

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Chapter Board of Directors

The Chapter Board of Directors is responsible for the following:

- Supervising, controlling, and directing the affairs of the chapter.
- Selecting the bank in which the chapter's funds are deposited, managing and disbursing its funds, developing and approving the annual budget, and complying with tax reporting requirements.
- Authorizing and monitoring committees.
- Reviewing and evaluating projects.
- Developing and monitoring chapter policies and procedures.
- Meeting as often as needed but at least twice per year.
- Submitting annual chapter charter renewal to the national office.
- Submitting a list of new officers to the national office within 30 days after an election.

Chapter Officers

Chapters must minimally elect a President and a Secretary/Treasurer. Alternatively, the chapter may decide to make Secretary and Treasurer two separate positions. It is strongly recommended that the chapter also elect a President-Elect to ensure that a President is in place for the next term.

The Chapter President

- Supervises and directs chapter activities.
- Is responsible for ensuring that the Board functions effectively. Confirms that Board members understand and adequately discharge their duties.
- Schedules Board meetings and presides at all Board/general membership meetings.
- Appoints standing and special committees. Appoints chairpersons to these committees.
- Acts as the official representative of the chapter.

The Chapter President-Elect

- Performs the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President.
- Serves as an ex-officio member of all standing committees.
- Is expected to succeed the President upon completion of the term as President-Elect or upon vacancy of the office of President.

The Chapter Secretary/Treasurer

- Maintains all chapter records, including bylaws, financial reports, and minutes of Board meetings, business, and committee meetings.
- Conducts official correspondence of the chapter.
- Distributes notices of chapter meetings.
- Maintains current committee and membership rosters.

- Serves as a standing member of the Communication Committee or any other appointed committee.
- Is responsible for the funds of the chapter and for keeping records of all income and expenditures.
- Deposits all chapter receipts in a bank account maintained in the name of the chapter.
- Renders to the officers, whenever they request it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer.
- Prepares an annual financial budget for approval by the Board and keeps the membership informed of the chapter's financial condition.

CHAPTER GOVERNANCE

The organizational structure your chapter members choose will determine which individuals are empowered to serve as their leaders. Whether your leadership is restricted to four elected officers or is expanded to include elected At-Large Directors, these individuals are the ones ultimately responsible for chapter management. These general responsibilities include:

- Formulation of annual goals and objectives (including approval of the yearly chapter budget) to support a long-range plan of action for continued chapter development.
- Advisement, support, and evaluation of standing and/or special committees to ensure that their activities are in accord with their intended purposes and the educational and professional nature of the association.
- Review and revision of chapter policies and procedures as necessary.

Chapter Board Meetings

To carry out these activities, it is recommended that leadership meetings be held regularly as described in the Chapter Bylaws, with meeting dates established at the beginning of the fiscal year. Emergency meetings may be scheduled as necessary.

Below are suggested guidelines for effective Board meetings:

- Give the Board members adequate notice about meetings – three to four weeks prior to the date of the meeting is ideal.
- Develop a definite agenda complete with expected actions and incorporate a time structure so that the Board spends only a certain amount of time on each item.
- Forward all pertinent agenda material to the Board at least two weeks prior to the meeting/conference call. Make sure Board members receive all information relating to an issue, both pro and con.
- Start the meeting on time. Assign an individual to record action notes.
- Make sure that all actions and motions are stated clearly and completely. Clarify who needs to do what and when.
- Only representatives elected by the general membership may vote on issues affecting chapter activities. When voting occurs, each representative is entitled to one and only one vote and all motions must be passed by a majority.
- Encourage the participation of all Board members, but keep in mind that individuals often appreciate a leader who takes charge. It is important to hear from everyone on some issues and effective to make quick decisions on others.
- Review the Board's discussions and decisions relative to the chapter's strategic plan.
- Make sure that everyone taking the floor speaks clearly and audibly. Sum up what the speaker has said, entertain discussion, and obtain a decision.
- Control aimless discussion by recommending a conclusion or further study.
- Retain control, but do not stifle free comment. Ask for support. Clarify issues by obtaining consensus, then move on.
- Check at the end of each meeting to see if members feel that all relevant subjects have been adequately covered.
- Make sure that the action notes are distributed to the Board within two weeks of the meeting or call.

Meeting Minutes

The purpose of taking minutes is to protect the organization and the people who participate in the meeting. The minutes are not intended to be a record of discussions, nor serve as a newsletter for the organization. The following guidelines will help volunteers and staff members take minutes that will protect the organization:

- Complete and accurate minutes need to be kept of every meeting, whether it is a meeting of the membership or the Board of Directors. Best practice recommends minutes are taken at the committee level as well.
- Minutes are a record of what was considered and accomplished at a meeting, not a record of each statement by those attending.
- Minutes indicate the place, date, and time of the meeting.
- Include a statement that the minutes of the previous meeting have been distributed and were approved either as written or as changed.
- The ultimate legal importance of meeting minutes can be substantial if antitrust, tax, or other legal issues are raised in litigation or some other context.
- Whenever appropriate, include self-serving statements about the procedures used by the organization to assure legal compliance. For example, "An antitrust avoidance plan was reviewed and implemented."
- Early drafts of minutes, and notes used to make them, should not be retained in organization files once the final draft of the minutes is prepared and distributed. The chief elected officers must be sure they are discarded.
- Distribute copies of the minutes to those who attended the meeting and safeguard the records in the permanent files of the organization.

Chapter Committees

Standing Committees

During chapter formation, it is important to decide upon the standing committees that will support the purpose of the chapter and ensure their ongoing existence by identifying them in the Chapter Bylaws.

The number of committees that may be formed is not limited, nor is a certain number required. However, it is recommended to establish standing committees based on real and ongoing need. When an objective or activity can be completed within one year and is not likely to be pursued annually, it is recommended that a **task force** be appointed, rather than increasing the number of standing committees. Generally, a new chapter need only provide for five standing committees:

1. Bylaws
2. Nomination
3. Membership
4. Program
5. Communication

Each committee should have a chair that directs its activities, and a budget.

Bylaws Committee

The Bylaws Committee is responsible for the annual review of the Chapter Bylaws to ensure their conformity with NANN Bylaws and the rules and regulations for chapters. The committee, with prior approval of the officers and/or Board, presents any recommendations for revision to the general membership for its vote. The President-Elect is generally a standing member of this committee.

Nomination Committee

The Nominations Committee is responsible for the development of guidelines for the election process, recruitment of nominees for office, and the development of a slate of candidates that will ensure representation by at least two institutions. They collect review materials from candidates such as CV, references, etc., submit slate of officers to the Board of Directors, prepare ballots, and compile results of balloting. The Immediate Past President is generally a standing member of this committee.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for the management of chapter promotion including the design and implementation of campaigns to recruit new members and to improve member retention. They can promote new membership through membership drives and by establishing contacts in hospitals, schools of nursing, and other healthcare agencies. The committee, in collaboration with the Secretary, is also responsible for the development of membership application forms and the maintenance of membership records.

Program Committee

The Program Committee is responsible for developing and promoting education programs for its members. When possible, continuing education credit should be secured for the educational offering or conference. They also make all logistical arrangements for educational offerings and programs. The chapter President-Elect is generally a standing member of this committee.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is responsible for the preparation and release of information regarding chapter activities and topics of concern in the neonatal field. This is typically achieved by the publication of a chapter newsletter. The chapter Secretary is generally a standing member of this committee.

A model form for chapter bylaws is provided in the resource section of this handbook.

Committee Chairperson

Regardless of the number or type of committees chosen, each must establish its own written policies and procedures, including member qualifications, terms of service, and duties and responsibilities. The general duties and responsibilities of a committee chairperson are outlined below:

- Have charge and full knowledge of all activities of the committee.
- Annually confirm committee membership with the approval of the Executive Committee or Board of Directors.
- Provide for the orientation of each committee member.

- Give notice, arrange, and preside at all meetings of the committee.
- Designate a recording secretary to keep the minutes of all committee meetings.
- Submit quarterly reports and meeting minutes for review by the Executive Committee or Board.
- Attend all regularly scheduled leadership meetings as called for by the chapter organizational structure.
- Communicate with and report activities to the chapter's Communications Committee.
- Maintain an accurate record of and monitor all committee expenses.
- Annually prepare and submit to the Chapter Treasurer a financial statement and committee budget request for the following fiscal year.
- Be responsible for keeping and annually reviewing the committee policies and procedures and other guidelines for committee activities.
- Devote sufficient time to consistently fulfill the duties of the position of chairperson.
- Perform other duties as may be requested by the Executive Committee or Board.

Leading Committees

A results-oriented committee chair will set goals, objectives, and activities that can make a membership, newsletter, fundraising, or any other committee idea an effective tool for the chapter. When action steps and accountabilities are clearly defined, individual committee members are much more likely to take their personal responsibilities seriously and make sure the job gets done. Consider the following steps in developing action plans for committees:

- Set specific quantifiable goals for the committee to achieve. For example: *This year we will increase membership by 10%.*
- Define the specific activities you will undertake to accomplish your goals. For example: *We will personally invite non-member nurses to at least two chapter activities during the year.*
- Make sure your activities fit within the budget allocated for the committee.
- Give specific assignments to individuals and set deadlines to make sure the job gets done. Make sure tasks are a reasonable amount of work for the individual they are intended and provide a start and end date. For example: *Individual "X" will post fliers at three area facilities for three continuing education meetings this year.*
- Assess your progress. Have you met your goals? If not, were they realistic? Are there other courses of action that may assist you in achieving the goal for next year?
- Recognize your volunteers and celebrate your successes. Make sure everyone feels good about the job they have done. For example: *Publish an article in your newsletter about the committee's accomplishments, present a plaque to someone who went the extra mile, write thank you letters to all volunteers, or phone committee members to personally thank them for their work.*

Keeping members engaged in committee work by setting up programs that have clear and attainable goals with specific assignments and due dates is one way to help ensure that your chapter retains enthusiastic, involved members.

Committee Member

The function of the committee will, in large part, dictate the number of committee members necessary to carry out its work. The most effective committees typically have three to five members (including the chairperson). The actual number should, however, be jointly determined by the Executive Committee or Board and the committee chairperson and documented (along with member qualifications, terms of service, and duties and responsibilities) in the committee policies and procedures. The general duties and responsibilities of a committee member include the following:

- Perform assigned tasks in a timely manner to facilitate the orderly progression of committee business.
- Maintain contact with the chairperson to ensure a viable, productive committee.
- Participate in committee evaluation and future planning.
- Attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings.
- Devote sufficient time to consistently fulfill the duties of the position.
- Perform other duties as may be requested by the chairperson and the Executive Committee or Board.