

Advocacy Committee Guidelines - August 1st, 2025

Louisville Chamber Advocacy Committee

The mission of the Louisville Chamber Advocacy Committee is to guide the Chamber's voice on local and regional issues that impact the business community.

We focus on city policies, economic development, and community-wide initiatives that support a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient economy. Through thoughtful dialogue, cross-sector representation, and proactive engagement, we work to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Louisville's business community are reflected in public policy and decision-making.

Operating Guidelines

Effective June 2025 (TBD - Pending advocacy committee approval and the guidelines submitted to the board for approval)

1. Committee Purpose

The Louisville Chamber Advocacy Committee provides a platform for informed discussion and guidance on local policy, economic development, and community initiatives. The committee represents the voice of Chamber members across sectors and supports the Chamber's mission to connect, advocate, and promote.

The committee will prioritize business and civic issues that impact multiple sectors, industries, or member groups. While the committee generally does not take positions on individual business matters, it may consider such cases when the issue highlights broader trends, challenges, or precedents that could affect the wider business community.

2. Structure and Membership

- The Advocacy Committee shall consist of up to 15 voting members, as follows with representatives from the Chamber membership, ideally representing a broad range of industry sectors and geographic representation.

- Professional Services
 - Finance & Legal
 - Home, Garden, Construction & Real Estate
 - Healthcare, Health & Wellness, Beauty & Fitness
 - Hospitality
 - Retail, Entertainment & Arts
 - Community & Nonprofit
 - Downtown
 - CTC
 - South Boulder Road
 - McCaslin / Cherry
 - At least 2 Chamber Board members, one of whom shall serve as Chair of the committee
 - The Chamber will make best efforts to seat representatives from each of the above sectors. However, in cases where full sector representation is not immediately possible, the committee may include multiple representatives from the same sector. The committee may begin operation with a minimum of 5 member representatives plus 2 Chamber Board members (7 voting members total).
 - Non-voting participants include:
 - 1 City of Louisville representative (e.g., Economic Vitality Department or City Manager's Office), who may provide insight or context and help vet agenda items. This representative may be asked to step out during sensitive discussions but will have the opportunity to present factual background beforehand.
 - The Louisville Chamber Executive Director, who serves as a non-voting member and may designate a staff representative to attend in their place when needed.
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3. Terms, Appointments & Agenda Priorities

- All committee appointments must be approved by the Chamber Board.
- Committee members will serve **two-year term**, with the possibility of renewal each year.
- **Reappointment is not automatic.** Committee members must be **nominated for renewal by the Committee Chair** and approved by the Chamber Board. Members will be informed by Chamber staff each fall whether they are being considered for reappointment for the following year.
- The Chair, a Chamber Board member, may nominate new committee members for Board approval.

- In the case of resignation or employment transition, the member is expected to notify the Chamber. Continued membership will be reviewed to maintain balanced representation.
 - Key civic and planning programs will be reviewed as part of committee discussions and updates, including:
 - Louisville Revitalization Commission (LRC)
 - Economic Vitality Committee (EVC)
 - Northwest Chamber Alliance (NWCA)
 - Front & Center Advisory Group
 - City of Louisville
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - City Council
 - Policy Changes
 - Code, zoning, signage where effects more than one business
 - Other city, county or state-level topics impacting Louisville's business community
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4. Responsibilities of Committee Members

- Be a Louisville Chamber member in good standing.
 - Attend at least 75% of scheduled committee meetings or send comments to actively participate. Come prepared by reviewing materials in advance. Offer constructive, respectful input during discussions.
 - Help formulate policy recommendations and advocacy strategies. Represent the broader interests of their industry sector and the Louisville business community, rather than advocating solely for their own business or individual concerns. Positively represent the committee within the community and Chamber network.
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5. Meetings

- The committee will meet **monthly**, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Meeting agendas will be set collaboratively by the **Chair and Chamber Executive Director**, with support from city staff where helpful.

The agenda will aim to be **distributed a week before the meeting but at least 48 hours prior**. Any items members wish to add to the agenda must be submitted in advance and are subject to **approval by the Chair at the start of the meeting** to ensure focus and use of time.

- Non voting guests or guest speakers may be invited to present and share important information.
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6. Communications Policy

- All discussions should be approached with openness and confidentiality.
 - Committee members will refrain from attributing specific comments to individuals without consent.
 - Members should not speak to the media or public on behalf of the committee unless authorized by the Chamber.
 - Policy recommendations are advisory and not final until reviewed and approved by the Chamber Board.
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7. Advocacy Engagement

- Committee members are encouraged to attend or participate in Chamber-hosted advocacy programs, policy roundtables, and civic engagement events throughout the year.
 - The committee is encouraged to engage in public policy discussions that affect the broader business environment, such as Comprehensive Plan updates, zoning reform, signage regulations, and other systemic issues.
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8. Voting and Public Commentary

Voting Procedures

- Only designated voting members of the Advocacy Committee may participate in formal votes.
- A quorum shall be defined as a **simple majority of the current appointed voting members**.
 - For example 9 voting members, quorum is 5.

- If operating with fewer members (e.g., 7 voting members), quorum is the majority of those seated.
- Votes require a **simple majority** to pass.
- Voting may occur during meetings or via electronic means when needed and approved by the Chair.
- Members may abstain from voting but are encouraged to briefly explain their abstention.

In the event of a **tie vote, the motion does not advance**. The Chair may call for a re-vote at a future meeting. The Executive Director will not serve as a tiebreaker.

Public Commentary Process

- If the Advocacy Committee wishes to make a **formal public comment or position statement**, the committee must first pass a motion to do so by majority vote.
- The Chair will then present the recommendation to the Chamber Board for review and approval.
Only upon **Board approval** may the committee issue a public comment on behalf of the Louisville Chamber.
- Individual support by the Chamber Executive Director for specific applications or projects is not considered a formal committee endorsement.

Transparency and Member Communication

- The Advocacy Committee and Chamber Board may adopt official policy positions on behalf of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce without a full membership vote. However, when possible, the Chamber will make a good faith effort to inform members in advance of any formal public commentary. This may include posting an update on the Chamber website, including a note in the member newsletter, or notifying members through other communication channels.
- In cases where an issue is particularly high-profile, divisive, or could significantly impact the business community, the Advocacy Committee or Chamber Board may elect to gather input from the membership prior to taking a position. This may be done via survey, listening session, or informal outreach, at the discretion of the Chair and Executive Director.

9. Member Conduct and Removal

The Louisville Chamber is grateful for the time and expertise that Advocacy Committee members contribute. To ensure the committee remains effective and focused, members are asked to participate actively, represent the broader business community, and approach discussions in good faith.

If a member is unable to meet participation expectations, or if concerns arise about conduct that may not align with the committee's purpose, the Chair and Executive Director will reach out to discuss the situation directly with the member.

In cases where issues cannot be resolved, the Chair and Executive Director may recommend a change in committee membership to the Chamber Board for final review and approval. Committee members will always be given an opportunity to share their perspective as part of any discussion.

The goal is always to maintain a respectful, collaborative environment that supports all volunteers and the Chamber's mission.