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Bylaw Guides and Website Resources

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The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) recently launched a new website! The new site includes a menu option specific to fire relief associations, offering a centralized place to find educational materials, data, newsletters, and other information tailored to your organizations. This article highlights some of the resources the OSA provides, like sample bylaw guides, to answer common questions relief association trustees have and to help them be successful in their roles.

Bylaw Guides

As nonprofit organizations, relief associations are required to create and maintain bylaws. Bylaws are governing rules adopted by a relief association, and they can be revised over time. To help relief associations create a solid foundation for their governance, the OSA provides a series of sample bylaw guides. The guides are designed to be used as a reference when developing, updating, and revising bylaws and are intended to help a relief association meet its minimum statutory requirements.

Both Word and PDF formats of the bylaw guides are provided, making it easy to copy provisions a relief association wishes to adopt from the guides into the association's own bylaws. Versions are available for both defined benefit and defined contribution plans, further customized by the type of fire department with which the relief association is affiliated. Bylaw provisions vary slightly depending on whether the relief association is affiliated with a municipal fire department, joint powers entity, or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation.

The bylaw guides provide relief association trustees with options from which they can choose. Because the sample bylaw guides are designed to meet minimum statutory requirements and to provide the basic framework for developing bylaws, relief associations may decide to have additional provisions or to use different language. The Board of Trustees should regularly review and update the association's bylaws to ensure they remain current and compliant with statutory requirements. In all cases, relief associations should have their bylaws reviewed by legal counsel and must also submit any revised bylaws, along with documentation of proper ratification, to the OSA for review and recordkeeping.

Find the bylaw guides by visiting the OSA website at www.osa.state.mn.us and choose the "Fire Relief Associations" menu option. The top of the Fire Relief Associations page includes a "Bylaw Guides" box where you can click to view all versions and formats of the sample guides.

Additional Website Resources

When visiting the Fire Relief Associations page of our website, you'll also find links to other resources, including statements of position, updated educational videos, links to state payment amounts, and

newsletter topics. The “Topics” page is an especially helpful resource for relief association trustees, providing short guidance pieces addressing common questions we receive from trustees.

We hope the new website provides you with a “one stop shop” for finding relief association content. Check out and bookmark the new Fire Relief Associations page and send us a message at pension@osa.state.mn.us if you have any suggestions or feedback.