**Constitution of
the National Federation of the Blind
of Florida**

(Adopted 1989 revised 2003 and 2016)

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the National Federation of the Blind of Florida.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida shall be to advance the general welfare of the blind of Florida and of the nation; to function as an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind; to serve as a vehicle for collective action by the blind and the parents of blind children; to operate as a mechanism through which the blind and interested sighted persons can come together to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life of the blind; to promote the vocational, cultural, and social advancement of the blind; to achieve the integration of the blind into society on a basis of equality with the sighted; and through collaborative advocacy and joint expression take any other action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

**ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section One—Active Members**

Any person may become an active member of this organization by joining and paying dues to any local chapter of this organization, or by paying dues directly to the state treasurer and thus becoming a member-at-large. All active members shall have the privilege to chair and serve on committees, speak on the floor of conventions and chapter meetings, and hold state and chapter offices. Voting at chapter and state elections shall not be denied for any reason provided the member is in good standing prior to the opening of the meeting at which elections occur. A majority of the active members of this organization must be blind.

**Section Two—Affiliation**

Membership in this organization automatically establishes membership in the National Federation of the Blind.

**Section Three—Expulsion**

A member may be expelled for violation of this constitution, or for conduct unbecoming a member of the state Federation. Expulsion requires a majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the chapter of which he/she is a member, or, in the case of a member-at-large, by a two-thirds majority vote of the state board of directors. With either procedure, the presiding officials shall extend an invitation to the member whose conduct is in question to be present and to offer his/her perspective.

Any person who feels that he/she has been unjustly expelled from a chapter may appeal to the state board of directors. Members-at-large expelled by the board of directors may appeal to the membership at the next convention. In either case, if this appeal process fails to provide satisfaction, the expelled member may then appeal to the board of directors of the National Federation of the Blind, which may or may not, at its discretion, consider the matter and make a binding decision.

**ARTICLE IV: ELECTIONS**

Elections shall be conducted by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at an annually held business meeting. Election shall be by voice vote, standing vote, show of hands, roll call vote, or secret ballot. Secret marked ballots shall be required upon the request of a majority of the active members present and voting. There shall be no proxy voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote on the first ballot, the name of the person receiving the fewest votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees, and a second ballot shall be taken. This procedure shall continue until one of the nominees has received a majority vote from the active members present and voting.

**ARTICLE V: OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section One—Officers**

There shall be elected biennial, at the state convention in odd numbered years, a president, a second vice president, and a secretary. There shall be elected biennial, at the state convention in even numbered years, a first vice president, and a treasurer. The terms of these officers shall begin at the close of the convention at which they are qualified and elected.

The president is the chief executive officer of the organization. The duties of all officers shall be those ordinarily associated with their respective offices. The president the vice presidents must be blind.

**Section Two—Board of Directors**

The board of directors of this organization shall consist of the five (5) constitutional officers and four (4) additional directors. The four (4) directors shall be elected at the state convention in the same manner as that prescribed for the election of officers. Two directors shall be elected biennial in even numbered years and two shall be elected biennial in odd numbered years.

The board shall advise the president and shall conduct the affairs of the organization between conventions. The president shall have the authority to fill vacancies that may occur in one or more of the elected offices. Such appointments shall be valid until the next convention, at which time the active members, present and voting, shall vote to fill any remaining term of service. A majority of the board must be blind.

The board of directors shall facilitate communication among the organization’s members by providing summaries of business, legislative, and committee activities. Conversely, the board shall strive, whenever prudent and applicable, to obtain the perspectives of chapter and committee leadership on potential policies or procedures that will affect the mission or general operation of these entities.

**ARTICLE VI: CHAPTERS**

**Section One—Formation**

The board of directors shall proactively encourage the formation of chapters in the National Federation of the Blind of Florida. The board shall identify localities where the formation of chapters appears feasible, and shall subsequently strive to strengthen the local leadership of blind residents. The board of directors shall charter new chapters whose membership organizes and pledges to abide by this constitution and by the policies of the National Federation of the Blind. The chapter president and vice president(s) must be blind.

**Section Two—Reorganization and Dissolution**

Board of director mandated reorganization or dissolution of a chapter should occur only after the board of directors has carefully examined and documented all relevant issues from all perspectives. In every case, the board must establish and adhere to procedures that provide the chapter’s leadership with both due process and opportunities to confront accusations.

**Section Three—Chapter Assets**

If, for whatever reason, a chapter ceases to be a part of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida, its assets shall be given to the state treasurer to be held in trust for subsequent return to a reorganized chapter in the same area. If no chapter is reorganized in the area for a period of two (2) years, the assets may become the property of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida.

**ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

**Section One—Regular Meetings**

There shall be at least one general convention of the membership held each year. The time and place of this convention shall be determined by the board of directors.

The board of directors shall hold regular meetings at a time and place to be determined by the board. At least two-thirds of the members of the board must be present at any meeting to constitute a quorum in order to transact business. Board members may meet in person, by telephone, or by other electronic means. Board members may be polled on any question in person, or by mail ballot, telephone, or other electronic means.

**Section Two—Special Meetings**

The board may meet at the call of the president, or any three (3) board members, provided notice is given via postal or electronic mail at least seventy-two (72) hours before the convening of the meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES**

**Section One—Appointed Committees**

The president may appoint such committees as he/she, the board of directors, or the organization deems necessary, with the exception of the Nominating Committee. When a committee chairperson is not an elected member of the board of directors, one board member shall be identified as the board’s liaison with the committee chairperson.

**Section Two—Nominating Committee**

There shall be a Nominating Committee that has as its sole responsibility to present to the state convention a slate of nominees, for consideration by the membership, for each office and directorship open for election. The responsibility of the Nominating Committee in no way prohibits active members, present and voting, from nominating qualified individuals from the floor.

The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one delegate from each chapter. The name of the voting delegate shall be submitted either orally or in writing by the chapter president or secretary to the president or vice president of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida prior to the beginning of the Nominating Committee meeting. A delegate must be an active member of the chapter he/she is representing.

**ARTICLE IX: DUES**

The membership dues of this organization shall be determined by the board of directors. Annual dues for members-at-large are delinquent on March 1 of each year. Chapters that collect this organization’s dues in proxy with their own dues must remit the portion due to the state by March 1. Dues received in proxy by chapters after February 1 must be remitted in sixty (60) days from receipt.

**ARTICLE X: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank to be selected by the treasurer with the approval of the president. If the members so vote, the treasurer shall be bonded and/or an outside audit shall be conducted. All financial obligations of this organization shall be discharged by check, and signed by the treasurer, following written authorization of the president.

At the state convention, the treasurer shall report to the membership the true and accurate financial condition of the organization, including totals of all receipts and expenditures for the year, moneys received from fund-raising and gifts, and moneys held in reserve, endowment, or quasi-endowment.

**ARTICLE XI: AFFILIATION**

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida is an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind. It shall not merely be a social organization, but shall formulate programs and actively work to promote the economic and social betterment of the blind. This organization shall comply with the provisions of the Constitution of the National Federation of the Blind and with the provisions of the contract appearing on the back of the Charter of Affiliation issued to state affiliates by the National Federation of the Blind.

Policy decisions of the National Federation of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Florida (whether made by the national convention, the national board of directors, the state convention, or the state board of directors) are binding on this organization, and this organization shall participate affirmatively in carrying out such policy decisions. As a condition of affiliation, this organization agrees that the National Federation of the Blind has the authority to expel or discipline an individual member, and to expel or reorganize any state organization or local chapter.

The name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof is the property of the National Federation of the Blind; and this organization, if it ceases to be a part of the National Federation of the Blind, for whatever reason, shall forfeit the right to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof.

**ARTICLE XII: DISSOLUTION**

In the event of the dissolution of this organization, or if (for whatever reason) it ceases to be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, its assets shall be given to the National Federation of the Blind to be held in trust for a reorganized affiliate in the state. In the event that no affiliate is reorganized in the state for a period of two (2) years from the date this organization ceases to be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind may claim the assets as its own.

**ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended at any general session of a state convention of this organization by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the active members present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing and read at a previous general session of a state convention. All proposed amendments must be in compliance with the provisions of the Charter of Affiliation received by the state affiliate from the National Federation of the Blind and with the policies of the National Federation of the Blind.

**PLEDGE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND**

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.