

**PRESCOTT-RUSSELL
FOSTER FAMILY ASSOCIATION
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of this association is the Foster Family Association of Prescott- Russell of Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell, hereafter referred to in this Constitution as the FFA.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

To work in partnership with Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell by providing support to foster families in order to improve the quality of life for our children and adults.

3. DEFINITIONS

- a. All references to the FFA throughout this document shall mean the Prescott-Russell Foster Family Association of Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.
- b. All references to Valoris throughout this document shall mean Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott- Russell.
- c. All references to foster parents in this document shall mean foster parents of Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott- Russell.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE FFA

- a. To encourage, promote and enhance communication, mutual cooperation and coordination among foster parents, the FFA, Valoris and the community.
- b. To promote and protect the rights and interests of foster parents in their dealings with Valoris.
- c. To provide assistance and support to foster parents regarding any difficulties they may be experiencing in their role as foster parents.

5. NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION

The FFA is a non-profit, non-incorporated association.

6. MEMBERSHIP

The members of the FFA shall consist of all foster parents in good standing with Valoris.

7. EXECUTIVE

The Executive of the FFA shall consist of:

- a. Elected officers
- b. Non-elected officers

8. ELECTED OFFICERS

The elected officers of the FFA shall consist of the:

- a. President
- b. First Vice-President
- c. Second Vice-President
- d. Secretary
- e. Treasurer

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The officers of the FFA shall be elected at the annual general meeting as outlined in the FFA by-laws.

10. NON ELECTED OFFICERS

The non-elected officers of the FFA are to be the Immediate Past President, the Foster Parents Society of Ontario Representative for PRFFA, and FFA members appointed to office by the FFA Executive.

11. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the FFA shall be held during the month of May.

12. OTHER MEETINGS

Other meetings will be held in accordance with the by-laws.

13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Amendments to the FFA Constitution and by-laws may be made at the annual general meeting providing fourteen days' notice has been given to the membership and providing such amendments receive majority vote.

BY-LAWS

1. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The FFA by-laws shall set forth the policies and procedures that the members and the executive shall follow to promote the purposes stated within its Constitution.

2. MEMBERS

All foster parents in good standing with Valoris are members and as such are eligible to vote at monthly meetings and at the annual general meeting.

3. MEMBERSHIP YEAR

The membership year shall be from September 1st to August 31st of every year.

4. ELECTED OFFICERS

- a. Elected officers must be members of the FFA, and in good standing with Valoris.
- b. Elected officers must be foster parents.
- c. The term of office of elected officers is three years.
- d. Any elected officer may be re-elected for a second and third term to the same office.
- e. Uninterrupted length of service in any one office may not exceed nine years.
- f. Any elected officer other than the President who has served in office for one, two or three terms, may be elected to another office on the executive.
- g. No elected officer of the executive may hold multiple offices concurrently.

5. NOMINATION OF ELECTED OFFICERS

- a. Prior to the election of officers at the annual general meeting, the President shall appoint a person to preside over the election.
- b. Officers shall be elected by the members present at the annual general meeting.
- c. All nominations shall come from the floor at the annual general meeting and must be seconded. Any person not able to attend the annual general meeting may make known his or her intent to seek an office in writing prior to the meeting. Such person must still be nominated and seconded by eligible individuals present at the meeting. Only after the

nominations have closed may a person accept or decline a position. If he or she declines a position, he or she may stand for another position.

- d. Where two persons accept a nomination for one office, the selection shall be by secret ballot.
- e. The presiding officer for the election shall appoint a scrutineer and tellers who are members of the assembly but whose names do not appear on a ballot. Only the name of the successful candidate will be announced, and tallies will be destroyed. If the count is equal, a second ballot shall be taken, and in the event of a tie, the outcome shall be decided by a coin toss.

6. NON ELECTED OFFICERS

- a. Immediate Past President.
- b. Foster Parents Society of Ontario (FPSO) Representative for Prescott-Russell.
- c. FFA members may be appointed to an executive office to serve as the chairpersons of various committees such as the Legal Defence Fund, the After Care Fund, the Mentors, the Communicators, Officer at large or any other officers as may be deemed essential by FFA Executive.
- d. Non-elected officers of the executive may hold multiple offices simultaneously.

7. VOTING AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. All members present shall have equal voting privileges.
- b. All members present shall have no more than one vote at any one time.
- c. All voting shall be decided by a majority vote. In the event of a tie, the presiding officer shall call for a second ballot. In the event of another tie, the outcome shall be decided by a coin toss.

8. VOTING AT EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. All voting shall be decided by a majority vote.
- b. All members at large may vote.

9. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- a. President

- i. Is responsible for the general management of the FFA.
- ii. When present, presides at all meetings of the FFA, except for that part of the annual general meeting set aside for the election of officers.
- iii. Serves as liaison between the FFA and Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell and other Foster Parent or Family Associations.
- iv. Is responsible for all annual reports.
- v. Is a signing officer for the FFA.
- vi. Votes only if the vote is by ballot or if his or her vote will change the outcome of the vote. Motions require a majority vote and fail if there is a tie vote. If there is a tie before the President votes, the President may vote either in the affirmative or in the negative causing the motion to be adopted or causing it to fail. If following a vote the affirmative exceeds the negative by only one vote, the President may vote in the negative causing the motion to fail by creating a tie. The President may also vote in the event that the negative exceeds the affirmative by one vote, again creating a tie and causing the motion to fail. The rule is that the President may only vote if by doing so, the outcome of the vote will change, either from adoption to rejection or from rejection to adoption or to create a tie, thereby causing a motion to fail.

b. Senior Vice-President

- i. In the absence of the President, the Senior Vice-President assumes all duties of the President.
- ii. Is a signing officer.
- iii. Has full voting privileges.

c. Vice-President

- i. In the absence of the President and the Senior Vice-President, the Vice-President assumes all duties of the Senior Vice-President, except that of signing officer.
- ii. Has full voting privileges.

d. Secretary

- i. Has custody of all books of record.
- ii. Keeps a correct record of the minutes of meetings.
- iii. Gives notice of all meetings of the FFA for which the executive has drawn an agenda.
- iv. Has full voting privileges.

e. Treasurer

- i. Has custody of all cash, cheques, and books of accounting.
- ii. Controls the collection and receipt of all monies payable to the FFA.
- iii. Pays out monies as authorized by the executive.

- iv. Prepares the annual financial statement and reports to the membership at the annual general meeting.
- v. Is a signing officer.
- vi. Has full voting privileges.

10. DUTIES OF NON ELECTED OFFICERS

a. Immediate Past President

- i. Serves as an officer of the executive for a term consistent with the title.
- ii. Has full voting privileges.

b. Foster Parents Society of Ontario Representative for Prescott-Russell

- i. Serves on the FFA Executive for a term consistent with the terms of office for the FPSO.
- ii. Represents the Prescott-Russell Foster Family Association regionally and provincially.
- iii. Has full voting privileges on all matters not pertaining to the Foster Parents Society of Ontario.

c. Appointed Executive Officers

- i. Performs the duties of the appointed executive officer within the parameters of the constitutions by-laws.
- ii. Has full voting privileges on all matters not pertaining to the office.
- iii. Officers holding multiple offices must vote according to appropriate conflict of interest guidelines.

11. BILINGUAL REPRESENTATION

There shall be bilingual representation on all committees of the FFA when so requested or required to meet the needs of the members.

12. PROCEEDINGS

In all cases not provided for herein, the proceedings at meetings of the FFA shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order* and by the usages and customs of the House of Commons of Canada so far as they may be applicable to the meetings of the FFA.

13. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. The place and time shall be determined by the executive, and notice of the agenda shall be given fourteen days prior to the meeting.

- b. The accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate any resolution passed or any action taken at the meeting.
- c. The members present shall constitute a quorum.
- d. The business to be transacted shall be as follows:
 - i. Reading and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting.
 - ii. Annual report of the President.
 - iii. Annual financial report of the Treasurer.
 - iv. New business.
 - v. Amendments to the constitution and by-laws.
 - vi. Election of officers.
 - vii. Adjournment.

14. EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

- a. Place, date and time shall be determined by the executive.
- b. The agenda shall be such as to accomplish the business of the FFA.
- c. The executive officers and non-elected officers present shall constitute a quorum.

15. MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. Place, date, and time shall be determined by the executive. The agenda shall be related to the FFA's business.
- b. A quorum shall consist of five of the elected and non-elected officers of the executive.

16. MENTORS

- a. Purpose
 - i. The FFA mentor program provides encouragement, support, suggestions and advice regarding the day to day problems encountered within the fostering community.
 - ii. Mentors will not be seen as the sole source of support that foster parents may rely upon for assistance. The FFA Executive encourages foster parents to seek support from each other and their workers in ways that are mutually beneficial and productive.
- b. Policy
 - i. The mentors are current foster parents selected by the FFA executive and approved by Valoris, preferably with a minimum of five years experience, and capable of providing quality peer support. They are selected based upon their credibility within the fostering community and the FFA executive.
 - ii. Mentors are bound by the oath of confidentiality they have signed and will use discretion at all times, the only exception being the duty to report as

mandated by legislation.

- iii The FFA executive will appoint a member to become the chairperson of the mentor program as a non-elected officer of the FFA executive, and will be directly responsible to the executive.

c. Procedures

- i Foster parents with any questions or concerns are encouraged to use the services of the mentor program.
- ii Mentors may recommend the services of a communicator, and communicators may refer foster parents to the mentor program should they deem it to be more appropriate.

17. COMMUNICATORS

a. Intent

- i. It is the intent of the FFA and of Valoris that foster parents who are subject to allegations, investigations, or service complaint inquiries shall on request have access to a Communicator for peer support.
- ii. It is not intended that the Communicator be seen as the only person that foster parents can turn to for assistance. The FFA encourages all foster parents to seek support from each other in ways that are mutually agreeable and productive. We further recognize that the Communicators may have a role in other non-investigatory matters where foster parents feel the need to have the assistance of a Communicator.
- iii. Foster parents may decide to have a Communicator for formal support or another foster parent for informal peer support, but may not have both concurrently.

b. Policy

- i. Communicators are current foster parents, selected by the FFA and jointly approved by the management of Valoris. They are foster parents with a minimum of five years fostering experience who undertake special training in order to provide the best peer support possible. They are chosen because they have credibility with both foster parents and staff and can be trusted with confidential information. They provide information, encouragement and advice to foster parents who may be under investigation, undergoing a service complaint review, or who may have other concerns with Valoris.
- ii. The Communicator team will select a member of the team to be nominated as Communicator chair to represent the Communicators as a non-elected officer of the FFA Executive.

c. Procedures

- i. All foster parents have the right and are encouraged to use the opportunity to consult a Communicator for information and advice.

- ii. Valoris may consult with a Communicator as necessary.
- iii. The Communicator may arrange a meeting with staff to discuss an unresolved foster parent concern, and when necessary can initiate the complaint procedure.
- iv. Foster parents are encouraged to contact the Communicators for support and advice when an allegation is made.
- v. The Communicator may provide support and assistance for foster parents during interviews, hearings and conferences with Valoris, arising from a service complaint or an allegation, case conferences where a plan of care is developed for a child in the foster home, any issues arising from any substantive dispute, or difference of opinion, or other difficulties encountered in the provision of care for a child in their home.

d. Confidentiality

Communicators shall conduct themselves, both during their service and at all other times, *in absolute and binding confidentiality* subject to the exception of information that must be disclosed on demand, as required by current laws, and Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) policies.

e. Support from Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell

- i. Valoris shall inform all new foster parents of the Communicator Program.
- ii. Valoris shall remind the foster parents that they may have access to a Communicator at the start of any investigation due to an allegation or complaint.
- iii. Valoris shall make the Communicator team aware of any relevant sections of current and new legislation, MCSS standards and guidelines, and Valoris policies and procedures as soon as they are available in translated forms.
- iv. Valoris shall cover costs for such things as training, babysitting, phone calls, mileage, meals for the family being investigated as well as the Communicator family when necessary during an investigation, and any other miscellaneous items as may be necessitated by the Communicator Program.
- v. Valoris shall notify the Communicators of all new foster home approvals and home closings.

f. Joint Responsibility

- i. Every year, both members of the Communicator team and the Services Liaison shall jointly review the roles and activities of the Communicators prior to the annual general meeting of the FFA.
- ii. All revisions or clarifications of the Communicator role shall be as a result of consultation with Valoris and shall be presented to the FFA Executive for final approval.

18. PRESCOTT-RUSSELL LEGAL DEFENCE FUND (PRLDF)

- a. Purpose of the PRLDF for foster parents.

The purpose of the PRLDF for foster parents is to assist members with legal costs resulting from allegations, investigations, or other matters relating to fostering children for VALORIS.

b. Definition of Member

Any foster parent or retired foster parent shall be a member of the PRLDF for foster parents.

c. Premium

The premium for the PRLDF shall be \$0 .05 per day per child who is presently in a foster home. The premium is to ensure the development and growth of the fund. The monies for the fund shall be transferred from Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell to the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.

d. Coverage

Foster parents or retired foster parents may request funds from the PRLDF for themselves, their natural/adoptive children or caregivers to assist with obtaining legal advice in the case of an allegation or an investigation relating to fostering children for Valoris.

e. Trustee for the PRLDF

The funds will be held in trust by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.

f. PRLDF Chairman

i. The officers for the PRLDF shall be as follows:

1. One member of the FFA shall be appointed as a non-elected member of the FFA Executive to act as Chair and to administer the fund according to the guidelines contained within this by-law.
2. One Communicator.

g. PRLDF Structure

- i. The FFA has a lawyer on retainer to provide legal advice to members of the fund on matters pertaining to investigations, allegations or other matters arising from their role as foster parents for Valoris.
- ii. The Chair shall make a financial report at the FFA monthly meetings.

h. Availability to the Prescott-Russell Legal Defence Fund.

- i. All members of the PRLDF shall have access to the fund.
 - ii. A request for legal consultation with a lawyer may be made by any current foster parent or retired foster parent for themselves or on behalf of their natural/adoptive children or caregivers, by contacting the PRLDF Chair, a Communicator, or the FFA Executive.
 - iii. The Chair shall review the request and determine if it meets the requirements of the fund.
 - iv. Upon approval by the PRLDF Chair and one Communicator, an appointment shall be arranged with the PRLDF lawyer. Should a foster parent wish to retain a lawyer of his or her choice the Chair and a Communicator shall make funds available to him or her under the same terms and conditions as apply to the FFA lawyer on retainer. Every subsequent appointment with the lawyers shall be arranged by the PRLDF Chair.
- i. Acquiring assistance from the PRLDF
 - i. Should the foster family seek the advice of a lawyer of their choice, the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell shall issue the cheque as requested by the PRLDF Chair.
 - ii. A letter shall accompany payment to any lawyer other than the FFA lawyer on retainer advising that any refunds regarding the legal fees are to be returned to the Prescott-Russell Legal Defence Fund.
 - iii. In the event of a conflict of interest for either the Chair or the Communicator they shall abstain and the matter shall be referred to the FFA Executive.
 - j. Financial Reporting by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.

The Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell shall provide a report prior to the annual general meeting each year to the FFA Executive, detailing the income and disbursements from the PRLDF, and at other times upon request by the Chair.

k. Dissolution of the PRLDF

If the FFA Executive elects to dissolve the fund, the accumulated monies shall be transferred to Valoris for the betterment of all foster children of Prescott-Russell.

19. THE AFTER CARE FUND (ACF)

The monies collected are to be kept by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell in a segregated account to be used at the sole discretion of the ACF Committee, a committee created by the FFA Executive in accordance with the terms of reference within the by-law.

a. Purpose of the Fund

The ACF was created to grant money to former foster children of Prescott-Russell to assist them in pursuing educational or career activities. Funds are also available for

former foster children of Prescott-Russell to ease financial burdens, uninsured medical or dental expenses and other purposes at the discretion of the FFA Executive.

b. Recipients of the ACF

ACF recipients shall be former foster children over the age of eighteen and under the age of thirty who were at one time in the care of Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell.

c. Premium

The premium for the ACF is \$0.35 per day per child presently in a foster home. The premium is to ensure the development and the growth of the fund. The monies for this fund shall be transferred to the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.

d. Coverage

- i. The total amount of grants given to any individual may never exceed \$5,000.
- ii. The ACF Committee may grant a cumulative maximum of \$5,000 to assist a former foster child in pursuing an education.
- iii. The ACF Committee may provide a maximum of \$1,000 to help a former foster child deal with a financial burden or to help pay down a debt.
- iv. The ACF Committee may provide a maximum of \$3,000 for uninsured medical or dental expenses for a former youth in care or for their dependents.
- v. The ACF Committee may also at the discretion of the majority of the FFA Executive grant amounts of money for other purposes as they see fit.

e. Availability of the ACF

- i. A grant from the ACF must be requested by a current or former FFA foster parent or Valoris case worker on behalf of a former foster child. The request shall be in writing and shall detail the reason for the request, the amount required and, if for educational or career development, the intended goals of the former foster child.
- ii. The amount of the grant is to be made payable to an institution, a professional, or a third party after a review of the estimate or bill, unless the former foster child can show proof of payment for re-imbusement.
- iii. The grant shall be accompanied by a letter indicating that any refunds relating to the grant are to be returned to the ACF segregated account.
- iv. The ACF Committee shall review every grant request and determine if it meets the requirements of the ACF. If it meets these requirements, the Committee shall then forward a request to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee to issue a cheque. Should it not meet the requirements of the ACF, the ACF Committee shall present the request to the FFA Executive for a decision prior to proceeding with the request.

- v. In order to maintain the integrity of the ACF, a minimum reserve of \$20,000 shall be maintained. An annual spending cap shall be imposed on the ACF Committee, the amount to be determined by the FFA Executive.

f. Trustee of the ACF

The ACF shall be held in trust by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell in a segregated fund.

g. Members of the ACF Committee

- i. One Executive member of the FFA to chair the Committee.
- ii. Two members of the FFA named by the FFA Executive.
- iii. A member of the Valoris management team.

- iv. The ACF Committee shall provide the initial review and approval of the grant requests by determining if the grant request meets the ACF requirements as detailed in this document. If the proposal does not meet the standard requirements, then the proposal shall be brought back to the FFA Executive for discussion, recommendations and approval.
- v. The information and recommendations shall be forwarded to the Valoris management team member for approval within two business days of receiving the information from the ACF Committee.
- vi. If approved by the ACF Committee, a cheque shall be sent to the appropriate party by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.
- vii. If not approved by all ACF Committee members, then all five members must meet within two business days to review the request.

h. Financial Reporting by the ACF Committee to the FFA Executive and by the Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell.

- i. The Valoris Foundation of Prescott-Russell shall provide a report prior to the annual general meeting each year to the FFA Executive, detailing the income and disbursements from the ACF and at other times upon request.
- ii. The ACF Committee shall report at the monthly meetings to the FFA Executive on any requests to the ACF or disbursements therefrom.

i. Validation

When the grant is used for training and educational purposes, proof of attendance and a copy of completion certificates must be provided.

j. Dissolution of the ACF

If the FFA Executive elects to dissolve the ACF, the accumulated monies shall be transferred to Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell for the betterment of all foster children of Prescott-Russell.