

# Bylaws

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## ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be the San Diego Refugee Forum.

## ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the San Diego Refugee Forum is to:

- encourage, promote and facilitate coordination and collaboration in the delivery of services to the diverse populations of people displaced from their homes abroad by war, violence or persecution (“refugees”) and seeking refuge in San Diego;
- provide opportunities for networking and information sharing among refugee service providers and between refugee service providers and mainstream service providers;
- provide opportunities for capacity building and organizational learning to refugee service providers;
- provide education and advocacy on issues of concern to refugees and refugee service providers;
- attract additional resources for San Diego’s refugee service providers.

## ARTICLE III: VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the San Diego Refugee Forum is a community of service providers (including both traditional refugee-serving agencies as well as mainstream providers from the fields of health care, education, social service, etc.) that freely shares information and seeks to collaborate proactively in providing the highest quality and effectiveness of service to refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, and others displaced from their homes abroad by war, violence or persecution and seeking refuge in San Diego.

## ARTICLE IV: FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The forum works to assure the most efficient use of available resources to accomplish the purpose of the organization by:

- A) Facilitating networking of organizations in San Diego providing services to persons fleeing from war and persecution.
- B) Increasing awareness and educating the San Diego community about persons fleeing from war and persecution, and promoting cross-cultural understanding.
- C) Advocating for persons fleeing from war and persecution and providing information about and influencing legislative and policy decision making at all levels of government that affect these persons.



## ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

### A. Composition and Selection

General Membership in the organization is open to any interested individual, agency or organization.

New member agencies/organizations will be admitted to the Forum after application approval by the Executive Committee. At time of application, the prospective member must designate one primary and one alternative contact person. It is the members' responsibility to ensure the continuous accuracy of their contact information. A member may choose to designate a different representative or representatives to Forum committees than it designates as the members for the general meeting of the Forum.

### B. Ethnic Community-Based Member Organizations

Organizational members are considered "Ethnic Community-Based Organizational Members," or "ECBO Organizational Members" if they meet at least one of the following definitions at the time they apply for membership:

- "a non-profit organization that was founded and is led by a current or former refugee"
- "a group of current and former refugees and immigrants, primarily for the advancement of refugees"
- "a non-profit organization whose board of directors is composed of at least 60 percent current and/or former refugees", or
- "a non-profit community-based organization whose governing board is comprised of a majority (at least 51 percent) who are current or former refugees"

These definitions come from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Ethnic Community Self-Help (ECSH) Program's [Implementation Guidelines FY 2016-2019](#)[1] and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) [2016 Ethnic Community-based Organizations Fact Sheet](#)[2].

### C. Place and Time of Meeting

Membership meetings will be held monthly and shall be held in San Diego County at a location designated by the membership. Members will be notified of any change in the time or place of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance.

### D. Quorum

A quorum for the purpose of holding a meeting shall be the simple majority of the membership.

### E. Dues

There will be annual membership dues of \$35 per individual membership and \$70 per agency/organization. The fiscal year of the organization shall be from January 1st to December 31st.



ECBO Organizational Members may pay reduced dues equal to that of individual membership.

#### F. Voting

All persons attending general meetings of the Forum shall be entitled to a seat and a voice. Only those individuals and agencies/organizations, which have satisfied the standards for membership shall be entitled to vote. Each individual member shall have one vote, and each agency shall have two votes. Members can exercise their vote no sooner than two months following receipt of their membership dues.

#### G. Support of Mission

In order to support the mission and overall effectiveness and impact of the Forum, members are encouraged to participate on the committee or task force(s) that they can support with their expertise and/or skills.

## ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

#### A. Position Titles

The officers of the Forum shall be:

- the Chairperson,
- Vice Chairperson,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer,
- Member at Large, and
- the County of San Diego Refugee Coordinator (ex officio).

#### B. Nominations

There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of three (3) members chosen from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall be selected during the September meeting of the Forum. The Nominating Committee will meet beginning in September, at which time it will prepare a slate of officers to be presented to the membership meeting in November, when open nominations will also be solicited from the floor. Candidates must be nominated by a third party; self-nominations will not be accepted.

#### C. Selection

Elections for the posts of chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer are held biannually, at the expiration of the incumbents' two-year terms, at the November general meeting. Every individual member of the Forum shall receive one ballot, and each organizational member two. Individual organizational ballots can be cast for the same or for different candidates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be the new chairperson. Should the candidate with the highest number of votes choose not to be the chairperson, the chair



position will be offered to the candidate with the second highest number of votes, and so on. The remaining three candidates with the next highest numbers of votes will allocate the remaining three officer positions among themselves at the first meeting of the Executive Committee prior to January's general meeting, at which the division of positions will be announced to the membership. The Member-at-Large will be selected by the newly elected officers from within the membership or other stakeholders at the first meeting of the Executive Committee.

#### D. Terms of Office

Terms of office for elected officers will be for two (2) years, from January, for a maximum of two (2) successive terms. Past officers are permitted to stand for re-election no sooner than one (1) year following the expiration of their second consecutive term.

#### E. Duties

- The Chairperson shall perform the duties that the title of the office connotes. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Forum and of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall provide guidance to all committees.
- The Vice-Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson and shall have such other duties as are assigned by the Chairperson.
- The Secretary shall keep and complete minutes and attendance records of the meetings of the Forum and of the Executive Committee and generally perform all duties, which pertain to the office.
- The Treasurer shall keep account of the Forum's income and expenses, manage Forum finances, make monthly reports to the Forum, and maintain the Forum's membership list.
- The Member-at-Large and County of San Diego Refugee Coordinator (ex officio) will assist the other officers in identifying and coordinating guest speakers for the monthly general meetings.

#### F. Contracted Support

The Executive Committee can retain professional support in order to facilitate the completion of special Forum initiatives and events. The support person(s) will be engaged on a contractual basis using funds from the Forum's annual operating budget.

## ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES/ TASK FORCES

#### A. Membership

Membership on committee/ Task Force is open to each member of the Forum. For each committee/ Task Force in which a member seeks to participate, each individual/organization shall designate an individual and alternate to represent it.



## B. Quorum

A quorum for the purpose of holding meetings shall be the simple majority of committee/ Task Force members.

## C. Committees

There shall be two types of committees/ Task Forces: standing and ad hoc. All committees/ Task Forces shall exist solely to fulfill the purpose and mission of the Forum. Each task force (Section 2 below) will appoint two co-chairs from within its membership. The co-chairs must be confirmed by the Executive Committee and shall present updates on the committees' work to the membership at large at the monthly general meetings.

### 1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of all elected, ex officio and at large officers. It shall act as the Executive Board of the Organization. The Executive Committee shall facilitate the business of the Forum. The Executive Committee will make emergency decisions and become the ad hoc nominating committee if an officer is unable to complete his/her term of office.

The Executive Committee shall meet, at minimum, once a month in advance of the regular monthly general membership forum meeting. The Executive Committee establishes and manages the Forum budget. The Executive Committee shall present next year's budget projection to the forum at a general forum meeting no sooner than July and no later than October. This budget projection shall include the next year's committee/ Task Force reimbursement limit.

### 2. Standing Committees/ Task Forces:

#### *a. World Refugee Day Planning Committee*

Shall promote awareness of the Forum and the refugee community in the San Diego community and by organizing annual World Refugee Day celebration event in June.

The World Refugee Day Planning Committee is not obligated to provide quarterly minutes between July and December, and is not subject to the Task Force reimbursement limit.[#5]

#### *b. Health Task Force*

Shall identify issues around health care and access to healthcare of concern to persons fleeing war and violent conflict in San Diego; facilitate the education of the San Diego community about these issues; and spearhead the Forum's advocacy efforts and involvement in public policymaking around those issues.

#### *c. Employment Task Force*

Shall identify issues around employment of concern to persons fleeing war and violent conflict in San Diego; facilitate the education of the San Diego community about these issues; and spearhead the Forum's advocacy efforts and involvement in public policymaking around those issues.



*d. Asylees/Asylum Seekers Task Force*

Shall identify issues faced by asylum seekers and asylees in San Diego; facilitate the education of the San Diego community about these issues; and spearhead the Forum's advocacy efforts and involvement in public policymaking around those issues.

*e. Domestic Violence Task Force*

Shall address domestic violence Issues for persons fleeing war and violent conflict in San Diego; facilitate the education of the San Diego community about these issues; and spearhead the Forum's advocacy efforts and involvement in public policymaking around those issues.

*f. Advocacy Task Force*

Shall promote inclusive communities and strong local economies through collaborative advocacy and civic engagement.

3. Ad Hoc Committees

May be appointed by the Chairperson as needed and nominated by members of the Refugee Forum.

*4. Delinquency and Reactivation*

To be considered active, all committees/Task Forces must:

1. have two approved co-chairs, and
2. provide quarterly minutes to the executive committee.

A committee/ Task Force shall be considered delinquent/inactive if at any time it has fewer than two approved co-chairs, or has not provided meeting minutes in the past 4 months.

Delinquent committees/ Task Forces can reactivate by submitting co-chair and operating guideline information to the Executive Committee, and, upon approval, sending meeting minutes to the Executive Committee.

*5. Reimbursements*

Active committee/ Task Force Chairs may request reimbursement approval from the Executive Committee in advance of an anticipated expense. Once approved, committee/ Task Force Chairs must provide digital or physical receipts in order to receive reimbursement.

## ARTICLE VIII: AFFILIATION LETTERS

Member agencies can present requests for affiliation letters from the Forum to the Executive Committee no later than two weeks before they desire receipt of a signed letter. Members can request letters no sooner than two months following receipt of their membership dues. Upon receipt of a request, the Chairperson is authorized to sign a letter on forum letterhead indicating that the requesting organization is an active member of the San Diego Refugee Forum.





## ARTICLE IX: FUNDING

The annual budget of the forum will be composed of membership fees. The forum will not seek outside funding unless in those cases where individual members are ineligible for the funding source sought; or the funding opportunity is likely to improve service coordination and collaboration among service providers and the Forum is uniquely well positioned to facilitate those goals. In these cases, the Forum will strive for the majority of the entire funding amount to be allocated directly as pass-through funds to member agencies. The Forum may seek sponsorship and other support for regular and special events.

## ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws can be proposed by the Executive Committee and require a simple majority vote of the membership to become effective. Proposed amendments to the By-Laws shall be presented at a monthly member meeting and put to a vote at the following meeting.

## References

1. [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/2016\\_2019\\_guidelines\\_for\\_ecsh\\_program.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/2016_2019_guidelines_for_ecsh_program.pdf)
2. [http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/res/pdf/Factsheets/ECBO\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram/res/pdf/Factsheets/ECBO_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

Status: Approved by majority vote of membership at the general meeting on Tuesday, November 21st, 2017.