

DHHCAN Bylaws

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN)

Mission & Bylaws

Approved December 6, 2021.

Section 1. Name.

The name of this organization shall be the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN).

Section 2. Duration.

The duration of DHHCAN shall be perpetual.

Section 3. Mission.

DHHCAN shall serve as the national coalition of organizations representing the interests of deaf and hard of hearing people on public policy and other issues related to improving the rights of deaf and hard of hearing persons and their quality of life, including affirmation of their right to consumer leadership, self-representation, and equal access to education, employment, community life, communication and technology.

Section 4. Vision.

DHHCAN shall provide a forum and proactive coordination of relevant information for the purpose of addressing and influencing legislation crucial to the lives and welfare of deaf and hard of hearing people. The coalition shall further the movement towards universal, barrier-free access for deaf and hard of hearing persons with emphasis on quality, certification and standards.

Section 5. Principal Office or Address.

DHHCAN's principal office or address shall be located at such place as the DHHCAN Officers may designate from time to time.

Section 6. Types of Membership.

There shall be two types of Membership: regular member and organizational partner.

Section 7. Regular Membership

Membership in this coalition is limited to the following requirements:

- Deaf/hard-of-hearing consumer-based national organization
- Non-profit status
- Consumer-oriented focus with its Board having a 51% majority of deaf or hard of hearing people
- Membership base of at least 50 individuals

Section 8. Acceptance and Endorsement.

Regardless of whether an organization meets all of the criteria described in Section 7, full regular membership becomes effective only by endorsement through a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote in support from the current DHHCAN membership and upon payment of membership dues.

Section 9. Organizational Partners.

Organizational Partners do not have voting privileges. Professional and advocacy non-profit organizations that cannot meet the DHHCAN membership criteria but are committed to advancing the mission of DHHCAN may apply to become a DHHCAN Organizational Partner. Organizations that cannot meet the criteria specified in Section 7 may apply, may be admitted with $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote in support of their application by current DHHCAN members.

Section 10. Organizational Partner Application.

To receive consideration for Organizational Partner status, applicants must submit a written statement attesting to the absence of financial interests and conflict of interest with DHHCAN goals as well as other documents necessary to determine the purpose, relevance, philosophy and organizational structure.

The Chair shall submit all documents to membership representatives at the next scheduled meeting, along with any comments or opinions of the DHHCAN Officers. Representatives shall have at least 30 days to review the information and share it with their organizations for input/feedback. Once all documentation is reviewed and satisfactory answers have been received to all questions, the matter of acceptance and endorsement of the applicant shall be brought to a vote no later than 60 days after being received by the representatives.

To receive consideration for Voting Regular Member status, applicants must submit nonprofit status, Bylaws, breakdown of deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing Board members, a copy of meeting minutes.

Section 11. Membership Records.

Membership information shall be maintained in a database, which shall be amended from time to time to reflect changes in membership information.

Section 12. Membership Dues.

- Dues for DHHCAN regular membership and Organizational Partners shall be set at an amount proposed by DHHCAN Officers and approved by a simple plurality vote of regular voting members present.
- Membership payments are due in September of every calendar year. The Treasurer shall send out renewal notices during the final meeting prior to the summer hiatus in June.
- A Member organization shall be deemed to be in good standing if DHHCAN has received that Member's annual dues for the fiscal year in along with a Conflict of Interest statement.
Membership dues are welcome from regular members as long as they have met the attendance requirements outlined in Section 5.11 below. Reinstatement to active membership shall be made immediately upon full payment of any arrears, and/or a year from official suspension due to lack of minimum number of attendance to DHHCAN meetings.

Section 13. Termination of Membership.

DHHCAN Officers may permanently terminate the membership of any Member organization who is in default of the payment of dues or for other good cause. Dues already paid will not be refunded. Examples of good cause include but are not limited to: significant misconduct, harassment, failure to comply with these Bylaws, or any other behavior that significantly impairs that organization's ability to work with the other member organizations.

In terminating a Member organization's DHHCAN membership, DHHCAN Officers will send a written notice to the Member organization via email and/or other communication means, notifying the Member organization that DHHCAN Officers are considering terminating the Member organization's DHHCAN membership, stating the reason(s) why, and giving the Member organization an opportunity to submit a written response and supporting documentation within 30 calendar days. If the Member organization needs more time, the Member organization must send a written extension request via email to DHHCAN Officers no later than the last day of the 30-day response period stating why the Member organization needs more time and how much time the Member organization needs. DHHCAN Officers must approve or deny the extension request in writing via email to the Member organization. Only one extension may be granted for a reasonable amount of time as determined by DHHCAN Officers. After the response period expires, and regardless of whether or not the Member organization submits a response, DHHCAN will conduct a vote and send a written decision to the Member organization via email and/or other communication means within 60 calendar days of receipt of the Member organization's written response or, if the Member organization does not submit a written response, the expiration of the 30-day response period. This decision cannot be appealed.

Section 14. Compensation of Members.

Members shall receive no salary or compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for the expenses reasonably incurred by them in the performance of their duties, including but not limited to catering expenses. Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent a Member from receiving any compensation from DHHCAN for duties other than as a Member with majority approval of DHHCAN voting members and in accordance with Section 36.

Section 15. Officers, Qualifications, and Power.

The officers of DHHCAN shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Chair and Vice Chair shall each be a representative of a full (regular) member organization of DHHCAN. The Secretary and Treasurer shall each be a representative of a member organization, regardless of voting status. Voting members of DHHCAN may create additional officers or committees as necessary. The Officers shall manage the affairs of DHHCAN and may exercise powers and take other appropriate actions not required by these Bylaws to be done by the Membership, including but not limited to determining policy matters, conducting all DHHCAN activities, appointing committees, delegating duties, and interpreting these Bylaws.

Section 16. Authority and Duties of Officers.

The Chair shall serve as the DHHCAN spokesperson and contact person and have the responsibility for ensuring that DHHCAN activities and operations are conducted effectively and efficiently. This includes ensuring the timely announcements of meetings and agenda items, ensuring the recording and distribution of meeting minutes, ensuring clear communications (including utilization of interpreters and captioning) regarding DHHCAN business, overseeing all appropriate and approved financial matters.

The Vice Chair shall assume responsibility for becoming familiar with all aspects of DHHCAN activities and operations and shall assist the Chair in areas designated by the Chair and the membership. The Vice-Chair shall serve in the absence of the Chair and shall succeed to the office of the Chair upon the completion of the Chair's term of office.

The Secretary shall maintain all correspondence, records including minutes of meetings and notification of meetings, and other matters of communications under the direction of the Chair.

The Treasurer shall have the responsibility for collecting all membership dues, processing all expense reimbursements, and maintaining the financial records and bank accounts of this organization. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for ensuring the timely filing of any tax forms should DHHCAN be incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Section 17. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of DHHCAN shall run from January 1 to December 31 of every calendar year.

Section 18. Funds.

All DHHCAN funds shall be deposited from time to time in DHHCAN's checking account, and all such funds may be withdrawn upon checks signed by the Treasurer or their designee as approved by the DHHCAN Officers. The Treasurer shall be responsible for monitoring monthly bank statements. The Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer shall all have access to and regularly monitor the checking account.

Section 19. Checks.

The Treasurer is authorized to sign checks on behalf of DHHCAN. The Chair may designate additional persons who may sign checks on behalf of DHHCAN. Payments in excess of \$500 from DHHCAN's checking account requires the Chair's accompanying signature.

Section 20. Payment of Operating Expenses

Payment of operating expenses including domain and website fees shall be made via direct debit, credit card, or other payment methods as authorized by the Officers.

Section 21. Expenditures.

No expenditure, obligation, or indebtedness shall be incurred without the prior knowledge and approval of DHHCAN Officers. Anyone who violates this Section may be personally liable for the expenditure or obligation incurred. If an expenditure, obligation, or indebtedness has already been incurred, DHHCAN Officers may ratify and/or reimburse the person requesting reimbursement, but shall have no obligation to do so.

Section 22. Authorization.

No Member organization or representative of DHHCAN shall have any power or authority to enter into any contract, execute or deliver any legal instruments, borrow money on its behalf, pledge its credit, or mortgage or pledge its assets except within the scope and to the extent of the authority provided by these Bylaws or by DHHCAN Officers. Authority may be given by DHHCAN Officers for any of the above purposes and may be general or limited to specific instances. Grants of such authority must be in writing.

Section 23. Loans.

No loans shall be contracted on behalf of DHHCAN. Furthermore, DHHCAN shall not loan money to its Officers or Members. Any Member who assents to or participates in such a loan shall be personally liable for repayment to DHHCAN and may be removed from the DHHCAN for breach.

Section 24. Requests for Reimbursement.

With DHHCAN Officers' knowledge and consent, a Member may from time to time use personal funds for DHHCAN operations, such as paying expenses associated with catering or DHHCAN's domain and website management. This does not include regular commutes to/from DHHCAN meetings. A Member may submit a written reimbursement request via email, with receipt(s) attached, to the Treasurer, who may consult with DHHCAN Officers to approve or deny the request for reimbursement. If the request is approved, then the Treasurer shall notify and reimburse the Member.

Section 25. Elections.

Elections of officers shall take place in December at the end of each two-year term. Nominations shall be announced in writing thirty days prior to the meeting. The Chair shall appoint a DHHCAN representative as the nominations officer. Election to office shall be by simple plurality vote of regular voting members present. The first meeting led by the new officers shall take place in January.

In case of vacancy of the Chair, the Vice Chair automatically becomes President for the unexpired term. In case of vacancy of the Vice Chair, Secretary, or Treasurer with less than one (1) year remaining in the term, the office may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining

Officers. A Officer appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed for the unexpired term of their predecessor's office. If the unexpired term is more than one year, a special election must be held within 60 days of the vacancy. Until such elections occur, a person may be appointed to the vacant office by an affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining Officers.

Section 26. Term of Office.

All of the officers shall each serve for a two-year term.

Section 27. Quorum.

A quorum shall be defined as a majority of regular members in good standing. If a meeting fails to meet quorum, voting cannot take place but members can continue to update each other on policy reports.

Section 28. Voting.

Organizations with regular member status shall be entitled to one voting representative.

Section 29. Parliamentary Authority.

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order New Revised shall govern DHHCAN in all cases where they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order DHHCAN may adopt.

Section 30. Amendments.

The DHHCAN bylaws may be amended by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of DHHCAN members present and voting at DHHCAN business meetings. Bylaws amendments shall be documented in the meeting minutes and distributed to all DHHCAN members by the preceding DHHCAN business meeting prior to vote.

Section 31. Suspension of Bylaws.

The DHHCAN bylaws may be suspended for a specific purpose by four-fifths (4/5) majority vote of the DHHCAN members present and voting.

Section 32. Minutes.

Minutes of the official meetings shall be distributed to members no later than 15 business days after adjournment.

Section 33. Meetings.

Regular meetings will be held at a time and place announced at least one week in advance to all members in good standing. Normally meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month. It is required that any one organization with full (regular) membership status of DHHCAN not miss more than three meetings a year (from September to June, we do not have meetings in July and August.) Organizational partners are exempt from this requirement.

Section 34. Mailing Lists.

Any mailing lists compiled by DHHCAN may be used only for the coalition's own purposes. All mailings must be authorized by the Chair.

Section 35. Ad Hoc and Special Committees.

The Chair may also form ad hoc or special committees as needed.

Section 36. Conflict of Interest.

If a Member (in an individual or organizational capacity) has a conflict of interest in any DHHCAN-related matter, that Member shall inform the entire Board in writing by email as soon as they are aware of the conflict. Service on the board of another not-for-profit organization does not constitute a conflict of interest. Upon notification of the conflict of interest, the remaining members of the Board shall then determine by a majority vote how to address the conflict of interest. Additionally, each year when organizational dues are submitted, the member organization must also submit a Conflict of Interest statement.

Section 37. Dissolution.

In the event that the coalition is dissolved by 4/5 majority vote, after payment of all debts and liabilities, remaining assets shall be distributed evenly among active DHHCAN member organizations.