

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
MONTANA ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND, Inc.**

Adopted July 14, 1946

**Revised July 12, 1947, February 28, 1956, July 11, 1959, February 28, 1964,
April 10, 1979, September 13, 2014, September 12, 2015, January 13, 2023**

Article 1: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Montana Association for the Blind, Inc.

Article II: Aims and Purposes

The aims and purposes of this organization shall be to provide a forum for the educational, social, physical, and rehabilitative improvement of the blind and low-vision population of Montana.

Article III: Qualifications for Membership

Any resident of Montana, having reached his or her 16th (sixteenth) birthday and having paid the required dues, becomes a member. The privilege of voting and of holding office shall be restricted solely to members in good standing.

Article IV: Officers

The executive officers, hereinafter known as the “Board of Directors,” shall be President; Three Vice Presidents; and 6 (six) District Representatives.

Article V: Method of Amendment

This constitution may be amended or revised in the following manner: The proposal must first be presented to the Board of Directors. If approved the secretary shall submit it to the membership. Ballots shall be returned within 45 (forty-five) days from the date of issuance. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the ballots returned is required for adoption.

Article VI: Dissolution

In the event that a resolution is adopted by the convention in assembly, calling for the dissolution of the Montana Association for the Blind, that resolution

must allow sufficient time for the Board of Directors to satisfy all claims against the organization and to divide the remaining assets among charitable non-profit organizations doing similar work for the blind in the State of Montana.

**BYLAWS
OF THE
MONTANA ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND, Inc.**

Adopted July 15, 1956

Revised 1962, 1979, 1982, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021

Bylaw 1: Membership (Revised 1991, 1992, 1993, 2003, 2007, 2014, 2019, 2021, 2023)

Section 1. At least a majority of the voting membership shall be declared blind, legally blind (20/200+ in the better eye with the best correction or a visual field of 20 degrees or less), or low vision (20/70+ with the best correction) by a physician.

Section 2: Membership dues shall be \$10.00 per calendar year due January 31st of that year.

Section 3: Any new member's dues shall be in the hands of the treasurer 30 days prior to ballots being sent out for any election.

Section 4: Five or more members may elect officers and form a chapter in any community and upon approval of the Board of Directors, be granted a charter containing the provisions governing all chapters.

4A. Five or more members may elect officers and form 1 (one) at-large chapter across the state and upon application to the Board of Directors, be granted a charter containing the provisions governing all Chapters.

Section 5: Any civic, service, fraternal organization or individual may be granted an honorary membership by the Board of Directors or convention, but will not have voting powers, hold office, or serve on the Board of Directors.

Section 6: The Board of Directors shall grant admission to a “Division” upon application. A Division shall consist of a group of members and potential members with a common interest pertaining to the purposes and mission of the MAB. Divisions shall submit their application to the Board of Directors along with a constitution and membership policies. Members of a division that do not meet membership requirements will be under the supervision of full members of the MAB and will not have voting privileges in the MAB unless they fulfill the membership requirements set out in the constitution of the MAB.

Bylaw II: Board of Directors (Revised 1997, 2002, 2003, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024)

Section 1.

1A. The Board of Directors shall have the power to transact all business of this association between annual conventions.

1B. The Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions passed by the membership at the annual convention shall govern this association.

1C. The president shall appoint a resolutions committee, which will present resolutions at the convention for adoption. Resolutions may be introduced from the convention floor, with sponsorship from a majority of district representatives or a majority of chapter presidents. Resolutions shall be presented in writing, in standard resolution format.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet at least 4 (four) times each fiscal year. Meetings can be face-to-face, telephone conference, video conference or any combination thereof.

Section 3. All meetings of the Board of Directors and of the annual convention shall be governed by *Roberts Rules of Order, revised*.

Section 4. A quorum to conduct business shall be a majority of the membership of the Board of Directors. A quorum does not include the president. The president shall vote to break a tie only.

Section 5. When a District Representative is unable to attend a meeting, it shall be his/her privilege and duty to appoint an alternate MAB member from within his/her district for that meeting.

Section 6. When any board member fails to attend 2 unexcused meetings per term his/her office shall be declared vacant by the president with approval of the board.

Section 7.

Section 7A: A reasonable expense of board members attending board meetings shall be paid by the treasurer upon presentation of written expenses.

Section 7B: A reasonable expense incurred by any board member to perform his/her duties, including travel of a representative to visit chapters lying within the confines of his/her district shall be reimbursed upon presentation of written expenses.

Section 8. In the event of any vacancy in the office of the president or any vice president, the vice presidents shall succeed in order.

Section 9. Officers shall assume the duties of their respective offices at the first regular board meeting, which may be held at the convention or within 30 days of the new officers being sworn in.

Section 10. The secretary shall notify all board members of pending meetings at least 2 (two) weeks in advance as to date, place, and agenda.

Section 11. All employees are accountable to the Board of Directors. All employees' duties and contracts need to be presented and approved by the Board. Then the contracts need to be presented to the employee for their signatures.

Section 12. The president and vice-president shall be legally blind.

Section 12A. The chapter president shall be legally blind. If no legally blind candidate is available for the position, a sighted member may serve upon election by the chapter.

Section 13. The president shall be required to appoint a parliamentarian and assign him or her to become familiar with Roberts Rules of Order. The parliamentarian will regularly attend board meetings and will make sure the board is following Robert's Rules of Order, the constitution, and the governing bylaws. If the parliamentarian misses 3 consecutive board meetings he or she will be removed upon the decision of the board.

Section 14. To avoid actual or apparent nepotism within the organization, spouses, significant others, roommates, and/or immediate family members are not eligible to simultaneously serve as board members or chapter officers—exceptions allowed through Board review and approval. The definition of “immediate family” is parents and children.

Section 15. District Representatives may not hold chapter officer positions while serving on the board. Winners of the 2024 election will be grandfathered in for one year.

Bylaw III: Nominations and Elections (Revised 1962, 1979, 1991, 1993, 2014, 2024)

Section 1.

Section 1A: The president shall appoint a nominating committee prior to November 1st on the year preceding the election for which the slate of nominees is to be prepared. The committee shall have 6 members, one from each district.

Section 1B: It shall be the duty of the nominating committee to canvas the membership and select candidates for the offices of President, first, second, and third vice presidents with no fewer than 2 (two) candidates, in so far as possible for each office, who will agree to serve if elected. It shall be the

duty of each member of the nominating committee to canvas his/her own district and present to the nominating the committee at least two candidates, in so far as possible for the office of the District Representative who resides in his/her District and who will agree to serve if elected. The name of any member wishing to be a candidate for any office for which he/she is qualified shall appear on the ballot provided he/she so indicates to the nominating committee.

Section 1C: It shall be the responsibility of the nominating committee to have in the hand of the secretary the complete slate of candidates, 45 (forty-five) days prior to the first day of the annual convention. A biographical sketch of each candidate shall accompany the slate of nominees.

Section 2.

Section 2A: The secretary shall mail 1 (one) ballot 30 (thirty) days prior to the first day of the annual convention to each member in good standing as of that date and only such members shall be eligible to cast the ballot. Within 20 (twenty) days of that date all voted ballots shall be returned to the secretary. Space shall be provided on the ballot for write-in candidates. Voting instructions shall head the ballot. A biographical sketch of each candidate shall accompany the ballot.

Section 2B: A stamped self-addressed envelope, bearing the voters return address, shall be mailed with each ballot for the convenience of the voter.

Section 2C: All officers shall be elected for 2- (two-) year terms. The President and 3 (three) vice-presidents shall be elected in the odd-numbered years. All District Representatives shall be elected in the even-numbered years.

Section 2D: The entire membership shall vote for the president and vice-presidents. In the year that District Representatives are elected

6 (six) separate ballots shall be used, one for each district. Members shall vote for district representatives in the district they are currently an active chapter member rather than in the district they reside.

Section 2E: The balloting method will include paper ballots in large print or braille and electronic voting that keeps track of who has voted but keeps the vote anonymous. Braille ballots would follow the procedures for ballots specified in Bylaw III, Sections 2A and B. Electronic voting would be opened thirty days before the convention and closed twenty days later.

Section 3.

Section 3A: The president shall appoint an election committee at the annual convention.

Section 3B: All envelopes containing ballots shall be delivered unopened to the chairman of the election committee by the secretary on the first day of the annual convention. The chairman will also access the electronic ballots that day. The election committee shall determine the validity of the voted ballots, tally and tabulate the vote and report the results in writing to the President by 8 a.m. on the last day of the annual convention. The report shall be accompanied by the ballots.

Section 3C: The president shall retain the ballots for 30 (thirty) days after which they will be destroyed by him/her, and he/she will so notify the secretary.

Section 4. All officers shall be elected for 2-year terms not to exceed 3 (three) consecutive terms in any one board position. Once 3 (three) years have passed, any previous officer may seek election again. The terms started on October 13, 2013, at the annual convention which is when the motion was passed. For District representatives currently serving

during convention 2013 this will be counted as having served one term

Bylaw IV: Vacancies and Committee Reports (Revised 2002, 2014, 2023)

Section 1: The president, with the majority approval of the board, shall appoint a replacement for any vacant board position within 14 days of the vacancy.

Section 2: The president, with the majority approval of the board members may make temporary appointments to the board of directors in the event of absence.

Section 3: The president may call any member of this association to report to a board meeting. That member's expenses shall be paid as prescribed for board members.

Section 4: The president shall appoint the chief editor of the association's newsletter who, if not already an elected member of the board of directors, shall serve as an ex-officio member of the board.

Bylaw V: Past Presidents (Revised 1995)

Section 1: The immediate past president shall automatically become an honorary and advisory non-voting member of the board of directors. He/she shall hold this office for no more than 1 (one) year.

Section 2: The title, past president, shall be given only to that person who has completed a term in the office of president to which he/she has been elected.

Bylaw VI: Fiscal (Revised 1995, 2003, 2014, 2017, 2022)

Section 1: The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

Section 2: There shall be a financial compilation (type of audit) at the end of

each fiscal year. In the event of a vacancy in the office of treasurer between compilations, there shall be an additional compilation or reconciliation at the discretion of the executive board.

A full audit will be performed at the discretion of the board.

Section 3: All disbursements of this association shall be made by check or electronic means, as approved in the Board Fiscal Policies.

Section 4: Any officer of this association, elected or appointed, having custody of \$2000 dollars or more of the association funds shall be properly bonded.

Section 5: The budget and finance committee shall be appointed by the board. This committee shall advise and assist the treasurer on all investments.

Section 6: All major contributions of \$5000 dollars or more, bequests or estate settlements received by the Montana Association for the Blind and not designated toward any program of the Association by the donor, must be placed into the investment portfolio of the Association.

Section 6A: Interest earned from the investment portfolio may be used to operate the Association and support the Association's business and programs.

Section 6B: The board of directors may use the funds in the investment portfolio for major programs which support or achieve the aims and purposes of the organization.

Section 7: The Board of Directors shall adopt and maintain written fiscal policies pursuant to the effective conduct and stewardship of Association fiscal matters.

Bylaw VII: Memorial Loan Fund (Adopted in 1954, revised 1962, 1982, 2005)

Section 1: There shall be established a memorial loan fund from which loans

may be made to blind and visually impaired members in good standing for purposes of physical restoration, educational, economic, or social improvement by acquiring technology for the blind necessary for competitive employment, completing educational objectives, or maintaining one's independence and self-sufficiency. Monies from this fund may be loaned under rules and regulations adopted by the board of directors. These funds shall be carried as a trust fund in a federally insured bank selected by the board of directors.

Bylaw VIII: Method of Amendment (Revised 2014)

Section 1: These bylaws may be amended or repealed by, notice and copies, of the proposed action, being sent by mail to each of the Board members at least 20 days in advance of a board meeting resulting in notification of the MAB membership of the proposal as well as the recommendation of the board at least 20 days in advance of the MAB Convention. Upon receiving a $\frac{3}{4}$ (three/fourths) vote the proposal becomes effective immediately.

Bylaw IX: Non-discrimination (Adopted 1992, Revised 2023)

Section 1: This organization follows Federal civil rights laws. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, age, disability, or sex including gender identity.

Bylaw X: Scholarships and Awards (Adopted 1994)

Section 1: The organization shall establish a policy for, and shall award Educational scholarships to, worthy blind students in the name of Emil A. Honka

Section 2: The organization shall establish a policy for, and shall make the presentation of, awards deemed appropriate to worthy individuals in the name of:

A. Keith E. Denton

B. Dorothy C. Bridgeman

Section 3: The organization shall establish a policy for and shall offer Scholarship awards in the name of Leila Jensen Proctor to worthy Individuals to enable them to enhance their skills in the teaching of Braille.

**RESOLUTIONS PASSED DURING THE
2014 STATE CONVENTION
BUSINESS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2014**

- 1. A resolution to Encourage State Funding of Orientation and Mobility Services provided by the Montana Independent Living Project.
ACTION – Write a “letter of support” by the MAB making available public funds through the Executive Budget Planning Process and/or the Montana Legislature to provide base, stable funding to MILP for its established direct service model.**
- 2. Write “letters of support” for the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act to congressional representatives, the Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Governor.**
- 3. The MAB becomes an active sponsor of the Bozeman Low Vision Center by allowing the use of its name to be associated with the Center and publicize the Center in MAB literature.**
- 4. The new board of directors shall attend leadership training that shall include a complete financial discussion of MAB income and expenses, MAB History, and board member responsibilities. The cost of the training shall be paid for by the association.**

**RESOLUTIONS PASSED DURING THE
2019 STATE CONVENTION
BUSINESS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 7, 2019**

- 1. Be it resolved that the MAB membership roll is not to be used for any commercial marketing or advertising that is not directly related to MAB business or activities previously approved by the board of directors.**
- 2. Be it resolved that while the names of the board and committee members are public record and can be freely distributed, the emails, phone numbers, and other personal information of board or committee members is not to be made public.**