

# **NAHJ ELECTIONS GUIDE**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC JOURNALISTS

# **NAHJ**

ASOCIACIÓN NACIONAL DE PERIODISTAS HISPANOS

**Reformatted for Election Season 2020**

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## Purpose

This manual is meant to guide the Elections Committee, board candidates, and voters through the NAHJ elections process. It draws from NAHJ's bylaws, staff experience and recommendations from NAHJ's attorney. Where necessary, the manual codifies practices to be used by the Committee when identifying and vetting candidates for board eligibility, and rules of conduct for candidates, voters and the Committee during the elections period; and the basic duties of those elected to the board.

## About the 2020 Elections

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, NAHJ will be holding its 2020 board elections entirely electronically. The Board of Directors voted to schedule the 2020 elections from September 28 to October 2, following the [NAHJ/NABJ virtual convention and career fair](#) that will take place August 5-8, 2020.

The NAHJ elections committee, composed of NAHJ board members appointed by the president as stated in the bylaws, will oversee candidate vetting, the elections process and publication of results. In compliance with NAHJ bylaws, the Board of Directors approved the formation of an advisory committee to help support the Elections Committee, including with logistics and candidate recruitment.

Members can get more details about the 2020 elections and submit their candidate nominations online by visiting the **2020 NAHJ Elections hub**: <https://nahj.memberclicks.net/2020-nahj-elections>

**The 10 positions up for election this year are:** President, Financial Officer, Secretary, Vice President for Print, Vice President for Broadcast, Vice President for Digital, Spanish Language At-Large Officer, Academic At-Large Officer, General At-Large Officer and Student Representative.

## Board Positions

NAHJ's Board of Directors has 18 members, including:

### **President:**

The President shall, subject to the control of the Board of Directors, generally supervise, direct, and control the business and the officers of the corporation. They shall preside at all meetings of the members and at all meetings of the Board of Directors. They shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the bylaws.

### **Vice President of Print, Vice President of Broadcast, Vice President of Online:**

In the absence or disability of the president, the Vice Presidents shall perform all the duties of the president, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the president. The vice president receiving the most votes from the general membership during the most recent election shall be the first to succeed the president in case of absence or vacancy. The vice

presidents shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as from time-to-time may be prescribed for them, respectively, by the Board of Directors.

**Financial Officer:**

The Financial Officer shall keep and maintain the organization's accounts, including its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, losses, capital, retained earnings, and other matters customarily included in financial statements; shall be responsible for depositing and disbursing the organization's money and valuables; shall keep a record of all of their transactions as financial officer and of the financial condition of the corporation; and shall have other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the bylaws.

**Secretary:**

The Secretary shall keep and maintain the minutes of all the meetings and actions of directors, the names of those present at such meetings, the number of members present or represented at members' meetings, and the proceedings of such meetings; shall keep a record of the corporation's members, showing the names of all members, their addresses, and the class of membership held by each; and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors or the bylaws.

**Spanish Language At-Large Officer:**

The Spanish Language At-Large Officer is the board's liaison for members who work for Spanish language media outlets, or who write or communicate primarily in Spanish. The candidate shall keep abreast of the concerns and activities of those members, and advise on programming and other courses of action.

**Academic At-Large Officer:**

The Academic At-Large officer is the board's liaison for academic members who institutes of higher education. They shall keep abreast of the concerns and activities of those members, and advise on programming and other courses of action.

**General At-Large Officer:**

The General At-Large Officer is the board's liaison for NAHJ's general membership. They shall keep abreast of the concerns and activities of the general membership, and advise on programming and other courses of action.

**8 Regional Directors:**

Each Regional Director is the board liaison for members living in the specified states (see below). They should keep abreast of the concerns and activities of the individual members, and professional and student chapters in their region. The regional directors shall also advise on programming for their

members, and attempt to organize a regular regional get-togethers, whether conventions, trainings or some other activity.

- Region 1 Director: Caribbean -- Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
- Region 2 Director: Northeast -- Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Region 3 Director: Mid-Atlantic -- Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington D.C., West Virginia
- Region 4 Director: South -- Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
- Region 5 Director: South Central -- Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- Region 6 Director: Midwest -- Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- Region 7 Director: Southwest -- Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- Region 8 Director: Pacific -- Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

**Student Representative:**

The Student Representative is the board liaison for NAHJ's student members. They should keep abreast of student member concerns and activities and relay them to the board, and advise on programming for student members and other courses of action.

## Board Terms

All board members, with the exception of the Student Representative, serve two year terms. The Student Representative serves a one-year term. The President may only serve for one term.

Executive officers (President, Vice Presidents, Financial Officer and Secretary) and At-Large Officers will be elected every two years at the Annual Convention in even years. Regional Directors will be elected every two years at the Annual Convention in odd years.

In the event of a resignation from the Board, the remaining Board members may appoint a successor to fulfill the remaining term. Vacancies that are not result of a resignation must be filled through an election, whether regular or specially-held.

## Candidate Eligibility Requirements

Each candidate for an open NAHJ Executive Board position must meet certain criteria, as laid out in the organization's bylaws, both to run for office and to serve on the Board. A copy of the bylaws can be found on the [NAHJ Website](#).

***An Elections Committee (see page 8) will vet each candidate to ensure that they are eligible to run for office and serve on the Board. In order to perform that duty, any NAHJ member interested in running***

*for the Board is asked to provide the Committee with a current resume; contact information for their current employer or, for those running for Student Rep, their university registrar; and contact information for two professional or academic references (preferably, NAHJ members) at the time that they decide to run.*

*The Elections Committee will use this information to verify that each candidate meets the requirements to hold a seat on the Board, and that the candidate is able to perform Board duties. Please expect that the Elections Committee will call your employer and references.*

*In the event that the Elections Committee finds that a potential candidate is not eligible for office, that candidate will be notified immediately and, if possible, given the opportunity to meet the necessary qualifications.*

**The criteria to run and serve in each position are summarized as follows:**

**President:**

The President must be a REGULAR member of NAHJ and a working journalist. They must have served at least one term on the Board of Directors in any capacity before serving as president. A member's past service on the board need not immediately precede their term as president. This person must gather 25 signatures from regular members in good standing (or 5 percent of total regular membership) to be on the ballot. Moreover, the President must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Vice President of Print:**

The VP of Print must be a REGULAR member who works at a print publication. This person must gather 25 signatures from regular members in good standing (or 5 percent of total regular membership) to be on the ballot. Moreover, the Vice President of Print must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Vice President of Broadcast:**

The VP of Broadcast must be a REGULAR member who works at a broadcast news outlet. This person must gather 25 signatures from regular members in good standing (or 5 percent of total regular membership) to be on the ballot. Moreover, the Vice President of Broadcast must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Vice President of Online:**

The VP of Online must be a REGULAR member who works at an online publication, or as a news gatherer whose main role is that of an online journalist. The person may work in traditional print or broadcast media, but their job must clearly be defined by the digital dissemination of news. To be on the ballot, candidates must gather 25 signatures (or 5 percent of total regular membership) from regular members in good standing. Moreover, the Vice President of Broadcast must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Spanish-Language At-Large Officer:**

The Spanish Language At-Large Officer must be a REGULAR member who works Spanish language media. This person must gather 25 signatures from regular members in good standing (or 5 percent of total regular membership) to be on the ballot. Moreover, the Spanish Language At-Large Officer must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Academic At-Large Officer:**

The Academic At-Large Officer must be an ACADEMIC member who works as a FULL-TIME instructor at a recognized and accredited institution of higher learning. The academic officer must be an instructor in news gathering and dissemination. All regular members in good standing will vote in this election. To be on the ballot, a candidate must gather 25 signatures (or 5 percent) from regular members in good standing. Moreover, the Academic Officer must REMAIN an instructor throughout his or her tenure.

**General At-Large Officer:**

The General At-Large Officer must be a REGULAR member, and a working journalist. This person must gather 25 signatures from regular members in good standing (or 5 percent of total regular membership) to be on the ballot. Moreover, the Spanish Language At-Large Officer must REMAIN a working journalist throughout his or her tenure.

**Regional Directors:**

Regional Director candidates need to be REGULAR members in good standing to qualify for the ballot, and must work in the region they represent. To qualify, each candidate needs a petition with 10 signatures of support from members in good standing within their region.

Again, the regions are:

- Region 1 Director: Caribbean -- Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
- Region 2 Director: Northeast -- Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Region 3 Director: Mid-Atlantic -- Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington D.C., West Virginia
- Region 4 Director: South -- Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
- Region 5 Director: South Central -- Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- Region 6 Director: Midwest -- Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- Region 7 Director: Southwest -- Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- Region 8 Director: Pacific -- Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

**Student Representative:**

Candidates must be a STUDENT MEMBER in good standing, and must have demonstrated an interest in broadcast, print or new media journalism, including taking media-related classes or working for a student media outlet. They must gather 25 signatures of student members in good standing, or 5 percent of the total student membership, and be a FULL-TIME student at a recognized and accredited college or university. Moreover, the student must REMAIN a full-time student at a recognized and accredited college throughout his/her tenure.

**\*Please note that candidates are allowed to include their own signature to qualify for the ballot.\***

## **Elections Committee**

The Elections Committee is a group of NAHJ board members appointed by the president as stated in the bylaws to oversee candidate recruitment and vetting, the elections process, and publication of results. The committee is expected to identify potential candidates, help those members through the qualification process and campaigning, and oversee voting and verification of election results.

At the start of the elections process, the Committee will put out a call for nominations and a list of candidate requirements. The committee will also publish an elections timeline, which will set dates for candidates to qualify for the ballot, for potential voters to renew or verify their good standing, and for the opening and closing of the polls.

## **Candidate Qualifications and Vetting**

Any NAHJ member who wants to be considered for a position on the board must be a member in good standing, with dues paid, and must meet the criteria of the position for which they are running, as described above and in NAHJ's bylaws. Candidates' qualifications - including employment or student status - will be verified by the Elections Committee.

### **Potential candidates also should:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to NAHJ through regular involvement in the organization.
  - Activities include but are not limited to:
    - Serving as an active member of a committee or initiative
    - Routine attendance at NAHJ conferences and events
    - Financial support of NAHJ and its efforts
- Demonstrated a commitment to journalism by having been active within his or her place of employment at a news gathering organization, or college or university journalism program.

### **The candidate, if elected, must be prepared to fulfill the responsibilities of an NAHJ board member, including:**

- Being active, engaged and committed to NAHJ's growth and success;



- Being committed to editorial independence, journalistic excellence, freedom of expression and freedom of access across all media platforms;
- Being committed to developing and supporting members at all stages of their careers through NAHJ's programs, particularly its annual conference and regional events, and through its publications and partnerships
- Participating in conference calls, attending three in-person board meetings at their own expense or the expense of their news organization, university or college
- Leading or participating in various initiatives, including fundraising, membership and chapter development, outreach, and contributing directly to the organization's fundraising drives including
  - Representing NAHJ at industry-related events
  - Chairing or serving on standing and ad hoc committees; organizing and/or hosting local events
- Being familiar with NAHJ's bylaws and the organization's history.

**Qualifying for the ballot:**

In order to qualify for the ballot, potential candidates must provide the Election Committee with the required number of signatures from members in good standing by the scheduled deadline, and must pass the candidate vetting process. NAHJ members in good standing can submit their nominations and signatures via an [online form on the 2020 NAHJ elections hub](#).

**Vetting process:**

The Elections Committee will screen candidates, and present the final slate to members for voting.

In order to facilitate the screening process, candidates are asked to provide:

1. A current resume
2. Two professional references
3. Contact information for their current employer

In the case of the Student Representative, candidates should provide:

1. A current resume
2. Two professional or academic references
3. Contact information for their school's registrar

The Elections Committee will use this information to verify that each candidate meets the requirements to hold a seat on the Board, and that the candidate is able to perform Board duties.

Please expect that the Elections Committee will call your employer and references.

In the event that the Elections Committee finds that a potential candidate is not eligible for office, that candidate will be notified immediately and, if possible, given the opportunity to meet the necessary qualifications.

Candidates who qualify for the ballot will be asked to provide:

1. A headshot
2. A 250-word bio
3. A 250-word candidate statement to be disseminated to members when the slate is announced

**Policy for Elections Committee Members on Candidate Signatures:**

The Elections Committee is an appointed body that helps find candidates, and vets their qualifications for the NAHJ Executive Board. In order to ensure a fair elections process, the Committee strives for independence, and, in nearly all cases, its members will refrain from lending their signatures to help a potential candidate qualify for the ballot.

However, if the Committee determines in an election year that (1) too many seats might remain vacant, and (2) that the majority of potential candidates are in danger of not qualifying for the ballot due to a lack of member signatures, the Committee will authorize its members to lend their signatures to all potential candidates that they are individually qualified to sign for (i.e., in such a case, an Election Committee member must sign for all potential officer candidates, and all potential regional candidates for the region in which the Committee member resides). The Committee members' signatures will not constitute an endorsement of any candidate, nor will they mean that a candidate's qualifications for office have been vetted and confirmed by the Committee.

**Campaigning:**

Candidates will receive a list of eligible voters and their email addresses so that they may campaign. In order to ensure that NAHJ members are not spammed, candidates are only allowed to send two direct emails or electronic messages to each eligible voter. Candidates may campaign through other means, including informational fliers, campaign buttons, Facebook fan pages, blogs, and videos uploaded to a social media site.

**Write-Ins:**

There will be a blank space on the ballot for write-in candidates. Any qualified NAHJ member may run a write-in campaign, but will be subjected to the same vetting process and standards as candidates officially named on the ballot. A write-in candidate will not be allowed to sit on the board unless they pass the screening process.

Write-in candidates may also request a listing of eligible voters but will be subject to the same rules of campaigning as those named on the ballot.

**Voting:**

NAHJ members in good standing, with dues paid, by the date specified (see page 11) will be eligible to vote electronically and the vote will be sent to the Elections Committee. Each member may cast one ballot and must do so by 5 pm on the days the polls close. **Important note: The 2020 elections will be held entirely electronically due to the coronavirus pandemic.**

Because the electronic voting system is disabled automatically by the company that NAHJ uses to prepare and tally the ballots, voters are strongly urged to cast their ballots early. Voters in-line at the Convention voting booth who have not cast a ballot when the polls close cannot be accommodated.

## **2020 Elections Timeline and Deadlines**

### **2020 NAHJ Elections Timeline**

**Monday, July 13:** Call for nominations and call for candidates.

**Thursday, July 30:** The date of record.

*Members must be in good standing by this date to be eligible to vote (That means you must pay your dues by this date to vote).*

**Friday, August 12:** Deadline to receive nominations. Candidates send in their materials.

**August 13-31:** Vetting period. To be completed by the Elections Committee.

**Friday, August 28:** Deadline to qualify for the ballot.

**Monday, August 31:** NAHJ announces candidates.

**Monday, August 31 to Sunday, September 27:** Campaign period.

**Monday, September 28:** Election begins. Polls are open for one week.

**Monday, October 2:** Elections close at 5 p.m. ET

**Tuesday, October 3:** NAHJ announces winners.

### **Further information about these deadlines and requirements**

#### **Call for nominations and candidate requirements:**

The Elections Committee should put out a call for nominations, and publish a list of open seats and candidate requirements no less than one month (30 days) before the deadline to qualify for the ballot.

Interested NAHJ members should notify the Elections Committee as soon as possible of their desire to run for office, and request a contact list for NAHJ members so that candidates may begin gathering signatures.

**Deadline for qualifying for the ballot:**

Signatures from members in good standing meant to help potential candidates qualify for the ballot must be received by the Elections Committee -- preferably sent to the Committee chair -- before midnight (11:59 pm) on the 35th day preceding the election, which the committee here defines as the 35 day preceding the scheduled closing of the polls.

**Deadline for candidates to send in their vetting materials:**

Candidates must turn in their vetting materials, headshot, bios, and candidate statements to the Elections

Committee within one week (7 days) of qualifying for the ballot. Failure to do will delay candidates' screening and ballot preparations, and will be taken by the Committee as a candidate's withdrawal from the race unless the Committee is notified of a potential problem before deadline.

**Deadline to become a member in good standing:**

NAHJ members must be members in good standing, with their dues paid, on the same date that candidates' vetting materials are due. This is because the company that NAHJ uses to prepare and tally its electronic ballots needs several weeks to create those ballots and make them accessible to eligible voters.

**Deadline to request a paper or absentee ballot:**

Eligible voters must request a paper ballot at least one week (7 days) prior to the opening of the polls.

Paper ballots should be sent to the Elections Committee.

**Scheduling the opening of the polls:**

The committee has determined that the polls should be open for no less than two weeks, in order to give all members -- whether voting electronically, in person, or by absentee -- enough time to cast their ballot.

**Scheduling the closing of the polls:**

The committee has determined that the polls should close at 5 p.m. on the night of the Annual Convention's Hall of Fame Gala. This will be done electronically by the company NAHJ uses to prepare and tally Ballots.

## **BALLOT COUNTING AND ELECTIONS RESULTS**

The Elections Committee will verify the elections results, under the watch of the Executive Director and any candidate who wishes to be present. Results are to be announced at the Hall of Fame Gala.

**Post-election:**

Candidates elected to Board of Directors **ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THEIR FIRST BOARD MEETING ON THE SCHEDULED DATE FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE ELECTIONS** (usually, the morning after the Annual Convention's "Hall of Fame Gala").

By the Fall Board meeting, all Regional Directors should have identified an alternate, as required in the bylaws, who can serve in case of their absence. Those alternates will also be placed on a list of potential future board candidates kept by the Elections Committee. All other board members are also asked to identify a potential successor to be added to the Elections Committee's list.