

# Election Committee (SOP)

## Montezuma Valley Volunteer Community Service Organization (MVVCSO)

Effective Date: June 28, 2025

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### Purpose and Authority

The Election Committee oversees fair, transparent, and accessible elections for the MVVCSO Board of Directors, ensuring the organization's mission to serve the Ranchita community is upheld. It operates under **Article VI, Section 1E** of the 2025 bylaws and **California Corporations Code § 5212**, which authorizes the Board to delegate specific powers to committees. This SOP ensures elections reflect best practices while meeting all legal and organizational standards.

### Composition

- Composed of at least three members:
  - One Director (not a candidate in the election).
  - Two Voting Members (not candidates in the election).
- Appointed by the Board, prioritizing impartiality, organizational knowledge, and diversity to reflect the community.
- No member may have a familial or financial relationship with a candidate, ensuring no conflicts of interest.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- **Election Planning:**
  - Establish election timelines, candidate criteria, and voting procedures per the bylaws.
  - Design inclusive processes (e.g., multilingual ballots, mail-in options) to maximize participation.
- **Candidate Vetting:**

- Verify candidate eligibility based on bylaw requirements (e.g., residency, good standing).
- Publicly post candidate lists at least 30 days before the election for member review.
- **Voting Oversight:**
  - Manage voting processes (in-person, mail, or electronic), ensuring accessibility for all Voting Members, including those with disabilities or limited technology access.
  - Provide accommodations such as large print ballots or transportation assistance.
- **Results Certification:**
  - Count votes and certify election results within 48 hours of the voting deadline.
  - Resolve disputes impartially and document the process for transparency.

## Meetings and Decision-Making

- Meets quarterly in election years, monthly during election cycles, with additional meetings as needed.
- **Quorum:** Majority of members (two out of three) must be present to conduct business.
- Decisions are made by majority vote, with the Chair breaking ties if necessary.
- Minutes are recorded and publicly posted within 14 days to ensure accountability.

## Reporting and Transparency

- Posts election procedures, candidate lists, and results at the food bank lot, community bulletin boards, and online (if available), using accessible formats (e.g., large print, Spanish translations).
- Reports to the Board on election integrity, accessibility, participation rates, and any irregularities, with findings included in the annual report.
- Maintains an open process, inviting member feedback to improve future elections.

## Compliance and Legal Standards

- Ensures non-discriminatory voting access per the **Unruh Civil Rights Act (Civ. Code § 51)**, with accommodations for all members, including those with disabilities or language barriers.

- Maintains governance integrity per **IRS 501(c)(3)** requirements, preventing private benefit and ensuring impartiality.
- Complies with **California Corporations Code § 5510** for fair and transparent member voting processes.
- Adheres to the **Nonprofit Integrity Act (NIA, Gov. Code § 12586)** through public reporting and accountability measures.

## **Additional Best Practices**

- Aligns with MVVCSO Northstars:
  - **Community Focus:** Reflects the needs and values of Ranchita in election processes.
  - **Transparency:** Keeps all procedures and outcomes open to scrutiny.
  - **Inclusivity:** Ensures participation from all Voting Members, including underserved groups.
  - **Serving All Members:** Provides equitable access to the electoral process.
- Incorporates proactive measures like voter education, regular SOP reviews, and post-election assessments to enhance fairness and efficiency.