

Texas Chess Association

Volunteer Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to cultivate a volunteer system that is responsive to the needs of our members, representative of the diversity of our community and respectful of the resources entrusted to TCA. This policy is intended to supplement, and does not replace, the rules governing volunteers in the TCA Bylaws, other policies and the parliamentary authority of the Association.

2. Definition

Any person who provides material personal services to TCA on a recurring basis without compensation is a volunteer (including board members and persons with positions described in this policy). Volunteers are not agents of TCA unless serving as an officer of TCA or otherwise authorized by the Board of Directors.

3. Operating Committees

The operating committees shall consist of the Events Committee, Development Committee, Public Relations Committee and the Administrative Committee. Operating committees are active, working committees that regularly support the programming and activities of the Association. The rules and duties of the operating committees shall conform to Appendix A and may be further explained in a committee charter.

No person may be the chair of more than one operating committee or a member of more than two operating committees. A board member shall be appointed to each operating committee to serve as a liaison between the Board of Directors and the committee. Other than the chair and board liaison, each committee member shall have a specific position or portfolio of responsibility within the committee. The committee chairs shall be responsible for calling and presiding over committee meetings, assigning duties and roles to committee members and reporting on behalf of the committee as needed. The committee chair shall appoint a secretary to keep minutes of all committee meetings and support the administrative functioning of the committee.

The Board of Directors shall appoint the chairs and members of operating committees. An application shall be posted on the website by August 15 of each year. Applicants may be interviewed if necessary. A principal officer shall be appointed as the chair of an operating committee unless there is no viable alternative. Chairs and members of operating committees shall serve until the end of the next annual membership meeting.

4. Advisory Committees

The following committees shall be designated as advisory committees: Audit, Election, Ethics, Governance, Scholastic and Membership. Advisory committees perform assigned tasks as needed and do not necessarily operate year-round. They primarily exist to study issues referred to them and make recommendations.

The chairs of advisory committees shall recommend a list of committee members to the Board of Directors no later than August 15 of each year. Existing members may only be recommended for reappointment if the member actively participated in the committee during the year. The chairs and members of advisory committees shall serve until the end of the next annual membership meeting.

If the committee chair is not reappointed or a vacancy arises, an application may be posted on the website to fill the position. New members may be added at any time at the recommendation of the committee chair or a board member. Members may express interest in advisory committees in the volunteer form. The chair may appoint a vice chair and/or secretary if needed.

Members of the Audit Committee must have an accounting background (such as a CPA or CMA certificate, internal audit experience, an accounting degree or being an accounting student). Except for the Secretary, candidates in a director election may not serve on the Election Committee.

5. Special Committees

Special committees may be created by the President, the Board of Directors or the membership as needed to address specific, time-bound issues. The purposes and scope of the committee shall be clearly established at the creation of the committee. A special committee may not consider issues unrelated to its mandate.

If a special committee is formed at a membership meeting without further instruction, the committee shall be presumed to be charged with reporting recommendations at the next annual membership meeting and shall dissolve upon the adjournment of that meeting. Other special committees shall endure until issuance of a final report to the Board of Directors (or, if sooner, any deadline specified upon formation).

The authority creating a special committee shall appoint its members and may specify a committee chair. If no chair is listed, the committee shall elect its own chair from amongst itself. The members and chairs of a special committee shall serve until the dissolution of the committee.

6. Council of Advisors

In addition to the members required by the bylaws, the Council of Advisors shall also include ambassadors, expert advisors and youth representatives.

Ambassadors shall be appointed by the Board of Directors for a term expiring at the end of the next annual membership meeting. Each ambassador shall represent a stakeholder group (such as chess clubs, colleges, rural counties, women and girls, tournament directors, parents, military, seniors, etc.). Ambassadors shall be responsible for understanding and communicating the needs of the group represented and collaborating with other volunteers to develop and improve events and programming for the group. Ambassadors may appoint assistants or interest groups to assist them in the conduct of their duties.

The Board of Directors shall appoint expert advisors. Expert advisors shall have professional experience in an area of special importance to TCA (such as business development, accounting, law, etc.). Expert advisors shall serve during the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

Each recipient of the Jim Hollingsworth Memorial Scholarship (or, if more than one recipient was selected in a year, a recipient designated by the Board of Directors) may serve as a youth representative. If a recipient declines or is a councilor in some other capacity, the Board of Directors may appoint a youth representative who is between 16 and 24 years of age. Youth representatives shall serve for a term of three years, expiring at the junior chess meeting. The youth representatives (and any other councilors under 25 years of age) are collectively known as the Youth Council and may execute special projects or initiatives as needed.

Unless otherwise specified by the Board of Directors, regular meetings of the Council of Advisors shall be held on the second Sunday of November, February and May and the first Sunday after the U.S. Open. These meetings shall include reports of officers, discussion of policy changes requiring review of the Council and any other items requested by any councilor.

In addition to the powers conferred by the bylaws, the Council may adopt advisory resolutions expressing the sense of the Council and it may direct that motions be submitted for the advance agenda of membership meetings in its name. The Council may also establish standing rules governing its internal affairs that are consistent with the bylaws and this policy.

7. Regional Directors

Regional directors are the primary advocate for chess in each region. Under the bylaws, they have a general mandate to promote chess within the region as well as specific duties.

Regional directors may organize regional events, conduct fundraisers and submit state championship bids for the benefit of the region. The net profits from such activities shall be donated to a local charity benefiting the region or deposited in a TCA account. If received by TCA, the funds shall be held as restricted funds to be used for activities primarily or exclusively benefiting the chess community of the region. Donations may also be accepted with a similar restriction. Regional directors shall have discretion to use these funds with the approval of the Treasurer in a manner consistent with the tax-exempt status of the Association.

Each regional director shall submit a report to the Board of Directors by August 15 of each year describing their activities as regional director in the fiscal year and proposing a plan of activities for the next year.

The office of regional directors shall terminate at the end of the annual membership meeting, so that each regional director must be annually reappointed to continue serving. Generally, regional directors will be reappointed if they submitted an annual report by the deadline, faithfully performed the duties of the office and are making satisfactory progress in growing chess in the region. If a regional director is not reappointed or a vacancy arises, a new regional director shall be selected as soon as practicable.

8. Member of the Year

The Association shall confer the Member of the Year award upon the volunteer who earns the most points during the awards year. The Member of the Year shall also receive a free life membership, free entry to all events directly organized by TCA for one year (if eligible to participate), a plaque and official merchandise items specified by the President. The award shall be announced at the annual membership meeting.

The President and Vice President shall maintain a list of opportunities to earn points and the points allowed for each activity (such as working as a tournament director, serving as a Delegate, writing articles for Texas Knights, etc.). The awards year shall be defined as the year ending on the last day of the annual Delegates meeting of the calendar year. The year for free entries shall be the following fiscal year, except that only the first Southwest Open after the award year shall be included. If the awardee already has a life membership, the membership shall be given to a person designated by the awardee. The President and Vice President shall not be eligible for the award.

9. General Rules

Committees may adopt committee charters to govern their internal affairs, but all committee charters must be approved by the Board of Directors or the membership. Additional volunteer positions may be created by the Board of Directors or any principal officer. Prizes and awards, compensation for serving as staff at a TCA event, Delegate stipends, fees for writing articles and expense reimbursements are not compensation for the purposes of volunteer status. Expenses may only be reimbursed if receipts are provided.

Annual reports of committees shall be submitted by August 1 of each year and published on the website. A committee may hold an annual workshop before a membership meeting. Workshops shall be open for all voting members and may provide opportunities for gathering membership input on issues that are relevant to the committee. The Board of Directors may call all volunteer meetings occasionally for announcements and discussion of important issues. Workshops and volunteer meetings shall be held by video conference and may take straw polls, but no business shall be transacted at those meetings.

10. Transitional Provisions

Any committees established by the Board of Directors not mentioned in this policy shall be abolished at the end of the 2026 annual membership meeting. The terms of committee members and chairs appointed before the adoption of this policy shall expire at the end of such meeting. The Administrative Committee members shall concurrently serve as the members of the Finance Committee and Recognitions Committee, but the chairs of those committees need not be the same person. Annual reports of committees shall not be required for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Appendix A

Operational Committee Responsibilities

Events Committee

The Events Committee shall be responsible for:

- ❖ Identifying venues for TCA-organized events
- ❖ Determining entry fees, schedules and other details for TCA-organized events
- ❖ Cooperating with the External Affairs Committee to promote TCA events
- ❖ Evaluating proposals to create new tournaments and other events
- ❖ Reviewing bidding guidelines and policies
- ❖ Assisting the Vice President with securing tournament bids as needed

Notwithstanding the committee's functions, the Board of Directors remains the sole authority for awarding tournament bids and approving venue contracts. Members with experience directing or organizing chess tournaments are highly preferred. The Vice President shall be an ex-officio member.

Development Committee

The Development Committee shall be responsible for:

- ❖ Exploring ideas for new programs and initiatives
- ❖ Identifying revenue opportunities
- ❖ Overseeing fundraising efforts
- ❖ Conducting research related to TCA business
- ❖ Engaging with the non-chess Texas population
- ❖ Cultivating relationships with state chapters and other partners
- ❖ Supporting strategic planning
- ❖ Promoting membership growth

The committee chair shall ensure that all donors who contribute at least \$50 (including the purchase of Life Patron memberships) receive a handwritten thank you note. The Treasurer is responsible for tax receipts.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee shall be responsible for:

- ❖ Assisting the Events Committee with events promotion
- ❖ Overseeing official publications of the Association
- ❖ Creating marketing and public relations strategy
- ❖ Developing educational resources
- ❖ Conducting membership surveys
- ❖ Recommending brand identify standards

The Editor of Texas Knights shall be an ex-officio member.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for:

- ❖ Developing the annual budget
- ❖ Selecting annual awards recipients
- ❖ Conducting the Jim Hollingsworth Memorial Scholarship program
- ❖ Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity of TCA activities
- ❖ Improving the effectiveness of operating processes
- ❖ Overseeing website improvements

The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member.