



BYLAWS

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 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. 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.

C. Quorum

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

D. Dues

There will be annual membership dues of \$30 per individual membership and \$60 per agency/organization, if paid before March 30th, and \$40 per individual membership and \$70 per agency/organization, if paid after March 30th. The fiscal year of the organization shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

E. 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.

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 of each year, 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 bi-annually, 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 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

A. Membership

Membership on committees is open to each member of the Forum. For each committee in which a member seeks to participate, each agency/organization shall designate an individual and alternate to represent it. When a designated member or his/her alternate does not attend three (3) consecutive committee meetings, they shall be dropped from that committee.

B. Quorum

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

C. Committees

There shall be two types of committees: standing and ad hoc. All committees shall exist solely to fulfill the purpose and mission of the Forum. Each task force (b-f 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. Standing Committees:

a. 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 established and manages the Forum budget. Committee Chairs make their budget requests to the Executive Committee in advance of any anticipated expense.

- b. Event Planning Task Force
Shall promote awareness of the Forum in the San Diego community and by organizing at least one annual public event, such as a World Refugee Day celebration.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. Transportation task force
Shall identify issues around transportation 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.

- 2. Ad Hoc Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson as needed.

ARTICLE IX: SUPPORT LETTERS

Member agencies can present requests for letters of support from the Forum to the Executive Committee no later than two weeks before they desire receipt of a signed

letter. Upon receipt of a request, the Executive Committee will survey all members' primary contacts for approval via email survey. A request is considered approved by the membership if the simple majority of returned surveys is in favor. Upon approval, the Chairperson is authorized to sign a letter on forum letterhead indicating that the requesting organization is an active member and that the forum is supportive of additional funding sources to be allocated to serving refugees in San Diego County.

ARTICLE X: 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 VII: 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.

Status: Approved by majority vote of membership at November 15, 2011 general meeting.