



Organizational Documents for your Military Spouse Club: Constitution

An organization's Constitution provides a thorough understanding of how an organization is intended to operate. The Constitution outlines the rules the board of directors must follow. It also details the duties and restrictions of the organization's officers and board members.

Unlike Bylaws, however, the Constitution will typically explain the belief system of the organization and outline the company's guiding principles in serving the public as a 501(c)3, or their members if a 501(c)7.

When creating/re-writing a Constitution for a nonprofit organization, ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws governing nonprofit operations. The Constitution should also reflect the organization's mission and provide a roadmap for governance and decision-making. This alignment ensures that your Constitution supports both compliance and organizational goals.

Remember, a well-implemented Constitution is a living document that guides and strengthens your nonprofit over time.

Segments to Include in a Constitution:

1) Constitution

- a) Article 1 – Name
- b) Article 2 – Purpose and Mandatory Statements
- c) Article 3 – Membership
- d) Article 4 – Officers/Executive Board
- e) Article 5 – Meetings
- f) Article 6 – Board of Directors
- g) Article 7 – Committees
- h) Article 8 – Financial
- i) Article 9 – Parliamentary Authority
- j) Article 10 – Insurance
- k) Article 11 – Elections



- l) Article 12 – Amendments and Revisions
- m) Article 13 – Dissolution

The Constitution itself is going to serve as a legal document, and there are several areas it will need to cover. By including these policies, your Constitution provides clarity on daily operations and establishes a foundation for accountability.

Article 1: Name

- Name and address of the organization.

Article 2: Purpose and Mandatory Statements

The purpose of the organization.

- Detail the mission and goals of the organization: This should include listing any broad objectives the organization has, as well as any activities that may take place that speak to the growth of the organization's operational processes.
- Explain why the organization exists: You will want to include facts and statistics outlining how the nonprofit is serving the public if you are a 501(c)3. If you are a 501(c)7, you need to list your mission in serving your membership. You can include bullet points to outline how your organization is going to meet your objectives. All key information should be included, such as where activities will take place. End this section with a summary of why the organization exists.
- A statement acknowledging that the organization is only allowed to operate with approval from Base/Post/Camp/Station leadership. See each Service's regulations for more details.

Mandatory Statements:

- Section 1: This organization will neither propagate extremist activities, nor advocate violence against others, or the violent overthrow of the Government, will not seek to deprive individuals of their civil rights, and will not engage in any form of partisan political activity as defined by DoDD 1344.10.

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- Section 2: The organization supports equal opportunity and will not discriminate in membership or hiring practices on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, or mental or physical handicap, and will not seek to deprive individuals of their civil rights.
 - Section 3: This organization operates and exists on a military installation only with the consent of the Approval Authority. This consent is contingent upon the organization's compliance with the requirements and conditions of Service Regulation. Failure to comply with cited policies will result in dissolution of the Private Organization (PO). The Approval Authority can revoke the PO's operating authority at any time.
 - Section 4: "THIS IS A NON – FEDERAL ENTITY. IT IS NOT A PART OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE/WAR OR ANY OF ITS COMPONENTS AND IT HAS NO GOVERNMENTAL STATUS."

Article 3: Membership

- Any stipulations that impact membership
- Describe membership details of the organization: This is where you explain who your members are. It will also explain how people can become members. If there are any approval processes taking place, you will need to outline them here. Also, make sure to explain any factors that can disqualify a person from being a member.
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Rights and responsibilities
 - Categories of membership (if any) General, Associate Members, Honorary Members
- Code of Conduct required by each member/volunteer. *The info on the Code of Conduct does not need to be in the Constitution, just that members must follow it. Deeper reference will be in the Bylaws.*
- All disputes will be handled by the process outlined in the Bylaws.

Article 4 – Officers/Executive Board



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- Briefly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for board members and volunteers. More detailed information will be in the Bylaws.
 - Show the structure of the Executive Board and General Board, including the reporting structure.
 - Explain how officers are chosen: Elections will be held for the Executive Board after being added to the slate by the Nomination Committee. General Board members are appointed by the President. Advisors and Honorees are proposed by the president and approved by the Executive Board.
 - State the powers the board has the right to exercise. The General Board has the authority to conduct the business of the organization and, at a minimum, will vote on the following:
 - The Annual Budget and Financial Plan
 - The proposed list of Community Grants
 - The proposed list of Scholarship recipients
 - The type and budgets of Fundraisers to be held
 - Write and approve changes to the Organization's Standard Operating Procedures for every committee
 - Any changes to the Constitution and Bylaws
 - Include how long officers stay in office and provide details as to how they can be removed from their positions and replaced with new officers.
 - Each board member will sign a conflict-of-interest statement requiring board members to disclose any financial or business interests in transactions involving the organization.
 - No part of the net earnings of a section 501(c)(3) organization may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. A private shareholder or individual is a person having a personal and private interest in the activities of the organization.

Article 5: Meetings

- Provide details relating to meetings

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- Outline how many meetings are going to take place and outline which members are required to be present.
 - Include details outlining how the meetings will take place, such as including the use of Robert's Rules of Order.
 - *General Board Meeting will be held once a month*
 - *Executive Board Meetings will be held as needed, called by the President and announced with at least 3 days' notice*
 - Committee meetings will be called as needed to perform their duties. All committee members will be given at least 1 weeks' notice for meetings.

Article 6 – Board of Directors

The organization shall be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of an Executive Board and a General Board.

Section 1: The Executive Board includes the following elected positions:

- *President*
- *Welfare VP*
- *Operational VP*
- *Secretary*
- *Treasurer*

Section 2: Along with non-voting:

- *Advisor,*
- *Honorary President, and*
- *Parliamentarian.*

Section 3: The General Board shall include the following appointed Positions:

- *Publicity*
- *Membership/Reservations*
- *Fundraising*
- *Welfare*
- *Scholarship*
- *Hospitality*



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- *Special Activities/Sub Clubs*
 - *Service Projects*
 - *Webmaster*
 - *Thrift Shop Liaison*
 - *Volunteer Coordinator*

Section 4: The attached Job Description SOP will show specific job duties and expectations for those serving on the Board of Directors

Article 7 – Committees

List the committees and the people who head up each committee

- **Section 1: Standing Committees:** Standing committees are formed each year and have a specific job in fulfilling the organization’s mission. They meet regularly to stay current on the status of actions within their committee.

Community Giving/Welfare Committee: Community Giving Chairman

Scholarship Committee: Scholarship Chairman

Fundraising Committee/Special Events Committee: Fundraising Chairman

- **Section 2: Special Committees:** Special Committees have a one-time purpose and only meet during their required tenure.

Budget Committee: Treasurer

Nominating Committee: Parliamentarian

Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee: Parliamentarian

- **Section 3: Ad Hoc Committees:** Ad Hoc committees are set up for a special and specific purpose. The President decides when an Ad Hoc committee is needed and appoints the Committee Chair and members with the help of the Executive Board

Article 8 – Financial

- Detail protocols for budget approval, expense tracking, and financial audits.

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- This is where you will talk about the bank accounts you have – (like operational and welfare). It will also say the positions that have access to the account.
 - Additionally, it will say that the organization follows a budget that is approved at the beginning of the board year and then re-evaluated at the beginning of the calendar year.
 - You will also state when your fiscal year is.
 - Audit procedures should be stated based on the Service Rules where you are located.

Article 9 – Insurance

- Your Service regulations will state the insurance required and the positions that need to be insured.
- Usually, people who have access to the bank account and/or handle money must be bonded.
- Many clubs are required to have liability insurance when they host events that people attend in person.

Article 10 – Elections/Voting

Outline when and who participates in the elections along with the purpose

- Elections will be held in the spring to elect the Executive Board for the next year.
- A slate will be put forth by a nominating committee, and the general membership will vote at a designated meeting in the spring. Voting may be allowed via electronic means if necessary to conduct the vote.
- Refer to the Nominating Committee and Elections/Voting SOPs for detailed information.
- General Membership will also vote on any amendments to the Constitution or the Bylaws as listed in Article “Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws”.
- Specify how elections are conducted, and votes are tallied, ensuring fairness and transparency. (See Elections/Voting SOPs)



Article 11 – Amendments and Revisions

- List the legal steps that must be taken to make a formal change to your Constitution. This will require a membership vote with some lead time for members to investigate the proposed changes.

Article 12 – Dissolution

- In this article, you will describe the procedures of how the organization will dissolve. It should include things such as:
 - The approval vote quorum to approve the dissolution.
 - How to notify the membership or anyone else that the organization is dissolving.
 - How the payment of any organization’s debts should be handled
 - The disposition of assets details of the organization’s funds and property