

South Dakota Mental Health Counselors Association (SDMHCA) By-Laws

Reviewed & Updated July 2025

A Division of the South Dakota Counseling Association (SDCA)

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of the Association shall be the South Dakota Mental Health Counselors Association (SDMHCA), an area of specialty within the South Dakota Counseling Association (SDCA) and a state division of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA).

ARTICLE II. Purposes

The purpose of the Association shall be to:

1. Promote the profession of mental health counseling.
2. Provide a system of information exchange among mental health counselors through newsletters, educational events, and other professional materials.
3. Offer programs that enhance and update the professional competencies of mental health counselors.
4. Advocate for legislation that advances and recognizes the profession of mental health counseling.
5. Serve as a forum for public policy and advocacy issues affecting mental health counseling.
6. Build alliances with counselors in other work settings to advance the counseling profession as a whole.
7. Promote and maintain high training standards for mental health counselors.
8. Support and disseminate scientific research related to mental health concerns.
9. Act as a liaison at the state and national levels with other professional organizations to advance the mental health field.
10. Educate the public about the role and function of mental health counselors.
11. Promote and support equitable licensure and certification for members.
12. Provide information and education regarding licensure and certification.

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section 1. Eligibility

- A. Membership shall be in accordance with the requirements of SDCA and AMHCA.
- B. SDMHCA offers a non-voting Affiliate Membership for psychologists, social workers, and other professionals who wish to connect with regular members.

Section 2. Qualifications

Any person who is a member of SDCA may join SDMHCA, provided:

- A. They are actively providing counseling services in community mental health centers, public, private, pastoral, or residential settings; or
- B. They hold a master's degree or higher in the mental health field from an accredited

graduate institution, or hold professional credentials in their counseling specialty; or

C. They are a student enrolled in a planned program leading to a degree in mental health counseling with the intention of becoming a mental health professional.

D. Affiliate members are those interested in the mental health delivery system. Affiliate membership provides access to meetings, publications, and SDMHCA-sponsored workshops, while maintaining a non-voting status.

ARTICLE IV. Meetings

1. The official business year of SDMHCA shall follow that of SDCA.
2. An annual meeting may be held in conjunction with the SDCA annual conference.
3. The President may call additional meetings when necessary. Meetings requiring funding (e.g., travel, meals, lodging) must have prior approval from the Executive Council.

ARTICLE V. Officers

1. The officers shall be: President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer (Secretary and Treasurer roles may be combined).
2. President: Serves as Chief Executive Officer, chairs the Executive Council, appoints committees, represents SDMHCA to SDCA and AMHCA, and delegates duties as needed.
3. President-Elect: Acts as President in their absence and assumes the presidency at the end of the term.
4. Immediate Past President: Serves two years on the Executive Council following their presidential term.
5. Secretary: Maintains records of Association and Executive Council activities.
6. Treasurer: Manages funds according to SDCA financial policy, maintains records of transactions, and provides quarterly reports.
7. All officers must be members in good standing of SDMHCA, SDCA, ACA, and AMHCA.
8. Terms of office are two years. No officer may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same role.

ARTICLE VI. Executive Council

1. The Executive Council carries out administrative and executive functions between official meetings.
2. Membership includes all officers, standing committee chairs, and other appointees approved by the Council.
3. All members of the Executive Council are voting members.
4. The Executive Council serves as the Awards Committee for the Howard B. Smith Distinguished Service Award, the Past President's Award, and any state or national awards.

ARTICLE VII. Committees

1. Committees may include:
 - Membership Committee – Recruitment and retention of members.
 - Nominations & Elections Committee – Oversees nominations and election processes.
 - Publications & Public Relations Committee – Manages publications and public awareness efforts.

- Program Committee – Plans programs and events.
- Government Relations Committee – Advocates for legislation supporting mental health counseling.
- 2. Special committees may be formed for specific purposes and will serve for no more than two years unless otherwise specified.
- 3. Committee chairs serve terms determined by agreement with the Executive Council.

ARTICLE VIII. Dues

Dues shall be assessed as recommended by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE IX. Elections

1. The Nominations & Elections Committee prepares a slate of candidates for President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. The slate is sent to the SDCA Executive Director for ballot inclusion or voted on at the annual meeting.
3. A majority vote elects an officer.
4. Officers assume duties at the start of the SDCA fiscal year.
5. In case of a vacancy:
 - The President-Elect fills an unexpired President's term.
 - The Executive Council fills other vacancies until the next election.

ARTICLE X. Conduct of Business

1. Unless otherwise specified, the Constitution and By-Laws of SDCA govern proceedings.
2. A majority of members present at a meeting constitutes a quorum.
3. A majority of the Executive Council constitutes a quorum for its business.

ARTICLE XI. Amendments

1. Amendments may be made at the annual meeting with a two-thirds vote of members present. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the President at least 30 days in advance.
2. In emergencies, the Executive Council may conduct an electronic vote. The voting period will remain open for 20 days. A majority vote enacts the amendment.