

**RHODE ISLAND
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER
BYLAWS**

I. Name and Jurisdiction

The Rhode Island Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (RIVOAD) is the state counterpart to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD.)

II. Mission

Rhode Island Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is a collaboration of independent organizations that are or may become active in any or all phases of disaster. The mission is to foster more effective service to people affected by disaster within the four phases of disaster: mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery.

III. Overview

RIVOAD is intended to be a network for organizations active in disaster. Each RIVOAD member organization will maintain its own identity and independence while closely collaborating with other RIVOAD member organizations, interfaith organizations, and local, state, or federal authorities. RIVOAD will actively collaborate with all organizations active in disaster response to share information and avoid duplication of efforts.

RIVOAD accomplishes its mission by adhering to the following principles:

Cooperation: Foster cooperation among RIVOAD member organizations at all levels and in all phases of disaster

Coordination: Coordinate the development of RIVOAD policies and procedures, and, the implementation of services among RIVOAD member organizations. RIVOAD may also provide links to national and international disaster relief organizations. RIVOAD serves as advocate and liaison between member agencies and the State of Rhode Island.

Communication: Exchange and disseminate information among RIVOAD member organizations and the public, as well as local, state and federal agencies, in conjunction with the individual RIVOAD members.

Collaboration: Work together to achieve specific goals and to undertake specific projects at disaster sites.

IV. Membership

A. Categories of Membership

1. Partner - Members who meet all of the following criteria, are eligible for the full voting category of membership in the RIVOAD.
 - Organizations with voluntary memberships and constituencies, which are not-for-profit, and non government
 - Organizations must have a policy for committing resources to meet the needs of people affected by disaster without discrimination
 - Organizations must have a representative that will act as the Authorized Member Organization Representative (AMOR) to vote at business meetings
2. Associate – The Associate category of membership may be granted to organizations, government agencies, or businesses with disaster planning and operations responsibilities or capabilities that do not meet all of the criteria for Partner membership and:
 - Have a disaster response program and policy for commitment of resources to meet the needs of people affected by disaster without discrimination
3. Steering – The Steering Committee is made up of member agencies, either Partner or Associate, who have a defined role in state EMA or NVOAD planning and/or have a clearly defined role in

disaster response. Members of the Steering Committee are willing to spend extra time and effort preparing for and organizing the business meetings of RIVOAD. This committee will include the three executive officers. The majority of the Steering Committee members must hold Partner Membership.

The criteria for Steering Committee Membership are as follows:

- An active member of the RIVOAD, defined by active participation in a majority of annual meetings
- Available and committed to meeting monthly
- Willing to plan and organize activities and trainings for all RIVOAD organizations

B. Conditions of Membership

- Meet the membership criteria of the RIVOAD
 - Agree with the mission of the RIVOAD
 - Have an authorized representative at RIVOAD general membership and special meetings.
1. Agencies requesting membership will apply to the RIVOAD by providing a completed membership application and written description of their intended commitment to the RIVOAD, signed by their agency's organizational leader.
 2. The RIVOAD Steering Committee will determine category eligibility of the candidate organization using the RIVOAD bylaws and present the application for discussion at the next business meeting.
 3. The members will vote after the application is presented and discussed to extend or deny an offer of membership to the candidate organization.

C. Responsibilities of Membership

1. The leadership of a RIVOAD member organization must be committed to sending knowledgeable and authoritative representatives to attend RIVOAD meetings.
2. The AMOR must have access to the resources of their organization to serve the needs of disaster victims. RIVOAD member organizations are encouraged to designate one alternate AMOR (AAMOR) to attend RIVOAD meetings.
3. The leadership of a RIVOAD member organization shall designate the primary representative and one alternate representative in their application materials. Routine changes should be made no later than thirty days prior to the next business meeting.
4. Partner Voting Member Organizations will have an AMOR or AAMOR attend all business meetings.
5. The Chairperson of RIVOAD may excuse the absence of a Partner Agency unable to attend.

D. Termination of Membership – An organization's membership may be terminated by:

1. RIVOAD member organizations may voluntarily withdraw by submission of a letter of separation to the Steering Committee.
2. Membership may be terminated at any time for any reason by a four-fifths formal vote of the general membership.
3. Consistent failure to meet the conditions and responsibilities of membership will constitute action for removal from membership, by the steering committee.

V. Meetings

A. Business Meetings

1. Business meetings will be held a minimum of two times a year on a schedule set by the RIVOAD.
2. Biannual business meetings will be scheduled at the beginning of the year.
3. Written notice, including a meeting agenda, shall be sent to all members prior to any business meeting with ten (10) business days.
4. The AMOR has voice for and votes for his/her organization at business meetings. Other representatives from the same organization have voice, when recognized by, and at the discretion of the Chair. This is so to ensure a reasonable exchange of ideas in a timely fashion without monopoly by multiple representatives of a single agency.

B. Emergency Meetings

1. Emergency meetings to meet the needs of disaster events (or drills) can be called at any time by the Chairperson, the Executive Committee or three members of RIVOAD, with minimal notice.
2. The Executive Committee reserves the right to invite appropriate agencies to participate in these meetings as well as to discourage unnecessary participation from member agencies.
3. Teleconferencing is an option for emergency meetings to facilitate the work of the RIVOAD.
4. Emergency meetings are open to all members and those agencies with specific response & recovery responsibilities that concern RIVOAD members.

C. Steering Committee Meetings

1. A minimum of four meetings are to be held annually.
2. The purpose of the meetings is to set the agenda and organize Business Meetings.

D. Committee Meetings

1. Committee meetings will be called by Committee Chairs as appropriate.
2. Committee Chairs will notify the general membership that a meeting is being called within ten (10) business days of the meeting, to encourage general membership participation.
3. Minutes of committee meetings shall be forwarded to the RIVOAD Secretary within one (1) week of meeting for general record keeping. Minutes shall include the names of the individuals attending the meeting, the purpose of the meeting and information about decisions made.

VI. Officers

Officers must be Partner Member AMORs. Individuals, not organizations, are elected. Any member of the RIVOAD may nominate officers. A written list of the accepted nominees must be provided to the general membership within ten (10) business days of a scheduled vote. These officers are elected by the membership of the RIVOAD. No single agency will be allowed to hold more than one officer position. When an officer's position is vacated, the Chairperson shall call for nominations and an election within the next business meeting to serve the unexpired term. Elected Officers will serve a two year term. The Executive Committee consists of the following officers.

A. Chairperson

Function: presides at meetings, acts as spokesperson and represents RIVOAD to the public and at RIEMA, delegates tasks as pertains to RIVOAD business, convenes meetings and provides leadership.

B. Vice-Chairperson/Treasurer

Function: Acts on behalf of the chair in the absence of or at the request of the Chairperson and maintains financial records of the RIVOAD.

C. Secretary

Function: Acts on behalf of the chair in the absence of or at the request of the Chairperson, maintains organizational records, communicates with general membership about the work of RIVOAD and its activity schedule, and keeps minutes of meetings.

VII. Treasury

In the event that RIVOAD dissolves or becomes an inactive group, any remaining funds from the treasury are to be disbursed to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

VIII. Standing Committees

1. The Steering Committee shall establish formal and ad hoc committees to focus the work of RIVOAD as needed.
2. Openings for Committee Chair positions will be communicated to general membership at least two weeks in advance of Chair appointment, so as to allow nominations from the field for said openings.

3. After reviewing nominations, the Executive Committee shall appoint a Committee Chair, whose role will be to set and facilitate committee agenda and to recruit members to complete the work of the committee.
4. Committees shall be representative of the RIVOAD member organizations.

The following Standing Committees will be appointed per the bylaws:

- **Drill/Exercise Committee**- planned opportunities for VOAD members and other community partners to practice their roles in the disaster mitigation cycle.
- **Education Committee**- planned opportunities for VOAD members to learn about potential disaster scenarios, best practice strategies, and other activities that will enhance the membership's ability to participate in the disaster mitigation cycle.

IX. Voting

1. Each Partner organization is entitled to one vote.
2. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
3. Members present at a properly noticed meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business.
4. All voting except as otherwise provided for in these bylaws shall pass by simple majority vote.
5. All votes (formal or consensus reached) will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
6. An individual or AMOR may represent more than one organization; however, an individual/AMOR has one vote regardless of the number of organizations he/she may represent.

X. Amendments

1. Amendments to these bylaws may be made by a two-thirds majority vote. Amendments must be moved and seconded at a properly noticed business or special meeting to be voted on at the following business meeting.