

Symbiosis Bylaws

Article I. Structure

Symbiosis is an organization composed of Individual Members, Member Organizations, (together, the “Membership”), Working Groups, and a Coordinating Committee.

Section I. Individual Membership

Any individual committed to the values and strategic vision of Symbiosis may register as an Individual Member through our website [sign-up form](#). Membership is not limited to residents of North America. Individual Membership records and contacts shall be maintained by the Welcoming Committee and accessible to the Coordinating Committee. While Individual Membership is open, Individual Members may be removed and temporarily or permanently banned from rejoining the organization in accordance with the process described in Article III for violation of the Symbiosis harassment and grievance policy or upon being found to have an irreconcilable disagreement with the goals and values of Symbiosis.

Section II. Member Organizations

Any local organization engaged in grassroots organizing work aligned with the values and strategic vision of Symbiosis may become a Member Organization of Symbiosis. This alignment is assessed by the Outreach Working Group based on the Member and Partner Organization Criteria document. If the Outreach Working Group determines that an organization seeking to join Symbiosis as a Member Organization is in compliance with these criteria, the Outreach Working Group will make this information available to the Membership via email and Slack. The Membership will then have seven (7) days to put forward a substantiated objection to the recognition of a new Member Organization. Objections from Individual Members must receive a second by another Individual Member, while objections submitted by a current Member Organization will automatically be considered.

If a substantiated objection is submitted within that seven-day period, the Outreach Working Group will compile the arguments put forward in that objection along with its response, and refer the decision to the Membership via the upcoming At-Large Referendum.

Every member of any Member Organization, defined by that Member Organization’s own bylaws, structure, and/or decision-making process, shall receive the full rights of membership as Individual Members of Symbiosis.

Individual Members of Symbiosis may organize themselves into local organizations in their own communities, which may be recognized as Member Organizations through the process described above.

Member Organizations found in irreconcilable disagreement with the mission and values of Symbiosis may be removed via At-Large Referendum.

Section III. Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee is the administrative body of Symbiosis. It is designated with hiring and overseeing staff, coordinating assistance to Working Groups, approving official statements of Symbiosis, formalizing relationships with allied organizations, organizing At-Large Referenda, and managing organization finances.

There are twenty seats on the Coordinating Committee. Twelve of those are elected directly by the Membership. Only Individual Members may run as candidates for the Coordinating Committee. Candidates may draft personal statements of 500 words or less for consideration by the Membership, which shall be circulated prior to the

In Coordinating Committee elections, voters may vote for up to twelve candidates. All Individual Members may vote in Coordinating Committee elections.

The remaining eight seats are reserved for nominations by vote of the Coordinating Committee between elections, requiring approval in At-Large Referenda. In order to accommodate rapid growth and develop shared ownership and control of Symbiosis, these nominations shall be individuals associated with Member Organizations. It is not required that all eight seats receive nominations. Other vacancies, due to resignation or removal of Coordinating Committee members, may be filled with nominations.

At least fifty percent (rounded down) of the seats on the Coordinating Committee must be held by non-male identifying members. This must be taken into account when calculating election outcomes and considering nominations. If male candidates fill half of the seats available, the ranking of vote tallies of remaining candidates to fill remaining seats will only consider non-male candidates.

Furthermore, at least thirty-three percent (rounded down) of the seats on the Coordinating Committee must be held by non-white identifying members. This must be taken into account when calculating election outcomes and considering nominations. If white candidates fill

two-thirds of the seats available, the ranking of vote tallies of remaining candidates to fill remaining seats will only consider non-white candidates.

There will be a single Coordinating Committee election prior to the Summer 2019 Congress. In the event that a new organizational formation does not successfully emerge from the Summer 2019 Congress, Symbiosis Coordinating Committee elections will take place at minimum annually.

Members of the Coordinating Committee are responsible for attending at least half of Coordinating Committee meetings and maintaining communication with the Coordinating Committee. While special accommodations may be determined for scheduling conflicts, failure to uphold the spirit of these responsibilities may result in the Coordinating Committee choosing, by consensus of members present, at a quorum of two thirds (rounded down) to remove a member from their position on the Coordinating Committee. Coordinating Committee meetings shall be chaired on a rotational basis among its members.

Agendas shall be drafted at least three days prior to all scheduled Coordinating Committee meetings by the chair of the upcoming meeting. Agendas may be amended at the start of each meeting. On a rotational basis, members of the Coordinating Committee shall take meeting minutes, which shall include all proposals and decisions made in the meeting. All records from Coordinating Committee meetings must be made promptly available to the Membership.

Section IV. Working Groups

This section pertains to organization-wide Symbiosis Working Groups formed for specific purposes. These are distinguished from any Working Groups formed by Membership Organizations for local purposes, which are formed according to the procedures of those Membership Organizations and are not subject to any Coordinating Committee oversight.

Working Groups are project-oriented formations that may be assembled as organizational needs arise. Working Groups may be proposed by any Individual Member of Symbiosis. Proposed Working Groups must be approved the Coordinating Committee. For approval, a proposed Working Group must have at least one designated coordinator. Larger projects may warrant a pair of coordinators. The Membership shall be notified of newly formed Working Groups and invited to join. Working Group coordinators are responsible for scheduling any necessary Working Group meetings and providing the Coordinating Committee with regular updates on their activities. Working Groups may be temporary. When the project they are tasked with is complete and the Working Group decides they do not have a successor project to replace it, they shall dissolve.

Symbiosis Working Groups pertaining to research, writing, and educational resource generation shall be grouped within Symbiosis as the Symbiosis Research Collective. The Mission Statement of the Symbiosis Research Collective may be found at <https://www.symbiosis-revolution.org/research-collective/>.

The Congress Working Group is of particular centrality to the mission of Symbiosis as a whole, and as such the Coordinating Committee shall exercise more direct oversight over the Congress Working Group than other Working Groups. The Congress Working Group is tasked with the organization and planning of the Summer 2019 Congress. Official decisions and public statements related to organizing this congress must be approved by the Coordinating Committee. Drafts and recommendations regarding these matters may be presented to the Coordinating Committee by the Congress Working Group. The Coordinating Committee may appoint a staff member as a coordinator of the Congress Working Group. Other coordinators may be selected by the Congress Working Group as needed.

Establishment of official partnerships with other organizations for the purposes of organizing the congress will take place through the Outreach Working Group, in accordance with the process laid out in Article I, Section II, and Article I, Section V.

Section V. Partner Organizations

Allied organizations that do not qualify as Member Organizations, which must be local organizations whose organizing work aligns with Symbiosis's values and strategic vision, may instead be Partner Organizations for the purpose of organizing and/or sponsoring the Summer 2019 Congress. Allied local organizations that simply do not wish to be recognized as Symbiosis Member Organizations but are interested in supporting the Summer 2019 Congress may also be recognized as Partner Organizations. While Partner Organizations will primarily collaborate directly with the Congress Working Group, any organization's status as a Partner Organization must first be approved through the Outreach Working Group, based on the Member and Partner Organization Criteria Document.

If the Outreach Working Group determines that an organization seeking to affiliate with Symbiosis as a Partner Organization is in compliance with these criteria, the Outreach Working Group will make this information available to the Membership via email and Slack. The Membership will then have seven (7) days to put forward a substantiated objection to the recognition of a new Partner Organization. Objections from Individual Members must receive a second by another Individual Member, while objections submitted by a current Member Organization will automatically be considered.

If a substantiated objection is submitted within that seven-day period, the Outreach Working Group will compile the arguments put forward in that objection along with its response, and refer the decision to the Membership via the upcoming At-Large Referendum.

Partner Organizations found in irreconcilable disagreement with the mission and values of Symbiosis may be removed via At-Large Referendum.

Section V. Staff

The Coordinating Committee may hire staff to manage various administrative needs of the organization, including facilitating Working Groups, connecting Individual Members with other Symbiosis contacts, assisting in the formation of new Member Organizations, and acting as an advisor for local organizing.

Staff members may not also hold voting seats on the Coordinating Committee, but are entitled to be present and participate in discussion in Coordinating Committee meetings.

The wages and terms of employment are to be settled by negotiation with the Coordinating Committee. They must be approved the Coordinating Committee.

Article II. Decision-Making

Section I. Coordinating Committee

The decision-making powers reserved for the Coordinating Committee are as follows: the nomination of new Coordinating Committee members for reserved or vacant seats, funding allocations, approving new Working Groups, hiring staff and determining their priorities and conditions of employment, approving organization statements, putting forward measures for approval by the Membership through At-Large Referenda, and administrative tasks. The Coordinating Committee must have a quorum of 60% (rounded up) of its members present in order to pass decisions.

The Coordinating Committee shall make decisions through modified consensus. Each decision shall require a discussion in attempt to reach consensus, with all opposing parties given an opportunity to voice their positions and objections. The chair may assist this process through “temperature check” non-binding votes. If full consensus is not reached following a timely discussion, any member of the Coordinating Committee may make a motion to call the question, which requires a second and a two-thirds majority vote in favor of ending discussion and voting

on the question. Support of at least a two-thirds majority is required for passage of all Coordinating Committee decisions.

Procedural matters including amendment of agendas, approving agendas, scheduling future meetings, recognizing future meeting chairs, and adjournment of a meeting are exceptions, and shall require a simple majority for passage, and while some discussion may be warranted, attempting to achieve consensus is not necessary. Time shall be allotted for amending and approving the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.

Section II. At-Large Referenda

On a recurring monthly basis, the Coordinating Committee will arrange for an At-Large Referendum across the entire organization. At-Large Referenda are used to secure approval for the following essential organization-wide decisions:

1. Recognition of a new Member Organization following a formal objection during the seven-day review period;
2. Recognition of a new Partner Organization following a formal objection during the seven-day review period;
3. Removing recognition of Member Organizations;
4. Removing recognition of Partner Organizations;
5. Seating new members of the Coordinating Committee nominated by the current Coordinating Committee;
6. Amending the bylaws;
7. Dissolving or merging Symbiosis into a new confederation, network, or organization emerging from the Summer 2019 Congress; and
8. Any other potential decision that the Coordinating Committee determines to require further democratic approval to move forward (for instance, establishing membership dues). Once the Coordinating Committee has referred a question to an At-Large Referendum, it must be successfully passed to be implemented.

A period of the last two weeks of every month shall be allocated for online and in-person discussion of the questions on the At-Large Referendum ballot and for voting. Multiple measures may be up for a vote simultaneously in an At-Large Referendum. During this two-week period, the Coordinating Committee shall ensure digital spaces for discussion amongst the Membership and may authorize the distribution of opinions for and against the measure(s). For a measure to pass, the following conditions must be met: a majority ($\frac{1}{2}$) of Individual Members who cast votes must approve the measure, and a supermajority ($\frac{2}{3}$) of Member Organizations who reach a decision must approve the measure by the standards of their own bylaws. There is no quorum for

At-Large Referenda, either for the participation of Individual Members or Member Organizations.

Initiatives (Member-initiated referenda) may be placed on an At-Large Referendum ballot by petition when a given proposal has received the signed support of ten percent of Individual Members or twenty percent of Member Organizations.

Article III. Grievance Proceeding/Conflict Resolution

The purpose of this section is to lay out conflict resolution within Symbiosis and make clear collective norms of harm reduction, conflict resolution, and violence prevention, as well as identify where responsibilities fall for these issues across the wider confederation. Grievance and conflict resolution policy are under development by the Conflict Support Working Group.

Section I. Collective Norms

These norms are held as values for all Individual Members and Member Organizations to uphold and strive for in interpersonal interactions. They are as follows:

1. Respect for self, each other, and the organization;
2. Assumption of good faith;
3. Care for all parties involved;
4. Minimizing the emotional burden on victims/survivors of violence;
5. Responsibility for both oneself and the health of the organization;
6. Prevention of harm through addressing issues proactively;
7. Honesty;
8. Understanding and working through the harm done; and
9. Fluidity and responsiveness to the needs of the situation.

Section II. Responsibilities for Harm Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Adjudication

Responsibilities that rest with Symbiosis organizers and Symbiosis as a whole.

1. Resolving intergroup conflict, if and as it arises, on a case-by-case basis.
2. Providing resources on conflict resolution (the “Conflict Resolution Primer”) to member groups.
3. Providing volunteer mediators, if needed and available, for conflicts within member organizations.
4. Providing trainings and workshops on conflict resolution in conjunction with member organizations at the 2019 Congress.

Responsibilities that rest with Member Organizations.

1. Addressing, preventing and resolving harm and conflict within the organization.
2. Adopting a conflict resolution and sexual violence policy and/or list of practices.
3. Alerting Symbiosis as a whole and other member organizations to instances of interpersonal violence that result in an individual being barred from involvement within that organization.
4. Determining practices and stances on the involvement of law enforcement in conflict resolution and instances of violence.

Section III. Sexual Violence

In recognizing the pervasive effects of sexual violence, our approach to these cases remains distinct from other forms of grievance or conflict. We expect all member groups to address sexual violence in particular, above and beyond conflict resolution, with an emphasis on minimizing the emotional burden placed on survivors.

We recommend that when an instance of sexual violence is reported, the perpetrator named should step back from organizing for at least the duration of the resolution process, unless requested otherwise by the survivor.

Section IV. Statement on Responsiveness

Conflict resolution must remain responsive to the needs and conditions of unique contexts. In keeping with this belief, all Symbiosis conflict resolution policy is subject to ongoing feedback, revision, addition, and change as needed.

Article IV. Amendment to the Bylaws

The bylaws of Symbiosis may be amended by the At-Large Referendum process (Article II Section II), initiated by the Membership or by the Coordinating Committee.