

**BYLAWS OF THE
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (ATCOG)
HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HSAC)**

ARTICLE I – NAME, PURPOSE, RESPONSIBILITIES

The name of the Committee shall be the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC). The Homeland Security Advisory Committee was created by Ark-Tex Council of Governments to advise the Board of Directors in all matters related to regional homeland security and to recommend to the Board of Directors plans and programs which improve the emergency response and recovery throughout the region which support and maintain the State of Texas Goals for Homeland Security in order to maximize effective and efficient use of resources.

HSAC promotes strategies to prevent terrorism and other catastrophic events and to prepare our local communities for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to their security and resilience. Grant funding assists local jurisdictions in building, sustaining, and delivering core capabilities to further the National Preparedness Goal which is, “A secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.”

Guided by the framework established in the Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, HSAC supports investments in homeland security planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercises. Grant funding is used to address gaps identified through the annual State Preparedness Report (SPR) in achieving capability targets set through the annual Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). These assessments identify capability targets and Texas’ current ability to meet those targets. Precedence is given to high-priority core capabilities where significant gaps exist.

The Committee’s specific responsibilities are:

1. To assist ATCOG in carrying on a continuous planning program to identify Homeland Security problems; in determining the needs of the region; in analyzing the existing Homeland Security Regional Plan and available resources; and in establishing goals and priorities
2. To review and comment to the ATCOG Board of Directors on applications requesting state or federal homeland security funds
3. To advise ATCOG’s member cities, counties, and special districts, directly or through the ATCOG Board of Directors, on matters within their jurisdiction pertaining to homeland security.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Representation

The Committee shall be composed of the following members appointed by the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair:

One representative from each of the nine counties		9
One representative from the two largest cities in the region		2
One representative from both a city and a county law enforcement department		2
One representative from two different fire departments in the region		2
One representative from an emergency medical services provider		1
One representative from the Texas Forest Service		1
One Texas District Chief representing the ATCOG region	1	
One Board of Directors Liaison		1
One representative from a state service agency		1
	Total	20

Members will be appointed by the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair. The Committee may make recommendations to the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair to fill vacant membership seats. An ATCOG staff member shall serve as HSAC liaison and shall attend each HSAC meeting.

Qualifications

To be eligible for membership on the HSAC, a member must reside in or be employed by the city/county/company the member is to represent unless otherwise designated by the ATCOG Board of Directors. Members must possess experience and/or training in disaster planning or response.

Term

1. The term of membership of the HSAC shall be two (2) years and shall begin on the date of appointment by the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair.
2. In the case of a vacancy, the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair may appoint a replacement to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
3. A member may be removed for good cause by the ATCOG Board of Directors

Vacancy

A vacancy occurs when

1. a member dies; or
2. a member's term expires; or

3. a member resigns (resignations shall be in writing to the ATCOG HSAC liaison or the HSAC chair); or
4. a member is removed; or
5. a member no longer meets the qualification requirements

Attendance

1. Members are expected to attend all meetings
2. Attendance records documenting HSAC member absences will be maintained by the ATCOG HSAC liaison. If a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, notification must be provided to the HSAC liaison prior to the meeting. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, including funding prioritization meetings, the member may send a representative who assumes all but the voting rights and responsibilities of the member.
3. A member can be removed when, within one calendar year, he or she misses fifty percent (50%) of the regularly scheduled meetings held or two consecutive regularly scheduled meetings. The member will be notified in writing of such removal.
4. Members so removed may appeal in writing to the ATCOG Board of Directors Chair within two (2) weeks of the date of notification. Appeals will be dealt with in a timely manner and the member will be notified in writing of the decision.

ARTICLE III – OFFICERS

Election

The HSAC shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among its members. Election of a Chair and a Vice-Chair will occur at the first meeting of the calendar year.

Term

Officers shall serve for a one-year period beginning on the date of election. Officers may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

Vacancy

In the event an Officer is unable to fulfill his or her term, the HSAC shall elect a replacement at a regular or specially called meeting, who serves for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Duties

1. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the HSAC.
2. In the case of a tie during a vote at which a quorum is present, the Chair will be deemed to have the authority to break the tie.

3. The Vice-Chair shall perform all the duties of the Chair in the case of absence or disability and such other duties as may arise, from time to time, when required or requested by the HSAC.
4. In case the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent or unable to perform their duties, the HSAC may appoint a Chair pro tem.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

Regular

1. The HSAC shall meet at least quarterly on a day, time and place specified by the ATCOG Executive Director, the ATCOG HSAC liaison or the HSAC as a whole.
2. HSAC meetings can be conducted in person, via conference call, or via webinar as is allowable by the Texas Open Meetings Act.
3. Written notice, including an agenda, of each regular meeting shall be prepared by the ATCOG HSAC liaison and electronically transmitted to each HSAC member at least five (3) business days before the meeting date.

Special

1. The HSAC shall meet specially if called by the ATCOG Executive Director, the ATCOG HSAC liaison, the HSAC Chair or requested in writing by at least one-third of the membership, excluding vacancies, of the HSAC.
2. A request by the membership for a special meeting must be in writing, addressed to the Chair, and describe the purpose or purposes of the meeting. Only that business reasonably related to the purpose or purposes described in the request may be conducted at a special meeting.
3. Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the special meeting.
4. Special meetings can be conducted in person, via conference call, or via webinar as is allowable by the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Quorum and Action

1. One third of the total voting membership, excluding vacancies, constitutes a quorum for conducting HSAC business.
2. A majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present is necessary for action by the HSAC. During a meeting at which a quorum has been established, and then subsequently lost due to members leaving, all remaining business items requiring a HSAC vote or action must be postponed until next scheduled meeting at which a quorum is established.

Open Meetings and Records

1. All meetings of the HSAC shall be open to the public. The meetings are subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act and corresponding records are subject to the Texas Public Information Act. The HSAC Chair has the option of closing the meetings when homeland security tactical issues are being discussed or when deemed necessary for confidentiality purposes.
2. Minutes of the HSAC meetings, documents distributed and other records are the property of ATCOG. The HSAC liaison shall keep the recordings of all the HSAC meetings according to the Local Government Records Control Schedule. These materials are available for public view, at the ATCOG offices, upon receipt of a written request by the interested party.
3. Except where these bylaws require otherwise, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of HSAC meetings.

Conflict of Interest

1. A HSAC member who is a member of the governing body, an officer, or an employee of an applicant must abstain from voting on any grant application, other than the planning grant application submitted by the COG, during the prioritization process if the member or an individual related to the member:
 - a. Is employed by the applicant agency and works for the unit or division that would administer the grant, if awarded;
 - b. Serves on any governing board that oversees the unit or division that would administer the grant, if awarded;
 - c. Owns or controls any interest in a business entity or other non-governmental organization that benefits, directly or indirectly, from activities with the applicant agency; or
 - d. Receives any funds, or a substantial amount of tangible goods or routine services, from the applicant agency as a result of the grant, if awarded.

The member is counted in determining the existence of a quorum.

2. A vote cast in violation of this section is not counted.

Professional Conduct

HSAC members should maintain objectivity and professionalism when carrying out business of the HSAC. In the event a HSAC member acts in a manner which brings the work of the HSAC into question or controversy, it shall be the responsibility of the ATCOG Executive Director to address the incident with the Chair of the ATCOG Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V – Regional Grant Process

Grant Application Workshop. All grant applicants must attend the Grant Application Workshop in order to be eligible for grant funding.

The grant application workshop will include the following information:

- a. Who can apply and what activities are eligible under each funding opportunity
- b. Requirements for project problem statements with supporting data, goal statement, project activity explanations, current and target output and outcome measures, and budget categories and line items
- c. The project period for each funding opportunity
- d. Applicable rules, regulations, and certifications required
- e. Any prohibitions
- f. Civil rights rules related to applicant employees and projects or activities
- g. State strategies or funding preferences
- h. Potential jurisdictional funding allocations based on risk-based funding allocation formula
- i. Local policies and procedures that affect the COG's prioritization process
- j. Due dates for applicants to submit and certify applications

ATCOG Staff Review and HSAC Recommendation for Funding.

After the grant workshop, ATCOG staff will provide each jurisdiction's representative(s) with an allocation amount. Projects can be submitted for that allocation amount only. Once all applications are received, the applications are reviewed by ATCOG staff to ensure completion and that all requested items are allowable. The HSAC reviews the projects to ensure all projects are in line with regional priorities (if applicable) and have met the regional eligibility requirement of 75% participation in the monthly ATCOG Communication Repeater Tests.

Applications are then prioritized via ballot based on several factors such as terrorism risks, current capability levels, and the described investment efforts to reduce existing capability gaps as described in the State Preparedness Report and the Regional Implementation Plan (which includes the Threat and Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment). Each HSAC member has plans and reports in possession and may bring these documents to the meeting for reference, but are not required. The committee's involvement provides an overarching knowledge of each jurisdiction within the region, which guides and aids the HSAC during the prioritization of projects. ATCOG's project

will be ranked as number (1) in the prioritization process and shall receive full funding. Any other special projects approved by the HSAC committee will be ranked as number (2) and so forth. In the event of a tie between two or more projects, the lowest rankings on each project involved will be dropped until the tie is broken. Any representative from the agency applying is prohibited from including his or her agency's project in the prioritization due to the conflict of interest policy in ATCOG's HSAC bylaws. All projects must be scalable. If the final regional allocation is reduced or increased by the State, all projects with the exception of ATCOG's project and other special approved projects (if applicable), will be reduced or increased proportionately. If the amounts of LETPA projects submitted do not meet the 25% LETPA requirement, ATCOG HSAC can increase the LETPA projects' amounts to meet the requirement.

Final Project Allocation. Following the committee meeting, the project allocation recommendation and prioritization results will be presented to the ATCOG Board of Directors for approval. Once ATCOG receives official notification of State approved projects, all applicants will be notified via email within three (3) business days.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENT

By ATCOG Board of Directors

The ATCOG Board of Directors may amend these bylaws at a regular or special meeting. The written text of a proposed amendment must be included with the notice of the meeting at which the amendment will be considered.

By Homeland Security Advisory Committee

The HSAC may amend these bylaws at a regular or special meeting. The written text of a proposed amendment must be recorded at the meeting at which the amendments is discussed and voted upon. The written text of a proposed amendment must be included with the notice of the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. An amendment adopted by the HSAC is not effective unless approved by the ATCOG Board of Directors.

Effective Date

An amendment to the bylaws takes effect when approved by the ATCOG Board of Directors unless the amendment specifies a later effective date. Copies of amended bylaws will be distributed to the HSAC members by the HSAC liaison.

Review

The HSAC shall review the bylaws annually to keep the document current. HSAC amendment recommendations shall be taken before the ATCOG Board of Directors for final approval. If upon review of the bylaws no amendments are deemed necessary, then no further action is required.

