

Proposed NOW 2026 Conference Rules

(final draft)

May 29th is Conference book publication date

I. Admission

A. The Conference shall be open to all persons properly registered. Registration badges shall be issued to identified Credentialed Voting Members, visitors, special guests and press, and shall be required for admittance to any segment or function of the Conference. Voting badges or their equivalent shall be issued for those eligible to vote or, for those attending virtually, virtual Conference website login and voting credentials.

B. A "Member" is a person who has a current NOW membership extending through June 28, 2026, the last day of the Conference. A member whose membership commenced after March 28, 2026, is considered a non-voting member for purposes of the Conference. Anyone joining during the Conference will become a member on June 29, 2026, after the conclusion of the Conference.

C. A "Credentialed Voting Member" is a member in good standing whose dues are received by the national organization or its appropriate subunit at least 90 days prior to the Conference (March 28, 2026, midnight EST), who is duly registered for the Conference, whose membership remains in effect through the last day of the Conference (June 28, 2026, 6 pm EST), and who is thereafter credentialed to vote. Only credentialed voting members are permitted to make motions and to vote in person and / or receive credentials for the voting platform. Each credentialed voting member shall have one vote on any particular matter. Credentialed voting members appearing virtually are deemed "present" and entitled to debate and to vote on plenary and non-election matters if they are connected to the Conference's video conferencing platform by the digital platform or teleconference connection to the platform, be able to hear, be capable of being heard unless muted, and be identified or identifiable by name and chapter.

D. All virtual members and attendees must all be identified or identifiable by their proper name and, if a member, also by chapter. If not, the participant can be renamed by the presiding officer or staff in the meeting so that everyone knows the participant's true identity. Participants who cannot be identified properly may be removed and barred from the proceedings.

E. "Visitors" shall be defined as persons who are not members of NOW. "Special guests" shall include speakers, entertainers and others designated by the President.

F. "Press" shall be defined as persons who may report on the Conference to the public through any media other than NOW publications or platforms. Press shall be required to register by emailing press@now.org and receiving press badges and relevant information.

G. Members who are also press, upon completing their registration for the Conference, shall be required to sign a statement that, in the event the Conference or any segment or function thereof votes at any time to exclude press, members with press identification who choose to remain in such session(s), pledge by their continuing presence therein, not to report on the general substance or the details of such session(s) through any media other than NOW publications or platforms. Members of the Press shall include the word press before their name on the zoom screen if they attend in a virtual setting.

H. All those who participate in and speak at the Conference during public and business meetings are advised that a transcript and oral recording may be made of any part of the proceedings.

II. Voting Credentials and Voting

A. Voting credentials shall authorize voting rights following their issuance. To avoid credentialing delays and challenges, members who seek to become Voting Credentialed members are strongly encouraged to take these steps:

1. Check membership status before registering by reviewing membership status at the on-line membership portal and assuring that membership extends beyond the last date of the Conference and commenced on or before March 28, 2026. Portal link is: <https://secure.now.org/a/now-self-service-page>
2. Register sufficiently in advance of the Conference so that any question may be identified, communicated, and resolved.
3. If there is any question as to voting status, members are advised to have on hand their membership card or proof of dues payment, so that credentialing questions readily may be resolved.

B. The Credentials Committee shall oversee the issuance of voting credentials at the Conference in order to assure that a member has gone through the registration and accreditation process and their eligibility to vote has been verified. Only members in good standing shall be credentialed as Credentialed Voting Members (1) whose dues are received by the national organization or its

appropriate subunits at least 90 days prior to the Conference (by March 28, 2026, midnight EST), (2) who is duly registered for the Conference prior to casting a vote, and (3) whose membership remains in effect through the last day of the Conference (June 28, 2026, 6 pm EDT).

C. NOW staff shall review applications for voting credentials. If voting credentials cannot be granted based upon the information immediately available to staff, the application shall be referred to the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee shall use its best efforts to verify eligibility for the issuance of credentials.

D. The Chair of the Credentials Committee shall report at the opening of the Conference the number of people credentialed as Credentialed Voting members, and the number of people registered, as of thirty (30) minutes prior to the plenary session start time.

E. The Credentials Committee shall devise a system or systems for the identification of virtual Credentialed Voting Members for the purpose of making motions and voting on motions and resolutions and require adherence to that system. Such a system could include segregation of virtual attendees during a voting period by voting and non-voting status, and may be different for plenary, workshop or issue hearing proceedings.

F. Challenges to voting rights shall be referred to the Credentials Committee. The Committee shall report to the Conference on any credentials challenges and their disposition at the opening of the next following voting plenary session.

G. Voting in Plenary and non-Election Sessions: All votes, other than election votes, may be voice votes as long as the presiding officer can ascertain the prevailing side. If the results of a voice vote cannot be determined, the presiding officer may proceed to counting a display of credentials and, for virtual participants, a show of hands as long as the presiding officer can ascertain the prevailing side. If the prevailing side cannot be determined by such counting, the presiding officer may fix an alternate method of voting. Only Credentialed Voting Members may vote. Virtual participants must be connected to the Conference's video conferencing platform, able to see and hear, capable of being heard whether muted or unmuted, and identified by name and chapter in order to vote on plenary and non-election matters.

H. Voting in Election Sessions: Elections will require a ballot for all contested offices. All voting shall be accomplished by use of an electronic voting platform or a voting procedure adopted by the Election Committee and be subject to the rules adopted by the Election Committee. Only Credentialed Voting Members will receive access to the voting platform. Credentialed Voting Members who have a disability that prohibits them from voting electronically may vote by voice with prior approval from the Chair of the Election Committee.

The Election Committee shall manage the election and the voting platform. The Conference Committee shall fix the times and places of election meetings.

I. Sharing voting credentials is prohibited.

III. Conduct of Plenary Sessions

A. A quorum shall be twenty-five percent of those members registered and credentialed to vote (“Credentialed Voting Members”) and shall include one officer and two other National Board members. If the presiding officer determines it is appropriate, announcements and speakers may proceed before the quorum count is completed.

B. Plenary Session Assistants: When additional services are required, the presiding officer shall appoint one or more Microphone Facilitators, Timekeepers, Tellers and other helpers to assist the chair, including:

1. Microphone Facilitators to staff microphones, maintain order in plenary sessions, implement the decisions of the body, and provide assistance with parliamentary inquiries and other “red card” items. For virtual participants, a Virtual Microphone Facilitator to perform the same functions and one shall be assigned a Direct Message identity to be used only for receiving proposed motions and parliamentary inquiries.
2. A Timekeeper to announce the close of speakers’ comments and debate on each motion, proposed bylaw amendment, or resolution after the time period allocated to it has expired.
3. A Teller may be appointed to make sure the number of votes cast is not more than the number of Credentialed Voting Member attendees.
4. Upon request, plenary session staff shall assist workshop coordinators in facilitating orderly proceedings and in preventing overcrowding in workshops.

C. Motions: Motions shall be made only by a Credentialed Voting Member after the Member has been recognized to speak. Each speaker shall state their name and chapter.

1. If the movant appears in person, a motion must be in writing, signed with the maker's name, followed by the maker’s chapter or state affiliation. Facilitators will have a supply of motion paper that provides for three copies of a motion. Upon introduction of a

motion, the maker of the motion shall provide one copy of the motion to the Chair, one copy to the recorder and shall retain the third copy.

2. If the movant appears virtually, prior to being recognized to make a motion, the text of the proposed motion must be conveyed by Direct Message to the Virtual Microphone Facilitator designated by the presiding officer to receive motions and, when recognized to speak, the movant must clearly (i) state their name and chapter, and (ii) state the motion so that it can appear in captioned form on the screens of those appearing virtually and on a display for those attending the Conference in person.

3. Each motion must be seconded by a Credentialed Voting Member, which shall be indicated by raising a hand, either in person or virtually.

4. Following the seconding of a motion or amendment, the motion or amendment will be read into the record prior to debate and prior to the vote on that motion or amendment.

D. Debate: Credentialed Voting Members may debate after the presiding officer recognizes the Member to speak; others may speak if recognized by the presiding officer. Each speaker shall state their name and, if a member, chapter. Debate on matters debated shall close after twenty (20) minutes or after the allocated time period. For resolutions, the presiding officer may evenly allocate the time remaining in the Conference to resolutions on the agenda or permit twenty (20) minutes per resolution.

1. Makers of motions shall be entitled either to open or to close debate on their motions and shall state their election after making a motion.

2. Persons desiring to speak from the floor shall form lines behind the microphones and shall indicate to the mike facilitators their identity as Credentialed Voting Member or Member and the purpose for which recognition is sought.

3. Virtual attendees desiring to speak shall raise their hands in order to join a form a queue (“stack”) and the virtual attendees’ queue shall be treated as one microphone.

4. The presiding officer shall call alternately on each microphone, varying as appropriate between the microphones for those in attendance and those appearing virtually.

5. A Microphone Facilitator shall convey information to the presiding officer about each in person speaker by means of colored cards as follows:

- a. Red for priority motions, privileged or incidental motion such as parliamentary inquiry, point of order, request for information, or suspension of rules;
- b. Yellow for subsidiary motion such as amend, limit or extend limits of debate, or apply a procedural step such as tabling; and,
- c. Green for main motion or debate.
- d. A chart detailing the red, yellow, green card classification of motions appears at the foot of these Rules.

6. A Virtual Microphone Facilitator shall determine if virtual participants would raise a red, green or yellow card and convey that information to the presiding officer.

7. After recognition and prior to debating, speakers shall state their name and chapter or state affiliation. Speakers are encouraged to state their pronouns. Each speaker shall be limited to two (2) minutes of debate on each motion. No person shall speak a second time to an issue until all persons seeking recognition have had an opportunity to speak.

8. Persons other than Credentialed Voting Members may participate in floor discussion only upon invitation of the presiding officer.

9. All statements must be addressed to the presiding officer and not to another member.

10. Should the President wish to debate, the President must ask the Vice President to preside. She or he shall not resume the chair until after the final disposition of the question under discussion. The President may vote to make or break a tie, or when the voting is by ballot.

11. A motion to close debate (“call the question”) can be made only by a Credentialed Voting Member who has been recognized to speak and requires a 2/3 vote to pass.

12. When questions are put to a vote, the microphone lines and aisles shall be cleared, and all persons shall be seated. Aisles and microphones shall remain clear until the vote is completed.

IV. Plenary Order of Business (Sunday)

- A. The first order of business shall be the announcement of the results of district elections.

- B. The second order of business shall be voting upon a consent agenda consisting of the resolutions originating from the 2025 Conference approved by the National Board prior to the 2026 Conference. The presiding officer shall bring up the consent agenda, ask if there are any requests for removal, and then move to approve the remaining items. Any Credentialed Voting Member may request removal of an item from the consent agenda for separate discussion and voting, which request will not require a second or vote. Any item so removed shall be placed on the agenda as a Resolutions item.

- C. The third order of business shall be voting upon the proposed amendments to the NOW Bylaws. The Structure and Process Committee (also identified as the “Rules Committee”) shall present the order of consideration for Bylaws amendments.

- D. Resolutions shall appear thereafter as the fourth order of business. The Resolutions Committee shall present the order of consideration for resolutions, including resolutions from the 2025 Conference removed from the consent agenda or not previously approved by the National Board. The Resolutions Committee may place resolutions on a consent agenda.

- E. After passage of each Resolution, the presiding officer shall determine if there is a need for a Conference Implementation Committee and solicit volunteers. If no Conference Implementation Committee is formed, resolutions may be assigned to an appropriate board committee, officer, and/or staff member for implementation by the presiding officer during or after the Conference.

- F. If any proposed Conference Resolutions are left on the floor at the end of the Conference, they shall be deemed referred to the National Board for action in a time-expedient manner.

- G. If all Conference Resolutions have been addressed, progress on the implementation of the previously adopted resolutions shall be reported as appropriate.

V. Workshops

- A. Workshops shall be open to all Conference registrants. In the event that any session becomes overcrowded by in person attendees, priority for seating shall be given to Credentialed Voting Members. Workshops are designed for discussion and do not generate resolutions. Resolutions to be submitted by petition may be discussed in workshops.

B. Participation in discussion may, at the discretion of the facilitator or by majority vote, be limited to Credentialed Voting Members. Facilitators shall require attendees to identify themselves by their name and, if a member, by chapter.

C. Workshops may exclude press, cameras, and recording devices other than recording arranged by Conference staff.

VI. Issue Hearings

A. Issue Hearing topics are fixed by the Conference Committee. Issue Hearing participants shall include two co-chairs appointed by the Conference Committee, a timekeeper, and Credentialed Voting Members. Credentialed Voting Members who wish to have a resolution considered shall bring their resolution to only one Issue Hearing.

B. The co-chairs will begin each Issue Hearing by reviewing the format of an Issue Hearing. A copy of the Issues and Administrative Policy Manuals shall be available electronically for chairs and members to use to review current policy on the issues.

C. At the beginning of the Issue Hearing, the co-chairs shall ascertain the number of resolutions being presented by participants. The co-chairs will divide the allotted time by the number of resolutions to be considered, including time for discussion and time for voting on final wording and prioritizing; equal time need not be given to every resolution. In order to consider all ideas, strict time division will be maintained. Time may also be allotted per speaker.

D. The voting procedures shall be:

1. Only Credentialed Voting Members attending the Issue Hearing shall be eligible to vote in Issue Hearings.
2. After discussion of all resolutions presented to the Issue Hearing, the co-chairs shall conduct a vote on each resolution. Credentialed Voting Members may vote for or against as many resolutions as they choose. Voting procedures shall be the same as applicable to plenary non-election sessions.
3. If two or fewer resolutions receive a majority vote, those resolutions shall be forwarded to the Resolution Committee for plenary consideration.

4. If three or more resolutions receive a majority vote, the co-chairs shall conduct a second round of voting on those resolutions which received a majority vote. In the second round of voting, members may vote for only two or fewer resolutions. The two resolutions which receive the highest affirmative votes in the second round of voting shall be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee for plenary consideration.

E. Resolutions which result from the Issue Hearings must comply with the formal requirements for resolutions contained in these rules. The original proponent of a resolution is responsible for updating and proofing a final draft of a resolution approved at the Issue Hearing immediately after the Issue Hearing is concluded and delivering it to the co-chairs or their designee the format required by the Resolutions Committee. The co-chairs or their designee shall review and, if necessary, correct the final draft and assure it is ready for submission to the Resolutions Committee.

F. Credentialed Voting Members may not be denied admittance to an Issue Hearing at any time except temporarily when a vote is in progress on an individual motion, amendment or resolution.

VII. Submission of Resolutions

A. Resolutions originating from the 2025 Conference and passed by the National Board prior to the 2026 Conference shall be placed on a plenary session consent agenda as provided above. Resolutions removed from the consent agenda and resolutions from the 2025 Conference which were not approved by the National Board will be deemed submitted to the Resolutions Committee.

B. Resolutions from Issue Hearings:

1. Resolutions may be submitted by the Issue Hearing co-chairs and/or a designee of the co-chairs to the Resolutions Committee. Only two (2) resolutions shall be accepted from each Issue Hearing. Such resolutions must have been adopted in accordance with the voting procedures described in these rules.

2. Resolutions from each Issue Hearing must be delivered to the Conference Office no later than two hours after the scheduled time for the adjournment of that Issue Hearing and, in any event, no later than 5:00 PM EDT on Saturday, June 27, 2026.

C. Resolutions submitted by Petition:

1. Petition resolutions must be signed by thirty-five (35) Credentialed Voting Members. Signatures may be secured only after the opening of the Conference. Each Credentialed Voting Member signing a resolution for submission by petition shall print their name, sign their name and indicate their chapter or state affiliation
2. Digital Signatures: If proponent of a Resolution to be submitted by Petition desires to collect digital signatures from Credentialed Voting Members attending virtually, the proponent must submit a copy of the plan to secure signatures and identification of the signature program or platform to be used to the Resolutions Committee and secure its approval prior to 5:00 PM EDT on Friday, June 26, 2026. No digital signatures shall be obtained prior to receipt of such approval.
3. If multiple pages of petition signatures are submitted, the text of the resolution must appear on the front of each page of signatures and the Resolution title must appear on the back of any page with signatures.
4. Resolutions submitted by Petition must be delivered to the Conference Office no later than 5:00 PM EDT on Saturday, June 27, 2026.

D. Format of resolutions

1. Resolutions must be typed, single or double spaced on 8.5 by 11-inch paper. All resolutions shall be no more than one page, one side in length. All margins (top, bottom, right, left) shall be at least one inch. Resolutions shall be printed in type size no smaller than 10 points. Single spaced Resolutions are limited to approximately 700–900 words and double-spaced Resolutions are limited to approximately 350–450 words.
2. Each resolution shall include at the bottom of the page the name and state or chapter affiliation of its maker, and how to contact that person via cell phone and email, so that members will know from whom to seek additional information about the resolution.
3. Submission shall be in hard copy and digital format. The digital format submission must be in a form acceptable to the Resolutions Committee.

VIII. Accessibility

- A. NOW is committed to making its meetings as accessible as possible.

B. Credentialed Voting Members who have a disability that prohibits them from voting electronically shall be permitted to vote by voice during the plenary sessions with prior approval from the presiding officer or the designee of the presiding officer.

C. Any member or person pending membership in need of assistance with large print while navigating the Conference website, having another accessibility or disability issue, or requires a needed accommodation during the Conference, should email online@now.org. Staff will attempt to help obtain the requested accommodation if it can do so.

D. In consideration of those with allergies and/or respiratory problems, the National NOW Conference is a scent-free environment. Participants are asked to use unscented products in lieu of scented toiletries and detergents, and to refrain from wearing perfumes and colognes.

IX. Materials and Fundraising

A. No candidate for a NOW officer or board position shall use the Conference website or Conference book for campaigning except as permitted by the Election rules.

B. Except for NOW PAC endorsed or supported candidates, no political party, group or candidate for public offices, shall (1) use the National NOW Conference or reach out to NOW members in attendance for partisan political purposes, or (2) hold forums, workshops, caucuses, seminars or any event to collect or attempt to raise funds.

C. Fundraising activities are only permitted by the National Action Center, the NOW PAC, and NOW PAC endorsed candidates, provided, however, that sponsors, exhibitors, NOW units and NOW members may engage in commercial activities and solicit donations to the extent permitted by their arrangements with NOW.

X. Authority

A. This Conference shall be governed by the Bylaws of the National Organization for Women, Inc., the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, these Conference rules, and the rules promulgated by any official Conference Committee. The fundamental principles of parliamentary law are: Courtesy to all, justice to all, one thing at a time, full and free debate, the rule of the majority, the right of the minority, the right of the individual and the absentee, and partiality to none.

B. Civility and decorum must be followed in debate and in the conduct of the Conference. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, requires that debates remain courteous, focused solely on the merits of the pending question, and free from personal attacks, insults, questioning of motives, and specifically providing that "The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate."

C. Any member may raise a "Point of Order" if decorum rules are violated and, if a member violates these rules, the chair may rule the member out of order.

D. Consistent with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, wherever and whenever appropriate, the Board is authorized to: (1) correct article and section designations, punctuation, spelling, formatting and cross-references; (2) make technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to adjust formatting to comply with these directives; and, (3) remedy scrivener's errors.

RESOLUTION FORMAT

Title: CENTERED, BOLDED IN CAPS

WHEREAS, the "WHEREAS" paragraph(s) give relevant supporting facts both about the issue and why the National Organization for Women (NOW) should relate to that subject; and

WHEREAS, both the "WHEREAS" and the "RESOLVED" phrases are in bold and all caps; and

WHEREAS, all acronyms (such as NOW) should be spelled out the first time used and abbreviated thereafter; and

WHEREAS, in the first and each succeeding "WHEREAS" paragraph, the last word of the paragraph should be followed by a semi-colon and then the word "and"; and

WHEREAS the last "WHEREAS" paragraph should end with a semi-colon but no "and";

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the resolution should state in this and following paragraphs what action NOW will take or what policy will be instituted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that for the first and each succeeding "RESOLVED" paragraph, the end of the paragraph should be followed by a semi-colon and the word "and"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolutions must be typed, single or double spaced, on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper and should be no longer than one page, one side in length: and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all margins (top, bottom, left, right) must be at least one inch, and type size must be no smaller than 10 point; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the final paragraph should end with a period.

SUBMITTED BY:

(Option 1): Issue Hearing (name of hearing) Chair of hearing: Full name, chapter or state affiliation, cell phone number OR

(Option 2): Petition with __ signatures (fill in number before submitting and attach signatures) Full name, chapter or state affiliation, cell phone number

Note: The Resolutions Committee must have a way to contact you in case any questions arise. If the Resolution is approved by the Conference, the cell phone number will be deleted before publication.

Parliamentarian Procedures

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

NOW meetings are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (12th Ed.), which sets rules for the orderly conduct of meetings.

The core principles of parliamentary procedure are ensuring equal rights for all members, managing one item of business at a time, protecting the minority's rights while upholding the majority's will, and encouraging full and free debate.

These ideas also have been summarized as: Courtesy to all; Justice to all; One thing at a time; Rule of the majority; Right of the minority; Right of the individual and the absentee; Full and free debate; and Partiality to none.

What is a request for information?

A request for information is a question directed to the chair and has priority, which means it can be posed before many other matters. Red cards are used for points of information, called on ahead of green or yellow cards. The chair responds to the points of information for which she knows the answer. When it is appropriate, the chair will ask the maker of the motion to provide the information requested.

Requests for information should not be used as a disguised form of debate. An example of debate disguised as a point of information is a question that begins with "Isn't it true that...?"

What is a point of personal privilege?

Points of personal privilege concern a person's rights as an individual. It may be a need for personal comfort or health, which are appropriate to bring this to the chair's attention. It can also be raised if you have been named specifically and your position was misstated.

A point of personal privilege is dealt with by the chair, not by cross-debate. It may raise a question of an individual's comfort or health, for example. If the speaker requests correction of a misstatement, the speaker may be given the opportunity to correct the misstatement.

What is a point of order?

A point of order is used to call a violation of the rules to the attention of the chair, but often used sparingly unless there are repeated violations. It can be asserted if a speaker violates time limits, a matter is addressed out of the order of the agenda, and similar matters.

What is a point of parliamentary inquiry?

A member may ask the chair how to go about doing something properly. For example, if you want the Conference to vote separately on two parts of a motion so that one portion could pass and one portion could fail, but you don't know how, it's appropriate to use a point of parliamentary inquiry (red card) to ask the chair how to do so.

Who answers these points of order, requests for information, etc.?

The chair rules on whether a point is properly raised. Rulings of the chair can be appealed; appeals require a second and are debatable. The parliamentarians may advise the chair; the chair makes all rulings.

What is the card system?

Red Cards raise priority items which may interrupt Conference business, such as Point of Order or Call for the Orders of the Day.

Yellow and Green cards have equal priority.

Yellow Cards indicate a desire to make an amendment or move to invoke a procedure.

Green Cards indicate a desire to make a main motion, debate a main motion or to divide the motion for separate consideration of its points.

[Chart Not Included in this Document]