

Bylaw Contents

Article I. Name of the coalition. Mention if other names are used to refer to the coalition. The name is usually indicated with the words, "This organization shall be known as ..." or "The official name of this organization is ..."

Article II. Mission or purpose of coalition. Clearly defining the mission helps the coalition to stay focused. Decide whether the primary purpose is service, social, political, or other. Decide whether the coalition will focus on a single issue or a set of issues, a geographic area, or specific population and include coalition's mission and vision statements.

Article III. Goals of coalition.

Article IV. Membership. This explains the members' rights and limitations. State any required fees, attendance requirements, and circumstances in which membership can be revoked. If honorary memberships are allowed, include particulars here.

Article V. Officers, staff and duties.

Governing structure: State who reports to whom in terms of the overall governing structure. Bylaws explain that a coordinator is hired and overseen by steering committee, for example, but will not detail to whom other staff members report or what their duties are – coordinator is responsible for day-to-day coalition operations.

Officers: Outline coalition's officers, with correct titles, terms of office and duties.

Electing and vacating offices: If officer is elected, describe leadership succession, voting process and how to remove officer from office. If officer is appointed, state who appoints.

Work Groups: Describe standing work groups (ongoing), how special task groups (exist for duration of completing a specific task or project) will be formed, how work group chairs are chosen, and how members will be appointed to those work groups.

Decisions: State how decisions are made and how many are required for a quorum (number present for official business to take place). A quorum can be percentage of total members, specific number, or a majority of members present at a regular meeting.

Dues: If dues or fees are assessed, the means, rate and when this occurs are included.

Article VI. Meetings. Explain how often meetings are held, i.e., whether coalition will meet regularly or only as needed. Bylaws should explain who has authority to call meetings, how notice of



upcoming meetings must be given, and any special or annual meetings. Contents, due dates and responsibility for annual reports also are covered.

Article VII. Steering Committee, Work Groups and Special Committees. Describe role of the steering committee, number and type of members, terms of office, meeting times, quorum and how members are appointed or selected. Name and describe work groups and any other committees (e.g., nominating committee)

Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority. Describe meeting procedures (i.e., Robert's Rules of Order, prerogatives of the chair, etc.). For many coalitions, an action agenda, modified parliamentary procedure, or consensus are alternatives to Robert's Rules.

Article IX. Dissolution Clause. Explain disposition of coalition's property/money if it dissolves.

Article X. Amending Bylaws. Describe procedure for changing bylaws, and required time for notice. State who can propose amendments or call for complete revision of bylaws and vote requirement for amending/revising bylaws (usually by two-thirds vote).