

Bylaws

The Giving Circle of HOPE

Article I. Mission/Purpose

The Giving Circle of HOPE provides assistance to people in need, and funds to organizations that serve them, in Northern Virginia.

Section 1.01 Goals

The goals of the Giving Circle of HOPE (the "Circle") are to:

- (a) Make a difference in the community by contributing time, talents, and monetary resources
- (b) Encourage community among ourselves and those we serve
- (c) Educate and increase awareness of local needs
- (d) Encourage self-sufficiency and well-being among those in need
- (e) Promote volunteerism and effective philanthropy
- (f) Build a network that is a catalyst for positive change

Article II. Name

The Giving Circle of HOPE (Helping Other People Everyday) is the official name of the organization.

Article III. Sponsor

The Circle is a component fund of the Northern Virginia Community Foundation (NVCF) with all the rights and benefits therein; including 501c3 status, tax reporting, liability insurance, investment of funds, and legal representation.

Article IV. Membership

Membership is open to all people who wish to further the mission and goals of the Circle through financial support and/or participation in service projects. Members shall be defined as those who complete a registration form and file it with the Circle.

Section 4.01 Member categories

There are two member categories:

- (a) **Voting** – Members who contribute \$365 or more annually to the Circle
- (b) **Service** – Members who donate their time and talents to accomplish the mission of the Circle

Section 4.02 ***Responsibilities of membership***

(a) **Voting Members**

- 1) Vote on matters regarding grant awards
- 2) Encourage other individuals to support and participate in the mission and goals of the Circle
- 3) Honor financial commitments to the Circle in accordance with section 4.04

(b) **Service Members**

- 1) Participate in service projects sponsored by the Circle
- 2) Encourage other individuals to support and participate in the mission and goals of the Circle

Section 4.03 ***Benefits of membership***

- (a) Participate in a dynamic, philanthropic, and fun organization
- (b) Offer input to the Circle's goals and grant awards
- (c) Explore and collaborate with others with shared values
- (d) Make a greater impact with pooled monetary resources
- (e) Add value and impact to service projects and special events
- (f) Learn about non-profits and needs in the community

Section 4.04 ***Contributions of Voting Members***

- (a) Voting Members shall contribute a minimum of \$365 per calendar year to be paid no later than November 1. Payments may be made on the following schedule: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.
- (b) The Treasurer will send contribution reminders by e-mail.
- (c) Only those Voting Members whose contributions are current shall be eligible to exercise voting privileges.

- (d) Each Voting Member shall have one vote, regardless of the amount of any contribution in excess of the amount specified in Section 4.04(a).

Article V. Organization/Structure

The Circle will have an executive committee (called the Guiding Circle), defined in section 5.01 and working committees (called Sub-Circles) as defined in section 5.07.

Section 5.01 *Members of the Guiding Circle*

The Guiding Circle will consist of up to 12 Voting Members of the Circle, including the six founding members who shall have a lifetime position in the Guiding Circle, if desired. With the exception of the founders, Guiding Circle members shall be selected in accordance with Sections 5.04 and 5.05.

Section 5.02 *Responsibilities of the Guiding Circle*

- (a) Provide the vision for the Circle
- (b) Call and direct meetings of the Circle
- (c) Manage accounting of contributions and expenses of the Circle, including the Emergency Fund defined in Article X
- (d) Oversee all Sub-Circles
- (e) Maintain records of Circle activities
- (f) Review and amend bylaws and present changes to the membership
- (g) Communicate about the Circle with members and the public
- (h) Conduct all other business of the Circle

Section 5.03 *Organization and Meetings of the Guiding Circle*

- (a) The Guiding Circle will meet at least four times a year, at such times as it shall determine and shall record meeting minutes.
- (b) Guiding Circle members will report on the activities of the Sub-Circles for which they have oversight responsibility
- (c) The Guiding Circle may elect a chair of the Guiding Circle or may choose to act as a committee of the whole.

Section 5.04 *Qualification of Guiding Circle Members*

Qualifications:

- (a) Be a Voting Member
- (b) Demonstrate leadership qualities
- (c) Have values and skills helpful to the Guiding Circle
- (d) Have enough time to be able to serve effectively
- (e) Make a commitment to put the Circle high on the list of personal priorities

Section 5.05 Selection of Guiding Circle Members

Selection can be by invitation or by self nomination. Positions will be filled as determined by the incumbent members of the Guiding Circle. The appointment of Guiding Circle members will be confirmed by consensus of the existing Guiding Circle.

Section 5.06 Terms of Service

Guiding Circle members will serve a minimum of two years. Founding members may serve indefinitely.

Section 5.07 Sub-Circles (Committees) and their responsibilities

- (a) Grants Sub-Circle – Screen, review, and select grants in accordance with Article VIII. See Section 8.01 for Responsibilities. Oversee endowments, see Article IX.
- (b) Service Sub-Circle – Plan and execute programs and projects for the Circle.
- (c) Outreach Sub-Circle – Recruit new members, seek corporate sponsors, network with other organizations, and maintain the speakers' bureau.
- (d) Circle Life – Plan meetings, organize hospitality, recognize volunteers, and organize book circle.
- (e) Administration – Correspond for the Circle, handle accounting and communications with NVCF, and maintain records of the history of the Circle.
- (f) Communications – Maintain website, write and distribute newsletter, communicate with the media, and maintain Circle publications.

Each Sub-Circle reports to a designated member of the Guiding Circle. Additional Sub-Circles may be designated and Sub-Circle responsibilities may be modified from time to time, as determined by the Guiding Circle.

Article VI. Meetings

The Circle will meet at least four times a year, at such times as the Guiding Circle shall determine. One such meeting will occur in November in order to vote on grant applications in accordance with Section 8.02.

Article VII. Administrative Expenses

The Guiding Circle may incur costs for supplies and services necessary to the operation of the Circle. These expenses may include, but are not limited to, website registration and maintenance, paper, printing, postage, room rental, refreshments, and materials for service projects. Funds for administrative and extraordinary expenses will be obtained by private grant or special fundraising event.

Article VIII. Awarding of Grants

Voting on grants will take place at the November meeting. Grant applications must be received by September 1 to be considered for the current year grant cycle.

Section 8.01 *Organization and Responsibilities of Grant Sub-circle*

- (a) All members of the Grant Sub-circle must be Voting Members.
- (b) The Grant Sub-Circle shall solicit grant applications for consideration by the Circle.
- (c) The Grant Sub-Circle shall review grant applications in order to:
 - 1) Determine if the application meets the mission of the Circle
 - 2) Determine if the application meets the grant award criteria as described in Section 8.03.
- (d) The Grant Sub-circle shall research grant applicants by any or all of the following:
 - 1) Visits or meetings with applicants
 - 2) Requests for supplementary materials or documents
 - 3) Communications with NVCF
- (e) The Grant Sub-circle shall publish a description of each qualified applicant organization with a summary of the recommended projects eligible for funding to the voting membership via email at least two weeks prior to the November meeting of the Circle

Section 8.02 ***Procedure for awarding grants***

- (a) The Grant Sub-Circle will present eligible grant applications at the November meeting of the Circle prior to voting.
- (b) The ballot listing of eligible grant applications will be available for downloading from the website.
- (c) Voting Members attending the meeting will cast their votes by paper ballot.
- (d) Voting Members not able to attend may vote by absentee ballot, which may be submitted via email.
- (e) Grants may be awarded in an amount up to the balance of the funds in the Circle's account as long as a minimum of \$1000.00 is maintained after disbursement of the grants. Grants shall be awarded upon approval of a simple majority of the voting membership.

Criteria for awarding grants

- (f) Applicant organization must be a non-profit tax-exempt organization pursuant to IRS section 501c.3.
- (g) Applicant organization must meet the Circle's mission.
- (h) Applicant organization must be approved by NVCF.
- (i) The following are excluded from consideration:
 - 1) Projects or programs that promote a particular religious or political ideology
 - 2) Endowment or capital projects and campaigns
 - 3) Dinner galas, advertising, and other special fundraising events
 - 4) General operating expenses of an organization
 - 5) Intermediary funding agencies

Article IX. Endowments

Designated gifts to the Circle will be managed according to the guidelines submitted to the NVCF.

Article X. Disbursement of Emergency Funds

The Guiding Circle may disburse up to 5% of the Circle's annual contributions in response to emergency requests from NVCF-approved non-profit organizations, in such amounts and at such times as it determines. Any request for such funds must be submitted pursuant to an Emergency Fund Request in the following form or such other form that is satisfactory to the Guiding Circle.

Giving Circle of HOPE Emergency Request Form

Name of Organization: _____

Referred by: _____

Date: _____

Amount needed: _____

Date funds are needed: _____

Please describe your request:
