

Big Country Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (BCVOAD) Bylaws

*Adopted 7/22/03.
Revised 2023*

I. NAME AND JURISDICTION

The name of the organization will be Big Country Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and will be known as Big Country VOAD (BCVOAD). The BCVOAD is a regional counterpart of the Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (TXVOAD). Through the Texas VOAD, the BCVOAD is affiliated with the National VOAD (NVOAD).

The jurisdiction served by BCVOAD is the 19 counties of the West Central Texas Council of Governments:

Brown	Jones	Shackelford
Callahan	Kent	Stephens
Coleman	Knox	Stonewall
Comanche	Mitchell	Taylor
Eastland	Nolan	Throckmorton
Fisher	Runnels	
Haskell	Scurry	

If changes need to be made to the specified region, the BCVOAD membership will vote to reflect those changes.

Address of the Organization:

Big Country VOAD
P. O. Box 82 Abilene, TX 79604
bigcountryvoadt@gmail.com

II. PURPOSE AND MISSION

The purpose of BCVOAD is to bring together independent voluntary organizations that respond to disasters as part of their overall mission.

BCVOAD will convene community entities to identify capabilities, encourage training, share information, and integrate resources into an efficient and effective disaster preparedness,

mitigation, response, and recovery system. BCVOAD does not engage in the direct provision of disaster relief services but provides a network that supports the efforts of its members who provide disaster services to those affected by a disaster.

Cooperation – The BCVOAD will seek to work together to overcome challenges by meeting to share information, as well as foster cooperation among member organizations at all levels and in all phases of disaster.

Coordination – The BCVOAD will coordinate the development of policies and procedures, the implementation of services among member organizations, and serve as a liaison between member agencies, and city and county governments within the West Central Texas jurisdiction.

Communication – The BCVOAD will exchange and disseminate information among member organizations and the public, as well as local, state, and federal agencies, in conjunction with the individual BCVOAD members.

Collaboration – Member organizations within the BCVOAD are dedicated to working together to achieve specific goals and undertake specific projects. We form partnerships before, during, and after the disaster.

Education and Training – The organization will seek to increase awareness and understanding of each organization and effective disaster relief.

Planning – The BCVOAD will seek to be prepared for disasters when they occur by having plans in place by which we can serve those affected by disasters efficiently and effectively. Plans could include: Donations Management, Volunteer Coordination, Unmet Needs, Long-Term Recovery

III. MEMBERSHIP

Each member organization maintains its own identity and independence yet works closely with other organizations to improve service and eliminate unnecessary duplications. The BCVOAD will seek to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

A. Eligibility of Membership

1. Organizations that have a disaster preparedness and/or response program and a policy for a commitment of resources to meet the needs of people affected by disaster without discrimination.
2. Must be based in or conduct business in the service area as defined above.
3. Members may be:

- Non-profit organizations
- Community-based organizations.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Voluntary Organizations/Civic Clubs
- Government entities.
- Educational or research institutions.
- Businesses or private corporations; and
- Disability organizations
- Philanthropic organizations/Foundations

B. Categories of Membership

1. Member (1 Vote per Agency)

- a. Not-for-profit organizations or agencies with voluntary memberships and constituencies designated as a 501C(3) or that have an exempt status such as a governmental organization, municipality, or entity within the organization that represents community service
- b. Members will be the core BCVOAD decision-makers, administrators, and responders from organizations that have agreed (by MOU) to be active responders with a stated policy of commitment of goods and/or services to help individuals and the community prepare for, reduce impact, and recover from disasters without discrimination.

2. Partner (Non-Voting)

- a. Partners are all agencies that are not Members. The Partner category of membership may be granted to local, state, or federal government agencies or businesses with disaster planning and operations.
- b. Partners will be auxiliary participants who may provide goods and/or services when called upon but are not required to make the same commitment as Members to decision-making and administration.

C. Conditions of Membership

1. Must meet the membership criteria of the BCVOAD.
2. Must agree with the mission of the BCVOAD.
3. Must have an authorized representative at BCVOAD business and special meetings and assigned committee meetings.
4. Must be in good standing with any dues requirements established by the BCVOAD. The amount and structure of dues for all membership categories shall

be proposed by the BCVOAD Executive Committee and approved by a majority vote of the Members present at the time of the vote.

5. The term of membership shall be renewed annually. The BCVOAD fiscal year runs from January to December.

D. Application for Membership

1. Complete and submit a BCVOAD Membership Agreement Form to the BCVOAD Treasurer along with any applicable dues. Candidate entities are encouraged to attend BCVOAD meetings while their "Membership Agreement Form" is pending review.
2. The BCVOAD Executive Committee (EC) will determine the eligibility of the member organization using the BCVOAD bylaws and present the request for discussion at the next business meeting.

E. Responsibilities of Membership

1. The BCVOAD member organization must:
 - a. Designate a person to be the Authorized Member Organization Representative (AMOR) to vote and/or attend meetings on behalf of that organization, as well as designate one alternate AMOR (AAMOR).
 - b. The AMOR must be a knowledgeable and authoritative representative that attends BCVOAD meetings.
 - c. The Authorized Member Organization Representative (AMOR) must have access to the resources of their organization to serve the needs of disaster victims.
 - d. Communicate changes of BCVOAD member organization points of contact to the Executive Secretary no later than 30 days following the change.
2. An AMOR who misses 50 percent of the business, special, or assigned committee meetings in a twelve-month period shall receive a reminder letter from the Executive Secretary. If after 30 days the Member continues not to participate, the Executive Committee will vote to terminate the membership.

F. Renewal of Membership

1. Notices of renewal will be sent at the quarterly meeting prior to the start of the new year to all current member organizations, including the name of the current AMOR and AAMOR

2. An organization's BCVOAD membership and AMOR will continue unless canceled or changed by the organization's director or administrator or revoked by the BCVOAD.
- G. Termination of Membership**
1. An entity's membership may be terminated by the following:
 - a. Voluntary – BCVOAD member organizations may voluntarily withdraw by submission of a letter or email of separation to the Executive Committee.
 - b. Non-Voluntary – The membership of an organization or individual may be canceled by the Executive Committee for reasons that include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Failure to continue to meet the criteria for BCVOAD membership.
 - ii. Habitual failure to take part in meetings and/or BCVOAD projects.
 - iii. Consistent failure of the organization or their AMOR to meet the conditions and responsibilities of the voting membership.

IV. MEETINGS

All meetings of the BCVOAD shall be guided by the current version of the Roberts Rules of Order except as otherwise provided for in these bylaws. All meetings are open to the public. Teleconferencing and/or videoconferencing is an option for all meetings.

A. Membership Meetings

1. Membership meetings of the general membership will be held at least quarterly or as voted upon by the membership.
2. Annual meeting will occur at the last meeting for the year.
3. Adequate notice will be sent to all members prior to any membership meeting.
4. Other business may be considered by a simple majority vote of members present.
5. The representative designated by a member organization has a voice for and votes for his/her organization at business meetings. Other representatives from the same organization have a voice when recognized by, and, at the discretion of the Chair. The intent is that there be a reasonable exchange of ideas in a timely manner without monopoly by multiple representatives of a single agency.

B. Special Meetings

1. Any member of the Executive Committee may call a special meeting of the BCVOAD when necessary. A special meeting may be called when ten percent of

the BCVOAD Members and/or Partners petition the Executive Committee. Written notice shall be sent electronically and/or by first-class mail to all members at least five days prior or, verbal notice is given at least two days prior to any special meeting and shall specify the purpose of such a meeting.

2. No other business may be considered except by unanimous consent of the entire voting membership of the BCVOAD. Such consent may be obtained either before or after such a special meeting, but until such consent is obtained, action on matters not identified in the purpose of the special meeting shall not be valid.

C. Emergency Meetings

1. Emergency meetings to meet the needs of disaster events (or drills) can be called at any time by either Executive Committee or a Member and/or Partner organization with minimal notice.
2. Such meetings would be open to all agencies with specific response and recovery responsibilities to discuss ways the organizations can work together to address unmet needs.

D. Committee Meetings

1. Meet as determined by their respective chair or at the request of any of its members.
2. Technical advisors may attend committee meetings at the request of the chair or any committee member.

V. OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of BCVOAD shall consist of the chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, past chair, and the chairs of the Standing Committees (as hereinafter defined).

Other members of the community as deemed necessary by the Chair to include, but not limited to local or state Emergency Management (or their designee), certain advisory members to include the faith community, non-governmental partners, or individuals, and/or agencies, not necessarily dedicated to disaster response or mitigation. These officers will serve as the Executive Committee with no voting power.

A. Elections

1. The term of office for the Executive Committee shall be a period of two (2) years.

2. Officers for open positions shall be nominated and voted upon at the Annual Meeting (December) of BCVOAD. The term of office for the officers shall begin immediately upon their election.
3. Any member of BCVOAD may nominate members as officers and chairs of the Standing Committees. Nominations must be seconded to be accepted. No single member will be allowed to hold more than one position on the Executive Committee.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Executive Committee

- a) Review and approve membership application and renewal forms.
- b) Investigate member misconduct and determine just cause for termination.
- c) Recommend bylaws and other policy changes to the voting members. An annual review of by-laws and other policy and procedure documents is recommended.
- d) Maintain situational awareness and make reports to the BCVOAD regarding developments in the emergency management community.
- e) Consider and refer appropriate matters of business to the full membership for consideration.
- f) Develop and implement various plans to allow member organizations to work together.
- g) Identify opportunities to implement MOUs with counties and other entities within the jurisdiction.

2. Chair

- a) Convene meetings and provides overall leadership. Preside at meetings.
- b) Acts as the spokesperson. Represent BCVOAD
- c) Create or discontinue committees, except for the Executive Committee, with the approval of the voting members.
- d) With the consent of the Executive Committee, the Chair may engage or delegate authority in external contracts or MOU.

3. Vice-Chair

- a) Assists the Chair
- b) Assumes the duties of the Chair at the request of or in the absence of the Chair.

4. Secretary
 - a) Maintain organizational records, take attendance, and make notifications of meetings and other important communications to the members.
 - b) Records minutes of meetings and preserves all business and historical records of BCVOAD.
 - c) Maintain a roster of member organizations including the name of the representative of each organization. When asked to do so by the Chair, the Secretary will “call the roll” of member organizations to facilitate the voting process.

5. Treasurer
 - a) The Treasurer will maintain any financial records of the BCVOAD.
 - b) Receive any applicable dues or payments.
 - c) Provide annual financial report.

6. Past Chair
 - a) Serves as technical advisor. Is not a voting member of the Executive Committee

7. Committee Chairs
 - a) Takes direction from the Chair and serves as a member of the Executive Committee
 - b) Presides over committee meetings.
 - c) Communicates with other officers to ensure ongoing situational awareness.
 - d) Represents the committee at general BCVOAD meetings and the Executive Committee meetings
 - e) Makes decisions on issues pertaining to the committee when time and/or circumstances do not permit a meeting of the committee members.
 - f) Create a subcommittee, in consultation with Chair, to accommodate the significant scope or complexity of a committee function.

- C. Standing Committees
 1. Committees can propose, develop, and publish points of consensus, which act as guiding principles for the BCVOAD.
 2. Committee members shall be representatives of the BCVOAD member organizations.

3. The following Standing Committees will be established per the bylaws and are based on the core competencies of the BCVOAD.
 - a) Donations and Resources Committee
 - (1) The committee will provide guidance and policy regarding solicited and unsolicited donations of goods, services, and funds in support of a disaster.
 - (2) Maintain a current list of resources available to meet the needs of persons affected by disaster through member organizations and other local groups
 - b) Programs – Education and Training Committee
 - (1) Provide educational opportunities including speakers and printed materials.
 - (2) Organize and coordinate training sessions regularly, including tabletop drills.
 - c) Communications Committee
 - (1) Support information sharing among all stakeholders by developing policies and procedures, tools, and strategies to enhance internal and external communication.
 - d) Membership Committee
 - (1) Responsible for discussing, formulating, and implementing strategies for membership growth, membership promotions, membership benefits, and networking opportunities.
 - e) Long-Term Recovery Committee (As Needed)
 - (1) Assist affected individuals in receiving adequate resources for their recovery to pre-disaster conditions.

D. Resignation and Removal of Officers

1. Voluntary Resignation – An officer may resign by submitting a resignation in writing to the Chair. In the event of the resignation of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair. Other officer vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the Chair after consultation with the Executive Committee or by the Executive Committee in the absence of a Chair. Officers so appointed shall serve until the end of the term for which appointed.
2. Involuntary Removal – Officers may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.
3. Resignation or Removal of an individual from office does not affect the membership of the individual's organization but the organization's director or

administrator will be notified and given the opportunity to appoint a new representative.

E. Succession

1. Upon the resignation, incapacity, or removal of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will assume the office of the Chair.
2. Upon the resignation, incapacity, or removal of the Vice-Chair, the Chair may appoint a temporary Vice-Chair until the position can be filled.
3. Upon the resignation, incapacity, or removal of any other office, the Chair may assume the duties of the vacant office(s), the Vice-Chair may assume the duties of the vacant office(s), or the Chair may appoint a temporary Officer until the position(s) can be filled.
4. When an office becomes vacant, the office will be filled at the next General meeting. If the next General meeting is scheduled more than one (1) month after the position becomes vacant, a Special meeting may be called at the discretion of the Chair to fill the vacant position.

VI. VOTING

1. Each member organization is entitled to one vote.
2. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
3. A quorum (as defined below) is required to make a decision-making vote.
 - a) Greater than 50% of members constitute a quorum.
 - b) Greater than 50% of executive committee members constitute a quorum.
4. All voting, except as otherwise provided for in these bylaws, shall pass by simple majority vote.
5. All votes (formal or consensus reached) will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
6. An individual may represent more than one organization; however, an individual has one vote regardless of the number of organizations he/she may represent.

VII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these bylaws may be made by a two-thirds majority vote. Amendments must be moved and seconded at a properly noticed business or special meeting to be voted on at the following business meeting.