



THE CONSTITUTION OF ASSOCIATION OF NDI IGBO IN TALLAHASSEE (ANIT) FLORIDA, INC.

P. O. BOX 12402, TALLAHASSEE FL. 32317

PREAMBLE

We, Ndi Igbo, residing in Tallahassee, Florida, United States of America in our effort to unite Ndi Igbo, to promote traditions and culture, to provide a community environment, that will enable Ndi Igbo in Tallahassee to advance intellectually, socially, and economically, do hereby resolve to constitute ourselves into the Association of Ndi Igbo in Tallahassee (ANIT).

ARTICLE 1 – BINDING FORCE

This constitution and its provisions herein, shall have a binding force on all members and officers of the Association.

ARTICLE 2 – NAME

The Association shall be known as the Association of Ndi Igbo in Tallahassee (ANIT) Florida, Inc.

ARTICLE 3 – MOTTO

Our motto shall be “UNITY AND PROGRESS” (Idi n’otu na Oganihu)

ARTICLE 4 – OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Association are:

- (a) To promote togetherness and cultural awareness among Ndi Igbo in Tallahassee.
- (b) To foster good relationships between us and other Igbo communities elsewhere.
- (c) To promote civic responsibilities and awareness among members of our community
- (d) To promote economic and community development in Igbo land.

ARTICLE 5 – MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to all persons of Igbo by birth, marriage, naturalization, adoption, and their families. New members shall complete membership application which shall be reviewed by the Membership Review Committee, with the final decision by the general house and considering the individual's alignment with the organization's principles, ethics, and conduct. To vote on Association deliberations, a member must be in good financial standing.

ARTICLE 6 -- CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

6.1 FINACIAL MEMBER:

A financial member when used in this constitution shall be any member who is eligible, active, and has paid by the relevant due date the membership dues and all other levies owed to the association.

6.2 HONORARY MEMBER:

The title "Honorary" shall be conferred upon a non-Igbo person who has shown interest or aspiration and whose service to the Association or Igbo at large deserves commendation. With the consent and recommendation of the Executive committee, and with the approval of two thirds (2/3) of the general house (of Active members present and voting)

6.3 NON-FINACIAL MEMBERS:

Any member who fails to attend meetings for two (2) times in a year (not consecutively), shall be entitled to half (50%) of his/her benefits for that fiscal year in addition to any fines that shall be levied during his/her absence.

A member shall be inactive if he/she fails to attend meetings for two (2) not consecutive meetings. Such members may re-activate their membership if they so wish, on payment of all outstanding dues and, fines and levy in full and not in part.

6.4 REVOCATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

A member's membership shall be if he/she found wanting in the following provisions:

Fails to attend meetings for two (not consecutive) times.

Fails to pay his/her annual dues.

Fails to abide by the Constitution

Refuses to honor other financial responsibilities such as levies and fines.

Fighting (verbal violence, physical altercations, threats, etc.) with another member(s) during

meetings

The Association shall suspend such member(s), and a fine imposed on such member(s) by the General Assembly after he/she is given a hearing and found guilty of misconduct. A member could be reinstated when he/she complies with the decisions and fines imposed by the Association for this misconduct.

ARTICLE 7 - STRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATION

7.1 Officers of the Association

The officers of the Association shall include a President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Web Master, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Publicity Secretary, Provost, Youth Activity Coordinator, and Social Secretary.

7.2 The Standing Committees

The Standing Committees of the Association shall include:

- (a) Cultural and Welfare Committee
- (b) Membership Review Committee
- (c) Finance and Economic Development Committee
- (d) Audit Committee
- (e) Disciplinary Committee

ARTICLE 8 - DUTIES & POWERS OF THE COMMITTEES

8.1 Cultural and Welfare Committee

The Association shall implement the following welfare programs:

- (a) Support members in times of need as stipulated in Article 13 (1) (b) i, ii and 13 (2)
- (b) Promote the health and well-being of members.
- (c) Foster a sense of community and mutual support.
- (d) Emergency Assistance Fund: Financial assistance for members facing emergencies or hardships after due evaluation by the Welfare Committee and approval by the Executives
- (e) Health and Wellness Initiatives: Programs promoting physical and mental health.
- (f) Career Support: Networking and professional development opportunities.
- (j) Bereavement Support: Support for members (spouse, children, and biological parents) during times of loss.

(h) Other Celebration Support

8.2 Membership Review Committee:

(a) The committee shall recruit and retain members. Contact any new Igbo resident (s) in Tallahassee or surrounding cities and introduce them to ANIT.

(b) The committee shall use any approved media (emails, flyers, instant messages, phone calls, etc.) to increase membership of ANIT.

(c) The committee shall review all applications for membership and recommend to the general house for voting.

8.3 Finance and Economic Development Committee:

The primary responsibilities of ANIT finance and economic development Committee include:

(a) Providing short- and long-term financial oversight for ANIT.

(b)) Be responsible for evaluating any potential development, providing its pros and cons, and developing recommendations to the executive committee.

8.4 Audit Committee

Objectives:

The primary objective of the audit committee is to assist the President in its oversight to safeguard the organization's financial integrity, to accept responsibility for the annual external audit and to liaise with the Association's auditor so that members of the association can be satisfied with the performance of the Association in managing its financial affairs.

The audit committee will ensure openness in the Association's financial reporting and will ensure the effective and efficient management of the Association's financial accounting systems and compliance with rules and regulations.

(a) The enhancement of the credibility and objectivity of internal financial reporting

(b) Assessing internal controls over financial reporting, especially donations, travel and entertainment, professional fees, compensation, and proper documentation

- (c) Reviewing annual information returns, such as Form 990 – Return of organization Exempt from Income tax
- (d) The coordination of the internal audit function with the external auditor
- (e) The provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal auditors, the general house.
- (f) Outline the Association's internal audit requirements and recommend a course of action that ensures that any internal audit processes adopted are appropriate, accountable and transparent.
- (g) The audit committee is responsible for the oversight of the integrity of the association's financial statements, the performance of the association's internal audit function, and the association's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- (h) Submit quarterly and/or annual audit committee reports to the general house to provide insight into the organization's financial reporting, specifically the audit process, internal controls and assurances.

The Audit Committee shall have the authority to call for the comments of the auditors about internal control systems, the scope of audit, including the observations of the auditors, and review of financial statement before their submission to the general house.

Powers:

- (a) The audit committee shall report to the general house as stipulated in Article 10 of the constitution and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters relevant to its term of reference.
- (b) The committee does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions in areas over which the President has responsibility and does not have any delegated financial responsibility.
- (c) The committee does not have any management functions and cannot involve itself in management processes or procedures.

Membership:

The committee will consist of 3 members appointed by the general house.
All members shall have full voting rights.

8.5 Disciplinary Committee:

(a) The committee shall review the membership of a member who fails to attend meetings for two (2) times (not consecutively) in a year. This member shall pay a fine of \$25. Therefore, attendance should always be taken by the secretary

(b) The committee shall have the powers to recommend to the general house disciplinary action including revocation of membership of any member who becomes disruptive, disorderly during meetings or failed to abide by the constitution as stipulated in Article 15 "Discipline".

(c) The committee shall have the powers to reconsider membership of a members who was previously revoked. Such recommendation shall be voted in the general house, and the member shall re-register and pay all dues and fines due at the time of re-registration.

ARTICLE 9- MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Membership of the Executive Committee shall consist of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Web Master, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Publicity Secretary, Provost, Youth Activity Coordinator Ex-officio members, and Chairpersons of the standing committees.

9.1 Duration of Office

Each Member of the Executive Committee shall serve for a period of 2 years.

9.2 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- (a) Serve as officers of the Association.
- (b) Shall be responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the Association.
- (c) Shall execute the policies of the Association.
- (d) Shall represent the views of the Association.
- (e) Shall give a semi-annual account of its activities to the General Membership of the Association during the first and third quarterly meetings of each year.
- (f) Shall exercise any other authority as approved by the General Membership of the Association.

ARTICLE 10 - DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

10.1 President

The President shall:

- (a) Be the chief executive officer (**CEO**) and spokesperson of the Association.
- (b) Supervise and control all operations of the organization **in consultation with the *Executive Committee and the General Membership of the Association.***
- (c) Summon executive meetings, and emergency meetings in consultation with a majority of the ***Executive Committee Members.***
- (d) Preside over all meetings of the Executive Committee.
- (e) **In consultation with the Executive Committee, appoint a member to serve on the Executive Committee until the next Quarterly meeting when elections will be held.**
- (f) Cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie at the Executive Committee Meetings.
- (g) Be responsible for major policy recommendations for the administration of the organization.
- (h) President shall, in consultation with the Executive Committee, make determinations on behalf of the Association.
- (i) Perform all duties as may be prescribed by the General Membership from time to time.
- (j) **Help develop and manage operating budget, monitoring monthly or quarterly financial statements, ensuring ANIT cash reserves and investment for long term success.**

10.2 Vice President

The Vice-President shall:

- (a) Assist the President in his/her duties and shall deputize for the President during the President's absence or when delegated to do so by the president.
- (b) Shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of the president when acting in that capacity.

10.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- (a) **Be responsible for the proper upkeep of all the Association's records.**
- (b) **Record minutes of all meetings**
- (c) **Provide copies of minutes to registered members for review**
- (d) **Send out notices of meetings no later than 30 days prior to next meeting date. In event of emergency meeting, a shorter notice shall be sent shorter than stated above.**
- (e) **File annual report with the Florida Department of State**
- (f) **Perform all other duties that may be assigned by the President from time to time.**

10.4 Assistant Secretary

The Assistant Secretary shall:

- (a) Assist the Secretary in his/ her duties and shall deputize for the Secretary during his/her absence or when delegated to do so.

10.5 Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall:

- (a) Receive and issue receipts for **all** funds collected on **behalf** of the organization and shall ensure that all the collected funds **are handed over to** the treasurer when collected.
- (b) Be responsible for giving accurate accounts of the organization's financial transactions with accurate documentation and shall be responsible for keeping the required books of accounts for the Association.
- (c) Present a report of the Association's finances during the first meeting of each year.
- (d) Present the financial reports at the quarterly meeting**
- (e) File annual Tax returns with the appropriate tax authority.**

10.6 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- (a) Receive and issue receipts to the Financial Secretary for all monies received on behalf of the Association and shall deposit the same into the Association's bank account in the name of the Association within five working days of receipt.
- (b) Be responsible for the custody of the Association's banking documents and receipts.

10.7 Social Secretary:

The Social Secretary shall:

- (a) Be responsible for coordinating all ANIT events, ensuring that adequate arrangement is made to entertain members and guests. Liaise with members hosting quarterly meetings and ANIT women to ensure adequate preparation is made for food and other entertainments.

10.8 Youth Activity Coordinator:

The Youth Activity Coordinator shall:

- (a) Shall decide which community centers, vacation resorts, and other places of interest for the Association's fun activities.
- (b) The youth activity coordinator shall submit to the executive committee for

approval, a plan of annual fun events, including but not limited to a summer picnic.

10.9 The Web Master:

The Webmaster shall:

- (a) Shall be responsible for maintaining the Association's website and any other social media.

10.10 Publicity Secretary:

The Publicity Secretary shall:

- (a) Be responsible for the publication of ANIT affairs and obtaining contacts.
- (b) Work with the Executive Committee or other committees to disseminate ANIT information to the mass media.
- (c) Be responsible for distributing ANIT publications to member organizations and at-large members.
- (d) Be Custodian of ANIT information and public records as seen fit by the Executive Committee.
- (e) Perform any other duties that the President may assign in line with the goals of the ANIT in compliance with relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

10.11 Provost:

The provost shall:

- (a) As a time keeper, maintain order, and enforce penalties as stated in the constitution during all ANIT meetings.

ARTICLE 11 - ORDER OF SUCCESSION

11.1 Election of Officers:

- (a) The executive committee shall appoint an ad hoc electoral committee of 3 prior to the day of the election.
- (b) A candidate for an office may be nominated by another member or volunteer for her or his candidacy.
- (c) All candidates shall make their candidacy known to the electoral officer any time prior to the start of the meeting at which elections will be held. All candidates must be in good financial standing.
- (d) A candidate may present a manifesto or statement of candidacy, advocating program(s) which are in concert with the objectives of the Association.
- (e) All elections must be conducted in person. All members must be present to vote,

and all candidates must be physically present to be voted for.

- (f) Election to the offices shall be by a secret balloting and the contestant with the most votes cast for an office wins that position.

11.2 Bye-Elections:

If an executive committee position becomes vacant, the President will appoint person(s) to fill the position(s) until an election is held the election of the officers shall be held no later than six months. In the event the President vacates her or his office for any reason, the Vice-President shall become the acting President until a new president is elected no later than six months. An Ad hoc electoral committee of 3 shall be appointed by the executive committee for the role of vetting the candidates for election.

11.3 Handover:

When there is a change of administration, the handover of the documents and properties of the Association shall be done as soon as possible and not later than three months.

ARTICLE 12 – AUDITORS

The general house shall nominate, subject to the approval of the general body, three persons to serve as auditors/members of the audit committee of the Association. Neither of these persons will be signatories to the Association's account. No member who has served as Treasurer or Financial Secretary in the last twenty-four months shall be appointed Auditor. Auditors shall be independent of the Executive Committee, shall serve for a renewable term of one year, shall audit all accounts of the Association, and shall submit interim as well as annual audit reports to the General House.

ARTICLE 13 – FINANCE

The finances of the Association shall be drawn from registration, quarterly dues, fundraising activities or solicitation, donations, bequeaths, and other legal sources.

13.1 Registrations

Each member of the Association shall register with a one-time registration fee of \$50.00 (Fifty Dollars). Student members shall register with \$25.00 (Twenty-five dollars).

13.2 Quarterly Dues

Members shall be assessed quarterly dues of \$35 (Thirty-five) per member and \$10.00 for a student member. Student dues may be temporarily waived by a vote of a simple majority of the general house.

13.3 Banking and Disbursement of Funds

The Association shall maintain a bank account in a local bank in Tallahassee. All funds of the Association shall be deposited within five business days of receipt to the credit of the Association. All expenditures must be approved by the General House, in cases of emergencies; the President may use his/her discretion in consultation with the Executive Committee to apply contingency funds. The Association shall have **only one account, the "Contingency Fund account"**.

13.4 Contingency Fund

The Association shall have a contingency fund of \$300.00. In cases of emergency, the President in consultation with the Executive Committee shall use his/her discretion to apply such funds.

ARTICLE 14 - FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND BENEFICIARIES

14.1 Death

- (a) Death of a member: ANIT will organize and implement a wake worth a minimum of \$1,000 for the deceased. Alternatively, if the family prefers not to have a wake due to circumstances to be reviewed by the Executive committee, ANIT will pay a condolence visit to the bereaved family with a purse of \$1000 (One thousand Dollars). ***ANIT will put equal effort on privileges and benefits to its financially up to date members.***

\$50 compulsory levy per member shall levied. Members who wish to donate more to assist the bereaved family are encouraged to do so. The Association may accept donations from non-members towards the wake-keeping and funeral. ANIT shall present any leftover money to the bereaved family.

- (b) Death of an immediate family member

- i. ~~FATHER, MOTHER, AND CHILDREN~~: The welfare committee will pay a condolence visit with a donation of \$200 and a sympathy card
 - ii. SIBLING: The welfare committee will pay a condolence visit with a donation amount of \$100 and with a sympathy card. ***This is in addition to any other voluntary contributions from the members.***

14.2 Naming Ceremony/Childbirth, Wedding, Natural Disaster, and Hospitalization of a Member

If ANIT is invited as a group, the organization will give a donation of **\$100 (one hundred Dollars)** for childbirth and **\$150 (One hundred and fifty Dollars)** for wedding. If a member is hospitalized, ANIT cultural and welfare committee will visit with a card only.

In the event of a natural disaster damaging a member's primary home, ANIT cultural and welfare committee will visit \$200 (two hundred dollars).

Upon the announcement of a ceremony of an active member, active participation, support, and assistance by all members shall be encouraged and extended to members performing ceremonies such as wedding, naming ceremony, graduation etc.

14.3 Charity Events

ANIT will actively engage in charity events around Tallahassee community and Igbo Land.

14.4 Awards and Recognitions

Upon approval by a majority of the general house, ANIT may, with a plaque or certificate acknowledge and recognize, any individual living or posthumously, or an organization in appreciation for their contribution towards the growth and progress of ANIT.

14.5 Mandatory Hosting of Meetings

The hosting of ANIT quarterly meetings shall be rotated amongst members or group of members. If a member/group of members cannot host the meeting in their residence, it shall be the responsibility of that member/group to secure a place of their choice to host ANIT or pay \$300 to ANIT to secure a suitable venue.

*Students shall be exempt from this mandate but can volunteer to host.

14.6 End of the Year Party

Every member shall contribute a levy of \$50.00 (fifty dollars) towards the annual end of the year party. Students are exempted.

ARTICLE 15 - MEETING PROCESSES

- (a) Decisions of the general house, the executive committee and any task forces and sub-committees of the Association shall be reached by a **simple majority** vote of members present, except when two-thirds majority votes are specifically required in the articles of this constitution. In all deliberations requiring a vote, voting shall be by **secret ballot**.
- (b) **The** executive committee may invite a non-member of the Association to attend its meeting for the purpose of making presentations on matters of interest to the membership.
- (c) In all procedural matters not covered by this constitution, this Association shall be governed by the Common Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Procedure. A speaker must be recognized by the President before he or she speaks. The speech shall be addressed to the President.

- (d) A speaker shall speak without recognition from the President only if he or she is doing so on "point of order", "point of information", or registering an objection. Any such interjection shall be addressed to the President who shall either sustain or overrule.

ARTICLE 16 - DISCIPLINE

- (a) All members shall be of good conduct and decorum during meetings.
- (b) Disruptive behaviors during meetings shall not be tolerated.
- (c) ANIT members shall be good representation of the organization's mission and goal both during and after meetings.
- (d) Any member found to be disruptive and or exhibits disorderly conduct during meetings shall be called to order by the president, referred to the disciplinary committee for reprimand which may include dismissal.
- (e) Any member found to have embezzled the Association's funds should be prosecuted in the court of law, if all efforts to retrieve the funds or settle the matter amicably fail.
- (f) The Association does not condone criminal behavior or activity. If any member is convicted of the following crimes, the Association will neither call nor visit such member(s): Theft, Burglary, Rape, Murder, Drug related offences etc. Members are always urged to be law abiding.
- (g) Any minor misconduct (for example noise making or deliberately interrupting any member who has the floor to speak) will be fined \$10.00 (ten dollars).
- (h) Any major misconduct such as using abusive words, fighting words, etc. will attract a fine of not more than \$50.00 (fifty) dollars.
- (i) Since it is practically impossible to list all forms of misconduct or disorderly behavior, fines for some misconduct may necessitate deliberation by members of the disciplinary committee. The committee shall determine which misconduct requires a hearing and proceed to do so, and then inform the general house of the member's guilt or innocence before a fine could be imposed in the general house.

ARTICLE 17 - INVESTMENTS

The General House may approve a secured investment either in the Financial Market, bonds, securities, estates, or any other investments as may be deemed necessary when funds are available. The yield from the investments shall be used to support the Association's benevolence activities.

ARTICLE 18 - TAX EXEMPT STATUS

The Association shall maintain the status of a Tax-Exempt Organization and as such shall not do any of the following:

- (a) Lend any part of its income or principal without the receipt of adequate security and a reasonable rate of interest
- (b) Pay any compensation more than a reasonable allowance for salaries or other compensation for personal services rendered to the Association for one or more of the purposes thereof.
- (c) Invest any amount accumulated out of the income in such manner as to jeopardize the carrying out of the purpose of the organization.
- (d) Do any other act which may constitute a violation of the tax-exempt requirements under the applicable Internal Revenue Acts.

ARTICLE 19 - FISCAL YEAR OF THE ASSOCIATION

The fiscal year of the Association shall begin at 12:00 a. in. on the first day of January and end at 11:59 p.m. of the last day of December of the same year.

ARTICLE 20 - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this constitution may be initiated by one or more members of the Association who are in good standing. Such proposed amendment must be initiated through a signed petition which must be submitted to the secretary of the Association no less than 30 days before the next meeting of the Association. A vote of "yes" by two-thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting shall be required for adoption. The amendments adopted shall become effective from the date of the next meeting.

This constitution is amended by members of the constitution review committee and adopted on September 14, 2024.