

Constitution of the National Capital Region Tamil Association



Document Version: 7.0
Version Date: February 07, 2025
Version Status: Approved



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Mission Statement:

The National Capital Region Tamil Association promotes the social and cultural interests of the Ottawa Tamil community, nurtures the cultural ties with Tamil roots, and integrates these with the Canadian way of life and values.

By-Law: 1 Name of the Association

This non-profitable association shall be named as the "**National Capital Region Tamil Association**", hereinafter referred to as NCRTA.

By-Law 2: Objective of NCRTA

1. Safeguard and uphold the Tamil identity with dignity and self-respect while fostering harmonious intercommunity relations. Strengthen bonds with diverse cultural communities in a cordial and friendly manner.
2. Promote the core principles of Tamil traditions by deepening the understanding of its heritage, culture, and language through cultural events and social gatherings.
3. Raise awareness of the challenges faced by the Tamil people in their homeland and support initiatives aimed at improving their quality of life.
4. Establish a structured approach to identify and address the needs of seniors, encouraging their participation in the social, recreational, and cultural activities of the NCRTA.
5. Recognize the importance of social issues affecting Tamil youth in Canadian society by organizing panel discussions, interactive seminars, and workshops to support their development.
6. Assist and facilitate the integration of new Tamil migrants by addressing their common concerns and providing guidance and support.
7. Encourage the exchange of ideas and information within the community, fostering personal development and addressing family and community needs.

By-Law 3: General Members

Section 3.1: General

1. The NCRTA shall be constituted as follows:
 - **Regular Members**
 - **Invited Members (Patrons):** Individuals who actively support and promote the overall mission of the NCRTA
 - **Board of Directors (Hereby referred to or interchanged as the Board)**
2. All Regular Members must complete an application form and sign a declaration of allegiance, agreeing to respect and adhere to the rules of the NCRTA Constitution. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and reside within the boundaries of the National Capital Region of Ottawa.
3. The Board shall determine membership fees annually and may offer a lifetime membership option at its discretion.



4. All applicants seeking membership must be approved by the Board before being officially enlisted. Membership updates will be made after each Board meeting.
5. No new members will be approved after the notice for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been issued until the AGM is completed. Membership approvals will resume thereafter.
6. Members shall not receive financial or material remuneration for their services.
7. Membership may be terminated due to non-payment of dues, violation of the Constitution, or other misconduct, as determined by the NCRTA Board.
8. All members must adhere to the NCRTA Constitution and actively participate in the association's activities and initiatives.

Section 3.2: Suspension

A member may be suspended under the following circumstances:

1. **Detrimental Actions:** If their actions or conduct are deemed harmful to the image and interests of the NCRTA.
2. **Absenteeism:** Board of Directors who fail to attend two consecutive board meetings without a valid reason (e.g., illness, prior appointment) may be suspended. Attendance shall be recorded at each meeting, and absences will be documented.
3. **Non-Payment of Dues:** Failure to pay membership fees within 60 days of the due date.
4. A temporary suspension of any member requires a formal meeting and the approval of at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors.
5. The Board shall determine the duration and terms of suspension during a Board meeting.

Section 3.3: Removal of Board Director(s)

A Board Director may be removed under the following circumstances:

1. **Reputational Damage:** If their actions or conduct have harmed the reputation and image of the NCRTA.
2. **Violation of By-Laws:** If they engage in conduct contrary to the provisions outlined in the By-Laws of this Constitution, thereby undermining the interests and objectives of the association and/or its members.
3. The following procedures must be followed:
Board Director is temporarily Suspended for the entirety of the process below:
 - a. **Investigation & Notification** – The Board notifies the member of the allegations and gathers evidence within 2 weeks of the incident.
 - b. **Right to Defense** – The member in question shall have the right to defend their actions with the option of third-party mediation if necessary within 5 days.
 - c. **Board Deliberation** – The Board reviews all facts before voting within 10 days.
4. The removal of a Board Director shall require the approval of at least two-thirds of the Board after all options in Section 3.3.3 have been exhausted.
5. Upon dismissal from the Board, the member cannot contest in 2 subsequent election terms, and their membership status will be suspended for a period determined by the Board.



By-Law 4: Structure of NCRTA

1. The NCRTA Board shall consist of **17 elected Directors** representing the governing body of the NCRTA. The Board of Directors shall comprise **13 Directors** and **4 Directors at Large**.
2. The officers of the Board shall include:
 - President
 - Vice-President
 - Secretary
 - Assistant Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Assistant Treasurer
 - Director of Cultural Affairs
 - Director of Youth and Relations
 - Director of Sports
 - Director of Marketing
 - Director of Media Communications
 - Director of Technology
 - Director of Human Resources
 - 4 Directors at Large
3. The **term of office** for the Board of Directors shall be a **maximum of two years**, with members eligible for re-election in the subsequent term.
4. Board Directors may contest for **re-election** at the end of their term; however, they **cannot serve in the same position consecutively for more than two terms**.
5. The Board shall appoint **sub-committees** to formulate and implement the activities and agenda of the NCRTA as needed, at the discretion of the Board.
6. The NCRTA Board may choose to establish a **Public Relations Sub-Committee** composed of Board of Directors and led by the President. Their mandate shall be to manage public relations matters carefully while supporting the Board.
7. Each sub-committee shall have one **Director from the Board appointed as the Chair** of the sub-committee.
8. The number of Directors on the Board may be **expanded** at any time through a **ballot during the general election process**. The total number of Directors shall always remain **an odd number** for practical and governance purposes.

By-Law 5: Local Chapters

1. If needed, the NCRTA may expand to establish **local chapters**. The number of local chapters may be adjusted based on **population distribution and demographic factors** within the National Capital Region of Ottawa, as determined during a general meeting.
2. There shall be **three Local Chapter Coordinators**, one for each chapter. Each Chapter Coordinator must reside within their respective region.
 - a. **Example:**



- **Ottawa Nepean**
 - **Ottawa West**
 - **Ottawa East/Centre**
3. Chapter Coordinators must be **current Board of Directors**.

By-Law 6: Finances

1. The NCRTA shall impose an annual membership fee, which will be strictly enforced by the Board and may be adjusted if necessary. A lifetime membership option may also be offered.
2. The NCRTA may accept **voluntary donations** from members and other legitimate sources for the following purposes:
 - a. **Humanitarian causes**
 - b. **Operational requirements**
 - c. **Event funding**
3. All accepted donations must be used strictly for **not-for-profit purposes** and **shall not** provide any monetary benefit to members.
4. All funds raised through social and cultural events organized by the NCRTA shall be the **sole property of the Association**. These funds shall be utilized in the best interest of promoting and supporting the NCRTA's mission and related activities, subject to **approval by at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors**.
5. Upon request, all financial records of the NCRTA shall remain transparent and accessible to all its members, subject to joint approval by the President and Secretary of the NCRTA.

By-Law 7: Use of Language

1. All official meetings, programs, and events shall be conducted in Tamil and/or English. Relevant literature shall be translated and made available in either Tamil or English as required.
2. Language is an essential tool for communication, and no individual or group shall be alienated or discriminated against based on language use. Interpretation in Tamil or English shall be provided when necessary.

By-Law 8: Mode of Communications

1. NCRTA's primary modes of communication shall include social media platforms, emails, and NCRTA.ca. These channels will be used extensively to foster engagement and maintain a strong connection among members.
2. The Board shall regularly update schedules and agendas and promptly inform members through digital communication channels.



3. All regulations, postings, membership profiles, and other relevant communications shall be respectful and closely monitored by the Board.
4. 'Privacy laws' shall be upheld, even in open-access communication.
 - a. Example: 'Members and non-members' emails will be included in a BCC list to protect privacy.

By-Law 9: Duties of the Officers and Chapter Coordinators

1. The **President** of the NCRTA shall be responsible for upholding the **Constitution** with diligence and integrity, ensuring the development and promotion of the Association's interests to the best of his/her ability.
2. The **Vice-President** shall assume the responsibilities and powers of the President in their absence, subject to the restrictions stipulated in the Constitution.
3. The **Secretary** shall be responsible for:
 - Maintaining the minutes of all meetings.
 - Ensuring compliance with procedures specified in the by-laws.
 - Handling official correspondence, forms, and submissions.
 - Signing and authenticating official documents.
 - Safeguarding all official stamps and seals of the NCRTA.
 - Transferring all relevant documents to the incoming Secretary at the end of the tenure.
 - Updating, restructuring, regulating, and maintaining the NCRTA's group chats and other forms of communication.
4. The **Treasurer** shall be responsible for:
 - Maintaining and updating financial accounts, records, receipts, and banking documents.
 - Managing financial transactions, ensuring compliance with Board approvals.
 - Serving as one of the designated signatories for financial transactions.
 - Transferring all relevant financial documents to the incoming Treasurer at the end of the tenure.
5. The **Assistant Secretary** shall assist and share the responsibilities of the Secretary.
6. The **Assistant Treasurer** shall assist and share the responsibilities of the Treasurer.
7. The **Director of Cultural Affairs** shall assist the President in organizing and managing all cultural events held by the NCRTA.
8. The **Director of Youth and Relations** shall assist the President in organizing and overseeing youth events hosted by the NCRTA.
9. The **Director of Sports** shall be responsible for planning, organizing, and managing all sports activities and events conducted by the NCRTA.
10. The **Chapter Coordinators** shall be responsible for overseeing local social, recreational, and cultural activities within their respective regions.
11. The **Director of Media Communications** shall manage and oversee all NCRTA-related activities on social media platforms, including but not limited to **Instagram, Facebook, and NCRTA community group chats**.
12. The **Director of Technology** shall be responsible for:



- Maintaining the NCRTA website and digital tools.
 - Identifying opportunities for integrating advanced and emerging technologies to enhance NCRTA's operations.
13. The **Director of Human Resources** shall be responsible for recruiting and managing the human resources necessary for the effective functioning of the NCRTA.
 14. The **Directors at Large** shall provide leadership and facilitate the **efficient and effective functioning** of the Board. They shall also oversee governance concerning both internal and external affairs.

By-Law 10: Meetings - General Considerations

1. All meetings shall be chaired by the President or a Director appointed by the President.
2. Meetings shall begin with an announcement by the Chairperson, followed by a moment of silence in tribute to those who lost their lives for their right to live peacefully and with dignity in their Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka.
3. The Chairperson shall ensure a respectful and orderly atmosphere during all meetings. Attendees must adhere to meeting-order by-laws.
4. The Secretary, or a Director appointed by the Secretary, shall record meeting minutes. The Chair shall verify and co-sign the minutes at the end of the meeting.
5. **Quorum Requirements:**
 - **General Meetings:** Two-thirds of the Board of Directors plus 15 Regular Members.
 - **Board Meetings:** A minimum of two-thirds of the Board Directors.

By-Law 11: Meetings - Annual General Meeting & Special General Meetings

Section 11.1: Summoning a General Meeting

1. The **President** shall summon the General Meeting and specify its objectives.
2. A **General Meeting** shall be convened under the following circumstances:
 - a. The **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** shall be held **within 90 days of the fiscal year-end (by March 31st each year)** to discuss the general activities of the NCRTA.
 - b. The **President** shall ensure that all members are duly notified about the General Meeting.
 - c. A **Special General Meeting** may be called under the following conditions:
 - i. At the formal request of **at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors**.
 - ii. At the request of members, subject to a **one-third majority from the member list**, provided they have been members of the NCRTA for at least six months. This request is subject to approval by the Board.
 - d. The new board shall be elected every two years at the Annual General Meeting.

Section 11.2: Ways for Members to Request a Special General Meeting

1. Members may formally submit a written request to the **Secretary**, detailing the reason for the meeting and securing support from 20% of the current membership.
2. The Board must review and approve or deny the request within **14 days** of submission.



3. If approved, the Special General Meeting shall be scheduled within **30 days** of approval.

Section 11.3: Annual General Meeting (AGM) Proceedings

1. The **new Board** shall be elected **every two years** at the Annual General Meeting.
2. The **Secretary** shall present a comprehensive report that includes:
 - The **financial statement**.
 - A **summary of NCRTA's progress and activities** throughout the year.
 - Any **other relevant matters** on the agenda.
3. This report shall be signed by the **President, Secretary, and one Director from the Board**.
4. Following the Secretary's report, the **short- and long-term objectives** of the NCRTA shall be discussed.
5. The **President shall conduct the election** of the new Board before the conclusion of the meeting.

By-Law 12: Meetings - Board meeting

Board meetings shall be convened under the following conditions:

1. **At least one-third of the Board Directors** may request a meeting, or it may be called by the President or Vice-President with sufficient notice.
2. Board meetings must be held **at least once per month**; however, the frequency may be adjusted at the discretion of the current Board of Directors.

By-Law 13: Election for the Board of Directors

1. A notice for the Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) shall be issued at least four weeks before Election Day and communicated through the designated communication channels.
2. General meeting notices must specify the date, location, duration, and time.
3. The Board shall nominate an election officer from the general membership during the general meeting to assist with elections.
4. All 17 Board positions shall **become vacant on Election Day**.
5. Candidates for the Board must have been NCRTA members for at least one year.
6. The Board of Directors shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast by NCRTA members.
7. Interested candidates must submit their nomination request at least one week before the AGM.
 - a. A candidate must be nominated by one member and seconded by another, both meeting the criteria specified in **By-Law 3, Section 3.1**.
 - b. The nominated candidate must agree to stand for election.
 - c. Nomination and consent may be given verbally at the time of the election.
 - d. Nominations must be received as outlined in the election call letter.
8. If more than two candidates are nominated, voting shall follow the procedure outlined in **By-Law 14**.
9. Presidential Candidate Requirements:



The ideal candidate for the position of President should possess the following qualities:

- a. Strong interpersonal and leadership skills.
- b. A clear and positive vision for NCRTA.
- c. Proficiency in both Tamil and English, with reasonable public speaking skills.
- d. Strong conflict resolution abilities.
- e. A strong commitment to NCRTA's vision and mission

10. Board Director Qualifications:

- a. Board Directors should possess relevant qualifications or a strong interest in the role, ensuring alignment with the responsibilities and potential for success.

11. Vacant Positions & Special Elections:

- a. If positions remain vacant on Election Day, AGM participants may be nominated, waiving the one-week nomination deadline.
- b. If any Board position becomes vacant during the term, follow **By-Law 15**
- c. Election procedures, including nomination submissions and result announcements, shall follow the guidelines outlined in the **Election By-Laws**.

By-Law 14: Voting

Section 14.1: Voting Eligibility

1. **Annual General Meeting:** Only those who have been members of the NCRTA for six months or more and meet the criteria specified in **By-Law 3** on the date of the election are eligible to vote.
2. **Board Meetings:** Only Board of Directors are eligible to vote.
3. Each eligible voter has **one vote**.
4. Proxy voting is **not allowed** at any meetings.

Section 14.2: Election Process

1. The voting process during an election shall be conducted in the following order:
 - a. **President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Director of Cultural Affairs, Director of Youth and Relations, Director of Sports, Director of Marketing, Director of Communications, Director of Technology, Director of Human Resources, and four Directors-at-Large.**
2. Elections shall be conducted by **secret ballot** if there is a contest.
3. If only one candidate is physically present, priority shall be given to the individual who is physically present. **Missing candidates must provide a valid medical or emergency reason** to be considered for the position.
4. For other voting matters unrelated to Board elections, voting shall be conducted **by a show of hands**, unless there is a single objection.

Section 14.3: Run-Off Election Procedure

1. If multiple candidates contest for the same position, each must present a justification before the members.



2. In a tie involving more than two candidates, a run-off election will be held between those who tied.
3. If a tie occurs between two candidates in a final round, the selection will be decided by a **luck-of-the-draw**.

By-Law 15: Filling Board Vacancies

1. Suppose a Board position becomes vacant due to resignation, removal, disqualification, death, or other circumstances. In that case, the Board shall appoint a replacement from the membership list according to **By-Law 13** and the approval of two-thirds of the Board.
2. The vacancy will be communicated to regular members, and interested individuals may apply.
3. The appointed member will serve until the **next scheduled election**.

By-Law 16: Founding Members and Subsequent Boards

1. This By-Law specifically highlights the role of individuals who shaped and established the NCRTA (see **By-Law 21**). Hereinafter, they shall be referred to as "**Founding Members**" in this Constitution.
2. Founding Members are individuals who established NCRTA (see By-Law 21). They serve as advisors, offering guidance, historical perspective, and suggestions to support NCRTA's growth.
3. If not on the current Board, they may receive Board meeting updates but cannot participate in regular meetings.
4. If there are no Founding Members remaining, the Board shall designate a special advisory role, open to past members or other distinguished individuals who can offer historical insight and guidance with the same privileges and limitations.

By-Law 17: Documentation, Minutes, Accounts and Banking

1. All proceedings, correspondence, and financial transactions must be documented in accordance with standard specifications and applicable NCRTA By-Laws. The appropriate officer or responsible person will authenticate these documents.
2. Any transfer of money from the bank account, outside of operational expenditures, must be authorized by at least **two-thirds** of the Board of Directors.
3. The Treasurer and either the President or the Secretary must countersign all cheques.
4. The Treasurer will release financial documents to the Board only upon a joint request from the President **and** the Secretary.
5. All relevant documents shall be promptly transferred to the Secretary without undue delay and may be made available in digital format to all members if requested.



By-Law 18: Collaboration with Other Organizations

Section 18.1: Collaboration

1. NCRTA may partner with Canadian or international organizations to support its activities, provided the collaboration aligns with the Constitution.
2. A Memorandum of Collaboration must be submitted to the Board, outlining:
 - a. The purpose and objectives of the partnership.
 - b. The roles and responsibilities of each party.
 - c. The terms, duration, and any financial or resource commitments.
3. A special Board meeting will be convened to review the memorandum.
4. At least **two-thirds of the Board** must vote in favor for the collaboration to proceed.

Section 18.2: Membership (Association & Dissociation)

1. **Joining NCRTA:**
 - a. Membership is open to individuals who support NCRTA's objectives.
 - b. Applicants must submit a membership form and meet any eligibility criteria set by the Board.
 - c. The Board will review and approve applications.
2. **Leaving or Removal from NCRTA:**
 - a. Members may resign anytime by providing written notice to the Board.
 - b. A member may be removed if they:
 - Violate NCRTA's Constitution or policies.
 - Act in a way that harms the organization's reputation or mission.
 - Fail to fulfill membership obligations, such as paying dues.
 - c. The Board will notify the member of their removal and provide an opportunity to appeal within 30 days.
 - d. The final decision rests with the Board.

By-Law 19: Dissolution

1. The Board will consider the dissolution of NCRTA only with the consent of at least **three-fourths** of its members who are listed as members for a minimum of six months. The total attendance must exceed **two-thirds** of the membership list.
2. The dissolution will be confirmed with the consent of a **three-fourths** majority at a general meeting duly convened for this purpose. A formal dissolution protocol will then be formulated.
3. The assets of the NCRTA will be converted into liquid cash, and all financial liabilities will be settled. Any remaining funds will be donated to a charity for a humanitarian cause, as determined by a **two-thirds** majority vote of the members present at the general meeting.
4. All official records will be archived in accordance with record management policies.



By-Law 20: Process to Amend the Constitution

Section 20.1: Amendment Proposals

1. Any amendment to the Constitution must be reviewed and approved by at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Board before proceeding.
2. All Board of Directors should be involved in a discussion regarding the proposed amendments and review the final draft before publication to the regular members.
3. If approved, the **President will present the amendment** at the next **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** or a **Special General Meeting (SGM)**.
4. The amendment will be adopted if **majority of the members** vote in favor at the AGM or SGM.
5. The exact wording of the amendment must be shared with members **at least two weeks** before the AGM or SGM.

Section 20.2: Submitting an Amendment to the Constitution

1. The amendment proposal must include:
 - a. **Heading:** "Proposed amendment to [By-Law/Section]."
 - b. **Proposed Change:** The exact amendment text and its justification.
 - c. **Submitted By:** Date, along with names and signatures of **at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of Board of Directors** for approval.
2. The proposal must be received by the active Board president.

Section 20.3: Submitting an Amendment to the By-Laws

1. By-laws must align with the NCRTA Constitution and cover operational matters such as:
 - a. Introducing and modifying by-laws.
 - b. Membership forms, fees, and dues.
 - c. Issuing membership cards and certificates.
 - d. Conducting NCRTA's business.
2. A **by-law amendment is approved** if it receives **at least 10 votes** at a Board meeting.
3. It must then be **confirmed by a majority vote** at the next **AGM** or an **SGM** (for urgent changes).

By-Law 21: Ratification

This Constitution of the NCRTA, including all amendments and revisions, has been duly reviewed, deliberated, and ratified by the undersigned members of the Board. These members, listed in alphabetical order, acting in their official capacity as the governing body at the time of ratification, formally approve this Constitution at a specially convened meeting held for this purpose.

This Constitution shall take effect immediately upon ratification and shall remain in force until duly amended in accordance with the procedures outlined herein.



Version 6.0: November 06th 2010

- Signed by the following hereby acknowledged as **"Founding Members"**:

Mr. Mahadevan Aravindan
Dr. Kanagaratnam Jeevakumar
Mr. Kandiah Jeyapalasingham
Mr. Ravi Ponnampalam
Mr. Prakash Rajasundram
Mr. Sellappa Ragavan
Mr. Sabanadesan Ravishankar
Mr. Sothivannan Retnasabapathy
Mr. Kapilan Sellathurai
Dr. Sivas Premjeyanth
Mr. Anand Sothinathan
Mr. Dominic Thambipillai
Dr. Thayananthan Thayaparan
Mr. Umakanth Thirugnanam
Mr. Sathish Vallipuram

Version 7.0: February 07th 2025

- Signed and formally accepted by the **"Board of Directors of 2024-2026"** as listed below:

Gajan Ganeshavadivel
Vasugi Ganeshram
Kangaiveniyan Gunaretnam
Balenthiran Jeyabalasingam
Anu Mary Joseph
Suthan Kuhanesan
Kesavan Muthurajah
Amilesh Nanthakumaran
Panchanathan Panchalingam
Angathan Paramasivam
Seyone Somasegaram
Sivaruban Sivalingam
Sivananthan Suntharalingam
Eelana Surendran
Yaswini Vaheesan
Mathumitha Vickneswaran