



THE NINETY-NINES, INC.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

Credentials Committee

1. **Purpose:** The Annual Meeting (AM) is typically held using a hybrid format, allowing credentialed members to participate in-person or online. The Credentials Committee SOP describes the process to credential and determine the number of credentialed members eligible to vote in the AM, in accordance with The Ninety-Nines, Inc. bylaws and standing rules.
2. **Applicability:** Credentials committee members; 99s members participating at the International level in the AM, either in-person or online.
3. **Background:** All members who wish to attend the AM, either in-person or online, must complete the online credentials process prior to the AM. All credentialed members of The 99s may cast votes during the AM. The Credentials Committee Chair (Chair) communicates the process and timing for credentialing to members. This SOP also describes the process for determining and reporting a quorum at the AM.
4. **Membership:** The Chair is appointed by the President and approved by the IBOD. The Chair appoints two (2) to four (4) committee members, who will assist in the online credentialing process and as needed in-person at the AM.
5. **Responsibility:**
 - 5.1. The Chair manages the credentialing process required for the AM, including an annual review/update of the credentials software application and website to ensure its functionality.
 - 5.2. The Chair will work with the Headquarters (HQ) manager to test the *99snet.net* software application used for credentialing prior to opening the credentials desk.
 - 5.3. The Chair asks HQ to send all 99s members an email notification with instructions for completing the online credentials process 30 days prior to the AM.
 - 5.4. The Chair monitors the online credentialing process to ensure that the credentialing software application used is operating smoothly and accurately.
 - 5.5. With direction from the Chair, committee members will assist with credentialing of members. Committee members:
 - 5.5.1. will assist with testing the *99snet.net* software application used for credentialing.
 - 5.5.2. will assist members experiencing technical issues during the period when the credentials desk is open.

- 5.5.3. will assist with AM proceedings to ensure that only credentialed members are tallied during voting operations.
 - 5.5.4. will identify credentialed members' badges with a unique sticker (for members attending the AM in-person). After conference registration check-in, members will stop at the credentials desk to receive this sticker.
 - 5.5.5. will post hours when technical assistance is available to credentialed members who wish to check that their technology is operational (up to 24 hours prior to the AM).
- 5.6. The credentialing period closes 36 hours prior to the AM. The Chair forwards the list of credentialed voters to the Voting Administrator at least 24 hours prior to the AM.
 - 5.7. At the AM, the Chair coordinates with the Voting Administrator to confirm the number of credentialed members present for voting (in person and online) and to assess if a quorum is present as dictated in the Standing Rules.
 - 5.8. The Chair reports the number of credentialed members participating in the AM and states if that number meets the quorum requirement for voting at the AM. This report is included in the minutes of the AM to provide an historical record.

6. **References:**

- 6.1. Bylaws Article II Purpose, Policies, and Definitions, Section 3. Definitions
 - 6.1.1. II.3.E. defines a proxy.
- 6.2. Bylaws Article VI Annual Meeting, Section 2. Voting
 - 6.2.1. VI.2.A. defines the voting body.
 - 6.2.2. VI.2.B. and C. state when proxy votes may be allowed for the AM.
- 6.3. Bylaws Article VI Annual Meeting, Section 3.
 - 6.3.1. VI.3. defines a quorum at the AM.
- 6.4. Standing Rules SR VII Annual Meeting
 - 6.4.1. SR VII.2. defines credentials requirement to participate in voting at the AM.

7. **Abbreviations and Definitions (used in this SOP):**

- 7.1. 99snet.net – software application for credentialing
- 7.2. AM – Annual Meeting
- 7.3. CC – Chapter Chair(s)
- 7.4. Chair – chair of the International Credentials Committee
- 7.5. Committee – International Credentials Committee
- 7.6. Credentialed member – a member in good standing at the time of opening the credentialing process for the AM. The member must have cleared the IBOD official acknowledgement for membership by the credentialing deadline and prior to the AM credentialing process initiation. Typically, membership must be 30 days prior to the AM held in the calendar year.
- 7.7. Election Buddy – online voting election system
- 7.8. FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions
- 7.9. HQ – Headquarters
- 7.10. IBOD – International Board of Directors

- 7.11. ICCE – International Conference and Career Expo
- 7.12. Online Meeting Organizer – administrator for the online meeting platform (e.g., Zoom)
- 7.13. President – president of the 99s
- 7.14. Voting Administrator – individual managing the electronic voting process (e.g., Election Buddy). Individual may serve as Head Teller in the case of technology failure and absence of an electronic voting process.

8. **Supplies:**

- 8.1. A document of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 8.2. For staffing at in-person AM location:
 - 8.2.1. Instruction sheet for working the credentials desk (see section 11 below).
 - 8.2.2. Pouches containing pens, pencils, highlighters, rubber bands, paperclips, sticky notes, and credentials badges for each member working the credentials desk.
 - 8.2.3. Voting cards to be used *only* in case of technology failure for electronic voting. These will be used by in-person credentialed members to cast their votes. Tellers and the Head Teller will count the votes cast and report the results.
 - 8.2.4. Identifying stickers to apply on name badges showing which members have been credentialed to vote. The sticker lets the Sergeant-at-Arms and Sentinels know that a member is allowed to vote.
 - 8.2.5. Alternative sticker/mark to apply on name badges for any active, non-credentialed members (e.g., walk-ins).

9. **Preparation and Decisions:**

- 9.1. The IBOD decides whether the AM is offered online and/or or in-person. That decision will be made at least 3 months in advance of the AM – at that time, proxy votes will be used if the AM is in-person only). The IBOD decision drives how voting is conducted at the AM.
 - 9.1.1. However, it is noted that a failure of technology during the AM may require that voting reverts to in-person-only with no proxy votes.
- 9.2. The Chair and the President discuss and decide how to conduct each year's credentials process and AM (see Section 17 for detailed timeline of the full process).
- 9.3. Cutoff date for list of members
 - 9.3.1. Select a date to generate the “frozen” list of members that will be used in the 99snet.net credentialing application (approximately one month before the AM).
 - 9.3.2. Ideally, the cutoff date is the beginning of a month, because member status is “rolled over” at the end of the month (see Section 9.4 below for member status information).
 - 9.3.3. In selecting the cutoff date, consider the activities that must happen in advance of the AM and how much time to allow for these activities. Add up the days/weeks required for these activities to arrive at a minimum lead time. Set the cutoff date no later than the date that permits the minimum lead time in advance of the AM (see the timeline in Section 17).

- 9.4. Member status review (conducted by HQ)
 - 9.4.1. A member must be fully paid within 2 months after her renewal date in order to be included in the membership count.
 - 9.4.2. Member status codes in the directory are CURRENT (fully paid), STANDBY (1 month or less past renewal date), and HOLD (2 months or less past renewal date). The membership list will be pulled within 1 month of the AM, then:
 - 9.4.2.1. The President and Chair decide the cutoff date. In general, all members (CURRENT, STANDBY, HOLD) are used for the 'frozen' list. This list is used to email members giving them instructions for the credentials process to grant them voting privileges at the AM.
- 9.5. Credentialing members
 - 9.5.1. All members wishing to vote, in-person or online, must complete the credentialing process online no later than 36 hours prior to the AM. This will enable the Committee and Voting Administrator to ensure that credentialed members are added to the pool of eligible voters for the AM.
 - 9.5.2. For credentialed members attending the AM in-person, they must also stop at the Credentials desk after checking in at the Conference location. Credentials staff should validate the credentialed member:
 - 9.5.2.1. add a unique sticker to the member's badge
 - 9.5.2.2. provide the member with a unique voting card to be used only in case electronic voting fails
- 9.6. Method of voting
 - 9.6.1. For electronic voting, credentialed members (either in-person or online) access the online voting system to cast their votes.
 - 9.6.2. If electronic voting is not available (e.g., failed technology), credentialed members attending the AM in-person raise their hands to vote. If the vote is too close to call, then voting cards will be used and counted.

10. Preparing for an In-Person Credentials Desk at the Conference:

- 10.1. Coordinate with the ICCE Chair and Credentials staff regarding the dates and times the Credentials desk will be open before the AM. Ideally, the Credentials desk should be staffed while the Conference Registration desk is open so that members may validate their credentials as they check in for the Conference.
- 10.2. Credentials staff may apply stickers to credentialed members' badges in advance.
- 10.3. Request firm commitments from Committee members with the times they will work the Credentials desk. It is especially important to have enough members at the desk prior to the meeting to answer member questions as needed. Many questions will be concerning the technology in use or didn't receive the voting platform email with their access information.
- 10.4. Contact the ICCE Chair to request the Credentials desk setup – tables, chairs, and electrical outlet for computer (needed to check membership status). Discuss signage and placement.

- 10.5. Identify at least one computer (with internet access) to have at the Credentials desk to verify membership status.
- 10.6. Prepare any paperwork for the meeting (e.g., spreadsheet of credentials list; stickers; AM script).

11. In-Person Credentials Desk:

- 11.1. Make sure you have all files/paperwork with you. Double-check before you leave home!
- 11.2. Meet with all Committee members at the Conference to reaffirm that they are present. Reconfirm all time slot commitments to ensure adequate coverage when the Credentials desk is open. Discuss any issues/conflicts that may have arisen. Review the outline of what happens at the Credentials desk.
- 11.3. Confirm that all materials are ready (including voting cards).
- 11.4. Confirm that a computer is available and operational to check the 99s membership directory. Determine which committee member will be responsible for computer verification. No credentialing will occur after the credentialing period ends.
- 11.5. What happens at the credentials desk:
 - 11.5.1. Validate the member is credentialed and a CURRENT member. Place the unique sticker on the name badge showing the member has been through credentials.
- 11.6. Just before the AM begins:
 - 11.6.1. Determine quorum and prepare the quorum report (see below).
 - 11.6.2. Work with the Voting Administrator and determine the number of members present in the room and online. Use this number to report the number of credentialed members and if a quorum is in the room.

12. Online Credentials Desk:

- 12.1. Work with the credentialing software developer to specify, revise, and test the application that conducts online credentials. Provide feedback and confirm when ready to launch.
- 12.2. Confirm the cutoff date and the member status to include (see section 9 above). Work with HQ to provide the credentialing software developer with the membership list of emails as of the cutoff date.
- 12.3. Train Committee members on the online credentials application.
- 12.4. Work with HQ on the email to be sent to members announcing that online credentials is open. Ensure that the email adequately describes the step-by-step process to complete credentials for all members and the open period for credentialing prior to the AM.

- 12.5. Work with HQ to identify members who are not current. Send them a separate email to encourage them to renew their memberships 2 months prior to the AM so that they will be eligible to vote as a CURRENT member. [This may be a way to get some people to renew sooner.]
- 12.6. The Chair and the President must review and approve the email. HQ sends the email to all members.
- 12.7. Each member accesses the application to enter her credentials.
 - 12.7.1. The application automatically credentials the member against the membership list.
 - 12.7.2. The application displays the member's chapter and section for verification.
 - 12.7.3. She confirms her entry and receives a confirmation screen.
- 12.8. Committee members monitor online credentials and address any questions or problems that members are experiencing.
- 12.9. Periodically, export the list of credentialed members. Report in-process totals to the president as requested.

13. Final preparation to determine the quorum at the AM

- 13.1. Work with the Online Meeting Organizer and Voting Administrator to set up and test the online meeting software and online voting application.
- 13.2. When Credentials closes, perform a final review for any anomalies. If an entry was in error, and that error was not resolved, inform the member that she may attend the meeting, but not vote.
- 13.3. Export a final list of credentialed members. Review again for any anomalies, and resolve. Send this list to the Voting Administrator.
- 13.4. Format this report as requested by the Voting Administrator. Send this list to the Voting Administrator and the Online Meeting Organizer.
- 13.5. The Chair prepares and gives the quorum report (see quorum, below).
- 13.6. Report the totals of credentialed members to the President and to all in attendance at the AM. Secretary records the results of the quorum in the meeting minutes.
- 13.7. At the beginning of the actual online AM, the Online Meeting Organizer takes a 'snapshot' of the list of attendees.
 - 13.7.1. Online attendees
 - 13.7.2. In-person attendees (provided by Sergeant-at-Arms / Sentinels)

14. Calculating and Reporting Quorum:

- 14.1. Per Bylaws VI.3., “A quorum shall be the presence of two (2) percent of the membership and the presence of credentialed members representing at least four (4) sections.”
- 14.2. The Chair should determine the number of credentialed members attending in-person and online to make the quorum report.
Credentialed in-person: _____ Credentialed online: _____
% of membership represented : _____ # Sections present: _____
- 14.3. The Chair forwards to the President and the Voting Administrator the quorum number represented by the credentialed members. This number should include the number of online credentialed members and the in-person credentialed members (from the Voting Administrator).
- 14.3.1. In case of technology failure *before* the quorum is established using the online voting system: the Sergeant at Arms is responsible to count the number of credentialed members in the room and report the number to the Chair (or her designate).
- 14.3.2. In case of technology failure *during* the AM (after the quorum was previously established at the beginning of the AM): the Tellers will record votes cast by the credentialed members in the room for the remainder of the AM.
- 14.4. The number of credentialed members (both online and in-person) is presented to the President and parliamentarian.
- 14.4.1. These numbers of potential votes are used to determine a majority or a 2/3 vote for a voted item to pass or fail.
- 14.5. On the agenda at the Quorum Call, the Chair reports: “Madame President, according to the International bylaws, Article VI, Section 3,
‘A quorum shall be the presence of two (2) percent of the membership and the presence of credentialed members representing at least four (4) sections.’
As of 8:15 am today, _____, 20__ , the total number of credentialed members eligible to vote is _____ available.”

15. Post Annual Meeting:

- 15.1. A copy of the final report should also be sent to HQ where the information is archived. The Voting Administrator will send a final report within 30 days after the AM.
- 15.2. Gather all receipts for expenses incurred for the credentials process. This includes any paper, envelopes, postage, and supplies. Write a letter to HQ and itemize expenses using the online expense report (available in the online library). Include copies of original receipts. Keep a copy with copies of the report.
- 15.3. Think about what went well and what needs improvement for credentials at the AM. Make notes immediately after the AM while your experiences are fresh in mind. Revise the SOP using ‘track changes’ so it can be updated and approved for use next year.

15.4. Revise the SOP if there are changes to the bylaws or standing rules as needed.

16. **Approval:**

16.1. Authorizing Body: International Board of Directors.

16.2. Approval Date: This SOP was approved on August 26,2023.

17. Timeline for Hybrid (In-Person, Online) Annual Meeting:

The following sequence of dates and activities is intended to be used as a guide. The sample date / timeframe below assumes an AM that occurs on the 2nd Saturday of July. The committee must prepare a more detailed schedule for the actual tasks necessary each year.

Typical Date / Timeframe	Duration of Activity (days)	Deadline (approx. days before Event)	Event	Actions
Feb 15	5	- 10	Spring IBOD Mtg	Review/update the SOP. Confirm necessary information for the next AM with the ICCE Chair.
Mar 15	5	- 120	AM	Confirm AM will be held hybrid. Review and decide on supplies needed (Section 8). Confirm participating committee members.
Mar 20	1	- 120		<i>One Person, One Vote</i> promotions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair submits ¼-page ad to The 99s magazine to alert 99s members that all members must complete online credentialing to vote at the AM – ad will run in the May/Jun issue of the magazine. Chair submits a similar item to run in the April <i>Straight & Level</i> e-newsletter.
Apr 20	1	- 90	AM	<i>One Person, One Vote</i> promotion – Chair reruns the above promotional item from the <i>Straight & Level</i> e-newsletter for May.
May 1	2	- 70	AM	Test online credentials application. Work with the Voting Administrator to test the voting application.
May 15	2	- 60	AM	Contact the ICCE Committee Chair to request setting up a Credentials Desk (tables; chairs; electrical outlet for computer) adjacent to Conference Registration Check-In area – ideally, members will register and then flow to Credentials Desk. Discuss signage and placement.
Jun 1	1	- 30	AM	<i>One Person, One Vote</i> promotion – Chair has HQ send out an email to all 99s with instructions for on-line credentialing. 23:59 GMT – cutoff to download 99s member database; send list to HQ for creation of online credentials desk database.
Jun 13	1	- 26	AM	23:59 GMT – cutoff for official processing of new / returning members to be added as confirmed members eligible for credentialing.
Jun 14	1	- 25	AM	23:59 GMT – cutoff for HQ to add late entries (new / returning members) as confirmed members eligible for credentialing.
Jun 15	21	- 24	AM	Open the online credentials desk. Monitor activity. Answer questions.

Typical Date / Timeframe	Duration of Activity (days)	Deadline (approx. days before Event)	Event	Actions
Jun 25		- 14	AM	Gather paperwork and supplies for the AM. Identify computer for the Credentials Desk. Confirm attendance of committee members to staff the Credentials Desk (ideally same times as Conference Registration Desk).
Jul 1 (Fri)		- 7	AM	<i>One Person, One Vote</i> – LAST CALL email for credentialing
Jul 6 (Wed)		- 2	AM	23:59 GMT – close the online credentials desk.
Jul 7 (Thu)		- 2	AM	Final review of credentialed members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export final credentialed list, send to Voting Administrator and President. • Summarize counts by Section • Determine if quorum rule will be met
Jul 8 (Fri)		- 1	AM	23:59 GMT – Chair and Voting Administrator confirm that credentialed list is final and uploaded for voting
Jul 9 (Sat)	5	0	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7:00 AM (local) – Coordinate with President and Voting Administrator to report credentialed members present in-person. Confirm whether the quorum rule is met by in-person members (back-up for technology failure). • 9:00 AM (local) – Give report at AM of 1) votes available, and 2) quorum (# credentialed members, # Sections represented – as per the bylaws).
Aug 9		+ 30	AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit final written report to include number of credentialed members by Section, showing Sections represented.