

National Alliance of Sentencing Advocates & Mitigation Specialists

Governing Rules

Article I: Name

The name of the organization shall be the National Alliance of Sentencing Advocates & Mitigation Specialists (NASAMS), hereinafter known as "Alliance."

Article II: Principal Office

The principal office of the organization shall be located in Washington, D.C.

Article III: Affiliation

The Alliance is a Section of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) and is subject to NLADA's articles of incorporation, bylaws and policies. Members of the Section shall also be considered members of the corporation, The National Legal Aid and Defender Association.

Article IV: Purpose

Section 1.

The purpose of the organization shall be:

- A. to promote the advancement of sentencing advocacy and to develop professional standards;
- B. to promote sentencing and confinement decisions and other criminal justice policies based upon principles of fairness, equity, human dignity and effective response to crime;
- C. to provide education, training and consultation to members;
- D. to provide a forum for professional communication and support and otherwise to foster professional identity among members;
- E. to promulgate ethical standards of practice, and
- F. to conduct other activities as may be necessary, desirable or incidental to attaining the purpose of the Alliance.

Section 2.

Nothing herein shall constitute any member of the Alliance as partners for any purpose.

Section 3.

The Alliance shall use its funds only to accomplish the purposes and objectives specified in these Governing Rules and no part of said funds shall inure or be distributed to the members of the Alliance.

Article V: Executive Committee

Section 1.

The Alliance shall have neither less than seven nor more than fifteen committee members with the usual number being nine, and collectively they shall be known as the Executive Committee.

Section 2.

Each member of the Executive Committee shall hold office for a period of three years and may be re-elected to serve additional three year terms.

Section 3.

The duties and powers of the Executive Committee shall be:

- A. to perform any and all duties granted to or imposed on its members collectively or individually by law or by these Governing Rules;
- B. to select one of its members as chair, one as vice chair, one as secretary, one as corresponding secretary, one as treasurer, and one as parliamentarian at its first meeting of the organization year (or as required due to vacancy of the position). These members shall constitute the Officers with duties as defined by policy.
- C. to meet at such times and places as required by these Governing Rules;
- D. to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of meetings; to develop and oversee activities which fulfill the purpose of the Alliance;
- E. to develop, define and carry out policies for the operation of the Alliance;
- F. to organize committees as deemed necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Alliance, and
- G. to develop rules and guidelines for the functioning of committees.

Section 4.

The duties of Officers of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- A. The Chair of the Executive Committee shall perform the usual function of the presiding officer at Executive Committee and annual membership meetings; appoint, in consultation with the Executive Committee, governors to any other offices of the board or board committees; and perform any other duty imposed or assigned by the Executive Committee.
- B. The Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President. The Vice Chair shall perform other duties as assigned by the Chair.
- C. The Secretary shall record and distribute the minutes of all Executive Committee meetings, and perform any other duty imposed or assigned by the Executive Committee.
- D. The Corresponding Secretary shall respond to correspondence directed to the Alliance requesting professional assistance and shall maintain a record of responses.
- E. The Treasurer shall maintain accurate records of all Alliance assets, periodically distribute to the Executive Committee and membership reports on the status of these assets, and perform any other duty imposed or assigned by the Executive Committee.

- F. The Parliamentarian shall advise the Chair and other officers, committees and members on matters of parliamentary procedure.

Section 5.

Election of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- A. The Executive Committee shall be elected by the Alliance membership annually. Candidates for election to a position on the Executive Committee must be professional members in good standing.
- B. At the time designated by the Executive Committee, but no less than thirty days prior to the election of the Executive Committee, the Alliance shall mail to all members in good standing brief summaries of the candidates' backgrounds and experiences, and an accompanying ballot. All qualifying ballots received no later than the close of the business day prior to the election will be counted.
- C. Newly elected Executive Committee members shall take office fifteen days from the close of balloting.

Section 6.

Vacancies in the Executive Committee shall be filled as follows:

- A. Should a vacancy on the Executive Committee occur prior to the expiration of a term, the Executive Committee may fill the vacancy by appointing a member in good standing to serve until the next regular election when a successor shall be elected to complete the unexpired portion of the term, or to begin a new term, whichever is applicable.
- B. Resignation from the Executive Committee prior to the expiration of the member's term shall be made in writing to the president or by notice to all members of the Executive Committee.

Section 7.

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- A. The Executive Committee shall convene no less than two meetings a year. One of the meetings shall take place at the annual conference, if held. Meetings may be conducted by conference call.
- B. The Chair of the Executive Committee shall convene meetings as needed and must call a meeting if three or more members of the Executive Committee request one in writing. Meetings of the Executive Committee, which are not held by conference call, are open to all members of the Alliance.
- C. Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee shall be made available to members of the Alliance upon request.

Section 9.

A member holding a position on the Executive Committee may be removed from office for cause, such as dereliction of duty or incapacitation, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Executive Committee members.

Article VI: Membership

Section 1.

There shall be two classifications of membership for the Alliance: individual and practicing attorney

- A. An Individual member is a member of NLADA and a section member of the Alliance, and receives all benefits and services of NLADA and the Alliance and may vote in NLADA and Alliance elections. Section members of the Alliance may hold a position on the Executive Committee.
- B. A Practicing Attorney is a Professional member of NLADA and may be a section member of the Alliance with all rights of Individual members, but with dues set accordingly.

Section 2.

The voting status of non-members serving on an Alliance committee shall be decided by the Executive Committee on a case by case basis.

Article VII: Dues and Assessments

Section 1.

The annual dues for each class of member of the Alliance shall be determined by NLADA. To remain in good standing, all members must remain current in dues and assessments.

Section 2.

A member who is not in good standing shall not be elected or appointed to a position on the Executive Committee or continue to hold a position on the Executive Committee. NLADA and the Executive Committee may by two-thirds vote excuse or lower annual dues for individual members for extenuating circumstances.

Article VIII: Membership Meeting

Section 1.

The Alliance's annual membership meeting will be held at the annual conference, if a conference is held. Although individuals who are not members of the Alliance may attend the meeting, voting shall be limited to members in good standing.

Section 2.

The President of the Alliance will preside over the membership meeting and shall be responsible for developing the agenda.

Section 3.

In voting at the Alliance membership meeting, the members present at the membership meeting shall constitute a quorum. To pass a motion or measure, a majority of the quorum is required.

Article IX: Approval of the Governing Rules

These Governing Rules will be effective upon approval by the majority of all members present at the membership meeting on August 3, 2006.

Article X: Amendment of Governing Rules

These Governing Rules may be amended or any part thereof repealed by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership voting.

[Amended March 1, 2004 by majority vote (95%) of members voting]