



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**United Nations Association of the United States of America National Council  
Standard Operating Procedures**

**SECTION MAP**

- Section 1: Name**
- Section 2: Composition of the National Council**
- Section 3: Diversity**
- Section 4: Meetings**
- Section 5: Strategic Advising and Leadership**
- Section 6: Programming**
- Section 7: Conflict Resolution**
- Section 8: Vacancies on the National Council**
- Section 9: Quorum and Procedure for Requested Votes**
- Section 10: Election to the National Council**
- Section 11: National Council Officer Election**
- Section 12: Task Forces**
- Section 13: Amendments**
- Section 14: National Office Authority**

**The mission** of the United Nations Association of the United States of America is to inform, inspire and mobilize Americans to support the principles and vital work of the United Nations and to strengthen the United Nations system; to encourage U.S. leadership to work constructively through the United Nations and encourage everyone to achieve the goals of the United Nations Charter; and to educate the American public about the invaluable work of the United Nations, raise funds, and carry out local activities related to the United Nations through its chapters and programs.

**The National Council** is an elected body of volunteer leadership that advises the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), a program of the Better World Fund, Inc. (BWF). Regional Representatives from the 11 UNA-USA regions are elected to the National Council to serve as strategic advisors, mentors, and ambassadors for the UNA-USA movement. Regional Representatives amplify the diverse voices of the regions they represent, and provide essential guidance on core UNA-USA programming, advocacy, and membership initiatives.

While the Council's expertise is instrumental in shaping the organization's direction and mentorship, it is important to note that the National Council is an advisory body; ultimate management and legal governance of UNA-USA are vested in BWF. This structure ensures that the Council can focus its energy on high-level strategy and regional support, while BWF maintains the formal authority to bind the organization and oversee its long-term institutional mission.

**Core Functions of the National Council are:**

- To serve in an advisory capacity to the national office as well as provide input to the national staff, including through National Council meetings, into setting the agenda of key UNA-USA events, including the Global Engagement Summit and the combined UNA-USA Leadership Summit and Annual Meeting of the National Council and UNA-USA membership;
- To identify and mentor champions, including National Council Members, to fulfill the organization's advocacy and educational mission for enhancing the U.S.-UN relationship;

- To serve as liaisons between chapter leaders, members-at-large, and the national office, offering the national office perspectives on grassroots priorities and concerns while assisting UNA-USA with campus and community chapters (both new development and mentorship for those on provisional status); and
- To assist the national office, as requested, in the development and dissemination of policies, programs, and strategic guidance that actively promote UNA-USA membership, advocacy, and educational programs and campaigns, including UNA-USA affinity groups.

**Section 1: Name** The name of the body shall be the UNA-USA National Council (and elected members of the National Council shall be referred to as Regional Representatives).

## **Section 2: Composition of the National Council**

The National Council shall consist of:

1. Regional Representatives from each of the regions elected by the UNA members in good standing in the region, based on the criteria and through the process described below. The minimum age of a National Council member shall be 18 years of age; and
2. The officers of the National Council, including the immediate past chair, if approved by the National Council.

### **As of January 1st of the election year, if a region has:**

- Under 1000 members = two Regional Representatives
- 1000 - 2000 members = three Regional Representatives
- 2000 + members = four Regional Representatives

## **Section 3: Diversity**

National Council composition, elections and all related meetings and/or activities should in principle and practice both reflect and foster diversity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, and disability. UNA-USA emphasizes Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI), rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to promote justice and fight systemic racism, recognizing that true prosperity requires equal opportunity for all, especially women, people identifying as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color BIPOC, and youth, through advocacy, education, and community action.

## **Section 4: Meetings**

The National Council shall have at least quarterly meetings, including during the UNA-USA Leadership Summit. National Council members shall be notified of these meetings in writing or by electronic message at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

Special meetings of the National Council may be called by the Executive Director of UNA-USA in consultation with the Chair of the National Council. The Chair of the National Council may also call a special meeting, when necessary. At least one week prior to the meeting, a written notice of the time, place and agenda should be sent to all members of the National Council.

Regional Representatives should attend the Annual Meeting, held in conjunction with the annual UNA-USA Leadership Summit.

The Executive Director and other representatives of UNA-USA staff shall attend meetings of the National Council and are expected to report and consult, as appropriate, about UNA-USA activities, future plans and priorities, finances, and relations with the Better World Fund and the United Nations Foundation.

## **Section 5: Strategic Advising and Leadership**

National Council members act as the primary bridge between the UNA-USA national office and the grassroots network, including support of UNA-USA chapters, members, Members-at-Large (members not affiliated with a UNA-USA chapter), and Divisions.

A central responsibility of the National Council is to advise on efforts to drive membership growth and development. As such, strategic advising may be coupled with opportunities for working collaboratively with chapter leaders, Members-at-Large, and national UNA-USA staff to help identify promotional opportunities within local communities to increase the presence and awareness of the movement, as well as help identify strategic leads to establish new chapters in high-priority advocacy areas or states with minimal representation.

**Chapter Definition and Support:** A UNA-USA chapter is a group of 25 or more UNA-USA members in good standing, formally recognized by the UNA-USA national office, with elected officers, and bylaws charged with promoting the organization's mission in a specified geographic location. In order to maintain good standing, UNA-USA Chapters must submit Annual Reports by the end of February, meet all federal and state regulations necessary to maintain 501 (c)(3) status – not limited to filing annual 990's, and registering with their respective state's agencies, and comply with the provisions outlined in the UNA-USA Chapter Handbook and the chapter's Affiliation Agreement with UNA-USA. UNA Members in good standing, who are unaffiliated with a Chapter or Division, will be considered Members-at-Large and are eligible to vote for National Council candidates in the Regions in which they live and to serve on the National Council.

Chapters which are unable to meet these requirements will be placed under provisional status, wherein they will be ineligible to receive quarterly membership dues. During this period of time the chapter in question will work alongside UNA-USA's national office to make all adjustments necessary to meet the minimum membership standards and ensure that all legal requirements are met. The national office will determine the health of all chapters by the date of the UNA-USA Annual Meeting. Chapters which are categorized under provisional status will be given a full calendar year to make corrections. Failure to do so within this period of time will result in the revocation of the chapter's charter, use of the UNA-USA name and legal standing as a subordinate organization of UNA-USA. Upon dissolution, all remaining members will continue as Members-at-Large and all properties and funds shall be transferred to the UNA National Headquarters.

In their advisory capacity, Regional Representatives of the National Council may be asked to provide guidance on the geographic jurisdiction and boundaries of chapters to ensure effective regional coverage. Regional Representatives, where practicable, are encouraged to maximize their impact through high-visibility leadership and ambassadorship, which may include serving as guest speaker at chapter events, participating in chapter events to celebrate newly opened chapters, and partnering with chapter leadership to engage with local elected officials to advance UNA-USA advocacy priorities. The National Council may provide mentorship by offering assistance for chapters that are at-risk, on provisional status, or newly-formed to ensure their long-term health and alignment with national UNA-USA goals.

**Regions Definition and Support:** UNA-USA membership shall be divided into eleven geographic regions (New England, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-East, South East, Great Lakes, North Central, South Central, Rocky Mountain, North West, Mid- Pacific, and Southern California). These regions serve to assure geographic diversity on the National Council and may convene Regional Meetings to discuss issues common to the region, share best practices and coordinate activities of mutual benefit.

Regional Representatives should regularly connect with chapter leaders and members (including Members-at-Large) in their region through the monthly National Leadership Call or other media

**Divisions Definition and Support:** UNA-USA Divisions support the activities of UNA-USA Chapters within a designated state, section of a state, or chapters in contiguous states. A Division is expected to help strengthen Chapters in its designated area but does not have authority over those Chapters. Divisions may organize or coordinate programs, projects, advocacy activities and events to promote the mission of UNA-USA and work with Chapters to build their membership. A Division board of directors shall include representatives from the Chapters in its designated area and is responsible for fostering communication among these Chapters. Divisions may elect officers, adopt bylaws, and have a treasury. Divisions must have at least three Chapters in good standing (i.e. not on provisional status or at-risk). No additional Divisions will be established beyond those already in existence.

**Affinity Groups Definition and Support:** UNA-USA Affinity Groups are national networks of UNA members in good standing who agree to come together virtually to educate and advocate for a particular UN topic. Affinity groups may be granted official recognition upon recommendation of the Executive Director in consultation with the National Council.

A Regional Representative may be appointed to serve as an Affinity Group Advisor to the official UNA-USA Affinity Groups. In this capacity, a Regional Representative would serve as the liaison between the Affinity Group and the National Council.

## **Section 6: Programming**

In their advisory capacity, Regional Representatives support national programming by offering constructive feedback on national programs facilitated by UNA-USA headquarters, either through formal channels such as a National Council meeting, or other channels as initiated by UNA-USA staff.

**UN Day:** To fulfill the strategic goal of national alignment and local impact, Regional Representatives will be able to offer feedback on the national UN Day program's topic, format, and speakers. Furthermore, the National Council is responsible for reinforcing chapter recognition of UN Day across each of the 11 regions to ensure widespread participation.

**UNA-USA Awards:** Regional Representatives will have the opportunity to participate in the selection process of the various UNA-USA Awards presented during the annual UNA-USA Leadership Summit, including: (1) Community Chapter of Excellence Award; (2) Collegiate Campus Chapter of Excellence Award; (3) High School Campus Chapter of Excellence Award; (4) Advocate of the Year Award; (5) Young Leader of the Year Award; and the (6) Arnold Goodman Lifetime Achievement Award. The National Council will approve the nominees as a final step in the selection process.

**UNA-USA Youth Observer to the UN:** The National Council may nominate one Regional Representative in good standing to serve on the selection committee for the UNA-USA Youth Observer to the UN. This Regional Representative will participate in the staff-managed process of reviewing applications and conducting interviews to select the next Youth Observer, announced publicly each year on International Youth Day (August 12).

## **Section 7: Conflict Resolution**

The National Council serves as a platform for grassroots feedback, where they may address or hear matters of concern from the general membership. In instances where chapter or local conflicts could not be resolved at the local/regional level, the National Council may assist in hearing the matter to provide guidance or mediation support. In the event of a conflict between a National Council resolution and organizational strategy, legal requirements, or budgetary constraints, the decisions of the UNA-USA national office shall take precedence to ensure alignment with the broader mission of the Better World Fund and the United Nations Foundation.

## **Section 8: Vacancies on the National Council**

The National Office shall be responsible for filling all vacancies that may arise in the National Council. These vacancies include regional representative seats left unfilled following a Regular Election as well as seats vacated in subsequent months and before the next Regular Election. A Special Election to fill regional representative seats left unfilled after a Regular Election, as well as any seats vacated in the first few months following a Regular Election, will be held in January of odd-numbered years. This will be the only Special Election held during the National Council two-year term. A Regional Representative seat(s) left unfilled following a Special Election or subsequently vacated will be filled in the following manner. The currently serving Regional Representative(s) in the region with a vacancy to fill, with the assistance of staff, shall convene a virtual meeting with the region's chapter presidents with the aim of selecting a qualified UNA-USA member to fill the vacant National Council seat. The selection will be made by a vote of the region's presidents. The UNA-USA member selected would have to meet all the eligibility criteria for a National Council Regional Representative (verified by the National Office), would serve out the remainder of the National Council term, and would be eligible to stand for election in the next Regular Election. Should a region's chapter presidents fail to fill a vacant seat, that seat will remain vacant until the next Regular Election.

### **Vacancy Categories:**

1. Due to Residency Requirement:  
National Council members must maintain their primary residence in the United States and within the region they represent for the duration of their term. If a National Council member moves to another region during their term, they become ineligible to continue to serve as a Regional Representative for the region which elected them.
2. Due to loss of "Good Standing"
  - a. If a National Council member becomes non-financial (dues not paid to the National Office within a 60-day period of the renewal date on record at the National Office), that member is considered not in "good standing" and becomes ineligible to continue to serve as a regional representative. That Regional Representative position will be deemed "vacant" and subject to the "vacancies" policy and procedure.
  - b. If a Regional Representative is absent for more than 50% of National Council meetings during a one-year period, they will be considered ineligible to continue to serve as a Regional Representative. That Regional Representative position will be deemed "vacant" and subject to the "vacancies" policy and procedure. Every effort will be made to inform members will in advance if they are at risk of losing standing.
  - c. If a National Council member is involved in any legal dispute, legal charges, or ethical behavior issues that could have adverse impact on the UNA-USA, the Executive Director can deem the member "not in good standing" which can result in the dismissal from or ineligibility of that member to serve on the National Council. Even though allegations are not proof of wrongdoing, a Regional Representative may need to withdraw from the Council until the identified issues are resolved. This designation of "loss of good standing" applies to National Council members as well as chapter and division officers.
3. Due to Death or Resignation:  
If a National Council member resigns, becomes incapacitated, or if their death occurs while in office, that Regional Representative position will be deemed "vacant" and subject to the "vacancies" policy and procedure.

### **Procedure for Addressing Concerns that May Result in Vacancies**

Any determination affecting the standing, removal, or vacancy of a National Council member shall include a written notice of the concern, a reasonable, defined opportunity for the member to respond, review by the National Council Officers in consultation with the UNA Executive Director, and the availability of a secondary review by the UNA Executive Director.

### **Section 9: Quorum and Procedure for Requested Votes**

National Council meetings will most often be virtual. Where applicable and to the extent they are not in conflict with the Standard Operating Procedure, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be generally utilized. Should a vote be requested (examples include but are not limited to: election of officers; a formal though non-binding recommendation to UNA-USA) a quorum of a majority of the National Council will be necessary for the meeting to be considered official and any vote be held; a majority vote will constitute approval for such matters. Scheduled meetings lacking a quorum may still be held and discussions with notes circulated.

### **Section 10: Election to the National Council**

UNA-USA members who are active and in good standing shall elect its National Council in alternate years via an electronic vote (hereinafter the "Vote").

Any Chapter, Division, or individual may nominate a candidate for the National Council, provided that the candidate meets the following minimum requirements. A candidate must:

1. Be a UNA-USA member in good standing for at least one year before the time of nomination;
2. Acknowledge intention to help fulfill all functions of the National Council, including being willing and able to participate in National Council meetings, and to participate as feasible, in special meetings and conference calls (as referenced in Section 4 above).
3. Have served in a local Chapter, Division, Regional, and/or National leadership capacity for at least one full year, or in the case of a Member-at-Large have comparable leadership experience before the time of nomination to serve on the National Council.

**Two months prior to the Vote**, the UNA-USA National Office membership team shall issue an **announcement requesting nominations** for the National Council. Nomination forms and resumes for candidates must be submitted by email one month prior to the vote.

**Two months prior to the UNA-USA Annual Meeting and UNA-USA Leadership Summit voting will commence.** Each member in good standing of UNA-USA shall have access to the nomination form of each candidate from its region. The National Council Regional Representatives shall be elected by a simple majority vote of UNA members, including UNA-USA Members-at-Large, from their regions. No two members shall be elected from the same Chapter. The candidates with the most votes in their respective region will serve on the National Council, subject to meeting the requirements, as stated in Section 2 of this document. Voting shall take place over two weeks and will conclude at least one month prior to the UNA-USA Annual Meeting. If the general vote ends in a tie for the final seat, there will be a run-off between the candidates who tied.

National Council members shall be elected to serve for a two- year term and shall be eligible for re-election for two consecutive additional two- year terms.

### **Section 11: National Council Officer Elections**

Officers of the National Council shall be elected by the National Council and shall be a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Nomination forms shall be submitted to the National Office. Each officer shall be an elected Regional Representative of the National Council in good standing (see Section 8). Each officer should come from a different geographic region. No officer shall be deemed an officer or agent of UNA-USA, Better World Fund, Inc. (BWF), or the United Nations Foundation, Inc., nor shall any such officer have any authority to bind or act on behalf of any of those entities. Each candidate's nomination form will be presented to each member of the National Council who is present at the UNA-USA National Council meeting held at the time of the UNA-USA Leadership Summit and elected by a simple majority of those National Council members.

Any officer vacancies during a term may be filled by a majority vote of the National Council at the next meeting

The National Council Chair shall be elected for two years. Beyond any National Council term(s), the Chair may serve an additional two years as an ex-officio member of the National Council as immediate past Chair if approved by a simple majority vote of the National Council. The Chair, as a facilitator, shall preside at all meetings of the National Council with an agenda provided by the Executive Director after consultations with the Chair. The Chair shall receive input from the National Council and facilitate the sharing of resources, information and knowledge between the National Office and the National Council. The Vice Chair shall serve as Chair when necessary. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the National Council.

### **Section 12: Task Forces**

Upon request from UNA-USA or BWF staff, time-limited task forces for special projects may be established, though these groups shall not serve as standing committees.

### **Section 13: Amendments**

UNA-USA staff shall have the sole right to amend these Standard Operating Procedures and any other membership policies and procedures. UNA-USA staff shall provide the National Council with written notice of any such amendments and consult with National Council members prior to the implementation.

### **Section 14: National Office Authority**

These Standard Operating Procedures and any amendments thereto shall require the prior concurrence of the UNA-USA office. These Standard Operating Procedures shall be subject to the governing documents of UNA-USA and, to the extent they conflict, the governing documents of UNA-USA shall be controlling. The National Council acknowledges that management of UNA-USA is vested in BWF and only BWF or any agents of UNA-USA authorized by BWF shall have the authority to bind or act on behalf of UNA-USA.

### **Standard Operating Procedures adopted June 12, 2011**

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**With the adoption of this document all prior Standing Operating Procedures are repealed and replaced.**

**Effective Date: April 15, 2026**

Respectfully Submitted to National Council March 10, 2026 by Ad Hoc SOP Review Committee (SOPerstars):

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