

Bylaws (2002)

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action

Community and Grassroots Associations Section

Bylaws and Guiding Principles

(Accepted June 8, 2002, by ARNOVA Board of Directors)

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Community and Grassroots Associations (CGA) Section is to provide a setting where those interested in community and grassroots associations can meet and discuss each other's work. The Section helps individuals with research, teaching, and practice interests related to community building and social action through voluntary movements. The Section also helps small nonprofit organizations form personal networks with each other and share knowledge in their mutual interest areas. The Section has an explicit international focus. The Section advocates the importance of interest areas within ARNOVA and among those interested in research, teaching, and practice related to small nonprofit organizations and community development. The Section also plays a leadership role in disseminating research knowledge and in developing materials needed to teach about community and grassroots associations. We also hope to organize special sessions allowing discussion of the research of Community and Grassroots Association People (CGAP). Some of these sessions will be regular annual ARNOVA conference sessions, scheduled so that they do not conflict with each other, while others will be special pre-conference and post-conference sessions. The Section is also organized in recognition that grant support and publication outlets for research in this area are more limited than in other areas of nonprofit sector inquiry. Therefore, the Section seeks to provide publication outlets and also to stimulate publication of research reviews and original work to make knowledge of the field available to students and other scholars.

II. History

The formation of the Community and Grassroots Associations Section began in the early 1990s when several of its founding members proposed that ARNOVA try to recruit new members by organizing a set of interest groups. David Horton Smith made that proposal to the ARNOVA Board in 1994 because of his interest in forming a section on community associations. Several seminar groups touching on this theme had begun in different cities and there was a desire to link these groups through ARNOVA.

Forming the CGA Section became possible when ARNOVA approved a policy on sections in November 1998, elaborated in June 1999. Before the CGA Section could formally be created, the group held roundtable discussions (1995-1997) during designated times at annual ARNOVA conferences. In 1998, prior to the opening of the ARNOVA conference, the group organized a special meeting of people interested in forming a section. In 1999, a formal pre-ARNOVA conference meeting of the Section was held in Arlington, Virginia, and on November 9, 1999, the ARNOVA Board of Directors officially created the Section.

David Horton Smith founded the Section, serving as its Founding Chair from 1998 to 1999. After the Section was formally created, elections were held. As a result of a tie vote in 2000, Carl Milofsky and Thomasina Borkman were elected as the first Co-Chairs, and Smith became Past Chair. The group also elected a Board of Directors, which met for the first time at the 2000 annual ARNOVA conference in New Orleans. In addition to an annual CGA Membership Meeting in 2001, the Section began offering additional seminar sessions on the Wednesday prior to the ARNOVA meetings to allow leisurely and lengthy discussion of work of particular interest to Section members.

III. Membership

Membership in the CGA Section is open to all ARNOVA members on an annual basis. Section members must be ARNOVA members. The ARNOVA Executive Office will collect the membership fee.

IV. Governance

The Board of ARNOVA creates sections. These Bylaws are approved and put into action by a vote of the ARNOVA Board. The policies and procedures established by the section must be in accordance with ARNOVA's Bylaws. If policies and procedures do not conform to ARNOVA's Bylaws, the ARNOVA Board of Directors has the power to vote the section out of existence.

The CGA Section is governed by an Executive Committee whose officers serve for two-year terms. The Executive Committee is comprised of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Past Chair, and a Secretary-Treasurer. Chairs shall not succeed themselves in that office. The Past Chair may hold the positions of Vice-Chair or Secretary-Treasurer.

The Executive Committee members will be members of the Section Board of Directors, and in addition, there will be six, at-large members of the Board elected from the membership for two-year terms. At-large Board members may be re-elected for up to a total of three terms, not necessarily consecutive. The Section Board will discuss and, where reasonable, vote on major policy issues at meetings held in conjunction with the annual ARNOVA conference. The Board also will be consulted from time to time by email on major new policy issues that arise between Board meetings.

If the Chair cannot fulfill his or her duties, the Vice-Chair will assume the role of Chair. If another member of the Executive Committee cannot fulfill his or her duties, the Chair will nominate a member from the Section Board to replace that person. The entire Board will vote on this nomination, and a simple majority is required for election.

There will be an effort to secure nominations for new officers during the annual ARNOVA conference in years ending in odd numbers. Nominations will continue as necessary after the meeting. Elections for new officers will be conducted by mail or electronic mail ballot through the ARNOVA Executive Office and should be completed as soon as possible after the annual ARNOVA conference in odd years. If possible, new officers should take office by February 1 of

even years so they can play an active role in planning CGAP activities for the next annual ARNOVA conference.

Because the CGAP meets only at the annual ARNOVA conference, the Executive Committee is empowered to act in the absence of a full CGAP Board meeting. However, it is expected that the officers will communicate regularly with other Board members, consult with them, and abide by their advice and suggestions.

The Chair, with the assistance of the Executive Committee, can create committees as needed and appoint individuals to chair or serve on those committees. Committee appointments and committee charges should be reported to the full Section Board and, in response, the Board should advise the Chair on these actions.

If members of the Board disagree with policies or actions of the Chair and/or the Executive Committee, any member can submit a motion for action. Another member of the Board must second such motions and then all members of the Board shall vote on them. When this happens, the Executive Director of ARNOVA is asked to receive the motion and second, and is then asked to poll those eligible to vote. A simple majority is required to pass a motion, except when the issue involves an amendment to the Bylaws. In that case, a two-thirds majority is required for passage of the motion. The amended Bylaws must be approved by the ARNOVA Board of Directors.

It is expected that major policy proposals will be discussed at the annual CGA Membership Meeting. "Major policy proposals" are those that do not involve the organization of sessions in conjunction with the annual ARNOVA conference or the creation of committees to do work of the Section. They involve new activities of the Section or significant changes in prior activities. Such policy proposals require a plurality vote of the membership to pass.

To efficiently carry forward the business of the Section, the Executive Committee or the full Board may make changes that are deemed necessary to successfully implement a general policy that has been voted on by the membership. In such cases, an additional vote from the membership is not needed, although a record should be kept of such administrative or policy changes and, when necessary and appropriate, the changes should be reported to the membership at the annual meeting.

Generally, policy initiatives must be proposed to the membership at the CGA Membership Meeting and approval voted on by a plurality of those members who are present. A quorum of the members is not required for a binding vote to occur at the CGA Membership Meeting. A quorum of the Section is defined as one third of the members listed as having paid their Section dues at the time of the annual ARNOVA conference. A mail ballot of the entire membership may also be taken, and for important policy changes, a mail ballot is encouraged. The Board may make important, time-sensitive policy decisions if it is not possible to wait and bring the issue before the full membership meeting.

Any member of the Section may challenge a decision made at the annual CGA Membership Meeting when attendance at the meeting is less than a quorum of the Section. This is done by

contacting the Chair of the Section in writing by December 31 of the calendar year in which the action was taken and asking that an email or mail ballot of the membership be conducted. The Section then will ask the ARNOVA Executive Director to conduct such a ballot and tally the results.

V. Meetings

CGAP will have an annual Membership Meeting in conjunction with the annual ARNOVA conference. Normally, the Membership Meeting is held on the day before the annual ARNOVA conference begins. The Section Board will hold a separate meeting during the ARNOVA conference at a time convenient to the participants.

In addition to these decision-making meetings, CGAP may run scholarly sessions on the day before the ARNOVA conference and after the conference, as well as special paper or panel sessions in conjunction with the ARNOVA conference.

Other meetings may be held as desired and needed.

VI. Programs and Activities

The CGA Section engages in programs that foster the sharing of research knowledge and the development of professional networks. The Section works to foster a sense of community among CGAP within the context of the annual ARNOVA conference. However, with permission of the ARNOVA Board of Directors and assuming that these activities do not directly compete with ARNOVA activities, the Section may organize research, teaching, training, or planning conferences or seminars independently of the ARNOVA annual meeting. Also, with permission of the ARNOVA Board of Directors and assuming that these activities do not directly compete with ARNOVA activities, the CGA Section also may encourage and/or sponsor publication projects that have the objective of providing outlets for research, teaching materials, and the definition and integration of knowledge related to the field.

VII. Resources

As part of ARNOVA, the CGA Section's primary source of revenues are membership dues paid by ARNOVA members in conjunction with their annual fee payments to the parent organization. With prior approval of the ARNOVA Board of Directors, the Section may raise funds through direct fundraising appeals, selling products (e.g., documents) or obtaining grants. A complete fundraising plan must be submitted to ARNOVA for approval to avoid duplication of fundraising efforts.

CGA Section funds will be collected, managed, disbursed, and audited by the ARNOVA Executive Office in accordance with ARNOVA procedures. Part of the dues paid for section membership shall be used for the administrative costs of the office. This amount will be determined by a vote of the ARNOVA Board of Directors.

A preliminary financial statement for the given year and a proposed budget for the next year will be produced by the Secretary/Treasurer annually and presented to the membership at the time of the annual Membership Meeting. These documents will also be given to the Section Board and to the ARNOVA Board during the annual ARNOVA conference. With appropriate revisions, the financial statement for the year will be presented to the ARNOVA Executive Office as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year.

VIII. Reporting

Members of the Executive Committee will communicate with each other regularly and all CGA Section Board members will regularly inform each other of their activities and the activities of the Section's committees. The Chair and the Secretary/Treasurer will produce an annual report on Section activities, which will be presented at the annual CGA Membership Meeting and the Section Board Meeting. Revisions to the report may be made during the CGA Membership Meeting or Section Board Meeting and become part of a final report by December 31 of the same calendar year. Accompanied by a list of Section members for the year, the annual report will be presented to the ARNOVA Executive Office in early January of each year.