



PEOPLE FIRST OF WISCONSIN BYLAWS

Article I NAME, MISSION, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 NAME

The name of this organization will be People First of Wisconsin. The organization will do its work in the State of Wisconsin. The organization will be a membership organization and will be run by people with disabilities from each local chapter who make up the Board of Directors. These Board members work to share information about the organization with local members & groups, and to bring the views of local members & groups to the organization.

Section 2 MISSION

The mission of People First of Wisconsin is:

- To help people with disabilities in Wisconsin to speak up for themselves, and to speak up for others with disabilities who need help;
- To provide opportunities for people with disabilities in Wisconsin to speak up and be heard;
- To educate people with disabilities of all ages, who live in Wisconsin, about their rights;
- To help people with disabilities in Wisconsin figure out what they want to do with their lives, and how they can make these dreams come true;
- To educate the public about the rights and strengths of people with disabilities and what they need from the public to be successful;
- To help local self-advocacy groups get started, get stronger, and figure out what they want to do and how to do it;
- To work toward closing all institutions in Wisconsin and making an inclusive life in the community a human right for people with disabilities.

Section 3 WHAT WE DO

The organization will at the local, state and federal level:

- Investigate and advocate on issues affecting people with disabilities.
- Provide a safe place for information sharing, networking, and teamwork.
- Represent people with disabilities during policy making by speaking with decision makers.
- Celebrate contributions of individuals and agencies that educate the public on issues related to aging and/or disability.
- Provide and support training that promotes growth, leadership, and expertise of self-advocates and other professionals within the field of aging and/or disability.

Article II MEMBERSHIP

The membership of People First of Wisconsin will be open to people with and without disabilities who believe in the mission of the organization, and to organizations or associations wishing to support the mission of People First of Wisconsin. Membership is for life and is open to people and organizations/associations from the State of Wisconsin.

Section 1 DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEMBERSHIP

The three different kinds of membership will be:

- Voting Members: people with disabilities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The privilege of voting, holding a position on the board, or serving as a committee chair is limited to general members in good standing.*
- Nonvoting Members: People with disabilities who have not yet registered as members or people without disabilities, called "Friends of People First of Wisconsin."
- Nonvoting Corporate Members Organizations or associations that serve people with disabilities and/or sponsor the work of People First of Wisconsin. Examples may include United Cerebral Palsy or Easter Seals.

“” means that this term can be found in the glossary after the last page of the Bylaws.*

Section 2 DUES

Members will pay \$5 membership dues/fees each year. The chapter advisor is responsible for collecting and sending the chapter's payments to the state office. Dues/fees will be collected by chapters each year. Membership fees/dues may be waived (not required) by the Executive Board due to individual circumstances and/or unforeseen events such as a pandemic or natural disaster.

Article III ELECTIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE, AND DUTIES

Section 1 LOCAL CHAPTER OFFICERS

Each local chapter* holds their own elections and elects their own officers. Each local chapter elects one member to represent them on the statewide Board of Directors.

Section 2 STATEWIDE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Statewide Board of Directors* is made up of one member of each local chapter. The Board of Directors elects the members of the Executive Committee. Each chapter receives one vote.

Terms Four (4) years. No individual may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms or eight (8) years total on the committee. Terms will be staggered. Each member must take at least one (1) year off before they can be appointed again.

The Board of Directors is elected to represent the statewide organization and will:

- Be informed about the organization's mission, policies, and projects.
- Keep up-to-date on issues and developments important to the organization.
- Review the agenda and supporting materials before board and organization meetings.
- Serve on committees and offer to take on special assignments.
- Review and approve the organization's annual budget at an Executive Board meeting and review the quarterly financial reports.
- Inform others about the organization.
- Suggest other chapter members who could contribute their skills and talents to the work of the board and organization.
- Follow conflict of interest* and confidentiality (keeps information private) policies.

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- Attend at least three board meetings per year. If absent more than three times in a year, a board member may be replaced by the President and a majority vote (more than half) of the board.
- Notify the state office, in advance, if they are unable to attend any scheduled board meetings.
- Contact the president if they are not able to fulfill the above duties to submit their resignation from the board so a new member can be appointed.
- Board members will help maintain a database of membership through review of Chapters and their members.

Any three (3) members of the board may call a special meeting of the board, after no less than five (5) days' notice has been given to each member. A simple majority of half + 1, of the Board of Directors makes a quorum* of people present, which will be required for the conduct of business.

Section 3 STATEWIDE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee* will be made up of elected officers of People First at the statewide level. The committee will have four officers: President, Vice-President, and three members at large*. The committee is responsible for Board of Directors' Meeting notices and setting agendas. The committee will also be responsible for annually reviewing bylaws and presenting recommended changes to the board and full organization. The Executive Committee will meet monthly by phone or virtually to move the organization's business forward and attend one full-day retreat in person each year. These officers will be elected at an annual Statewide Board of Directors' Meeting by a vote of the majority of the members at the meeting. Officers will take on their duties at the next Statewide Board of Directors' Meeting.

Section 4 TERMS OF OFFICE Elections will be held in the fall of odd number years.

Executive Committee Officers:

- Two (2) years. No individual may serve more than three (3) consecutive terms or six (6) years total on the committee. Terms can be extended if no other organization member is willing to fill the officer position.

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Section 5 OPENINGS-OPEN SEATS

The Executive Committee, will fill by appointment, vacancies (open seats) that occur of an unexpired term. Appointed members will complete the remaining term of the position.

Section 6 GETTING PAID

No Board Members will be paid for their participation in the organization. Reimbursements for reasonable expenses is not considered pay.

Section 7 DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

The President will:

- Develop agendas together with the Executive Committee for all meetings of the organization and board of directors.
- Have knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives.
- Manage the duties and responsibilities of the organization's Executive Director.
- Act as spokesperson for the organization.
- Call special meetings as necessary.
- Appoint committee chairs, with the approval of the Executive Committee, and assist in the effort to recruit committee members.
- Appoint People First membership representation on other boards, organizations, committees, etc. when requested and as needed.
- Provide leadership in the training and transition period of new board members.
- Work with the local chapters to recruit new board members.
- Consult with board members as needed to ensure that members are engaged and actively contributing to board functions.
- Review financial statements and discuss with organization staff as needed.
- Sign Executive Director timesheets and other financial documents.*
- Perform other duties as needed in this office.
- Serve as a positive role model and representative of People First of Wisconsin.

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Vice-President

The Vice-President will:

- Develop agendas together with the Executive Committee for all meetings of the organization and board of directors.
- Attend all board meetings.
- Have knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives.
- Assist in providing leadership in the training and transition period of new board members.
- Carry out special assignments as requested by the board President.
- Understand the responsibilities of the President and can perform these duties in the President's absence.
- Participate as an important part of the board leadership.
- Serve as a positive role model and representative of People First of Wisconsin.

Members at Large

The Members at Large will:

- Attend all board meetings.
- Have knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives.
- Record board and organization minutes, as interested and able with reasonable accommodations. Organization staff will assist as needed in the recording and distribution of minutes.
- Work with the board President to develop meeting agendas.
- Assume responsibilities of the President in the absence of the board president and Vice-president.
- Review financial statements and discuss with organization staff as needed.
- Assist in providing training in the transition period of new board members.
- Serve as a positive role model and representative of People First of Wisconsin.

Article IV MEETINGS

Section 1 REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the local chapters will be held, virtually or in person, at dates and times chosen by the local chapter officer/s. Statewide meetings will be held a minimum of four (4) times at dates and locations chosen by the Board of Directors each year. Board members will be notified as soon as the Executive Committee has determined the dates for the following year's meetings. The annual meeting shall take place in the Fall either virtually or in person, during the Self-Determination Conference. Action may be taken by a majority (more than half) of the membership present.

Section 2 PROCEDURES

The procedures for all meetings of this organization, whether Board of Directors, or local chapters, will be guided by these bylaws.

Article V FINANCES

The fiscal year for the organization will begin on October 1 through September 30.

Article VI ADVISORS

Section 1 ROLE OF ADVISORS

Advisors are chosen by local chapter members to assist local groups to participate in the organization to the fullest. Their responsibilities include:

- Serve as a point of contact between their local chapter and the state office.
- Make sure Board Members can attend meetings—making sure members have rides and are able to attend.
- Make sure everybody understands what's going on and what their roles are.
- Help the Board plan events like conferences & annual membership meetings.
- Make sure the local chapter's officers complete monthly reports to send to the statewide office.
- Attend an advisor training each year.
- Support opportunities for participation in local, state, and federal policy making activities.

- Help the Board to find and record information.
- Make sure members understand the information sent to them in the mail.

Section 2 GETTING PAID

No advisors will be paid for their participation in the organization.
Reimbursements for reasonable expenses is not considered pay.

Article VII SUPPORT STAFF

Support staff are designed to be exactly that - support. Support staff are not participants in People First meetings with outside stakeholders.* They should not speak for the individual or express their views during the meetings or be involved with the discussion or activities, other than to support the individual who they are working with in the ways requested. Abuse training is recommended. They shall follow the Code of Conduct.*

Some examples of acceptable support are:

- Explain or provide help understanding a concept when requested.
- Assist with writing or using technology when requested.
- Assist other activities such as eating or transportation.

Article VIII AMENDMENTS

These bylaws will be reviewed annually, and may be amended (changed) at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the general membership present and voting, provided that such amendment will first have been submitted to the Board of Directors and to the organization membership at least two (2) weeks prior to a regular meeting.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest is when a party has competing interests or loyalties because of their duties to more than one person or organization.

Quorum: The minimum number of people needed at a meeting to do business. An example is having four out of seven board members present in order to pass a motion at a meeting.

Good Standing: If current contact information for the person or organization is located in the membership database, these members will be considered members in good standing.

Local Chapter: Local Chapters are groups of People First members from the same community or area who meet monthly to talk about their goals and projects related to People First issues. Local Chapters make their own decisions about how to support the mission of People First and report back to the state office regularly with updates.

Board of Directors: The Statewide Board of Directors is a group made up of people from each local chapter who come together to share and discuss the overall mission and goals of People First as a whole. They meet every three months to discuss new and old business. They are also responsible for keeping their local chapters up to date with statewide issues.

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee is a smaller group than the Statewide Board of Directors that attends and leads the board meetings every three months. They also meet at least two times per year to work on their professional development skills and discuss business of People First and attend meetings at the Governor's Office in Madison three to five times per year. Being a part of the Executive Committee is a large but rewarding responsibility. The members will include: President, Vice President, and members- at -large. Meetings can be held virtually or in person.

Members at Large: The Members at Large in the Executive Committee have some of the same responsibilities as the President and Vice President of the Executive Committee. For instance, they attend monthly Executive Board Committee Meetings and meetings with the Governor's office.

People First meetings with outside stakeholders: People First organizes and is invited to many meetings to discuss issues facing people with disabilities. Some examples of these meetings are: Meetings with the Governor’s Office, Long-Term Care meetings hosted by the Department of Health Services (DHS), Survival Coalition meetings, meetings with legislators, and long-term care hearings.

Sign staff timesheets and other financial documents: The President of People First oversees the staff of the organization and must review their timesheets and other financial documents in a timely manner. If they are not able to sign for any reason, the office manager or technical assistant may sign the time sheets. If they are not able to sign for any reason, another Executive Committee member at large may sign the time sheets.

Code of Conduct:

I will use respectful language in person, virtually, on social media, texts, and in emails.

I will try to use plain language when communicating with others.

I will give others a chance to communicate and share their ideas in person or virtually, without interrupting them.

I will not swear at or insult other people.

I will not argue or fight with other people.

I will not threaten other people.

I will not belittle or compete with other people in person or virtually.

I will not touch others inappropriately or make sexual comments.

I will ask if I do not understand something.

I will not steal or ask other members for money or loan members money. (If a member is in crisis or has a strong financial need, they should let the chapter advisor and/or PFW staff know.)

I will treat everyone equally in my actions, words, and body language. This includes people of different colors, abilities, genders, sexual orientations (such as gay, lesbian, pansexual) and religions.

I will prepare for meetings, be on time, and clean and dressed for the meeting. If I do not know what to wear, I will ask an advisor or other board member.

When attending Zoom or other virtual meetings, I will be thoughtful of others:

- Mute my voice when I am not speaking.
- Raise my hand or use the “hand” emoji when I have a question or comment.
- Turn off my camera if I need to use the restroom.
- I will conduct myself the same at virtual meetings as I would at in-person meetings. Example: no multi-tasking such as driving or doing house work during a virtual meeting.
- Meetings will be conducted in a kind and positive manner. Anyone being disruptive in a meeting will be given one warning and will be removed if the behavior continues.

As a member of People First of Wisconsin, I understand that I represent People First of Wisconsin, not only at meetings but also in the community. I will treat others with respect. People First of Wisconsin does not allow bullying or negative attitudes or comments toward others, in person, virtually, or on social media.

8/13/2022 Approved by Board of Directors

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