

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARDS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

PRESENTED BY RACHEL COLE-JANSEN
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, ABODE
BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA



Sustainable Solutions to Homelessness

OVERVIEW

Who We are

Why LEAB?

Recruitment

Engagement

Meeting Structure

Feedback Integration

& Implementation

Case Example: Grievance Policy

Q&A



WHO WE ARE

Abode's mission is to end homelessness by assisting low-income, un-housed people, including those with special needs, to secure stable, supportive housing; and to be advocates for the removal of the causes of homelessness.

Abode provides services throughout the Bay Area, including San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Napa, and Solano Counties.



WHY ARE LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARDS IMPORTANT?

LEABs can guide us in how we carry out our mission – both in launching new projects, as well as refining existing efforts.

LEABs can direct us in identifying our "blind spots" - places where quality improvement is necessary, but less visible to service providers

Can engage in a wide variety of quality improvement efforts – from updating trainings to improving educational materials to enhancing policies

LEABs help us serve in a way that more closely aligns with the interests, needs, and goals of the community

LEABs empowers people with lived experience to serve on a board that advises on services that people like them receive: lived experience voice matters.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR INCORPORATING LIVED EXPERTISE

- Represent diversity across geographic, demographics, and program types
- Stipend provided: lived experience is lived expertise, and time spent offering deep feedback should be valued accordingly
- Accommodations must be made for meaningful inclusion: include technology & IT help for remote participation, food, translation/interpretation services, and staff support
- Feedback calendars are set jointly between service providers and LEAB, balancing the needs of all stakeholders – agendas are not solely set by staff
- LEAB feedback sessions should incorporate service providers – who then sponsor the feedback integration process and ensure the feedback is meaningfully implemented



CASE EXAMPLE FROM ABODE: GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

- Feedback area requested by LEAB
- Feedback offered by LEAB expanded beyond the initial scope of feedback request...
 - ...but during the feedback integration process, leadership recognized the depth and breadth of changes requested by LEAB would substantially improve agency function
- Action items included:
 - Creation of public-facing grievance submission form on Abode's website, with third party review of submitted grievances (separate from the program(s) involved)
 - Expansion of grievance policy visibility across agency sites and during program experience
 - Creation of automated grievance resolution process dashboard with oversight by Compliance, monitored as part of risk management workgroups
 - Expanded training for direct service staff around grievance and complaint processes, and separate training specific for supervisors and managers on grievance resolution process
- Two year feedback solicitation to implementation timeline, with an additional year (ongoing!) for evaluation
 - **Meaningful implementation can take time.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION



GO TO LEAB PAGE ON ABODE'S WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://ABODE.ORG/LEAB-BOARD](https://abode.org/leab-board)



QUESTIONS & REQUESTS FOR OUR
OPERATIONS MANUAL TO
LEAB@ABODE.ORG