Bylaws are written rules that help an organization map out its purpose and conduct its business. They are useful for many types of organizations, including youth boards, program area committees and leadership advisory boards.

Bylaws should be written when a group is just being organized; other times that writing bylaws is useful are when an organization has evolved to different functions from its original mission and when clarifications are needed regarding operating procedures or election of officers.

Generally, bylaws outline eight major areas:

- Name of the organization
- Purpose of the organization
- Membership/attendance
- Officer responsibilities
- Meeting requirements
- Quorum
- Amendment procedures
- Other rules (such as parliamentary procedure)

Task forces and coalitions

For volunteer groups, bylaws can help define the roles of task forces and coalitions. They provide detailed work assignments, which can help increase the impact of educational programs in the county.

A task force or coalition is typically made up of three to five people who are interested in a specific educational area and who serve for 1 year. Task force/coalition membership changes yearly as educational programming changes.

A county agent may appoint as many task forces/coalitions as needed. Members of these groups can include resource people who are not members of the Program Area Committee.

Example bylaws

In the following pages are examples of bylaws for leadership advisory boards, program area committees and youth boards. The examples are not meant to be replicated exactly. Instead, they should be used as a guide in developing bylaws for your county's specific needs. Your program may need
additional bylaw sections not provided here, and some articles in the examples may not pertain to your county.

Consider these steps in developing bylaws to fit your group’s needs:

1. **Gather examples of the bylaws from similar organizations.** There’s no need to start from scratch. Review the bylaws of other organizations and determine whether they have rules that your volunteer group could use or adapt.

2. **Decide who will write and approve the bylaws.** Before you begin writing the bylaws, decide who will approve them: Is it the current volunteer group as a whole, the officers, the county Extension agents, or a combination?
   
   Also, appoint one person to take the lead in writing the initial draft of bylaws.

3. **Develop a first draft.** Write a first draft and then allow the group designated to approve them to meet at least once to review and comment on it. During this discussion, assign one person to take notes, and allow the original author to make the corrections before distributing the draft to the rest of the group.

4. **Write a second draft, and meet again to discuss it.** Distribute copies of the corrected draft to all the members of the group who will vote on it. Make the final edits based on the discussion.

5. **Complete and approve the final draft.** After the second draft is reviewed and corrections are made, the group assigned to develop the bylaws should present them to the organization for final approval.

6. **Use your bylaws.** Once the bylaws have been adopted, make sure that the volunteer organization puts them into practice.

**Summary**

Writing bylaws need not be overwhelming or frustrating. The key is to remember your organization’s mission and objectives. Investigate other organizations to find examples, and keep your bylaws simple and straightforward. Your group will be able to work more effectively if it follows the policies and procedures outlined in your bylaws.

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Bylaws

XXX County Leadership Advisory Board
Proposed for Adoption—Month, Day, 2006

Article 1. Name

Example: The name of this organization shall be the XXX County Leadership Advisory Board and herein called the “board” or the “LAB.”

Article 2. Purpose

Example Part 1: The LAB develops a long-term vision for the county Extension program, advocates for and interprets the program throughout the county, and helps develop resources for the county program. It is responsible for the broad, overall perspective of county programming.

Specifically the LAB focuses on these specific objectives:

- Review the county Extension program’s mission and purpose and the local program’s goals, objectives and primary audiences served
- Develop resources to ensure that high-quality programs can be implemented
- Ensure that accountability and legal and ethical integrity are maintained
- Monitor and strengthen the educational program
- Enhance the county Extension program’s public standing
- Serve as the Community and Economic Development Program Area Committee (optional)

Example Part 2: XXX County’s Leadership Advisory Board supports and abides by the established policies of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
Article 3. Membership and attendance

Membership shall be open to community leaders who have a genuine interest in the community and Texas AgriLife Extension Service in XXX County.

The county Leadership Advisory Board should have at least 10 but no more than 20 members. [Note: A county may specify the number to serve.]

Each member serves a 3-year term, with the terms staggered so that one-third of the members is replaced each year. Leadership Advisory Board members do not have to be members of other committees.

LAB members have these major responsibilities:

• Attend all board meetings. The LAB meets approximately twice a year. The president and county Extension agent(s) will provide meeting dates well in advance.
• Stay informed about the organization’s mission, services, policies and programs
• Review agendas before the meetings and be ready to discuss the agenda items
• Serve on subcommittees and assist with special assignments as needed
• Inform others about Texas AgriLife Extension Service
• Work with the county Extension agents to recruit new LAB members
• Keep current on developments concerning the county Extension program
• Help the board carry out its responsibilities, such as developing a long-term vision, reviewing financial statements and being advocates for the county Extension program

Article 4. Officers

The LAB officers are elected at the annual fall meeting and serve 1-year terms. Elections must be coordinated by the county Extension agent(s) following Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

To be eligible for an office, a person must be nominated by an LAB member. Before the council's annual meeting, the LAB may select a nominating committee of three LAB members. If the LAB selects a nominating committee, this committee shall nominate at least one qualified candidate for each of the council officers to be elected at the upcoming LAB meeting. The nominating committee shall ascertain that those nominated will serve if elected.

A quorum is needed for elections to take place. Each LAB should have a president, vice president and secretary but may add other offices if needed. Listed below are the functions of the LAB officers.

President

• Oversees board and executive committee meetings
• Acts as a spokesperson for the organization
• Works with the county Extension agents to recruit new LAB members
• Calls special LAB meetings when needed
• Appoints members to special committees as needed
• Helps the county Extension agents evaluate the board members’ roles and performance
Vice president
- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Carries out special assignments as requested by the board president
- Understands the duties of the board president and performs them when the president is absent

Secretary
- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Maintains all board records and ensures their accuracy
- Reviews board minutes
- Notifies members of board and committee meetings when notice is required
- Assumes the responsibilities of the president and vice president in their absence

No person shall be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

The duties of the officers shall be those that usually pertain to their offices and those that are stated in these bylaws as well as other duties assigned to them by the LAB.

When a vacancy in the office of president occurs, the vice president will succeed to the position of president for the remainder of the term in office. The LAB shall promptly fill the remaining term of other vacancies in office by appointment from the membership.

Article 5. LAB meetings

Notes: It is a good idea to clearly define times of year that the LAB typically meets so that the members understand the time frame up front. Also, this section should include the time of year when elections will be held.

The LAB shall meet twice annually. One meeting will be held in the spring and the other in the fall. General agenda items for the two meetings are listed below.

Spring
- Review the strategic plan for the county Extension program to ensure that outcomes are being met
- Discuss long-term county educational plans to ensure that the programs are relevant to the county
- Review county Extension budgets from the previous year and potential spending for the current year
- Plan for the recruitment of new members
- Hear updates on how programs are being implemented
- Discuss how to diversify and expand the program

Fall
- Hear an in-depth report from Extension faculty about the county programs conducted that program year, including the results of outcome and output programs
- Develop strategies to demonstrate the impact of the county program
- Elect and install officers for the coming year
• Review program plans for the coming year (These plans are developed by Extension faculty with guidance from program area committees and youth boards).

• Determine strategies for developing resources to support major programming efforts.

The president shall designate the place, date and time of the LAB meetings. The secretary shall notify the LAB members about each meeting at least 2 weeks before the meeting date.

**Article 6. Quorum**

> Notes: The bylaws should define a quorum for voting to take place. Most literature stipulates that at least 51 percent of the membership should be present.

A quorum of the LAB consists of a minimum of 51 percent of the members present at a properly called meeting of the LAB. Properly called meetings are those for which the secretary has provided 2 weeks’ notice to all members of the LAB.

**Article 7. Amendments**

> Note: If the bylaws will need to be amended, include the steps and rules to develop, vote on and implement the changes.

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a properly called meeting of the LAB. At least 2 weeks before the meeting, the secretary shall send each member of record an announcement of the meeting with notice that bylaw changes or amendments are to be acted upon. A copy of proposed amendments or changes shall be included in the meeting notice.

**Article 8. Task forces and coalitions**

> Notes: The organization may decide to address specific issues or investigate matters by forming small task forces or coalitions. Task forces are groups that serve for 1 year or less; coalitions are formed to address objectives for more than 1 year.

The LAB shall decide whether a task force or coalition should be formed to address an issue. The LAB may dissolve task forces or coalitions as well as create new ones to fulfill its plans and objectives.

Task forces and coalitions shall be empowered by the LAB to consider, take action or investigate matters consistent with the plans and purposes of the LAB.

Each task force and coalition will have a chair, and the person serving as chair will serve in this capacity until the task force or coalition has completed its task and/or is dissolved.

Task force and coalition activities shall make reports to the LAB at its meetings. A committee representative shall give the report and submit a copy to the LAB.

**Article 9. Rules of order**

> Notes: Each group should follow some type of rules to conduct meetings. The most common is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

The newest revision of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the authority on all questions of parliamentary law in which they are applicable and consistent with these bylaws.
Bylaws

XXX County Program Area Committee—ANR, FCS or CED
Proposed for Adoption—Month, Day, Year

Article 1. Name

Example: The name of this organization shall be the XXX County Program Area Committee–XX and herein called the “committee” or the “PAC.”

Notes: State the name of the organization.

Article 2. Purpose

Example Part 1: The XXX County Program Area Committee–XX advises the county Extension agents about issues and needs in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and community or economic development. This is done by assisting the county Extension agent in six programmatic areas:

- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Interpretation
- Committee membership to ensure optimum representation and diversity
- Use of the best practices for the management of external support funds adopted by The Texas A&M University System and Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Example Part 2: The XXX County Program Area Committee–XX supports and abides by the established policies of Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Notes: Separate the purpose into two parts. Part 1 should provide a general statement about the organization’s purpose and goals. Part 2 should state that the organization supports Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
Article 3. Membership and attendance

Membership shall be open to community leaders who have a genuine interest in the programmatic area in XXX County. The county Program Area Committee–XX should have at least 8 but no more than 20 members. [Note: A county may specify the number to serve.]

Each member serves a 3-year term, with the terms staggered so that one-third of the members is replaced each year. PAC members do not have to be members of other committees.

The members have these major responsibilities:

- Attend all meetings. The Program Area Committee–XX meets approximately twice a year. The president and county Extension agent(s) will provide meeting dates well in advance.
- Stay informed about the organization's mission, services, policies and programs
- Review agendas before the meetings and be ready to discuss the agenda items
- Serve on task forces or coalitions and assist with special assignments as needed
- Keep current on developments concerning the county Extension base program (ANR, FCS, CED)

Article 4. Officers

The Program Area Committee–XX officers are elected at the annual fall meeting and serve 1-year terms. Elections must be coordinated by the county Extension agent(s) following Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

To be eligible for an office, individuals must be nominated by a PAC member.

A quorum is needed for elections to take place. Each PAC should have a president, vice president and secretary but may add other offices if needed. Listed below are the functions of the Program Area Committee–XX officers.

President

- Oversees PAC board and executive committee meetings
- Acts as a spokesperson for the organization
- Works with the county Extension agents to recruit new PAC members
- Calls special PAC meetings when needed
- Appoints members to special committees as needed
- Helps the county Extension agents evaluate board members’ roles and performance

Vice president

- Attends all PAC board meetings
- Serves on the PAC executive committee
- Carries out special assignments as requested by the board president
- Understands the duties of the board president and performs them when the president is absent
Secretary

- Attends all PAC board meetings
- Serves on the PAC executive committee
- Maintains all board records and ensures their accuracy
- Reviews board minutes
- Notifies members of board and committee meetings when notice is required
- Assumes the responsibilities of the president and vice president in their absence

No person shall be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

The duties of the officers shall be those that usually pertain to their offices and those duties stated in these bylaws as well as other duties assigned to them by the PAC.

When a vacancy in the office of president occurs, the vice president will succeed to the position of president for the remainder of the term in office. The PAC shall promptly fill the remaining term of other vacancies in office by appointment from the membership.

Article 5. Program Area Committee–XX meetings

Notes: It is a good idea to clearly define times of the year that the Program Area Committee–XX typically meets so that members understand the timeframe up front. Also, this section includes the time of year when elections will be held.

The Program Area Committee–XX shall meet twice annually. One meeting will be in the spring and the other in the fall. General agenda items for the two meetings are listed below.

Spring
- Review the implementation of all programs
- Review the strategic plan of the county Extension program to ensure that outcomes are being met
- Hear an update on task force/coalition groups
- Discuss the recruitment of new members
- Conduct other business as needed

Fall
- Report the results available from all outcome/output programs for that programming year
- Update the full committee on task force/coalition work
- Review program plans developed for the coming year
- Determine whether a task force/coalition should be developed

The president shall designate the place, date and time of the PAC meeting. The secretary shall notify the PAC members of each meeting at least 2 weeks before the meeting date.

Article 6. Quorum

Notes: For voting to take place, the bylaws should probably address and define a quorum. Most literature stipulates that at least 51 percent of the membership should be present.

A quorum of the Program Area Committee–XX consists of a minimum of 51 percent of members present at a properly called meeting of the PAC. A properly called meeting is one for which the secretary has provided 2 weeks’ notice to all committee members.
Article 7. Amendments

Note: If the bylaws need to be amended, include the steps and rules to develop, vote on and implement the changes.

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a properly called meeting of the Program Area Committee–XX. At least 2 weeks before the meeting, the secretary shall send an announcement of the meeting to each member of record with notice that bylaw changes or amendments are to be acted upon. A copy of proposed amendments or changes shall be included in the meeting notice.

Article 8. Task forces and coalitions

Notes: The organization may decide to address specific issues or investigate matters by forming small task forces or coalitions. Task forces are groups that serve for 1 year or less; coalitions are formed to address objectives for more than 1 year.

The Program Area Committee–XX shall decide whether a task force or coalition should be formed to address an issue. The PAC may dissolve task forces or coalitions as well as create new ones to fulfill its plans and objectives.

Task forces and coalitions shall be empowered by the Program Area Committee–XX to consider, take action or investigate matters consistent with its plans and purposes.

Each task force and coalition will have a chair, and the person serving as chair will serve in this capacity until the task force or coalition has completed its task and is dissolved.

Reports of task force or coalition activities shall be made to the Program Area Committee–XX at its meetings. A committee representative shall give the report and submit a copy to the PAC.

Article 9. Rules of order

Notes: Each group should follow some type of rules to conduct meetings. The most common is Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the authority on all questions of parliamentary law in which they are applicable and consistent with these bylaws.
Article 1. Name

Example: The name of this organization shall be the XXX County Youth Board and herein called the “youth board” or the “YB.”

Article 2. Purpose

Example Part 1: The XXX County Youth Board advises the county Extension agents about issues and needs in the areas of youth development. This is done by assisting the county Extension agent in six programmatic areas:
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Interpretation
- Committee membership to ensure optimum representation and diversity
- Use of the best practices for the management of external support funds adopted by The Texas A&M University System and Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Example Part 2: XXX County Youth Board abides and supports established Texas AgriLife Extension Service’s policies.

Article 3. Membership and attendance

Notes: This article should include a statement about general membership, standards and requirements. To be a member, individuals must attend organizational meetings and carry out other defined tasks, roles and responsibilities.
Membership shall be open to youth and adult leaders who have a genuine interest in the youth development in XXX County. The YB should have at least 8 but no more than 15 members. [Note: A county may specify the number to serve.]

Each member serves a 2-year term, with the terms staggered so that one-third of the members is replaced each year. The Youth Board should have a ratio of three youths to one adult. The YB members do not have to be members of other committees. Major responsibilities of members are listed below.

- Attend all meetings. The county Youth Board meets about twice a year. The president and county Extension agent(s) will provide meeting dates well in advance.
- Stay informed about the organization’s mission, services, policies and programs
- Review agendas before meetings and be ready to discuss agenda items
- Serve on task forces or coalitions and assists with special assignments as needed
- Keep current on developments concerning the county Extension base program (ANR, FCS, CED)

### Article 4. Officers

The YB officers are elected at the annual fall meeting and serve 1-year terms. Elections must be coordinated by the county Extension agent(s) following Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised. To be eligible for an office, a person must be nominated by a county YB member.

A quorum is needed for elections to take place. Each YB should have a president, vice president and secretary but may add other offices if needed. Listed below are the functions of the YB officers.

**President**
- Oversees board and executive committee meetings
- Acts as a spokesperson for the organization
- Works with the county Extension agents to recruit new YB members
- Calls special YB meetings when needed
- Appoints members to special committees as needed
- Helps the county Extension agents evaluate board members’ roles and performance

**Vice president**
- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Carries out special assignments as requested by the board president
- Understands the duties of the board president and performs them when the president is absent

**Secretary**
- Attends all board meetings
- Serves on the executive committee
- Maintains all board records and ensures their accuracy
- Reviews board minutes
- Notifies members of board and committee meetings when notice is required
- Assumes the responsibilities of the president and vice president in their absence
No person shall be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

The duties of the officers shall be those that usually pertain to their offices and those duties stated in these bylaws as well as other duties assigned to them by the YB.

When a vacancy in the office of president occurs, the vice president will succeed to the position of president for the remainder of the term in office. The YB shall promptly fill the remaining term of other vacancies in office by appointment from the membership.

**Article 5. Youth Board meetings**

*Notes: It is a good idea to clearly define times of the year that the Youth Board typically meets so that members understand the time frame up front. Also, this section should include the time of the year when elections would be held.*

The YB shall meet twice annually. One meeting will be in the spring and the other in the fall. General agenda items for the two meetings are listed below.

**Spring**
- Review the implementation of all programs
- Review the county Extension program strategic plan to ensure that outcomes are being met
- Hear an update on task force/coalition groups
- Discuss the recruitment of new members
- Conduct other business as needed

**Fall**
- Report the results available on all outcome/output programs for that programming year
- Update the full committee on task force/coalition work
- Review program plans developed for the coming year
- Determine if a task force/coalition needs to be developed

The president shall designate the place, date and time of YB meetings. The secretary shall notify the YB membership of each meeting at least 2 weeks before the meeting date.

**Article 6. Quorum**

*Notes: The bylaws should probably define a quorum for voting to take place. Most literature stipulates that at least 51 percent of the membership should be present.*

A quorum of the YB consists of a minimum of 51 percent of members present at a properly called meeting of the YB. A properly called meeting is one for which the secretary has provided 2 weeks’ notice to all board members.

**Article 7. Amendments**

*Note: If the bylaws need to be amended, include the steps and rules to develop, vote on and implement the changes.*

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a properly called meeting of the YB. At least 2 weeks before the meeting, the secretary shall send an announcement of the meeting to each member of record with notice that bylaw changes or amendments are to be acted upon. A copy of proposed amendments or changes shall be included in the meeting notice.
Article 8. Task forces and coalitions

Notes: The organization may decide to address specific issues or investigate matters by forming small task forces or coalitions. Task forces are groups that serve for 1 year or less; coalitions are formed to address objectives for more than 1 year.

The YB shall decide whether a task force or coalition should be formed to address an issue. The Youth Board may dissolve task forces or coalitions as well as create new ones to fulfill its plans and objectives.

Task forces and coalitions shall be empowered by the YB to consider, take action or investigate matters consistent with the plans and purposes of the YB.

Each task force and coalition will have a chair, and the person serving as chair will serve in this capacity until the task force or coalition has completed its task and is dissolved.

Reports of task force or coalition activities shall be made to the YB at its meetings. A committee representative shall give the report and submit a copy to the YB.

Task force or coalition members do not have to be members of the YB.

Article 9. Rules of order

Notes: Each group should follow some type of rules to conduct meetings. The most common is Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the authority on all questions of parliamentary law in which they are applicable and consistent with these bylaws.