

BY-LAWS

OF THE SELF-ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC.

MISSION

The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State is a strong voice for and by people with developmental disabilities promoting independence, empowerment, leading by example, communicating, networking and encouraging each other.

VISION

The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State is an organization led by people with the challenge of a developmental disability to assure the civil rights and responsibilities that include the opportunities and choices of equal citizenship.

The Association accomplishes this by:

- ◆ educating
- ◆ advocating
- ◆ supporting
- ◆ networking
- ◆ communicating
- ◆ promoting respect and dignity
- ◆ sharing information and resources
- ◆ improving quality of life

ARTICLE I — ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. NAME. The SELF-ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. and serves New York State.

SECTION 2. OFFICES. The principle office is located at 500 Balltown Rd., Bldg. 5, Schenectady, NY 12304

SECTION 3. FISCAL YEAR. The fiscal year of the Association shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

SECTION 4. BOOKS AND RECORDS. SA will keep correct and complete books and records of accounts and will also keep minutes of all proceedings of its Board meetings and Committee meetings and these records will be available to be examined, for proper purpose, by all self-advocate members, supporters and other interested parties.

SECTION 5. REGIONS. The Association is divided into six regions of the State; Capital/Northern, Central, Western, Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island. See Appendix 1 for a list of counties included in each region.

ARTICLE II — MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. MEMBERS. There shall be two types of members, voting and non-voting members. Voting members are persons with a developmental disability who are members of SA group affiliated with SA (see below). Only voting members can elect the members of the board at the annual regional conference of the region their group is located in. Non-voting members are friends, family members, professionals and other persons or organizations with an interest in the Association.

SECTION 2. GROUPS. A group formally affiliated with the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State is one that meets the following criteria:

- ◆ Groups must elect their leaders- president, vice-president etc.
- ◆ Groups choose their own advisor(s)
- ◆ Groups develop their own agenda and activities. They participate in regional and state SA activities (even if only one person goes to the regional meeting, conference, etc.)
- ◆ The main purpose of the group is self-advocacy activities
- ◆ If affiliated with an agency, the group remains independent of that agency and the way that agency functions. These groups would not be SA groups unless they also have the above listed elements.
- ◆ Maintains membership records and list of current members and officers with SA's main office.

SECTION 3. ANNUAL DUES: There are no dues required of voting members to the statewide organization, however, local self-advocacy groups may require dues. Annual dues for non-voting members are \$10 for individuals and \$100 for organizations.

SECTION 4. The Association will keep a current list of voting members through local group lists of members. Local groups will submit their membership lists to the Association annually on October 1st.

ARTICLE III — CONFERENCES

Each region will schedule one or more annual conferences, depending on the size of the region. Election of board members will occur at regional conferences. An annual statewide conference will be held each year on a date and location chosen by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV — BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than eighteen (18) but not more than nineteen (19) members. The immediate past president will continue as a member of the board after his or her term as president and will be a member of the executive committee.

In order to accommodate population and geographic considerations, 18 board positions shall be allocated to the 6 regions based on the following guidelines:

New York City— 5 Board Members, one for each borough, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island.

Long Island— Two Board members, one from Nassau County and one from Suffolk County.

Hudson Valley— Three board members, one from Taconic DDSO, and two from the Hudson Valley DDSO. For Hudson Valley, one member will be from Westchester County and one from the remaining part of the DDSO.

Capital District— Three board members—one from Sunmount DDSO, and two from the Capital District DDSO.

Central— Two board members—one from Broome DDSO and one from Central DDSO.

Western— Three board members, one from Western DDSO and two from the Finger Lakes DDSO, including one from the southern section of the Finger Lakes DDSO.

SECTION 2. VACANCIES. Any vacancy on the Board of Directors will be filled by a majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors. The appointed person shall serve until the next regularly scheduled election for that position. If a Board member or officer wishes to resign, they must do so in writing to the President of the Association. The Board of Directors by a majority (2/3) vote of a quorum (50% of board members, plus 1) may remove any Board Member.

SECTION 3. TERMS OF OFFICE. The Board members will be elected for three (3) years and terms will be staggered. No Board member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms. The term is from October 1st to September 30th.

SECTION 4. The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times per year. A quorum (50% plus 1) of Board members must be present to conduct the general business of the Board. The Board will create an annual report summarizing the activities of the organization for that past year.

ARTICLE IV — BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)

SECTION 5. QUALIFICATIONS. To be a member of the Board of Directors, an individual must meet the following qualifications:

- ◆ Be a member of an SA group
- ◆ Have one year of experience in a leadership role (officer) in an SA group
- ◆ A recommendation from the current SA group the candidate is a member of.
- ◆ Available to travel to 4 Board meetings, which at this time include up to three days and two nights in Albany.
- ◆ Willing to speak for themselves and others including in public (at meetings, etc.)
- ◆ Available to attend regional meetings
- ◆ Commitment to activities within the region they represent
- ◆ Have a developmental disability

SECTION 6. ADVISORS TO THE BOARD. There will be six advisors appointed to the board including one representative from each of the six regions. Advisory Board members are non-voting members. The role of the advisor will be to support and assist board members from their regions in preparation for SA board meetings, during SA board meetings, and with regional activities throughout the year. The board may also appoint special advisors as needed.

ARTICLE V — OFFICERS

SECTION 1. In order to run for an officer position a board member must serve at least one year on the board.

SECTION 2. The officers of the Association shall include: a President, 2 Co-Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

SECTION 3. The Board of Directors from among their number at the first meeting of the board will elect the officers annually after the new term begins. Officers shall be elected for a term of one year. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in one position. The term is from October 1st to September 30.

SECTION 4. If a vacancy in an elected officer position should arise (except President), a Board member who is not an officer shall be appointed by the President to complete the unexpired term of office, subject to Board approval.

ARTICLE V — OFFICERS (CONTINUED)

SECTION 5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS:

President— The President shall preside over business meetings and any other meeting of the general membership. He/she shall appoint the chairpersons of all committees and may appoint special committees as requires. He/she shall act as the executive officer of the Association and in general perform the duties usually associated with the office of President.

Co-Vice Presidents— One of the Vice Presidents shall succeed the Presidency in case of a vacancy in that office and shall perform the duties of the President in his/her absence. The Board will vote on which Co-Vice President succeeds the president. He/she may be responsible for any duties assigned him/her by the President or Board of Directors.

Secretary— The Secretary shall ensure that a record of all proceedings of all meetings of the Board of Directors is maintained.

Treasurer — The Treasurer shall ensure that a complete and accurate account of all funds received and disbursed is maintained.

ARTICLE VI — ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. The election of the Board of Directors shall take place at regional conferences and occur between April 1st and September 1st.

SECTION 2. The Elections Committee will oversee the election of officers and the regional elections of the Association.

SECTION 3. The officers of the Board shall be elected by the board at the first meeting of the new term. This meeting will be held in October.

ARTICLE VII — COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. STANDING COMMITTEES SHALL INCLUDE:

1. Executive Committee consisting of the officers of the Association
2. Elections consisting of two (2) Board members and one (1) Advisory Board member, appointed by the President annually.
3. Personnel Committee consisting of at least two (2) Board members and one (1) Advisory Board member, appointed by the President annually.
4. Conference Committee consisting of at least two (2) Board members and one (1) Advisory Board member, appointed by the President annually.
5. Finance Committee consisting of at least two (2) Board members and one (1) Advisory Board member, appointed by the President annually.
6. Bylaws Committee consisting of at least two (2) Board members and one (1) Advisory Board member, appointed by the President annually.

The president appoints the chairperson of each committee. Standing committees will provide regular reports of their activities to the Board of Directors.

SECTION 2. The President with the approval of the Board of Directors may establish special Committees as the need arises.

ARTICLE VII — EMPLOYEES

The Board of Directors may authorize the employment of full and part-time employees as are appropriate to carry out the business and projects of the Association. The Board delegates the duties and responsibilities of employment, including supervision of all employees to the Administrative Director.

ARTICLE IX — ETHICAL STANDARDS

SECTION 1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. No Board or Advisory Board member shall have financial interest, or shall engage in business or other activity, which will create substantial conflict with his/her duties as a Board/Advisory Board member.

SECTION 2. NEPOTISM. No close relative of a Board/Advisory Board member shall be eligible for employment at the Association.

SECTION 3. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS. No Board/Advisory Board member shall accept gifts, or other items having more than nominal value, from any donor engaged in a business relationship with the Association, or from any employee.

SECTION 4. ACCEPTANCE OF IMPROPRIETY. No Board/Advisory Board Member shall, by his/her conduct, give reasonable basis for the impression that he/she is engaged in acts that constitute a breach of trust.

ARTICLE X — AMENDING THE BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the Association may be amended, repealed, or added to, or new Bylaws may be adopted by a vote of the Board. Any proposed changes to the Bylaws, along with the date it is to be voted upon, shall be presented in writing to the Board, at least (30) days prior to the date it is to be voted on. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of a quorum is necessary for ratification.