

# **BYLAWS OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA**

*Revised 2011*

## **ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Section 1 - The name of this organization shall be the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (Eastern), hereinafter “the ACYOA”.

Section 2 - The ACYOA shall function subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the Primate or the Locum Tenens of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), hereinafter “the Diocese”, and the Diocesan Council in accordance with the Bylaws of the Diocese. The Primate shall be the President of the ACYOA.

Section 3 - The Primate shall govern and preside over all administrative bodies of the ACYOA including, but not limited to the following:

- A. General Assembly
- B. Central Council
- C. Office of the Executive Secretary
- D. Chapters

## **ARTICLE 2 - OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the ACYOA shall be:

Section 1 - To fulfill the mission statement of the Diocese through the youth:

“The Mission of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church is to preach the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim its message of salvation. This mission is realized through worship, education, witness, service, and fellowship in Christ as expressed in the distinctive faith-experience of the Armenian people. All the faithful of the Armenian Church are called to participate fully in this mission.”

Section 2 - To encourage its members to learn, practice, uphold, and witness to the teachings of the Christian faith according to the doctrine, sacraments, canons, and traditions of the Armenian Church.

Section 3 - To support and work for the strengthening of the Armenian Church and to promote among its members and others the study and appreciation of Armenian culture and heritage.

Section 4 - To strengthen the spiritual and social bond among its members, and to contribute toward the development of a healthy community life among all Armenians.

Section 5 - To enhance and strengthen among its members loyalty to the principles of the Constitution of the United States; to uphold the spirit of human freedom, universal justice, and devotion to duty as good citizens.

### **ARTICLE 3 - POLICIES**

The policies of the ACYOA shall be:

Section 1 - To work through the respective Chapters in harmony and in cooperation with the Pastor and Parish leadership of each local community and to take interest and an active part in the life of the local Armenian Church.

Section 2 - To create and maintain friendly and cooperative relations with Armenian institutions and organizations whose aims and activities are consonant with the objectives and policies of the ACYOA and to make an effort to support and work with organizations connected with the Diocese and its Parishes.

Section 3 - To create and maintain friendly and fraternal relations with other religious youth organizations whose aims and activities are consonant with the spirit of the ACYOA.

### **ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1 - All persons at least 18 years old, who are communicant members of the Armenian Church, are eligible for membership.

Section 2 - A candidate for membership shall apply to the Chapter Executive Committee.

Section 3 - Upon being duly admitted, a new member shall pay the required annual dues. Additionally all members are encouraged to be dues paying members of their local Parish.

Section 4 - Members-at-large shall be those who live in a geographical area where there is no organized Chapter. A candidate for Member-at-large status shall apply to the ACYOA Central Council, who will determine eligibility for membership at the next ACYOA Central Council meeting. A Member-at-large applicant shall pay dues to the ACYOA Central Council. Members-at-large are entitled to all the privileges of membership in the ACYOA and may at any time affiliate with a Chapter, after which their Member-at-large status shall cease.

Section 5 - Those persons at least 18 years of age who are not communicant members of the Armenian Church, but who are interested in ACYOA, and are willing to subscribe to the objectives and policies of the Bylaws may become Associate Members. Application for Associate Membership shall be made to the Chapter Executive Committee, and approved by the ACYOA Central Council. Associate Members may participate in the local activities of the Chapter, but may not vote or hold elected office. Annual contributions equal to membership dues by Associate Members in lieu of dues shall be considered contributions to the Chapter.

Section 6 - Members may transfer to another Chapter but cannot be considered a member of more than one Chapter at any given time.

Section 7 - Annual local Chapter dues for ACYOA members shall be determined by each Chapter's Annual Membership Meeting. A portion of the dues, to be set annually at the General Assembly, shall be sent to the Central Council.

## **ARTICLE 5 - FORMATION OF CHAPTERS**

Section 1 - Five or more persons qualified to become members of the ACYOA may organize a Chapter with the approval of the Pastor and Parish Council of the local Parish.

Section 2 - The President of the Chapter shall be the Pastor of the Parish or Deacon-in-Charge. In the absence of the former, the Parish Council Chairperson shall act as the President. The President of the Chapter shall have the responsibility of ensuring all action taken by the Chapter or any of its committees is consistent with the objectives and policies of these by-laws.

Section 3 - A written application for Chapter formation in the ACYOA shall be made by the Pastor and Parish Council and submitted to the Primate and the ACYOA Central Council for approval.

Section 4 - The name of the affiliated Parish shall precede the name "ACYOA" for each Chapter.

## **ARTICLE 6 - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Section 1 - The members of a Chapter shall hold an Annual Membership Meeting called by the Chapter Executive Committee within the first quarter of the fiscal year. The Chapter Executive Committee shall contact all members at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting, stating the agenda of the meeting.

Section 2 - The Chapter President shall preside over the Annual Membership Meeting.

Section 3 - The majority of the members in good standing of the Chapter shall constitute a quorum at an Annual Membership Meeting. If such a quorum is not obtained, a second meeting shall be called in the same manner. At this subsequent meeting, the number of members present, being five or more, shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4 - The functions of the Annual Membership Meeting shall be:

- a) To elect the Chapter Executive Committee and to elect delegates to the General Assembly.
- b) To review and approve the Chapter Annual Report for the previous year, including the financial transactions of the Chapter, and approve the portion of the annual net proceeds to be contributed to the local Parish.

- c) To decide on the amount and the manner of any Chapter financial contributions other than to the local Parish provided that the consent of the Chapter President and Parish Council is obtained for such appropriation.
- d) To decide on all matters of new business submitted by the Chapter Executive Committee or the membership.
- e) To decide upon annual dues.

Section 5 - Special Membership Meetings may be held to address urgent resolutions. Special Membership Meetings shall be called by the Chapter Executive Committee with at least one week's notice upon a majority vote of the Chapter Executive Committee, or upon the request of at least one-third of the members in good standing, presented to the Chapter Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE 7 - CHAPTER MEETINGS**

Section 1 - The Executive Committee shall call a Chapter Meeting at least quarterly.

Section 2 - Chapter Meetings shall be presided over by the Chapter President, or an individual designated by the Chapter President, and conducted by the Chairperson.

Section 3 - The presence of twenty-five percent of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum at any Chapter Meeting and decisions shall be taken by the majority vote of those present.

Section 4 - In case of a tie in any voting, the Chapter President shall cast the deciding vote or, at his discretion, request an additional ballot.

Section 5 - Chapter Meetings shall be called in order to discuss and to act upon plans and programs for the enhancement of the ACYOA, guided by the objectives of the ACYOA and the mission of the Armenian Church.

## **ARTICLE 8 - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1 - Each Chapter at its Annual Membership Meeting shall elect by secret ballot three to eleven (shall be an odd number) members who, along with the Chapter President, shall constitute the Chapter Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of at least a Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Section 2 - The Executive Committee shall meet regularly and have the authority to transact the general business of the Chapter and to implement the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Annual Membership Meeting and any other meetings of the Chapter.

Section 3 - The duties of the Executive Committee shall be:

- a) To establish the agenda of the Annual Membership Meeting.
- b) To submit a written Annual Report to the Parish Council and the ACYOA Central Council after the Chapter Annual Membership Meeting, reporting election results of the Chapter and describing the activities and financial status of the Chapter during the past fiscal year.
- c) To correspond regularly with the Central Council and submit quarterly reports.
- d) To collect dues and ensure proper upkeep of finances with Parish and Financial Institutions.

Section 4 - The elections of the members of the Executive Committee shall be subject to approval by the Chapter President.

Section 5 - The term of office of the members of the Executive Committee shall be one year. No member shall hold the same position for more than two consecutive years.

Section 6 - In case of a vacancy in the Executive Committee, an election shall be held at the next Regular Chapter Meeting. The member who had the highest number of votes short of election at the last Chapter Annual Membership Meeting shall be a nominee.

Section 7 - All officers, upon retiring from office, shall deliver to the Chairperson in office all monies, accounts, records, books, paper, and all other property belonging to the Chapter. The Chairperson in office shall distribute said items to the respective officers to whom they pertain. The President of the Chapter shall oversee the transfer.

## **ARTICLE 9 - GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Section 1 - The General Assembly is the representative body of the Chapters of the ACYOA, and shall exercise supervision and governance over the bodies within the ACYOA. Delegates from all Chapters shall convene at least once a year for a General Assembly.

Section 2 - The number of elected delegates a Chapter may send to the General Assembly based on the number of dues paid members from the past fiscal year shall be:

5-10 members	2 delegates
11-25 members	3 delegates
26-50 members	4 delegates
51+ members	5 delegates

Section 3 - Names of delegates shall be submitted to the Central Council at least 15 days prior to the General Assembly in order to be registered and seated. All names shall be approved by the Chapter President. If an elected delegate is unable to attend the General Assembly, the next highest vote-getter short of being elected shall assume the responsibilities of the delegate.

Section 4 - The Chapter Chairperson shall be an ex-officio delegate to the General Assembly. If the Chapter Chairperson is unable to attend the General Assembly, another member of the Executive Committee may be elected to attend as an alternate.

Section 5 - The President of each Chapter, as well as all clergy accepted by the Diocese, shall be ex-officio delegates to the General Assembly.

Section 6 - A majority of the registered delegates of the Chapters shall constitute a quorum at the General Assembly.

Section 7 - All sessions of the General Assembly shall be presided over by the Primate of the Diocese, or a Clergy Representative designated by the Primate.

Section 8 - The Chairperson of the General Assembly shall be elected from among the delegates by plurality vote. The one receiving the next highest number of votes shall be designated as the Vice Chairperson. The ACYOA Central Council shall secure a competent secretary and assistant secretary to record the Minutes of the General Assembly.

Section 9 - The Chairperson of the General Assembly shall appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms and a Parliamentarian.

Section 10 - The ACYOA Central Council shall keep a permanent record of the proceedings of the General Assembly. Within ninety days following each General Assembly, a copy of the record of the proceedings and minutes of the General Assembly shall be filed at the ACYOA Office of the Diocese, and a copy shall also be sent to each Chapter.

Section 11 - Any Chapter that has not met its financial obligations or submitted its annual report to the ACYOA Central Council prior to the start of the General Assembly shall not be entitled to have voting representation at the General Assembly.

Section 12 - The duties of the General Assembly shall be:

- a) To receive the reports of the ACYOA Central Council and Executive Secretary on the activities and financial status of the ACYOA.
- b) To approve the budget proposed by the ACYOA Central Council for the upcoming fiscal year.
- c) To discuss and act upon all matters relating to the activity of the ACYOA submitted to it or placed on its agenda. Matters not submitted to the General Assembly or placed on its agenda, in compliance with Article 9, Section 15 shall be considered upon a three-fourths vote of the Assembly.
- d) To elect by majority vote the members of the ACYOA Central Council, the Nominating Committee, and the Auditing Committee.
- e) To decide the time and place of the next General Assembly.

Section 13 - The decisions of the General Assembly shall be binding upon the Chapters of the ACYOA upon approval by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Section 14 - All ACYOA Central Council members shall have a non-transferable right of voice and vote at the General Assembly. The ACYOA Executive Secretary shall have a non-transferable right of voice at the General Assembly.

Section 15 - All amendments to the Bylaws and proposals intended to be presented at the General Assembly by the membership shall be submitted in writing to the ACYOA Central Council not less than thirty days prior to the Assembly.

Section 16 - An agenda, along with a proposed budget for the upcoming year, annual reports, and all amendments and proposals intended to be considered, shall be sent to Chapters twenty days prior to the General Assembly.

## **ARTICLE 10 - CENTRAL COUNCIL**

Section 1 - From among the members of the ACYOA, the General Assembly shall elect seven members to constitute the ACYOA Central Council. Only one person from any Chapter may be elected to the ACYOA Central Council in any given year. The ACYOA Central Council term of office shall commence following the confirmation of the election by the Primate and Diocesan Council.

Section 2 - The first General Assembly shall elect for the first ACYOA Central Council three members serving a two-year term, and two members serving a one-year term. Thereafter, as terms of office expire, the vacancies shall be filled by members elected for two-year terms. No member shall hold office in excess of two consecutive terms.

Section 3 - While in office, an ACYOA Central Council member may not serve as Chairperson of a Chapter.

Section 4 - In case of a vacancy in the ACYOA Central Council created by resignation or otherwise, the ACYOA Central Council shall invite the individual who received the next highest number of votes short of election at the same General Assembly to fill the vacancy. This member shall serve until the end of the term.

Section 5 - The Primate and the ACYOA Central Council shall determine the place and frequency of meetings. The Primate or his Clergy Representative shall preside over ACYOA Central Council Meetings.

Section 6 - The ACYOA Central Council shall define the responsibilities of its officers and committees.

Section 7 - The ACYOA Central Council shall keep a permanent record of its proceedings which shall be filed at the ACYOA Office of the Diocese.

Section 8 - It shall be the responsibility of the ACYOA Central Council to convene the General Assembly, to fulfill the decisions of the General Assembly, to prepare publications, to sponsor

programs according to the objectives of the ACYOA, to receive Chapter reports and to advise and assist its Chapters.

Section 9 - The ACYOA Central Council shall be entitled to require, at any time, an accurate accounting of funds and activities from any Chapter. Should a Chapter fail to produce such documents, the ACYOA Central Council may restrict their voting privileges at the following General Assembly.

Section 10 - On the basis of a report from a Chapter Executive Committee and/or Chapter President, the ACYOA Central Council may take steps deemed necessary and proper for the best interests of the ACYOA, with consultation of the Primate and Diocesan Council.

Section 11 - Any member of the ACYOA Central Council failing to attend two consecutive meetings without reasonable justification, or failing to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations of office without reasonable justification, may be removed from the ACYOA Central Council if so decided by a unanimous vote of the other members of the Central Council and approval of the Primate.

Section 12 - The Primate and the Diocesan Council, in consultation with the ACYOA Central Council, may appoint an Executive Secretary when and if deemed necessary to work with the ACYOA Central Council under the direction of the Primate for the advancement and efficient functioning of the ACYOA.

## **ARTICLE 11 - DIOCESAN-WIDE FUNCTIONS**

Section 1 - All Diocesan-wide functions shall be held under the name of the ACYOA.

Section 2 - The Central Council shall develop guidelines for each Diocesan-wide function.

Section 3 - Any Chapter wishing to host a Diocesan-wide function shall present a detailed outline of location and activities, including prices, which should be submitted to the ACYOA Central Council sixty days prior to the General Assembly. The Pastor and Parish Council shall approve this outline prior to submission to the Central Council and General Assembly.

Section 4 - A detailed report, including financial records, shall be kept by the host Chapter, and sent to the Central Council within ninety days of the event. If a written request is received by the ACYOA Central Council before the deadline, the Central Council may extend the deadline by no more than an additional ninety days at their discretion.

Section 5 - Half of the net proceeds from Diocesan-wide functions shall be sent to the ACYOA Central Council by the sponsoring Chapters.



## **ARTICLE 12 - FUNDS**

Section 1 - The fiscal year shall be from January first to December thirty-first. Chapter dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year.

Section 2 - All assets of the ACYOA shall be under the sole jurisdiction of the General Assembly and are to be administered by the ACYOA Central Council for the general welfare of the ACYOA and for carrying out the responsibilities assigned to it by these.

Section 3 - The ACYOA Central Council shall have the power to make special appeals for funds for specific purposes. Any appeals shall be approved by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Section 4 - The Chapters shall spend the funds at their disposal for the welfare of the Chapter and for carrying out the responsibilities assigned to them by these Bylaws.

Section 5 - At least fifteen percent of the annual net proceeds of each Chapter shall be contributed to the local Parish. Five percent of annual net proceeds shall be contributed to the ACYOA Endowment Fund.

## **ARTICLE 13 - ELECTIONS**

Section 1 - All elections shall be by secret ballot, and unless otherwise specified, shall be decided by majority vote of the members assembled at a meeting.

Section 2 - Only members who have paid their annual dues in full are eligible to vote at elections or become candidates for elective office.

Section 3 - In case of a vacancy in any National Committee of the ACYOA created by resignation or otherwise, the ACYOA Central Council shall invite the individual who received the next highest number of votes short of election at the last General Assembly to fill the vacancy. This member shall serve until the following General Assembly. In the event the first alternate is unable to fill the vacancy, the second alternate shall be invited to fill the position. Should no alternates be available, the ACYOA Central Council shall select an ACYOA member in good standing to fill the vacancy with the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as the elected National Committee members, upon approval of the Diocesan Primate.

## **ARTICLE 14 - BYLAWS**

Section 1 - Chapter Bylaws and standing rules may be prepared and amended at a Chapter Membership Meeting, provided they do not contradict these Bylaws and are approved by the ACYOA Central Council.

Section 2 - The Diocesan Bylaws shall supersede and supplement these Bylaws. Final adjudication of questions, policies, and procedures not resolved through normal channels shall rest with the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Section 3 - These Bylaws may only be amended by a two-thirds vote of two consecutive General Assemblies. Amendments shall take effect immediately following the second vote, contingent upon approval by the Primate and Diocesan Council.

Section 4 - All amendments to the Bylaws shall be submitted to the ACYOA Central Council thirty days prior to the General Assembly to be considered.

Section 5 - Proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be sent by the Central Council to the Chapters twenty days prior to the General Assembly.

Section 6 - The amendments ratified by the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Primate and the Diocesan Council for approval. The ACYOA Central Council shall inform the Chapters of the status of the amendments.

## **ARTICLE 15 - DISSOLUTION**

Section 1 - In the event that the number of members of a Chapter falls below five at the end of the fiscal year and for a continuous period of three months thereafter, that Chapter shall be considered dissolved.

Section 2 - Upon the dissolution of any Chapter, the assets, records and all property thereof shall be turned over and shall belong to the Parish Council of the local Parish. If there is no Parish in the community of the dissolved Chapter, such assets, records, and properties shall be turned over and shall belong to the ACYOA Central Council.

Section 3 - The dissolution of the ACYOA may only occur with a three-fourths vote in favor of dissolution by the General Assembly. Dissolution shall become final upon the confirmation of the Primate and the Diocesan Council. In case of dissolution, all assets, records, and properties are to be turned over to the Primate and Diocesan Council.

## **ADDENDUM TO BYLAWS**

### **I. Chapter Executive Positions and Responsibilities**

- a. The Chairperson shall conduct all meetings of the Chapter. The Chairperson or a representative of the Executive Committee shall be an ex-officio member of all appointed committees.
- b. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform all the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the latter.
- c. The Treasurer shall notify members of their financial obligations, shall collect all monies, and shall be the custodian of the funds of the Chapter. These funds shall be deposited in a bank designated by the Executive Committee and kept in the name of the Chapter.
- d. The Recording Secretary shall: keep a careful and authentic record of all minutes of meetings, preserve all documents of the Chapter except those specifically assigned to others, bring to each meeting a copy of the Bylaws and a list of the members of all standing and regular committees.
- e. The Corresponding Secretary shall: maintain a membership database listing the membership of the Chapter and showing the name, address, e-mail address, phone number, and date of birth of each member; notify all members of meetings (or oversee notification); conduct the correspondence of the Chapter. In the absence of the Corresponding Secretary. The Corresponding Secretary shall ensure confidentiality of all personal contact information of the Chapter members.

### **II. Terms Defined**

- a. Ex Officio - right by virtue of elected office.
- b. Parish - A fully established faith community or a mission community recognized by the Diocese.
- c. Parliamentarian - An advisor who is well educated in parliamentary procedure.
- d. Sergeant at Arms - An officer who is appointed to maintain order at a meeting.