

BY-LAWS

OF THE

ERITREAN COMMUNITY

IN WINNIPEG INC.



NOTE: - These by-laws were amended and approved by the members in a general meeting held on November 17, 2019

SECTION - I HISTORY

Eritrea gained independence liberation in 1991 after long struggle against colonial powers. The Eritrean community in Winnipeg was formally established even before the independence of Eritrea by few ambitious immigrants in 1985. Many people from the East African State of Eritrea came to Canada during the pre-independence years of intense turmoil and conflict. The first Eritreans came in the late 70's. Over the years many more Eritreans have made Winnipeg their home. There are approximately 3,000 Eritreans who now call Winnipeg home.

SECTION - II NAME AND FUNCTION

The name of the community shall be The Eritrean Community in Winnipeg Inc.(hence, it will be referred as ECW further). The community shall be an independent Eritrean ethno-cultural entity that functions as a non-profit organization bound by the principles outlined in these By-Laws.

SECTION - III MISSION, VISION, MANDATE, AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

- Ensure the well-being of all Eritrean-Canadians in Manitoba.
- Preserve their heritage and solidarity spirit.
- Facilitate adaptation and integration process and promote multiculturalism, as well as innovation and inspiration.
- Promote understanding and harmony between Eritreans and the wider Canadian society

Vision

- To establish a vibrant, inspirational and healthy Community that sustains an efficient Eritrean-Canadian support network.
- To empower and create a platform for members to voice their concerns and share their perspectives and unique experiences as we believe that the best in each of us enriches all of us.

Mandate

1. To strive and work for the well being of the Eritrean and Canadian people.
2. To address communally any socio-economic challenges in facilitating and enhancing our continuous settlement and integration process.
3. To bridge and minimize the cultural shock and gap that newcomers face and provide a sense of belongingness within the concept of multiculturalism.
4. To establish a strong functional network support for Canadians of Eritrean origin across Canada.

5. To establish, coordinate, and implement effective projects, programs, and workshops that practically improve access to essential services and enhance the well-being of the Eritrean society in Manitoba.
6. To motivate and inspire members in pursuing their ambitions in fully participating and positively contributing towards the prosperity of our wider Winnipeg community and The Canadian society in general.
7. As Eritrean-Canadians with dual citizenship, the community shall have a cooperative and working relationship with any Eritrean Government representative and service providers in Canada; or any Organizations that work for the wellbeing and collective representation of our people at all level.
8. As responsible citizens, strive to be good ambassadors in fostering a good relationship between both Canadian and Eritrean societies.

Objectives

The objectives of the community shall be:

1. To bring together all Eritreans residing in Manitoba, regardless of their creed, political beliefs, sex or age, into a framework of mutual cooperation in solving common problems through a concerted effort participating in social occasions, as well as sharing each-other's dreams in good and in bad times such as wedding, bereavement, sickness, etc.
2. To teach and promote traditional arts and skills; and preserve the cultural heritage of Eritreans by maintaining strong link with country of origin and its representatives in Canada.
3. To promote a greater understanding and identification among children of the Eritrean Community with their cultural and linguistic heritage; and develop a sense of duty for both their adopted and native country of origin
4. To facilitate and assist Eritrean newcomers in getting the social services available in Manitoba and in Canada in general.
5. To organize and coordinate programs and workshops that would enhance the well-being of the Eritrean society in Manitoba
6. To encourage all Eritreans to participate in physical fitness , sport activities, and engage in socio-cultural activities with other communities in Manitoba to promote friendship.
7. To promote a network and cooperative working relationship with other groups and organizations that have similar objectives in North America in dealing with youth at risk of the inner city and new immigrants' integration process.
8. To promote harmony and unity, friendliness, brotherhood and sisterhood among Eritreans in Manitoba.
9. To provide assistance to our community members with Canadian and Eritrean government services within the capacity of the community and under The Canadian government laws. To ensure that



information, necessary documents, and forms/applications for services to our members are available at The Eritrean Community Centre.

10. To solicit relief assistance when the people of Eritrea are faced with natural disasters like famine, earthquake, epidemic etc. The community would take it upon itself to raise emergency aid from Eritreans, Canadians, and organizations that would be channeled to the affected people of Eritrea through appropriate means identified by Board of Directors according the Canadian laws.
11. To combat bigotry and racism whenever and wherever it may occur.

SECTION - IV FORMALITIES

1. The office of the community shall be in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
2. The community shall have a seal as stamped below.
3. The Logo and slogan of the community shall be as determined by the members.

SECTION - V MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to the general public who believe in the Mission, Vision, and Mandate of the community as well as willing to be abided by its bylaws and principles.

A) FULL MEMBER

A Full member is a person who has fulfilled the requirements of membership and abides by the community bylaws. He/she embraces the mission, vision, and mandate of the community. In addition, the person should be willing to actively participate in community activities.

B) ASSOCIATE MEMBER

The Executive Board Members in consultation with Council of Directors have the authority to grant an associate membership to non-Eritreans who are friends of Eritrean Community as long as he/she embraces the vision and mission of the community. An associate member is entitled to have the same rights and privileges as a full member as long as he/she fulfills the required obligations as a full member. An associate member eligible to vote, however, is not eligible to be elected as a board member

C) HONOURARY MEMBER

Honourary membership shall be granted to individuals who are recognized as having rendered outstanding intellectual, financial and/or moral contribution to the community. Honourary members are not entitled of any rights and privileges like a full member or an associate member.



1.1. REQUIRMENTS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

- A) Proof of Eritrean identity and evidence of residency in The Province of Manitoba.
- B) He/she has to be an adult (18 years of age and older) during the time of registration.
- C) Join individually on his/her free will by understanding the Mission, Objectives, and good spirit the community stands for and abides by its bylaws and principles. The individual should commit to the best interest of the community.
- D) To ensure its unity and solidarity spirit of the community, group membership is not allowed.
- E) Every person should apply individually and personally in his/her free will; there should be no third person /party representation.
- F) Has never participated in any defaming or damaging the reputation of the community or its elected board members.
- G) Has never involved in any harassment or disturbances at the community or its events.
- H) Has never involved or worked against the best interest of the people of our two home lands Eritrea and Canada.
- I) A person should be in a good standing and his/her membership application has to be approved by the board members

DEFINITION:

For the purpose of these By-laws, an Eritrean is:

- a person born from Eritrean parents in or outside of the land of Eritrea;
- a person whose father or mother is of Eritrean origin;
- the spouse of an Eritrean person;
- An individual who may not be an Eritrean from ethnic point of view, but who, because of his/her Eritrean up-bringing may have incorporated Eritrean culture and psychological make-up, and presently residing in Manitoba Canada.

D) MEMBERSHIP PROCESS:

Any Eritrean-Canadian who resides in Manitoba, on his/her free will and by understanding the objectives and good spirit the community stands for as outlined in section III of this By-Law, when requests a membership has to follow the proper membership process; namely:

- a. Has to fill out and submit an official registration form that could be found in our website.
- b. Make an appointment to attend in person and make known his/her intention to join the community by speaking to board member or representative of the community.
- c. The applicant should provide at least two pieces of ID for identification purposes. One piece of ID should be an official Canadian document e.g. Permanent Residence Card, MB Health Card, and an Eritrean identification document e.g. Eritrean ID or other legal document.
- d. Make a non refundable registration fee payment currently set at \$10; however, it is subject to amendment as the discretion of the board members.
- e. All registration forms must be reviewed and approved by the board members to ensure that all requirements of registration are met. The board decision should be communicated to the applicant in writing and reported to The Council of Directors.

E) MEMBERSHIP FEE:

In order to be a full member or an associate member, one has to pay an annual membership fee of \$120/yr/family. In one family, there could be only one person or multiple people. Manitoba Health Card will determine this. If a person is single, he/she would pay as one family. However, one membership fee would represent one count towards service privileges. Thus, a family has an option to have one count as a family by paying only \$120/yr for the whole family or may opt to have more than one count by paying the first person \$120/yr and each of the remaining family members who would like to have their own service privileges should pay \$60/yr. This will foster the family value of our community.

In appreciation of the contributions towards their fellow Eritreans, if a community member is a retired person, then he/she would pay senior discounted rate half of the full rate.

F) MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

- For accountability and administrative purposes, full members and associate members who have intention to renew their membership, they must make payments of their membership dues by the end of the community's set fiscal year - December 31th of every year.
- If an individual does not make annual membership fee payments for two consecutive years, the membership of the individual would be suspended.
- And if the suspended individual would like to renew his/her membership after two years of absence, the person should pay again a registration fee in order to renew his/her membership.



SECTION - VI MEMBERS OBLIGATION, RIGHTS AND PRIVELAGES

A) MEMBERS RIGHTS AND PRIVELAGES

1. A member who doesn't fulfill the annual payment of last year and the year before that he/she is not eligible to elect or be elected or get any membership benefits of any kind.
2. A member of a family who fulfils his/her annual payments and in good stand according the standards set in this bylaw is eligible to elect and be elected and could assign a *proxy*.

DEFINITION: A proxy is a person who is entitled to vote at the annual general meeting (AGM) on behalf of a member who has appointed him/her according the set rules of Proxy as indicated in sub section VI of this bylaw.

3. A full member or an associate member is entitled to elect and be elected in any subcommittee of the community as well as to hold a position in any programs of the community. However, an Associate member cannot hold the position of executive board member of the Community or of its programs.
4. Membership services shall commence three months post approval of the membership application by the board.
5. A full member or an associate member is entitled to participate in the Sponsorship Program of the Community in sponsoring his/her family and relatives to Manitoba according to the set rules and principles of the Sponsorship Program.
6. A full member or an associate member is entitled to participate in any community activities and programs for free or by paying only the special set membership fee in receiving any services.

B) MEMBERS OBLIGATIONS

To run an organization as large as a community it requires full participation and a lot of dedication of time, money, skills and efforts of all its members. Our community would exist and be strong only if all of us, as its members, volunteer and dedicate some of our time and combine our knowledge and effort for the well being of our community. Therefore, a full member or an associate member should:

- a. Make an extra effort to attend meetings and other community activities.
- b. Be willing to volunteer and participate in community programs and activities at least one day a month.
- c. If not able to volunteer one day a month, provide monetary or in kind contribution to the community.
- d. Make annual membership fee payments on time i.e. December 31 of every year

SECTION - VII RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Members are encouraged to attend meetings and other activities.
2. Members shall always address the chair when speaking at meetings.
3. The Community's letterhead, seal and stationary shall be used for Community purposes only.
4. For accountability purposes, the authority and administrative responsibility of the community shall be held by two executive bodies namely – The Board Members and The Council of Directors.
5. The Board Members and The Council of Directors should work in harmony in making sure the best interest of the community and its members are properly addressed in any circumstances. They have moral and legal obligation to serve the community members who bestowed their trust on them.
6. To be elected as a Board Member, one should be an active member for at least two consecutive years. In addition, he/she should have worked as a volunteer for the community at least for six months and be familiar with all of the community issues.
7. A Board Member or a Member of The Council of Directors who intends to resign shall give six weeks advance notice in writing to The Executive Board members, except in emergency situations.
8. The Executive Board Members have the authority to initiate new programs and services as well as to create ad hoc sub-committee as needed in consultation with The Board Members.
9. A Leader of any Eritrean Community Program has to be a registered member.
10. Priority of employment to any Eritrean community programs should be given to active members.
11. Allegations of misconduct by a member should be investigated by ad hoc committee elected from the general members and from The Council of Directors. This committee should report its findings to The Executive Board Members.

The ad hoc committee would look into matters:

- (a) Activity contrary to The Eritrean Community mission and vision.
- (b) Assertions of unethical dealings
- (c) Activities denigrating Eritreans
- (d) Activities denigrating and damaging the reputation of The Eritrean Community
- (e) Refusing to adhere to the bylaws and the resolutions of the general meetings

None- member employee of The Eritrean Community are not subject to the above ad hoc Committee investigations.



The ad hoc committee may recommend and suggest to The Board the following actions

- a) Issuance of a written warning
 - b) Reprimand
 - c) Suspension of membership rights up to twelve months
 - d) Declaring the member unworthy of membership and expulsion from the community
12. The fiscal year of the Community shall be from January 1st to December 31.
13. Budget - The Executive Board Members shall present in writing a full budget report for the year at the general meeting.
14. Limit on indebtedness - The Board Members in consultation with The Council of Directors are empowered to borrow without the approval of the general membership provided that the total indebtedness at any particular time does not exceed one thousand dollars (**\$1000.00**)
15. All income and property of the community shall be used for the promotion, development and growth of the community only.
16. No income or property of the community shall be used for the personal benefit of any individual community member.

SECTION -VIII ANNUAL MEETING

1. An annual general meeting shall be held on any day after March 15 and before April 15 of every year as Board members may decide.
2. Notice and agenda of the meeting shall be distributed at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
3. Every two years a new Board should be elected.
4. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless **50%** or more of the members are present (including proxies) at the time when the meeting proceeds to business. In an event where a quorum does not exist for any meeting, the presiding officer shall have the power to adjourn the meeting and fix a new date for a next meeting.
5. An emergency general meeting shall be called if **30%** or more full members petition the Board members to do so.
6. An additional general meeting could be called if four or more of the Board members believe that there is a real need.
7. Due to unforeseen circumstances, if The Board dissolves, then The Council of Directors shall have the authority to call a general meeting and elect new board members.

8. Any observer, who would like to attend a general community meeting, should notify the Executive Secretary at least ten days before the date.

SECTION - IX AUTHORITY AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The authority and administrative responsibility of the community shall be held by two bodies namely – The Board Members and The Council of Directors.

1. THE BOARD MEMBERS

1. The number of The Board Members shall be 7 and 3 reserves.
2. The term of office of the Board Members shall be two (2) years.
3. A Board member can be re-elected several times.
4. A Board member who does not fulfill his/her responsibilities satisfactorily may be removed from office with a consultation of Council of Directors and should be reported to the members during a general meeting.
5. If a vacancy occurs on the Board for any reason, the reserve member who had the highest number of votes fills the vacancy.
6. At the end of the term, the Board should formally submit all documents, and financial records and assets belonging to the community to their successors.
7. The Board Members may form committees from the general members as needed.

2. THE COUNCIL OF DIRECTORS

A) ELECTION/APPOINTMENT

- a) The Council of Directors shall consist of all the Directors or Program Leaders of the Eritrean Community Programs and associations.
- b) Program leaders are appointed by the board members based on their qualifications to run each program. Community association leaders are elected by members of their association.
- c) The number of The Council of Directors should be determined by the number of community programs (eg. Eritrean Language and Culture Heritage School, After School Program, Sponsorship Program, and BeAlat Shimagle) and community associations (eg. Eritrean Women's association, Youth Program).

d) The Council of Directors should be an active member of The Eritrean Community. If the elected community association or program leader is not an active member of The Eritrean Community, then an alternate active member from the program can be appointed.

e) A Board Member shall not be a member of The Council of Directors or the vice versa.



B) RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

a) The Council of Directors shall act as an advisory body to Board Members.

b) The Council of Directors should oversee the performance of Board Members in carrying out their mandate.

c) If any concern arises, The Council of Directors should directly discuss the matter with The Executive Board and resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, The Executive board should call a general meeting.

d) If the board members ceased to function as board, then The Council of Directors has the authority to call a general meeting.

e) The Council of Directors on the recommendation of the elected board members has the authority to impose penalties (financial or non financial) or suspend membership for a period of time or expel any member whose general behaviour is found to be detrimental to the Community's reputation or contrary to community bylaws.

SECTION – X VOTING AND ELECTIONS PROCEDURE

1. To be eligible to vote, a person must be:

- (a) a full member or an associate member for at least six months
- (b) eighteen (18) years of age or over, and
- (c) not in arrears of dues.
- (d)

2. To be elected as a board member, one must fulfill the following criteria:

- (a) a full member as defined in this bylaws,
- (b) be an active member for at least three consecutive years,
- (c) volunteered in the community for at least one year ,
- (d) willing to abide by and uphold the terms of this bylaws,
- (e) not suspended or disciplined by the Community and not have been convicted for an indictable offence.

3. Nominations for election to the Board Member are to be done at the annual general meeting and each nomination must be seconded.

4. Voting at elections shall be by secret ballot, and each member shall have one vote.

5. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority.
6. To exercise voting by proxy right, one has to comply with the following Proxy voting rules and regulation:
 - a. The Proxy has to be in writing
 - b. Should provide a notice and get approval of the board members 24 hours before the general meeting start time.
 - c. There are two types of proxies – general authority & specific authority. If specific authorities are required then the proxy appointment must specify which resolutions are required.
 - d. The appointed person has to fill out Proxy Voting Form before the meeting begins.
 - e. The appointed person shall only act on the specific instruction of the person appointed him/her.
 - f. One person can act as a proxy only for up to three people.
7. Number of the proxy voters can be included in the required 50% in determining the quorum.
8. An election committee shall be elected to oversee and conduct the election process of new Board members.
9. In a tie vote situation, the Chairperson shall cast a tie-breaking vote.

SECTION - XI DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE

A. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The number of the Executive Committee shall be five (5).

1. THE PRESIDENT:

- (a) shall be the chief executive officer of the community
- (b) shall convene and preside over annual, executive and board meeting;
- (c) countersigns all payments of the community with the Treasurer and executive any, all indicia of obligation including bonds and mortgages
- (d) establishes liaison with other organizations, institutions and individuals for the purpose of sharing information and establishing mutual links
- (e) in collaboration with the Vice President shall oversee public relations, community website, and any publications
- (f) performs other duties as identified by the Board Members.



2. THE VICE PRESIDENT:

- (a) In the absence of the president the vice president shall temporarily have and exercise all powers, rights and duties of the president.
- (b) Works in coordination with the president and the secretary
- (c) prepares written materials that demonstrate the development and activities of the community
- (d) in collaboration with The President shall oversee public relations, community website, and any publications
- (e) responsible for media monitoring and press releases
- (f) undertakes publicity campaigns to advance the goals and objectives of the community
- (g) perform other duties as identified by the Executive Committee.

3. THE SECRETARY:

- (a) The secretary shall assist the president in carrying out his/her duties. In the absence of the president and vice president the secretary shall temporarily have and exercise all powers, rights and duties of the president
- (b) takes, keeps and distributes minutes of all meetings.
- (c) prepares and presents a report at the general annual meeting.
- (d) prepares notices and oversees the correspondence of the community as directed by executive committee
- (e) registers new members, keep and maintain an up-to-date membership records
- (a) perform any other clerical duties as identified by the Executive Committee.

4. THE TREASURER;

- (a) becomes the custodian of all funds as well as property of the community.
- (b) collect and receive membership dues and contribution and all monies belonging to the Community, and issues receipts.
- (c) makes disbursements as authorized by the Executive Committee
- (a) keeps accurate records of all financial transactions
- (b) prepares and presents an itemized statements of receipts and disbursement to all Board and annual meetings and upon request, to the Executive Committee
- (c) submits books and financial statements for audit at the end of the fiscal year and/or on request of the Executive Committee
- (d) submit audited financial statements to Board Members prior to the annual general meeting
- (e) perform other duties as identified by the Executive Committee
- (f) Chairs any financial sub committees related to community activities

5. THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

- (a) shall be in charge of all social events
- (b) organizes and coordinates any community related social events (cultural, educational, sports etc)
- (c) arranges facilities for social events
- (d) oversees any social related sub-committees

The remaining board members could be assigned with community related duties as deemed necessary by the board members.

A GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS:

1. In addition to their specific duties, the members of the Executive Committee are jointly and collectively responsible for all of the duties and actions of the community
2. Any Executive Officer may be removed from his/her executive responsibilities for failure to perform assigned duties upon a resolution adopted by 2/3rd vote of the Board Members and replaced by one of the existing board members. However, he/she could remain as a Board member. The newly elected executive committee member shall hold office until the next annual general meeting.
3. All community related press releases should be approved by majority of the board members.

SECTION - XII MEETINGS

1. The Board Members shall formally meet 12 times a year. The Board Members may convene at any time if 3 or more of its members request for an urgent meeting.
2. The president shall cast only a tie-breaking vote at Executive, or Board meetings if such a situation presents itself.
3. The Council of Directors shall formally meet 4 times a year. The Council of Directors may convene at any time if 3 or more of its members seek an urgent meeting.
4. Annual general meetings should be conducted between March 15 and April 15 of every year.

SECTION - XIII AUDITOR

At the annual general meeting every second year three Auditors shall be elected for the following two years. The Treasurer, by February 15 shall deliver to the Auditors the books of the community together with financial statements for the fiscal year ending 31st of December. The Auditors shall examine into the financial condition of the Community, prepare a balance sheet, and report therein. Such balance sheet and report shall be delivered to the Treasurer by the Auditors within 30 days after receiving the books and statements, and the same shall be read or distributed at the annual general meeting.

SECTION - XIV REMUNERATION

No Executive Officer, Board member or any member of the community as such, shall not receive any remuneration for services rendered to the community, or for attendance in regular or extraordinary meetings, or any other reason, unless under special conditions, the community decides to do so by a majority vote of the Board Members.

SECTION - XV INDEMNITY

Any Board member or Executive Officer of the community shall be indemnified out of the funds of the community against all costs, charges and expenses reasonably incurred by him/her in respect of any civil, criminal or administrative action or proceeding to which she/he is made a part by reason of being or having been a Board or Executive member, if:

- (a) she/he acted honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interest of the community; and
- (b) in the case of a criminal or administrative action or proceeding that is enforced by a monetary penalty, she/he had reasonable ground.

SECTION - XVI AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAW

1. To amend these bylaws, The Executive Board Members shall circulate the proposed amendment to all members not less than seven (7) days before the date of the regular or emergency general meeting at which the amendment is to be considered.
2. A point specific amendment to these bylaws could also be requested by any full member at a general meeting to address only to the specific point.
3. The proposed amendment shall be discussed and then voted upon at the general meeting.
4. Fifty percent (50%) of members who are eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum (including proxies) to amend the constitution.
5. For the amendment to pass, it shall require the approval of majority of the members present at the meeting (including proxies).

SECTION - XVII DISSOLUTION

If for whatever reasons the community is dissolved its property shall be given to any humanitarian organizations working for any good cause in Eritrea. The Board Members in consultation with The Council of Directors have the authority to decide as to which organization the property of the community should be given.



