

# BYLAWS of Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families, Inc. (WFCF)

## Section 1 - Organization

**1.1 Name.** For legal purposes, the name of the organization as originally chartered by the State of Wisconsin in 1988 is Fathers for Equality and Justice, Inc. The name was changed in the early 1990's to Wisconsin Fathers for Equal Justice (WFEJ) and in 1998 to Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families (WFCF). The organization does business under this latter name (WFCF), and will hereafter be referred to as such in these by-laws. The organization is also sometimes referred to simply as Wisconsin Fathers. In 2020 it was voted on by WFCF board to modify name to: **WISCONSIN for Children and Families**, and still maintain the **WFCF** acronym.

**1.2 Goals and Purposes.** WFCF was founded in 1988 by and for fathers who were experiencing the loss of a normal relationship with their children as a result of divorce or separation. WFCF has, as its fundamental goal, the preservation of a normal father-child relationship upon dissolution of the family unit. A major objective is to support the father's wishes for a type of relationship the father believes is in the best interest of the child/children. Our presumption is that equal parenting by father and mother is the most desirable parenting style. WFCF works primarily with fathers (regardless of whether they were ever married to the mother of their children), but serves others in a father's family, such as a second wife or the children's grandparents.

When Wisconsin's Equal Justice Task Force challenged gender bias in Wisconsin courts in 1989, WFCF recognized that its appeal for equal and just treatment for fathers was part of a nationwide trend to extend equal justice principles throughout our society. As equality and greater opportunities appeared for women, WFCF insisted that gender bias against fathers in the courts be equally recognized and removed.

WFCF remains dedicated to securing equal justice in the courts, but with the realization that to secure fair and equitable treatment for fathers in the courts, the definition of "best interests of the child" needs to include the loving devotion of both parents and the legitimate interest of the extended family. WFCF knows that both parents are critically important to the child's well-being, and that the preservation of these family bonds is of equal importance.

As a result of these family bonds, it is of equal importance that both parents share equally in major decisions regarding their child(ren). **This happened in 2000**. Toward these ends, WFCF has the following specific goals and objectives:

- Equalizing to the greatest extent possible the placement of children with both parents.
- Enhancement of conditions for children that favor regular contact with the extended family.
- Promoting financial support guidelines for children that presume each parent will pay their own share of costs

- Elimination of all laws, presumptions, court practices, and governmental agency biases that have the effect of favoring one parent over the other on the basis of gender. **Most if not all gender references have been removed from statutes**

- Improvement of conditions for fathers and their children through education and open communication among our members and with the public at large.

- Providing personal services to our members to the extent possible that may include counseling, emotional support, and information sharing about lawyers, legal challenges, and other areas of expressed need.

**1.3 Structure.** WFCF is a statewide organization, operated primarily for the benefit of citizens of the State of Wisconsin. It is directed and managed by an elected Board of Directors.

## **Section 2 - Membership**

**2.1 Qualification.** Anyone above the age of eighteen (18) years of age, without regard to race, religion, national origin, sex, handicap, sexual orientation, economic status, marital status or class is eligible for membership, provided that he/she agrees with the goals and purposes of WFCF and meets dues requirements. Members can be individuals or organizations residing or located anywhere in the world.

**2.2 Dues.** All members are required to pay dues to WFCF as a condition of membership. Membership dues requirements are set by the Board of Directors and apply equally to all members, except under the expressed written permission of the Board of Directors.

**2.3 Term of Membership.** The term of membership is **lifetime**. A member is said to be in "Good Standing" with regard to membership.

**2.4 Expiration of Membership. None.**

**2.5 Voting Rights.** All members in Good Standing shall have an equal right to vote as provided in these bylaws, except where restricted by law or by the Articles of Incorporation.

**2.6 Membership List.** The Vice President for Membership shall create and maintain a Master Membership List that contains the name, address, phone number, and e-mail address (if applicable) of each member of the organization. All Board members are entitled to have full access to this list at all times. The information on this list cannot be

shared outside of WFCF without Board approval.

### **Section 3 - Board of Directors**

**3.1 Qualifications.** All members of the Board of Directors **must be members** in Good Standing of the organization. Candidates for board positions should have a minimum of **one year of active involvement with WFCF**. Active involvement includes, but is not limited to, participation on a WFCF committee or on a special project of WFCF.

**3.2 Disclosure Requirements.** All candidates for election to the Board of Directors are expected to be law-abiding individuals. Any candidate who has been convicted of a felony or who is not in full compliance with their court orders related to their divorce or paternity action must state at the time of their acceptance of their nomination the circumstances under which they are not in compliance or the details of their criminal conviction.

**3.3 Composition of the Board.** The size of the Board of Directors may vary and is limited only by law and the Articles of Incorporation. All directors shall be elected, at large, by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

**3.4 Election to the Board.** **Candidates for Board positions must be submitted to current WFCF board members, at least 20 days prior to annual meeting to be considered.** Candidates for Board positions may be nominated by any member in Good Standing, including themselves. **If a board nominee is considered unacceptable to at least two thirds of the current board, that candidate shall not be further considered for a board position in that election.** Unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws, candidates for Board positions shall be individually elected by majority vote of the members in Good Standing assembled at the Annual Meeting.

**3.5 Duties of the Board.** All business and other affairs of the organization shall be the responsibility of and under the exclusive control of the Board of Directors. **The Board of Directors shall have the authority to establish any policy, create any organizational structure and pass any rule or bylaw that is not contrary to the Goals and Purposes of this organization and is not expressly prohibited by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or otherwise by these bylaws.**

**3.6 Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee consists of the President, the Executive Vice President, and the Immediate Past President. If the Immediate Past President is no longer a member in good standing, has been removed from the Board, or no longer wishes to serve on the Board, the Board shall name another of its members to the Executive Committee.

**3.7 Term.** A Director's term runs from the Annual Meeting when the Director was elected until the next Annual Meeting when succeeding Directors are elected. Where a vacancy on the Board occurs because a Director dies, resigns, loses Good Standing, is removed from office, or otherwise leaves WFCF, the vacancy may be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Directors. A Director elected to fill a vacancy is eligible to serve for the unexpired term of the person that Director replaced.

**3.8 Removal from the Board.** A Director may be removed from office by majority vote of the entire membership or by **two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors**. For removal by the membership, the Board of Directors shall solicit a vote of the membership within 30 days after being presented with a petition signed by at least 10% of the members in Good Standing. For removal by the Board, a request for removal must be made by at least two board members before the Board is allowed to act.

**3.9 Additional Method of Removal.** If a Director is convicted of a felony or found to be in contempt of court during his or her term of office, or has violated any Disclosure Requirements imposed in Section 3.2, the Board is required to explicitly confirm or remove the Director at its next meeting. Confirmation or removal under this section requires a majority vote of the Board.

#### **Section 4 - Selection of Officers and Directors**

**4.1 Officers.** The standing officers of the organization shall consist of the President, the Executive Vice-President, the Immediate Past President (if still on the Board), the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Vice-President for Membership. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, **except** the offices of President, Secretary, and Treasurer, which shall remain as distinct positions that cannot be held by the same person. If there are sufficient directors and available members, the President should also not concurrently serve as the Executive Vice President, Newsletter Editor, or the Web Engineer.

**4.2 Selection of Officers.** Candidates for office in the organization are nominated by any Board member. Officers are elected by majority vote of the full Board of Directors and serve at the pleasure of the Board. The President, Executive Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected at the first Regular Meeting of a newly installed Board of Directors. Officers may be removed from office according to the same procedures spelled out in Section 3.8 for removal from the Board of Directors.

**4.3 Selection of Directors.** Persons holding non-officer positions on the Board of Directors will be selected by a majority vote of the Board upon that candidate agreeing to uphold that position as described.

**4.4 Vacancies.** Whenever a vacancy occurs in the offices of President, Secretary, or Treasurer because the incumbent dies, resigns, loses Good Standing is removed from office, or otherwise leaves WFCF, the vacancy shall be filled within 30 days by the Board of Directors in accordance with these bylaws. Vacancies in other Board positions may be filled at the Board's discretion (see Section 3.7).

#### **Section 5 –Duties of Officers, Directors, and Other Positions**

**5.1 President.** In accordance with the law, the Articles of Incorporation, these bylaws and the expressed policy of the Board of Directors, the President shall manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. The President shall preside over the Annual Meeting and all meetings of the Board of Directors. The President shall be responsible

for any other duties as required of that office by the Board of Directors. The President serves as the public spokesperson for WFCF and sets the direction of the organization in accordance with the input and majority agreement of the full Board. The President also serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

**5.2 Executive Vice-President.** The Executive Vice-President shall have all the rights, duties and responsibilities of the President during any absence or incapacity of the President. In addition, the Executive Vice-President shall be responsible for any and all duties of that office as identified by the Board of Directors. The Executive Vice President also serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

**5.3 Immediate Past President.** The Immediate Past President is primarily responsible for ensuring the continuity of the organization during leadership changes. This individual is responsible for any and all duties of that office as identified by the Board of Directors. The Immediate Past President also serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

**5.4 Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for producing, maintaining, and disseminating written records of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting and of all meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall be custodian of all official records of WFCF, except where otherwise specified in these bylaws. The Secretary shall be responsible for any duties as required of that office by the Board of Directors.

**5.5 Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall keep accurate and complete records of all income to WFCF from any source and of all expenditures by WFCF for any purpose. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all moneys, notes, securities and other financial instruments that belong to the organization. The Treasurer shall deposit into a WFCF bank account in a timely fashion all funds that come into WFCF. These accounts shall be established by the Board of Directors and maintained in good order. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for disbursing funds from WFCF accounts to cover costs approved by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall present a summary statement of the financial status of the organization at each regular meeting of the Board of Directors and a complete record of income and expenditures at the Annual Meeting and at other times as required by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be responsible for any other duties as required of that office by the Board of Directors.

**5.6 Vice President for Membership.** The Vice-President for Membership shall maintain on a database an accurate and up-to-date Membership List as described in Section 2.6, including the Anniversary Date of each member. This database shall be updated on a monthly basis to reflect ongoing additions and deletions to the list of members. The Vice President for Membership is responsible for notifying members when their membership dues are about to expire and for coordinating with the Treasurer when dues are paid or renewed. The Vice-President for Membership is also responsible for ascertaining from members whether they want their membership information made available to other members and shall be responsible for any other duties as required of that office by the Board of Directors.

**5.7 Newsletter Editor.** The WFCF Newsletter Editor has creative, management, and production responsibilities for the WFCF newsletter, subject to the editorial rules established by the Board of Directors. The editor shall seek articles and other content for

the newsletter from the members at large, the Board of Directors and from other sources as he or she sees fit. The Board of Directors has final authority over the content of the WFCF newsletter and shall clearly delineate the rules by which the editor is to carry out their duties. The newsletter represents the public presentation of WFCF to not only its members, but to many others who may be involved in WI family law, and as such is expected to be accurate and professional in its presentation. The Newsletter Editor may or may not also be a member of the Board of Directors.

**5.8 Web Engineer.** The WFCF Web Engineer has creative, management, and production responsibilities for the WFCF website and all internet-based WFCF systems, subject to any rules established by the Board of Directors. The Web Engineer shall seek and develop content for the internet-based systems of WFCF from the members at large, the Board of Directors, and from other sources as he or she sees fit. The Web Engineer is responsible for ensuring that the WFCF website is clearly written, easy to navigate, and up to date in terms of the information presented and the links to other sites that are included on the website. The Board of Directors has final authority over the content and management of the WFCF internet-based systems. The WFCF website represents the public presentation of WFCF to not only its members, but to many others who may be involved in WI family law, and to any who access the internet from anywhere, and as such is expected to be accurate and professional in its presentation. The Web Engineer may or may not also be a member of the Board of Directors.

**5.9 Other Directors.** The Board of Directors may at its discretion create or abolish other Director positions on the Board subject to the rules laid out in these bylaws. These positions may or may not be designated as Vice President positions, but they shall have a title and area of responsibility. These Directors shall be responsible for any other duties as required of that position by the Board of Directors.

**5.10 Transfer of Authority.** In case of the absence or incapacity of any Board Member of the organization or for any other reason as the Board of Directors may deem appropriate, the Board of Directors may transfer all powers and duties of that Board Member to any other Board Member of the organization with a two-thirds vote of the entire Board.

## **Section 6 – Board Meetings**

**6.1 Meetings.** The Board of Directors shall meet **at least quarterly**, in person or by teleconference at a time determined by the Board. Meetings in addition to Regular Meetings may be held at the discretion of the President or Secretary. All Board Members shall be notified of any Board meeting at least five (5) days in advance.

**6.2 Actions and Quorum.** Any action of the Board of Directors requires an affirmative vote of the majority of the full Board unless otherwise provided in these bylaws. An action taken at a meeting by a majority of the full Board shall be an act of the entire Board of Directors unless a larger number of directors is required by statute, the Articles of Incorporation or these bylaws.

**6.3 Action without a Meeting.** Any action that may be taken at a Board meeting

may also be taken in between meetings if all members of the Board are aware of the action and are given an opportunity to discuss it and vote on it. Actions taken between meetings should be by e-mail or other agreed upon means of communication that are shared with all Board Members.)

**6.4 Absentee and Proxy Voting.** A member of the Board who plans to be absent from a Board meeting may provide absentee voting instructions to another specific board member if there is a specific decision to be made by the Board that the absentee member wishes to have a vote on. A Board member absent from a meeting may also allow another Board member to cast their vote for any matters before the Board by proxy, meaning that authority is granted by the absent member to another specific Board member to vote on any matters before the Board at a specific Board meeting. Both of these provisions shall pertain to a single Board meeting only. If the member in question would be absent in a subsequent Board meeting, he or she would need to re-exercise this absentee or proxy vote for later meetings. Such absentee votes or proxy voting authority shall be communicated to a named specific Board member via US Mail, e-mail, or facsimile and shared with the rest of the Board.

**6.5 Agenda.** Each meeting of the Board shall have an agenda compiled by the President. Any Board member may add topics to the agenda. Discussion of specific topics may be postponed or re-prioritized by majority vote of those Board members present.

## **Section 7 - Member Meetings**

**7.1 Annual Meeting.** An annual meeting open to all members of WFCF shall be held each **year**. The date and place for each Annual Meeting shall be fixed by the Board of Directors and announced to the members as provided herein (See Section 7.3). Failure to hold the annual meeting as provided herein shall not work a forfeiture or dissolution of the Corporation.

**7.2 Special Meetings.** Meetings of all members of WFCF in addition to the Annual Meeting shall be called by the President or Secretary at the request of the Board of Directors. The Board shall endeavor to hold such meetings of the general membership as often as possible to further the Goals and Purposes of WFCF.

**7.3 Notice of Meetings.** Written notice stating the place, day and time of the Annual Meeting and, in the case of any Special Meeting as provided herein, the purpose or purposes of such Special Meeting, shall be initially given to all members not less than ten (10) nor more than fifty (50) days in advance of the meeting. **Such meetings will be publicized via multiple means (e.g. newsletter, website, special mailings, e-mail)** in order to give the membership sufficient opportunity to plan on coming to the meeting. If mailed, the notice shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the member at their last-known address.

## **Section 8 - Committees**

**8.1 Establishment.** Committees may be established for any purpose except those

specifically required of the Board members or Officers of the organization.

**8.2 Authority.** Committees can only be established by the Board of Directors acting in accordance with these bylaws. However, the President shall have a limited authority to establish an Interim Committee for up to 30 days without prior Board approval.

**8.3 Committee Chair.** No committee or Interim Committee shall be established without the simultaneous appointment of a Chairperson. Authority to appoint the Chairperson shall be the same as that required for the establishment of the Committee.

**8.4 Membership Eligibility.** The Board may appoint both members and non-members to serve on a WFCF committee.

**8.5 Members of the Committee.** The Chairperson or the Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint additional members to a committee. These can be both members and non-members of WFCF.

**8.6 Term.** The term of each Committee shall be fixed by the Board of Directors, except that no Committee shall exist for longer than one year without reestablishment.

**8.7 Termination.** Except as provided elsewhere in this section, the Board of Directors may terminate a Committee or an Interim Committee at any time. The Board of Directors may terminate the appointment of any member of a Committee at any time. A Chairperson may not be removed unless a replacement Chairperson is simultaneously appointed.

**8.8 Committee Reports.** Committees shall report to the Board of Directors at the Board's discretion.

**8.9 Executive Committee.** Regardless of the other provisions of this section, the Board President shall serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee, which shall be a permanent committee until terminated by the Board. No additional members shall be appointed to the Executive Committee, and no one shall be appointed to fill any vacancy that may exist on the Executive committee, except as provided for in these bylaws.

## **Section 9 - Financial Matters**

**9.1 Financial Management.** The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the financial stability of the organization through good stewardship of its funds.

**9.2 Fiscal Year.** The organization's fiscal year shall coincide with the calendar year.

**9.3 Audit.** A professional audit of the entire organization shall be performed as required.

**9.4 Spending Authorization.** The Board of Directors is responsible for authorizing and approving all WFCF expenditures. Individuals may be granted permission by the Board to make expenditures on behalf of WFCF not to exceed specified limits.

**President has a \$250 maximum without board approval.**



**9.5 Reimbursement.** Any person may be reimbursed for out of pocket WFCF-related expenses, provided they submit their request for reimbursement on a WFCF Reimbursement Form to the Treasurer.

## **Section 10 - Discipline**

**10.1 Cause.** Disciplinary action may be instituted for cause, as defined by law, the Articles of Incorporation or in these bylaws. Cause defined herein shall be:

- a) the failure of an Officer or a Director to perform duties required of that position; or
- b) the failure to discharge a financial responsibility to WFCF after receipt of written notice and within a reasonable period of time;
- c) the exercise of behavior that is found in an inquiry to be opposed and/or damaging to the organization or its Goals and Purposes.

**10.2 Charges.** Charges of a violation under this Section may be brought by any two or more members of the organization. The charges must be detailed in writing, the document must be signed by the petitioners and it must be presented to a member of the Board of Directors to be valid.

**10.3 Action.** Upon notification of a charge against a member by other members, as provided herein, the Board of Directors must place the matter on the agenda of the next Board meeting that is more than 20 days after notification of the charges. No discipline can be administered as the result of an accusatory petition without a hearing in which accusers and the accused have an opportunity to be heard. Written notice of any such hearing must be given to all Directors, to the accusers and to the accused no less than 20 days before the hearing.

**10.4 Discipline.** Discipline shall be limited to suspension of any or all membership rights on either a temporary or permanent basis. Suspension of rights shall require a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Termination of rights shall require a 2/3 vote by the Board of Directors.

**10.5 Other Action.** Nothing in these bylaws shall be intended to defer or to prohibit the Board of Directors from taking any and all legal action as deemed necessary to protect the tangible and intellectual property, name and good will of the organization.

## **Section 11 - Miscellaneous**

**11.1 Amendment of the Bylaws.** The powers to alter, amend, or repeal these bylaws, or to adopt new bylaws requires a two thirds vote by the Board of Directors, subject to any limitations in the law. These bylaws may contain any provisions for the regulation

and management of the affairs of the organization that are not expressly prohibited by law or by the Articles of Incorporation.

**11.2 Ownership.** Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families declares by these bylaws that it owns all of its distinguishing characteristics, such as its name, the initials of its name, its logo, newsletter, website, chat sites, videos, and all other intellectual properties. WFCF does not grant permission for the use of these characteristics except by the expressed approval of the Board of Directors. Furthermore, all work done on behalf of WFCF is the property of WFCF and **not of the individual who performed the work.**

**11.3 Seal.** The Corporation shall have no seal.

**11.4 DISSOLUTION CLAUSE** Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families (*furthermore identified as WFCF*) may be dissolved only with authorization by its Board of Directors given at a special meeting called for that purpose. Upon dissolution or other termination of WFCF, all remaining assets of WFCF, after payment in full of all its debts, obligations, and necessary final expenses, or after the making of adequate provision therefore, shall be distributed to such tax-exempt organizations (with purposes similar to those of WFCF) as shall be chosen by the then existing Board of Directors of WFCF.

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