

**ASSOCIATION OF VA SOCIAL WORKERS
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
(Revised October 2015)**

SECTION I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The organization shall be known as the Association of VA Social Workers (AVASW) hereinafter referred to as the Association, or AVASW.

SECTION II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Association is to encourage development of comprehensive Social Work services to veteran beneficiaries through education and training, leadership, promotion, and member collaboration to enhance practice effectiveness. The Association will advocate for the recruitment, retention, and recognition of VA Social Workers. To further its objectives, the Association may collaborate with established social work organizations and other organizations that are relevant to social work practice in health care settings.

SECTION III. MEMBERSHIP

1. Full Member: Any person employed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) who has a master's degree from a social work graduate school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) may be a full member.
2. Associate Member: Those with the same credentials as full members who were formerly employed by the VA may join as associate members.
3. Student Member: Social Work graduate students with a full academic year VA field placement may join during their placement. Student memberships terminate when the student's VA training ends. Student members may not vote or hold elective office.
4. Contract Member: Any person having the same credentials as a full member who is placed at a VA facility by an agency that has a contract with the VA to provide social work services may join. Contract memberships terminate when the person's VA placement ends. Contract members may not vote or hold elective office.
5. To become a member a person must complete an application and pay dues for one year. Membership is normally renewed annually.

SECTION IV. OFFICERS

1. Officers of the Association must be Full or Associate members, are elected by the voting members, and serve a term of two years beginning the first day of the calendar year.
2. Officers that must be Full Members are President, President Elect/Vice President, Past President, and Nominations Chairperson. The Past President, Treasurer, and Secretary may be Full or Associate Members. The Vice President/President Elect will serve two years, then two years as President, then two years as Past President.

In general, the duties of the elected officers are:

3. President – sets the agenda and presides over meetings of the membership and Executive Committee conference calls. The President represents the Association to the Director, VA Social Work, and with other VA Central Office personnel who may have a relationship or liaison with AVASW or who are relevant to VA Social Work.
4. Vice President/President Elect – acts as President in the absence of the President. Participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and email. May lead special projects or task forces
5. Past President – Serves as Education Coordinator for the Association. Chairs committees or ad hoc groups of members recruited or appointed to participate in educational projects. Acts in behalf of the President if requested. Participates in

Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and email.

6. Treasurer – manages the funds of the Association, including paying Association expenses. Answers inquires from members and prospective members regarding their status and/or the criteria and procedure for joining AVASW or renewing membership. Provides regular financial reports to the Executive Committee. Participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and email.
7. Secretary – Keeps records (minutes) of membership and Executive Committee meetings and conference calls. Participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and email.
8. Nominations Chairperson – Recruits for annual executive staff elections & holds electronic elections. Receives inquiries from members about elected offices. Participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and email.

SECTION V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members of the Executive Committee, elected and appointed, must be voting members of the Association. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to carry out the functions and purposes of the organization. The Executive Committee includes the elected officers of the Association and the following members:

A. Members-at-large

Three at-large members are elected to represent members who are staff social workers (full members); social work managers and executives (full members); and previous employees (associate members). The At-Large members that represent Full Members must be Full Members. The At-Large Member that represents Associate Members may be either a Full Member or an Associate Member. The at-large members are voting members of the Executive Committee and are elected for two year terms which begin the first day of the calendar year.

In general, the duties of the members-at-large include: Participating in the Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and emails; promoting AVASW with their constituents and inviting AVASW membership; polling the members they represent regarding issues or proposals resulting in actions or positions to be taken by the Association; and special projects determined by the Executive Committee.

B. Appointed Members

Members appointed by the President are voting members of the Executive Committee with duties as follows:

1. Congressional Liaison – Collaborates with other professional associations and elected officials to support the goals of the Association. The Congressional Liaison participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and emails.
2. Website Manager – Serves as webmaster for the AVASW website. The webmaster will manage the online membership database in collaboration with the Treasurer. The Webmaster participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and emails.
3. Newsletter Editor – Oversees the content of, and publishes, the Newsletter. The Executive Committee acts as the Editorial Board for the Newsletter. The Newsletter Editor participates in Executive Committee meetings, conference calls, and emails.
4. Chairpersons of special projects or task forces may be appointed by the President as temporary Executive Committee members.

C. Removal & Resignation

1. Removal: Appointed members of the Executive Committee may be removed at any time at the discretion of the President. The President may, at their discretion, replace the terminated appointed member. Elected officers who do not uphold the responsibilities of their office may be removed from office and the Executive Committee at any time by a

majority vote of the Executive Committee. The President will appoint a replacement for the terminated officer until an election is held to elect a replacement.

2. Resignation: An officer or appointed member of the Executive Committee may resign by giving notice to the President. If an officer resigns, the President will appoint a replacement until an election is held to elect a replacement. If an appointed member resigns a replacement may be appointed by the President. If the President resigns the Vice President/President Elect will become President.

SECTION VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VOTING and QUORUM

1. Each member of the Executive Committee member has one vote. The member may appoint a proxy or designee for specific votes.
2. The presence of a majority of members on the Executive Committee is necessary to constitute a quorum at any conference call or meeting.
3. Action on any issue or proposal requires an affirmative vote by the majority of the quorum present at a meeting or conference call.
4. The Executive Committee will periodically review the Constitution & Bylaws, make changes if indicated, and will make the Constitution & Bylaws available to the members for review and/or recommendations for changes. The Executive Committee has final responsibility for changes to the Constitution & Bylaws.

SECTION VII. DUES

The amount of the annual dues will be set by the Executive Committee. Sufficient dues will be set to pay for the costs of operating the Association.

SECTION VIII. NEWSLETTER

The Association will regularly publish a Newsletter. The Newsletter Editor, in collaboration with the Executive Committee, will establish publication dates.

SECTION IX. WEB SITE

The Association maintains a website available to members and non-members. The website contains a membership directory, information regarding continuing education opportunities, resources that may be used in behalf of veterans, and publications and documents available to the members on a variety of topics relevant to social work practice in the VA. Parts of the website will be available to the general public, other parts will be available only to members.

SECTION X. ELECTIONS

1. The Executive Committee will authorize elections to elect officers and three members at large to the Executive Committee, to poll the membership and/or to decide other matters relevant to the purpose of the Association.
2. Candidates for elected positions who receive the most votes will be elected. Other issues will be decided by a simple majority (over 50%) of those voting in an election.
3. Full and Associate Members of the Association are eligible to vote for elected members of the Executive Committee and to vote on issues brought to the membership by the Executive Committee. Elections will have a published closing date. Members who vote by the closing date will determine election outcomes.