

# National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee Constitution

## ARTICLE I. NAME

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

## ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee shall be to advance the general welfare of the blind of Tennessee 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 Tennessee. To operate as a mechanism through which the blind and interested sighted persons can come together in local chapters, divisions, 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 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 One; 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 local chapters or divisions and active members who are not affiliated with local chapters or divisions.

1. All active members of local 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 a local 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 requirements established by the Board of Directors.

## Section Two; Disciplinary Action

Any member may be expelled; and any chapter or division may be expelled, suspended, or reorganized for violation of this constitution 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, LOCAL CHAPTERS

Any organized group desiring to become a local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee shall apply for affiliation by submitting to the President of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee a copy of its Constitution and a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers. When the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee, either in convention assembled or by action of its Board of Directors, shall have approved the application, it shall secure for the local chapter a Charter of Affiliation from the national office. Annually, each local chapter shall provide to the Treasurer of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee a current list of its members, their names, addresses, and their state dues. Upon request, a local 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 local chapters, their names, and addresses shall be sent without delay to the Treasurer of the state organization. No group shall be accepted as a chapter and no group shall

remain a chapter unless a majority of its voting members are blind. The President, the Vice President, and at least a majority of the Officers or Board of Directors of the local chapter must be blind. The President of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee shall be ex officio a member of each local chapter. In the event of the dissolution of a local chapter, or if (for whatever reason) the local chapter ceases to be a part of this organization, its assets shall become the property of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee; and it shall forthwith cease to use the name National Federation of the Blind, Federation of the Blind, or any variant thereof.

#### ARTICLE V DIVISIONS

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.

#### ARTICLE VI OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

There shall be elected at the regular annual convention during each even numbered year, a President, a First Vice President, a Second Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The terms of these officers shall begin at the close of the convention at which they are elected and qualified.

Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the active members who are 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.

The duties of each officer shall be those ordinarily associated with that office. The President and the Vice Presidents must be blind.

#### ARTICLE VII, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of this organization shall consist of the five (5) constitutional officers, and six (6) additional members, three (3) of whom shall be elected for two (2) year terms at the annual convention during even

numbered years, and three (3) of whom shall be elected for two (2) year terms at the annual convention during odd numbered years.

The Board Members shall be elected in the same manner as that prescribed for the election of officers.

The Board shall meet at the call of the President or on written call signed by any three (3) of the Board Members. The Board shall advise the President and shall have charge of the affairs of the organization between conventions. At least a majority of the members of the Board must be present at any meeting to constitute a quorum to transact business.

The Board may be polled by telephone, mail, or electronic ballot on any question .A majority of the Board must be blind.

## ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

### Section One: Annual Convention

This organization shall hold an annual convention, the time and place of which shall be fixed by the membership or (if the membership so decides) by the Board of Directors or the President. At least fifteen (15) active members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business at any annual convention.

### Section Two: Special Meetings

The President of this organization may call a special meeting of the body at any time the President, or a majority of the Board of Directors, deems such action to be necessary. At such special meeting at least fifteen (15) active members must be present to constitute a quorum to transact business, and written notice must have been sent to the President of each local chapter and division and to the members of the Board of Directors at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting.

## ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES

The President may appoint such committees as the President or the organization deems necessary .The President shall be ex officio a member of all committees.

## ARTICLE X. AFFILIATION

The National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee 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 March 1, a list of the names and addresses of its members and elected officers. A copy of the Constitution of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee and of all amendments to the Constitution shall be sent to the President of the National Federation of the Blind without delay.

The National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee 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, its chapters, and divisions, shall comply with the provisions of the Constitution of 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. Its chapters, divisions, and members; 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 or reorganize a state affiliate, local chapter, or division. In the event of reorganization, the assets of the affiliate and its local chapters and divisions belong to the reorganized affiliate; and the former affiliate, its chapters, and divisions shall dissolve and cease to exist.

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 or any of its chapters or divisions which cease 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.

The President of the National Federation of the Blind shall ex officio be a member of this organization and each of its local chapters and divisions.

## ARTICLE XI, DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND CONVENTION

This organization shall elect each year at least one (1) delegate and at least one (1) alternate delegate to attend the Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. No person shall be elected as a delegate or alternate delegate unless they are an active member of this organization in good standing. To the extent of the resources of this organization, the expenses of delegates and alternate delegates to the Convention of the National Federation of the Blind shall be paid.

## ARTICLE XII, DUES

The dues of this organization shall be an amount established by the Board of Directors payable in advance and expiring on December 31 each year, necessitating renewal annually. In accordance with Article IV of the Constitution, local chapters shall pay the state dues of their members. At-large members not affiliated with a chapter or divisions 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. The Board of Directors each year will establish a date by which time dues must be paid in order to vote at the convention.

## ARTICLE XIII, DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The funds of this organization shall be deposited in a bank or banks to be selected by the Treasurer with the approval of the President; except that the Board of Directors may also authorize establishment of investment accounts with other financial institutions. All financial obligations of this organization shall be discharged by check or electronic transaction, issued on order of the President, and signed or approved by the Treasurer or by an Assistant Treasurer approved by the membership or the Board of Directors. For purposes of this section, a credit card shall be considered an electronic transaction.

## ARTICLE XIV, 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 organized 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 assets become the property of the National Federation of the Blind.

If the dissolution of this organization should occur and if at that time the National Federation of the Blind is no longer a tax-exempt organization under the provisions of the federal Internal Revenue Code or if the National Federation of the Blind has been dissolved, all assets of this organization shall be given to an organization with similar purposes which has received tax-exempt certification from the federal Internal Revenue Service.

#### ARTICLE XV, AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting 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 business session and provided it is in compliance 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.

Adopted April 20, 2024 \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary: *Christina A. Clift*