

**North East Ohio Telugu Association(NEOTA)**  
**THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

**Article I - Name**

The name of the Association is NORTH EAST OHIO TELUGU ASSOCIATION (NEOTA). It is a non-profit organization.

**Article II - Objective**

The main objective of NEOTA is to enhance Telugu culture and heritage in the greater Cleveland area and to act as a sister organization to local and national Indian and Telugu cultural organizations.

**Article III - Membership**

- 1) Any individual, over 18 years of age, living in and around greater Cleveland, who accepts the constitution of NEOTA and the aims and objectives for which it stands shall be eligible to be a general member of the NEOTA.
- 2) There shall be four (4) categories of membership.
  - a) **Family Membership:** This is open to families interested in Telugu culture. Both husband and wife in the family have the right to vote and are eligible to hold office.
  - b) **Individual Membership:** This is open to individuals interested in Telugu culture. They have the right to vote and are eligible to hold office.
  - c) **Life Membership:** This is open to families or individuals interested in Telugu culture, who pay a lump sum fee/donation as determined by the Executive committee. They have the right to vote and are eligible to hold office.
  - d) **Student Membership:** This is open to full time students who are interested in Telugu culture. They have no right to vote and are not eligible to hold office.

**Article IV - Membership Dues**

- 1) Family, individual and student members shall pay annual dues which shall be determined and received as needed by the Executive committee. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.
- 2) Annual dues shall be due and payable on or before January 1 of each year. Any members can attend association functions after January 1, either by paying membership or by paying entry fees as determined by the Executive Committee. Members who paid their membership dues by July 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year only are eligible to vote and contest for elections during that year.

**Article V - Administration and officers**

- 1) The general governance of the Association shall be vested in the Executive Committee.
- 2) The Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as EC) shall be composed of an elected body of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Coordinator, and Member Services Coordinator.
- 3) Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as BOT) shall be composed of three (3) elected members. Trustees are members of good standing in the Greater Cleveland Community and are community leaders who can affect change through their leadership and advocacy.
- 4) The Executive Board (hereafter referred to as EB) shall be composed of three (3) Board of Trustees and six (6) members of the Executive Committee.

**Article VI - Terms of Office**

**1) Trustees**

- a) Terms of office of the trustees shall be for a period of three (3) years. The term of one Trustee will expire each year and a new one will be elected at the general body meeting along with the election for members of the executive committee.
- b) During the first election, one member of BOT is elected for a 1 year term, a second member is elected for a 2 year term and third member is elected for a 3 year term.

## **2) Executive Committee**

- a) The terms of office of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Coordinator and Member Services Coordinator shall be for a period of one (1) year (January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup> )
- b) The President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Cultural Coordinator and Member Services Coordinator shall not hold their positions for more than two successive terms.
- c) No family shall hold more than one position in any given year.

## **3) Vacancies**

- a) In case of vacancy in the office of the President, The Vice-President shall hold the office of the President for the rest of the term.
- b) In case of a vacancy in the office of the President and the Vice-President, the Secretary shall hold the office of the President for the rest of the term.
- c) In case of a vacancy in the office of VP, Secretary or Treasurer, the Vacancy/ vacancies are to be filled within two months of such occurrence by the President with the consent of the remaining members of the Executive Board by seeking nominations from the members of good standing.
- d) In case of vacancy in the office of 3(three) or more members of the Executive Board, the remaining officers of the Executive Board shall call a fresh election to elect new officers in all the offices for the remaining term. The new officers shall take over the office soon after the election.
- e) All vacancies are to be filled within two months of such occurrence if it happens within the first three quarters of the year.
- f) Vacancies arising in the last quarter may not be filled.
- g) A vacancy created by Trustee may be only filled by the election for the remainder of the term at the General Election. If there are two or more vacancies in BOT, then immediate elections should be called to replace the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

## **Article VII - Elections**

### **1) Eligibility Criteria**

- a) Trustee nominee must be a NEOTA member in good standing as defined in Article III and has served the NEOTA well in some official or ad hoc capacity in the past.
- b) EC nominee must be a NEOTA member in good standing as defined in Article III

### **2) Election Protocol**

- a) Elections shall be held before November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year at the annual general body meeting.
- b) Six members of the executive committee and one Trustee are to be elected every year and their terms of office shall be as defined in Article VI
- c) The EB shall appoint a Nominating & Election Committee (hereafter referred to as NEC) each year to oversee the election process. Any member in good standing other than the existing member of the Executive Board can be part of NEC.
- d) The NEC shall be in place by the end of September. This committee shall conduct elections for that year.
- e) Communication seeking nominations for the election shall be sent at least 45 days prior to the election by NEC using e-mail process and web notification.
- f) Members of the NEC may not nominate themselves for the office.
- g) Deadline for receiving nominations shall be at least 3 weeks before the election.
- h) NEC shall confirm with the nominees on their participation and distribute the list of nominees to all members at least 2 weeks prior to the election.
- i) In the event no nominations are received by the NEC before the specified date for any of the posts, floor nominations will be solicited at the annual meeting.
- j) Detailed procedures for the election shall be determined by the Nominating and Election committee.

### **3) Transition to newly elected committee**

- a) A Financial audit committee may be setup by the President when presenting the Year-End Financial Reports. This committee may consist of 2 to 3 members outside the Executive Committee to review all financial statements with Treasurer for year-end statements and sending out appropriate notices.

- b) A transitional meeting is prudent when the control transfers from one Executive Board to the Incoming New Executive Board after the elections. It is at this time a review may be given of the yearly activities and budget fixed for the coming year.
- c) All records, assets and documents along with year-end financial statements approved by EB are to be handed over to the newly elected executive committee no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

## **Article VIII - Duties of Officers**

### **1) Executive Board and Executive Committee**

- a) The Executive Board bears the overall responsibility for Telugu Community's image, viability, financial well-being and actions of NEOTA. The Executive Committee shall govern and direct activities of importance to the Telugu Community of the Greater Cleveland area. It shall govern the activities of various committees of NEOTA.
- b) NEOTA EC has the authority to appoint necessary ad-hoc committees and direct their activities to carry out specific projects, events or tasks.
- c) General body can remove any elected office member or member of the organization for behavior detrimental to the organization by two-thirds majority of the voting members present at a meeting specifically called for the purpose.
- d) Any member or officer removed from the association according to the above paragraph may appeal such decision and may be reinstated by the approval of two-thirds majority of the general body.
- e) The Executive Board shall determine the annual dues of the association.

### **2) Trustees**

- a) The Trustees shall be responsible for setting long term objectives of the association. Their duties include, but are not limited to, the activities such as taking action on all constitutional and legal matters pertaining to NEOTA as well as assisting and cooperating with the EB on their projects.
- b) The Trustee shall strive to encourage and spread the organizations goodwill
- c) The Trustees will use their influence to bring in donors to patronize NEOTA.

### **3) President**

- a) The President is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Presiding officer of NEOTA and shall perform all duties that promote the mission and objectives of the organization.
- b) President shall preside at all the meetings of the association, Executive committee and Executive Board.
- c) President shall make all such appointments as required or authorized by the constitution and by the Executive committee.
- d) President shall designate committees, committee chairs and representatives to other groups.
- e) President shall appoint special and ad-hoc committees as may be necessary to further the association objectives and monitor their progress. With Executive Committee consultation, President may direct a committee to be discontinued when its purpose has been served.

### **4) Vice President**

- a) The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in their absence and when so acting shall have all the powers of the President...
- b) The Vice-President may be assigned to one or more special projects.
- c) He/she shall perform such other duties as assigned by the President.
- d) The Vice President shall be responsible for activities and food services during NEOTA events & celebrations.

### **5) Secretary**

- a) The secretary shall record, share and keep the minutes of the meetings of the Association, Executive committee and Executive Board.
- b) Assist the President, Executive Board to fulfill their duties.
- c) Maintain lists and Contact details of Executive board members. Maintain all records and information of the Organization and Inventories of the Association.

### **6) Treasurer:**

- a) The Treasurer shall receive record and be the custodian of the funds of the association.
- b) The Treasurer shall maintain proper accounting and present financial statements, bank records at the Executive committee meetings.
- c) The treasurer provides report of all expenses, balances, and assets of NEOTA available funds at NEOTA meetings.
- d) Treasurer will keep the Executive Board apprised of IRS regulations and file the necessary Tax documents and post the Tax deduction notices to the donors.

**7) Cultural Coordinator**

- a) The cultural coordinator shall be responsible for preparing guidelines, soliciting and approving cultural items with the consultation of executive committee, contacting and coordinating performers, preparing agenda for cultural events, organizing prize distributions, coordinating audio and stage management activities, and presenting cultural items to the audience.
- b) Although cultural coordinator serves as the lead person, the Executive Committee as a whole shall be responsible for the overall planning and implementing of any NEOTA function.

**8) Member Services Coordinator**

- a) The Member Services Coordinator shall be primarily responsible all member communications, services and for content of NEOTA website
- b) Runs membership drives and necessary public relations to increase membership levels.
- c) Maintain Life membership lists, directory of Trustees, Executive Committee members and membership information.
- d) Monitor and setup membership table at various events.
- e) Coordinate all the member communications

**Article IX - NEOTA Protocol and Procedures**

- 1. There shall be at least one general body meeting each year at a place and date designated by the EB.
- 2. The time and place of all meetings shall be decided by the Executive committee at the start of the year. Special meetings may be called by the President as required.
- 3. The Executive Board shall meet at least twice in a year. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in every 3 months.
- 4. If a member of the Executive Board fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings they may be removed from the Executive Board. Meetings must be scheduled well in advance.
- 5. The quorum for any meeting of the EB or EC shall be two-thirds of its members. The quorum for General Body meeting shall be 30% of members in good standing.
- 6. Disputes between Trustees and the Executive committee shall be resolved by majority of the votes at a specifically called Executive Board meeting with a well respected member outside the executive board acting as mediator.
- 7. Program Revenues may be disbursed only after paying all operation costs for the Program or Event. Every event budget must be reviewed by the EC and plans must be made to work towards a sustainable budget. Due diligence must be made to recover the costs of an event either through memberships, sponsorships, admission fees or selling goods etc.,
- 8. Parliamentary Procedures:

In the absence of any provision, in the by-laws of this association, all members of the association and Executive Board shall be guided by Parliamentary rules as used and contained in the current edition of Robert's "Rule of Order".

**Article X – Expense Policy**

- 1) The President MUST consult with all other Executive Committee members and obtain the majority approval to sign any check exceeding \$500 or contract of expenditure less than \$3,000. Checks could be signed by the President or Treasurer after approval of EC and duly recorded in the EC Meeting minutes.

- 2) For any expenditure of \$3,000 or more, the President MUST present it to the Executive Board and obtain its approval.
- 3) The President or Treasurer may authorize expenses up to \$500 from yearly available funds.
- 4) When ever program budget exceeds available NEOTA funds, the Executive Committee must present plan to Executive Board to recover the program costs. Ways and Means committee must be in place to implement the plans. General body may be brought into the resolution process.
- 5) All large expenses must be approved prior to disbursement.
- 6) The president and treasurer owe a fiduciary duty to the members and they should assist the BOT to examine the finances of NEOTA.
- 7) Self payment by the NEOTA office bearers from NEOTA funds shall not be allowed.

#### **Article XI – Financial Accounts**

- 1) NEOTA shall maintain separate funds for specific purposes. All financial records shall be maintained as required by IRS
- 2) General Operations Account –Annual membership fees, advertisement revenue, food revenue, movie collections and miscellaneous income shall be deposited in the General Operations Account. The funds from this account alone should be used to organize events and incur any administrative and organizational expenses NEOTA needs from time to time.
- 3) Endowment Account - This account consists of all the funds received towards Life Membership Fee and any other special income received. Also any surplus amount exceeding \$5000 that is available in the General Fund account at the end of fiscal year shall be transferred into this account. The withdrawal of funds from this account to meet any general/operational expenses of NEOTA requires the approval of general body. The NEOTA executive committee shall have the powers, only in case of emergencies, to withdraw any interest that is earned on this account, to meet NEOTA operational expenses. Such amount shall not exceed \$500 and only one such withdrawal shall be permitted without the approval of the General Body in a given fiscal year.

#### **Article XII – Amendments to Bylaws**

1. Amendments to these bylaws consistent with the NEOTA may be made only by membership with approval of 2/3rd (two-third) of the members present at general body meeting, voting in favor of such amendments. The Trustees must incorporate all amendments passed by the general body into by-laws.
2. The President must communicate notice of all proposed amendments to bylaws in writing, to the membership at least ten days (10) prior to the meeting called to consider the amendments.
3. Requests for amendments to bylaws made by a member and supported by 10% of the membership must be submitted in writing to the President at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of an annual meeting each year.
4. Requests for amendments to bylaws made by a majority vote of the Executive Board may be submitted to the General Body by the President at any time provided due notice has been given for a general body meeting to adopt any such amendments as per “1.” above.
5. Every Five (5) years the General body, in agreement with the Executive Board, should evaluate bylaws, starting in the year 2010 and years that have multiples of 5 thereof.

#### **Article XIII – Dissolution**

In the event of dissolution of NEOTA, the Executive Board shall, with the approval of general Membership and after paying the just debts and expenses of NEOTA, distribute assets to any organization(s) with like purposes or to organizations formed and operated exclusively for literary, educational and charitable purposes. Any such dissolution shall be accomplished pursuant to the laws of State of Ohio.

#### **Article XIV – E-mails, Website and Technology**

- 1) To minimize costs all correspondence is to be carried out electronically unless otherwise stated in by-laws. NEOTA shall maintain a website and e-mail list to communicate with members and has sole proprietary rights to both website and e-mail list. No individual, inclusive of executive committee member owns any personal rights/ ownership to these items.
- 2) The executive committee shall maintain website and e-mails in a dignified manner. No member of the executive committee shall use them for (a) personal glory, (b) airing grievances and internal conflicts (c) accusations, profanity, insults, derogatory / demeaning comments and /or (d) any other purposes that are detrimental to NEOTA image and principles.

**Article XV – Indemnity**

- 1) Executive committee members shall not be held personally liable for any actions and decisions taken on behalf of the association.
- 2) The NEOTA members list (mailing address, e-mail address and phone numbers etc) shall be solely used for distribution of NEOTA related information only.
- 3) NEOTA members list (mailing address, e-mail address, phone numbers), equipment, individual software, web pages generated during the year, photographs taken during the year are association's property. No one shall sell trade or exchange or utilize them in any other manner for personal or third party gains without obtaining permission of general body.