

VIRGINIA SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION ALLIANCE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this organization is the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, which hereinafter may be referred to as “the Action Alliance.” The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance is a non-profit organization chartered with the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

ARTICLE II. Vision/Mission

Section 1: The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance was created from the transformation into one organization of the state coalitions formerly known as Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault and Virginians Against Domestic Violence.

Section 2: The Action Alliance has a compelling vision for a world where all of us thrive. We will act strategically in Virginia, and as partners in the national movement to end sexual and intimate partner violence, by promoting gender justice, racial justice, reproductive justice and economic justice for all people.

Section 3: The mission of the Action Alliance is as follows:

The Action Alliance, a diverse group of individuals and organizations, believes that ALL people have the right to a life free of sexual and domestic violence.

We will use our diverse and collective voice to create a Virginia free from sexual and domestic violence—inspiring others to join and support values of equality, respect and shared power.

We recognize that sexual and domestic violence are linked to other forms of oppression, which disproportionately affect women, children, and marginalized people. Understanding the great harm racism has created for individuals, families and our communities in Virginia, we commit to building within the coalition an anti-racist framework from which to address sexual and domestic violence.

ARTICLE III. Guiding Principles

As the Action Alliance conducts its work, it is essential that survivors, the interests of survivors, and those impacted by sexual and domestic violence are at the forefront of all decision-making.

Recognizing that local agencies have been the foundation of coalition work by connecting communities and survivors to statewide advocacy, we are committed to an Action Alliance in which Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy agencies continue to be the driving force of the Action Alliance.

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Recognizing the historical inequities between resources allocated to address sexual and domestic violence, we seek to equitably address the elimination of both sexual and domestic violence.

Recognizing that sexual and domestic violence affects all Virginians, we seek to create an Action Alliance where those who have been traditionally oppressed in society and/or marginalized in anti-violence work have the opportunity to be full and active participants in the Action Alliance. The Action Alliance recognizes that representation of traditionally oppressed groups is only a beginning. Intentional diversity also involves an analysis of oppression and a commitment to challenging and changing the disempowering influences of dominant culture. Everyone must share responsibility for ensuring that ALL voices are heard and valued.

ARTICLE IV. General Commitment

Section 1: The Action Alliance governing body, membership, groups and committees are committed to encouraging respect and appreciation of a diverse group of individuals as they contribute their experiences, leadership, and voices to the fulfillment of the Action Alliance's mission.

ARTICLE V. General Membership

Section 1: Membership is open to Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy agencies (SDVAs), allied affiliate organizations, and individuals who demonstrate commitment to the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Action Alliance. New members must register with the Action Alliance and pay dues annually. However, ability to pay dues will not be a barrier to individual membership. If individual members cannot pay annual dues, they can be exempted from doing so as part of the registration process.

Section 2: Members are encouraged and entitled to participate in membership meetings. One membership meeting will be held each year. Members must be present to participate in decision-making. All meetings of the Action Alliance are open to the general public; however, only members can participate in any decision-making process. Meeting facilitators may move a meeting into executive session, which only members can attend, for the purposes of conducting sensitive business, such as discussions about the performance of members of the Governing Body or about removing Governing Body members from that Body.

Section 3: Members are encouraged to review the Goals, Values, Mission, and Strategic Plan of the Action Alliance and to participate in the Alliance's committees, workgroups, or special projects. Members are also encouraged to form local or regional committees or interest groups to facilitate and advocate for the prevention of sexual and domestic violence in their communities.

Section 4: The Membership will affirm the membership of the Governing Body

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at an Annual Membership meeting from a slate prepared by the Governing Body's Recruitment and Retention Committee. The Membership also has the authority to remove a Governing Body member at a regularly scheduled membership meeting when recommended by the Governing Body.

ARTICLE VI. The Governing Body

Section 1: Governing Body membership shall be open to those persons who live and/or are employed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and/or whose agency provides services to Virginia residents, and/or whose interests support the vision, mission and guiding principles of the Action Alliance and who are members of the Action Alliance.

Section 2: The Governing Body will be affirmed by the Membership at an Annual Membership Meeting, where a slate prepared by the Governing Body's Recruitment and Retention Committee will be presented.

Section 3: The Governing Body's responsibilities will include the duties of a corporate board of directors as defined by law, as well as other organizational responsibilities in some or all of the following general areas: Finance; Policy and Governance; and Recruitment and Retention.

With the exception of the Finance committee, which is a required committee to meet the Action Alliance's fiduciary responsibilities, the Governing Body may establish and dissolve committees to meet the Action Alliance's organizational responsibilities and accomplish its mission and strategic plan. These committees shall be reviewed, identified and confirmed at a meeting of the Governing Body as necessary and using the Governing Body's modified consensus process, and should take effect at the first annual meeting of the Governing Body in a new calendar year.

Section 4: The Governing Body will be made up of no fewer than 11 and no more than 15 members from across Virginia. In order to have diverse experiences, leadership, and voices within the Action Alliance, the Governing Body shall be composed as follows:

- Each recognized caucus shall have a seat on the Governing Body.
- No less than 33% of the Governing Body will be survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.
- No less than 33% of the Governing Body will be staff of Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy agencies.
- No less than 33% of the Governing Body will be members of communities that have been historically oppressed in Virginia, with the majority of these seats held by people of color.
- No agency may hold more than one seat.

These composition criteria *do not* exclude members from serving on the Governing Body who are not survivors or staff of Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocacy

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agencies or members of communities that are historically oppressed.

Section 5: Governing Body members will be affirmed for a five-year term and may serve up to 1 additional term. Governing Body members who have served for 10 consecutive years must vacate their Governing Body position for one term (5 years) before serving again. The terms are based on the individual and not the seat or position that individual fills.

Section 6: Each Governing Body member is expected to serve on at least one committee and encouraged to serve in a leadership position for a committee during their tenure on the Governing Body.

Section 7: The Governing Body will meet at least 4 times each year.

Section 8: Governing Body members will be expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of The Governing Body, which may be held as in-person gatherings or virtually. To facilitate rich and substantive discussions and decisions, Members attending remotely are encouraged to appear on camera and participate in discussion and decisions.

Section 9: When a member of The Governing Body misses two consecutive meetings and/or 50% of all Governing Body meetings during the calendar year, these absences become grounds for forfeiture of that seat on the Governing Body.

Section 10: The Governing Body will develop and maintain a protocol addressing members whose seats are in forfeiture status.

Section 11: Approved minutes of Governing Body meetings will be provided upon request.

ARTICLE VII. Action Alliance Officers

Section 1: Pursuant to Article VI. Section 3 above, Action Alliance Officers will include the Governing Body Facilitator, and the Officer leading each of the committees listed in Section 3. One of the 3 Officers will also be identified as the Governing Body Facilitator-Elect.

Section 2: Action Alliance officers, including the Facilitator-Elect will be affirmed by the Membership from a slate prepared by the Recruitment and Retention committee.

Section 3: Each Action Alliance officer will serve one two-year term.

Section 4: The officers of the Action Alliance will comprise an Organizing Team that works with the Executive Director to coordinate and guide the work of the Governing Body. The Organizing Team is chaired by the Governing Body Facilitator.

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ARTICLE VIII. Groups and Committees

Section 1: The work of the Action Alliance is conducted primarily by three Committees, each chaired by the corresponding officer: Policy and Governance, Finance, and Recruitment and Retention.

Section 2: Committees may establish ad-hoc committees as appropriate or necessary to accomplish the work of the Governing Body Standing Committee.

Section 3: Governing Body Standing Committees and ad-hoc committees are open to participation by all Action Alliance members.

Section 4: All Committees have the responsibility for ensuring that their work is informed by the Action Alliance vision, mission and guiding principles.

ARTICLE IX. Task Forces and Caucuses

Section 1: A Task Force is made up of members who come together to work on behalf of a special population or an identified issue consistent with the vision, mission and guiding principles of the Action Alliance that has been officially recognized by the Governing Body.

Section 2: A Caucus is made up of members of the Action Alliance who share an identity within a traditionally oppressed and/or marginalized group in society that has been officially recognized by the Governing Body.

Section 3: Caucuses and Task Forces meetings are open to participation by all Action Alliance members who are eligible by caucus or task force definition to participate.

Section 4: Caucuses and Task Forces have the responsibility for ensuring that their work is informed by the Action Alliance vision, mission and guiding principles.

ARTICLE X. Parliamentary Authority/Decision Making/Quorum

Section 1: All decision-making within the Action Alliance will be achieved through a consensus process.

Section 2: At a membership meeting, quorum is the members physically present to participate in decision-making.

Section 3: At a meeting of the Governing Body, 2/3 of the Governing Body must be present in order to conduct business.

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ARTICLE XI. Amendments

Section 1: These by-laws may be amended at a membership meeting of The Action Alliance by the membership, provided notice in writing has been sent to each member at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

Section 2: These by-laws may be amended by the Governing Body provided the amendments do not result in a change to the vision, mission, guiding principles or member rights and responsibilities. Any such amendments will be reported to the Membership of the Action Alliance at the Annual Membership Meeting.