

**BY-LAWS OF THE
RHODE ISLAND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION, INC.**

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1: The organization shall be called the Rhode Island Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., and hereinafter shall be referred to as RIOTA.

Section 2: It shall be affiliated with the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. hereinafter referred to as AOTA, in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth in the by-laws of AOTA.

Section 3: RIOTA shall encompass the geographical area of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

ARTICLE II OBJECTIVES

The function and powers of RIOTA shall be to:

- A. Act as an advocate for the profession of occupational therapy.
- B. Improve and advance the education and collaboration of occupational therapy practitioners.
- C. Promote research in the profession of occupational therapy.
- D. Encourage high standards of practice.
- E. Engage in other professional and community activities to further the dissemination of knowledge of the practice of occupational therapy.
- F. Cooperate with other individuals or groups concerned with health related issues.
- G. Increase consumer awareness of application of occupational therapy practice in the community.
- H. Increase consumer awareness regarding the scope of occupational therapy practice to assist an individual to achieve life pursuits.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Membership classifications and qualifications:

- A. Registered occupational therapist;
- B. Certified occupational therapy assistant;
- C. Student occupational therapist/assistant
- D. Retired occupational therapy practitioners no longer holding a license as an occupational therapy practitioner.
- E. Associate member: one who is interested in promoting occupational therapy, but is not eligible for membership in the above classifications.

Section 2: Rights and privileges of members:

- A. Active or retired occupational therapist or certified occupational therapy assistant:
 - 1. May attend and participate in all regular and called meetings of RIOTA;

2. May vote on all issues pertaining to RIOTA;
 3. May hold any office if a concurrent member of RIOTA;
 4. May chair or serve on committees subject to the qualification established by the By-laws of a particular committee;
 5. Will receive all mailings of RIOTA.
- B. Student occupational therapist or therapy assistants:
1. May attend and participate in all regular and called meetings of RIOTA;
 2. May vote on all issues pertaining to RIOTA;
 3. Is NOT eligible to hold an office;
 4. May serve on committees subject to qualifications established by the By-laws for the particular committee;
 5. Will receive all mailings of RIOTA.
- C. Associate member:
1. May attend and participate in all regular and called meetings of RIOTA;
 2. Will have no voice or vote in any capacity regarding the elections or business of RIOTA or AOTA;
 3. Is not eligible to hold office;
 4. May serve on committees subject to the qualifications established by the By-laws for the particular committee;
 5. Will receive all mailings of RIOTA.
- Section 3: Good Standing: A member is in good standing provided that person has:
1. Obtained certification from the National Board of Certified Occupational Therapists (NBCOT);
 2. A current state license, if an employed OT practitioner;
 3. Paid current RIOTA dues.

Note: Associates, students, and retirees are exempt from #'s 1 & 2.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers: The officers of RIOTA shall be President, President Emeritus, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2: Election: The officers of RIOTA shall be elected by the voting membership by mail ballot according to Article X, Section 2A.

Section 3: Eligibility for office: eligibility to hold office has been stated in Article III, Section 2.

Section 4: Term of office: All officers shall be elected for a two (2) year term and may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd number years.

Vice-President and Secretary shall be elected in even number years.

Section 5: Vacancies in office: The President, with consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint a replacement to complete the term of office in the event of any vacancy

except the office of the president. In that case, the Vice-President shall automatically assume the position for the remainder of the term, if such is less than one (1) year, otherwise a special election shall be held. In the event there are no candidates, the Executive Board is empowered to put forth a plan for interim management of the association.

Section 6: Duties of the voting officers: In addition to the rights and duties provided elsewhere in the By-laws, or as custom or parliamentary usage may require, the officers have the rights and duties respectively assigned to them in the succeeding sections of this article – see Standard Operating Procedures. Each officer serves as a voting member of the Executive Board of RIOTA. Each officer is required to attend each executive board meeting. If an absence is necessary, a report must be submitted to the president, documenting progress since the last meeting and including any contribution to the current agenda. If more than two (2) unexcused absences occur within operating membership year (September-June), the board will review and take further action, which could include dismissal from position in the form of a letter from the president.

Section 7: President shall:

- A. Guide and conduct the activities of RIOTA in accordance with the general policies of AOTA;
- B. When requested, furnish credentials for the Representative and Alternate Representative, or shall notify the chair of the Credentials Review and Accountability if no representation is possible;
- C. Complete three (3) reports per year to be presented to the membership and published in the RIOTA newsletter;
- D. Be the chief executive officer of RIOTA and shall preside at all general membership meetings of RIOTA and the Executive Board;
- E. Appoint all committee chairs, except the nominating chair, with the consent of the Executive Board and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee;
- F. Have the power to sign all written obligations of RIOTA and shall have the general powers of supervision and active management usually vested in that office;
- G. Have the right to appoint a COTA liaison, a student liaison, and a consumer representative as non-voting members of the Executive Board;
- H. Shall serve in role of President Emeritus for the term of six (6) months after his/her term of office;
- I. Structure meeting agendas according to the RIOTA master calendar and present agenda via email to board members prior to the start of meetings;
- J. Update RIOTA master calendar, as changes and/or additions are necessary.

Section 8: President Emeritus shall:

- A. Assist the President in the transition of duties;
- B. Assist the President in the discharge of duties and shall assist the Vice President in the discharge of duties if and when the president is absent;
- C. Shall serve for six (6) months into the Presidents term.

Section 9: Vice-President shall:

- A. Assist the president in the discharge of duties and shall discharge the duties of the President if and when the President is absent, or in the event of a vacancy of that office, fill the unexpired term (if less than a year);
- B. Serve as State Special interest Section Coordinator/Liaison by providing pertinent feedback to the executive board via email or at executive board meetings;
- C. Submit annual report to the president and keep a copy in RIOTA archives;
- D. Identify vacant board and committee positions and coordinate recruitment for vacant positions;
- E. Monitor voting and non-voting board members' attendance at meetings and initiate contact if two or more absences occur.

Section 10: Secretary shall:

- A. Include in minutes, within thirty (30) days after the election of officers, a complete roster of current RIOTA officers, committee chairs and representatives. As changes occur, updates must be sent;
- B. File with the chair of the Affiliation of State Association Presidents (ASAP), a copy of the By-laws of RIOTA at the time of its adoption, and any amendments to the By-laws within thirty (30) days after they are adopted;
- C. Be responsible for recording and reading the minutes of the meetings of RIOTA and the Executive Board. Final version of minutes are to be filed in official RIOTA ledger, and also sent to the board members electronically no later than fourteen (14) days following the meeting;
- D. Be responsible for sending routine correspondence and other communications of RIOTA as directed by the Executive Board;
- E. Be an active member of the newsletter and membership committees.

Section 11: Treasurer shall:

- A. Have charge of all monies of RIOTA and coordinate budget planning with Executive Board and committee chairs;
- B. Pay all bills upon the authorization of the President, with the exception of those bills above or outside the budget allotment which shall be paid upon the authorization of the Executive Board; authorize other board members to pay bills as required;
- C. Maintain a ledger of all expenditures and receipts;
- D. Complete an annual report (ending June 30th) to be presented to the membership and published in the RIOTA newsletter;
- E. Provide an audited statement at the end of each fiscal year;
- F. Serve on the membership committee and perform duties related to the collection of membership dues;
- G. Submit an annual report by July 31st;
- H. Maintain documents and make recommendations for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as related to fiscal responsibilities.

Section 12: Non-voting Officers: All positions to follow are required to report on activity since last board meeting, either through attendance at board meeting or

submission of report to president prior to board meeting, allowing enough time to be reported to board meeting attendees. All positions to follow are required to provide a summary of activity in his/her area to members via newsletter submissions three (3) times per year.

If reports are not presented for more than two (2) meetings, the board will review and take further action, which could include dismissal from position in the form of a letter from the president.

- A. President Emeritus: Participate in transition of presidential duties six (6) months after term expires;
- B. Alternate AOTA Representative: Assist AOTA Representative in discharge of duties; Serve on RIOTA executive board; Holds the entitlement to vote in AOTA Representative's absence if needed;
- C. Pediatrics Special Interest Group Chair: Coordinate and implement special interest section programming for pediatrics meetings and events; Coordinate all speakers and presentations including audiovisual aids, computer needs, handouts, location, and food and beverage needs; Develop and submit annual budget for approval of executive board;
- D. Educational Resource Coordinator: Plan and implement educational opportunities for members on a wide variety of practice and interest areas through general membership meetings and other educational opportunities as determined by the executive board; Coordinate all speakers and presentations including audiovisual aids, computer needs, handouts, location, and food and beverage needs; Encourage involvement in community career days and other opportunities that will assist RIOTA in advocating for the Occupational Therapy profession, such as the Health Partnership Council; Develop and submit annual budget for approval of executive board;
- F. COTA Liaison: Promote partnership between COTA and OTR RIOTA members;
- G. Reimbursement Liaison: Keep abreast of local payment and coverage problems; Serve as the coordinator for related advocacy efforts; Function as the point person for the state association on issues surrounding coverage and payment for occupational therapy services; Maintain status as American Occupational Therapy Association member for continual communication;
- F. Consumer Representative: Promote awareness of the role of Occupational Therapy in the community; Provide objective prospective into organization.

Section 13: Non-voting Committee Chairs: All positions to follow are required to report on activity since last board meeting, either through attendance at board meeting or submission of report to president prior to board meeting, allowing enough time to be reported to board meeting attendees. All positions to follow are required to provide a summary of activity in his/her area to members via newsletter submissions three (3) times per year.

If reports are not presented for more than two (2) meetings, the board will review and take further action, which could include dismissal from position in the form of a letter from the president.

- A. Communications Committee Chair: Oversee newsletter and webpage;
- B. Legislative Committee Chair: Oversee state legislative process as it relates to Occupational Therapy; Serve as lobbyist liaison;
- C. Nominating Committee Chair: Oversee election process; See Article X Section II;
- D. Public Relations Committee Chair: Oversee plan for increasing awareness of Occupational Therapy in RI; Identify opportunities to promote Occupational Therapy in the community; Coordinate and oversee OT Month events; Choose one project per year to help educate potential consumers about Occupational Therapy.

ARTICLE V: REPRESENTATION IN AOTA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Section 1: Election: RIOTA may conduct elections in cooperation with AOTA for Representative and Alternate Representative of the AOTA Representative Assembly. Responsibilities, qualifications, duties, terms of office, and related details shall be determined by AOTA.

Section 2: Relationship of the AOTA Representative to RIOTA: The elected Representative must be a member of RIOTA, with two prior years of Board experience and shall serve on the Executive Board with voice and vote. The Alternative Representative to RIOTA serves on the Executive Board with voice, but no vote, except in the absence of the Representative.

ARTICLE VI: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1: Name: The Executive Body of RIOTA shall be called the Executive Board.

Section 2: Members: Voting – elected officers and AOTA Representative;
Non-voting – Non-voting Officers and Non-voting Committee Chairs.

Section 3: Meetings: Regular meetings of the Executive Board shall be held as the President shall direct or when requested by a majority of the Board members. There shall be a minimum of four (4) Executive Board meetings a year. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum. Minutes shall be published in the RIOTA newsletter. Special meetings may be held as needed to review and/or revise the Long Range Plan, Standard Operating Procedures, and By-Laws.

Section 4: The Duties and authority of the Executive Board shall be to:

- A. Insure that the objectives of RIOTA are being met;
- B. Manage the affairs of RIOTA between meetings;
- C. Approve appointments made by the President;
- D. Authorize the Treasurer to pay bills that are outside or above the budget allotment;
- E. Set the time for meetings of RIOTA;
- F. Make recommendations to the membership on national affairs and state policy, amendment(s) to the By-Laws, the budget, membership dues or special assessments.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Executive Board shall have the power to create committees. Recommendations for chairs may be made by the general membership or the Executive Board. Committee chairs are appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board and shall serve for the President’s term. All members are encouraged to serve on committees.

Section 2: Standing Committees may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Communications Committee;
- B. Legislative Committee;
- C. Nominating Committee;
- D. Public Relations Committee.

Section 3: The chair(s) of each committee shall submit a report for discussion at meetings of the Executive Board and shall prepare an annual report. Copies shall be filed with the President, and with the Secretary. The Executive Board shall approve of the format and procedure (i.e. SOP) for each standing committee.

Section 4: Ad Hoc committees are approved by the Executive Board. These committees are responsible for presenting reports to the Board at regular intervals and upon completion of their activities.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

Section 1: RIOTA shall conduct one annual business meeting per year, and at least three (3) other meetings during the year to accomplish objectives of RIOTA.

Section 2: The meetings shall be held at a time and place designated by the Executive Board.

Section 3: Special meetings may be called by the President or by three (3) members of the Executive Board. The call for a special meeting must state the business to be transacted and no other business may be transacted.

Section 4: The annual membership meeting shall be held in September.

Section 5: All meetings shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Revised, unless otherwise specified.

Section 6: Contact hours for RIOTA meetings will be recorded.

ARTICLE IX: THE QUORUM

Voting procedures and quorum shall be outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and shall be available for member review.

ARTICLE X: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: A. The Executive Board shall recruit and appoint a Nominating Committee Chair who shall be a registered occupational therapist or a certified occupational therapy assistant and a member of RIOTA.

B. The Nominating Committee Chair shall serve one (1) year and may only serve two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 2: A. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of qualified candidates and mail ballots to members by May 1st, to be returned within thirty (30) days to the Nominating Committee Chair.

B. The results of the ballot will be announced at the next Executive Board meeting, at the annual membership meeting, and will be published in the RIOTA newsletter.

ARTICLE XI: DUES AND ASSESSMENTS

Section 1: The fiscal year of RIOTA shall be July 1st through June 30th.

Section 2: The annual membership dues shall be determined by the Executive Board.

Section 3: Dues shall be payable annually in September in accordance with RIOTA fiscal year. Membership renewal dates are printed on mailing labels. If membership is not renewed, member will no longer receive correspondence. Dues may be accepted throughout the fiscal year, and will be pro-rated accordingly.

Section 4: In case of emergency, assessments shall be recommended by the Executive Board and presented to the membership.

ARTICLE XII: ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE

Section 1: The members of RIOTA shall abide by the current licensure laws of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations and in accordance with AOTA standards and ethics.

Section 2: Advertising by occupational therapy practitioners under their professional title shall be in accordance with propriety and precedent in medically associated professions.

Section 3: Membership in RIOTA may be suspended at any time by a majority of the Executive Board for malpractice or misconduct in accordance with the Rhode Island licensure laws and the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT).

ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Mail ballot: These By-Laws shall be amended or revised by the voting members of RIOTA through individual mail ballots.

Section 2: Ballot: The Executive Board shall forward proposed changes and a ballot to the voting members thirty (30) days prior to the deadline stated on the ballot. By-Law changes shall be determined by the majority of the mail votes received from voting members in good standing by the stated deadline.

Section 3: Results: Results of the voting on amendments shall be announced in the next RIOTA newsletter and at the next membership meeting.

Section 4: Any amendment shall not be in conflict with AOTA By-Laws.

ARTICLE XIV: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be the authority for parliamentary procedure.

Adopted February 26, 1979.

Amended September 1982

Amended June 1988

Amended July 1995

Amended July 2003

Amended March 2005

Amended June 2005

Amended March 2006

Amended June 2006