The constitution of the National Federation of the Blind sets forth our mission and our structure.

Please note, our constitution was amended at the 2014 National Convention to create a chairperson of the board of directors. Our current constitution is below.

Article I. Name

The name of this organization is the National Federation of the Blind.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of the National Federation of the Blind is to serve as a vehicle for collective action by the blind of the nation; to function as a mechanism through which the blind and interested sighted persons can come together in local, state, and national meetings to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life for the blind; to provide a means of collective action for parents of blind children; 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 to take any other action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

Article III. Membership

**Section A.**The membership of the National Federation of the Blind shall consist of the members of the state affiliates, the members of divisions, and members at large. Members of divisions and members at large shall have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities in the National Federation of the Blind as members of state affiliates.

The board of directors shall establish procedures for admission of divisions and shall determine the structure of divisions. The divisions shall, with the approval of the board, adopt constitutions and determine their membership policies. Membership in divisions shall not be conditioned upon membership in state affiliates.

The board of directors shall establish procedures for admission of members at large, determine how many classes of such members shall be established, and determine the annual dues to be paid by members of each class.

**Section B.**Each state or territorial possession of the United States, including the District of Columbia, having an affiliate shall have one vote at the national convention. These organizations shall be referred to as state affiliates.

**Section C.**State affiliates shall be organizations of the blind controlled by the blind. No organization shall be recognized as an "organization of the blind controlled by the blind" unless at least a majority of its voting members and a majority of the voting members of each of its local chapters are blind.

**Section D.** The board of directors shall establish procedures for the admission of state affiliates. There shall be only one state affiliate in each state.

**Section E.**Any member, local chapter, state affiliate, or division of this organization may be suspended, expelled, or otherwise disciplined for misconduct or for activity unbecoming to a member or affiliate of this organization by a two‑thirds vote of the board of directors or by a simple majority of the states present and voting at a national convention. If the action is to be taken by the board, there must be good cause, and a good faith effort must have been made to try to resolve the problem by discussion and negotiation. If the action is to be taken by the convention, notice must be given on the preceding day at an open board meeting or a session of the convention. If a dispute arises as to whether there was "good cause," or whether the board made a "good faith effort," the national convention (acting in its capacity as the supreme authority of the Federation) shall have the power to make final disposition of the matter; but until or unless the board's action is reversed by the national convention, the ruling of the board shall continue in effect.

Article IV. Officers, Board of Directors, and National Advisory Board

**Section A.**The officers of the National Federation of the Blind shall be: (1) president, (2) first vice president, (3) second vice president, (4) secretary, and (5) treasurer. They shall be elected biennially.

**Section B.**The officers shall be elected by majority vote of the state affiliates present and voting at a national convention.

**Section C.**The National Federation of the Blind shall have a board of directors, which shall be composed of the five officers and twelve additional members, six of whom shall be elected at the annual convention during even-numbered years and six of whom shall be elected at the annual convention during odd-numbered years. The members of the board of directors shall serve for two‑year terms. Biennially, during even numbered years, at the first meeting of the board of directors following the convention at which officers and board members are elected, the board of directors shall select a chairperson from among its members who shall not be the same person as the President and who shall serve without compensation.

**Section D.** The board of directors may, in its discretion, create a national advisory board and determine the duties and qualifications of the members of the national advisory board.

Article V. Powers and Duties of the Convention, the Board of Directors, and the President

**Section A.** Powers and Duties of the Convention. The convention is the supreme authority of the Federation. It is the legislature of the Federation. As such, it has final authority with respect to all issues of policy. Its decisions shall be made after opportunity has been afforded for full and fair discussion. Delegates and members in attendance may participate in all convention discussions as a matter of right. Any member of the Federation may make or second motions, propose nominations, serve on committees, and is eligible for election to office, except that only blind members may be elected to the national board. Voting and making motions by proxy are prohibited. Consistent with the democratic character of the Federation, convention meetings shall be so conducted as to prevent parliamentary maneuvers which would have the effect of interfering with the expression of the will of the majority on any question, or with the rights of the minority to full and fair presentation of their views. The convention is not merely a gathering of representatives of separate state organizations. It is a meeting of the Federation at the national level in its character as a national organization. Committees of the Federation are committees of the national organization. The nominating committee shall consist of one member from each state affiliate represented at the convention, and each state affiliate shall appoint its member to the committee. From among the members of the committee, the president shall appoint a chairperson.

**Section B.** Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors. The function of the board of directors as the governing body of the Federation between conventions is to make policies when necessary and not in conflict with the policies adopted by the convention. Policy decisions which can reasonably be postponed until the next meeting of the national convention shall not be made by the board of directors. The board of directors shall serve as a credentials committee. It shall have the power to deal with organizational problems presented to it by any member, local chapter, state affiliate, or division; shall decide appeals regarding the validity of elections in local chapters, state affiliates, or divisions; and shall certify the credentials of delegates when questions regarding the validity of such credentials arise. By a two‑thirds vote the board may suspend one of its members for violation of a policy of the organization or for other action unbecoming to a member of the Federation. By a two‑thirds vote the board may reorganize any local chapter, state affiliate, or division. The board may not suspend one of its own members or reorganize a local chapter, state affiliate, or division except for good cause and after a good-faith effort has been made to try to resolve the problem by discussion and negotiation. If a dispute arises as to whether there was "good cause" or whether the board made a "good-faith effort," the national convention (acting in its capacity as the supreme authority of the Federation) shall have the power to make final disposition of the matter; but until or unless the board's action is reversed by the national convention, the ruling of the board shall continue in effect. There shall be a standing subcommittee of the board of directors which shall consist of three members. The committee shall be known as the subcommittee on budget and finance. It shall, whenever it deems necessary, recommend to the board of directors principles of budgeting, accounting procedures, and methods of financing the Federation program; and shall consult with the president on major expenditures.

The board of directors shall meet at the time of each national convention. It shall hold other meetings on the call of the president or on the written request of any five members.

**Section C.** Powers and Duties of the President. The president is the principal administrative officer of the Federation. In this capacity his or her duties consist of carrying out the policies adopted by the convention; conducting the day‑to‑day management of the affairs of the Federation; authorizing expenditures from the Federation treasury in accordance with and in implementation of the policies established by the convention; appointing all committees of the Federation except the nominating committee; coordinating all activities of the Federation, including the work of other officers and of committees; hiring, supervising, and dismissing staff members and other employees of the Federation, and determining their numbers and compensation; taking all administrative actions necessary and proper to put into effect the programs and accomplish the purposes of the Federation. The implementation and administration of the interim policies adopted by the board of directors are the responsibility of the president as principal administrative officer of the Federation.

Article VI. State Affiliates

Any organized group desiring to become a state affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind shall apply for affiliation by submitting to the president of the National Federation of the Blind a copy of its constitution and a list of the names and addresses of its elected officers. Under procedures to be established by the board of directors, action shall be taken on the application. If the action is affirmative, the National Federation of the Blind shall issue to the organization a charter of affiliation. Upon request of the national president the state affiliate shall provide to the national president the names and addresses of its members. Copies of all amendments to the constitution and/or bylaws of an affiliate shall be sent without delay to the national president. No organization shall be accepted as an affiliate and no organization shall remain an affiliate unless at least a majority of its voting members are blind. The president, vice president (or vice presidents), and at least a majority of the executive committee or board of directors of the state affiliate and of all of its local chapters must be blind. Affiliates must not merely be social organizations but must formulate programs and actively work to promote the economic and social betterment of the blind. Affiliates and their local chapters must comply with the provisions of the constitution of the Federation.

Policy decisions of the Federation are binding upon all affiliates and local chapters, and the affiliate and its local chapters must participate affirmatively in carrying out such policy decisions. 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 any affiliate or local chapter of an affiliate which ceases to be part of the National Federation of the Blind (for whatever reason) shall forthwith forfeit the right to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof.

A general convention of the membership of an affiliate or of the elected delegates of the membership must be held and its principal executive officers must be elected at least once every two years. There can be no closed membership. Proxy voting is prohibited in state affiliates and local chapters. Each affiliate must have a written constitution or bylaws setting forth its structure, the authority of its officers, and the basic procedures which it will follow. No publicly contributed funds may be divided among the membership of an affiliate or local chapter on the basis of membership, and (upon request from the national office) an affiliate or local chapter must present an accounting of all of its receipts and expenditures. An affiliate or local chapter must not indulge in attacks upon the officers, board members, leaders, or members of the Federation or upon the organization itself outside of the organization, and must not allow its officers or members to indulge in such attacks. This requirement shall not be interpreted to interfere with the right of an affiliate or local chapter, or its officers or members, to carry on a political campaign inside the Federation for election to office or to achieve policy changes. However, the organization will not sanction or permit deliberate, sustained campaigns of internal organizational destruction by state affiliates, local chapters, or members. No affiliate or local chapter may join or support, or allow its officers or members to join or support, any temporary or permanent organization inside the Federation which has not received the sanction and approval of the Federation.

Article VII. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution, all assets of the organization shall be given to an organization with similar purposes which has received a 501(c)(3) certification by the Internal Revenue Service.

Article VIII. Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any regular annual convention of the Federation by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the State Affiliates registered, present, and voting; provided that the proposed amendment shall have been signed by five State Affiliates in good standing and that it shall have been presented President the day before final action by the convention.