

THE ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION IN CONNECTICUT

**A NOT-FOR-PROFIT
(BYLAWS)**

ARTICLE I — NAME

1.1. The name of the organization is ***ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION IN CONNECTICUT*** (hereinafter referred to as the Association or **ECAC**).

1.2. ECAC incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut is organized and shall operate in accordance with the meaning and provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations issued thereunder.

Article II – Purpose and Mission:

2.1 . ECAC is organized for charitable, social, cultural, and educational purposes. The mission is to support and provide quality and reliable community services to Ethiopians, Ethiopian-Americans, and friends of the Ethiopian community residing in Connecticut regardless of religious, ethnic, political, and any other ideological background. The association aims to

1. Create social support systems for members,
2. Organize different activities that promote social, educational, and cultural heritage,
3. Promote the interests of the members through cooperation with public, private, and non-profit agencies,
4. Provide support to new Ethiopian immigrants to enable them to easily integrate into the United States system,
5. Establish and manage a multi-use community center accessible to all members.
6. Coordinate gathering of willing members for funeral service, a celebration of life, or memorial service during the death of a member or member's family in CT

2.3. – Principal Office:

The association shall be headquartered in East Hartford, Connecticut. It may have other branch offices in other parts of Connecticut if needed.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

3.1. – Eligibility: General membership shall be open to any Connecticut resident, who is Ethiopian, a spouse of an Ethiopian, Ethiopian-American, or anyone who is interested to join the association. Members shall be willing to abide by the association’s bylaws. Members must be 18 years of age or above. Membership shall be granted following submission of membership application and fulfillment of eligibility criteria as indicated above. Membership shall begin immediately after receipt of a welcome email/letter from ECAC.

3.2. –Type of membership: The organization has a general and preferred membership category. For the purpose of membership, married couples/partners are considered as two individuals. Children above the age of 18 years are eligible to join the association independent of their family. Executive members are regular members except that they are formally elected per the identified rules and regulations herein. The types of memberships are as follows;

3.2.1. - Preferred members – are those fee-paying members who are Ethiopians, spouses of Ethiopians, or Ethiopian Americans residing in Connecticut. These Members have voting and nomination privileges.

3.2.2. General members – are those who are not fee-paying members as defined above. Such members will have no voting or nomination privilege for an office but may attend any General Assembly meeting and are entitled to participate in other activities of the organization. Donations are welcome.

ARTICLE IV– REVENUE SOURCES: To achieve its objectives, ECAC shall have the following revenue sources:

1. Membership annual dues
2. Various revenue-generating activities
3. Funds to be secured by submitting proposals to governmental and non-governmental charitable institutions
4. Sponsorship of initiatives, activities, or programs by individuals, businesses, or organizations
5. Contributions or donations by individuals, businesses, or organizations (Website, mail, email, personal, and/or phone solicitations)

4.1 Fees: The monthly membership fee is \$5 per individual. Children under the age of 18 are not required to pay membership fees. Members are encouraged to pay on a yearly \$60 or quarterly basis when and if possible. Membership fees must be paid at the beginning of the month (1-10). The membership fee is subject to change by a majority vote of the members at an annual meeting of the full body of the association. Membership fees are not refundable upon resignation and/or termination of membership.

4.2 Fiscal year. The fiscal year of the Association shall begin on the 1st of January and end on the 31st of December of each year. or as may be modified by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V— *Rights of members*: Preferred members of the association shall have the following rights:

- 5.1. Vote in-person or by proxy
- 5.2. Attend and vote at the annual meetings through Skype, teleconference, or any other electronic communication media
- 5.3. Nominate candidates for Presidency, Vice-Presidency, secretary, treasurer, and public relations officer
- 5.4. Serve as officers of the association upon election.

ARTICLE VI— *Resignation and termination*

6.1. *Resignation*: Any member of the Association may resign by notifying a member of the executive committee via mail or email.

6.2. *Termination*:

6.2.1 Any member may lose membership status in case of failure to abide by the bylaws of the Association.

6.2.2 A preferred member may lose nomination and voting privileges upon failure to pay a membership fee for six consecutive months.

6.2.2 If it is evidenced that a member tried to impose his or her political, religious, racial/ethnic and related opinions on other members.

If one of the above conditions is fulfilled, the executive committee will work together with the member to resolve the issue. Repeated discussion with the member about what was violated and the corrective actions will be the core of the resolving process. If the member repeatedly refuses the invitation for discussion, his membership will be considered as abandoned.

ARTICLE VII — THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The general assembly shall have the power to elect Executive committee members, officers, treasurers, and Auditor or Auditing Committee or remove elects with just cause.

7.1 — *Annual meetings*: General assembly meetings shall be held annually, at a time and place designated by the Executive committee. Members with good standing for 48 hours prior to the meeting can through Skype, teleconference, or any other electronic communication media.

7.2 — *Special meetings*: Special meetings may be called as necessary by the Executive Committee to communicate and resolve any specific issue.

7.3 — Notice of meetings: Notice of each meeting shall be distributed to each voting member no less than two weeks before the meeting. The secretary is responsible for preparing and distributing notices of meetings. Meeting notices may be distributed via mail, text, or email.

7.4 — Quorum: Fifty percent of the members present at any properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum requirement is not met, and three fourth(3/4) or 75% of the members present decide to continue with the agenda, the meeting will proceed. However, there have to be ten (10 %) of all members present on that day for the meeting to proceed.

7.5 — Voting: All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of those present at the meeting in which the vote takes place. Member representatives and Executive members can attend and vote in meetings through Skype, teleconference, or any other electronic communication media.

7.6 — Meeting Affairs: The executive team will be responsible to develop the agenda as required. The order of business on the general assembly meeting shall be as follows:

- i. Roll Call
- ii. Reading of the Minutes from the preceding meeting
- iii. Committee Reports
- iv. Reports from Officers
- v. Old and Unfinished Business
- vi. New agenda
- vii. Meeting Adjournment

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8.1. The executive committee shall consist of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and public relations officer. The members of the executive committee shall be elected at the annual meeting by members of this association. Elected members of the executive committee will assume responsibilities immediately following the general assembly meeting. The tenure of the executive committee members shall be 2 years with eligibility for re-election for up to two consecutive terms.

8.2 – Powers and Duties: The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall policy and direction of the association and may delegate responsibilities of day-to-day operations to other members.

8.3 – Election: During the general assembly meetings, members will nominate 10 individuals for the executive committee roles. Once the nominees are allowed to concur with their nomination, members will cast a final vote to elect 5 candidates for each executive committee role. The elected five shall discuss and decide the best fitting role for themselves based on their experience and take their respective positions as president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and public relations officer. The transition process shall be completed within four weeks of the election.

8.4 – Meeting and Notice: The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly, at an agreed-upon time and place. An official meeting requires that each committee member have a notice via text, email, and or phone call, at least two weeks in advance.

8.5 – Resignation, termination, and absences: Resignation from the Executive Committee must be in writing and received by the Secretary. Any member of the Executive Committee shall be terminated from the role for two or more unexcused absences from Executive Committee meetings in one year. For reasons that are verified of an Executive Committee leading the community in a direction that is not the initial intention of this organization, an Executive member should be terminated from their role at any time by a majority vote of the General assembly.

8.6 – Vacancies: When a vacancy on the Executive Committee exists mid-term, the secretary must receive nominations for new members from present Executive Committees two weeks in advance of an Executive Committee meeting. These nominations shall be sent out to executive committee members with the regular meeting announcement, to be voted upon at the next Executive meeting. These vacancies will be filled only to the end of the particular Executive member's term.

ARTICLE IX – THE PRESIDENT

The President represents this association in accordance with the directives issued by the Executive Committee. He or She shall convene regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings, preside over the sessions of the general meeting and the executive committee, and perform such other duties as may be instructed by the executive committee. The President shall sign all contracts, checks, and other obligations of the organizations, jointly with the secretary and treasurer.

ARTICLE X – THE VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President shall chair committees on special subjects as designated by the president. In the absence of the President, the Vice President assumes the duties and responsibilities of the President.

ARTICLE XI – THE SECRETARY

The secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of executive committee actions, including taking minutes at all meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and agenda to each executive committee member, and ensuring that the association records are well maintained. The secretary shall sign all contracts, checks, and other obligations of the organization, jointly with the president and treasurer. The secretary shall assume the role of the President in the absence of both the President and the Vice President.

ARTICLE XII – THE TREASURER

The treasurer shall make a report at each board meeting. The treasurer shall assist in the preparation of the budget, help develop fundraising plans and make financial information available to executive committee members and the public. The treasurer shall handle any financial transactions of the association including but not limited to collection of membership fees and depositing money in the bank within twenty-four (24) hours of the ECAC bank. The treasurer shall also sign all contracts, checks, and other obligations of the organization, jointly with the president and the secretary.

ARTICLE XIII - PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) shall be responsible for the following: Note that the PRO can delegate certain functions to volunteer members

1. Publishing objectives and activities of the association and making them available to the public
2. Managing association's website and social media
3. Recording videos and filing meeting sessions of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee
4. Publishing and distributing all written and electronic interviews (upon approval of the executive committee or the President) to the members of the organization and the general public.
5. Carrying out other duties as assigned by the Director

ARTICLE XIV – THE Auditor

The Auditor/Audit Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- 1) Examine and analyze accounting records to determine the financial status of the Association and prepare annual financial reports concerning operating procedures to the General Assembly of the Association;
- 2) Review data regarding material assets, net worth, liabilities, income, and expenditures.
- 3) Promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the programs and operations of the Association;
- 4) Detect and prevent waste, mismanagement, fraud and abuse using
 - a) proactive involvement and timely intervention;
 - b) dissemination of information best practices and lessons learned; and
 - c) capacity building methods;
- 5) Propose timely, useful, innovative, and reliable information and advice that lead to positive Changes
- 6) Facilitate inter-organizational collaboration and exchange of ideas on issues of the organization, management, and finance;
- 7) Identify areas of weakness and vulnerabilities, and recommend constructive solutions.

ARTICLE XV— ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15.1 – Committee Formation: The Advisory Committee consists of members having interests in topics or projects identified by the Executive Committee. The Advisory Committee shall include but are not limited to the Social Committee, Fundraising Committee, Housing, Public Relations, and Education Committee. Those committees can dissolve/disband any of the committees, sub-committees, or task force(s) when it finds it unnecessary.

15.2 – Chairperson Appointment: The president shall be responsible for appointing the Chairpersons for these committees with a two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Executive Committee. Each Chairperson shall appoint the members of his or her committee.

ARTICLE XVI— AMENDMENTS

This bylaw may be altered, amended, or replaced as necessary and may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the General Assembly at a meeting specifically called for this purpose and announced one month in advance. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Secretary to be sent out with regular Executive committees announcements.

ARTICLE XVII– Dissolution

If this association is dissolved for any reason, after payment of, or provision for payment of, all debts and liabilities, its assets shall be *distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or a state or local government, for a public purpose.*

ARTICLE XVIII– CODE OF CONDUCT

As a member of ECAC, I will

- Respect: Each member is expected to demonstrate self-control, high regard, and respect for any other member(s) and the views and ideas expressed by any other member(s) while participating in any activities related to or organized by the association.
- Care: Each member has a responsibility in trying to create a conducive and productive environment that fosters and promotes a sense of community, mutual respect, and an enjoyable experience while participating in any activity organized by the association
- Dare: To help and support the members and the association by presenting myself in a fair and balanced way with integrity and honesty.

ARTICLE XXX– CERTIFICATION

This bylaw was approved by a simple majority of the members at the general meeting of the association held on **March 23, 2019, at East Hartford Public Library 840 Main Street East Hartford CT 06108.**

Representative:-----

