

## **Conference of Court Public Information Officers Constitution**

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### **Article I – Name**

The name of this organization shall be the Conference of Court Public Information Officers, herein referred to as the Conference.

### **Article II – Purpose**

The purpose of the Conference is to exchange information, ideas, and best practices for improving and promoting the mission of the court public information officer in educating and informing diverse constituencies about the courts and the rule of law in society. The Conference shall encourage conferences, workshops, seminars, projects, courses, and may sponsor or co-sponsor such events as the membership deems appropriate.

### **Article III – Objectives**

The objectives of the Conference are to provide a professional organization to improve the skill and knowledge required of those performing the duties of court public information officer by identifying and disseminating information regarding best practices and related information of interest to those within the public information field. This objective is achieved:

- through sponsorship or co-sponsorship of conferences, workshops, seminars, projects, courses or other educational programs;
- by serving as a forum for the discussion of problems and successes inherent in the mission of the court PIO;
- by providing its members with a membership listing;
- through the initiation when feasible of newsletters, bulletins, technical publications, electronic bulletin boards, and e-mail listserves;
- in such other ways as the membership deems appropriate.

Recognizing that integrated communication of ideas, concepts, policies and procedures is fundamental to the successful work of any public information officer or public information office, the Conference shall always strive to be in concert with the goals and objectives of the Conference of Chief Justices, Conference of State Court Administrators, National Center for State Courts, and other court-related groups.

## Article IV – Membership

Section 1 – The membership of the Conference shall consist of individuals whose interests are consistent with its objectives and who meet the requirements for membership as provided by this article.

### Section 2 – Types of Members

- a. Active Members. (\$100 fee\*) – Active membership shall be open to all court staff whose duties encompass essential functions of a public information officer as a part of their job, whether they serve as a PIO, communications officer, administrator, or in another capacity with PIO responsibilities. This includes the staff of the National Center for State Courts whose duties encompass the above-mentioned duties. Active members may vote on all CCPIO issues, attend annual conferences, access the CCPIO members-only website, subscribe to the CCPIO listserv, and hold CCPIO elective office.
- b. Retired members (\$50 fee \*) – Retired members may apply to the Board of Directors to qualify as a retired member. Retired members may not vote on CCPIO issues, hold elective office, or access the CCPIO members-only website and listserv unless a waiver has been requested and granted by the Board. Retired memberships shall be subject to periodic review by the Board to ensure accurate membership classification and to avoid professional conflicts of interest.
- c. Life membership (No fee\*) – Life memberships may be awarded by majority vote of the Board to those who have supported the mission of court public information officers in an exemplary manner or to a founding member who has made substantial contributions to the organization and its mission. Life members may not vote on CCPIO issues or hold CCPIO elective office, but may, upon approval by the Board, access the CCPIO members-only website and listserv.
- d. Sponsorships. (Any amount) – Sponsorships shall be open, subject to Board approval, to any unit of government, corporation, association, organization, or individual that supports CCPIO's mission and wishes to contribute financially to its work. Sponsors do not hold membership privileges but will be recognized on the CCPIO website, on the CCPIO listserv, and in annual CCPIO conference materials. Sponsors may attend annual conferences.

\*All fees, cited as of May 2006, subject to revision on recommendation of the Board and affirmation by the voting membership.

Section 3 – Membership Dues. Membership dues and due dates shall be determined by majority vote of the members in good standing and voting.

Section 4 – Membership in the Conference shall not be denied to any individual, and participation in any activity of the Conference shall not be abridged on account of race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identify, religion, socioeconomic status, national origin, or disability. Privileges of membership shall not be otherwise restricted except as determined by the Conference membership.

## **Article V – Board of Directors**

Section 1 – The affairs of the Conference shall be managed by the Board of Directors, hereinafter designated as the “Board”, under such rules as the Board may determine and subject to the specific conditions of this Constitution.

Section 2 – The Board shall consist of the: President, President-elect, Membership Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Web Administrator, and Immediate Past President. They shall be elected by the membership of the Conference as specified herein.

Section 3 – The officers of the Board shall serve terms in office as defined at Article VII, Section 4.

Section 4 – It shall be the duty of the Board to work with the Conference secretariat to plan and make arrangements for the annual meeting, or other meetings of the Conference.

Section 5 - Vacancies to complete an unexpired term of office shall be filled by nomination of the President and approval of the Board.

Section 6 – The president may invite Past Presidents to participate in discussions as non-voting members of the Board.

## **Article VI – Officers**

Section 1 – President

(a)The President shall have general supervision of the Conference affairs and shall preside at the Conference meetings and at meetings of the Board.

(b)The President, with the assistance of other members of the Board or members at large as designated by the President, shall represent the Conference with other interested persons and organizations.

(c)The President shall have exclusive responsibility to serve as spokesperson for the Conference unless that responsibility is otherwise delegated by the President to another conference officer, committee chair, or member. All requests by media, legislative bodies, or other organizations for comment, testimony or other information regarding the Conference shall be directed by any member receiving such inquiries to the President. The President shall either respond directly to such inquires or request appropriate disposition by a delegate chosen for such purpose. In either event, responses to inquiries regarding Conference affairs shall occur in a time frame and in accordance with commonly accepted standards of professionalism.

Section 2 – The President-elect shall assist the President and shall assume the duties of the President when the President is unable to perform these duties. The President-elect shall succeed to the position of the President upon the completion of the President’s term of office, or if the President resigns or is unable to perform the duties of the President.

Section 3 – The Membership Chair shall have the responsibility of recruiting, reviewing, and then forwarding to the Board his/her recommendations for members within the defined membership categories. He/she shall determine whether candidates for Conference membership meet criteria established for such membership within the Conference Constitution. He/she may from time to time recommend through the Board of Directors to the membership such other criteria for Conference membership as it deems proper. Such additional criteria, if approved by the Board of Directors, shall be subject to approval by the Conference membership as prescribed by the Conference Constitution.

Section 3 – The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the National Conference. The Treasurer shall receive all funds paid to the Conference and shall approve payment of all bills incurred by the Conference as approved by the Board. The Treasurer shall prepare an annual

report on the financial affairs of the Conference. The Treasurer with the consent of the Board of Directors may delegate these responsibilities to the secretariat to the Conference.

Section 4 – The Secretary shall prepare minutes of all meetings of the Conference and the Board of Directors and maintain all permanent records. These duties may be delegated with the consent of the Board of Directors to the secretariat to the Conference.

Section 5 – The Webmaster shall serve as the content manager of the CCPIO website and otherwise facilitate posting of CCPIO website materials in concert with the technical person(s) designated by the Board to maintain and update the website. The webmaster may delegate management of sub-directories of the site to such CCPIO members as appropriate (e.g. the membership chair who oversees membership updates.)

Section 6 – Officers and committee members of the Conference shall serve without pay.

### **Article VII – Elections**

Section 1 – A Nominations and Election Committee shall be established to be responsible for nomination of officers and conduct of the election process. The Nominations and Election Committee chairman and members shall be recommended by the President and approved by the Board at least forty-five (45) days prior to the election of officers. The Nominations and Election Committee shall prepare a slate of candidates for open offices and ensure that proposed candidates are willing and able to serve.

Section 2 – Balloting for a slate of officers shall be conducted during the annual meeting. Election results shall be announced and newly elected officers and directors shall be introduced at the annual meeting following the voting.

Section 3 – Officers shall be elected by a majority of members of the Conference in good standing, present, and voting.

Section 4 – All elected positions are for a two-year term that expires at the end of the calendar year, with the President-elect serving the first term as President-elect and the second term as President. The Immediate Past President will continue as an ex officio member of the Board of Directors for one term.

### **Article VIII – Meetings**

Section 1 – Membership

- (a) Meetings of the Conference will be held annually as a minimum. The scheduling of the annual meeting and such other meetings as may be necessary shall be the responsibility of the Board.
- (b) All meetings of the Conference shall be conducted according to the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, except where there is a conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws.
- (c) At meetings of the Conference, a quorum for the conduct of business shall consist of twenty percent of the total membership in good standing at the time and on the date the meeting is held.

Section 2 – Board

- (a) Meetings of the Conference Board will be held as needed. The dates of these meetings and scheduling of any meetings shall be the responsibility of the Board.
- (b) All meetings of the Board shall be conducted according to the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, except where there is a conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws.
- (c) At meetings of the Board, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the total Board.

(d) Meetings of the Board may be conducted via telephone, video conference, or other electronic means as the Board may find necessary.

#### **Article IX – Finances**

Section 1 – The Conference shall be organized as a non-profit organization.

Section 2 – The fiscal year of the Conference shall be from 1 January to 31 December, inclusive. The Board shall approve and establish for each fiscal year a budget of estimated expenditures and receipts.

Section 3 – The Treasurer is authorized and empowered on behalf of the Conference to receive by devise, bequest, donation, or otherwise, either real or personal property, and to hold the same absolutely or in trust, and to invest, reinvest, and manage the same and to apply said property and the income arising there from to the objectives of the Conference. The Treasurer shall also have the power with the Board's approval to allocate funds for the purposes of carrying out the objectives of the Conference.

#### **Article X – Committees**

The Board shall establish standing committees such as Membership, Program, Nominations and Elections, and Constitution Committees, and such other necessary standing and ad hoc committees as it deems appropriate. The President shall appoint committee chairs and committee members, preferably following consultation with the Conference Board.

#### **Article XI – Government**

Section 1 – All questions coming before the Conference, its governing body and committees, shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast of those members in good standing and voting, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution.

Section 2 – Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, vocal or “show-of-hands” voting shall be used in meetings. Ballots may be used upon recommendation of the Board or upon agreement of a majority of the members in good standing, present and voting and ballots shall be used when voting on Conference matters through the U.S. Mail, Federal Express, or similar common carrier. As determined by the Board, electronic mail or other electronic means may be used to conduct voting if a majority of the Board determines that expediency is required to resolve a question or election. When electronic means are used to vote, the Board shall make every feasible effort to assure the security of such votes and their counting.

Section 3 – Policies and procedures defined by the Board require approval by a majority vote of the membership in good standing and voting.

#### **Article XII - Bylaws**

Section 1 – Bylaws are incorporated within this Constitution with the intent that no separate set of bylaws is presently necessary. Bylaws may be created separate from and following adoption of this Constitution at the direction of the membership or the Conference Board. No such bylaws may be in conflict with the Conference Constitution nor may Article XII of this Constitution, regarding bylaws, be changed.

Section 2 – Proposed bylaws shall be considered by the Constitution Committee of the Board which shall report and make recommendations to the membership at large. Proposed bylaws and amendments to bylaws shall be submitted to the entire membership at least forty-five (45) days before the date designated by the Board on which the vote for approval/disapproval will be conducted. Approval of bylaws or amendments to bylaws shall require a simple majority vote of the members in good standing and voting.

Section 3 – The Board may recommend that bylaws be proposed, considered, and adopted on an emergency basis without consideration by the Constitution Committee and without prior notice to the membership at large upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members in good standing and voting. Approval of bylaws or amendments to bylaws considered pursuant to this section shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members in good standing and voting.

### **Article XIII – Amendments to the Constitution**

Section 1 – Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed at the request of (a) majority of the Board, or (b) by written petition of at least two-thirds of the members of the Conference.

Section 2 – Proposed amendments shall be considered by the Constitution Committee of the Board, which shall report and make recommendations to the membership at-large. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the entire membership at least forty-five (45) days before the date designated by the Board on which the vote for approval/disapproval will be conducted.

Section 3 – Approval of Amendments shall require a simple majority vote of the members in good standing and voting.

Section 4 – A review and consideration of update to this Constitution and any bylaws shall be completed every four years after the date the Conference is chartered. The Board shall appoint a Constitution Committee and provide guidance for this planned review and consideration of updating the Constitution and any Bylaws.

### **Article XIV – Dissolution**

Section 1 – The Conference shall only use its funds to accomplish the objectives and purposes specified in this Constitution and no part of its funds shall inure to or be distributed to the members, officers, or directors of the Conference. On dissolution, the net assets remaining after payment of all debts shall within ninety days of dissolution be used for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code as it now exists or as may be amended.

### **Article XV – Inurement**

Section 1 – The Conference is not organized for pecuniary profit, nor shall it have any power to issue certificates of stock or pay dividends, inure, upon dissolution or otherwise, to the private benefit of any member.