



# BY-LAWS

## OF THE SELF-ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE

The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State is a strong voice for and by people with developmental disabilities promoting independence, empowerment, leading by example, communicating, networking, and encouraging each other.

### MISSION

Speaking Up for Ourselves and Others.

### Vision

The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State, Inc., is an organization founded, and led, by people with developmental disabilities for people with developmental disabilities. We promote the awareness and recognition of the civil rights and responsibilities which include the opportunities and choices of equal citizenship.

## Values

SANYS works toward positive social change while embracing the following values:

**HONESTY**  
**RESPECT**  
**INCLUSION**  
**CHOICE**  
**EQUALITY**  
**FREEDOM**

## Article 1: Organization

### ARTICLE 1: ORGANIZATION: KEEP

**Section 1. Name.** The SELF-ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK

STATE, INC. and serves New York State.

**Section 2. Offices.** The principal office is located at 500 Balltown Rd., Bldg.5, Schenectady, NY 12304

**Section 3. Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the Association shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

**Section 4. Books and Records.** SA will keep correct and complete records of accounts and will also keep minutes of its board meetings.

**Section 5. Regions.** The Association is divided into six regions of the State; Capital/Hudson Valley, Central/Northern, Western, Finger Lakes, New York City/Westchester, and Long Island.

## Article II: Membership

**Section 1. MEMBERS:** There shall be Voting Members and Allies.

Voting Members: Persons with a Developmental Disability who are members of a self-advocacy group are eligible to become voting members. Voting members are eligible to vote in SANYS board elections. Only voting members can vote for the members of the board at their annual regional board elections.

Allies: Friends, family members, professionals and other persons or organizations with an interest in the Association are not considered members but are considered Allies of the organization.

**Section 2. GROUPS.** There shall be two types of Self-Advocacy Groups, SANYS Member Self-Advocacy Groups and SANYS Supported Self-Advocacy Groups

SANYS Member Group: A group eligible to be a \*SANYS Member Groups is one that meets the following criteria:

- Groups must elect their leaders- president, vice-president etc.
- Groups choose their own advisor(s)
- Groups develop their own agenda and activities.
- Delegate an officer to represent the group at SANYS regional Meetings.
- The main purpose of the group is self-advocacy activities
- Maintains membership records and updates list of current members and officers with SANYS as needed or, at least, annually.
- If affiliated with an agency, the group remains independent of that agency and the way that agency functions. \*These groups must still meet all the other requirements listed above.

SANYS Supported Groups: A group is eligible to be a SANYS Supported Group if they are an active self-advocacy group that

does not meet the criteria above and have an interest in support and information from SANYS.

\*Belonging to a SANYS Member Group is one of the eligibility requirements to become a SANYS Board Member.

**Section 3. Annual Dues.** There are no dues required of voting members to the statewide organization, however, local self-advocacy groups may require dues, but this is not a part of SANYS relationship to local groups. SANYS will have no role or responsibilities related to the finances of local groups.

**Section 4.** The Association will keep a current list of voting members through local group lists of members. Local groups will submit their membership lists to the Association annually.

## **Article III: Events/Conferences**

**Section 1 Regional Events.** Each Region will hold one or more regional conference or other event annually.

**Section 2 Stateside Events.** An Annual Statewide Conference will be held on a date and at a location chosen by the Board of Directors.

## **Article IV: Board**

**Section 1. Board of Directors.** The Board of Directors will consist of no more than 18 members and no less than 10 members. These Board Members serve as regional representatives and shall be allocated as noted below:

New York City/Westchester— Up to 6 Board Members, one for each borough, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. Additionally, 1 member from Westchester County

Long Island— Up to 2 Board members, 1 from Nassau County and 1 from Suffolk County.

Capital/Hudson Valley— up to 4 board members. 2 from the Capital area, 1 from the upper Hudson Valley and 1 from the lower Hudson Valley.

Central— Up to 3 board members—1 from Broome DDS/RO and 1 from Central DDS/RO and one from Sunmount DDS/RO

Western— Up to 1 Board Member.

Finger Lakes: Up to 2 Board members including 1 from the southern Section and 1 from the northern section of the Finger Lakes DDSO.

**Section 2. Vacancies.** Any vacancy on the Board of Directors will be filled by a majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors. The appointed person shall serve until the next regularly scheduled election for that position.

**Section. 3 Resignations:** If a Board member or officer wishes to resign, they must do so in writing to the President of the Association.

**Section 4. Removals.** The Board of Directors by a majority (2/3) vote of a quorum (50% of board members, plus 1) may remove any Board Member if they are not meeting statewide or regional requirements or for other cause.

**Section 5. Terms of Office:** Board members will be elected for three (3) years and terms. No Board member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

The term is from Jan 1 of year 1 to Dec 31 of year 3.

**Section 5. Meetings:** The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times per year. A quorum (50% plus 1) of Board members must be present to conduct the general business of the Board. The Board will create an annual report summarizing the activities of the organization for that past year.

**Section 7. Qualifications.** To be a member of the Board of Directors, an individual must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a member of an SANYS Member SA group
- Have one year of experience in a leadership role (officer) in an SANYS Member SA group
- A recommendation from the current SA group the candidate is a member of.
- Available to travel to 4 Board meetings, which currently include up to three -days and two nights in Albany.
- Willing to speak for themselves and others including in public (at meetings, etc.)
- Currently participates in SANYS Regional Meetings and Has participated for at least 1 year
- is Available to attend regional meetings during their term.
- Commitment to activities within the region they ----represent
- Have a developmental disability

\*If a candidate does not meet one or more of the above requirements but has other unique and relevant Self-advocacy Leadership experience, the board of directors can choose or decline to waive requirement on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 7.** Board Advisors: The Board may appoint up to six advisors to the board including one representative from each of the six regions. Advisory Board members are non-voting members. The role of the advisor will be to support and assist board members from their regions in preparation for SA board meetings, during SA board meetings, and with regional activities throughout the year. The board may also appoint special advisors as needed.

## Article V: Officers

**Section 1.** To run for an officer, position a board member must serve at least one year on the board.

**Section 2.** The officers of the Association shall include: a President, 2 Co-Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

**Section 3.** The Board of Directors, from among their number, at the first meeting of the board will elect the officers annually after the new term begins. Officers shall be elected for a term of one year. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in one position. The term is from the date of the first meeting of year 1 to the date of the first meeting of the following year.

**Section 4.** If a vacancy in an elected officer position should arise (except President), a Board member who is not an officer shall be appointed by the President to complete the unexpired term of office, subject to Board approval.

## Article VI: Elections

**Section 1:** Elections for board Members take place regionally as needed based on board term dates for each region.

**Section 2:** Officer's election will be held during first board meeting of the year.

**Section 3:** The Elections/BY Laws committee will oversee the Process for elections of officers and regional elections.

## **Article VII: Committees**

**Section 1:** Standing Committees shall include:

1: Executive Committee: Composed of the officers of the Board. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the full board. Responsibilities include Board Agenda setting, Organizational oversight, Supervision of Executive Director, Finance, and audits, Addressing high level organizational concerns/Conflicts, Board Education.

2: By-Laws/elections Committee: Composed of at least 2 board members, one board advisor as appointed by the President. The By-laws/Elections Committee responsibilities include Oversight of by-laws compliance with and proposed by-laws revision recommendations to full board as necessary, oversight of regional election processes and officers' elections.

**Section 2:** The President with the approval of the Board of Directors may establish special Committees as the need arises.

## **Article VIII: Employees**

The board of directors may authorize the employment of part-time and full-time employees as are necessary to carry out the



business and projects of the association. The Administrative Director is responsible for the duties of employment including supervision of all staff members.

## **Article IX: Ethical Standards**

**Section 1 Conflicts of Interest.** No Board or Advisory Board member shall have financial interest, or shall engage in business or other activity, which will create substantial conflict with his/her duties as a Board/Advisory Board member.

**Section 2 Nepotism.** No close relative of a Board/Advisory Board member shall be eligible for employment at the Association.

**Section 3 Acceptance of Gifts:** Acceptance of Gifts. No Board/Advisory Board member shall accept gifts, or other items having more than nominal value, from any donor engaged in a business relationship with the Association, or from any employee.

**Section 4 Impropriety:** Acceptance of Impropriety. No Board/Advisory Board Member shall, by his/her conduct, give reasonable basis for the impression that he/she is engaged in acts that constitute a breach of trust.

## **Article X: Amending the By-Laws**

The Bylaws of the Association may be amended, repealed, or added to, or new Bylaws may be adopted by a vote of the Board. Any proposed changes to the Bylaws, along with the date it is to be voted upon, shall be presented in writing to the Board, at least

(30) days prior to the date it is to be voted on. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of a quorum is necessary for ratification.

\*These by-laws were adopted by the SANYS Board of Directors on December 7, 2021.

\*\*It should be noted that additional board requirements added at this time (see below) are not retroactive in nature and do not apply to board members elected prior to that date. They therefore will remain eligible to complete their terms of service. The new requirements will apply to any potential Board candidates following the date of approval.

\*\*\*Board requirements added to this version of SANYS By-Laws: Currently participates and has participated in SANYS Regional Meetings for at least one year.