

**NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON
FAMILY RELATIONS**

SECTIONS GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS SECTIONS GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

I. Purpose of Sections

Sections promote NCFR's mission and the common interests of NCFR members in specified family areas. Sections provide a means of **increasing communication and interaction** among NCFR members of similar interest within the framework of the larger organization.

II. Section Functions

In order to promote the accomplishment of NCFR's purposes, functions of sections shall be:

- A. To provide a home where members will find others who share their interests.
- B. To elect section officers on the national ballot.
- C. To plan and conduct programs at the annual conference.
- D. To submit proposals for special projects to the NCFR Board.
- E. To establish committees for special activities.
- F. To communicate with section constituents.
- G. To recognize research and scholarly work (especially by students), mentoring and service contributions by both professionals and students.
- H. To supply names of individuals competent to represent the section in legislation, public relations, research, and other areas when contacted by board members or staff.
- I. To provide representation for any priority issues of concern to the section.
- J. To support the NCFR focus groups when and as appropriate.

III. Section Governance

A. Formation/Maintaining of Sections

1. A section of NCFR shall be formed when a preliminary statement of intent to establish a new section has been filed with the board, and when at least 150 active NCFR members with a family section-related specialty have registered their intent for board consideration. A section shall remain solvent as long as it maintains 100 registered members and abides by NCFR regulations on sections. If membership is below 100 for two consecutive years, the section shall be considered insolvent. (Appendix D)
2. In terms of organizational structure and administration, sections originate (and are dissolved) through the action of the NCFR Board of Directors operating according to the NCFR bylaws. It is important that section leaders and members understand that they have no authority to obligate or to make binding commitments on NCFR, or in NCFR's behalf.

- B. Governance - The minimum section organizational requirement shall include a statement of purpose; the election by the section of a chair, chair-elect, secretary/treasurer, and students and new professionals representative at the time of the regular NCFR elections; and a membership meeting to be held concurrently with the NCFR annual conference. Officers shall be elected for a period of two years in accordance with established board procedures. Section purposes and bylaws are subject to board confirmation and shall be on file at headquarters of NCFR. A year-end report (Appendix A), a section monitoring report (Appendix B), a work plan (Appendix C), and annual meeting minutes shall be filed with the headquarters annually.
- C. Section Officers – The officers of this section shall be a chair, a chair-elect, a secretary/treasurer, a students and new professionals representative, a past chair, and these officers shall comprise the Section Executive Committee. The chair-elect, secretary/treasurer, and students and new professionals representative shall be elected by the members of the section for a **two-year term** in accordance with established board procedures. Student members shall not be eligible for the offices of chair-elect or secretary/treasurer. Candidates for section office shall have been members of the section for at least **two years**. Section chairs shall not be eligible for re-election until at least one year has lapsed since prior service.

Officer Job Descriptions

1. **Chair** – The chair shall be the **official representative of the section** in the activities of the NCFR. The chair shall preside at all meetings of the section and the executive committee, and shall call special meetings when necessary. The chair shall be a member of the NCFR annual program committee, be **responsible for the preparation of the section program for the annual conference**, or appoint a section member in consultation with the section executive committee and the NCFR annual program chair to assume responsibility.
2. **Chair-elect** – The chair-elect shall preside at meetings in the absence of the chair, act for the chair in the chair's absence or disability, and perform such other duties as are requested by the chair. The chair-elect shall work with the chair to **identify reviewers and oversee the process of proposal review for the annual conferences** and shall, with the chair, make final recommendations regarding the section's programming for the annual conference. The chair-elect shall **chair the awards committee and be responsible for all section awards**.
3. **Secretary/Treasurer** – The secretary/treasurer shall be responsible for keeping minutes of meetings and **taking care of all communications**, report on the financial status of the section based on reports from NCFR staff. In cooperation with the chair and NCFR staff, keep an accurate record of all section assets, liabilities, and financial transactions. An annual financial report should be included in the annual meeting minutes.
4. **Students and New Professionals Representative** – The students and new professionals representative shall act as a liaison between the section and the students and new professionals and **serve as the section's representative on the NCFR Students and New Professionals Leadership Council**. The SNP representative will serve on the **nominations committee**.
5. **Past Chair** – The past chair shall **serve as the chair of the nominations committee**.

Election of Officers

1. **Nominations:** The nominations committee shall present a slate of two nominees each for the offices of chair-elect, secretary/treasurer, and students and new professionals representative to the section members biennially through the NCFR communications. The nominations committee shall consist of the past chair, the students and new professionals representative and one other assigned member of the section.
2. **Elections –** Voting shall be by electronic ballot and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. Each member shall have one vote. Votes for write-in candidates may be made.

Terms of Office

1. The terms of office of the chair, chair-elect, secretary/treasurer, students and new professionals representative, and past chair shall be two years. After completing the office of chair-elect, that person will move to the office of chair. After completing the office of chair, that person will move to the office of past chair. **Officers shall assume office at the close of the annual meeting.** No person shall serve two consecutive terms in the same office.

Removal from Office

1. Any officer who fails to perform his or her duties adequately may be relieved of his or her office by a majority vote of the executive committee. In the event of a vacancy in the chair position due to removal from office, the chair-elect shall assume the duties of the chair.

Vacancies

1. In the event of a vacancy in any office, the **section executive committee shall appoint a member** to fill the office for the unexpired term.

D. Financial Accountability & Responsibilities

1. Each section will receive a **yearly operating allocation from NCFR.**
2. NCFR will incur all travel-related expenses for the section representative to attend the spring conference program planning committee meeting.
3. Annual section operating expenses may include:
 - a. Sponsoring speakers or presenters at the annual conference
 - b. Refreshments at section annual meeting
 - c. Paper, proposal/travel awards, etc.
4. Sections are able to retain surpluses or unspent allocated funds for future expenditures.
5. Financial implications of sponsoring special speakers or special sessions at the annual conference.
 - a. **Sponsorship of special speakers or special sessions at the annual conference involves commitment of section resources.** Typically, these resources will be financial. For example, sponsoring sections may accept responsibility for travel expenses, hotel, honorarium, conference registration, and meals for special speakers (depending on what is negotiated between the section and speaker) as well as any costs associated with making the presentation. Costs associated with speaker fees are the responsibility of the section. In addition to underwriting the speaker/session, sections may offer other forms of support, such as providing facilitators or discussants, or individuals to fill other roles specified by the conference program committee or organizers of the special session.

- b. Sections that sponsor special sessions/speakers by underwriting their expenses should consider the following:
 - When contacting and negotiating with prospective special speakers, section chairs should work with NCFR staff in formulating the speaker agreement.
 - NCFR may waive part of the conference registration fee for special speakers.
6. Request for expenditures shall be referred to the section executive committee. The secretary/treasurer, in consultation with the executive committee, shall submit an annual financial report to be included in the annual meeting minutes.
7. **Each section shall be responsible for debts except as authorized by the executive committee** for the section and NCFR shall not be responsible for unauthorized debts. All expenditures shall be approved in advance by the secretary/treasurer of the section before payment by NCFR headquarters. Requests for reimbursement shall be sent to NCFR within 30 days of incurrence with attached receipts.
8. **All section funds are managed by NCFR headquarters.** Section officers and/or members are prohibited from holding funds designated for the section and/or its activities.
9. Section officers will receive quarterly financial reports from NCFR headquarters.

E. Responsibilities of Section Chairs

1. Attend or appoint a member to **attend the conference program planning committee meetings during the annual conference and spring conference program planning meeting.**
2. Write or designate a member to **write articles regarding section news and business for the NCFR Report and NCFR website.** Submit them to the *NCFR Report* editor by the announced due dates.
3. Oversee section news publications. If the section publishes a newsletter, it is the responsibility of the section chair to ensure the relevance of the newsletter to the section, its quality and its timeliness. Newsletters will be posted on the section webpage, and within the section's discussion group. All items published in section newsletters are the editorial responsibility of the section chair and publications must bear the statement: ***"Items appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily imply endorsement by the National Council on Family Relations."***
4. **Preside at a section annual meeting during the NCFR annual conference.**
5. Submit approved section expenses in writing to the NCFR director of finance.
6. Consult the section executive committee and call meetings as deemed necessary to:
 - a. Set up section sub-committees.
 - b. Monitor any section-sponsored awards.
 - c. Discuss new and ongoing tasks of section committees
 - d. Set up work plan at the annual conference for the coming year
7. **Communicate with section constituents.**
8. Prior to the annual conference, submit **year-end report** regarding section accomplishments of the current year (Appendix A). The report will be posted on the section webpage for the section membership to view.
9. Prior to the annual conference, submit **section Monitoring Report** to NCFR headquarters (Appendix B).
10. Oversee the section nominating committee.
 - a. The nominating committee selects two candidates for the following section offices: chair-elect, secretary/treasurer, students and new professionals representative(s).

11. Annual conference responsibilities
 - a. Attend section chair-related sessions
 - 1) Conference program planning committee meeting (or appoint a section member in consultation with the executive committee)
 - 2) Section annual meeting
 - 3) Any appropriate committee and/or section executive board meeting
 - 4) Section chairs meetings
 - b. **Attend Newcomers Welcome** or appoint a section officer to represent the section
 - c. **Attend NCFR annual business meeting and membership forum**

12. Oversee responsibilities of officers other than the chair
 - a. Oversee specific offices of each section and their related responsibilities as defined in the section bylaws.
 - b. **Oversee transition of officers** - In addition to responsibilities detailed in the NCFR Bylaws, section officers are expected to orchestrate an orderly transition into and out of office. To that end, communication between incoming and out-going officers is encouraged for the purpose of reviewing role responsibilities, ongoing projects and priorities, and plans for future activities. Current and historical documents of interest are to be transmitted from those exiting office to those who are incoming within the same time frame.

F. Organizational Reports

1. Sections complete an **annual year-end report** of activities addressing their accomplishments of the previous year. These reports are distributed to the NCFR Board of Directors and posted on the NCFR section webpages. (Appendix A).
2. Sections complete an **annual monitoring report** that is reviewed by the NCFR Board of Directors. According to the NCFR board governance handbook the NCFR Board of Directors will monitor the work of the sections yearly (Appendix B).
3. Sections complete the **section work plan annually** and submit it to the NCFR headquarters. The section work plan will be completed after the section annual meeting and will include the plan of work of the section for the upcoming year. Recommendations, ideas, and suggestions will come from the members at their annual meeting. (Appendix C).
4. Sections annually submit **minutes from their section annual meeting** along with the **operations budget for the upcoming year** to the NCFR headquarters.

Below is a summary of the above listed Section chair responsibilities that require an action by a specific date:

TASK	DATE DUE	NOTES
<i>NCFR Report</i> articles due	December 15 th (Spring Issue)	Send to <i>NCFR Report</i> editor
New year section update	January 31 st	Sent by NCFR member relations manager
Review financial report	February	Sent by NCFR director of finance
Special sessions & pre-conference programs submissions due	March 1 st	Send to NCFR director of research and policy education
<i>NCFR Report</i> articles due	March 15 th (Summer Issue)	Send to <i>NCFR Report</i> editor
Awards solicitation for applications	March 15 th	Sent by section chair-elect

Invited symposia submissions due	April 1 st	Send to NCFR director of research and policy education
Review financial report	April-Program Planning Meeting	Sent by NCFR director of finance
<i>NCFR Report</i> articles due	June 15 th (Fall Issue)	Send to <i>NCFR Report</i> editor
Fundraising approval requests	July 15 th	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Section award winners notified	July 31 st	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Review financial report	August	Sent by NCFR director of finance
Submit call for abstracts for NCFR annual conference	September 1st	Send to NCFR director of research and policy education
Section member survey	September 15 th	Sent by NCFR member relations manager
<i>NCFR Report</i> articles due	September 15 th (Winter Issue)	Send to <i>NCFR Report</i> editor
Order award plaques and certificates. If financial awards request checks for award winners.	September 30 th	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Section proposal/papers/poster award winners	October 1 st	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Section year-end reports due	October 15 th	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Section monitoring report due	October 15 th	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Review financial report	November Annual Conference	Sent by NCFR director of finance
Nominations for NCFR national election due	December 1 st	Send to NCFR member relations manager
Section work plan and section meeting minutes due	December 1 st	Send to NCFR member relations manager

IV. Section Activities

A. Annual Conference Program

1. Section representative to the conference program planning committee meeting. Each section shall have a **representative to the conference program planning Committee** who shall coordinate the section's role in planning the annual conference. NCFR will incur all travel-related expenses for the section representative to attend the spring conference program planning committee meeting.
2. Annual responsibilities of the section representative to the conference program planning committee related to the planning of the annual conference. (See NCFR annual conference program committee handbook for complete details.)
 - a. Attend annual conference program planning committee meetings
 - b. Prepare material for NCFR's member news magazine, the *NCFR Report* (if applicable).
 - c. **Submit special sessions and pre-conference programs to the director of research and policy education by March 1st**
 - d. **Estimate the number of reviewers needed for your section and recruit qualified reviewers**

- e. Submit all invited symposia to the director of research and policy education by **April 1st**
- f. Proposal review process (See NCFR annual conference program committee handbook)
 - 1) NCFR staff emails list of submitted proposals and a list of reviewers to section chairs
 - 2) Decide which reviewer is to receive which proposal
 - 3) Begin and monitor the review process
 - 4) Evaluate the scores of the proposals
 - 5) Accept and reject submitted proposals
 - 6) Design the program for your section
- g. Recruit facilitators/discussants
- h. Send the completed program file to NCFR
- i. Keep track of changes for your section's program and send to NCFR
- j. Submit food and beverage, audio visual equipment and social meeting room setups
- k. Monitor your section's program during the conference
- l. Other obligations during the conference

B. Fundraising:

1. Sections wishing to conduct fundraisers **must receive prior approval from NCFR** headquarters. As resources permit, NCFR will support your fundraising effort with announcements, additional rooms or times, online payment, and table space at certain events (restrictions apply; approval required).
2. If the fundraiser will occur at the NCFR annual conference, NCFR headquarters approval must be received by **July 15th**. Sections will be required to complete an NCFR section fundraising activities policies and procedures and approval form (Appendix E). Allow at least two weeks for processing this request.
3. Sections will be given the use of an exhibit booth free of charge at the annual conference; however, the sections must fully staff their activities with section volunteers.
4. If your fundraiser includes sale of merchandise, online payment can be set up through the NCFR store with item pick-up onsite at the conference. NCFR retains 5% to cover administration.
5. Sections conducting activities that require persons to be present must fully staff their activities with section volunteers.
6. At the conclusion of all fund raising activities, all monies raised should be transferred to the NCFR director of finance who handles the recording and banking of all such monies.

C. Board Designated Awards

Some sections support board designated awards. Board designated awards have fund balances that are invested in CDs and marketable securities to earn interest that supports award expenses. The balance of award funds may fluctuate with market gains and losses, but is not intended to be spent. For sections that support designated awards, interest earnings and associated portfolio fees will be allocated to the section's operating fund. When interest earnings are not enough to cover award expense, the section may reduce the award amount or subsidize the expenses with their operating fund.

D. Publications

1. Sections may publish periodic newsletters and they may publish other one-time compilations of materials (course syllabi) or papers.
2. Any publications that require a contribution of finances or staff from NCFR must be approved by the executive director.

3. **Sections cannot produce publications for non-section members** without the approval of the NCFR board.
4. **Sections may not initiate their own journals.** The NCFR board policy governance handbook indicates that the intellectual integrity of the NCFR's journals, their missions, and the selection of their editors are the responsibility of the Board of Directors.

E. Awards

1. Sections may establish modes of appreciation to recognize those individuals/groups that further the interests of the section and/or exemplify the standards to which members of the section aspire. Such awards shall reflect only the endorsement of the section and not that of NCFR. **Financial expenses incurred in developing and/or presenting such awards are the exclusive responsibility of the section.**
2. Designated awards provide an ongoing source of revenue for a financial award. With designated awards, the principle is invested in CDs and securities which generates interest that the section uses to pay the award expenses. The principle is not intended to be spent, and may only be by decision of the NCFR Board of Directors. Designated awards may be given out on an annual or biennial basis, and changed due to the interest rate environment.
3. Designated award requirements
 - a. All new designated awards will be reviewed and approved by the NCFR Board of Directors to ensure they meet the following criteria.
 - 1) The award does not duplicate existing awards
 - 2) The award promotes NCFR's mission of catalyzing research, theory and practice
 - b. Proposal establishing a designed award must include:
 - 1) Purpose
 - 2) Award (plaque, money, certificate, where presented, etc.)
 - 3) Criteria
 - 4) Nomination/application process
 - 5) Committee structure
 - 6) How the award will be funded.
4. Non-designated awards
 - a. All non-designated awards will be reviewed and approved by the NCFR headquarters to ensure they meet the following criteria:
 - 1) The award does not duplicate existing awards
 - 2) The award promotes NCFR's mission of catalyzing research, theory and practice
 - b. Proposal establishing a non-designated award must include:
 - 1) Purpose
 - 2) Award (plaque, money, certificate, where presented, etc.)
 - 3) Criteria
 - 4) Nomination/application process
 - 5) Committee structure
 - 6) How the award will be funded.
 - c. Non-designated awards are funded by **section** operating funds. Sections usually create and distribute these awards either by raising funds or using their annual budget allotments. They also pay for any related expenses with their own operating fund.

5. Section award deadlines
 - a. Sections must notify the NCFR member relations manager of any award to be presented at plenaries at the annual conference by **July 31st**. Details are needed regarding the financial administration, selection criteria and process, as well as the names of the award winners.
 - b. **NCFR will order awards (plaques or certificates) per section requests** if the NCFR member relations manager has received the request by **September 30th**.
 - c. If a financial award is to be presented at the annual conference, **a request stipulating the amount** must be sent to the NCFR member relations manager by **September 30th**.
6. Section notification of award winners
 - a. Section award chair will **notify the winners and non-winners** of the award results.
 - b. Section award chair will send the following information to the NCFR member relations manager by **October 31st** to be placed in the winter *NCFR Report*.
 - c. Section award winner/s information will be placed on the NCFR Zippy News, individual section webpage, and winter *NCFR Report*.

V. Section Member Communications

- A. Newsletters - Sections shall be permitted to distribute newsletters to their members to convey section news and business. All items published in section newsletters are the editorial responsibility of the section chair and publications must bear the statement: ***Items appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily imply endorsement by the National Council on Family Relations.***
- B. Section Webpages – **NCFR will create and maintain individual webpages for all sections.** It is the responsibility of the section to supply NCFR headquarters with updated material to be placed on the individual webpages.
- C. Section Discussion Groups – NCFR will create and maintain individual discussion groups for all sections. NCFR will update discussion groups daily. Section members have the right to be removed from the section discussion group if they would like.
- D. Mailing Lists
 1. Mailing lists for section members are part of the greater databank of NCFR members, and therefore, are not the property of, or the responsibility of, section members, officers, or others appointed by or implementing section duties.
 2. NCFR is legally and ethically dedicated to ensuring that none of its members receive inappropriate or undesirable material through NCFR-originated mailing lists. Mailing lists of section members may not be sold, rented, or distributed by sections, nor may sections use any part of NCFR mailing lists without express written permission of NCFR.
 3. NCFR section mailing lists are updated daily to provide the most current information possible, and mailing lists obtained several months or weeks prior to use will not be accurate. Section leaders seeking section members' names for official NCFR section business should contact NCFR and must follow the standard operating procedures for one-time-use only. **It is against NCFR policy for sections to maintain a file or database of section members' names for use as a mailing list or directory. It is also against NCFR policy to exchange lists of members' names with or sell them to any other group or individual.** All requests for section member's names and emails must be submitted to NCFR's member relations manager.

- E. Social Media and Blogs – Sections can use social media platforms and blogs to engage members, and to participate in conversations with other organizations and people interested in the section’s topic area and goals. Section leaders/members are responsible for creating and managing any platform they might decide to use.

Please get in touch with NCFR staff before creating any social media accounts; NCFR will need to have passwords or be connected as an administrator. Email the NCFR communications manager with any interest in or questions about using social media for your section. They will provide community guidelines (Appendix F) and an administrator checklist (Appendix G), and can provide recommendations and best practices if desired.

Please remember: Social media should not be a substitute for official communication through your section discussion group to all your section members. Not all your section members will be social media users.