

CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

Adopted February 1937

Amended January 2026

	Page Number
PREAMBLE	2
ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND OBJECTIVES	2
Article 1.1 Name of the Organization	2
Article 1.2 Objectives of the Organization	2
ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERSHIP AND NONDISCRIMINATION	3
Article 2.1 No Discrimination	3
Article 2.2 Chapters, Law Student Chapters, and At-Large Membership	4
Article 2.3 Membership Dues	4
ARTICLE 3 - ORGANIZATION	4
Article 3.1 Geographic Chapters	4
Article 3.2 Regions	4
Article 3.3 Definition of Chapter	4
Article 3.4 Denial of Chapter Charter Application	4
Article 3.5 Chapter Autonomy Subject to Constitution and Bylaws	4
Article 3.6 Authorization to Use NLG Name	5
Article 3.7 Interests of Constituent Groups	5
ARTICLE 4 - NATIONAL CONVENTION	5
ARTICLE 5 - OFFICERS AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	5
Article 5.1 Composition of National Executive Committee (NEC)	5
Article 5.2 Election of the National Executive Committee	6
Article 5.3 Terms of Office for Officers	6
Article 5.3.1 Temporary Amendment to Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect Terms of office	6
Article 5.4 Terms of Office for Regional Vice Presidents	6
Article 5.5 Selection and Terms of Office for Project and Committee Representatives	
Article 5.6 Duties of National Executive Committee	6
Article 5.7 Duties of Officers	6
Article 5.8 Executive Council Actions Between Meetings	6
Article 5.9 Procedure to Fill NEC Vacancies	7
Article 5.10 Removal from Office	7
Article 5.11 Travel Expenses	
Article 5.12 EC and NEC Meetings	8
ARTICLE 6 - ELECTIONS	10

ARTICLE 7 - DISCIPLINE	10
Article 7.1 Chapter Censure	10
Article 7.2 Chapter Charter Revocation	10
Article 7.3 Service of Charges and Opportunity to be Heard	10
Article 7.4 Local Chapter Autonomy to Discipline	10
Article 7.5 Member Censure, Suspension or Expulsion	10
ARTICLE 8 - UNION MEMBERSHIP	10
ARTICLE 9 - BYLAWS MAY BE ADOPTED AND AMENDED	10
ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENTS	11
ARTICLE 11 - SAVINGS AND SEVERABILITY	11

PREAMBLE

The National Lawyers Guild is an association dedicated to the need for basic change in the structure of our political and economic system. We seek to unite the lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers of America in an organization which shall function as an effective political and social force in the service of the people, to the end that human rights and the rights of ecosystems shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests.

Our aim is to bring together all those who regard adjustments to new conditions as more important than the veneration of precedent; who recognize the importance of safeguarding and extending the rights of workers, women, farmers, and minority groups upon whom the welfare of the entire nation depends; who seek actively to eliminate racism; who work to maintain and protect our civil rights and liberties in the face of persistent attacks upon them; and who look upon the law as an instrument for the protection of the people, rather than for their repression.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND OBJECTIVES

Article 1.1 Name of the Organization - shall be the National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

Article 1.2 Objectives of the Organization - shall be:

- (a) To aid in making the United States and the State Constitutions and law and the administrative and judicial agencies of government responsive to the will of the American people;
- (b) To protect and foster our democratic institutions and civil rights and liberties of all people;
- (c) To aid in the establishment of governmental and professional agencies to supply adequate legal services to all who are in need and cannot obtain it;
- (d) To promote justice in the administration of the law;

- (e) To aid in the adoption of laws for the economic and social welfare of the people;
- (f) To keep the people informed upon legal matters affecting the public interest;
- (g) To encourage, in the study of law, a consideration of the social and economic aspects of the law;
- (h) To improve the ethical standards which must guide the lawyer in the performance of his or her professional and social duties; and
- (i) To promote world unity through collaboration among the Bars of members of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP AND NONDISCRIMINATION

Article 2.1 No Discrimination - Upon application, the following persons who agree with the objectives of the organization as set forth herein, shall be admitted to membership without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, color, race, religions or political belief or affiliation, formal educational level, or condition of restraint within any institution:

- (a) Lawyers, any person who at the time of application for membership is authorized to practice law anywhere;
- (b) Law students, any person who attends law school. A law student member may retain that membership status for one year following graduation or until he or she become eligible for another membership category, whichever comes first;
- (c) Legal workers, any person who is currently working, or who has worked, or who is training to work, for pay or as a volunteer, in any office, collective or other institution, which has as its primary function the provision OR administration of legal services, information or education; or who, as an individual, provides or administers legal services, information, or education as a major component of their paid or volunteer work work; and
- (d) Jailhouse lawyers, any person who is incarcerated in a jail or prison and who is regularly engaged in providing legal services to other prisoners. A jailhouse lawyer member may retain that membership status for one year following release from incarceration or until he or she become eligible for another membership category, whichever comes first.

No member or other person qualified to participate (including, for public events, members of the public) shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the organization based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, color, race, religion or political belief or affiliation, disability, formal educational level, or condition of restraint within any institution.

Article 2.2 Chapters, Law Student Chapters, and At-Large Membership

- (a) Wherever a chapter exists, membership shall be through such chapter. A Chapter Charter is the official recognition of a local chapter by the national organization. Any NLG Chapter that

otherwise meets the requirements of a Chapter in the NLG Constitution and Bylaws as of January 1, 2022, shall receive a Chapter Charter, if it does not already have one. The Chapter Charter shall have effect on January 1, 2022. Any new chapter after January 1, 2022 will need to apply for a charter through the National Executive Committee.

(b) Where there exist multiple, non-student chapters, in overlapping geographic regions, members may self-determine chapter affiliation.

(c) Where other relevant circumstances exist, a member of a non-student chapter may be permitted to self-determine chapter affiliation, including the option to be a member-at-large. If a member wishes to pursue this option, they must petition the NLG National Office, who will approve or deny the member's request.

(d) Law students shall be concurrent members of their law student chapter and full voting members of their local non-student chapter.

(e) Where there is no organized chapter, membership shall be through direct affiliation with the national organization. Such persons shall be known as members-at-large. Jailhouse lawyers shall be members-at-large.

Article 2.3 Membership Dues - shall be as provided in the By-laws.

ARTICLE 3 - ORGANIZATION

Article 3.1 Geographic Chapters - The normal unit of organization shall be the chapter consisting of the members in a reasonable geographic area or attending a particular law school. Disagreement about what constitutes a reasonable geographic area shall be resolved by the NLG National Office.

Article 3.2 Regions - Each chapter and at-large member shall be a member of one region. A region shall consist of designated states (including the District of Columbia) or parts thereof, grouped together. The number and boundaries of geographic regions shall be determined by the National Executive Committee. Each region shall be represented by one Regional Representative.

Article 3.3 Definition of Chapter – Eight or more members of the National Lawyers Guild in a reasonable geographic area will be considered to be a chapter for voting purposes under the delegate system. Chapters are bound to adhere to the Constitution and Bylaws of the national organization. Disagreement about what constitutes a chapter shall be resolved by the NEC.

Article 3.4 Denial of Chapter Application – The NLG National Office shall not recognize a new chapter in the same geographic area in which a chapter already exists without the consent of such existing chapter.

Article 3.5 Chapter Autonomy Subject to Constitution and Bylaws - Local chapters shall have complete autonomy, subject only to the provisions of the National Constitution and Bylaws, to the referendum decision of the national membership, and to the decisions of a National Convention, or the National Executive Committee. Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, each local chapter shall have complete autonomy concerning all matters as shall in its discretion

be necessary to maintenance of its good standing with its respective integrated State Bar Association.

Article 3.6 Authorization to Use NLG Name - No chapter or any committee of any chapter or any groups of members-at-large shall publish or publicize any report or statement as, or purporting to be a report or statement of the National Lawyers Guild without the authorization or approval of the National Office.

Article 3.7 Interests of Constituent Groups - The interests of law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers shall each be represented within the National Lawyers Guild by a national committee, project, or task force selected by mail ballot of all members of that constituent group or (in the case of law students and legal workers) by the members of that constituent group in attendance at a national convention. If no existing national committee, project, or task force claims to represent a constituent group, the NEC may designate a committee, project, or task force to represent the constituent group until the next national convention or until a mail ballot can be conducted. If more than one national committee, project, or task force claims to represent the interests of the same constituent group, the NEC shall recognize one of the committees, projects, or task forces to represent the interests of that constituent group until the next national convention or until a mail or electronic ballot can be conducted.

ARTICLE 4 - NATIONAL CONVENTION

The highest governing authority of the organization shall be its national convention. The Bylaws shall establish that in procedures for the election of national officers, amending this Constitution and other votes taken at the national convention based upon the principle that democratic decision-making requires that each dues paying member and member of the National Office staff of the National Lawyers Guild have the ability to vote for national officers and constitutional amendments, regardless of whether s/he personally attends the Convention and that each member shall be entitled to one vote. The Bylaws shall also establish procedures for voting on other resolutions at the national convention in the manner that best serves the needs of the national organization.

ARTICLE 5 - OFFICERS AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Article 5.1 Composition of National Executive Committee (NEC) - The organization shall be governed by a board of directors, known as the National Executive Committee, composed of the following: a President (with President elect every third year); a Vice President; a Secretary; a Treasurer; two National Law Student Vice Presidents, a National Legal Worker Vice President, a Jailhouse Lawyer Vice President, a Regional Representative from each region, the National Office (NO) Executive Director, a National Office staff representative ((either a member of staff or representative of the staff's choosing), two representatives from the United People of Color Caucus, two representatives from the Queer Caucus, and one representative from up to eight NLG projects and national committees in addition to the TUPOCC and QC representatives. Each of these members shall have one vote except for national office staff, which shall have two votes and may be placed by either a member of staff or a representative of the staff's choosing.

Article 5.2 Election of the National Executive Committee:

- a. The President, Treasurer, Vice President, and Secretary shall be elected by the National Convention as provided herein.
- b. The National Law Student Vice Presidents shall be elected by vote of the law student members attending the national convention or by mail or electronic ballot of all law student members of the organization, such ballot to be conducted after the national convention. The election shall be conducted by the Law Student Caucus or such other committee, project or task force as may be designated to represent the interests of law students.

Article 5.3 Terms of Office for Officers - The term of office for President, Treasurer, and Secretary shall be three years. The term of office for all other members of the NEC shall be two years.

Article 5.4 Terms of Office for Regional Representatives. Each Regional Representative shall serve for the term prescribed in the bylaws of their region or, if the bylaws are silent, for a term of two years.

Article 5.5 Selection and Terms of Office for Project and Committee Representatives – Committees, projects, and additional caucuses other than those with guaranteed seats on the NEC shall be selected from those that submit applications. Up to eight additional committees, projects, and caucuses shall then be selected as specified in the Bylaws by vote of the national membership for seats on the NEC as part of the existing post-convention voting.

Article 5.6 Duties of National Executive Committee - The National Executive Committee shall govern the organization. The NEC is the highest decision-making authority in the NLG outside of the National Convention. All National Executive Committee decisions are reviewable by the national convention.

Article 5.7 Duties of Officers - The duties of all officers shall be defined by the Bylaws, by resolution of the national convention and by the National Executive Committee, except that the duties of the Regional Representatives may be further defined by their respective regions.

Article 5.8 Executive Council Actions Between Meetings - The Executive Officers and the Executive Director are authorized -- as the Executive Council (EC) -- to govern the business of the organization between meetings of the National Executive Committee and to take any action on behalf of the organization that the full National Executive Committee is entitled to take. "Executive Officers" refers to the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, TUPOCC senior co-chair, Legal Worker Vice-President, and the senior National Student Vice President. The national officers shall report to the full National Executive Committee all actions taken by the Executive Council between meetings; important decisions shall be reported within 15 days. All EC decisions are reviewable by the NEC.

Article 5.9 Procedure to Fill NEC Vacancies:

- a) In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, Treasurer, Secretary, or Vice President, the remaining National Executive Committee members or the Executive Council shall appoint a replacement who shall serve until the next national convention, when the remainder of the vacant term shall be filled by election.

b. The office of senior TUPOCC co-chair shall be filled by The United People of Color Caucus, and no other committee, project, or task force may be designated to represent the interests of Black, Indigenous, People of Color members in accordance with the Alabama Manifesto. As such, if TUPOCC bylaws make no provision for filling a vacancy or if a vacancy is not filled within 60 days, the National Executive Committee shall fill the vacancy during the next election of TUPOCC officers by its membership and the remainder of the term shall remain vacant until such time.

c. The office of National Law Student Vice President shall be filled by the Law Student Caucus or such other committee, project or task force as may be designated to represent the interests of law student members, in accordance with its bylaws. If its bylaws make no provision for filling a vacancy, or if a vacancy is not filled within 60 days, the National Executive Committee shall appoint a law student member to fill the office until the next national convention, when the remainder of the vacant term shall be filled by election.

d. The office of National Legal Worker Vice President shall be filled by the Legal Worker Caucus, or such other committee, project or task force as may be designated to represent the interests of legal worker members, in accordance with its bylaws. If its bylaws make no provision for filling a vacancy, or if a vacancy is not filled within 60 days, the National Executive Committee shall appoint a legal worker member to fill the office until the next national convention, when the remainder of the vacant term shall be filled by election

e. The office of National Jailhouse Lawyer Vice President shall be filled by the Prison Law Project, or such other committee, project or task force as may be designated to represent the interests of jailhouse lawyer members, in accordance with its bylaws. If its bylaws make no provision for filling a vacancy, or if a vacancy is not filled within 60 days, the National Executive Committee shall appoint a jailhouse lawyer member to fill the office until such time as an election by mail ballot can be conducted to fill the remainder of the vacant term.

f. The offices of Regional Representatives shall be filled as required by the respective regional bylaws. If the regional bylaws make no provision for filling a vacancy, or if a vacancy is not filled by the region within 60 days, the National Executive Committee shall appoint a member of the region to fill the office until the next election, when the remainder of the vacant term shall be filled by election.

g. A project, committee, task force, or caucus representative vacancy shall be filled by the entity. If the entity does not fill the vacancy within 60 days, the National Executive Committee may designate another entity to appoint a representative to the National Executive Committee.

Article 5.10: Removal from Office

a) Suspension for Failure to Engage - Upon 14 days advance notice of the meeting at which the vote shall occur, any member of the National Executive Committee may be suspended from office by a vote of two thirds of the remaining National Executive Committee members upon the occurrence of either of the following: unexcused failure to attend two consecutive quarterly meetings of the National Executive Committee, and/or failure to complete tasks assigned by the National Executive Committee within a reasonable amount of time, except that the National Jailhouse Lawyer Vice President shall not be suspended for failure to attend meetings.

b) Suspension for Just Cause - In addition, members of the Executive Council and the National Executive Committee may be immediately suspended until the next convention for other reasons that constitute just cause by a vote of two thirds of the remaining National Executive Committee members. Just cause shall include, but is not limited to, a violation of the Constitution or conduct inconsistent with the aims and purposes of the organization.

c) Removal Procedures

i) Executive Council Members: Following a vote to suspend a member of the EC, the remaining NEC members must inform the general membership of the Executive Council member's suspension, along with an explanation for its decision, and set a date for the general membership to vote on removing or reinstating the Executive Council member within thirty (30) calendar days of the NEC's vote to suspend. The vote for removal must be supported by a simple majority. If the vote for removal is not adopted by the membership, the EC member must be reinstated immediately.

ii) National Executive Committee Members: Following a vote to suspend a member of the NEC (who is not a member of the Executive Council), the remaining NEC members must inform the body of members who elected/appointed the suspended NEC member (the "impacted members") of that individual's suspension, along with an explanation for its decision, and set a date for the impacted members to vote on removal of the NEC member within thirty (30) calendar days of the NEC's vote to suspend. The vote for removal must be supported by a simple majority. If the vote for removal is not adopted by the impacted members, the NEC member must be reinstated immediately.

iii) Members at large shall have the ability to call for the removal of a member of the NEC or EC by submitting a resolution during the annual convention.

d) Vacancy - Any vacancy created by the removal of an elected National Executive Committee or Executive Council member shall be filled as provided herein.

Article 5.11 Travel Expenses - Officers shall pay their own transportation expenses to attend a National Executive Committee meeting at the national convention. The organization shall pay the non-local land, rail or air travel expenses of the President, Treasurer, Vice-President, Secretary, President-Elect, SNVP, and LWVP to enable them to attend up to three additional National Executive Committee meetings per year. Each region shall pay the same expenses for its Regional Representative. Projects, committees, caucuses, projects, and task forces shall pay the travel expenses of their National Executive Committee representatives.

Article 5.12: EC and NEC Meetings

(a) Conduct. All EC and NEC members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Constitution, the aims and purposes of the organization, and procedures agreed upon by the EC or NEC respectively.

(b) Meeting Frequency and Notice. The NEC shall meet at least quarterly, including at least once at the national convention, and at such other times as the NEC deems necessary to conduct the business of the organization. Ad hoc NEC meetings may be scheduled by the President or written agreement

of at least 25% of active NEC members and, once scheduled, NEC meetings may only be cancelled by written agreement of a majority of NEC members. NEC members shall receive at least one week's notice prior to a NEC meeting. The EC shall meet as often as needed to conduct the business of the organization between NEC meetings. The EC shall notify the NEC of all EC meetings prior to or within a reasonable amount of time following the meeting. Meeting agendas and the physical or digital location of the meeting will be circulated at least 48 hours before each meeting.

(c) Open Meetings. Attendance of NEC meetings shall be open to all members except when the NEC enters Executive Session. EC meetings shall be open to all NEC members. Information on how to attend NEC Meetings shall be readily available to members in good standing at least one week in advance of the meeting.

(d) Minutes. Minutes will be submitted to the EC or NEC respectively by the Secretary and approved by the EC or NEC respectively within a reasonable time following the meeting. Approved minutes will be posted and made readily available to members in good standing within one month of the meeting.

(e) Voting. Unless otherwise stated in the Constitution, all decisions of the NEC shall be made by majority vote of the entire NEC. EC and NEC members may vote by proxy. All votes shall be on the record and meeting minutes shall include information about how each EC or NEC member voted.

(f) Quorum. Attendance of a simple majority of the EC or NEC members then serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the EC or NEC, respectively, except that votes requiring a two thirds majority of the NEC shall require a quorum of two thirds of NEC members then serving.

(g) Executive Session. The EC or NEC may hold an executive session, i.e. a session closed to everyone but the EC or NEC members respectively, by a vote of a majority of EC or NEC members in attendance respectively. Executive Session may be called only to discuss the following:

- (i) Employment/labor issues of any past, present or prospective employee, including personnel matters, such as performance evaluations, compensation, or disciplinary actions;
- (ii) Information, strategy and negotiation session for collective bargaining agreements or labor relations and arbitration;
- (iii) Litigation or potential litigation matters, including an attorney or other professional advisor;
- (iv) Sensitive personal problems and disputes with members;
- (v) Discussing crisis situations and security arrangements where confidentiality is needed.

The EC and/or NEC must document which of the above articles applies to the Executive Session, and such documentation must be kept alongside any other meeting minutes, which must be readily accessible by members upon request. Notwithstanding the foregoing, however, voting on such matters shall not take place in executive session.

ARTICLE 6 - ELECTIONS

All officers, delegates, and members of committees, whether of any local or national organization, shall be elected by a majority vote unless such local or national organization shall provide a different method of voting.

ARTICLE 7 - DISCIPLINE

Article 7.1 Chapter Censure - The National Executive Committee may recommend by a vote of two thirds of its members, the censure of any chapter for violations of the Constitution or for conduct inconsistent with the aims and purposes of the organization. Such action shall become a resolution of censure if ratified by a two thirds vote of the next National Convention. In the event that the National Executive Committee determines that a threat—internal or external—to the organization exists that must be dealt with sooner than the next annual convention, a vote of the membership shall be taken via the same means used for votes following annual conventions.

Article 7.2 Chapter Charter Revocation - The National Executive Committee may recommend by a vote of two thirds of its members, the revocation of the charter of any chapter. Such action shall become a revocation if ratified by a two thirds vote of the next National Convention. In the event that the National Executive Committee determines that a threat—internal or external—to the organization exists that must be dealt with sooner than the next annual convention, a vote of the membership shall be taken via the same means used for votes following annual conventions.

Article 7.3 Service of Charges and Opportunity to be Heard - No recommendation of censure or charter revocation shall be voted on by the National Executive Committee except after service of charges in writing and a reasonable opportunity for the chapter to be heard. Nor shall a recommendation of censure or charter revocation be ratified by the National Convention except after service of charges in writing at least one month prior to the vote on the recommendation and a reasonable opportunity to be heard before the National Convention. In the event that the National Executive Committee determines that a threat—internal or external—to the organization exists that must be dealt with sooner than the next annual convention, a vote of the membership shall not be taken except after service of charges in writing at least one month prior to the vote on the recommendation and a reasonable opportunity for the chapter to be heard by the membership before the vote.

Article 7.4 Local Chapter Autonomy to Discipline - Local chapters shall have complete autonomy with respect to the disciplining of their own members for violation of this Constitution or Bylaws or the local constitution or bylaws, but only after service of charges in writing and a reasonable opportunity for the member to be heard and subject to appeal to the National Convention. Any member who has been suspended or removed from membership in a local chapter may apply for membership-at-large, which application may be granted at the discretion of the National Executive Committee. In the event that the NEC determines that a threat—internal or external – to the organization exists that must be dealt with sooner than the next annual convention, a vote of the membership shall be taken via the same means used for votes following annual conventions.

Article 7.5 Member Censure, Suspension or Expulsion - The National Executive Committee may recommend, by a vote of two thirds of its members, the censure, suspension, or expulsion of any

member-at-large for a violation of the Constitution or conduct inconsistent with the aims and purposes of the organization. Such action shall become a resolution of censure, suspension, or expulsion if ratified by a two thirds vote of the Convention at its next meeting. No recommendation of censure, suspension, or expulsion shall be voted on by the National Executive Committee except after service of charges in writing and a reasonable opportunity to be heard. Nor shall a recommendation of censure, suspension or expulsion be ratified by the Convention except after service of charges at least one month prior to the vote on the recommendation and a reasonable opportunity for the member to be heard before the National Convention. In the event that the NEC determines that a threat— internal or external—to the organization exists that must be dealt with sooner than the next annual convention, a vote of the membership shall be taken via the same means used for votes following annual conventions. In that event, a vote of the membership shall not be taken except after service of charges in writing at least one month prior to the vote on the recommendation and a reasonable opportunity for the member to be heard by the membership before the vote.

ARTICLE 8 - UNION MEMBERSHIP

All non-managerial employees of the National Lawyers Guild on a National Committee, Project, Regional or Local level shall within thirty days of their being hired, become part of whatever union is the recognized collective bargaining agent for Lawyers Guild workers at the time of the employee's hiring. All non-managerial employees of the National Lawyers Guild will be covered by applicable portions of any collective bargaining agreement in existence at the time of their being hired, from the date of hiring.

ARTICLE 9 - BYLAWS MAY BE ADOPTED AND AMENDED

Bylaws not inconsistent with this Constitution may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the National Convention.

ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the National Convention, consistent with voting procedures in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE 11 - SAVINGS AND SEVERABILITY

In the event that any court or authority of competent jurisdiction were to declare null, void, or unenforceable, any provision or provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws as written or applied, all other unaffected provisions of this Constitution and Bylaws shall remain in full force and effect.