



# Chicago Tamil Sangam

## BY-LAWS

(As Revised on 31st March, 2022)

## Article I. Name and Emblem

1. **Abbreviation:** The approved abbreviation of the organization's name, where an acronym is proper, shall be "Sangam."

2. **Emblem:** The Sangam emblem's design, specification, and guidelines shall be inherited by the Board of Directors. Any changes must require the approval of the two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors. The sub-committee or an extended functional team shall inherit and have a specialized logo, reviewed and approved by the two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors.

## **Article II. Membership Eligibility**

Any individual or family who subscribes to the Chicago Tamil Sangam(CTS) Constitution in general and "Article II Objective" in particular is eligible to be a member of the Sangam. The Board of Directors reserves the right to suspend or deny membership to sex offenders and to any individual charged or convicted of any major crime.

## Article III. Fees and Dues

1. **Dues:** The annual dues payable by the membership categories/levels shall be as follows:

<b>Grand Patron</b>	\$1000.00 or more (One-time payment)
<b>Life Member</b>	\$250.00 (One-time payment)
<b>Annual Membership Levels</b>	
Family Member	\$ 30.00
Single Member	\$20.00
Student Member	\$10.00
Senior Member	\$10.00

Grand Patrons will be entitled to two free admission tickets to all Chicago Sangam programs for life. This benefit will NOT apply to any programs conducted in coalition/partnership with other organizations.

Life members will be entitled to two free admission tickets to Children's Day program for life. Life members can upgrade to Grand Patrons membership level by paying the difference of \$750 or more.

2. **Payment of Dues:** The annual membership dues shall be payable during the year and will be valid for one full year commencing from the date of subscription payment. Membership dues paid in the form of a check will be deposited within thirty(30) days of the receipt of payment (OR) a copy of the check should be e-mailed to the Treasurer with Secretary, Vice-President, and President on copy within one(1) week of the receipt of payment.

## Article IV. Nomination and Election of Board of Directors

### 1. Nominations:

#### a. Call for Nomination:

- i. At least sixty days before the General Body Meeting in which the new/upcoming Board is to be announced, the Secretary shall Call for Nomination (CFN) for the Board of Directors by written notice from all members of the Sangam in good standing ((i.e.) having valid membership\*).
- ii. The CFN shall be sent to the patron's preferred e-mail (primary e-mail as provided in the currently approved membership records) and the same information will be published in the CTS website.
- iii. Optionally, notification regarding CFN will be posted in the Sangam's approved social media platform (i.e., CTS FB page – with redirect to CTS website) subject to a two-thirds majority Board approval.

- b. **Nomination process:** The nomination shall be proposed and seconded ONLY by members with voting rights. Nominations bearing the signed consent of the nominee should reach the Election Committee's (EC) e-mail within fifteen(15) days from CFN. Optionally, nominees who send their scanned nomination via e-mail to Election Committee may also send the originals via US mail to the CTS PO box within fifteen(15) days from CFN for CTS's record keeping.
- c. An e-mail acknowledgement of the nomination will be sent by the EC to all nominees within 3 days of nomination closure from CFN.
- d. A nominee shall ONLY apply for one open position. Multiple nominations are NOT allowed.
- e. CTS Election nomination submission (for any position to serve on the Board) mandates the nominee to be a current Illinois resident with valid CTS membership in addition to meeting the voting eligibility.

2. **Nomination List:** Election Commission will publish the list of all the nominees to the current Board and to the electoral nominees within twenty(20) days from the CFN. As an operational guideline, the current Board will publish a calendar of election events dates & deadlines for all steps involved.

3. **Withdrawal of Nomination:** Nominees desirous of withdrawing their nomination should communicate to the EC via e-mail within twenty five(25) days from CFN date. Final list publication: The EC shall publish the electoral candidates' list to the final list of nominees within thirty(30) days from CFN.

4. **Election:** The election of the Board of Directors will be conducted by the Election Committee consisting of five(5) members. Anyone contesting in the election cannot be part of the Election Committee. Three(3) EC members will be appointed by the President and approved by two-thirds majority vote of the current Board of Directors. The Current and the Past President will be serving as the other two members of the Election Committee.

5. **Process:** The Election Committee, in consultation with the Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and President, shall finalize the list of all eligible candidates and voter list (per Constitution) and hold an election by secret ballot for the positions that are contested (i.e., Where there are more than one nominee). All election-related disputes will initially be handled/mediated by the EC. EC's decision will

be FINAL & BINDING. However, if the nominee(s) chooses to contest the EC decision, it is highly recommended that they notify the CTS Board first prior to initiating any further action.

6. **Voters List:** The EC must publish the voter's list\* to the final list of contestants by the thirtieth(30<sup>th</sup>) day from the CFN date. Voters List will enlist the patron's Name/Member ID, E-mail ID, Mailing address, and an optional phone number.
7. **Eligibility:** Grand patrons and life members should have paid the membership dues on or before six months of the CFN date. Annual members should have paid their membership dues for the past two consecutive years (which includes the election year) on or before three months of the CFN date.

8. **Number of Votes**

Grand Patron, Life Member, and Family Member	Two(2) votes
Single Member (18 yrs of age)	One(1) vote
Senior Member	One(1) vote
Student member	No vote

9. **Ballot:** The ballot will be serialized and e-signed by at least two Election Committee members outside of the current & past President. Voting will be conducted electronically with a secret ballot process. The ballot will have the list by position in alphabetical order by the nominee's last name. The online voting tool selection will be subject to Two-thirds of the Board's approval.
10. **Voting:** Eligible members shall cast their votes electronically. Access to the voting application will be provided through the registered e-mail ID supplied in the Voters List. The Top nominees with the most votes will be elected for their respective contested position.
11. **Tie-situation:** In the event of a tie-on vote count for any contested position, the service term will be shared as mutually agreed by the EC, newly elected Board, and the winning contestant(s).

Example Timeline for Election Process

#	Action	Date
1	Call for nomination	April 15 <sup>th</sup>
2	Nomination end date	April 30 <sup>th</sup>
3	Nomination acknowledgment sent to the nominees (on or before)	May 3 <sup>d</sup>
4	Election calendar, along with the nomination list sent to the Board	May 5 <sup>th</sup>
5	Deadline to withdraw the nomination	May 10 <sup>th</sup>
6	Candidate list shared with the nominees	May 15 <sup>th</sup>
7	Voter's list shared with the candidates	May 15 <sup>th</sup>
8	Election closure and new board announcement	Jun 15 <sup>th</sup>

## Article V. Management

1. **Duties of the Board of Directors:** The Board of Directors shall manage the affairs of the Sangam by the laws under which the Sangam is organized and with the provisions of the Constitution. It shall direct the investment and care of the funds of the Sangam; make appropriations for specific purposes; take measures to advance the interests of the Sangam; and generally, direct the day-to-day operations of the Sangam.
2. **Proxy Voting:** The absentee Board member will need to submit an e-mail proxy statement to the Secretary, nominating another attending board member as proxy.
3. **Additional Board of Director(s):** The Board may choose to appoint additional directors based on the requirement to strengthen the operations. The number of additional directors must not exceed a max count of three(3). The additional director(s) will NOT have any voting rights in Board meetings.
4. The fiscal year of the Sangam shall operate from January 1st to December 31st of the calendar year. The annual budget (estimated revenue and expenditure) process shall be initiated by the Treasurer by Oct 1st of the current year and adopted by the Board of Directors at its first meeting after January 1st of the following year.
5. At the annual meeting, the Annual Report shall be prepared and presented by the Secretary with due support from the Board of Directors. The annual report will include a historical log of the previous year's events, upcoming events, and additional information as required. The Treasurer shall prepare and present the financial report.
6. **President and Vice President – (Roles & Responsibilities):** The President will preside over the Board of Directors meetings. In his/her absence, the Vice President will preside over such meetings. The Vice President shall assist the President in the affairs of the Sangam. If for any reason, the President is unable to fulfill the term of office, the Vice President will fill the balance of the period of office.
7. **The Secretary and the Asst. Secretary - (Roles & Responsibilities):** The Secretary shall arrange for all the meetings and notify the respective members in advance in consultation with the President. He/she shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of all meetings, outlining action items, maintaining and follow-thru on issues as deemed necessary. The Asst.Secretary shall assist the Secretary in the affairs of the Sangam. If, for any reason, the Secretary is unable to fulfill the term of office, the Asst.Secretary will fill the balance of the period of office.
8. **The Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer- ( Roles & Responsibilities):** The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining financial records of the Sangam. He/she will be liable to collect the fees and other funds as directed by the Board of Directors. He/she will be responsible for filing taxes every fiscal year with IRS. He/She will publish current, new, and renewed membership list every six months to the Board. The Asst.Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in the affairs of the Sangam. If the Treasurer is unable to fulfill the term of office, the Asst.Treasurer will fill the balance of the period of office.

9. **Youth Committee:** Youth (ages 12-18 years) belonging to all levels of CTS membership families that are active as per Sangam guidelines are eligible to be part of youth committee. A nominated board member will mentor the youth committee. The Board member will define the process and criteria for selecting the lead. The primary responsibility of the Youth Committee will be to organize youth activities that encourage active participation of our Tamil youth in giving back to the community. The youth committee members DO NOT have any voting rights in Board meetings.
10. Various special committees (except for the Youth committee) may be formed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors to carry on particular activities for the year. The President will fill vacancies arising in these committees with the approval of the Board of Directors. Non-board members of the special committees do not have any voting rights in Board meetings.
11. The Board needs to exercise discretion when engaging in collaborative efforts with representatives of locally based for-profit organizations to ensure that they don't use the CTS platform to advance their personal business interest.
12. If a Board member relocates out of state and no longer resides in the Illinois area during their elected tenure they will be ineligible to continue serving in their elected capacity. They will need to tend in their resignation to the Board within 60 days of their relocation. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the Board passing a resolution to have the relocated Member removed from the Board and their duties.



## **Article VI. Amendments**

1. Amendments to the ByLaws must follow the guidelines as below:
  - I. It needs to be in line and confirm with the Constitution of the Sangam.
  - II. The Secretary shall e-mail the proposed amendment(s) to all members of the Board at least fifteen(15) days ahead of a meeting.
  - III. At the subsequent board meeting upon completion of fifteen(15) days, the Board of directors may approve the amendment(s) (with the quorum present) with two-thirds majority.
  - IV. However, if the proposed amendment(s) is not approved (except for grammatical errors), a revised version of the proposed changes must follow steps 1-3 again for final approval.

## Article VII. Miscellaneous

1. Unless approved by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors, no fundraising of any sort should be carried out on behalf of the Sangam by its members and Board of Directors.
2. Any donations collected or given to any entities should have the approval of the Board with a two-thirds majority. The Board will draw an agreement for collecting/dispersing, and any exceptions require review/approval by two-thirds of the Board of Directors.
3. Any activity (as long as it complies with Article II(5) of the CTS Constitution) may be sponsored by the Sangam with two-thirds approval of the Board.
4. A trust fund should be set up with the funds collected from the Life membership/Grand Patron(s) fees. Trust fund (as stipulated in Article V of the CTS Constitution) cannot be withdrawn without the approval of two-thirds of the Board of Directors. Fifty percent of the interest income from the trust fund may be used for any purpose approved by two-thirds of the Board of Directors.
5. Official Communication: Notices and announcements (as deemed relevant) will be communicated by the Secretary via E-blast/USPS mailing.
6. CTS is a socio-cultural communal organization that represents the interests of the Chicago Tamil diaspora. CTS may need to interact with Government officials in the USA (both at the Federal and State level) and in India, Tamilnadu (both at the Union and State level) in particular when opportunities arise or necessitate. CTS shall send a courtesy congratulatory wishes/welcome message to the newly elected Government officials as stated above.
7. CTS may send felicitation to the honorees/recipients of Government Awards (at the discretion of the Board) recognizing their remarkable contribution to the Tamil language, literature, and Arts. In such circumstances, the Board members will need to approve the drafted statement/press release within the deadline stated in the approval request for timely publication.
8. CTS stands to reflect the concerns of the patrons on more significant social causes/issues/humanitarian crises. In such events, the CTS board will publish a press release /statement upon two-thirds majority Board approval.
9. CTS may support crowdsourcing fund requests (example: GoFundMe) from the patrons (members of the CTS) or the CTS Helpline team. However, CTS will not initiate any fundraising requests on behalf of patrons. The fundraiser-related request and messages will be reviewed and approved by the Board, and they will be published on CTS's communication platform.

## Article VIII. Operating Guidelines with Roles & Responsibilities

*For the benefit of institutionalizing checks and balances in the community facing proceedings of the Sangam, the Board of Directors may designate one of the Board Members as the co-overseer of such activities in addition to the President. This designee may be appointed at the beginning of the new term of the Board of Directors and can be changed during the term as needed.*

### **Board Meetings:**

1. The Secretary will schedule the meeting. The announcement of the meeting will be sent to the Board of Directors at least (preferably) forty-eight (48) hours in advance. The meeting announcement would include a tentative agenda and also solicitation for additional discussion points of interest from the Board.
2. Solicited agenda items will be included in the meeting, and the order of the discussion items may be re-prioritized by the Board during the meeting.
3. Inability to attend the meeting needs to be informed at least a day ahead of the meeting unless in the event of an unplanned absence due to illness or an emergency.
4. Meeting minutes will be compiled and distributed within seven(7) business days of the meeting and approved by the Board in the next meeting for archival.

### **General Body Meeting:**

1. The Secretary will present a report of the activities of the Sangam.
2. The Treasurer will present a financial report of the Sangam and a status report on the current, new, and renewed membership list.

### **CTS E-Blast:**

1. Secretary will be primarily responsible for the E-blast communication in collaboration with the Communications team.
2. The communications team will comprise a four(4) member team. The team will include the Secretary, Asst. Secretary and two(2) members of the Board (who will operate on a rotational basis). They are responsible for drawing the write-up to enable/expedite timely dispatch.

3. For paid advertisement E-blasts (only those that comply with CTS guidelines\*), the Treasurer will be primarily responsible for confirming payment from the requesting individual/vendor/organization.
4. E-blast will be sent upon confirmation of payment.
5. Board will decide the advertisement fee structure for profit and non-profit organizations, patron, and non-members. This will be subject to current pricing trends.
6. Board will ONLY approve free advertisements that comply with CTS guidelines\*

### **News Letter: Palagai**

1. The Board will decide the interval for newsletters.
2. Responsibility for compiling newsletters and mailing will take a round-robin assignment with 2-3 volunteers for each newsletter.
3. Content can be drawn from multiple sources (Board, patron, external organization).
4. Advertisements should be sponsored by a board member and that Member is responsible for collecting fees from the client.
5. President and designated Director to review and approve the content before printing and mailing (48 hours approval window is required).

### **Events Program Conception & Planning:**

1. The tentative Calendar of Events needs to be published on the CTS website at the beginning of the Calendar year in Jan.
2. Planning any CTS events/programs is the responsibility of the entire CTS Board. Planned programs need an approval by two-thirds of the Board of Directors. CTS-organized events (outside of the Calendar of Events) need to be planned with a minimum of sixty(60)-day notice – Within reason, exceptions will be accommodated.
3. Members of the Event/Program Committee are selected by the Board. Any changes to the members of the Program Committee needs to be approved by at least two(2) office bearers, preferably the President and the Secretary in conjunction with the Program Committee lead.
4. Program Committees' primary responsibilities will include venue reservation, event insurance, ticketing, lunch and/or dinner arrangements, gifts/prizes, guest accommodation and execution of the program.

5. Program Committee will need the approval of the Board in regards to the program agenda, guest invitees, engaging sub-committees (members outside of the Board), along with the event budget.
6. Any other special event arrangements (outside of the standard setup) will need two-thirds Board approval. Periodic program status updates needs to be provided by the program committee to the Board.
7. The program committee is authorized to solicit donations and sponsorship for the event/program. Donations & sponsorship will ONLY be entitled to the published benefits (as outlined in the Board-approved sponsorship document) with no additional benefits. (i.e. No expectation/commitment for preferred program participation or commercial advertisement).

#### **Centenary/Special occasion commemoration:**

1. CTS will celebrate (e.g., Thamizh Arignargal Naal) annually - the Centenary/special occasion commemoration of Tamil iconic individual(s), thereby honoring/ recognizing their exemplary service and years of contribution to the Tamil language, literature & Arts.
2. The Board will meet at the beginning of the new term and
  - a. Prepare the plan for the next two(2) years
  - b. Identify the respective event committee(s) outlined in the event's agenda.
  - c. The event committee(s) will comprise Board members and CTS patrons as needed.
  - d. The Board member(s) will lead the committee and manage the event successfully.

#### **Partnership Events:**

1. CTS may partner with other Tamil Sangams in the USA or regional organizations in the Chicago Area to co-host or facilitate an event.
2. In such a situation, CTS, board members, or board-appointed committee works with the other organization to prepare an MoU for the event. The MoU, at a minimum, should include the scope of the event, goal, budget, and financial obligations for each of the involved organization(s).
3. The MoU must be reviewed and approved by two-thirds of the Board members.
4. Any event-related communications must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate committee(s). CTS must be made aware of any event-related public communications such as press releases or joint statements seventy-two(72) hours before such happening.

**Asset Management:**

1. CTS board would establish the asset management teams at the beginning of the term. The asset management team's main objective is to maintain and govern the physical, digital service, and assets of CTS.
2. There will be a total of four(4) Board members – two(2) on each of the two(2) teams (Physical Asset & Digital Services Asset) which would work on a rotational basis.
3. Physical Asset Management includes handling event decoration materials, food serving materials, audio & video equipment. This team manages the inventory, storage location, and related activities.
4. Digital Service and Asset Management includes handling CTS digital assets such as website hosting provider, social media platform, e-mail platform, event photos, videos, and other digital services. This team is responsible for administering the platforms, maintaining digital assets, upgrades, and renewals.
5. The asset management teams would prepare their goal and operation policy and guidelines at the beginning of the new term. The group presents their operation metrics which would include asset usage, activities, their observations and recommendations to the Board every six(6) months a year. The CTS board reviews the activities as presented and would provide suggestions/recommendations.
6. Any asset management or service changes would require two-thirds Board approval.

**External Training Partnership(s):**

CTS may organize training partnerships in Performing Arts and diminishing/dwindling Tamil Heritage arts. This particular service area provides an avenue to enrich those arts and pass them along to our next-generation youth.

1. CTS Board will nominate the Arts oversight team at the beginning of the term.
2. CTS offers equal opportunity to all trainers and institutions. The trainers and institutes approach the CTS board with their training offerings proposal through the CTS website or by sending an e-mail.
3. The oversight team reviews the proposal credentials of the trainers and institution. The team collaborates with the requester to arrive at a nominal payment structure and payment processing approach.
4. The oversight team will need to send the arrived proposal for the Board to review. The submission must be approved by a two-thirds Board majority. The trainer or institute will then be informed of the final decision.

5. After approval, the oversight team prepares an MOU and gets a formal signature from the trainer/Institute and CTS Board.
6. The performing arts training, its process, calendar, and registration will be published to CTS patrons through CTS's communication channel.

### **Financial Disputes:**

CTS e-blast, events, and performing arts training extensions are paid services currently offered to the patrons and community. Any financial disputes must follow the intervention guidelines as listed below:

1. Disputes ranging from \$1-1000 will be handled by the Treasurer and Joint Treasurer.
2. \$1001-2500 will be handled by the entire team of Office Bearers.
3. Greater than \$2500 is considered a significant dispute and will warrant Board involvement. The Board may appoint a three(3) member review team to handle the situation in such significant conflicts.
4. The Treasurer will be primarily responsible for publishing/disclosing the details of the financial dispute (if any) to the patrons in the Annual Statement.

### **Community Interfaces:**

1. Board members are not authorized to make commitments to any individual or organization unless they have two-thirds majority approval of the Board.
2. All Board members are authorized to solicit membership from the community.
3. Any grievances from community members need to be channeled through the President and ExOfficio President for further action.
4. Any monetary contributions as received by the members of the Board must be communicated and recorded with the President and the Treasurer.

### **Abbreviations and Referenes**

1	CTS – Chicago Tamil Sangam
2	CFN – Call for Nomination
3	EC – Election Committee

\* The Sangam is secular and not affiliated to any particular religion, political party, or cause.