

# The Constitution

of

## The Caribbean Association of North Alabama (CANA)

Revised: March 2010

### Article I (Name of Organization)

This organization shall be called "The Caribbean Association of North Alabama (CANA)", and shall henceforth be referred to as the "Association".

### Article II (Mission, Slogan, Policies, and Objectives)

#### Section 1: Mission and Slogan

**Mission:** "Our mission shall be to unite and empower the Caribbean Community of North Alabama by fostering economic and social networks that promote interaction, the continuity of Caribbean cultures and the advancement of the Caribbean community."

**Slogan:** Many cultures, one people.

#### Section 2: Policies

This Association shall not be profit driven. Its focus shall be on the social and economic development of the Caribbean Community, without being sectarian or partisan. The Association shall not condone, be involved with, or support any activities contrary to the laws of the United States.

The Association may be dissolved by a vote of sixty-six percent (66%) of members in good standing present at a duly summoned general meeting.

In the event that the Association is dissolved, the Executive Body shall ensure that the settlement of the Association's debt is given first priority. The remaining assets shall be donated to a similar Caribbean based organization, as determined by the membership

#### Section 3: Objectives

The primary objectives of the Association are to:

- i. Render assistance to persons of Caribbean heritage and lend support to Caribbean-affiliated businesses and enterprises in North Alabama;

- ii. Establish networks to promote economic and social development of the Caribbean Community in North Alabama; and
- iii. Establish lines of communications between the Caribbean cultures and the North Alabama communities;

### **Article III (Membership)**

#### Section 1: Membership Categories

Membership of the Association shall consist of Caribbean nationals, their family members, descendants, and friends with an interest in Caribbean affairs.

Membership shall consist of five categories: Regular Members, Family Members, Associate Members, Corporate Members, and Student members.

- *Regular* membership is open to individuals of Caribbean origin.
- *Family* membership is open to husband and wife.
- *Associate* membership is open to individuals with an interest in Caribbean affairs and culture, as well to anyone interested in promoting the goals and objectives of the Association. This category is also reserved for individuals who have no interest in serving on the Executive Body and/or may not be available to attend meetings on a regular basis.
- *Corporate* membership is open to business entities operating in the USA that are supportive of the goals and objectives of the Association. Regular attendance at meetings is not expected of corporate members.
- *Student* membership is open to students of Caribbean origin who:
  - a) do not have a regular, full-time job; and
  - b) take post-secondary level courses amounting to six (6) hours or more credit hours per semester. (The Executive Body may request evidence to support a student member's claim).

#### Section 2: Voting Criteria

Voting members shall constitute all the members numerated in Article III, Section 1, who are in good standing.

A member in good standing must meet the following requirements:

- a) Regular attendance at general meetings of the Association. 'Regular attendance' shall mean attending at least 50 percent of all general meetings. (The Executive Body reserves the right to examine extenuating circumstances that may prevent regular attendance);
- b) Willingness to serve on committees;
- c) A commitment to promote the goals and objectives of the Association; and
- d) Pay dues in a timely manner.

Section 3: Membership Dues

The annual membership fees for the Association shall be:

Individuals .....	\$30
Family .....	\$50 (husband and wife)
Students .....	\$20
Associate .....	\$25
Corporate.....	\$75

**Article IV (Management of the Organization)**

Section 1: The Executive Body

Management of the activities, finances and properties of the Association shall be entrusted to a team consisting of four executive members.

To avoid conflict of interest, two or more immediate family members shall not hold executive positions of the Association at the same time.

Individuals should not serve in the same Executive position for more than two consecutive terms.

The Executive Body shall consist of a:

- (i) President
- (ii) Vice President
- (iii) Secretary
- (iv) Treasurer

Section 2: Interim Officers

The Executive Body may appoint members to serve in any vacant office, on an interim basis of no more than three months, in accordance with Article VI, Section 2. The vacancy shall be filled by a democratically elected candidate within the three months following the creation of the vacancy.

Section 3: Other Officials

Other officers of the Association shall include heads of the following Standing Committees:

- a. Membership Committee
- b. Sponsorship Committee
- c. Scholarship Committee
- d. Elections Committee

The Executive Body shall appoint additional committees as deemed necessary.

Section 4: Qualifications of Executive Members Executive Body Membership  
Members of the Executive Body must be:

- (a) Voting members who have demonstrated a willingness to serve;
- (b) An active member for at least ninety (90) days.

Section 5: Duties of Executive Members

The President

Must be a Regular member as defined in Article III, Section 1. He/she shall be expected to provide effective leadership to CANA and be a strong advocate for a spirit of collaboration and motivation of the rest of the membership. In relation to the foregoing, his/her duties also include:

- Call and conduct meetings;
- Monitor the functioning of the Association;
- Effectively delegate duties and responsibilities;
- Visibly support the programs of the Association; and
- Signatory to the Association's financial and accounting transactions as well as projects.

The Vice-President

- Must be a Regular member as defined in Article III, Section I.
- Coordinates and assists with the operational and developmental efforts of the Association;
- Signatory to all accounting and financial transactions in the absence of the President; and
- Assume the responsibilities of the President when necessary.

The Treasurer

- Keep accurate, up-to-dated records of all the Associations' financial transactions and receipts;
- Maintain the financial reports of the Association;
- Develop projected budget and monitor approved budget;
- Chair the finance committee (if one is appointed);
- Submit timely financial reports to the Executive Body and the Association;
- Signatory to all financial and accounting transactions;
- Periodically remind members of their debts to the Association and collect and record all outstanding financial amounts;
- Keep accurate inventories and ensure the safety of all the Association's financial and physical assets; and
- Make the Association's books and records available to interested members. Requests for access to such documents shall be submitted in writing to the President at least seven days in advance.

## The Secretary

- Accurately record the minutes of scheduled general meetings;
- Disseminate the agenda and minutes prior to the start of every general meeting;
- Notify members of the date, time, and venue of meetings, either electronically and/or in writing with the stipulated timeframe;
- Assist the President in communicating with the wider Caribbean community; and
- Perform public relations and other communication functions.

## Section 6: Annual Work Plan

The incoming Executive Body, within one month after being elected, shall present to the membership for endorsement, a plan of action for the next twelve months.

## **Article V (Nomination and Election of Officers)**

### Section 1: Frequency of Elections

The process of electing the officers of the Association shall be conducted every two years or at such time as requested by a motion from the floor and approved by a majority vote of members in good standing.

### Section 2: Quorum

A quorum of sixty percent (60%) or more of the members in good standing shall participate in the election of officers, and vote on matters related to amendment of the constitution, and dissolution of the Association.

Fifty-one percent (51%) or more of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at other regularly called meetings to conduct the legal business of the Association.

All other business before the Association requiring a vote shall require the approval of a simple majority of members present.

Members in good standing present at any meeting that had to be rescheduled due to a lack of quorum will constitute a quorum, irrespective of meeting's agenda, provided that the general membership is given at least seven days prior notice as per Article VIII, Section 2.

Voting could be in person, by absentee ballot, or electronically.

Section 3: Appointment of Elections Committee

An Elections Committee appointed by the Executive Body shall manage the Association's election process.

Section 4: Nomination Process

Candidates must be nominated and seconded by members in good standing no later than 60 days prior to the elections. Nominations could be submitted electronically or in writing to the Elections Committee.

Candidates must indicate their interest in writing and submit a one-page biography or resume to the Elections Committee at least six weeks prior to elections.

At least one month prior to the actual elections the Committee shall present the candidates to the general meeting.

Section 5: Date of Elections

Annual elections of officers shall be held in September at the end of the Association's financial year.

**Article VI (Vacancies on the Executive Body)**

Section 1: Resignation(s)

The resignation of an Executive Officer must be submitted to the President at least two (2) weeks prior to the effective date. If the President expresses a wish to demit office, that resignation letter shall be presented to the Vice-President.

Resignations shall be announced at the next general meeting subsequent to notification of the Executive Body.

Section 2: By-elections

In the event that there is a vacant Executive position during the course of the year, the remaining members of the Executive Body shall appoint an interim officer pending a by-election to fill the vacancy.

Elections to fill any vacancy on the Executive Body must be held within three (3) months following the creation of vacancy.

## **Article VII (Impeachment of Officers)**

### Section 1: Impeachment

Executive Officers may be impeached.

### Section 2: Tendering of Charges

Any member of the Association may tender charges of impeachment against an officer(s). These charges shall then be included on the next general meeting's agenda for thorough discussion.

### Section 3: Due Process

The accused Executive member shall be heard, if he/she so desires.

### Section 4: Voting on Matters of Impeachment

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the members present at the meeting at which impeachment charges are discussed shall be required to pass a motion for impeachment.

Voting shall be by secret ballot.

### Section 5: Grounds for Impeachment

Grounds for impeachment shall include but not limited to the following:

- Misuse of executive position as determined by the membership within the framework of the Constitution;
- Gross misrepresentation of the Association;
- Unethical personal or professional practices that will negatively impact the creditability of the Association;
- Bringing the Association into disrepute.

### Section 6: Removal of Officers

Grounds for removal of officers shall include but not limited to the following:

- Guilty of impeachable acts;
- Failure to fulfill obligations of office;
- Prolonged absence without the approval of the Executive Body;
- Lack of participation in the Association's activities.

### Section 7: Expulsion of Members

Members, who in the opinion of the membership within the framework of the Constitution discredit the Association, shall be expelled.

The accused member shall be heard, if he/she so desires.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the members present at the meeting at which charges are discussed shall be required to pass a motion for expulsion. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

## **Article VIII (Meetings)**

### Section 1: General Meetings

General meetings are construed to be gatherings of the Association's members, sanctioned by the Executive Body, at which the business of the Association is discussed.

### Section 2:

General meetings shall be held at least once per quarter. Members shall be notified of the date, time, place and agenda at least seven (7) days in advance.

The Association's meetings shall follow the following format:

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Minutes:
  - Reading,
  - Confirmation
  - Matters Arising
- Treasurer's Report
- Committee Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- Any Other Business
- Adjournment

### Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Executive Body

### Section 4: Meetings of Committees

Committee chairs shall establish meeting times, places and locations at their discretion.

### Section 5: Executive Meetings

Executive meetings held either at a physical venue, electronically, or via conference call, shall be convened at least once per month.



## **Article IX (Committees)**

### Section 1: Standing Committees

Members of Standing Committees shall be appointed on an annual basis.

Other committees shall be appointed by the Executive Body as the need arises. These committees shall be dissolved either as soon as their tasks have completed or at the end of their term.

The Executive Body shall appoint committee chairs from among the appointed committee members.

## **Article X (The Budget)**

### Section 1: Annual Budget

The Treasurer, on behalf of the Executive Body shall present a three year projected budget to the general membership for approval by the end of the first quarter of each financial year.

The Treasurer shall present quarterly budgetary reviews to the general body.

### Section 2: Financial Statements

The Treasurer shall present financial statements at every general meeting. Such statements should reflect a list of the Association's debtors.

### Section 3: Claims for Reimbursement

A valid receipt must accompany all requests for reimbursement of authorized purchases made on behalf of the Association.

All claims for reimbursement must be made and settled within 30 days.

Outside general meeting decisions only the President and/or Treasurer shall authorize individual members to make purchases not exceeding twenty dollars (\$20) on behalf of the Association.

### Section 4: Members' Rights

Every member in good standing has the right to inspect and query the Association's accounts at any general meeting.

### Section 5: Annual Audit

The assets of the Association shall be audited annually by a three-person Audit Committee, appointed by the general membership.

The Executive Body, through the Treasurer, shall make all the necessary resources available to the Audit Team, at a time and place mutually agreed to by both parties.

The audit shall be completed by August of each year. A formal report shall be presented at the August General Meeting.

## **Article XI (Constitutional Amendments and By-laws)**

### Section 1: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution and By-laws of the Association may be proposed and discussed by any member of the Association.

The Constitution and By-laws of the Association may be amended or revised by a sixty-six percent (66%) affirmative vote of the members present at any general meeting, providing that a copy of the proposed amendments or revisions are made available at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting on which the item is on the agenda for discussion.

### Section 2: Ideals and Principles

This Constitution and By-laws are written in accordance with, and consideration of the ideals and principles upon which the Association is founded.

### Section 3: Source of Law and Reference

This Constitution, its By-laws, revisions and amendments shall be the source of law and reference for all deliberations of the Association, once it is ratified and accepted by a general meeting.