

# Virginia Chapter of the National Organization for Women

## By-Laws

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### SECTION 1. AUTHORITY

1. Virginia NOW shall be bound by the National NOW bylaws and National NOW policy and may take no action contrary thereto.
2. In the absence of national policy, Virginia NOW policy shall be established at the state conference.
3. Chapter policy shall be established by members of the individual chapters and shall not be contrary to National and Virginia NOW policy.

### SECTION 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of Virginia NOW shall be to provide a structure whereby NOW members of the Commonwealth of Virginia may work together to carry out the purposes and goals of the National Organization for Women Inc. Virginia NOW has been determined by the IRS to be a 501(c)(4) organization whose purpose is to bring women into full participation in society, promoting awareness of issues that impact women economically, legally, socially, and personally. We strive to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

### SECTION 3. MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person residing in Virginia who is a member of National NOW is automatically a member of Virginia NOW unless choosing otherwise. Any person who is a member of National NOW may choose to be a member of Virginia NOW regardless of their place of residence. Any person designating a chapter of Virginia NOW shall be a member of that chapter.
2. Virginia NOW welcomes participation from all individuals without regard to age, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender and/or sex, family life, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, and veteran status.
  1. No person shall be excluded from but no person shall receive preferential hiring on the basis of age, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender and/or sex, family life, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, gender identity or expression, marital status, citizenship, and veteran status.

### SECTION 4. STRUCTURE

Virginia NOW shall consist of:

1. Members;
2. The chapters within the state;
3. The Executive Committee, consisting of the state officers.
4. The Chapter Presidents and their officers.
5. The terms "Virginia NOW" and "Virginia Chapter of the National Organization for Women" and "Virginia Chapter of NOW" means all state members, chapters, State Council and Executive Committee.

### SECTION 5. OFFICERS

- **President**
  1. Shall be the executive officer of Virginia NOW;
  2. Shall help resolve conflicts within Virginia NOW;
  3. Shall foster communication within Virginia NOW;

4. Shall serve as or appoint a spokesperson for Virginia NOW in all matters except those under the legislative vice-president;
5. Shall preside at all meetings of Virginia NOW and the State Council;
6. Shall appoint members of the nominating committee, elections committee and any other committees.
7. Shall appoint the Treasurer with the advice and consent of the executive committee.
8. Shall appoint, with the advice of the state conference, the State Council, or the chapters of Virginia NOW, coordinators to implement programs, policies, or plans mandated by the state conference, the State Council, or the chapters;
9. President has the authority to appoint and retire certain executives as needed. The President may also hire at will for the needs of their chapters with advice of their executives and chapter officers.
10. Shall be, or appoint with approval of the State Council, the Chair of Virginia NOW PAC (Political Action Committee);
11. Shall serve as, or appoint with approval of the State Council, a representative to state coalitions; and
12. Shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee.

- **Executive Vice President**

(Previously known as *Secretary*)

1. Shall assume the responsibilities of the President if the President is unable to perform them. In the event of a vacancy in the position of President, the Executive Vice President shall assume the position of President until such time as regular elections are held.
2. Shall assist the President in the operation of the state organization; and
3. Shall manage state meetings, caucuses, and conferences.
4. Shall keep minutes of meetings of the executive committee, State Council and state conference;

- **Treasurer**

1. Shall be appointed by Virginia NOW's President with the consent of the officers.
2. Working with the President shall draw up a projected annual state budget for the year to be presented at the first executive committee meeting after the State Conference
3. Shall collect and deposit state funds, and disburse them in accordance with the approved budget upon receipt of duly approved vouchers;
4. Shall submit a Treasurer's report at each State Council meeting;
5. Shall prepare and submit financial transactions and reports for review by the executive committee.
6. Shall be a member of the Virginia NOW PAC, and
7. Shall provide guidance to the executive committee in management of financial resources of Virginia NOW.

- **Vice President of Communications**

1. Manages internal/external communication & correspondence within the state.
2. Shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining an Internet presence for Virginia NOW.
3. Shall accept and assist in updating amendments to the state bylaws for distribution to the membership;
4. Shall produce press releases and other press information for the President;
5. Shall produce/archive Virginia NOW's media and photography.
6. May also serve as Virginia NOW's webmistress;

6.a. Conducts day to day activity of website, Facebook, and Twitter, blog, etc., and their overall administration.

6.b. Is able to appoint and/or retire a Web Editor to assist any and all communication needs with the approval of the State President.

- **Membership Vice President**

1. Shall coordinate with existing chapters to identify and contact at-large members to expand existing chapters or convene new ones;
2. Shall assist chapters in development of programs and projects, including administrative development;
3. Shall assist chapters in communicating with other levels of NOW regarding chapter development;
4. Shall provide coordination, training and information to chapters on member recruitment and retention, including National and Virginia NOW recruitment incentives and procedures;
5. Shall report statistics on chapter and at-large membership to the State Council at least annually

- **Vice President, Legislative**

1. Shall coordinate with chapters on legislative matters, including providing training and legislative information on a regular basis;
2. Shall coordinate lobbying and testimony on state and national legislative issues;
3. Shall serve as or appoint a spokesperson on legislative issues;
4. Shall assist in drafting legislation in accordance with Virginia NOW's Legislative Agenda;
5. Shall communicate with National NOW about state and national legislative issues;
6. Shall be a member of Virginia NOW PAC (Political Action Committee) ; and
7. Shall maintain communication with the Senators and Delegates of the Virginia General Assembly, with Virginia's Congressional Representatives, and with other elected and appointed state officials.

## **SECTION 6. COMMITTEES**

- **Executive Committee**

1. Shall consist of the officers listed in Section 5;
2. Shall carry out Virginia NOW business between State Council meetings, and
3. Shall approve the annual state budget.

- **Special Coordinators**

The President may appoint special coordinators. Said special coordinators will have the responsibility for implementation, planning, organizing or otherwise facilitating special programs, meetings, or projects called for by resolutions or other policies at the state conference, by the State Council, or mandated by National NOW. Special Coordinators:

1. Shall regularly report to the executive committee or State Council on implementation of their designated duties; and
2. Shall present budgetary requests in accordance with procedures established by the Treasurer.

- **Other Committees**

1. An ad hoc committee performs time-limited functions not otherwise covered, and the chair and members are appointed by the President.
2. A Political Action Committee (PAC) may be established by the State Council, and shall follow the rules for such committees as established by the Virginia State Board of Elections.

## **SECTION 7. ELECTIONS**

The officers of Virginia NOW shall be elected by of those present at conference a by majority vote or electronic vote or when a successor is elected.

- Persons wishing to be a candidate for Virginia NOW office must forward their application to the officers of Virginia NOW, including the President, Executive Vice President, and Communications VP, either before the conference or at the conference before voting begins; these shall be distributed to members via email and at the conference.

- Executive officers may also be appointed and/or retired by the President if the need arises.
  - Special executive elections shall be announced to the rest of the executive community.
  - The appointed officers will be submitted to the next election and run for re-election.

## **SECTION 8. STATE CONFERENCE**

1. The state conference may be held annually, the date and place to be selected by the executive committee;
2. The officers will be elected at the state conference, state council meeting, or by electronic vote every other year;
3. State conference, through resolutions passed there, is the policymaking body of the state;
4. By-laws changes may be made at the state conference by two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; and
5. All voting Virginia NOW members present shall constitute a quorum.

## **SECTION 9. STATE DUES**

1. Amount of dues and dues structure is set by National NOW;
2. Chapters may collect new members' dues;
3. Chapters shall remit the National portion and state portion of the new members' dues to National NOW and the Virginia NOW Treasurer, respectively.

## **SECTION 10. PROCEDURE**

Except as herein provided, the latest edition of *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern all proceedings of Virginia NOW.

## **SECTION 11. AMENDING THE BY-LAWS**

1. These by-laws may be amended at the state conference, state council meeting, or by electronic vote by a two thirds majority of those members present and voting.
2. Any proposed changes shall be communicated to the membership prior to the state conference or state council meeting.

## **SECTION 12. REMOVALS AND SUSPENSION**

The State Council, by a two-thirds vote of its membership, may remove any officer, Board member, chapter charter, or membership if the Board determines the actions in question are contrary to the purposes and policies of Virginia NOW and injurious to the organization.

## **SECTION 13. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

In the event of a grievance, each side of the controversy will designate one arbitrator and these arbitrators will select another neutral arbitrator. Any person who has a conflict of interest may not serve as an arbitrator. The arbitrators will conduct a private hearing on the matter, at which all sides to the controversy shall be permitted to present their case. The arbitrators shall endeavor to resolve disputes to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. Should they fail to resolve the controversy, the matter may be referred to National NOW.

## **SECTION 14. DISSOLUTION**

1. The state organization may be dissolved only by approval by mail ballot of a majority of state members in good standing.
2. Upon dissolution of the state organization, the State Council shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the organization, dispose of all assets equally among the existing chapters of the state, or to National NOW if no chapters exist.

*Adopted by the Virginia NOW Bylaws Convention on August 14, 1977. Amended: 1978; August 4, 1979; June 7, 1980; June 13, 1981; June 19, 1982; April 1, 1984; April 5, 1986; April 5, 1987; May 21, 1989; June 15, 1991; May 2, 1992; June 5, 1993; April 26, 1998; June 1, 2002; July 15, 2006; April 16, 2011.*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Definitions**

**Voting member** is a person who holds a current, valid membership in Virginia NOW. This includes those who joined at the state conference. Please note there are different rules for voting at the National NOW Conference.

**Communication** and **notice** may include, but not be limited to, the following: in writing, telephone, email, website, Facebook, Twitter, or blog.

**Internet presence** includes Websites, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.

**Fiscal year** is for tax and other governmental reporting purposes. The fiscal year shall start on June 1 of each year, following the annual state conference.

**Program year** is the Virginia NOW activities year between state conferences.

### **Special Coordinators may be appointed to carry out the following duties:**

1. Implement communication with the leadership and general membership;
2. Maintain state records and state membership database; and
3. Serve as the editor of the state website and other social media;
4. Create and update state brochures and publications; and
5. Plan and lead Virginia NOW actions as may be determined by the executive committee, the State Council, or the state conference.

### **Financial Activities**

1. The budget year shall begin after the state conference and end at the end of the next state conference.
2. The budget shall be presented at the first executive committee following the meeting of each program/budget year
3. Disbursement of funds shall be by check signed by either (a) the state Treasurer or (b) the President in the absence of the state Treasurer.
4. An audit, defined as a review of the records of revenues and expenses, shall be conducted at the direction of the President annually.
5. The Virginia NOW Treasurer may serve as, or appoint with approval of the State Council, the Treasurer of the Virginia NOW PAC (Political Action Committee).

### **Virginia NOW Fundraising Activities**

Fundraising may be led by a special coordinator. Activities may include:

1. Develop and carry out fundraising activities;
2. Establish a committee to help raise funds when necessary; and
3. Assist chapters with fundraising training and information.

### **State Conference**

1. May be held annually.

2. Principles guiding state conference: The state conference is the main annual gathering of members and a time for renewing relationships and commitments as well as charting a future course. It is also an important recruiting opportunity. Given the diverse needs of membership and officers, we recognize the need to be flexible in dates and process. At all times, we strive to be inclusive and transparent. We will aim to hold the conference at sites throughout the state to create awareness in various places and involve more people.
3. At-large Virginia NOW members may caucus to elect at-large delegates to the National NOW Conference. Notice of this caucus shall be included in the state conference announcement.

#### **Preservation of Virginia NOW Records**

Preserving records of Virginia NOW and chapters is encouraged. Virginia NOW and chapter records are currently contained at the following locations:

- Library of Virginia, Special Collections, in Richmond.
- University of Virginia, Special Collections, in Charlottesville.
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in Blacksburg.

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*Approved September, 2015*