

BYLAWS

Living Independence for Everyone, (LIFE), Inc. Amended August 2012

NAME, PURPOSE AND GOALS

The name of this organization shall be Living Independence for Everyone (LIFE), Inc., hereinafter known as LIFE.

- A. The Purpose of this organization is to assist in the empowerment of people with disabilities to be as independent and as fully involved in their communities as they choose to be.

- B. The primary goal of the organization shall be to assist in the independent living empowerment of people with disabilities. This goal will be accomplished by:
 - 1) Providing, or coordinating and/or facilitating the provision of devices, equipment, materials, services, modifications or other aids or forms of support that improve their capacity to live independently;
 - 2) Furnishing peer counseling and guidance to encourage, establish and maintain independent living attitudes and philosophies;
 - 3) Rendering advocacy support on an individual or systems-wide basis;
 - 4) Supplying information and referral services to allow sufficient access and utilization of available assistance.
 - 5) Providing skills training instruction to improve specific independent living abilities and competencies; and
 - 6) Contributing any other help that assists people with disabilities in acquiring, retaining or enhancing the capacity to live independently.

ARTICLE II Membership

- A. The voting membership of LIFE, Inc is determined by those individuals with disabilities, parents or guardians of those individuals with disabilities or those who have a personal or professional interest in disabilities.
- B. Membership fees are considered to be whatever is meaningful to the individual. The payment of membership fees is not necessary in order for an individual to be considered a member of LIFE.

ARTICLE III MEMBER MEETINGS

- A. Member meetings will be set by the Board of Trustees with advice from the Executive Director.
- B. The meeting site for the Member Meetings, and all other LIFE-sponsored functions, shall be in physically accessible facilities.

ARTICLE IV BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- A. Except as otherwise provided by these bylaws, all of the authority of the organization shall vest in and be exercised by the Board of Trustees including creating and filling of all staff positions or contractual agreements.
- B. No less than ten trustees, to include five At-Large trustees and five officers, will be elected by the Board of Trustees with input and recommendations from members and staff. on a Bi-Annual basis or at a special meeting called for that purpose when circumstances warrant. These individuals will also serve on the local Advisory Council in the area in which the individual trustee resides.
- C. At least 51% of the trustees shall have a disability and every effort will be made to represent each Congressional District in the state.
- D. Each trustee shall hold office for a term of not more than five years. The term of each trustee shall be specified at the time of his or her election, and each trustee shall hold office until his or her successor is elected and qualified, or until his or her resignation, removal from office or death.
- E. Any trustee may, by notice in writing to the Board, resign at any time.
- F. Any trustee may be removed from office for cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the trustees then in office.
- G. Any trustee may be removed from office automatically if he/she fails to notify the Chair Person or other Board Officer regarding his/her absence from Board meetings on more than two occasions.
- H. Any vacancies on the Board of Trustees may be appointed on an interim basis by the remaining trustees in any meeting of trustees, and any trustees elected at any such meeting shall serve until the next election of trustees and until their successors are elected and qualified.
- I. A third of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except with respect to filling a vacancy on the Board. The act of a majority of

- trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board.
- J. Meetings shall be held at a time and a date fixed by the Board with input from the Executive Director
 - K. Regular meetings of the Trustees shall be held at such times and places as the Board of Trustees may determine. The secretary shall give two weeks notice of such meeting to all trustees.
 - L. Special meetings may be called by the president or any other Trustee constituting one-third of the membership and shall be held at the time and place specified in such call, with notice to all Trustees.
 - M. Any action which may be taken at any meeting of the Trustees may be taken without such meeting by one or more written or phone documents by a majority of the trustees. The written action shall be filed with the secretary of the organization and inserted by the secretary in the permanent records of the trustees.
 - N. The trustees shall serve without compensation for their services except for the reimbursement of verifiable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

- A. The officers of this organization shall be a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson a secretary, a treasurer and a past Chairperson . All officers, except the past Chairperson shall be elected by a majority of the Board of Trustees **will hold office for a two year period of time.** The past Chairperson post shall be occupied by the most recent Chair upon the termination of his/her term as Chair . The Board may elect to combine any of the offices except the Chair .
- B. The officers of this organization shall have authority and perform such duties as are customary to their respective offices and such other duties as may be required of them by the Board.
- C. Any officer may be removed with cause by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Board. The Board may also have the discretion to fill officer positions, vacated for whatever reason, until the next Annual Meeting.
- D. The Officers shall constitute the Executive Committee for LIFE. The Board of trustees vests with the Executive Committee the authority to take action and render decisions in the interim period between Board meetings which are in keeping with the mission and objectives of the organizations.

- E. The Board of Trustees may provide for standing or special committees as it deems desirable and discontinue these committees at its pleasure. Such committees shall perform duties as may be delegated to them by the Board. Board committees shall keep full records of their proceedings and transactions, and shall report to the Board at the next subsequent meeting.

ARTICLE VI RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The LIFE Board of Trustees will be responsible for the overall coordination of all aspects of LIFE .
- B. Trustees serving on the Advisory Council of each LIFE office shall act as the liaison to the LIFE Board of Trustees for their respective Center.
- C. The role of the LIFE Board of Trustees shall include the following:
 - a. Administering all grant funds in single or multiple accounts and managing all other aspects of the organizations financial affairs;
 - b. Ensuring compliance with Section 725 Standards and Assurances;
 - c. Establishing all of the organizations general policy, procedure and service provision guidelines;
 - d. Maintaining suitable fiscal records and processes;
 - e. Directing the adequate performance of LIFE activities;
 - f. Developing statewide cooperative arrangements;
 - g. Overseeing and assessing the organizations evaluation functions; and
 - h. Other related duties and tasks.

ARTICLE VII. ADVISORY COUNCILS

- A. Advisory Councils will be made up of Board of Trustee members residing in the local office area as well as up to ten (10) members, a vast majority of whom will be LIFE consumers and/or family members of consumers in the area in which they receive services, who are identified and appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- B. Advisory Councils will be created in areas where LIFE has a local office as individuals are identified to serve.
- C. Advisory Councils will meet no less than semi-annually.
- D. Advisory Council members will be voting members of LIFE
- E. The Role of the Advisory Council shall include the following:

- a. Review the provision of direct services and assistance to their consumers by their respective LIFE office.
- b. Support the efforts of office staff to act as liaisons with collaborating parties within their communities.
- c. Generate new resources for consumer services and other LIFE activities and;
- d. Promote public awareness of issues related to disability in general and the LIFE organization in particular.

ARTICLE VIII. FISCAL YEAR

- A. The fiscal year of the organization shall be the calendar year.

ARTICLE IX CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. A trustee having a conflict of interest or a conflict of responsibility on any matter involving the organization and any other business or person shall refrain from voting on such matters. No trustee or officer shall use his or her position for his or her direct or indirect financial gain.

ARTICLE X RECORDS OF TRUSTEES

- A. The Executive Director and the Secretary of the organization shall keep the minutes and official acts of the organization and the names and terms of all trustees. Terminations and the facts relating thereto shall be recorded. It shall be the duty of every trustee to furnish the Executive Director and the secretary of the corporation with his or her address and to report promptly to the Executive Director and the secretary any change in his or her address.

ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

- A. These bylaws may be amended or repealed by a majority of the Board of Trustees after seeking public comment from the Membership. Suggested amendments will be published on the LIFE website and facebook page for no less than 30 days before adoption.