope of work with the resources available.
    2. Discussion of committee progress on goals and work plans combined with opportunities for integration and coordination of efforts across all collaborative groups
    3. Policy/advocacy issues are included in this section for setting priorities and developing an integrated position.
  - ii. Leveraging Resources – Progress on increasing investments in this work at both the collaborative and community level
  - iii. Partner/Project Updates
  - iv. Backbone Report – Reporting on upcoming events, funding milestones, and other progress.
- c. **Committee meetings** are as needed (at least two per year), and focus on advancing or amending the committee's annual work plan. Current Committees and Community Hubs include:
  - i. Communications Committee
  - ii. Capacity-Building Committee
  - iii. Advocacy Coordinating Committee
  - iv. Water Policy Committee (Jersey Water Works Lead in Drinking Water Task Force)
  - v. Housing Policy Committee
  - vi. Connections Committee

- d. Community Hubs meet as needed and focus on advancing or amending their annual work plans. Current Community Hubs include:
  - i. Paterson
  - ii. Newark
  - iii. Trenton

**5. Decision-making Process**

a. Overview

- i. All decision making at committee and full membership meetings will use a formal consensus process which includes a high standard for speaking against a consensus. All items requiring decision making will make time for open discussion among the members involved. There are two alternatives for speaking against moving forward with a decision:
  - 1. A member can go on record disagreeing with the proposed action but allow it to move forward – the “I can live with it but can’t officially support it” rule.
  - 2. A member can disagree with the proposed action thus stopping forward movement and requiring continued discussion to find alternative options for consensus.
- ii. A voting process will only be used if the consensus process results in an inability to move forward and the issue at hand absolutely requires a decision before the next meeting. The voting process will:
  - 1. need a supermajority (2/3rds) or above to approve, and
  - 2. be used only for highly time-sensitive issues and not as a routine decision-making practice.
- iii. Members who disagree with decision/actions/stands are asked to clearly distinguish between the decision of the collaborative and the stand taken by the member organization. While every organization may have a different position, when speaking for or about the collaborative, members will honor the consensus of the group. Members understand and affirm the distinction between collective action and individual organizational action.

b. Decision Tree

Item	Who Makes the Decision
Purpose, Goals, Outcomes distributed in name of Lead-Free NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Steering Committee has final authority on these items with input from Committees, general membership and supporting backbone staff as needed.</li> </ul>
Annual Work Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committees design and decide the Annual Work Plan for their group, aligned with purpose statements, goals and outcomes. Backbone staff reviews to ensure integration across all committees and resolve any duplication or potential conflicting tasks/use of resources and sends to the Steering Committee for final approval.</li> <li>• Steering committee and backbone staff allocate staffing and budget resources to support the work plans based on available capacity and resources.</li> </ul>

<p>Advocacy Positions of Initiative on Related Policy</p>	<p><b>The text below is subject to change pending attorney recommendations.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members and organizations may request support for new and ongoing advocacy efforts to the Advocacy Coordinating Committee at committee meetings or through email.</li> <li>• The Advocacy Coordinating Committee will review all requests regarding purpose alignment with Lead-Free NJ's purpose, type of commitment, resource needs, etc. After review, appropriate advocacy needs and efforts will be recommended by the Advocacy Coordinating Committee representative to the Steering Committee at a steering committee meeting (or by email, if urgent) for final approval. In addition, policy committees may present recommended advocacy efforts to the Advocacy Coordinating Committee for review.</li> <li>• New and urgent advocacy efforts recommended to the steering committee by email will be evaluated within 3 business days. Approval will be assumed if no objections are made within 3 business days.</li> <li>• In special circumstances where the above timeframe is unacceptable, expedited requests may be submitted directly to the Steering Committee co-chairs.</li> <li>• <i>Add text on lobbying, etc.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Grant design and submission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Backbone staff designs and submits grants for funding the backbone core functions including staffing, communications, meeting costs, consultants/contractors, and evaluation infrastructure.</li> <li>• The backbone organization, and any member organization, may seek Steering Committee input and/or endorsement of funding requests for work that advances the purpose and shared goals of Lead-Free NJ.</li> </ul>
<p>Conflict resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicts between members, committees, the backbone organization or each other should be resolved directly whenever possible using a productive focus. If the conflict cannot be resolved between the original parties, the Steering Committee is the final arbiter of member or group conflict.</li> <li>• The Backbone staff are available to support the process.</li> </ul>
<p>Membership – see Member Roles &amp; Responsibilities</p>	<p>Lead-Free NJ has open membership that offers organizational and individual engagement and support for different levels of activity. Access to resources and decision making authority is dependent on the level of activity and commitment and capacity of the organization and/or individual.</p>
<p>Disclaimers</p>	<p>Members are free to go on record disagreeing with a decision/action/stand of Lead-Free NJ and remain a member in good standing. See the Overview above for details and implications of this action.</p>

## 6. Communications

### a. Internal communications:

- i. The primary means of communication amongst members are email and a communication platform such as Mighty Networks. The platform will house all documents relevant to collaborative work, including literature, presentations, correspondence and advertising elements. The platform will also be used to communicate with members - i.e. about upcoming events, funding and job opportunities, news articles of interest, etc. Members are



encouraged to actively engage in conversations via the platform and to share their own relevant materials. Members will be provided with access to the platforms upon sign-up via an introductory email from backbone staff.

- b. External communications:
  - i. All members are encouraged to be ambassadors for the work of this initiative. Sharing of authorized materials/statements is encouraged especially in terms of the Statement of Purpose, Goals, Outcomes and Action Plans. Members should take care to identify themselves as their own organization which is a member of Lead-Free NJ when sharing this information.
  - ii. Use the name and logo only in its complete form (“Lead-Free NJ”) and add the phrase “member of”. It must be consistent in all forms of communication including literature, public relations, presentations, newsletters, correspondence and advertising. The logo and name may not be modified in any way except that it may be proportionally reduced or enlarged in size to fit the space available, as long as it meets the standard for minimum size. Distortion of the logo in any way is unacceptable.
  - iii. From time to time members may wish to co-brand events or materials related to this effort. Approval must be obtained when the logo is going to be used as part of a marketing campaign and/or applied to promotional pieces such as hats, clothing, water bottles, etc. The backbone staff coordinates all logo usage approvals based on Steering Committee guidance. To submit your request for logo use, contact [info@leadfreenj.org](mailto:info@leadfreenj.org).
  - iv. Speaking on behalf of/in the name of the collaborative to the press or at public functions requires the notification and approval of the Steering Committee or its Co-Chairs.
  - v. Lead-Free NJ seeks to promote progress on initiative goals and highlight the work of members or committees related to the collaborative’s goals. This includes: recognition of member successes in newsletters, press releases, etc. as warranted. Members and committees can share their successes with backbone staff at [info@leadfreenj.org](mailto:info@leadfreenj.org) and/or the steering committee via email.
  - vi. Community hub and committee members will be offered opportunities to speak on behalf of their organizations at collaborative meetings and events.

## 7. Finances

- a. Financial support for actions
  - i. Committees are asked to assess the resource needs related to their work - what will it cost to develop the collective products/services and/or to implement activities developed by the committee. These estimates are submitted to the backbone staff and Steering Committee for review and recommended prioritization for inclusion in future collaborative grant requests submitted by the backbone organization or other member organizations.
  - ii. Individual member organizations are also encouraged and are free to seek new funding for these projects or to pilot test best practices. Members are asked to inform the backbone staff when submitting such requests to avoid

duplication of efforts. Members are also strongly encouraged to notify the Backbone organization when awarded such grants so that integration of efforts across members and committees is ensured.

- b. Encourage collaborative grant-seeking
  - i. Backbone staff will actively search for and facilitate opportunities for collaborative grant seeking among partners to further work regionally and in local communities.
- c. The Backbone Organization as Fiscal Agent
  - i. The Backbone organization (New Jersey Future) is the identified fiscal agent for all grants that support core backbone functions. As such, it is directly and fully accountable to the funder for its own activities and expenditures under the grant.
  - ii. The backbone organization may also request and receive funding that supports committee work, special collaborative events or pass through funding for pilot-testing best practices in local communities. The backbone organization, and any member organization, may seek Steering Committee input and/or endorsement of funding requests for work that advances the purpose statement and shared goals of Lead-Free NJ. The backbone will act as the fiscal agent for these grants and will develop formal subcontracts for any pass thru funds. Committees and members who have access to such funds must accept mutual accountability for specific grant requirements placed on the Backbone organization as a result of this funding.

#### 8. **Operating Procedures Revisions**

The Lead-Free NJ operating procedures manual is a living document that represents the needs of Lead-Free NJ members and those affected by lead in accordance with its mission.

- a. To request changes to the operating procedures manual, members must submit their request to the backbone staff.
- b. Backbone staff will review all requests and present them with a recommendation to approve or not approve to the steering committee at the next meeting or by email..
- c. The steering committee will decide on any changes to the operating procedures manual through a five-day review where changes will be adopted if there are no serious objections..