



The Virginia Association
for Education & Rehabilitation
of the Blind & Visually Impaired

**Bylaws of the Virginia Chapter
of the Association for the
Education and Rehabilitation of
the Blind and Visually
Impaired**

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization will be the Virginia Chapter of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. It will be known in abbreviated form as Virginia AER.

The Virginia AER is a State Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, AERBVI. It is subject to all its rules and regulations.

ARTICLE II: Purpose

The purpose of the chapter will be to empower, encourage, and educate professionals who work in all phases of education and rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired children and adults in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The purpose shall be to render all possible assistance to promote, develop, and improve all phases of education, rehabilitation, and other vital human services to persons of all ages who are blind and visually impaired.

The following goals will promote this purpose:

Goal 1: Empower

Empower its members by providing a platform to communicate professional concerns, a collective voice to speak to issues in the field that impact members and those they serve, upholding professional standards, and offering grants to support creative projects to enhance their work and outreach.

Goal 2: Encourage

Encourage members by presenting awards for exemplary service, providing opportunities to share skill sets with colleagues, challenging professional growth by presenting at conferences and training seminars, and offering scholarships to people committed to entering the field of services for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Goal 3: Educate

Educate members by developing training, planning conferences, and facilitating collaborations with other individuals and organizations who impact the lives of children and adults with visual impairments.

ARTICLE III: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Membership in Virginia AER will be open to all persons, agencies, and organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia who are interested in services provided to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Membership is renewable and possible through the National AER Organization, not specific Chapter lines.

Section 2: Non-Discrimination

No person, agency, or organization otherwise eligible will be denied membership in Virginia AER based on age, gender, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

Section 3: AER Membership

All members of National AER residing or working in the Commonwealth of Virginia will automatically be members of the Virginia Chapter. Membership fees, otherwise known as “dues” for individuals and institutional membership, shall be established by the International AER Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV: Board Members

Section 1: Board Members

The Board of Virginia AER will consist of ten members: President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, an Immediate Past-President, four Board Members at Large, and a Student.

Section 2: Qualifications of Board Members:

Any individual voting member of Virginia AER shall be eligible to serve in any office. No two offices may be held concurrently by the same person.

Section 3: Terms of Service

- 3.1 The President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President will serve a two-year term in their respective positions. When a President-Elect is elected to office, the natural progression will be to move to the office of President and then to the office of the Immediate Past President.
- 3.2 The Secretary and Treasurer will serve a two-year term. The Secretary and the Treasurer may be re-elected to successive terms of office. The terms of Secretary and Treasurer shall be staggered by one year.

- 3.3 The Board Members at Large will also serve a term of two years. The terms of Board Members at Large should be staggered by one year.
- Add: 3.4 The Student Member will serve a term of one year. This is a voting position. The board will pay the Student Member's membership cost.
- 3.5 Board Members may be elected or re-elected to the same position in consecutive years.

Section 4: Board Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the President-Elect will serve the remainder of the term as acting President and, upon completion of said term, will assume the presidency in normal order. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President-Elect, there will be no replacement until the annual election, when a President-Elect will be elected. In the event of a vacancy in both the offices of President and President-Elect, the Immediate Past President will preside over the Board. The Board will then select a President from its own body or the general membership to serve until the next election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, Board Member at Large or Student Member the Board may appoint a replacement from its own body or the general membership for the remainder of the term.

Section 5: Duties of Members

- **5.1 The President** will preside over all meetings of the membership and the Board; will be the responsible executive officer and will administer the affairs of the chapter between meetings of the Board; and will appoint committees in accordance with the bylaws. The President shall be responsible for the board agendas and preside at all meetings of the membership and the Board. The President or appointed designee shall be responsible for the Virginia AER newsletter and all other social media practices. The President shall appoint appropriate committees to conduct Virginia AER's business. The President or appointed designee shall represent Virginia AER on any National AER committees or councils as appropriate. The President will maintain documentation to keep the chapter's 501(c)3 status current.
- **5.2 The President-Elect** will serve as assistant to the President and, in the absence of the President, will preside over meetings of the membership and/or the Board. The President-Elect will serve as Chair of the Virginia AER Conference Committee. The President-Elect may choose to delegate the role of Conference Chair but remains accountable for the Virginia AER Conference and will function as liaison to the Board.
- **5.3 The Secretary** will be responsible for the records of the chapter and will record the minutes of the Board meetings. The minutes will be prepared and disseminated to the Board at least one week in advance of the next Board Meeting. The Secretary will conduct routine correspondence and ensure all records are archived in an appropriate location. Add: The Secretary will be responsible for transmitting all records to the successor at the completion of his/her term. The Secretary will preside at Board meetings without the President and President-Elect present.

- **5.4 The Treasurer** will be the chief financial officer. The Treasurer will see that regular financial statements are prepared in accordance with recognized accounting principles. The Treasurer will report account balances and any significant account activity at each Board meeting for review. Both the Treasurer and the President will have access to all financial accounts. The Treasurer will submit a yearly financial statement to National AER as required. The Treasurer will also provide an annual financial report to Virginia AER members. The Treasurer will prepare the annual budget prior to September 1, with the budget period being from January 1 to December 31. The Board will review and approve the budget prior to presentation to the general membership. The Treasurer will preside at Board meetings without the President, President-Elect, and Secretary.
- **5.5 The Immediate Past President** will serve as an advisor/mentor to the President and will be a voting member of the Board. The Immediate Past-President will chair the Nominations Committee. The Immediate Past President oversees the Scholarship Selection Committee or delegates the role.
- **5.6 Board Members at Large** will provide current information and resources from the field. Board Members at Large will inform the Board about existing regional strengths and needs to better align needed training and support. Each Board Member at Large will chair or co-chair at least one committee.
- **5.7 The Student Board Member** will be a current higher education student who will provide a valuable perspective regarding the transition from education to employment. The Student Board Member will be a voting member.

ARTICLE V. Board Responsibilities

Section 1: Purpose

The Board will serve as the governing and policy-making body of the chapter between membership meetings.

Section 2: Composition

The Board will consist of 10 members. President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, 4 Members at Large, and Student Member.

Section 3: Votes

Each member of the Board will have the right to debate any question before the Board and other assembly of the members. Each Board member will have one vote. No Board Member will be permitted to assign their vote to another Board Member.

Section 4: Meetings

The Board will hold at least four meetings during each calendar year, with one of those meetings being held at the annual membership meeting. One meeting a year may be virtual and open to the Virginia AER membership. A board meeting may be called by three members of the Board. The Board may participate in meetings by various means, including in-person, telephone conferencing, or any form of electronic communication.

Section 5: Quorum

A quorum will be constituted by the presence of the most currently occupied seats on the Board. Half of the total number of board members must be present to be acceptable.

Section 6: Budget

The Board will review and approve the chapter's budget as the Treasurer recommends before presentation to the membership annually.

Section 7: Membership Communication

The Board will report its activities, decisions, and budget to the membership at each annual meeting of the chapter and by other means of communication, such as email. The president, or their designee, will maintain and administer a Virginia AER newsletter.

Section 8: Removal of Board Member(s)

One or more of the Board Members may be removed with cause. If there is cause, the member in question must be notified at least seven days before the meeting at which the vote will be taken. The member in question will have the opportunity to contest the removal. If a quorum of the Board agrees to the removal, then the Board member will be notified.

ARTICLE VI: Committees

In preparation for assuming office, the President will appoint committees. Each Committee should have at least one board member and can include additional members. All appointed Committee chairs will be current members of AER and are responsible for providing a report of activities prior to each Board meeting to the Secretary and/or President. Additionally, each Committee will submit a written report to the Secretary and/or President before the end of the term, including a list of Committee Members and a summary of the committee's activities for the year.

The Board approves the following standing committees:

Conference Planning:

Must include at least one board member. The President and President-Elect, or an individual they appoint, will serve as chairperson or liaison to the Board for conference-related matters. The principal task of the Conference Planning Committee is to plan and prepare, with the full assistance of the Board, for the next Virginia AER Conference, including a scheduled time for a board meeting and/or a general membership meeting.

Bylaws Review:

Bylaws review will consist of at least three members to review the bylaws every 5 years or as needed. If changes are needed, the Bylaws Review Committee will draft and submit proposed revisions and/or amendments to the Board. The Secretary will chair this Committee or choose to delegate to another member. The Secretary will also keep running dates of bylaw reviews and pass them on to the next appointed secretary.

Awards/Nominations:

The Awards and Nominations Committee will be composed of at least three members and will be responsible for polling the membership at least ninety days before the annual meeting to solicit nominations for all awards and citations to be presented to the chapter. The chair will submit all proposals to the Board at least thirty days prior to the presentation of the awards for Board approval.

In addition, this Committee verifies upcoming vacancies on the Board, recruits potential board members, and ensures the elections are held in accordance with the bylaws.

This committee is composed of at least three members. The purpose is to promote educational opportunities to members and explore and apply for grants pertaining to non-profit professional organizations. Based on Board approval, the committee may provide funding for training events, individual members attending conferences, and grants to support the implementation of special projects involving people who work in the field. The Treasurer will assist in monitoring the debits and the credits. Information learned by the members may be disseminated to the general membership through newsletter articles, training sessions or during the General Membership Meeting.

Scholarship Funding:

The Scholarship Funding Committee consists of one Board member and at least two additional members responsible for maintaining scholarship funds. The committee determines the amount of scholarship funding available for awards each scholarship cycle. The Treasurer will assist in monitoring the debits and credits. The Scholarship Funding Committee is responsible for ensuring that a request for scholarship applications is made.

Scholarship Selection:

The Scholarship Selection committee is composed of the Immediate Past President, or an individual they appoint, and at least two additional members. This committee sets timetables for posting scholarship applications, reviews submissions, and selects the recipient(s). Scholarship recipients are allowed to receive up to two scholarships.

Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP):

The ACVREP Committee will have at least two members and the President or his/her designee. This team will maintain [Registered Provider of Professional Learning and Education \(RPPL\)](#) certification and work with the ACVREP Coordinator on the Conference Planning Committee to ensure that requirements are met. The President or his/her designee will hold the RPPL Certification and will keep records and documentation accordingly.

ARTICLE VII. General Membership Meeting

Section 1: Notification

An annual meeting of the general membership will be held at a time and location determined by the President, Board, and Conference Planning Committee (if appropriate). The membership will then be notified of the time and place of the meeting.

Section 2: Purpose

The purpose of the annual meeting will be to promote the purposes of the chapter and the interests of its membership.

Section 3: Location

The Chapter will make every reasonable effort to schedule and hold its annual meeting in a location where all members can participate and be fully accommodated without discrimination based on gender, age, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

Section 4: Quorum

A quorum at the General Membership Meeting will be constituted by the presence of at least twenty percent of the membership who registered at the annual meeting during which the business meeting is being held.

ARTICLE VIII. Nominations and Elections

Section 1: Chair

The Immediate Past President will chair and appoint two additional members to serve on the nominating committee.

Section 2: Voting Members

All voting members will be eligible to vote for the offices of President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Board Members at Large and Student Member.

Section 3: Procedures

- 3.1. The Committee will solicit from the membership, via mail or email, nominations for each elective office or seat on the Board.
- 3.2. Before any nomination will be considered valid, the nominee will submit a written biography and interest in serving. The nominee and nominator's current paid membership will be verified by contacting the National AER office.
- 3.3. In the event that the membership does not submit at least two nominees for each elected office, the Nominating Committee will attempt to solicit two nominees for each elected position on the election ballot.
- 3.4. Elections will be held by ballot pursuant to the procedures established by the Board, either held prior to or during the annual meeting by mail or other electronic means.
- 3.5. Each voting member may vote for one (1) candidate for each elective office or board seat on the ballot.
- 3.6. The candidate receiving the most votes for each elective position will become the holder of the office on August 1st following the annual meeting. In the event of a tie vote in the election for any office, the election will thereon be decided by a runoff election.

ARTICLE IX. Chapter Relationships

Section 1.

Members of the Chapter will reside or work in the State of Virginia at the time of the application for membership.

Section 2.

The chapter will aid in planning and will support and participate in regional and international meetings sponsored by AER.

Section 3: Tax Status

The Virginia Chapter of AER is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including, for such purpose, the making of distributions to organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code). The President will uphold status and keep all documentation accordingly.

No part of the net earnings of the organization will inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization will be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501 (c) 3 purposes. No substantial part of the activities of the organization will be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization will not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization will not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code) or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code).

Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets will be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code), or will be distributed to the Federal Government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. However, if the named recipient is not then in existence or no longer a qualified distributor, or is unwilling or unable to accept the distribution, then the assets of this organization will be distributed to a fund, foundation, or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future Federal Tax Code).

ARTICLE X. Amendments

Section 1.

The Bylaws may be amended at any business meeting held during the annual meeting, by mail ballot, email ballot, or any other electronic communication involving the entire voting membership of the chapter.

Section 2.

The amendment will originate in one of the following manners: 1) submission by petition of at least fifteen voting members, or 2) submission by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 3: Notification

A proposed amendment will be submitted to the Board at least forty-five days prior to consideration by the Board. It will, in turn, be submitted to the entire membership no less than thirty days prior to the final vote by the membership.

Section 4: Adoption of Amendments

The adoption of proposed amendments requires a quorum and affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the voting membership present at a business meeting or the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of mail ballots returned or by the same two-thirds amount by a form of electronic communication.

ARTICLE XI. Budget and Fiscal

Section 1.

In addition to the membership fees, the chapter may accept gifts or donations from interested individuals or groups. It may conduct fundraising activities as approved by the membership and/or Board for the chapter's general purposes or special projects.

Section 2.

The Treasurer will manage all income. All monies will be deposited in accounts by the Treasurer and approved by the President and Board. All funds deposited will be reported to the President and Board.

Section 3.

Regular expenditures of the chapter will be made in accordance with a budget prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the Board. All checks for expenditures must be signed by the Treasurer and/or co-signed by the President if needed.

Section 4.

Ad hoc projects will be maintained under the direction of members of the Board with a clear delegation of who is responsible and with a summary of tasks and information submitted to the President and shared with the Board.

Section 5.

Any non-budgeted expenditure or amount(s) more than the approved budget will need the approval of the Board before payment will be considered.

ARTICLE XII. Parliamentary Authority

Section 1.

Except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws or rules adopted by the Board, the Chapter will be governed in all of its meetings by parliamentary law as contained in [Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised](#).