



ESTABLISHING A LOCAL NAMRC CHAPTER

Congratulations! You are considering starting a local National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) affiliate (State Chapter) in your area. A local chapter can provide a number of benefits to its members, to the state NRA chapter and ultimately to persons with disabilities from culturally diverse backgrounds. This document will walk you through the process of establishing a chapter, identify some of those benefits, suggest resources, and discuss some of the kinds of activities local chapters may engage in. However, before we begin that process, a brief discussion of who NAMRC is will be helpful.

WHO IS NAMRC?

NAMRC is a division, established in 1992, within the umbrella organization of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). As such, it embraces the mission of NRA, but also is guided by its own unique mission, and set of objectives. The mission and objectives of NAMRC, as reflected in its bylaws are as follows:

MISSION:

“The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation is a professional association of dedicated individuals, whose mission is promoting cultural diversity and disability through advocacy for excellence and equity in rehabilitation research, education and practice.”

OBJECTIVES:

- *To advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities from culturally diverse populations to ensure equity, parity and quality in the delivery of rehabilitation services.*
- *To provide leadership and direction in research consistent with the mission of the Association.*
- *To advocate for, propose, and support legislation and policy that addresses the needs of individuals with disabilities from culturally diverse populations.*
- *To foster the growth, development and career enhancement of existing and potential members through professional development, mentoring and networking.*
- *To enrich the capacity of the larger rehabilitation community to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities from culturally diverse populations through education, training and awareness.*
- *To promote a more culturally diverse rehabilitation community through advocacy, recruitment and outreach.*

WHAT IS A LOCAL NAMRC CHAPTER?

A local chapter of NAMRC is composed of individuals who have paid national NRA and NAMRC Division dues, who support the mission and goals of both organizations and choose to organize at the state, or other sub national level to respond to local interest and needs. A state NAMRC chapter will

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function as a division within the state NRA chapter, having a seat on its board, and as a state level representative of the national (NAMRC) association. A state NAMRC chapter will have its own set of officers, structure, bylaws, activities, etc., using the national NAMRC bylaws as a guide. Local NAMRC chapter members are not assessed local dues to belong (because they have already paid national NAMRC Division and NRA dues) but chapters may engage in a variety of fundraising activities to support the mission, goals and activities, e.g., scholarships, seminars, charitable donations, etc., of the local chapter.

GETTING STARTED

- I. Alert the leadership of the state NRA chapter** of your intent to establish a state NAMRC chapter and garner their support.
 - Be able to articulate the benefits of adding a local NAMRC chapter, i.e., increase total membership, diversify membership, add knowledge and information about serving multicultural populations, expand pool of potential leaders, etc. Utilize the NAMRC web page @ www.namrc.org to acquire information about NAMRC, history, events, bylaws, officers, etc.
 - Clarify misperceptions about who NAMRC is. It is not a BIPOC (Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color) only, separatist organization. It is not a militant civil rights organization. It is a group of rehabilitation professionals who support its mission and goals. (Caucasians/Euro-Americans have and continue to be members, serve on the board, and a past national president was a Caucasian female.)
- II. Become familiar with benefits to members:
 - Becoming part of a national network
 - Participate in national training conference to expand knowledge, establish new networks, friendships, and potential resources and mentors
 - Enhance one's own professional development, through leadership and developmental opportunities in service to the association; both locally and nationally
 - Gain access to national recognition, award and scholarship programs
 - Help to develop and shape an organization of like-minded persons that is responsive to local needs and interest.
- III. Determine pool of potential interested individuals
 - Contact the national NAMRC membership chair to obtain names of existing NAMRC members who reside in your state.
 - Survey existing state NRA chapter members to ascertain potential interest in joining the NAMRC division and being active in a state NAMRC chapter.
 - Identify potential targets of individuals who are not current NRA members, but may be interested in joining in order to be a part of a NAMRC chapter
- IV. Establish initial planning group and interim officers (Recommended five or more)
 - Suggested officers: President, secretary, treasurer & board members
 - Establish schedule of activities and responsibilities to become operational
- V. Create initial bylaws to include basic components

- Obtain and review NAMRC national bylaws available from NAMRC web site as guide and to assure non conflict with national provisions and mission.
- Address structure, officers, board, purpose, name, planned activities, meeting frequency, etc. (See attached, Bylaws Development Guide*)
- Submit proposed bylaws to local NRA chapter(if one exist) for input and to NAMRC for approval

BECOMING OPERATIONAL:

- VI. Develop key activities and functions: (Becoming operational)
- Development of meeting schedule and frequency
 - Election of officers
 - Identification of activities, programs and focus areas around:
 1. Professional development
 2. Information and advocacy
 3. Fund development
 4. Scholarships
 5. Social activity
 6. Charitable donations and community service
 - Develop working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order (There are a number of resource materials, i.e., books, videos, etc., that can be accessed on and off line that are useful.)
- VII. Establish linkages with national NAMRC events and activities
- Attend and support annual NAMRC national conference: Serve on conference committees, become workshop presenter, attend training sessions and annual business meetings
 - Run for positions on the national board
 - Participate in national legislative initiatives, respond to national surveys, participate in the election of officers and board members.
 - Identify issues and information for the national NAMRC Board of Directors
- VIII. Where do I go for help?
- NAMRC web site: www.namrc.org
 - NAMRC President: Can provide information on resource persons and contacts and resource information
 - NAMRC Speaker's Bureau via Board of Directors: Can identify individuals within Association who can speak on topics related to chapter development, start up and multiculturalism.
 - NAMRC Treasurer: Can assist with fund management and fund development.
 - NAMRC Membership chair: Can assist with questions about process for joining and may help identify existing NAMRC members in your state.
 - NRA website: For information on NRA membership and divisions, and a Bylaws check list for what do include in bylaws

**** If no state NRA chapter exists, the relationship should be established with the national NRA office and with the national NAMRC president.**

Bylaws Development Guidelines*

Bylaws serve as the basic operational guidelines for the organization. They will function as the reference document for defining how the organization is structured, what its purpose is and how it will operate. They serve as a common point of reference for all of the members on the rules the organization will follow. They represent the best thinking of the organization leaders at the time they are established, but are always open to formal revisions as time, situations or new information may dictate.

Background. Webster's New World; Robert's Rules of Order, says the following: "*Bylaws are the most important document of the organization. Without bylaws the organization would have no structure and anarchy would rule. Bylaws states what rights the members have within the organization, how much power the assembly (full body or quorum thereof) has to make decisions and what limits and powers are put on boards and officers.*" Another perspective on bylaws is offered by Sylvester (2010), "*Bylaws are rules that, for the most part, cannot be suspended....It helps to think of the bylaws as a contract between the members and the organization.*"

Format*. Bylaws are divided into articles, and information within the articles is divided into sections. The generally accepted articles of the bylaws include the following, in this order:

Article I Name. The full name of the organization properly punctuated should be included here.

Article II Object (Purpose). A concise statement about the objective of the organization.

Article III Members. The class of members; qualification of membership; method of becoming a member; dues and fees; and the duties, rights, and obligations of members.

Article IV Officers. The officer titles, terms, the nomination and election process, duties and methods for filling vacancies

Article V Meetings. Information on regular, annual and special meetings as well as how meetings are called, the quorum for a meeting, and any information on changing the meeting in case of an emergency.

Article VI Board. The composition, powers and rules of the board.

Article VII Committees. The names of the standing committees as well as their composition, manner of selection and duties. Also, the requirements and composition of special committees.

Article VIII Parliamentary Authority. The parliamentary manual that the organization will use as the basis for the rules for conducting business and the rights of the members, e.g., Robert's Rules of Order.

Article IX Amendments. How the bylaws can be changed, who can change them, what kind of vote and notice is required, etc.

Organizations may add other Articles, for example sometimes the organization may have a separate article on *nominations* and *elections* and other issues it deems necessary.

*Webster's New World, *Robert's Rules of Order: Simplified and Applied*, 3rd Ed. 2014. Robert McConnell Productions.