

Potential Alternative Organization Structures for AHSS

At their retreat, the Alliance Executive Committee requested some preliminary research and options into alternative organizing structures that might serve as an alternative, or complement, to the LIO structure and provide AHSS with the potential for more independence from the Puget Sound Partnership and increased ability to raise money and fund priority projects. The following preliminary options were discussed: 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), Council of Governments, Lead Entity. The table below describes each option briefly and provides some examples. Council feedback is requested on:

- Additional notes or pros and cons of each option
- Additional options to consider or research
- Pros and cons, in general, of an alternative organization structure for AHSS

	Description	Example	Notes
501(c)(3)	Nonprofit organization that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service to be tax-exempt under the terms of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.	HCCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May apply for private and public grants • Creating a nonprofit organization takes time, effort, and money. Because a nonprofit organization is a legal entity under federal, state, and local laws, it may be necessary to consult an attorney, accountant, or other professional. • Would need to establish governance and decision making structure (e.g. Board, Director, other?) and participation structure for government.
501(c)(4)	A social welfare organization, such as a civic organization or a neighborhood association. An organization is considered by the IRS to be operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare if it is primarily engaged in promoting the common good and general welfare of the people of the community.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted to engage in lobbying to achieve its social welfare purpose • May apply for private and public grants • Would need to establish governance and decision making structure (e.g. Board, Director, other?) and participation structure for government.
Council of Governments	A multi-purpose association of governments that delivers federal, state and local programs while fulfilling its primary function as a regional planning organization. COGs are accountable to their membership - the local units of government within that region. Conceived in the 1960s, COGs were	HCCC Cowlitz-Wahkiakum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires legislative endorsement • May apply for private and public grants

	established under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) chapter 36.64.080 for the “purpose of studying regional and governmental problems of mutual interest and concern.” The role of COGs has evolved with changing dynamics within federal, state and local government, as well as the growing awareness that within a region, entities must work together to resolve economic, infrastructure, social and environmental issues.		
Lead Entity	<p>Lead entities are local, watershed-based organizations that develop local salmon habitat recovery strategies and then recruit organizations to do habitat protection and restoration projects that will implement the strategies. Lead entities perform an essential role in salmon recovery in Washington State. Established in law (Revised Code of Washington 77.85), lead entities consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lead entity coordinator (usually a county, conservation district, or tribe) • A committee of local, technical experts • A committee of local citizens • A lead entity grant administrator (usually county, conservation district, tribe, or regional organization). 	<p>HCCC (see RCW)</p> <p>West Sound Watersheds Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening governments can designate the lead entity as well as the geographic boundaries • May apply for private and public grants