

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

Bylaws

Final Revised Version January 2018

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; and will be known in abbreviated form as the Virginia AER.

The Virginia AER is a State Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, AERBVI, and is subject to all of 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 following goals will be utilized to promote this purpose:

Goals

Section 1: Empower its members by providing a platform to communicate professional concerns, by providing collective voice to speak to issues in the field that impact members and those they serve, by upholding professional standards, and by offering grants to support creative projects to enhance their work and their outreach.

Section 2: Encourage members through presenting awards for exemplary service, through providing opportunities to share skill sets with colleagues, through challenging professional growth by presenting at conferences and training seminars, and through offering scholarships to people committed to entering the field of services for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Section 3: Educate members by developing trainings, 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. The membership of the Virginia Chapter will be open to all persons, agencies and organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia interested in services provided to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Memberships are renewable.

Section 2: Non-Discrimination. No person, agency, or organization otherwise eligible will be denied membership in the Virginia Chapter on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

Section 3: AER Membership. All members of AER National residing or working in the Commonwealth of Virginia will automatically be members of the Virginia Chapter.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section 1: The officers of the Virginia Chapter will consist of a President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and an Immediate Past-President.

Section 2: Terms of Office

- 2.1 The President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President will serve a one-year term in their respective positions. When a President-Elect is elected into office the natural progression will be to move to office of President and then to the office of Immediate Past President.
- 2.2 The Secretary and Treasurer will serve a two-year term. The Secretary and the Treasurer may be re-elected to successive terms of office, but no other officer will be re-elected to the same office until at least one year has passed following the date of expiration of that officer's term.
- 2.3 The four Board Members at Large will also serve a term of two years.

Section 3: 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 at which time there will be elected a President-Elect. 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 or Treasurer or Past President, The Board may appoint a replacement from its own body or the general membership for the remainder of the term.

Section 4: Duties of Officers - Subject to the control of The Board, all officers will have authority and perform such duties in the management of the chapter

- 4.1 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 to the bylaws.
- 4.2 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 act as liaison to The Board.
- 4.3 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 two weeks in advance of the next Board Meeting. The Secretary will conduct routine correspondence as directed by the President and/or Board and will see that records are transmitted to the successor at the completion of his/her term of office. The Secretary will preside at Board meetings in the absence of the President, and President-Elect.

- 4.4 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 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 - December 31. The Board will review and approve the budget prior to presentation to the general membership. The Treasurer will preside at Board meetings in the absence of the President, President-Elect, and Secretary. The Treasurer will maintain documentation to keep the chapter's 501(c)3 status current.
- 4.5 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.

ARTICLE V. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1: Purpose. The Board will serve as the governing and policy-making body of the chapter between meetings of the membership.

Section 2; Composition: The Board will consist of the officers of the chapter, the Immediate Past President, and four other elected members, known as Board Members at Large.

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 officer or Board Member will be permitted to assign his/her 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. A board meeting may be called by the President or by three other 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 a majority of the currently occupied seats on The Board.

Section 6: Board Member at Large Vacancies: In the event that any member-at-large of The Board is unable to serve for any reason, The Board will select from the membership, a person to complete the unexpired term of that at-large board member.

Section 7: Budget: The Board will review and approve the budget of the chapter as recommended by the Treasurer prior to presentation to the membership.

Section 8: Membership Communication: The Board will report its activities and decisions to the membership at each annual meeting of the chapter or by other means of communication.

Section 9: Removal of Board Member(s): Any one or more of The Board Members may be removed with cause. In the event there is cause, the member in question must be notified at least seven days before the meeting at

which it is voted on. 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

Section 1. The President in preparation for assuming office, will appoint Committees. All appointed Committee chairs and Committee members 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 prior to the end of the term that includes a list of Committee Members and a summary of the committee's activities for the year. The following standing committees are approved by The Board:

Committees:

- Conference Planning – may vary in size but will not have fewer than five members with the President-Elect, or his/her appointee, serving as chairperson. The principle task of the Conference Planning Committee is to plan and prepare, with the full assistance of The Board, for the next Conference on Visual Impairment including a scheduled time for a board meeting and a general membership meeting.
- Bylaws Review – will be composed of a minimum of three members and will review the bylaws annually. If changes are needed, the Bylaws Review Committee will draft and submit to the board, proposed revisions and/or amendments to the bylaws of the chapter. The Secretary will chair this Committee or choose to delegate to another member.
- Awards – will be composed of at least three members and is charged with the responsibility of polling the membership at least ninety days prior to the annual meeting for the purpose of soliciting 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.
- Communications – will be composed of 1 Board Member at Large and at least 2 additional members. This committee will take the lead on publications, public relations, a Virginia AER website and social media.
- Grants and Stipends - this committee is composed of at least 3 members. The purpose is to promote educational opportunities to members and to explore and apply for grants as they pertain to non-profit professional organizations. Based on Board approval the committee may provide funding for training events, and individual members attending conferences, and grants to support implementation of special projects involving persons who work in the field. The Treasurer will assist in monitoring the debits and the credits. Any new information learned by the members may be disseminated to the general membership in the form of newsletter articles or training sessions.
- Scholarship Funding - This committee is composed of one Board member and at least 2 additional members and is responsible for raising and maintaining funds for scholarships. The Treasurer will assist in monitoring the debits and credits.
- Scholarship Selection – This committee is composed of at least one Board member and 2 other members. This committee sets timetables for posting scholarship applications, reviews submissions, and selects the recipient(s).

- Education - this committee will be composed of at least one Board member and other members of the AER membership. The purpose is to promote training opportunities to those who work in the field beyond what is offered at the Virginia AER Conference.
- Nominations - this committee will consist of a minimum of three members with the Immediate Past President serving as chairperson. The Committee verifies upcoming vacancies on The Board, recruits potential board members, and ensures the elections are held in accordance with the bylaws.
- Legislative – will consist of a minimum of three members to include the President-Elect. This committee will monitor, communicate and disseminate state and federal regulations, bills, guidelines, etc. to the membership.
- Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP) – This committee will consist of a minimum of two members. 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.
- Recruitment – This committee will work closely with professional liaisons within our field to recruit new professionals to the field of visual impairment.
- Fundraising Committee – This committee will work to raise funds for the general operating fund and will consist of at least one board member and 2 other members. It will report its activities to the treasurer prior to Board meetings.
- Appointment of Professional Liaisons - The Immediate Past President may choose to appoint Professional Liaisons to provide input from the general membership regarding specific field concerns. Such Professional Liaisons would monitor their specific field and inform The Board of current issues relevant to Board decisions. Possible Professional Liaisons can include but are not limited to: RT, VR, TVI, O&M, DB, etc.

ARTICLE VII. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Section 1. 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. The purpose of the annual meeting will be to promote the purposes of the chapter and the interests of its membership.

Section 3. 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 on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

Section 4. A quorum at a regular business 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. The Immediate Past-President will chair and appoint an additional 2 members to serve on the nominating committee.

Section 2. All voting members will be eligible to vote for the offices of President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Members at Large.

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. Current paid membership of the nominee and the nominator will be verified by contacting the AER office.
- 3.3. In the event that at least two nominees for each elected office are not submitted by the membership, 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 July 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 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. Said chapter is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, 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).

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 distribute, or 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 by any other form of 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 of ~~Directors~~ at least forty-five days prior to consideration by The Board and 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. 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 and may conduct fund raising activities as approved by the membership and/or Board for the general purposes or special projects of the chapter.

Section 2. All income will be handled by the Treasurer. 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.

Section 4. Ad hoc projects will be maintained under the direction of The Board.

Section 5. Any non-budgeted expenditure or amount(s) in excess of the approved budget will need the approval of The Board before payment will be considered.

ARTICLE XII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. The Chapter, except as otherwise provided in the Bylaws or in rules adopted by The Board, will be governed in all of its meetings by parliamentary law as contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Section 2. Upon the opening of the annual membership business meeting and all board meetings, the President will announce the name of a qualified member who is at the meeting and who has agreed to serve as a Parliament