



BYLAWS

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BYLAWS
RED RIVER VALLEY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of this association shall be Red River Valley Paralegal Association (RRVPA) and shall be affiliated with the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

ARTICLE II
OBJECTS AND PURPOSES

- 2.1 To establish good fellowship among RRVPA members, the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., and members of the legal community.
- 2.2 To encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment.
- 2.3 To further education among members of the profession.
- 2.4 To cooperate with bar associations.
- 2.5 To support and carry out the programs, purposes, aims and goals of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.
- 2.6 To initiate and encourage participation in programs to broaden public understanding of the function of the legal assistant, and to expand the profession.

ARTICLE III
POLICY

RRVPA shall be nonsectarian, nonpartisan, nonprofit and nonunion. No actions or programs may be initiated or undertaken (now or in the future) in conflict with the bylaws of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., or of the policies of that Association.

ARTICLE IV
MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to legal assistants/paralegals, students in legal assistant programs and attorneys or paralegal educators, based on requirements approved by the Board of Directors. In addition to the following, the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe further rules and regulations defining and governing the admission of individuals to membership in this association.

4.1 ***Voting Member.*** Voting membership shall be open to any legal assistant/paralegal who meets the requirements set forth below and such additional standards as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe:

- a. Graduation from one of the following ABA approved legal assistant/paralegal studies: bachelor's degree, associate's degree or a post-baccalaureate program. If not ABA approved, graduation from a legal assistant/paralegal program which consists of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours, or the equivalent, of which 18 semester credit hours are substantive paralegal courses.
- b. A bachelor's degree in any field, and either one-year employer training as a legal assistant/paralegal; or 18 semester credit hours of legal assistant/paralegal substantive courses.
- c. Successful completion of a national certifying examination which is specifically designed for legal assistants/ paralegals and which includes continuing legal education for maintenance of that certification status.
- d. Seven years or more of experience working as a legal assistant/paralegal who has been employer trained by and under the supervision of an attorney who attests that such person is qualified as a legal assistant. (Note: Employer Attestation Form must be completed.)

Only Voting Members may vote and hold office in the Association.

4.2 ***Associate Member.*** (Non-Voting) Any individual who is working as a legal assistant/paralegal who has not yet achieved the status of a voting member; or an individual who works in a related area of work (for example, but not limited to, legal assistant manager, legal assistant supervisor, nurse consultant or legal investigator) may become an associate member of the Association. An Associate Member may fully

participate in the affairs of the Association by serving on any standing or special committee, except where such participation is not granted pursuant to these Bylaws or the Standing Rules of the Association.

- 4.3 ***Student Member.*** (Non-Voting) Any person who is currently enrolled in a course of study for legal assistants/paralegals as a student in good standing in any university, college, or other approved school pursuing a course of studies as a legal assistant/paralegal may become a student member of RRVPA. A Student Member may fully participate in the affairs of the Association by serving on any standing or special committee, except where such participation is not granted pursuant to these Bylaws or the Standing rules of the Association. After a student member has graduated from a formal course of study, he or she must upgrade his or her membership to that of a regular or associate member by submitting the appropriate application to the Second Vice President.
- 4.4 ***Sustaining Members.*** (Non-Voting) Any law firm, agency, association, educational institution, corporation or other entity interested in supporting the legal assistant profession and the Association may become a sustaining member by meeting such additional standards, if any, as may from time to time be prescribed by the Standing Rules of the Association.

ARTICLE V APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Applications for membership shall be submitted to RRVPA on forms approved by RRVPA's membership. The forms should clearly state that the association is an affiliated association of The National Association of Legal Assistants and that all members are bound by the NALA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility in addition to any code adopted by the association. Approval of membership shall be noted on the forms in accordance with standing rules, if any, adopted by RRVPA.

ARTICLE VI MANAGEMENT

The governing body of this association shall be the Board of Directors, composed of one duly elected member from geographical regions as from time to time are established by the Board of Directors, the elected officers of this association and the Parliamentarian. The Board of Directors shall exercise all the powers that may be exercised and performed by a non-profit organization.

ARTICLE VII
MEETINGS

- 7.1 **Membership.** The annual meeting of the membership shall be held in June for the purpose of electing officers and directors, and for hearing reports of the officers, directors and chairpersons. Notice of the annual meeting shall be in writing to all members of record at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. The Notice of the annual meeting shall contain the slate of officers for the ensuing year.
- a. Special meetings may be called by the President upon fifteen (15) days written notice to all members of record.
 - b. At any regular or special meeting of the membership, fifty-one percent (51 %) of the voting membership of RRVPA shall constitute a quorum. In the event of a vote of to dissolve the association, a quorum shall consist of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members of RRVPA.
 - c. It is required that RRVPA hold a minimum of four educational events or a total of 10 hours of education during each fiscal year in order to maintain affiliation with the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. These programs may be held in connection with a regular meeting of the membership.
- 7.2 **Board of Directors.** The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held, without other notice than this bylaw, immediately before and at the same place as the annual meeting of members. The first meeting of each newly elected Board of Directors shall be held without notice other than this bylaw, immediately following and at the same place as the annual meeting of the members. The Board of Directors shall meet at least quarterly and at other times as called by the President. Written notice of the time and place of such meetings shall be given by the Secretary to the entire association membership at least ten (10) days prior to the time set for each meeting.
- a. Special meetings may be called by, or at the request of, the President or a majority of the Board of Directors. Written notice of a special meeting shall be given by the Secretary at least ten (10) days prior thereto.
 - b. A majority of the Board of Directors present in person shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE VIII
DUES AND ASSESSMENTS

Dues shall be in an amount as may from time to time be established by the Board of Directors. Dues shall not be increased other than at the time of renewal and shall not be pro-rated.

Dues shall be due July 1st of each year, payable by August 1st. Dues shall not be prorated.

ARTICLE IX
OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHAIRPERSONS

The elected officers shall be the President, one or more First Vice Presidents, one or more Second Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary and a NALA Liaison.

One or more regional directors shall be elected by the members of the respective geographical regions at the annual meeting of the membership.

The appointed officer shall be the Parliamentarian.

The Board of Directors shall be composed of elected and appointed officers and the elected directors. The Board of Directors shall act as a planning committee for the association.

No officer or member shall be compensated for RRVPA duties. However, upon majority vote of the Board of Directors, persons may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses in connection with RRVPA related activities provided the expenses have been authorized prior to expenditure.

ARTICLE X
ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The Nominations Chairperson shall present a slate of officers to the membership not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the election. No name shall be on the slate without consent of the candidate. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted and election shall be by majority vote of members present.

Directors for each region shall be elected by the members of the respective geographical regions at the annual meeting for the association. If there are no members in a region, no director will be elected.

The Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the newly-elected President at or following the annual meeting.

The term of office for all officers and directors shall be one year and shall run from August 1st through July 31st

Names of newly elected or appointed officers shall be submitted to the NALA Headquarters and the Affiliated Associations Director at least thirty (30) days after election and/or appointment.

With the exception of the NALA Liaison, RRVPA officers are not required to be NALA members. Only voting members may hold office.

Unexpired terms of office shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Directors.

Any officer absent from three consecutive meetings without good cause, may be removed from office by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XI STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

The President shall appoint the following standing committee chairpersons:

Education (First Vice President)
Membership (Second Vice President)
Finance and Audit Committee (Treasurer)
Public Relations & Newsletter & Website
Legal Assistant's Day
Mentor Program
Outreach Program

Special committee chairpersons may be appointed by the President, as needed, with the approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XII DUTIES OF OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND CHAIRPERSONS

12.1 **President.** The President shall preside over all Board of Directors meetings and membership meetings. The President shall appoint a Parliamentarian, special and

standing committee chairpersons as provided in these bylaws. The President shall pass files to successor immediately upon installation and shall cause all other officers and chairperson files to be passed to respective successors. The president shall be ex-officio (non-voting) member of all committees except the committee on nominations and elections.

12.2 ***First Vice President.*** The First Vice President shall preside and shall assume all duties assigned to the president in the president's absence. This officer shall automatically be chairperson of the committee on education. These duties shall include planning seminars, workshops and working with NALA in the event of co-sponsorship of any programs. The First Vice President shall also be responsible for fulfilling the educational requirements under Article VII of these Bylaws and shall report such educational meetings to the NALA Liaison.

12.3 ***Second Vice President.*** The Second Vice President shall automatically be chairperson of the Membership Committee and shall be charged with the responsibility of developing programs to encourage membership in the association. This officer shall receive applications for membership and accept or reject the same. Upon acceptance, membership certificates shall be signed by the appropriate officer or officers and delivered to the member and the dues shall be delivered to the Treasurer. The Second Vice President is responsible for keeping a current roster of membership. The Second Vice President shall work with the NALA Second Vice President to encourage membership in NALA.

12.4 ***Secretary.*** The Secretary shall be responsible for minutes for all meetings and keeping permanent minutes. This officer shall assist the president in any way including giving notice of meetings. Association minutes of any meeting shall be available to the NALA President upon request.

12.5 ***Treasurer.*** The Treasurer shall deposit all funds and make all disbursements, subject to approval of the Board of Directors and as provided in the budget. Any extraordinary expenses must be approved by the Board of Directors before obligation to pay. The Treasurer shall be chairman of the finance committee which committee shall prepare a budget for the ensuing fiscal year which shall be adopted by the membership at the annual meeting. (Budget shall be submitted to the Board of Directors prior to presentation at Annual Meeting.) The Treasurer may be bonded (premium paid by RRVPA). All disbursements of association funds must be by association check. This officer shall submit a written financial report at each regular meeting to be attached to official minutes as part of permanent record. The Treasurer is also responsible for reporting the

membership annually to NALA with the renewal fee for continued affiliation with NALA.

- 12.6 ***NALA Liaison.*** This officer shall be a NALA member, shall be familiar with the NALA Bylaws, shall receive minutes of all NALA meetings, and shall represent RRVPA at the NALA annual meeting of affiliated associations. This officer shall report semi-annually on association activities to the NALA affiliated associations director on forms provided by NALA headquarters, and shall report all officers' names to NALA headquarters and the NALA affiliated associations director. In the event the NALA Liaison is unable to attend the NALA annual meeting of the affiliated associations, the association may designate another association to serve as its representative.

This officer may submit items the association wishes discussed to the NALA affiliated associations director and shall participate in discussion sessions at NALA annual meetings. A report to association members on the NALA annual meeting is required.

This officer shall, within sixty (60) days of passage, notify the NALA Affiliated Associations Director of any changes in the association's bylaws. This officer shall be the main contact between NALA and the association. This officer shall be a member of the governing body for this association.

- 12.7 ***Parliamentarian.*** The Parliamentarian shall attend all meetings and give opinions on parliamentary procedures upon request of the president. This officer shall be familiar with association bylaws, NALA bylaws, shall receive all proposed bylaw amendments, and prepare standing rules and amendments to standing rules and bylaws upon request of the Board of Directors. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall serve as parliamentary authority for items not covered by these bylaws or the association standing rules.

- 12.8 ***Regional Directors.*** Each Regional Director shall work with the Second Vice President in the promotion of membership and shall work with the First Vice President in the coordination of educational programs within the respective regions. It shall be the duty of each director to report on the activities of that region, to represent the members of that region on the Board of Directors, and to keep members of that region advised of the activities of the entire association and other regions of same.

- 12.9 ***Audit Committee.*** The Audit Committee will be composed of a past treasurer and two members selected by the President whose purpose is to audit the treasurer's books at the close of the fiscal year prior to the transfer of accounts to the newly elected treasurer. In

the event the incumbent treasurer is elected to a second term the audit will be performed following the annual meeting and prior to the first regular meeting of the membership.

- 12.10 ***Public Relations***. The Public Relations Committee shall have the duty of editing, approving and handling any and all material for publication pertaining to Red River Valley Paralegal Association, including arrangements for radio and television programs or in any other media. The committee shall work with the Educational Programs Committee in publicizing all projects and activities of the association and shall aid in developing promotion brochures for the association. The Public Relations Committee shall have the duty of publishing the association's newsletter. The chairperson shall act as editor and shall have charge of publishing and circulating the publication.

ARTICLE XIII FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of RRVPA shall be from August 1st through July 31st.

ARTICLE XIV CODE OF ETHICS

Every member of RRVPA shall subscribe to and be bound by the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. Violations of the NALA Code shall be grounds for immediate dismissal from membership and/or removal from office. Any member who has violated the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility shall have the right to appeal the ethical charges and/or dismissal of membership before a committee of three members to be appointed by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XV AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Bylaw amendments (not in conflict with NALA bylaws) may be adopted by two-thirds (2/3) of members present at any annual or special meeting. The NALA Affiliated Associations Director must be advised of any amendments within sixty days of passage.

ARTICLE XVI DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of RRVPA all property and assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit charitable organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, to be selected by a majority vote of the remaining members of RRVPA, notice having been given to RRVPA

members and the NALA Affiliated Associations Director at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. In no event shall any of such property and assets be distributed to any member or private individual.

ARTICLE XVII RETENTION OF AFFILIATION

Affiliation with the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., is renewable each year by payment of an affiliation fee and attached to a current membership roster. In the event of suspension of affiliation, RRVPA may re-affiliate with NALA by submitting a new application with membership roster, bylaws, sample of educational programs, petition and current initial fee.

In addition to the renewal fee, RRVPA must comply with the required reports and requested procedures as outlined in these Bylaws.

The annual renewal fee is payable on October 1st and delinquent November 1st. Payment received after due date must be accompanied by a late fee penalty established by NALA.

This affiliation agreement shall be reviewed periodically by the President and the Affiliate Director of the National Association and the President and NALA Liaison of the Affiliate Association, at the request of either party. Each party agrees that this agreement may from time to time be amended by attachment executed by the President and Secretary of each party, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of each of the parties hereto.

The following Bylaws were adopted by RRVPA in May of 1983;

Amended March 15, 1991

Amended September 20, 1996

Amended September 24, 1999

Amended March 20, 2003

Amended October 6, 2016

Amended October 12, 2017

Amended April 6, 2019

The underlined language is required for affiliation with the National Association of Legal Assistants