



Constitution of the National Federation of the Blind of New York State, Incorporated

As Amended October 24, 2021

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the National Federation of the Blind of New York State, Incorporated, hereinafter referred to as NFB of NYS.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the NFB of NYS shall be to advance the general welfare of the blind of New York State and 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 of New York State; to operate as a mechanism through which the blind and the interested public can come together in organized chapters and state meetings to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life of the blind; to provide a means of collective action for parents of blind children; to forward the interests of blind students and provide them with a means of joint action and expression; 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; and to take any other action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

Article III: Membership

Section A: Active Members

At least a majority of the active members of this organization must be blind. Active membership shall be of two (2) classifications: active members who are affiliated with organized chapters or divisions; and active members who are not affiliated with organized chapters or divisions, and thus are Members-At-Large.

1. All active members of organized chapters or divisions shall automatically become active members of this organization, with the right to vote, serve on committees, speak on the floor, and hold office.

2. Any person who is not affiliated with an organized chapter or division may become an active member of this organization by receiving a majority vote of the active members present and voting at a convention or by complying with the requirements established by the Board of Directors. They would thus be a Member-At-Large.

The Board of Directors may establish other classes of membership.

Section B: Disciplinary Action

Any member may be expelled; and any chapter or division may be expelled, suspended, or reorganized for violation of this constitution, the Code of Conduct, or for conduct unbecoming to a member, chapter, or division of the Federation by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular business session of this organization, or by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. The State Convention of this organization may reinstate any person who has been expelled, unless such expulsion has been confirmed by the National Convention or by the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind, in which event the person may not be reinstated except by the National Board. Any person who feels that they have been unjustly disciplined or expelled from this organization, or any chapter or division which feels that it has been unjustly disciplined, reorganized, or expelled may appeal to the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind, which may (in its discretion) consider the matter and make a binding decision; but until or unless the action of discipline, reorganization, or expulsion is reversed by the National Board, it shall continue in effect.

Article IV: Officers and Board of Directors

Section A: Officers

The Officers of this organization shall be (1) President, (2) First Vice President, (3) Second Vice President, (4) Secretary, (5) Treasurer, and (6) Immediate Past President. All except for the Immediate Past President shall be elected at the annual State Convention during odd-numbered years by a

majority vote of the members present and voting and shall serve a two-year term. The Immediate Past President shall be considered an officer for up to one year following leaving the office of President. Please note this does not apply if the immediate past president was removed for just cause.

Section B: Board of Directors

This organization shall have a Board of Directors consisting of the six constitutional officers and one delegate from each chapter, division, and group. A quorum of the Board of Directors must be present at all Board meetings to conduct any business. This shall include a majority of the Board members.

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

Section A: Powers of the Convention

The NFB of NYS will meet annually in Convention assembled at a time and place to be selected by the President, with the approval of the Board of Directors. At least five Board members (two of whom must be officers) and twenty additional members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business at a State Convention.

The Convention is the supreme authority of the organization. It is the legislature of the NFB of NYS. As such, it has final authority with respect to all issues of policy. Its decisions must be made after the opportunity has been afforded for full and fair discussion.

Members in attendance may participate in all Convention discussions as a matter of right. Any member may make (or second) motions, propose nominations, and serve on committees; except that only blind members are eligible for election to office. Voting and making motions by proxy are prohibited.

Consistent with the democratic character of the Federation, Convention meetings shall be 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 rights of the minority to full and fair presentation of their views.

Section B: Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors

The function of the Board of Directors as the governing body of the organization between conventions is to make policies when necessary and not in conflict with the policies adopted by the Convention. Policy decisions which can be reasonably postponed until the next meeting of the 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, organized chapter, or division. It shall decide appeals regarding the validity of elections in organized chapters or divisions; and shall certify the credentials of members when questions regarding such credentials arise.

The Board of Directors shall meet at the time of each State Convention. It shall hold other meetings at the call of the President, or on the written request of five of its members.

Section C: Powers and Duties of the President

The President is the principal administrative officer of the organization. In this capacity, their duties consist of: carrying out the policies adopted by the Convention; conducting the day-to-day management of the affairs of the organization; authorizing expenditures from the treasury in accordance with and in implementation of the policies established by the Convention; appointing all committees; coordinating all activities of the organization, including the work of other officers and committees; hiring, supervising and dismissing staff members and other employees of the organization, 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 the principal administrative officer of the organization. The President is an ex officio member of all chapters, divisions, and committees.

Article VI: Organized Chapters, Divisions, and Groups

Section A: Organized Chapters

Any organized group desiring to become an Organized Chapter of the NFB of NYS shall apply for affiliation by submitting to the President of the NFB of

NYS a copy of its Constitution and a list of the names and full contact information including postal mail address, phone number, and e-mails of its members and elected officers. When the NFB of NYS, either in convention assembled or by action of its Board of Directors, shall have approved the application, it shall secure for the organized chapter a Charter of Affiliation from the national office. At least thirty days prior to the annual State Convention, each organized chapter shall provide to the Treasurer of the NFB of NYS a current list of its members and dues. These member lists must include the member's name, post office mailing address, phone number, e-mail address and indication of whether the member has paid their dues. Upon request, an organized chapter shall also provide the state President with a list of the names and addresses of the chapter members and with a detailed financial report of the chapter for the past year. The fiscal year of this organization shall be the calendar year. As new members enter organized chapters, their names and addresses shall be sent without delay to the Treasurer of the state organization. No group shall be accepted or remain as a chapter unless a majority of its voting members are blind. The President, the Vice President or Vice Presidents, and at least the majority of the Officers or Board of Directors of the organized chapter must be blind. As a condition of affiliation, a chapter must hold at least six general membership meetings per year. The President of the NFB of NYS shall be an ex officio member of each organized chapter.

Section B: Divisions

NFB of NYS shall organize statewide divisions in accordance with procedures established by the Board of Directors. Such divisions shall function as statewide chapters, and as such, shall be subject to all the rules outlined above for organized chapters, with the exception that a division of parents of blind children shall not be required to have the majority of its board of directors and officers to be blind, provided a majority of its members, board of directors and officers be parents of blind children.

Section C: Groups

Groups focusing on specific topics related to the blind of New York may be formed. Any group of this organization wishing to be formed must submit a written request to the Board of Directors for their consideration.

Article VII: Affiliation

NFB of NYS shall be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind and shall furnish to the President of the National Federation of the Blind annually, on or before January 1, a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers, a copy of the Constitution of NFB of NYS, and of all amendments to the Constitution. These shall be sent to the President of the National Federation of the Blind without delay. The NFB of NYS 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 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 (whether made by the National Convention or the National 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, it is agreed by this organization that the National Federation of the Blind, whether by action of the National Convention or the National Board, has the power to expel or discipline an individual member, and to expel and reorganize a state affiliate or organized chapter or division of an affiliate, and the former affiliate or organized chapter or division shall dissolve and cease to exist. The name national federation of the blind, federation of the blind, or any variant thereof, are the property of the National Federation of the Blind; and any affiliate, organized chapter or state division 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.

Article VIII: Delegates to the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind

This organization shall appoint the President and First Vice-President as Delegate and Alternate Delegate, respectively, to the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. To the extent of the resources of this organization, the expenses of the Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind shall be paid by NFB of NYS. The Delegate and/or Alternate Delegate shall, upon request,

submit to the members of this organization a detailed report of their activities and voting record.

Article IX: Dues

The dues of this organization shall be determined by its Board of Directors, payable in advance and expiring on December 31 each year, necessitating renewal annually. In accordance with Article VI of the Constitution, organized chapters shall pay the state dues of their members. Members at-large shall pay their dues annually. No person may vote who is delinquent in the payment of their dues. The membership year will be the calendar year.

Article X: Disbursement of Funds

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank to be selected by the Treasurer with the approval of the President. All financial obligations of this organization shall be discharged on written order of the President and processed by the Treasurer.

Article XI: Vacancies

If a vacancy should occur for any reason in the office of President, the First Vice President shall assume all duties of the President for the remainder of that term of office. The Second Vice President shall assume the duties of the First Vice President for the remainder of the term. The Board of Directors will appoint a Second Vice President. Likewise, if a vacancy should occur in the office of First Vice President, the Second Vice President will assume the duties of the First Vice President for the remainder of the term, and the Board will appoint a Second Vice President.

If vacancies occur in the offices of Second Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer, the Board will appoint replacements. In all cases, appointments by the Board of Directors to office shall not extend beyond the following State Convention, at which time elections will be held to fill any mid-term vacancies in the offices of Second Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer. Persons elected in mid-term will serve for one-year terms.

Article XII: Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of this organization, or if (for whatever reason) this organization 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 New York State. If no affiliate is reorganized in the State for a period of two years from the date this organization ceases to be an affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, the assets shall become the property of the National Federation of the Blind. Furthermore, in the event of the dissolution of an organized chapter, or if (for whatever reason) the organized chapter ceases to be a part of this organization, its assets shall become the property of the NFB of NYS and it shall forthwith cease to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof.

Article XIII: Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any annual State Convention of this organization by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the President, and read at a business session of the Convention prior to the session during which the vote is taken; and provided it is not inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter of Affiliation received from the National Federation of the Blind, and with the policies of the National Federation of the Blind.

Article XIV: Code of Conduct

The NFB of NYS shall abide by the National Federation of the Blind Code of Conduct. All individuals within the organization, including all attendees at NFB-sponsored events, are expected to refrain from the unwelcome and harmful misconduct outlined in the Code, including, but not limited to discrimination, abuse, misuse of power, sexual misconduct, conflict of interest, fraud, and other forms of misconduct.

Official 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.