

National Association of the Deaf BYLAWS

**As amended by the Council of Representatives
at the NAD 2026 Biennial Conference in San Francisco, California**

ARTICLE I. NAME

§ 1.1 Name

The name of the organization shall be the National Association of the Deaf, hereafter referred to as the Association.¹

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

§ 2.1 Mission

The object of the Association shall be to preserve, protect, and promote the civil, human, and linguistic rights of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America and U.S. territories.

§ 2.2 Membership

The Association shall be a federation of State Associations, Organizational Affiliates, Collegiate Student Affiliates, Junior NAD Chapters, and individual members, united in their commitment to advancing the Association's mission.

§ 2.3 Relationship

The Association shall work with its State Associations and Organizational Affiliates through their designated representatives to support and advance its overall mission. Resources shall be provided to affiliates upon request, while respecting their independence as separate entities.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

§ 3.1 Eligibility and Dues

Membership shall be available to individuals, State Associations, Organizations, Collegiate Student Organizations, and Junior NAD Chapters who support the mission of the Association. Annual dues for all membership shall be determined by the Board.

§ 3.2 Organizational Membership

§ 3.2.1 State Association Affiliates

One (1) State Association Affiliate per state, with fifteen (15) or more members, shall be recognized. The District of Columbia and the American territorial entities shall be considered states under this category.

§ 3.2.2 College Student Affiliates

¹ Deaf and hard of hearing is defined to include Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf Disabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened.

Fifteen (15) or more student members of a postsecondary educational program may organize for the purpose of forming a College Student Affiliate.

§ 3.2.3 Organizational Affiliates

Three (3) categories of Organizational Affiliate membership shall be conferred upon nonprofit, for-profit, and government entities upon payment of annual dues.

§ 3.2.3.1 Nonprofit Organizational Affiliates

Three (3) subcategories of Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate membership shall be available to bona fide national, state, and local entities aligned with the NAD mission.

§ 3.2.3.2 For-Profit Organizational Affiliates

Two (2) subcategories of For-Profit Organizational Affiliate membership shall be available to national and state for-profit entities aligned with the NAD mission.

§ 3.2.3.3 Government Affiliates

Government Affiliate membership shall be available to federal, state, and local governmental entities aligned with the NAD mission.

§ 3.2.4 Special Interest Group

Special Interest Group membership is granted to special interest groups with at least 15 active individual members that meet eligibility requirements, upon payment of annual dues.

§ 3.2.5 Junior NAD Chapters

Junior NAD Chapter membership shall be conferred upon groups of 5 or more middle and high school students engaged in scholarship, leadership, and citizenship activities, upon payment of the annual dues.

§ 3.3 Individual Membership

Three (3) categories of Individual membership – Regular, Senior, and Youth – shall be conferred upon payment of annual dues.

§ 3.3.1 Regular Members

Regular membership status in the Association shall be conferred upon residents of the United States and U.S. territories..

§ 3.3.2 Senior Members

Senior citizen membership status shall be conferred upon individuals at the age of 50 and beyond.

§ 3.3.3 Youth Members

Youth membership status shall be conferred upon individuals aged 18 to 30 years.

§ 3.4 Associate Members

Associate membership status shall be conferred to hearing individuals, upon payment of annual dues. Associate members shall not vote or hold office.

ARTICLE IV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

§ 4.1 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Association shall be composed of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and eight (8) Regional Board Members. In addition, the Board shall appoint up to two (2) Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members and two (2) Appointed Board Members. All board members shall be deaf or hard of hearing and residents of the U.S. or its territories.

§ 4.2 Elected Officers

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association shall be elected by ballot at the biennial national conference. No person shall be eligible to hold office who has not been for two years immediately preceding the election, a member of the Association as well as a member of a State Association Affiliate and/or Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate.

§ 4.3 Elected Regional Board Members

Regional Board Members shall be elected by ballot by delegates of their respective regions at the biennial national conference. No person shall be eligible to hold office who has not been, for the two years immediately preceding the election, a member of the Association as well as a member of a State Association and/or Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate. The United States shall be divided into four (4) geographical regions, and each region shall be represented by two (2) Regional Board Members, one of which is elected two (2) years apart from the other:

§ 4.3.1 Region I

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

§ 4.3.2 Region II

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

§ 4.3.3 Region III

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

§ 4.3.4 Region IV

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Midway Atoll.

§ 4.4 Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members

The Board of Directors shall select two (2) Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members.

§ 4.5 Appointed Board Members

The Board of Directors may select up to two (2) Appointed Board members for special expertise. Consideration shall be given to ensuring diversity balance for the Board as a whole. The selection shall be drawn from national multiracial/cultural deaf organizations dedicated to dismantling racism in NAD's operations and advocacy work. Appointed Board Members must be a member of the Association.

§ 4.6 Candidacy Requirements

The Election Committee shall receive completed candidacy forms, requisite background information, and proof of membership of a State Association and/or member-based Organizational Affiliate from prospective candidates for Officer and Regional Board Member positions no later than thirty (30) days prior to the biennial national conference to verify candidacy requirements. Names of official candidates shall be posted prior to the conference. If there are no prospects for a particular position, the Election Committee shall receive candidacy documents prior to the start of the Council of Representatives meeting. There shall be no nominations from the floor except in cases where there is not more than one (1) candidate running for the Elected Offices at the time of deadline in which nominations from the floor shall then be accepted.

§ 4.7 Terms of Office

§ 4.7.1 Elected Officers

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association shall be eligible to serve for no more than three (3) consecutive two-year terms.

§ 4.7.2 Elected Regional Board Members

Regional Board Members of the Association shall be eligible to serve for no more than two (2) consecutive four-year terms.

§ 4.7.3 Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members

Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members of the Association shall be eligible to serve for no more than two (2) consecutive four-year terms.

§ 4.7.4 Appointed Board Members

Appointed Board Members of the Association shall be eligible to serve for no more than three (3) consecutive two-year terms.

§ 4.8 Assumption of Office

Elected Board Members shall assume their respective duties immediately after the adjournment of the biennial national conference. Appointed Board Members shall assume their respective duties immediately upon accepting appointment by the Board of Directors, within 60 days after the biennial national conference.

§ 4.9 Board Meetings

§ 4.9.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall meet at least five times during each biennium. Places, dates, and times shall be established by the Board of Directors. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President or at least five (5) board members. The President shall conduct a poll in advance of the meeting to indicate that at least a quorum would be expected to be present for each such meeting. Video conferences shall be used for regular meetings when the need arises.

§ 4.9.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President or upon the written request of five members of the Board of Directors. At least twenty-four hours of written notice must be made before the meeting. Notice shall state the purpose of the meeting and no

business other than that stated shall be conducted. Video conferences shall be used for special meetings. The President and Secretary with a majority of the Board members shall be present.

§ 4.9.3 Quorum

A majority of the Board of Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Board members participating in a meeting by approved electronic means shall be considered present for purposes of quorum.

§ 4.10 General Duties

The Board of Directors shall have general control of the affairs of the Association between biennial national conferences, during which time they shall consider action on conference recommendations. The Board shall undertake actions to ensure the financial health and growth of the Association. The Board shall have the power to fill Board vacancies except for the office of President as they may occur between biennial national conferences, to appropriate money from the operating fund, and to ensure that the current expenditures of the Association shall not at any time exceed the regular income for each fiscal year.

§ 4.11 Duties of the Board of Directors

§ 4.11.1 President

The President shall be the chief spokesperson for the Association and shall chair business meetings of the biennial national conference and the Board of Directors, and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

§ 4.11.2 Vice President

The Vice President shall serve at any time the President is unable to serve, or when the office of the President becomes vacant and shall serve as chair of the Governance Committee.

§ 4.11.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the biennial national conference and meetings of the Board of Directors.

§ 4.11.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have charge of vested funds of the Association and shall serve as chair of the Finance Committee.

§ 4.11.5 Regional Board Members

Regional Board Members shall serve as liaisons between the Board of Directors, State Associations, and individual members within their region. Regional Board Members shall function as facilitators during conferences and virtual State Association meetings. Regional Board Members shall also act as a resource for State Associations and individuals in their geographical areas.

§ 4.11.6 Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members

Membership-Based Nonprofit Affiliate Board Members shall serve as liaisons between the Board of Directors and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizations, and work with the Board of Directors as a whole.

§ 4.11.7 Appointed Board Members

Appointed Board Members shall provide support to and work with the Board of Directors as a whole.

§ 4.12 Executive Session

The Board of Directors shall convene in executive session where circumstances warrant, i.e., when discussing matters of sensitive, personnel, or litigious nature.

§ 4.13 Resignations

Resignations must be submitted in writing to the President or the Secretary.

§ 4.14 Removal from Office

Elected and Appointed Board members may be removed after a due process hearing for failure to carry out their duties or for other good and sufficient reasons by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors present and voting.

§ 4.15 Conflict of Interest

All individuals elected or appointed to any office, including members of the Board and its committees, shall comply with the organization's Conflict of Interest Policy, as amended from time to time. Any actual or potential conflict shall be promptly disclosed. Individuals with a conflict shall recuse themselves from and shall not participate in or be present for deliberations or voting on the matter. The Governance Committee shall oversee compliance.

§ 4.16 Compensation

Members of the Board of Directors shall serve without receiving compensation except for standard expense reimbursement for costs incurred in the discharge of duties.

§ 4.17 Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors shall be empowered to appoint a Chief Executive Officer to serve as the chief administrative officer of the Association. The Chief Executive Officer shall report to the President of the Association and shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board.

§ 4.18 Indemnification

The Association shall indemnify any Board member or employee of the National Association of the Deaf for expenses actually incurred in defending any civil action, suit, or proceeding in which they are made a party by reason of their service, provided they are found not liable. Such indemnification shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which the individual may be entitled under the bylaws, any agreement, action of the Board or otherwise.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

§ 5.1 Biennial Meetings

The Association shall meet in a biennial national conference during each even-numbered year.

§ 5.1.1 Conference Site and Format

The Board shall govern the selection of conference sites and the determination of conference format for biennial national conferences. Conferences may be held in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. In-person conference sites shall rotate among established geographical regions.

§ 5.1.2 Call to Conference

The President of the Board of Directors shall issue an official call to the biennial national conference at least six (6) months in advance.

§ 5.1.3 Conference Format

The biennial national conference format and duration shall be determined by the Board of Directors at least nine (9) months in advance.

§ 5.1.4 Forums

All individuals in the United States and U.S. Territories, shall be able to participate in public polling of topics prior to and at the biennial national conference as needed.

§ 5.1.5 Council of Representatives

Delegates to the Council of Representatives shall conduct official business during the biennial national conference. The quorum at the Council of Representatives meeting shall be a majority of the voting delegates who have been registered with the credential committee as in attendance, provided that at least one-third of the State Associations and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliates in good standing are present. The Council of Representatives shall be composed of the following:

§ 5.1.5.1 State Association and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate Representatives

Proportionate Council of Representatives representation by State Association Affiliates and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliates shall be determined as follows:

- 15-199 members—up to two (2) delegates
- 200-399 members—up to three (3) delegates
- 400-599 members—up to four (4) delegates
- 600-799 members—up to five (5) delegates
- At least 800 members—up to six (6) delegates

State Associations and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliates shall provide a membership count for purposes of determining the number of delegates; Said membership count shall be conducted through a tally of members registered² with State Associations and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliates during the following time period between biennial national conferences, by March 15th of even numbered years.

§ 5.1.5.2 College Student Affiliate Representatives

The Council of Representatives shall include one (1) delegate from each College Student Affiliate of the Association.

§ 5.1.5.3 Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate Representatives

The Council of Representatives shall include one (1) delegate from each bona fide local, state, and national Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate of the Association, which meets eligibility criteria set forth by the Board of Directors. Further, Membership-Based Nonprofit

² The word “registered” is defined to mean “entered or recorded on an official list or directory.” Consequently, State Association and Membership-Based Nonprofit Organizational Affiliate membership databases are to contain the following information of its members: name, address, email, videophone number, and/or other forms of contact information. General sign up databases do not meet the criteria for registration data.

Organizational Affiliates which meet eligibility criteria set forth by the Board of Directors shall have proportionate representation in the same manner as provided for State Association Representatives.

§ 5.1.5.4 Special Interest Group Representatives

The Council of Representatives shall include one (1) delegate from each Special Interest Group of the Association.

§ 5.1.5.5 Junior NAD Representatives

The Council of Representatives shall include two (2) delegates from the Junior NAD chapter network.

§ 5.1.6 Regional Caucuses

Regional caucuses may convene at will during the biennial national conference. Caucuses shall be composed of state delegates and other delegates within the respective regions.

§ 5.1.7 Privileges

The Board of Directors and Past Presidents of the Association shall have the privileges of the Council of Representatives except voting.

§ 5.1.8 Virtual or Hybrid Biennial Meetings

If the Board determines that emergency or significant circumstances warrant, the biennial national conference may be conducted virtually or in a hybrid format through the use of available technology. Meetings of the Council of Representatives, Forums, and the election of officers, as provided in Article IV , Section 2, may also be conducted virtually or in a hybrid format.

§ 5.1.9 Term during the National, State, or Local Emergency

If there is a declaration of national, state, or local emergency, and where the use of technology becomes unavailable and the virtual biennial national conference cannot be held prior to the end of the even-numbered year, the officers of the Board of Directors and Regional Representatives shall continue to serve an additional two years.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

§ 6.1 Standing Committees

The standing committees of the Association shall be the Finance and Governance Committees.

§ 6.2 Ad Hoc and Special Committees

The Board of Directors may also form ad hoc or special committees as needed, with the chair of each to be appointed by the President.

§ 6.3 Committee Responsibilities

All committee chairs and members must be listed and accessible. All committees shall be required to file regular, monthly reports to the membership on the progress of that committee after reporting to the President and the Board.

ARTICLE VII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

§ 7.1 Robert's Rules of Order

Unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws, the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority of the Association.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

§ 8.1 Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council of Representatives present and voting at the biennial national conference, provided that amendments are submitted to the Bylaws Committee sixty (60) days prior to the conference, that copies are sent to conference delegates thirty (30) days prior to the conference, and that amendments are read during the conference and acted upon immediately thereafter. Amendments may be enacted only by the Council of Representatives.

§ 8.2 Suspensions

These bylaws may be suspended for a specific purpose by four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Council of Representatives present and voting.

ARTICLE IX. DISSOLUTION

§ 9.1 Dissolution of Assets

In the event that the Association is dissolved, after payment of all debts and liabilities, remaining assets shall be distributed to national 501(c)(3) organizations dedicated to advocacy on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing people, including the advancement and preservation of sign languages and Deaf culture.