

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (GAC) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

*Two GACs – one for Maine; one for New Hampshire

A. Policy Principles

See companion document.

B. Committee Composition

1. The Board of Directors appoints the GAC Chair and Committee members. Neither need to be Board members.
2. The state lobbyist and Executive Director are advisors to the GAC and will attend all meetings.
3. GAC membership will be a mix of individuals with expertise from the full range of elder housing options offered by LeadingAge ME NH members.
4. GAC membership will include a variety of disciplines – CEOs, CFOs, DONs, etc.
5. Maximum number of members: 7

C. Member Qualifications

1. GAC members may bring their perspectives as providers but their commitment is to the LeadingAge ME NH Policy Principles which emphasize the needs of Maine and New Hampshire's older adults vs. the individual needs of any provider.
2. Membership on the GAC is a significant commitment. Your attendance is expected at all meetings regardless of provider issue. Meetings may be called with very short notice.
3. The GAC seeks to be transparent and accessible to the full LeadingAge ME NH membership. GAC members are expected to reach out to members to solicit input as needed. GAC members shall report this feedback to the E.D. for compilation and report out at GAC meetings.
4. GAC members must be collaborative by nature, open-minded and have the ability to take a big picture perspective and a long view.
5. Any member who is unable to act collaboratively or civilly will be asked by the Chair of the Board of Directors to step down from the Committee.

D. Committee Process

1. Input from Members

- a) The GAC hosts an all-member meeting with the State Lobbyist before the legislative session starts. They lead a discussion about issues of concern and inquire whether members would

like to work proactively on legislation, rules/policies, relationships with DHHS, etc. – in addition to tracking bills filed by others.

- b) If any member (including any member of the GAC) would like LeadingAge ME NH to file a bill or align with another group/organization taking the lead on a bill, he/she must submit a written **Advocacy Action Request** to the GAC.
- c) As they are published, the State Lobbyist adds any bill he/she feels could be of interest to members to the **Bill Tracking Worksheet**. Also, any member may ask that a published bill be added to the list. The GAC seeks member feedback via email and/or conference calls as to the relevance of these bills, making notes on the Bill Tracking Worksheet.

2. Review by the GAC

- a) The GAC has a standing schedule of bi-weekly meetings during the legislative session (and may meet more frequently if needed) to review any Advocacy Action Requests and/or new Bills on the Tracking Worksheet. When considering what LeadingAge ME NH's position should be, they subject the requests/bills to the following screening questions:
 - i. ***Would taking this position be consistent with our policy principles?***
 - ii. ***If primarily a business operations matter, what is the level of impact on the member(s)?*** (i.e. Will this specific issue severely undermine the member(s) ability to operate, or could the issue be understood as “part of doing business” and/or in the best interest of older adults?)
 - iii. ***Will a positive outcome serve only a narrow band of members – i.e. a single provider type or a single member?***
 - iv. ***Is now the right time?*** (i.e. Is the climate right?)
 - v. ***What would be the resource demands?*** (e.g. staff & lobbyist time, data collection, research, \$ to hire a consultant/advisor.)
 - vi. ***Are we the best to lead (or should we support via a coalition or other associations)?***
 - vii. ***If we are successful, what would be the scope and degree of impact?*** (Consider # of providers impacted, relative impact of new resources secured, # of older adults impacted.)
 - viii. ***Will our position create synergy with other advocates (including other associations to which our members may also belong) or conflict?*** (Recognize that conflict is not necessarily bad, but if we do not anticipate it, we could be blindsided.)
 - ix. ***Is there any headline risk?***
 - x. ***Would taking a position lead to “association fatigue”?*** (i.e. Are we moving on many fronts and thus our message could get lost in the din or irritate lawmakers, policymakers, etc.?)

3. LeadingAge ME NH Position

- a) Preferably, the GAC arrives at consensus and makes a position recommendation to the Board of Directors (or if short notice necessitates faster action, the Executive Committee). If consensus is not achieved, the GAC reports a split decision.
- b) The Board or Executive Committee makes the final decision as to what position LeadingAge ME NH will take. After receipt of the GAC's recommendation, the Board or Executive Committee has 10 business days to meet and render a final decision. Such meetings may occur in person or via teleconference. A majority constitutes a quorum. The meeting may also occur via email discussion/vote so long as all members of the Executive Committee or Board vote on the matter under review.
- c) *NOTE: The Executive Committee may decide that an issue is too complex or controversial and that it should be discussed/evaluated with the entire Board. In these cases, the standard decision timeframe of 10 business days may need to be extended. Conversely, in emergency situations, such as a sudden bill amendment, a proposal may go directly to the Executive Committee for their consideration.*
- d) Positions may include:
 - Oppose – LeadingAge ME NH opposes the item as presented/filed. If appropriate, testimony will be provided in opposition. The position may include a directive to work with interested parties.
 - Support – LeadingAge ME NH supports and if necessary and appropriate, provides testimony in favor. This position may also be stated as:
 - Support with LeadingAge ME NH amendments, or
 - Support contingent upon amendments being made by other parties.
 - No Position/Monitor Only – After review, LeadingAge ME NH neither opposes nor supports, but remains neutral. No testimony provided.
 - No Objection – LeadingAge ME NH will not oppose with testimony the item as filed.

4. Advocacy Strategy

- a) Once a decision is made to adopt a position on an issue, the GAC (in conjunction with the E.D. and lobbyist and any members offering special expertise) is responsible for crafting testimony, public communication, etc. Per the direction of the GAC, the E.D. issues Action Alerts, schedules emergency strategy calls, etc.
- b) If the underlying intent of a bill or proposal changes significantly, the GAC will seek input from members and possibly recommend a new position to the Board or Executive Committee who would then render a new decision.
- c) The E.D. facilitates information sharing with all members -- at least a monthly email providing status updates.