

# **TAMA Constitution and Bylaws**

## **PREAMBLE**

Whereas the need exists for cohesive action on the part of the people of Telugu origin residing in Metro Atlanta, it is hereby resolved that a not-for-profit organization be formed to preserve and propagate the Telugu cultural heritage and maintain the identity of said group of people, to provide a forum for Telugu literary, cultural, educational, social, and charitable interaction among its members.

## **Article I: NAME**

A not-for-profit organization has been formed and the name of the organization is Telugu Association of Metro Atlanta, hereinafter referred to as TAMA.

## **Article II: OBJECTIVES**

- Preserve, maintain, and perpetuate the cultural heritage of the people of Telugu origin in Metro Atlanta and State of Georgia.
- Assist, propagate and advance cultural, literary, educational, arts, social, economic, health, and community affairs of the people of Telugu origin in Metro Atlanta and State of Georgia.
- Organize periodic Telugu literary and educational meetings/gatherings to promote the local talent as well as to invite the distinguished Telugu scholars and artists to Atlanta for close interaction with the people of Metro Atlanta and State of Georgia.
- Collaborate with other community organizations for Telugu literary, cultural, and educational activities.
- Raise, solicit, collect, and disburse funds, charities, and donations for cultural, educational, and charitable purposes (including natural disasters) either directly or in cooperation with other not-for-profit organizations in the U. S. and abroad.

## **Article III: MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING**

TAMA membership is not transferable and membership dues are not refundable. Residents of Georgia aged 18 years or older subscribing to the objectives of TAMA and willing to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of TAMA can become TAMA members as follows:

### **1. Membership Types:**

TAMA Membership can be as a “Life Member” or as a “Biennial Member”, as follows:

- a. "Family Membership" shall be defined as husband and wife.
- b. "Single Membership" shall be defined as membership by one individual.
- c. Membership dues can be paid by the membership applicant only by his/her credit card, debit card, or personal check. Cash payments are not permitted.

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## **2. Life Member:**

Life Member: Any person or family shall be eligible to become a Life Member of TAMA by submitting an application in the prescribed form with the appropriate dues. The life membership fee shall be \$250.

## **3. Biennial Member:**

Biennial Member: Any person or family shall be eligible to become a biennial member of TAMA by submitting an application in the prescribed form with the appropriate dues. The biennial membership fee shall be \$60 for family and \$30 for single person.

## **4. Membership Term:**

Membership term for biennial members is up to two years and it includes the year during which they paid the dues and the following calendar year (January 1 to December 31). A member is in good standing as soon as the payment of his/her dues is certified.

## **5. Membership Dues:**

The membership dues shall be recommended by the Board of Directors (as defined in Article IV.2) from time to time for the approval by simple majority of the general body. Any revision in the membership dues shall be made only once in a calendar year and will be effective immediately after the approval.

## **6. Suspension of Membership:**

Documented activities against the purposes of the organization as defined in Article II shall constitute grounds for suspension of membership. These allegations shall be communicated to the member by the Board of Directors in writing through registered mail. The alleged member shall then be entitled to a hearing by the GBM on such charges. In order to be eligible for aforementioned hearing, the alleged member should request the Board of Directors in writing by certified mail to call for such hearing within thirty days from the receipt of above notification. Failure to respond within thirty days shall result in automatic suspension.

## **7. Voting:**

Voting: Members in good standing as of June 30 are eligible to vote in the next year's election. In case of Life memberships, there shall be two votes, one for the head of the family and one for the spouse. In case of divorced or legally separated families, the voting rights shall remain with the original partners unless advised otherwise by them in writing with mutual consent. Only Life Members in good standing as of June 30 are eligible to contest for any TAMA Executive Committee position in the next year's election. Additionally, only members who have been Life Members for at least 3 calendar years and in good standing are eligible to contest for a Board of Directors position.

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## **Article IV: ORGANIZATION**

TAMA organization shall be made up of the General Body, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee.

### **1. General Body:**

The General Body shall determine the basic philosophy and policies of TAMA. It is empowered to amend the bylaws.

### **Membership:**

General Body shall consist of all TAMA members in good standing, as defined in Article III.

### **Meetings:**

There shall be at least one general body meeting in each calendar year. The president shall call a general body meeting if 10% or more of the members of the Association sign a petition requesting such a meeting. The president shall also call a general body meeting if two-thirds of the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors request for such a meeting. Three weeks written notice with the exact purpose and agenda needs to be included when such a special meeting is called. A minimum of 30% of the members shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority vote shall carry the decisions. In the event there is no quorum at the general body meeting, a second general body meeting will be called after due notice. Members present at this second general body meeting shall constitute a quorum. Any item that is put to vote by the general body can be voted upon only by the membership in attendance. Proxy voting is not allowed.

### **Parliamentary procedures:**

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all meetings and procedures except where they are inconsistent with the TAMA Constitution or Bylaws.

### **2. Board of Directors:**

The board is responsible for the conception and execution of long term projects in TAMA. Long term projects are deemed as any project that span across consecutive years. The Board will actively participate in fundraising activities. The Board will appoint and provide guidelines for the Audit Committee and the Election Committee. The members of the Election Committee appointed by the Board should be life members of TAMA for a period of at least 3 calendar years. The Board in consultation with Executive Committee will announce the election schedule. The Board shall set the amount of dues for various memberships. The Board and Executive Committee will be the final authority in resolving disputes and conflicts in TAMA matters and activities. The Board shall be informed of the annual plans of the Executive Committee but shall not interfere in the day to day operations of the Executive Committee. The Board shall also appoint a parliamentarian for any General Body Meeting.

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The Board shall oversee the transition of TAMA assets and materials from one Executive Committee to the next. The Board is responsible for the management of all endowment accounts. The Board must approve the opening and closing of any TAMA bank accounts.

Directors serve a term of two calendar years following their election. There will be 10 (Ten) Directors serving staggered terms with five Directors elected every year.

In addition, the President will serve as a member of the Board. The Directors elect a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer for the Board from among the board of directors for a term of 1 calendar year. The chairman must have served at least a period of 2 years in the board. The Secretary and Treasurer must have served at least a period of 1 year in the board.

The Board shall meet at least once a quarter. The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes of the Board meeting gets posted on TAMA website within 3 weeks of the meeting.

The Treasurer shall maintain the endowment accounts on behalf of the Board. The Chairman and the Treasurer shall be the only authorized persons to sign the checks individually up to \$1000. Any check exceeding \$1000 shall require the signatures of both Chairman and Treasurer. The Treasurer shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Board of Directors. Any expense exceeding \$2000 shall be approved by the board. He/she shall submit year-end financial reports to the General Body.

### **3. Executive Committee:**

The Executive Committee shall provide the leadership; execute the plans reviewed by the Board of Directors and policies approved by the General Body and directives provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. It shall have the authority to act for and on behalf of TAMA. No member of the Executive Committee, individually or jointly, shall borrow money for the association. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for certifying the membership. The President and members of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for one another and shall be jointly responsible to the General Body.

### **Membership:**

The voting members of the Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, General Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Secretary, Education Secretary, Literary Secretary, Media Secretary, Technology Secretary, Event Secretary, Sports & Youth Secretary, Community Services Secretary, and Women's Services Secretary. The term of office for all of these positions shall be one calendar year i.e. from January 1 through December 31.

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## **President:**

The President shall be the spokesperson for the association. The President shall be the coordinator of the Executive Committee and shall perform all duties pertaining to the office of the President. He/she shall preside over all meetings of the TAMA Executive Committee and call all General Body meetings. He/she shall be an ex-officio of any of the meetings organized by any member of the Executive Committee. He/she shall appoint any ad-hoc committees with the approval of the Executive Committee. He/she presides over all TAMA functions. He/she may sign any contracts, deeds, documents, and other instruments on behalf of TAMA after satisfying the following conditions. First, the President MUST consult with all other Executive Committee members and obtain the majority approval to sign any contract of expenditure of less than \$5,000. Second, for any contract of expenditure of \$5,000 or more, the President, on behalf of the Executive Committee, MUST receive the approval of the Board of Directors. The President and Treasurer shall be the only authorized persons to sign the checks individually up to \$1000. Any check exceeding \$1000 shall require the signatures of both President and Treasurer. The current outgoing president shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee for the next calendar year.

## **President-Elect:**

The President-Elect shall assist the President and fulfill his/her duties in his/her absence and when so acting shall have all the powers of the President. He/she shall perform such other duties as assigned by the President. The President-Elect shall be responsible for fundraising activities and food services during TAMA events. He/she shall oversee membership drive for the organization. The President-Elect shall automatically become the President for the following year.

## **General Secretary:**

The General Secretary shall be the custodian of the Seal, Constitution, and Bylaws of the association. He/she shall issue call for meetings of the General Body, the Executive Committee at the directive of the president, assist the president in preparing the agenda before each meeting and prepare the minutes of the meetings. He/she shall post the minutes of a meeting on the TAMA website within 3 weeks of the meeting. He/she shall perform the official correspondence of the association and all correspondence shall be done as specified in Article XII and through Technology Secretary. He/she shall maintain an updated list of all paid members while ensuring that an updated membership list is posted on the website on a quarterly basis. He/she shall be responsible for the maintenance of records, documents, accurate postal and email addresses, official correspondence of the organization, and reports of any Ad-hoc Committees. He/she shall be responsible to ensure that all reports, documents, and records are kept and filed as required by law. He/she shall be responsible for transferring all the records of TAMA to the incoming General Secretary within five days (by January 5) after the end of his/her term.

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## **Treasurer:**

The Treasurer and President shall be the only authorized persons to sign the checks individually up to \$1000. Any check exceeding \$1000 shall require the signatures of both Treasurer and President. He/she shall be responsible for issuing notice and collection of all dues and deposit the same in such banks or trusts as the Executive Committee may designate. He/she shall operate all accounts as per Article IX. He/she shall have custody of all accounts, receipts, and disbursements. He/she shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. He/she should ensure that this information is posted on the TAMA website within 45 days of the end of the financial quarter. He/she shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers incident to the office of Treasurer by law. He/she must ensure that the tax returns are filed with the Internal Revenue Service for the year in office and provide appropriate records for financial audits to the Board of Directors. He/she shall transfer all records, documents, and accounts to the incoming Treasurer within five days (by January 5) after the end of his/her term. Any expense exceeding \$1000 shall be approved by the Executive Committee. He/she shall submit year-end financial reports to the General Body.

## **Cultural Secretary:**

The cultural secretary 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, and presenting cultural items to the audience. Although cultural secretary serves as the lead person, the Executive Committee as a whole shall be responsible for the overall planning and implementing of any TAMA cultural event.

## **Education Secretary:**

The education secretary shall oversee all administrative aspects of "ManaBadi" (basic Telugu language classes) and serve as a liaison between "ManaBadi" and TAMA. He/she shall also be responsible for Telugu Library i.e., in securing books, cataloguing them, and circulating them to TAMA members in a timely manner.

## **Literary Secretary:**

The literary secretary shall be responsible for conducting literary meetings, inviting distinguished scholars and artists, soliciting literary articles, editing TAMA magazine and newsletter.

## **Media Secretary:**

The media secretary shall be responsible for video recording and photographing the TAMA events and occasions of importance as called by the Executive Committee. The media secretary shall also preserve, catalog and handover the media to the next Media

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Secretary within five days (by January 5) after the end of his/her term. He/she shall act as a liaison between the Executive Committee and media in publicizing TAMA activities.

## **Technology Secretary:**

The technology secretary shall be responsible for the design, maintenance, enhancements, accuracy and security of the TAMA website and email lists, as authorized by the President and/or General Secretary. Technology secretary is responsible for processing emails for day-to-day TAMA operations.

The technology secretary shall recommend from time to time to the Executive Committee the methods to increase revenue and better communication through web site and e-mails. Technology Secretary shall post any community related messages on the website and/or TAMA emails, sent by any TAMA member with prior approval of TAMA President.

## **Event Secretary:**

Event Secretary shall handle all major activities related to the organization of any event such as choosing a venue, reserving a venue, organizing prize distributions whenever applicable at TAMA events, coordinating audio and stage management activities such as sound, lighting etc.

## **Sports & Youth Secretary:**

Sports & Youth Secretary shall be responsible for all TAMA sports related activities and shall also organize events that cater to youth.

## **Community Services Secretary:**

This secretary is responsible for the Clinic operations, Senior Citizens services, Help Line operations, etc.

## **Women's Services Secretary:**

This secretary is responsible for Mahila Sambaralu and any other women oriented activities.

**Note:** Each Executive Committee member shall work with the Technology Secretary to ensure that TAMA website is updated regularly with information pertaining to activities enlisted in their role descriptions. Also, while each secretary may act as a lead person for the activities enlisted in their role descriptions, Executive Committee as a whole shall be responsible for decision making, planning and implementation of activities/events pertaining to each secretary.

## **Meetings:**

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in three months. The quorum shall be a majority of the membership. The TAMA General Secretary, in consultation with the President, shall prepare the agenda. If four or more of the Executive Committee members request in writing a special meeting of the Committee, the General Secretary shall call for

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a special meeting scheduled to meet within two weeks of the written request. Special meeting agenda shall be limited to the topics mentioned in the written request. In case of any such special meetings, the General Secretary shall send a minimum of seven days notice to all Executive Committee members.

There shall be at least 1 joint in-person meeting per quarter of the Board and the Executive Committee presided by the Board Chairman. In the absence of the Board Chairman, Executive Committee President shall preside over this meeting.

## **Article V: VACANCIES**

Any vacancies in the Executive Committee will be filled by a majority vote of the Executive Committee members within one month of such occurrence.

Any vacancies in the Board of Directors will be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors within one month of such occurrence.

Members appointed in the above manner for vacant position(s) in Executive Committee and/or Board of Directors shall serve in the position until the next election.

## **Article VI: TERMINATION**

Any member of the Executive Committee, who fails to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without prior written information to the Executive Committee, shall be terminated without prejudice. Any such vacancies shall be filled as stated in Article V.

Any member of the Board, who fails to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without prior written information to the Board shall be terminated without prejudice by a majority vote of the Board. The removed officer shall be ineligible to serve as a member of the Board for the remainder of that term. Any such vacancies shall be filled as stated in Article V.

## **Article VII: IMPEACHMENT/REMOVAL**

Any member of the Executive Committee may be removed or impeached on the grounds of incompetence, corruption, favoritism, extortion, or oppression in office, or gross misconduct in a special General Body meeting, subject to 30% quorum, called for such purpose. Approval of two-thirds of the General Body shall be required for such impeachment/removal.

Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed or impeached on the grounds of incompetence, corruption, favoritism, extortion, or oppression in office, or gross misconduct in a special meeting of Life Members, subject to 30% quorum, called for such purpose. Approval of two-thirds of the attendees of the above mentioned meeting shall be required for such impeachment/removal.



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## **Article VIII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Officers of the Association shall be elected at a meeting of the Association on or before November 30 of every calendar year. The election will be conducted by the Election Committee appointed by the Board of Directors following the guidelines established by the Board.

The members of the Election Committee shall neither contest for any position nor nominate/second/endorse any candidate.

Only Life Members in good standing as of June 30 are eligible to contest for any TAMA Executive Committee position in the next year's election. Additionally, only members who have been Life Members for at least 3 calendar years and in good standing are eligible to contest for a Board of Directors position. For the contestants of Executive Committee, there shall be a nonrefundable nomination fee of \$100 and for the contestants of the Board, there shall be a nonrefundable nomination fee of \$200.

To contest for the President-Elect position, the contestant must have served in Executive Committee/Board for at least 3 years.

To contest for the position of Secretary or Treasurer for Executive Committee, the contestant must have served in Executive Committee/Board for at least 2 years.

To contest for the position of Cultural Secretary or Technology Secretary for Executive Committee, the contestant must have served in Executive Committee/Board for at least 1 year.

No one should contest for more than one position in the same election. No one can serve in any given TAMA position for more than 2 consecutive terms.

## **Article IX: TAMA FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

TAMA shall maintain separate funds for specific purposes. All financial records shall be maintained as required by IRS.

### **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 TAMA needed from time to time.

### **Endowment Account(s):**

- These accounts consist of all funds received towards Life Membership Fee, Clinic Donations, Long term project donations and any other special income received. Also any surplus amount exceeding \$3,000 that is available in any operational account at the end of calendar year shall be transferred into the endowment accounts.

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- These accounts will be managed by the Board Treasurer on behalf of the TAMA Board.
- To manage expenses, the Board will maintain operating accounts for Clinic and Long Term Projects.
- The withdrawal of funds from the endowment accounts to meet the financial needs of a permanent home for TAMA requires  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority approval of the Board.

## **Charitable Trust Account:**

TAMA, being a community organization, realizes that it has a responsibility to help and rise to the occasion when a tragedy strikes a family/person or community. On such occasions the Executive Committee has the power to raise funds to support such causes. All donations and special income derived through the special efforts shall be deposited in this account and such funds may be utilized for the cause in the manner that the Executive Committee agrees.

**Audit of the accounts:** The Board of Directors shall appoint a three- member audit committee and name one of them as chairperson of the committee to audit the accounts every fiscal year. Such committee shall be in place by the end of November of every calendar year. Only TAMA Life Members in good standing shall be eligible to participate in the committee. However, the audit committee shall be permitted to obtain any professional help from an accountant to complete the assigned task. The committee shall verify all the accounts operated by TAMA and submit a report to the Board of Directors by January 31 of the following year and the Board of Directors must ensure that the report is posted on the TAMA website by the last day in the month of February of the same year the report was submitted to them.

## **Article X: TAMA CELEBRATIONS**

TAMA shall celebrate at least three festivals in a calendar year: Sankranti, Ugadi and Deepawali. Any additional festivals may be celebrated if the majority of the Executive Committee members are in agreement.

## **Article XI: AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

TAMA President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, is empowered to establish adhoc committees to accomplish such tasks and operations as to realize the objectives of the association, to investigate specific problems, procedures and matters of interest, and to make recommendations to the executive committee. In no event shall an ad-hoc committee exist beyond the end of the term of the Executive Committee that establishes it.

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## **Article XII: E-MAILS, WEBSITE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Realizing that technology has vital role to play in promoting organizational activities, TAMA shall establish a website, and email list. TAMA has sole proprietary rights to both the website and email list. No individual, inclusive of Executive Committee member owns any personal rights/ownership to these items. The Executive Committee shall maintain website and emails 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, badmouthing, profanity, insults, derogatory/demeaning remarks, etc.; or (d) any other purposes that are detrimental to TAMA image and principles.

## **Article XIII: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Generally when there is a difference of opinion among the members of the executive committee or the Board of Directors, the majority opinion shall be binding. However, if a member perceives himself/herself to have been constantly harassed or deprived of his/her ability to serve the organization, the matter should be referred to the Board of Directors.

## **Article XIV: RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The following rules and regulations shall conclusively bind TAMA and all persons acting for or on behalf of it:

No part of the net earnings of TAMA shall be distributed to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any member in furtherance of the objectives set forth herein.

No part of the activities of TAMA shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign including the publication or distribution of statements on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws, TAMA shall not carry on any activities not permitted by an organization:

1. (a) Exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law, or
2. (b) That can accept tax-deductible contributions under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.

Office holders of TAMA shall avoid conflicts of interest in carrying out their responsibilities.

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## **Article XV: INDEMNITY**

The Executive Committee members and the members of the Board of Directors shall not be held personally liable for any actions and decisions taken on behalf of the association.

The TAMA members listing (mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number) shall be used for distribution of TAMA related information only.

The TAMA members listing (mailing address, e-mail address and phone number), equipment, individual software, web pages developed during the year; photographs taken during the programs (performed by the professional artists), etc. are the association's property. No one should sell, trade or exchange or utilize in any other manner for personal or third-party gains without obtaining the permission of the general body.

## **Article XVI: DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the association, dispose off all the assets of the association exclusively for the purposes of the association in such manner, or to such association or associations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt association under section 501(c) (3) and 170 (C) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or Federal, State, or Local government for exclusive public purpose.

## **Article XVII: AMENDMENTS**

The constitution may be amended in a GBM with appropriate quorum as defined in "Article IV - 1) General Body". In this GBM where the agenda specifically calls for the amendments, the constitution may be amended with the approval of at least two-thirds majority or more of the attending membership. The amendments and the time and place for the meeting shall be notified to all members at least 30 days in advance. The Executive Committee and the Board shall solicit input, concerning the amendments, from the current TAMA members at least 60 days prior to the GBM specifically called for amendments. All amendments, approved by Executive Committee and Board, shall be submitted in writing to the President to enable him/her to circulate 30 days in advance. Only those members present at meeting shall be eligible to vote.

## **GUIDELINES**

- TAMA shall work with National and Regional Telugu organizations as a co-host for the events related to Telugu community in Atlanta.
- If the current President is unable to attend the Board meeting, he/she shall delegate the meeting to the current President-Elect.
- Board Secretary and Executive Committee's General Secretary shall share the minutes of the respective meetings with the team within 48 hrs of the meeting.