

# REGIONAL GUIDELINES

## La Verna Region



LA VERNA - SFO - REGION

Terms:

**Regional Fraternity**– Union of all local fraternities in the La Verna Region.

**Regional Fraternity Council**– all the ministers of the local fraternities in the Region, the members of the Regional Executive Council and Regional Spiritual Assistant(s).

**Regional Executive Council**– Perpetually professed members of the OFS in La Verna Region who are elected to the REC by the members of the Regional Fraternity Council. To fill other needed ministries, professed secular Franciscans may be appointed by Regional Executive Council. Appointed members of the REC are only consultative and do not have a vote on the REC. The Regional Spiritual Assistant(s) is/are appointed to the REC by the major superior (or his delegate) of the First Order or Third Order Regular (TOR).

### Chapter One– The Regional Fraternity

1. The Regional Fraternity of the La Verna Region of the OFS consists of local fraternities in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Regional Fraternity assures the link between the local OFS fraternities of the Region with the OFS National Fraternity of the USA (NAFRA) (Cf. General Constitutions article 61.1).
2.
  - a. The **Chapter** gathering of the Regional Fraternity Council is held once each year (Cf. National Statutes- article 22.3). The Regional Fraternity Council is animated and guided by the **Regional Executive Council (REC)** (Cf. National Statutes- article 23.1). The REC is elected every three years and members must be perpetually professed. The electors are the ministers of the local fraternities or their delegate and the members of the Regional Executive Council. All are required to be present at the annual Chapters (Cf. General Constitutions- articles 61.3, 62.1; National Statutes- article 22.1).
  - b. The Provincial or Provincial Spiritual Assistant of the First Order or TOR, with fraternities in the Region, appoint a **Regional Spiritual Assistant (RSA)** who is an *ex officio* member of the Regional Executive Council. If they are more than one, they form a conference, and render their service collegially (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the OFS- article 21.2). The Regional Spiritual Assistant does not vote on financial matters or in elections (Cf. National Statutes- article 22.1; Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the OFS- article 5.1, 2).
3. The Regional Fraternity Council (local ministers, Executive Council Members, and Regional Spiritual Assistants) shall meet in chapter at least once each year. They have the power to create or approve **Regional Guidelines** in conformity with the Rule, the General Constitutions and the National Statutes (Cf. National Statutes- article 22.2), as well as the duties set forth in article 62 of the General Constitutions. Many of these duties are carried out by the Regional Executive Council acting in the name of the Regional Fraternity Council. Major changes in the Region such as budgets, change in Guidelines, etc. need the approval of the Regional Fraternity Council (Cf. National Statutes- article 23.5; General Constitutions- article 62).
4. The Regional Executive Council shall carry out the business of the Regional Fraternity in a spirit of ministry and servant-leadership. The REC may carry out business electronically between sessions, provided that these decisions are ratified at their next regular meeting (Cf. General Constitutions- article 62.1,2; National Statutes- article 23.1, 23.6). The Regional Executive Council shall meet at least twice a year (Cf. National Statutes- article 23.7).

## Chapter Two– The Regional Fraternity Council (Cf. National Statutes- article 22.1)

1. The Regional Fraternity Council includes:
  - a. The Regional Executive Council
  - b. The duly-elected minister or delegate of each local fraternity in the LaVerna Region
  - c. The Regional Spiritual Assistant or conference of Regional Spiritual Assistants
2. The Regional Fraternity Council meets in Chapter at least once a year to assist in promoting the Franciscan life in the Region and the local fraternities. (Cf. National Statutes- article 22.2, 3, 4). The Regional Fraternity Council directs the Regional Executive Council to implement the recommendations, policies and conclusions of the Regional Fraternity Council gathered in Chapter.
3. a. The **election** of the Regional Executive Council is held every three years. It shall prepare for these elections at least four or more months in advance (Cf. National Statutes- article 11.1). A nominating committee shall develop a slate of nominees for the various offices of the REC. Their names, the office they seek, and their competency, as well as a short biography should be sent to the electors at least two months in advance of the elections. The Regional Minister shall inform the members of the Regional Fraternity Council of the place, the day and time of the elections at least one month in advance (Cf. General Constitutions- article 76.1).  
  
b. The REC shall request the National Minister to **preside** at the Chapter of Elections (Cf. General Constitutions- article 76.2). The REC shall notify the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants (CNSA) of the need for someone to **witness** the elections. Both the National minister and CNSA can delegate someone for the election process. These requests should be made at least six or more months in advance of the elections (Cf. General Constitutions- article 76.2) Neither the presider nor the witness has a right to vote.
4. The Regional elections are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the General Constitutions and the National Statutes. (Cf. General Constitutions- articles 76 to 80; Nat'l Statutes- articles 7 to 15).
5. Perpetually professed members of the Region, in good standing, can be voted for an office (**passive voice**). Members of the Regional Fraternity Council have the right to vote (**active voice**) as well as passive voice unless otherwise indicated by the General Constitutions (Cf. General Constitutions- article 77.1, 77.2, and article 79). No member of the Regional Fraternity Council can cast more than a single vote even if he/she holds more than one title (Cf. National Statutes- article 8.4,5).
6. A member of the Regional Executive Council may also be a member of a local fraternity council. However, the office of Minister at two different levels is incompatible. Likewise the offices of Vice-Minister, Secretary and Treasurer at the same level are incompatible (Constitutions, art. 82).
7. A quorum of the Regional Fraternity Council must be present in order to conduct a legitimate election. A **quorum** is defined as the physical presence of more than half of those who have a right to vote (Cf. General Constitutions- article 77.4). An **absolute majority** is at least one more than half of those who are present to vote. In the elections, a **relative majority** is the highest number of votes when an absolute majority is not required. **Please note: re: the local fraternity:** Article 18.6 of the USA National Statutes reads: *No official business may be transacted at a local fraternity meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum consists of a majority of active members who are not excused from attendance. At the local level, no fraternity business is to be conducted at the Chapter of Elections.*
8. The funds of the Regional Fraternity is supported financially by the local fraternities in the Region. The Regional Fraternity Council determines the annual **fair share** to be contributed by local fraternities

for all active fraternity members who are in good standing (Cf. General Constitutions- article 30.3; National Statutes- articles 3.6b, 18.7a,25.3, and OFS Rule #25).

9. Concerning access to Region financial accounts, the Regional Treasurer's name along with the Regional Minister's and/or delegate's name will be on all financial records.

### **Chapter Three– The Regional Executive Council (REC)**

1. a. The **Regional Fraternity** is animated and guided by the Regional Executive Council (Cf. General Constitutions- article 62.1,2; National Statutes- articles 22 to 25). The members of the REC are the Regional Minister, Regional Vice-Minister, Regional Secretary, Regional Treasurer, at least one elected Councilor or if there is a need, more than one Regional Councilor may be elected, and the Regional Spiritual Assistant appointed by the Provincial Spiritual Assistant or Provincial Minister. In addition, the REC **appoints** a Formation Director, Web-Master, and Archivist.  
  
b. The **Regional Formation Director** may be elected (Cf. National Statutes-article 23.2). If the Regional Formation Director is elected, he/she has full rights on the Regional Executive Council. If he/she is appointed, he/she attends the meetings of the REC and exercises a consultative role (Cf. National Statutes- article 23.2). The LaVerna Regional Fraternity Council has chosen to appoint the Regional Formation Director as well as a **formation team** as needed.
2. a. The **Regional Spiritual Assistants** (or the president of the conference of Spiritual Assistants) are members of the REC and provide spiritual support and assistance for the Region. At all levels of the OFS, the principal task of the Spiritual Assistant is to foster a deeper insight into Franciscan spirituality, to provide a wider perspective to include servant-leadership to all the local fraternities in the region, and to co-operate in the initial and continuing formation of the Secular Franciscans of the Region (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the OFS- article 13).  
  
b. The Regional Spiritual Assistants also conduct the **Pastoral Visitation** of the local fraternities in the Region once every three years (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the OFS- article 14), to act as witness at local fraternity council elections, and to develop vibrant Franciscan community life among the fraternities. The RSA collaborates with local Spiritual Assistants and guides their continuing formation, working to develop a fraternal communion among them (Cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the OFS- article 14.2).
3. The responsibilities of the Regional Executive Council are as follows:
  - a. to prepare the annual Chapter Meetings and the Regional District Gatherings;
  - b. to promote, animate, and co-ordinate the life and activities of the OFS and its support of the Catholic Churches within the La Verna Region;
  - c. to detail an action plan for the OFS within the Region according to the directives of the National Executive Council (NAFRA) and/or International Presidency (CIOFS) and in collaboration with them, the REC communicates information to the local fraternities;
  - d. to provide formation of the local Formators who are responsible for the growth and animation of newcomers (orientation, and initial/ongoing formation) and to offer local fraternities the information which supports their formative and operative needs;
  - e. to discuss and approve the **Annual Report** to the National Executive Council;
  - f. to schedule as required, once every three years, a **Fraternal Visit** to the local fraternities. Circumstances may require additional visits as well;
  - g. to make decisions regarding the use of available funds and, in general, to deliberate on matters regarding the financial management/ economic affairs of the Regional Fraternity and to have, before

the term of office is finished, the Regional Fraternity's financial and real estate situation **audited** by an expert who is not a member of the council or by the fraternity's board of examiners. Ownership of real estate is not recommended;

- h. To perform such other duties as are indicated by the Constitutions or are necessary to achieve its own aims (Cf. General Constitutions- article 62.2).

#### 4. Guidelines for District Gatherings in the Region.

- a. District Gatherings shall be held early in each calendar year in March or April. The Regional Councilor for the various districts shall arrange, with a local fraternity from each district, to provide a suitable place to hold this event. This is done at least 6-9 months in advance of the Gathering. This will assure that a facility is reserved for these events.
  - 1. The local host fraternity is responsible for establishing the fee required to cover the costs of the facility and refreshments on a *per capita* basis.
  - 2. The stipend for speakers, other than Regional Executive Council members, shall be provided by the Region. The stipend includes the cost of travel and room-and-board as needed.
  - 3. The local fraternity and the Regional Executive Council shall discuss any other costs or fees before they are actually incurred.
- b. The Regional Executive Council shall determine the **agenda** for these gatherings. No later than December 1 of the previous year, the REC will give the local ministers notice of the time and place of these gatherings, the cost of attendance (as recommended by the host fraternity), and the proposed agenda.

### Chapter Four- Regional Officers

The Regional Executive Council is entrusted with the role of guiding the Region in Franciscan life and growth. Each of the officers of the REC contributes to that goal. Collaboratively they achieve the purpose and goal of their servant ministry to the Region. Their collaborative efforts support the achievement of that end. Be aware of this common goal as we outline the duties of each REC officer and invite them to give competent service to the Region. The National Statutes give direction in Article 24. Each member of the REC not only fulfills his/her own responsibilities, but also contributes to the servant ministry and dialogue that enriches the Franciscan life of the Region. Each officer on the REC serves a three-year term and may be elected to a second consecutive term. For a third and final successive election to the office, a majority of 2/3 of the votes of those present and must be obtained on the first ballot (Cf. General Constitutions- article 79.1,3).

- 1. The elected **Regional Minister** has the following duties:
  - a. to convoke and preside at the meetings of the REC and the Regional Fraternity Council;
  - b. to convoke every three years the Chapter of Elections of the Regional Fraternity Council, contacting NAFRA and CNSA for someone to preside at and witness the elections. Requests should be made well in advance of the selected date of the elections. The council and the Minister dialogue about this issue;
  - c. to preside at and confirm the elections in local fraternities within the Region in person or through a delegated member of the REC. The Regional Spiritual Assistant or his/her delegate is present to witness elections;
  - d. to conduct the local Fraternity Visitations personally or through a delegated member of the REC. The minister will co-ordinate this **Fraternal Visit** with the **Pastoral Visit** of the Regional Spiritual Assistant;
  - e. to participate in meetings called by the OFS National Minister. The Regional Minister is an *ex officio* member of the National Fraternity (NAFRA) and is required to attend NAFRA meetings or send a delegate. The delegated person is automatically the Regional Vice-Minister (Cf. National Statutes- article

- 8.3a). If the Vice-Minister is unable to attend, a member of the REC, selected by that body, shall be the delegate (Cf. National Statutes- article 8.3b). The Regional Minister informs the National Minister in writing, of the name of the delegate;
- f. to represent the Regional Fraternity in any issues dealing with the civil order;
  - g. to prepare, along with the Regional Executive Council, the **Annual Report** to the National Executive Council on the state of the Region. The Regional Executive Council and Minister collaborate in securing information from local fraternities;
  - h. to request, with the consent of the REC, a **Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation** from the National Executive Council and CNSA. This is done once every three years. The visitation requires the presence of the Regional Fraternity Council as well as the REC for a full weekend. It may be a part of the Annual Regional Chapter. It is important to dialogue with the visitors from NAFRA about the schedule for the Visitation approximately 4-6 months in advance;
  - i. to fulfill any other duties assigned by the REC (Cf. General Constitutions- article 63).
2. The elected **Regional Vice-Minister** has the following duties:
- a. to fulfill all the duties of the Regional Minister in his/her absence or because of the Minister's consistent inability to fulfill the duties of the Regional Minister;
  - b. to attend NAFRA meetings as the official delegate if the Regional Minister cannot attend;
  - c. to be attentive to and supportive of the actions of the REC;
  - d. to accept other responsibilities given him/her by the Minister or the REC as he/she feels competent and confident (Cf. General Constitutions- article 52.1; National Statutes- article 24.2).
3. The elected **Regional Secretary** has the following duties:
- a. to keep a written record of the minutes of both the Regional Fraternity Council meetings and the Regional Executive Council meetings. The Secretary distributes copies of the appropriate minutes to the members of the Regional Fraternity Council and/ or REC as is appropriate;
  - b. to preserve important documents (e.g Documents of Establishment of local fraternities) and correspondence of both the Regional Fraternity Council and the Regional Executive Council;
  - c. to work with Regional Archivist in turning over documents to be stored as archival material;
  - d. to assist the Regional Minister in communicating with the local fraternities, Regional Councilors, OFS members, and members of higher level councils as needed;
  - e. to maintain the regional database of members' names, addresses, etc.;
  - f. to maintain the La Verna Region section of the National database by recording names, contact information and address changes of members, as well as information such as admission, profession, death, and any other changes that occur for members in the Region;
  - g. to maintain a visitation and election schedule in collaboration with the REC by recording and keeping lists of visitations and elections;
  - h. to perform other duties assigned by the Regional Executive council (Cf. General Constitutions- article 52.2; National Statutes-article 24.2).
4. The elected **Regional Treasurer** has the following duties:
- a. to keep an accurate and up-to-date record of monies received and spent at the Regional level and to oversee any property of the Regional Fraternity unless the REC determines otherwise;
  - b. to deposit all funds of the Regional Fraternity in bank accounts determined by the REC in the name of the Regional Fraternity;
  - c. to give an accurate financial report for approval at each meeting of the REC and at the Annual Chapter of the Regional Fraternity Council;
  - d. to pay all bills or charitable donations only by check for business the Regional Fraternity requires and the REC approves;
  - e. to prepare and present a budget of the Region at the yearly Chapter of the Regional Fraternity Council;
  - f. to limit individual expenses to \$500.00 or less unless an expenditure is approved by the REC;
  - g. to assure every three years an official audit of the Region's financial books is done before the Regional

Chapter of Elections. It is to be done by an outside expert or the fraternity's board of examiners. Members of the REC may not do the audit. The annual audit is achieved by competent people chosen by the REC. Financial transparency is expected;

- h. to present criteria to the REC for spending funds to be used when assisting people in need (i.e. the retreat endowment fund). Donations given for a specified purpose may not be used for other purposes;
  - i. to notify local councils of their *fair share* donations and to invite payments on a quarterly basis;
  - j. to reimburse REC members and Regional Fraternity Council members for travel expenses for meetings and for the annual Chapter. The region pays housing costs of official attendees at the annual Chapter and visitors from the higher level and offers them a just stipend;
  - k. to pay the Region's *fair share* to the National Fraternity (Cf. General Constitutions- art. 52.4; National Statutes-article 6.4).
5. The elected **Regional Councilors** have the following duties:
- a. to represent particular local fraternities and maintain communication with them and keep in touch with their assigned fraternities and local councils;
  - b. to assist in the scheduling, planning and the conduction of workshops or break-out sessions as part of the annual District Gatherings in conjunction with the REC;
  - c. to conduct, if delegated by the Regional Minister, **Fraternal Visitations** to their assigned fraternities once every three years and to preside at local fraternity elections if delegated by the Region Minister;
  - d. to build better relationships, they may visit their assigned fraternities separate from official Visitations. This must be done with prior notification to that fraternity;
  - e. to report to the REC on the status of their assigned fraternities and fraternity members;
  - f. to write a follow-up letter to local fraternity ministers after a Fraternal Visitation is made, citing the strengths of the fraternity as well as to make suggestions to improve the flow of operations within the fraternity and the fraternity council. This letter should also be sent to all REC officers and to the Provincial Spiritual Assistant;
  - g. to actively participate in REC meetings, to attend the annual REC **planning session/retreat**, and to attend all REC District Gatherings and the annual Regional Chapter (Cf. General Constitutions- articles 32.1, 32.2).
6. The appointed **Regional Formation Director** serves a three-year term and has the following duties:
- a. to select a team of Secular Franciscans to assist in the work of the Regional Formation ministry. He/she will establish the number of team members and select his/her own team. When a team is selected, the names are submitted to the REC for approval;
  - b. to plan, with the team members, the annual District Gatherings with respect to topics such as Formation, Vocation, and Spirituality;
  - c. to preside at meetings of the team. Together they will assist local Formation Directors and offer help in whatever way is needed;
  - d. to upgrade their own formation, the Formation Director and/or team members will attend Formation Workshops conducted by the National Formation Team or other competent group. If fiscally possible, the Region may offer financial assistance for such workshops;
  - e. one or more team members might visit local fraternities as Formation needs present themselves (Initial and On-going). First-hand knowledge will help them make suitable suggestions and give practical guidance to local Formators;
  - f. to choose to develop Regional Formation workshops for the needs of local Formators;
  - g. to give regular reports to the REC and offer a report to the annual Chapter of the Regional Fraternity Council;
  - h. to recommend names of OFS perpetually professed members who are competent to serve as a future Regional Formation Director and/or team member (Cf. LaVerna Formation Manual (2008)- pages iii, iv/B1 to B3; General Constitutions 52.3).

7. The appointed **Regional Web-Master** serves a three-year term and has the following duties:
  - a. to keep the Region website information up-to-date; he/she will be compensated for services and expenses incurred upon approval by the REC;
  - b. to work through a designated REC liaison who will communicate what the REC may choose to add or delete from the website;
  - c. to keep confidential the website log-in and password; The REC Secretary and other REC members may receive the log-in and password as the REC designates. This information may be shared only with the approval of the REC;
  - d. to maintain the host (server) contract and to provide the REC Secretary with a copy of the contract. The Web-Master does a periodic review of the contract and makes recommendations to the REC concerning the contract as needed;
  - e. to respond to questions, comments and requests from users of the website. The Web-Master communicates important questions/ requests/ comments to the REC personally or through the liaison for review by the REC;
  - f. to prepare an annual report to the REC personally or through the REC liaison. This could be on a prepared form or through recommendations, information on site-use, possible re-designs of site, updates and similar issues;
  - g. qualifications for this position are the following:
    1. preferably a professed Secular Franciscan, but another qualified person could serve;
    2. must have the skills needed to perform the service of Web-Master (i.e. computer skills, skills in developing, designing, updating a website in a competent manner;
    3. must have access to a computer, e-mail and internet. The computer needs to be capable of the programming necessary to design and update the website;
    4. must recognize copyright restrictions, know about the website host and their reliability, how large the website can be and any other matters relating to website maintenance.
  
8. The appointed **Regional Archivist** serves a three-year term and has the following duties:
  - a. to collect pertinent information from external sources pertaining specifically to the Region (i.e. active and de-activated fraternities, REC meeting minutes, newsletters, membership lists, Pastoral and Fraternal Visitation reports of local fraternities, Documents of Establishment, local fraternity histories, Annual Reports); the REC will provide any financial compensation for all travel and necessary expenses relating to setting up and maintaining the Region Archives;
  - b. to form a team with whom to work if needed;
  - c. to communicate with the Region and its fraternities concerning materials that are to be kept in the archives and materials to share with the National archives;
  - d. to assist in finding a suitable, secure place in which to store Region archive material;
  - e. to collect pertinent correspondence documenting early Regional history, pictures, etc.;
  - f. to scan all documents onto hard-drive and to create folders of documented material and to store these folders in archivable containers— storage boxes, file cabinets, etc.;
  - g. to create a directory of archival files both on the computer and paper copies for easy identification;
  - h. to write updates and/or give verbal reports to the REC;
  - i. to give talks at District Gatherings and/or annual Chapter concerning history of our Region;
  - j. to be available for consultation when needed to check a document;
  - k. qualifications for this position are the following:
    1. should possess some experience as an archivist and/or historian;
    2. should have good organizational skills as well as good writing skills;
    3. should have access to a computer with scanner and an external hard-drive specific for Region activities is recommended.

**LaVerna Regional Guidelines**

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Approved by the La Verna Region Council June 24, 2017