



Contents

Federation Bylaws Template Overview

Appendix A: Model bylaws

Appendix B: Federation bylaws checklist

Two methods for submission of bylaws:

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Federation Bylaws

Template Overview

Whenver a group of people gather for the purpose of supporting a common objective, there is a need for a document that describes the structure and flow of authority of that organization. That document is traditionally titled the “bylaws.” Some groups supplement the bylaws with a document termed “standing rules,” which provides details and outlines the various processes listed in the bylaws, but is subordinate to the bylaws and cannot conflict with them.

A NARFE federation is such a group and, therefore, needs to have a set of bylaws that describes its structure and explains the duties and authority of the federation leaders. Appendix A is a sample set of bylaws that, once the blanks [] are filled in, could sufficiently serve a federation.

Federations should review the sample bylaws (Appendix A) as well as the federation bylaws checklist (Appendix B). You may discover checklist items that your federation’s bylaws do not include but should. Conversely, you may find items in your federation’s bylaws that do not appear in the checklist and can be considered for removal.

Some organizations follow the traditional style of producing two documents—a constitution and a set of bylaws. The rationale was that the constitution would describe the most important aspects of the organization and would be harder to change in comparison to the bylaws. However, this is an outdated practice. Combining the constitution and the bylaws into a single document negates the requirement for producing two documents with each revision.

The universe of federations, fifty-four in number, is very diverse. California has fifty-three congressional districts while a few federations have only one. Some federations are small with many highways that can be driven top to bottom in an hour and with other federations that journey could take days or can’t be completed by automobile. Forty-three percent (43%) of our federations have a total membership that is below 1700 members, several with only 3 or 4 chapters. Travel distances and cost as well as other budget parameters will drive the structure of the federation. One size does not fit all. **We should strive to provide the maximum fulfillment of members’ needs at a reasonable cost with the minimum amount of bureaucracy.** **The goals of every federation include organizing effective communication with all elected officials that affect our members, supporting the human resource needs of the members, and helping the organization grow through recruiting of new members.**

The template has been developed to simplify the time required to process and to help recruit new officers so an individual does not make a career of serving in the same NARFE office too long. Reasonable terms and time served can make or break an organization. Succession planning is encouraged to the extent possible.

Dues go to whichever chapter a member chooses, even if in another state. Federation 10% funds follow Chapter Membership; for National Members, their NARFE HQ membership database address rules where the 10% funds go.

If affiliated with a federation, the chapter is subject to paying the federation a “per capita” amount. The affiliated chapters should have an expectation of receiving unique services to benefit the chapters’

members (recruiting, legislative support for contacting national and local offices, training, leadership recruitment, etc.).

The minimum number of officers to run a federation is two: president and secretary/treasurer. Better might be three officers: A president, secretary and treasurer OR a president, secretary/treasurer, and a vice president. This is dependent on the number of federation members who are available and willing to serve. It is expected that larger federations will have a lot more positions.

Although officers' duties are more detailed in the NARFE Chapter and Federation Officers' manual (F-10), this template enumerates only the minimum duties required of officers. The federation may consolidate as many duties that are appropriate and are encouraged to develop a set of procedures or guidelines in a separate federation document that is specifically designed as the "how to" for all activities and positions of the individual federation.

The ability and desire to serve, as well as budget limits should dictate the maximum number of other officers the federation can elect or appoint; but that is the decision of the federation members.

Voting methods should be made known to all individual members in the federation. The nominating committee should be appointed at the beginning of the federation new year when officers are installed and complete their work prior to the creation of a ballot. If the ballot is provided at an annual meeting for voting, nominations from the floor are appropriate. The procedures that the nominating committee will use should be available to all members. Internal procedures for nominations, voting, ballot design and procedures, not in conflict with NARFE guidelines, should be developed by each federation. The federation process for nomination of officers has to be open to everyone in the federation, including National Only members. At this time, NARFE headquarters does not require that chapters or federations provide a written ballot to every member. Every member must be notified that there is an annual meeting and the details, including that the nominating committee will make a report of nominees and that additional nominees may be added at that meeting.

The NARFE Secretary/Treasurer (natsectreas@narfe.org) and the Headquarters Office of Governance Operations staff (fedchpsrvcs@narfe.org) are available to assist as needed.

APPENDIX A: NARFE FEDERATION BYLAWS TEMPLATE

[STATE] _____ FEDERATION BYLAWS

Please note: Where brackets appear, fill in appropriate information.

Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the [STATE] _____ Federation of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE).

Article II. PURPOSES

The purposes of the federation are to promote the aims and objectives of the association and ensure that its chapters' and members' concerns are presented to the NEB. The bylaws of the federation shall not be in conflict with the national association bylaws. The federation shall not enter into activities, arrangements, or agreements that conflict with programs or activities of NARFE.

Article III. MEMBERS

Section 1. Eligibility

A federation shall be composed of members belonging to chapters chartered within its borders and national members residing within its borders. Only one federation will be authorized within any one state, the District of Columbia, territory or possession of the United States or foreign country. A chapter of NARFE members approved by national NARFE may apply to be an affiliated chapter in the federation. The appropriate district/ area vice president or other officer designated by the federation executive board/ committee shall assist and advise the members in organizing, electing officers, preparing bylaws or other steps necessary to obtain a charter from NARFE and to function as an affiliated chapter of the federation.

Article IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Elected Officers

The elected officers shall be president, executive vice president, area or district/ area vice presidents (if applicable); secretary, treasurer (or secretary/ treasurer) elected from NARFE Federation voting members.

Section 2. Terms and Term Limits

Terms shall begin at the close of the meeting at which those elected are announced, and continue for a term of up to [xx] _____ years or until a successor is elected and assumes office. A short period for transition allows for records transfer.

Section 3. Duties of Officers

A. The president shall preside at meetings of

the executive board, executive committee (if applicable), and federation, serve as the official spokesperson for the federation, shall appoint with approval of the executive board a membership, legislative (national and state, if available), nominating and audit committees, serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating and audit committees, and perform other such duties specified in these bylaws, the parliamentary authority, and any rules adopted by the executive board.

- B. The executive vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president, as specified in these bylaws, the parliamentary authority, and any rules adopted by the executive board.
- C. The secretary shall perform such duties usual to the office of secretary, as specified in these bylaws, the parliamentary authority, and any rules adopted by the executive board, and handbooks/ manuals published by national headquarters.
- D. The treasurer shall perform such duties usual to the office of treasurer, as specified in these bylaws, the parliamentary authority, and any rules adopted by the executive board, and handbooks/ manuals published by national headquarters.

Section 4. Appointed Positions

There may be positions appointed by the president and approved by the executive board such as chaplain, service officer, parliamentarian, at least one congressional district leader (CDL) for each [STATE] _____ congressional district, a senatorial leader (SL), or other committee as deemed necessary.

Section 5. Nominations and Election

- A. The nominating committee shall be composed of at least three members. The Nominating committee shall nominate at least one candidate for each elected office, and shall report the nominees to the executive board to determine the ballot method.
- B. The officers shall be elected by ballot vote. A majority of the members voting is required to elect. In case of a tie, the winner shall be chosen by lot. If there is only one candidate nominated for an office, that candidate shall be declared elected by acclamation without need for a ballot.

Section 6. Removal and Vacancy

A vacancy in the office of president shall be filled by the vice-president/ executive vice president for the unexpired term. A vacancy in any other office shall be filled by the executive board for the unexpired term. By a two-thirds vote of the entire executive board, any person may be removed from any elected office for

failure to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office, following a hearing and the affected officer being given the right to speak in his or her own defense.

Section 7.

The federation may by resolution require the treasurer (or the secretary-treasurer) to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties. The expense of obtaining a bond shall be paid from federation funds.

Article V. MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meetings

The federation shall hold an annual meeting or an annual conference that can include: one to two days of training and NARFE organization and legislative priorities, membership, recruitment, administrative skills (software and NARFE database review), business items such as election of officers, votes on resolutions and national or federation bylaws amendments, financial report, and such other reports as designated by the Executive Board. If preferred, in odd-numbered or even-numbered years, the federation may hold a meeting to provide for election of officers, votes on resolutions and national or federation bylaws amendments, financial report and such other reports as designated by the Executive Board, and additional training on NARFE's programs.

Section 2. Federation Conference

- A. When an annual meeting or conference is held, the call for the meeting shall be sent at least ninety days prior to the date of the meeting. The federation executive board shall determine the procedures to be used for planning federation meetings, selection process, fundraising, reports, program content and all other meeting arrangements. This should be recorded in a procedures or guidelines document and be available for use by federation members.
- B. The quorum for the meeting shall be [XX] _____ federation members.
- C. The voting body shall be composed of all federation members, each entitled to cast one vote on any matter brought before the meeting. Ballots may be distributed by mail, federation newspaper or electronic process (e-mail or on web site) in advance of the conference or at the conference. Upon request, a paper ballot will be made available. Allowance for write in candidates or nomination from the floor if voting is held at a meeting. The method of voting shall be determined by the executive board and included in internal federation operating procedures.

- D. The executive board may postpone or cancel a conference by a majority vote. All members shall be promptly notified of the postponement or cancellation with an explanation. In the event of a cancellation, the executive board may set a new date for the conference. If a new date is not set, new officers and any pertinent information may be distributed to all members by the most appropriate means as determined by the executive board.

Article VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Composition

At a minimum, the executive board shall consist of the elected federation officers, and one elected national only member. Additional voting members may be added with the approval of the executive board. Any others appointed to the board shall be ex-officio nonvoting members.

Section 2. Authority and Duties

The executive board shall have full power and authority over all affairs of the Federation between annual meetings or conferences. The executive board shall: (1) adopt an annual budget, by two-thirds majority vote, at the last executive board meeting of the preceding fiscal year; (2) establish if there will be a chapter per capita fee, the amount and what the fee will be used for; and (3) fill vacancies except for the office of president. In addition, the executive board shall determine by majority vote the fiscal year of the federation and the procedures for filing the appropriate IRS form for a tax-exempt organization.

Section 3. Executive Board Meetings

The executive board shall meet at least once per year at a time and place designated by the president after consultation with a majority of executive board members. Additional meetings may be held and scheduled at least 60 days in advance or at the call of a majority of the board members. A meeting may be canceled or postponed by a majority vote of the executive board. A quorum for a board meeting shall be a majority of the board members, three of whom must be officers.

The act of a majority of board members present shall be the act of the executive board. A vote of the board may be taken by telephone, ballot, mail, or e-mail. If a vote taken is not at a regular board meeting, the action taken shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting. The board can only take action by email if there is unanimous written consent. That means that every board member must send their consent to take this

APPENDIX B: FEDERATION BYLAWS CHECKLIST

Criteria are ranked in order of importance [1] Essential; [2] Important; [3] Good to know; [O] Optional

1. NAME

- [1] Include full name of federation
- [2] Include state initials
- [1] Part of NARFE association

II. PURPOSES

- [1] Purposes should be in compliance with the national NARFE Articles of Incorporation
- [1] Should reference federation objectives stated in the national bylaws and standing rules
- [1] No conflict with the association or its bylaws

III. MEMBERS

- [1] Indication that members must be composed of NARFE members in a chapter and national only members residing in its state borders.
- [2] Include a definition of a chapter affiliated with the federation
- [1] Assist and advise chapters on organization matters

IV. OFFICES

- [1] Identify specific officer positions – president, vice president(s), secretary, treasurer, secretary-treasurer
- [O] Treasurer bond statement
- [1] Officers must be voting members
- [1] Duties of each position
- [1] Nominations and election procedures
- [1] State when elected members assume office
- [1] State term length
- [1] Vacancy procedure for president and other positions
- [1] Power/authority

V. MEETINGS

- [1] Regular and other types of meetings
- [3] Location
- [1] Note when the annual meeting is held and agenda
- [2] Explain how special meetings are decided upon
- [1] Quorum (number)

VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD

- [1] Composition
- [2] Limitations in authority
- [1] List duties. If detailed, include in separate sections or an internal procedures handbook
- [1] Quorum
- [2] Executive Committee defined, if applicable
- [1] Establish fiscal year and file IRS returns

VII. COMMITTEES

- [1] Name each committee that is necessary for most federations to function
- [1] Differentiate between standing and special committees
- [1] Provide a general description of committees and areas of interest
- [1] List officers in each committee, if applicable
- [3] List any special qualification of committee members (if any)
- [2] Define the powers and limitations of each committee
- [1] Include a statement that the president shall be ex officio member of all committees except the nominating and audit committees
- [O] Outline how and when committees meet

VIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- [1] *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*

IX. AMENDMENTS

- [1] Procedure for proposing an amendment
- [1] Previous notice of amendments provided to voting members
- [1] State the number of days/weeks needed for previous notice
- [1] Two-thirds vote
- [1] Final approval obtained by National Headquarters before effective

X. DUES

- [1] State affiliated chapter per capita dues amount
- [1] Statement that dues, gifts, contributions to NARFE are not tax deductible by IRS

MISCELLANEOUS

- [3] Additional provisions, if applicable
- [1] Signature block for federation secretary and national secretary/treasurer
- [2] Federation IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- [2] Enclose a copy of other rules (if applicable)