

Writing (Or Reviewing) Your Constitution

Although we can't do as Thomas Jefferson did and write a constitution that rarely has to be changed, we can keep trying to reach the ultimate goal. Your organization constitute should be flexible enough to last for more than 2 or 3 years, yet restricted enough to respond to situations. The following is a list of things to consider when writing a constitution. Although it is by no means complete, it does provide a good beginning.

- I. Purpose: Any organization should have a purpose and this should be included in addition to the name of the organization.**
- II. Membership: This section should determine which people are members of the organization, and any restriction on membership. Some questions that should be decided are:**

III.

. INCLUDE NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE HERE:

ORGANIZATION does not discriminate in its membership or activities on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, religion or religious creed, disability or handicap, sex or gender (including pregnancy, sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct including acts of sexual violence such as rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and coercion), gender identity and/or expression (including a transgender identity), or sexual orientation.

. 1) Who can vote in elections, or other matters pertaining to the organization?

. 2) Who can be members?

. 3) Powers of the organization:

A. Do they approve the budget?

B. Who final authority rests with (i.e. the organizational body, or executives?)

C. Number of votes necessary to approve legislation and for elections.

D. When is quorum is necessary and what is it?

IV. The Governing Body: This section should include members, their powers, duties, elections, and voting. In this section you should consider:

1) Who is on the executive board and the duties of each officer on the board? When assigning duties, be sure to include:

A. Who runs the meetings?

B. Who creates and abolishes committees?

C. Who's responsible for money?

D. Who's responsible for the social activities?

E. Who's responsible for minutes and publicity?

F. Who keeps records of funds?

IV. Recall of officers

. 1) Can automatic recall occur?

. 2) Can the constituency recall the person? If so, how?

Petition?

V. Amendments: Who ratifies the constitutions, and how many people must ratify it?