

From NASW Standards for Chapter Operations

B: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Reference: *NASW Bylaws; NASW Standards for Chapter Nominations and Elections 12-02.* (Refer to *Election Standards and Procedures for National Leadership for procedures for national elections.*)

STANDARD 1.B.1 CANDIDACY REQUIREMENTS

An individual must be a regular, associate or student member of the association and in good standing to be a candidate for election to a chapter office.

STANDARD 1.B.2 FORMER STAFF ELIGIBILITY FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE

Regular, associate or student members in good standing who have held national or chapter staff positions are not eligible to become candidates for chapter elective positions until two years after their last day of employment with NASW.

STANDARD 1.B.3 CCNLI MEMBERS BALLOT ELIGIBILITY

CCNLI members are not eligible to become candidates for an elective position while serving on the CCNLI or for the election year immediately following the expiration of their term on the CCNLI, except in chapters electing the CCNLI chair. CCNLI members may become candidates for the elected position of CCNLI chairperson in the program year immediately following the conclusion of their term as a committee member.

STANDARD 1.B.4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Chapters shall have nominating procedures in place to ensure that affirmative action goals are met each election year (Affirmative Action Program of NASW, III.2.b.).

STANDARD 1.B.5 CCNLI MEETINGS

The CCNLI shall meet at least once per year to conduct the selection process and to certify a preliminary slate to the secretary of the chapter board of directors.

STANDARD 1.B.6 DIVERSITY AND BALANCED REPRESENTATION

The CCNLI shall assemble a slate that will ensure that the elected leadership of the chapter represents all geographical areas and population concentrations covered by the chapter and provides a balanced membership group reflecting the racial and ethnic diversity, gender, sexual orientation, and student distribution and the special interests of the members of the chapter (NASW Bylaws, Article XVI, D.2.).

STANDARD 1.B.7 SINGLE AND DOUBLE SLATING

The CCNLI shall document reasonable efforts to select two candidates (double slate) for all statewide positions -- officers, CCNLI Chair and Delegate Assembly positions -- and may select more than two, provided that the slate is assembled in such a way as to ensure that any combination of candidates receiving the largest number of votes will enable the chapter to meet its affirmative action goals and representational mandates. Single slating for local chapter positions is allowed for individual regions, units, districts or branches for board or Chapter Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification (CCNLI)

positions. The total slate, however, must ensure that the Affirmative Action goals for your chapter will be met.

STANDARD 1.B.8 BYLAWS COMPLIANCE

The CCNLI shall assemble a slate of positions that adheres to the terms and conditions of office set forth in the chapter bylaws.

STANDARD 1.B.9 NOMINEE NOTIFICATION

Individuals selected by the CCNLI to become candidates for elective office are to be contacted by a CCNLI member who formally issues the invitation on behalf of the CCNLI.

STANDARD 1.B.10 CONFIDENTIALITY

CCNLI deliberations are confidential. Other than candidate notification, the preliminary slate shall be kept confidential until officially announced by the secretary of the board of directors.

STANDARD 1.B.11 PRELIMINARY SLATE AND PETITION PROCESS ANNOUNCEMENT

The secretary of the board of directors announces the preliminary slate and the petition process to the chapter members through publication in the chapter newsletter and website. The petition process allows members to add their name to the slate by submitting a petition to the CCNLI **within 30 days of the announcement.**

PETITION PROCESS REQUIREMENTS:

- For a statewide position, the petition must include signatures from at least 2% of the total number of chapter members with representation from each branch
- For a branch position, the petition must include signatures representing 2% of the total number of branch members.
- The CCNLI must verify that petition signers are members of the Association, the chapter, and in the case of branch positions, the appropriate branch.
- The CCNLI must verify that the petition contains the number of eligible signatures required for the specific position for which it has been submitted.

STANDARD 1.B.12 CAMPAIGN ETHICS

A campaign for election shall be conducted in keeping with the ethical standards of the profession as articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics. A candidate shall conduct herself/him in a manner that is professional. A candidate will in no case, speak against an opponent or disparage the opponent in any way.

STANDARD 1.B.13 CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

Candidates may seek members to endorse their candidacy and announce endorsements as a means of providing evidence of qualifications for a position and support for their candidacy. Candidates must obtain clear and specific written permission to use the name of any person as an endorser and must explain to the endorsing person the exact manner in which the endorser's name will be used orally or in writing. The current elected or

appointed NASW position of an endorser shall not be mentioned in any endorsement statement or list of endorsers. Current members of the National and Chapter Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification, the national and chapter board, national and chapter staff are prohibited from endorsing any candidates or giving the appearance of endorsing candidates. Units of the Association (e.g. chapters, committees or commissions, etc.) are also prohibited from endorsing candidates or giving the appearance of endorsing candidates.

STANDARD 1.B.14 CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Campaign materials must be in keeping with the professional nature of the organization. Normally the content of materials will be limited to a picture of the candidate, a statement of positions, a listing of credentials and qualifications, and names of endorsers. **Materials should not include comments regarding an opposing candidate.**

STANDARD 1.B.15 USE OF NASW MATERIALS AND CHAPTER RESOURCES

NASW resources including the NASW name, letterhead, staff time, postage, email, faxes, websites, etc. may not be expended for the purpose of supporting one candidate over another. The use of NASW newsletters and websites to report the candidacy of chapter members and electoral area candidates is encouraged, provided that:

- (1) The report is included as a news article or an announcement in the regular association publication.
- (2) The candidacy of all chapter and electoral area candidates is reported.
- (3) The candidates' opponents are informed at least two weeks in advance of the deadline for receipt of copy so that they may insert material of their own if they wish. The names of the opposing candidates shall be included in the article or announcement whether or not the opponent submits material to be included in the article.

Mailing lists of members may be sold to candidates either by national or by chapters, at the usual and customary fee as long as the requests (for labels, etc.) meet all other mailing list request policies.

NASW resources such as telephone trees and special interest networks may be used to encourage members to vote if they are used impartially, but not to endorse candidates or give the appearance of endorsing candidates.

Listservs may be used to encourage members to vote and to dialogue with/or about candidates, but not to endorse specific candidates. Association postal permits are not permitted to be used by candidates or on behalf of candidates.

Chapter Executive Directors, Chapter Presidents, CCNLI Chairs and candidates share responsibility for ensuring that association resources are used appropriately.

Promotion, other than the above, of any candidate should be available only at private cost *not to exceed* \$500 (including advertising space, cost of mailing, mailing lists, etc.). Every advertisement should include the statement "this is not to be construed as an endorsement by the association of an individual".

STANDARD 1.B.16 PERSONAL APPEARANCES

In keeping with the policy that Chapters may not endorse candidates, candidates for the same office must be offered equal access to chapter functions. If a candidate requests or is invited to appear or speak at a chapter function in the capacity of a candidate, the same access must be actively offered to opposing candidates. In the event that the opposing candidates cannot appear, they must be offered the opportunity to submit a written statement of an appropriate length to be read by a member of her/himself choice or presented in written form at the same occasion.

STANDARD 1.B.17 CAMPAIGN MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The CCNLI has the responsibility of monitoring campaign activities. A request for a review of a complaint of a potential or alleged election practice violation can be made by any member or unit of the Chapter. In the event of such a request (or complaint), the Chair will immediately inform the Committee. If the Committee concludes that a violation is likely, the CCNLI Chair will notify the Chapter Board President and the Chapter Services Department. Sanctions may be applied.

STANDARD 1.B.18 VIOLATIONS

The CCNLI shall determine whether a violation has occurred and, if so, whether the violation is of major or lesser degree. The determination of whether a major violation has occurred will be based on the following:

- a. Degree of departure from the guidelines
- b. Degree of harm to the opposing candidacy
- c. Closeness of the election
- d. Relationship between the departure/violation and the election results.

A violation might be deemed “major” if it clearly involved a knowing, willful and deliberate disregard of the guidelines, disregard of generally accepted notions of fairness, or a violation of ethical standards. In such instances, the candidate’s behavior rather than its impact on the election would be the prime consideration. “Lesser” or “minor” violations would include technical and inadvertent breaches of the guidelines, which in the opinion of the CCNLI had little or no effect on the outcome of the election.

STANDARD 1.B.19 CAMPAIGN SANCTIONS

If a violation is found to have occurred, the CCNLI, in consultation with the Chapter Services Department, will report this to the Chapter Board of Directors with a report on whatever sanction(s) or other actions the CCNLI has taken. In the event of a finding of “major” violation, the CCNLI may determine that the candidate should be disqualified from assuming office or other appropriate action. Upon consultation with the Chapter Services Department and other appropriate national staff, the CCNLI shall communicate the decision to the Board President and to the candidate. If no appeal is filed within 15 days of the date of the notice of sanction(s), then sanctions, if any, should take effect

STANDARD 1.B.20 APPEAL OF DECISION AND/OR SANCTIONS

Any party found in violation of the standards may present an appeal to the CCNLI within 15 days of the date of the notice of sanction(s). The appeal shall be presented in writing and sent by certified mail to the Chapter President and shall state why the decision should be modified. In the event that the Chapter President was a candidate in the election that is challenged, the Chapter Vice President or another officer shall act in place of the President. The Executive Committee shall consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting or earlier if warranted. The Executive Committee may request further information from the candidates(s), from the chapter, from the CCNLI or from any other person, but need not do so if the file information is sufficient for its purposes. The Executive Committee may hold the CCNLI action or grant the appeal in whole or in part. The decision of the Executive Committee on the matter shall be final.

STANDARD 1.B.21 ELECTION CERTIFICATION AND BALLOT DISTRIBUTION

To be valid, chapter elections must be certified by the CCNLI in consultation with the Chapter Services Department and approved by the chapter board of directors. The ballot must be **mailed to all eligible chapter members by May 15. It must allow at least three weeks for members to vote and return ballots**, and it must meet all the requirements for format, content, process and confidentiality established in the *Standards for NASW Chapter Nominations and Elections*.

STANDARD 1.B.22 ELECTION DETERMINATION

Election of candidates to office shall be by a plurality of the total votes cast (NASW Bylaws, Article IX.C.3.).

STANDARD 1.B.23 ELECTION TIES

When all votes have been tallied by the CCNLI and there is a tie, the winner shall be determined by a coin toss in the presence of the candidates (or their designees), under the supervision of the CCNLI, with the chairperson or her or his designee calling the toss.

STANDARD 1.B.24 SPECIAL ELECTIONS

All special elections shall adhere to the same standards as regular elections for processes, procedures, timelines (except for the May 15 deadline for receipt of ballots by members), and confidentiality.

STANDARD 1.B.25 WAIVERS

To be eligible for a waiver from any of the standards and requirements established in the *Standards for NASW Chapter Nominations and Elections*, a chapter must have demonstrated and documented its efforts to comply with the standards, and sought consultation and technical assistance from the appropriate national staff. The chapter must submit a formal request for waiver in writing to the Office of Chapter Services, which has been designated by the National Board of Directors to act on these matters, before the CCNLI certifies the chapter's preliminary ballot to the secretary of the chapter board of directors.

STANDARD 1.B.26 VACANCIES IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS

Except for the positions of president-elect and president, all vacancies for chapter elective positions are to be filled through the board of directors' appointment of a person to serve until the term expires. The board of directors shall adopt a policy specifying that in the event of vacancy in the position of president-elect, either the position shall be offered to the candidate receiving the next largest number of votes in the election or the position shall be filled through a special election. When a vacancy occurs and the board of directors has not established a policy prior to the position becoming vacant, the chapter shall hold a special election. When a vacancy occurs in the position of president, the position shall be filled by the vice president, who shall serve until the term expires, except in the event that no election for the position of president-elect was held before July 1 (causing the vacancy in the position of president), in which case the vice president shall serve until a special election for the position of president is completed.

STANDARD 1.B.27 DELEGATE ASSEMBLY DELEGATES' TERMS

Delegates are elected to three-year terms beginning July 1, to serve two years before and the year of the Delegate Assembly. The number of delegates to which a chapter is entitled may vary from Assembly to Assembly on the basis of a formula determined by the Assembly itself. All chapters are represented by at least one delegate and a guaranteed alternate, the first and second delegates (or guaranteed alternate) are always the president and the president-elect respectively, when those positions are filled. Delegations from chapters entitled to three or more delegates must comprise a balanced representation of all geographic areas and population centers of the chapter (NASW Bylaws, Article V, Section E. 3.).

There is no position of "delegate" on a chapter board of directors, but board members may run as delegates and, if elected, serve in both positions.

STANDARD 1.B.28 QUALIFIED PROSPECTS' ROSTER

The CCNLI is responsible for maintaining a roster of qualified prospects for the chapter president and board of directors to consider in filling elective vacancies and appointive positions at the committee - task force - liaison level.