

# CAMEROONIAN ASSOCIATION OF RICHMOND-VIRGINIA



## BY-LAWS

Membership shall be obtained through the fulfilment of certain obligations with the organization that shall include, but not limited to a registration fee, payments of all dues, full participation in all association organization activities, and regular attendance at meetings.

**Categories of membership:** there shall be three (3) categories of membership

1. Full membership
2. Senior membership
3. Honorary membership

### **Full membership:**

- Shall be opened to Cameroonians and friends of Cameroonians age at least 18 years old and live in Richmond or environs in Virginia
- Must attend regular monthly meetings at least once every quarter
- Shall host monthly meetings in a sequential manner following the meeting schedule drawn by the social secretary at the beginning of the year
- Has a voting right and can candidate for any office of the executive board
- Can be nominated to perform special duties in a committee internally
- Can be mandated by the assembly to carry out a public function on behalf of the association when the need arises
- Entitled to social benefit as stipulated in the association's benefit agreement

**Senior membership:** Open to Cameroonians aged 65 and above who have been residing in the Richmond area or environs in Virginia for at least six (6) months. They may not be required to pay any registration or monthly dues. However, should they be faced with any social problem, the group shall participate fully but contributions will be voluntary. On another perspective, Senior may opt to be full members with association benefits.

**Honorary membership:** Membership under this category shall be entitled to non-indigenes and residents that identify and support the cause of our association.

**Conditions for membership:** There are three (3) categories defining membership. Active, Conditional and Inactive memberships. Being current or active in membership shall entail the following:

- Paid registration \$10/year,
- Paid dues –(sinking fund) \$110/year or \$10/month
- Paid hosting fees \$5/month
- Any returning member wishing to renew his/her membership shall be required to settle all previous year's financial obligations before being allowed to register for the new year. Exceptions to this clause will be dealt with by the Executive Committee

**Active:** A member with good standing is one who meets the following:

- Attends over 60% of meetings up to the point of calculation, paid minimum of 80% of current financial requirements, to include but not limited to births, marriages, deaths and events.
- Under this category non-payment of dues within the first three months period is qualified as non-membership
- Assistance or visitation will be based on being in compliance

**Conditional:** A member with 100% financial requirements met but whose attendance is considered below 60%.

**Inactive:** A person who may be registered for the year, but who is neither up to date with his/her financial obligations nor meets the minimum attendance requirement of 60%. Members who temporarily relocate to another state for professional and/or educational reasons could maintain their membership as long as they comply with their obligations

**Visitor:** A person may visit and observe CAMASSOR prior to joining for no more than three (3) months. During the observation period, a person with a Visitor status may contribute to discussions. However, after the observation period, s/he is encouraged to register and be active.

**Meetings:** Decisions taken at meetings would follow democratic principles. Meeting attendance is compulsory for all resident members

- The association shall hold monthly meetings on the last Saturday of every month. Meetings shall alternate location as per the annual calendar drawn by the Social Secretary
- Meetings shall begin at 7.00 pm but deliberation shall start at 8.00 pm prompt, arrival after this time is considered late.
- The hosting calendar for a given year will be drawn following the below steps:
  1. The number of monthly hosts for a given year will be based on the actual or projected membership for that year. For example, if there are 33 members, 3 people (33/11) will host every month. It will be incumbent upon members hosting in the same month to coordinate for different hosting activities as well as how they will share the hosting check provided by CAMASSOR at the conclusion of the meeting they will host.

2. From September through November of the previous year, the Social Secretary will begin asking for volunteers to host in the next year. CAMASSOR members volunteering during that timeframe will have hosting priority for the chosen months.
  3. At the January meeting, the Social Secretary will once again ask for volunteers to fill the remaining months without hosts. In the event there are still months without hosts at that point, a random draw will be conducted to assign remaining members to open months.
  4. It will be the responsibility of scheduled hosts to find replacements if they have some unanticipated conflicts.
  5. A fine of \$200 will be levied on a member who is scheduled to host and does not do his/her fair share through adequate collaboration with his/her co-hosts.
- In case of irregularity on the hosting schedule, a member can opt to host the meeting on behalf of the other who by circumstance is not able to do so. It shall be the responsibility of a scheduled host to find his/her replacement(s) whenever necessary.
  - Hosting will be based on attendance and a hosting fee of \$5/member will be collected each meeting and a lump sum of \$200 will be handed to the host(s) at close of meeting.
  - In case there is no member willing to host, the President shall be compelled to host the meeting.
  - A \$2 late coming fee is required from all with no exceptions.

**Social Agreement and Benefit:** The formality for these functions shall be performed upon receipt of announcement and or invitation. Upon receipt of any form, the association will mobilize members as need be. If there is no ceremony, the president with or designated members shall request for a convenient date and time to visit the member and or family on behalf of the association.

**Benefit Eligibility:** In order to be eligible for CAMASSOR benefits, one shall meet the following criteria:

1. Meet the requirements of Active Membership as described above.
2. A new member must first observe a waiting period of three (3) months from the day s/he registered and be active.
3. A returning member must pay all of her/his past dues (if any) as of the last time s/he was a registered member and observe a 3-month waiting period. One is considered a returning member if the time elapsed between her/his memberships is a year or more.

**Joyful occasions:**

**Birth (Born-house):** Upon receipt of announcement, the association will plan a visit to the family within the first six months following delivery and present material gift of the sum of \$300 to an active member from the association's coffers.

**College Graduation (Undergraduate and Graduate):** Upon receipt of announcement, the association will plan to present material gift of the sum of \$100 for undergraduate degree and \$200 for a graduate degree to an active member or their child from the association's coffers within the first four weeks following graduation.

**Marriage:** The formality for this function shall be performed upon receipt of an announcement and or invitation. Upon receipt of any form, the association will attend the ceremony and present material gift to the sum of \$100 to an active member.

**Sorrowful occasion:**

Upon receipt of the announcement, all members shall endeavor to make their presence at the bereaved location.

Whether the corpse is being transported or not, the financial obligations shall be as follows:

**Death of an active member:** The sum of \$100 will be contributed per member and a flat sum equal to the minimum between the total to be collected from all registered members and \$3,000 given to the bereaved family. However, members are encouraged to join SAGI in order to decrease the burden of funeral arrangements. The association in accordance with the family will organize the funeral. Members will bring food and drinks to sympathize with the bereaved family.

**1<sup>st</sup> degree family:** Mother, Father, spouse and children: The sum of \$50 will be contributed per member and a flat sum equal to the minimum between the total to be collected from all registered members and \$1,500 given to the bereaved active CAMASSOR member.

**Death of family members (under 18 or full-time student) living with member in Richmond:** The sum of \$20 will be contributed per member and a flat sum equal to the minimum between the total to be collected from all registered members and \$500 given to the bereaved active CAMASSOR member.

**Hospitalization for illness:** Members can receive hospitalization assistance once yearly for a minimum of three days hospital stay. Upon announcement, the social secretary or any designated member will be dispatched with assistance. A memorable envelope of \$100 and a get well card will be given to the family.

**Affiliated Organizations:**

**I- Solidarite AGIssante (SAGI)**

**i- Objective and Mission**

The objective of SAGI is to bring together all Cameroonians that are regrouped within the different associations existing in the United States in an electronic file without distinction of race, tribe, or religion with the purpose of helping each other. Its mission is to facilitate the transportation, of the remains of its compatriots and members of SAGI, deceased in the United States, to their respective villages in Cameroon. This is accomplished by regrouping all the SAGI delegates from different member associations and collecting the necessary funds.

**ii- CAMASSOR SAGI Delegate**

- a. Shall be the main point of contact for matters related to SAGI (Solidarite AGIssante), which is an insurance group whose mission is to ensure remains of registered Cameroonians who pass away abroad are repatriated to Cameroon.
- b. Shall ensure CAMASSOR members who enroll in SAGI are up to date with their dues as well as any relevant communications from SAGI
- c. Shall ensure the Financial Secretary or his designee is in charge of taking care of all SAGI-related matters in a timely fashion when he/she is unavailable
- d. Shall present a quarterly and annual reports to the general assembly

## **II- African Community Network (ACN)**

### **i. Mission**

The mission of the ACN is to serve as a support network of resources and to be a common voice for the African community in the Greater Richmond Area. The organization also aims to preserve and share the diversity of African cultures, to promote a deeper multicultural understanding and connection within the Greater Richmond Area and beyond. The ACN demonstrates this mission through the dedicated work of several committees: Education; Health, Economic Development; Advocacy; Social and Cultural.

### **ii- CAMASSOR ACN Delegate**

- a. Shall represent CAMASSOR at monthly meetings of the African Community Network (ACN)
- b. Shall report on ACN happenings at each general assembly meeting

## **Socio-Cultural Activities**

The association shall organize socio-cultural activities to publicly portray its beautiful culture and sustain this culture through the younger generations. Collective efforts from all members would be mandatory for success

## **Events**

- a. Two events are earmarked each year:
  - I Summer Event:** To formally welcome new members, congratulate graduates, celebrate our national day and raise funds for the association. Activities may include, but may not be limited to barbecuing, sport challenging with another association, demonstrating our culture publicly and enhancing interactions with other associations.
  - II End-of-Year Event:** To celebrate the concluding year by providing gifts to kids and end of year/term reports from the incumbent executives when applicable
  - III** The budget for each of these parties shall be established by the Executive board and voted on by the general assembly by the March meeting.
  - IV** Depending on fund availability in the association's coffers, members shall be asked to raise some funds in order to meet the budget established for a given party. Should the

association be unable to raise the necessary funds one month prior to a party, the party must be cancelled and reimbursements processed for contributors up to that point.

### **Social conduct:**

All members of the association are expected to be law-abiding and maintain a good social conduct as defined as not disrupting any meetings in any shape or form (e.g. not speaking out of turn or speaking rudely to others during meetings);

- a. If any member violates our code of social conduct or civil rights of another, they will be summoned by the president to appear before the advisory committee
- b. If this offense is considered **minor**, the member will be suspended from the association for 3 months
- c. If it is considered **major**, the member shall be advised to resign
- d. If it is considered **aggravated**, the member might be subject to legal prosecution at a civil court in Richmond

If a member is an accomplice to any violation of our code of social conduct or a criminal offense, they will be judged and sanctioned accordingly. If they fail to respond before or at the subsequent meeting, the association reserves the right to consider this reaction as an informal resignation and shall act accordingly

Any member who intends to resign must verbally pronounce their resignation at the assembly or send a written resignation to the president

- a. A resigning member must not give reasons for taking that decision but the association would appreciate knowing their reasons
- b. A member who resigns reserves the right to rejoin the association at a later date if they meet up with financial obligations.

**Ex-communication: In the case of extreme misbehavior**, the ex-communication of a member must be approved by a simple majority of the assembly and forwarded to the advisory for recommendation. Upon decision from the board the member will receive an official letter from the president

### **Amendment**

- These bye-laws are subject to annual review by the constitution review committee
- The committee shall gather suggestions for amendments and present them to the assembly for approval
- The amendments enacted will be signed by the chairperson of the constitution review board and countersigned by the president
- All amendments shall be progressively attached as an addendum to the bye-laws

### **Salvage Clause**

- This clause empowers the assembly to deviate or violate the stipulated by-laws, rules and regulations of the constitution proper at any time in any defined circumstance
- A simple majority of the quorum of the assembly must approve this deviation or violation for it to become effective
- However, in emergency situations a simple majority of the assembly can approve a deviation or violation of any section/article of these bye-laws
- Emergency situations could be as a result of death, meeting timelines for union's activities and others deemed as such by the assembly