Tennessee Council of the Blind

Constitution

Amended and approved September 3, 2023

ARTICLE I - Name and Affiliation

This organization shall be known as the Tennessee Council of the Blind, hereafter referred to as TCB. TCB is an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind (ACB).

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of TCB shall be:

1. To expand the social, economic, and cultural opportunities for blind people in Tennessee, and to encourage and assist such people in becoming more active, productive, and responsible members of the community.

2. To enhance the education and rehabilitative services available to blind people in Tennessee.

3. To bring about greater employment opportunities for blind people.

4. To inform such blind people of available opportunities and services in education, employment, recreation, and other areas of common concern.

5. To inform the public of the capabilities and accomplishments of blind people and of the necessity of providing specialized education to enable such people to meet their full responsibilities as citizens.

ARTICLE III - Membership

TCB members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age to vote and hold office. The majority of the total membership shall be legally blind. Membership period shall be January 1 through December 31. Members who join TCB after March 1 of the year must have all dues paid no later than thirty days before the start of that year's TCB convention to be eligible to vote at the

convention.

Membership shall consist of six (6) classes.

Section 1: Annual Members.

Any person having an interest in the purposes of TCB may become an annual due’s paying member. Dues shall be submitted to the TCB treasurer along with a completed TCB membership form. Annual dues may be collected anytime during the year, however any dues collected for new memberships after August 1st and before December 31st shall extend to the following membership period.

Section 2: Chapter Members.

Any member in good standing of any local chapter of TCB shall be deemed a member of TCB, provided that the chapter complies with the Constitution and Bylaws of TCB by submitting dues for such members.

Section 3: At large members.

Any person living outside the area of available and reliable transportation to any chapter of TCB may join as an at large member and shall have the same rights as those of other annual dues paying members.

Section 4: Life Members.

A person may become a life member by the payment of an amount set by the membership or the Board of

Directors. A life member shall be entitled to all rights and privileges given to annual members.

Section 5: Honorary Members.

Honorary membership may be bestowed on any person who has contributed significantly to the attainment of the purposes of TCB, and shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of the membership except those of voting and holding office.

Section 6: Junior Membership.

An individual under the age of eighteen (18) expressing an interest in TCB may become a junior member by paying a minimal amount of dues to be determined by the membership. Junior members shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of the

membership except those of voting and holding office.

ARTICLE IV – Dues.

All members shall pay annual dues at times and in amounts to be set by a majority vote of the membership at the annual TCB convention. Dues collected shall include that amount required by ACB annually for membership. Any member who has paid that amount established for life member shall not be required to pay TCB dues. Honorary members shall not be subject to the payment of dues.

ARTICLE V - Local Chapters

Section 1: Affiliation.

Any organized group of five (5) or more person, a majority of whom are legally blind, desiring to be affiliated with TCB shall submit a list of its officers and members to TCB. When TCB approves the application, its secretary shall issue a certificate of

acceptance to the chapter.

Section 2: Annual Dues.

The chapter secretary and/or treasurer shall submit annually the per capita dues and a current list of members that includes all requested information to the secretary and treasurer of TCB.

Section 3: Chapter Constitution.

When a local chapter is certified, a copy of its constitution and bylaws must be filed with the TCB secretary. A copy must also be sent to the TCB Webmaster.

Section 4: Rights of Local Chapters.

Each chapter shall retain possession of its real and personal property. Chapters may collect additional dues above those required to be affiliated with TCB.

ARTICLE VI - Officers and Their Duties.

Section 1: Officers.

The officers of TCB shall be: president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and Immediate past president. The president and vice-presidents shall be legally blind. TCB shall maintain board liability insurance.

Section 2: Duties of the President.

It shall be the duty of the president to preside at all meetings of TCB, to appoint committees, and to perform other customary duties of the office. Additional duties may be outlined in the Bylaws.

Section 3: Duties of the Vice-Presidents.

It shall be the duty of the vice presidents, in order of their precedence, to perform the duties in the absence of the president. Additional duties may be outlined in the Bylaws.

Section 4: Duties of the Secretary.

It shall be the duty of the secretary to record all proceedings of TCB, to keep a current roll of the members, to attend to all correspondence necessary in discharging the business of TCB, and to perform other duties as may be required.

Section 5: Duties of the Treasurer.

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to collect all funds, to pay all outstanding bills, to keep a record of expenditures of TCB, and to report annually, after having all accounts examined by the auditing committee.

ARTICLE VII - Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall consist of the six constitutional officers and at least one elected director from each chapter. No more than three officers or directors may be elected from any one chapter. A majority of the Board of Directors shall be legally blind.

Section 1: General Supervision.

The Board shall have general supervision over the affairs of TCB between conventions. It shall study, formulate, and recommend policies and carry out the actions directed to it by the membership at any TCB convention and perform other functions as required.

Section 2: Budget.

The Board shall present a proposed budget to the membership at the annual convention of TCB. However, in case of a reasonable or unexpected expense, the board, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting, a quorum having been

established, may exceed the approved budget.

ARTICLE VIII - Elections and Terms of Office.

Officers shall be elected in even numbered years to hold a two-year term. Directors shall be elected in odd numbered years to hold a two-year term. Terms of officers and directors shall begin at the close of convention at which they were elected. Those seeking nominations for office shall be present at the annual TCB conference and convention.

Section 1: Term limits.

Officers and Directors may serve no more than three (3) consecutive terms of two (2) years in one position. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer shall have no term limits.

Section 2: Resignations.

Any resignation from the Board of Directors shall be submitted in writing to the secretary. Any member of the Board resigning may not hold any position in TCB for the remainder of the unexpired term and the following term.

Section 3: Vacancies.

Any vacancy occurring between conventions of TCB shall be filled on an interim basis by the Board of Directors, except for the office of president to which the vice president shall succeed. Election shall be held at the annual convention of TCB to fill the

unexpired term. Service for less than one half (1/2) of an unexpired term shall not be counted in determining eligibility for any unexpired elected position.

ARTICLE IX - Disbursements of Funds.

All TCB funds shall be deposited in a bank or other financial institution recommended by the treasurer and approved by the Board of Directors. All disbursements shall be made by check and signed by the treasurer. The president or his/her designated

representative shall be a cosignatory on all TCB banking accounts and shall receive copies of all financial statements.

ARTICLE X – Meetings.

Section 1: Annual Convention.

TCB shall hold a convention annually, the time and place to be determined by the membership, or if not, to be fixed by the Board of Directors. The membership shall receive all pertinent information concerning the convention sixty (60) days prior to the convention. Only in the event of a serious emergency or where the interest of TCB clearly dictates a change may the Board alter the time or place of meetings chosen by the membership. In such cases, the membership shall be notified immediately.

Section 2: Board Meetings.

The TCB Board of Directors shall meet no less then quarterly.

Section 3: Special Meetings.

The president, two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Directors, and/or two-thirds (2/3) of the membership may call for a special meeting of TCB at any time such a meeting is advantageous or deemed necessary, provided members are notified at least ten (10) days prior to the special meeting.

Section 4: Quorum.

Fifteen percent (15%) of the membership shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at the annual TCB Convention. Quorum for Board of Director Meetings shall be seven (7). Quorum for Special Meetings of the Membership shall be one-third

(1/3) of the membership. Quorum for special and standing committees of TCB shall be a simple majority of that committee.

ARTICLE XI - Committees and Their Duties.

Section 1: The Auditing Committee.

This committee shall consist of three (3) people other than the treasurer appointed by the president at the annual convention of TCB. Its duties shall be to review the receipts and disbursements of the treasurer and report to the membership.

Section 2: The Credentials Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people (including the treasurer and secretary), appointed by the president. Its duty shall be to determine those members who are eligible to vote.

Section 3: The Nominating Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people appointed by the president. Its duty shall be to recommend qualified candidates for the positions available at that year’s election.

Section 4: The Constitution and Resolutions Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people appointed by the president. Its duties shall be:

1. To consider current issues affecting blind people.

2. To receive and present resolutions from the membership; and any changes to the constitution.

Section 5: Membership Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people appointed by the president. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for developing and recommending activities to increase membership for consideration by the Board.

Section 6: Legislative Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people appointed by the president. The legislative committee shall be responsible for reporting to the membership on legislation affecting blind and visually impaired people. It shall also recommend to the Board of Directors specific actions to be taken by TCB.

Section 7: Fundraising Committee.

This committee shall consist of from three (3) to five (5) people appointed by the president. The Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for developing and recommending fundraising projects to

the Board of Directors. It shall also recommend to the Board of Directors specific actions to be taken by

TCB.

Section 8: Other Committees.

The president may appoint other committees deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of TCB with

Board approval.

ARTICLE XII - Bylaws

Bylaws, which may be deemed necessary for the interpretation and/or implementation of this constitution, may be adopted at the annual convention of TCB by a simple majority of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE XIII – Amendments.

This constitution may be amended at any annual convention by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of

members present and voting. The proposed amendment shall have been signed by at least five (5)

members in good standing and shall have been read to the convention one (1) day prior to the day on

which the final action is taken. Any proposed amendment may be considered immediately if

unanimous consent is given.

ARTICLE XIV – Dissolution.

After two (2) readings, this organization may be dissolved only at the annual meeting by a four-fifths

(4/5) vote of the members present and voting. Upon the dissolution of the Tennessee Council of the Blind, all assets shall be distributed to the American Council of the Blind. If ACB no longer exists, these assets shall be distributed to an organization with similar purposes related to blindness that has received a Section 501(c)(3) Certification by the Internal Revenue Service.

ARTICLE XV - Parliamentary Reference.

ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED shall govern the proceedings of TCB, provided that they do not conflict with this constitution.

Approved September 3, 2023