



**PARTNERSHIP**  
**OF**  
**OFFICE SERVICES SUPPORT EMPLOYEES**  
**IN SOCIAL SERVICES**

**BY-LAWS**

Proposed Revisions May 2022

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## ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Partnership of Office Services Support Employees in Social Services (POSSESS).

## WHAT IS A POSSESS MEMBER

A POSSESS member is one who functions in a support role in all areas of Social Services. As a member, he/she maintains and supports the organization of POSSESS.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the Partnership of Office Services Support Employees in Social Services (POSSESS) is to provide office services support personnel with a statewide organization for professional identity, professional development (education and training), networking and advocacy. By promoting these primary objectives, POSSESS will advance Office Services Support as a profession, improve the understanding of office support responsibilities and ultimately enhance the quality of services to the customers of the Social Services System.

## ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

The fiscal year of POSSESS will run from July 1 through June 30 of each calendar year.

**Individual Member** – any person employed by local social services agencies, regional or state offices of the Virginia Department of Social Services in the area(s) of support (fiscal, administrative, eligibility or services) shall be eligible for an Individual Membership that is paid either by the agency or the individual.

**Associate Member** – any person not eligible to be an Individual Member but who has an interest in the purposes and activities of this organization shall be eligible for an Associate Membership. The Associate Membership shall not exceed 25% of the total state membership.

**Privileges and Rights of the Members of POSSESS:**

a. Individual Member – These members are entitled to the full rights and privileges of POSSESS as follows:

- (1) the right to vote on all matters pertaining to the membership;
- (2) eligible for elective and appointive offices;
- (3) eligible for appointment to committees and commissions of the organization;
- (4) admission to and participation in organization meetings;
- (5) eligible for all services, resources and publications of the organization;
- (6) eligible for the Percell Erquhart and State Scholarships for conferences;
- (7) if an agency merges with another agency the member does not need to move his/her membership (only if the member prefers);

b) Associate Member – These members are entitled to:

- (1) admission to and participation in organization meetings;
- (2) eligible for all services, resources and publications of the organization;
- (3) if an agency merges with another agency the member does not need to move his/her membership (only if the member prefers).

An Associate Member has the option to serve on a committee knowing that he/she has no voting rights.

- c) Membership Dues – Membership dues of \$20.00 are due by July 31 of each year. New membership dues will remain \$20.00 at any time. Renewal membership dues will be \$25.00 if paid after the July 31 deadline. Agency Memberships, for up to 10 members, dues are \$150 per year and are due by July 31 of each year. **NO EXCEPTIONS. No partial payments will be accepted by the State Treasurer. Membership dues are non-refundable.** Individual memberships are non-transferrable. Membership through the agency tier belongs to the paying agency and those members can change based on communication to POSSESS. Due to auditing purposes, new or renewal membership applications will not be accepted from April 15 to June 30 of the current year.

A one year or more lapse of membership will qualify as a new member.

- d) State Conference Scholarship – All POSSESS Individual Members are eligible to apply for this Scholarship.

The submission of a conference registration form is not valid until payment is received. If a member is awarded a scholarship, the member or agency will receive reimbursement after conference concludes. Should the recipient not attend conference or attend the business meeting while at conference or fail to meet the remaining criteria set forth in the Manual of Policy and Procedures, reimbursement will not be made.

The board will review and determine scholarship recipients.

- e) Percell Erquhart Scholarship – Percell Erquhart began his affiliation with POSSESS by serving on the Planning Committee. In July of 1993, he was chosen as the first Treasurer of POSSESS. After our first conference in November of 1993, Percell was diagnosed with cancer of the brain. He died in November of 1994. In May of 1995, POSSESS voted to establish the Percell Erquhart Scholarship.

All Individual Members are eligible to apply for this Scholarship. The criteria to be used for this scholarship will be that the applicant has made an exceptional contribution to the betterment of the POSSESS organization. **This criteria is not based on member’s job performance at their agency.** Exceptional contribution is defined as noteworthy, outstanding, dependable, and unique. (Examples include conducting a workshop at conference, creating or improving processes within POSSESS, advancing the mission of the organization, performing duties beyond the original tasks designated, etc.)

All applications will be submitted to the State Vice President and reviewed and a recipient will be determined by the Board of Directors. If no applicant meets the criteria, the Scholarship will not be awarded. If recipient is selected, the award will be presented at the Spring Conference.

The scholarship covers up to two nights at the conference hotel rate and full conference registration. It must be applied prior to the next Spring Conference. Any exceptions will be reviewed by the Executive Board.

- f) Eligibility for Elective/Appointive Office: Individual Members who have attended two business meetings within the qualifying fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

#### **ARTICLE IV – STATE OFFICERS**

The State officers of POSSESS shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board of Directors will also include two representatives from each region and will be appointed by the elected members of the board.

Any Individual Member in good standing shall be eligible to serve as an officer or regional representative. The term of all officers and representatives shall be for two years beginning July 1 of even numbered years. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive elected terms. All vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Directors. All officers shall turn over to their successors all records of their office within 30 days after elections. An officer or representative who misses two consecutive meetings (Membership, Board of Directors and/or Executive) without an acceptable explanation to the Board of Directors shall forfeit his/her position.

#### **The Duties of the State Officers:**

**President** – The President shall preside over all meetings of POSSESS, the Board of Directors and the Executive Board. The President shall also be an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee. The President, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, shall appoint a Parliamentarian and a Webmaster.

**Vice President** – The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or inability of the President to serve. The Vice President shall appoint committee chairpersons subject to notification to the Board of Directors and shall coordinate conference meeting places and programs. Other duties as assigned in Manual of Policy and Procedure.

**Secretary** – The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the business meetings, the meetings of the Board of Directors and the meetings of the Executive Board. A draft of the minutes shall be submitted to the Board of Directors within 30 days of the meeting. The Secretary shall be the custodian of all records and papers, roll of membership and lists of committees. The Secretary shall coordinate all committees of POSSESS and be responsible for these committees. The Secretary shall notify, in writing, committees and Board Members of their appointments and their changes.

**Treasurer** – The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the funds of POSSESS as directed by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall deposit all funds in a financial institution insured by an agency of the Federal Government. The Treasurer shall render a detailed itemized financial statement of receipts and disbursements to the Membership, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Board. A detailed itemized annual report of receipts and disbursements shall be given at the semi-annual business meetings. The Treasurer shall provide other reports and accounts as requested by the membership, the Board of Directors or the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall maintain a current roll of membership.

#### **ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board shall consist of State Officers of POSSESS.

#### **The Duties of the Executive Board:**

The Executive Board shall act in emergencies between Board of Directors’ meetings. The Executive Board may prepare recommendations for presentation to the Board of Directors.

#### **ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors shall be composed of State Officers, Regional Representatives, the Parliamentarian, and the Webmaster and will be considered the representatives of the membership with power to act in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the members. The Parliamentarian and Webmaster will be non-voting members of the Board of Directors.

An orientation meeting shall be held between the outgoing and incoming Board of Directors to train and exchange records. The outgoing Board of Directors shall attend the first meeting of the incoming Board of Directors.

**The Duties of the Board of Directors:**

The Board of Directors shall transact the business of POSSESS between regular meetings of POSSESS except where otherwise provided in these By-laws. The Board shall review and approve expenditures as needed.

**Parliamentarian** – The Parliamentarian is appointed by the State President and shall attend all business, Board of Directors, and Executive Board meetings. The Parliamentarian shall use Robert’s Rules of Order to maintain control of all meetings. If the Parliamentarian is an Individual Member of POSSESS, he/she shall have a vote at business meetings. If a non-member Parliamentarian is utilized, he/she will have no vote at business meetings.

**Webmaster:** The Webmaster is appointed by the State President and shall attend all business and Board of Directors meetings. These individuals shall maintain and manage all POSSESS websites to deliver membership needs and requirements, coordinate with the Board of Directors on planning, design, development, operations and new postings on the website, as well as communicate and correspond the needs of POSSESS with the hosting company.



## ARTICLE VII – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

**Section I** - The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least one representative from each of the five regions of POSSESS. The Committee shall prepare a complete ballot with at least one person standing for election for each office. Elections shall be held and completed prior to the Spring business meeting in even numbered years. All nominees shall give consent and submit written consent from their direct supervisor or agency director, to serve if elected before names can be placed on the ballot.

A member may only run for one office during each election process. A member expressing interest in more than one office will be asked to choose one office to run for before the ballots go out to the membership.

State election timelines are outlined the Manual of Policy and Procedures.

**Section II** - Officers shall be elected by a majority of the members with voting privileges who complete the official ballot. Ballots without a valid POSSESS membership number will be voided. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee will close voting according to Manual of Policy and Procedures.

The ballots will remain sealed until Nominating Committee members meet according to timeline in Manual of Policy and Procedures to tabulate the results. At that time, the Nominating Committee Chair will send out results of the election to the Executive Board. A signed written report shall be presented at Spring Conference. Any member listed on the ballot shall not be allowed to serve on the Nominating Committee

**Section III** – In the event the Nominating Committee is unable to prepare a complete ballot prior to the respective deadline, nominations and voting for positions without any nominations or resulting in a tie will occur at the Spring business meeting. Only Individual Members will be allowed to participate in this voting process.

**Section IV** – Officers shall serve a term of two years. Officers shall not serve more than two consecutive elected terms in the same office.

## **ARTICLE VIII – REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

There shall be five regions of POSSESS – Central, Eastern, Northern, Piedmont and Western. An Individual Member of State POSSESS shall be a member of his/her respective region.

### **The Purpose of the Regions:**

To provide active support of State POSSESS purposes through which all members may participate in the affairs of POSSESS.

To provide an operational and administrative unit through which the State organization may conduct its operations and the membership may assist in the formulation of POSSESS policy.

### **Regional Representatives:**

Any Individual Member in good standing shall be eligible to serve as representative. It is desired that no more than two representatives be from the same office/agency. The term of all representatives shall be for two years. Representatives may not serve more than two consecutive terms unless the role cannot be filled and current representative agrees to continue.

**Selection of Regional Representatives:** Representatives shall be chosen through application process to take place after new board term begins July 1<sup>st</sup> of even numbered years. See Manual of Policy and Procedures for criteria and process timeline.

**Duties of Regional Representatives:** Represent regions at Board of Directors meetings, business meetings and other duties as outlined in Manual of Policy and Procedures.

**ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

Business meetings shall be held at scheduled conferences and other times as outlined in the policy and procedure manual.

The Board of Directors shall meet quarterly. There may be called meetings at the request of the Executive Board or three members of the Board of Directors. Notice must be given to the Board of Directors in advance of all called meetings.

The Executive Board shall meet at the discretion of the President or at the request of two members of the Executive Board. Notice must be given to all Executive Board members in advance of all meetings.

**Quorum**

Business Meetings – A majority of the members in attendance at the POSSESS business meetings shall constitute a quorum.

Board of Directors – A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Executive Board – A majority of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum.

In the event there is no quorum to transact official business, a written ballot may be submitted for action.

**ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES**

Committees will be formed by the Board of Directors at the time the board determines the need for the formation of a committee. Committees will be active for as long as the need is identified and will be disbanded when the need has been met. Committee members will be solicited via an application process. The Secretary shall coordinate all special committees of POSSESS. Committee members shall be solicited, by Board of Directors, from POSSESS membership except as otherwise provided by these by-laws. The appointed committee will determine who will serve as Chairperson of the committee.

There can be no changes in State Committee chairs serving on current committees without the approval of the Board.

**Each Committee**'s size will be determined by the Board of Directors based on need, but shall consist of at least one member from each region, unless otherwise specified in the Manual of Policy and Procedures. All committee chairpersons must submit reports to the Secretary as needed. Board approval is required for all funding requests. If approved, all receipts need to be submitted to the State Treasurer.

Reference the policy and procedure manual for the committee list and descriptions.

### **ARTICLE XI – FINANCES**

The Board of Directors shall propose changes in the dues structure for members, subject to approval by the membership. Members whose current dues are not paid shall forfeit all rights and privileges of membership until such dues are paid. A review shall be conducted prior to Spring conference by the Executive Board. Upon the completion of the State Treasurer's final term, a review will be performed by an outside person with accounting experience.

### **ARTICLE XII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY AND PROCESS**

Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised, shall be the parliamentary authority when they are not inconsistent with these By-laws.

### **ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS**

The By-laws may be amended provided they have been submitted in writing to the Board of Directors for study and recommendation 30 days prior to the ensuing Board meeting and approved:

1. During a state business meeting, by two-thirds vote of members present, or
2. By email ballot, if timing of business meeting does not allow timely review, by a two-thirds vote of responses received.

A copy of the amendments shall be provided to each member of POSSESS 30 days before the vote is conducted.

**ARTICLE XV – AFFILIATION**

POSSESS shall seek an affiliate relationship with the Virginia League of Social Services Executives by submitting an application to the League President. It is expected that this affiliation will be one of cooperation and that there will be no conflict in objectives of the two organizations.