

Greater Richmond Telugu Association

CONSTITUTION (Bylaws)

PREAMBLE

Whereas the need exists for cohesive action on the part of the people of Telugu origin residing in Greater Richmond area of State of Virginia, Greater Richmond Telugu Association (GRTA) was established and became a not-for-profit organization under IRS code, Section 501 (c) (3) to preserve and propagate the Telugu cultural heritage and maintain the identity of said group of people, to provide a forum for Telugu literary, cultural, educational, social, and charitable activities of its members. Since its founding, the constitution of GRTA has gone through several amendments over a period of time. The GRTA constitution was last amended in November 2021, to address the contemporary needs of the community.

Article I: TITLE

A not for profit organization has been formed and the name of the organization is Greater Richmond Telugu Association, hereinafter referred to as GRTA.

Article II: OBJECTIVES

- Preserve, maintain, and perpetuate the cultural heritage of the people of Telugu origin in Greater Richmond, state of Virginia and neighboring states.
- Assist, propagate and advance cultural, literary, educational, arts and community affairs of the people of Telugu origin in Greater Richmond, state of Virginia and neighboring states.
- Organize periodic Telugu literary meetings/gatherings to promote the local talent as well as to invite the distinguished Telugu scholars and artists to Richmond for close interaction with the people of Greater Richmond, state of Virginia and neighboring states.
- Collaborate with other organizations promoting Telugu literary, cultural, and educational activities.
- Raise, solicit, collect, and disburse funds, for cultural, educational, and charitable purposes either directly or in cooperation with other not-for-profit organizations in the U. S. and abroad.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

Persons aged 21 years or older, subscribing to the objectives of GRTA and willing to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of GRTA can become GRTA members as follows:

1. **Patron Member:** Patron Membership is for life, any person, family in good standing, GRTA annual member for 3 (Three) consecutive years shall be eligible to become a Patron Member of GRTA by submitting an application in the prescribed form with the appropriate dues. Membership is not transferable and membership dues are not refundable. The patron membership fee shall be \$250. Patron members shall have all basic privileges of GRTA membership including the right to contest and vote in GRTA elections.

2. **Annual Member:** Any person or family shall be eligible to become an annual member of GRTA by submitting an application in the prescribed manner with the appropriate dues. Membership is not transferable and membership dues are not refundable. The annual membership fee shall be \$25 for family and \$20 for single person. Family membership shall be defined as husband, wife and their children of 20 (twenty) years or less. Annual members shall enjoy all basic privileges of GRTA membership including the right to contest and vote in GRTA elections.
3. **Membership Term:** Membership terms for annual members are for one year (i.e., from January 1st to December 31st). A member in good standing in a calendar year is one who paid his/her dues before 6:00 P.M. on January 30th of that calendar year. A patron member is in good standing as soon as the payment of his/her dues is certified. (This section was amended in November 2021).
4. **Membership Dues:** The membership dues shall be recommended by the Executive Committee from time to time for the approval by simple majority of the general body. Any revision in the membership dues shall be made only once in a calendar year.
5. **Suspension of Membership:** Documented activities against the purposes of the organization as defined in Article II shall constitute grounds for suspension of membership. These allegations shall be communicated to the member by the Executive Committee in writing through registered mail. The alleged member shall then be entitled to a hearing by the Ad-hoc Committee on such charges. In order to be eligible for aforementioned, the alleged member should request Executive Committee in writing by certified mail to call Ad-hoc Committee for such hearing within sixty days from the receipt of above notification. Failure to respond within sixty days shall result in automatic suspension.
6. **Voting:** Each individual member in good standing shall have one vote. In case of Patron or Annual Family memberships, there shall be two votes, one for the head of the family and one for the spouse. In case of divorced or legally separated families, the voting rights shall remain with the original partners unless advised otherwise by them in writing with mutual consent.

Article IV: ORGANIZATION

GRTA organization shall be made up of the General Body and the Executive Committee.

1. General Body: The General Body shall determine the basic philosophy and policies of GRTA. It is empowered to elect, remove and impeach GRTA officers (except as provided in Article VI), amend bylaws, and revoke memberships.

Membership: General Body shall consist of all GRTA members in good standing, as defined in Article III.

Meetings: There shall be at least one general body meeting in each calendar year to elect the new officers. However the president shall call a general body meeting if 30% or more of the members of the Association sign a petition requesting such a meeting. The president shall also call a general body meeting if two-thirds of the Executive Committee requests for such a meeting. Four weeks written notice with the exact purpose and agenda needs to be included when such a special meeting is called.

A minimum of 30% of the members shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority vote shall carry the decisions. In the event there is no quorum at the general body meeting, a second general body meeting will be called after due notice. Members present at this second general body meeting shall constitute a quorum. The general body meeting shall be chaired by the Parliamentarian, who is appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee members attending a scheduled meeting. Parliamentarian must be a member in good standing or a patron member and not a member of the Executive Committee. Should the parliamentarian be absent to conduct the meeting due to extraordinary circumstances, president may preside over the meeting.

Parliamentary procedures: Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all meetings and procedures except where they are inconsistent with the GRTA Constitution or Bylaws.

2. Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall provide the leadership and execute the policies as approved by the General Body and directives provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. It shall set the amount of dues for various memberships. It shall have the authority to act for and on behalf of GRTA. No member of the Executive Committee, individually or jointly, shall borrow money for the association. The president and members of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for one another and shall be jointly responsible to the General Body.

Membership: The voting members of the Executive Committee shall consist of the *President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Cultural Coordinator*. The term of office for all of these positions shall be one year.

President: The President shall be the spokesperson for the association. The President shall be the coordinator of the Executive Committee and shall perform all duties pertaining to the office of the President. He/she shall preside all meetings of the GRTA Executive Committee and call all General Body meetings. He/she shall be an ex-officio of any of the meetings organized by any Coordinators (Cultural, Movie, Literary and Educational). He/she shall appoint all committees authorized by the bylaws with the approval of the Executive Committee. He/she presides over all GRTA functions. He/she may sign any contracts, deeds, documents, and other instruments on behalf of GRTA after satisfying the following conditions. First, the President MUST consult with all other Executive Committee members and obtain the majority approval to sign any contract of expenditure with less than \$2,000. Second, for any contract of expenditure with \$2,000 or more, the President MUST present it to the General Body and obtain its approval. The President and Treasurer shall be the only authorized persons to sign the checks individually up to \$500. Any check exceeding \$500 shall require the signatures of both President and Treasurer.

Vice President: The Vice President shall assist the President and fulfill his/her duties in his/her absence and when so acting shall have all the powers of the President. He/she shall perform such other duties as assigned by the President. The Vice President shall be responsible for fundraising activities and food services during the GRTA celebrations.

Secretary: The Secretary shall be the custodian of the Seal, Constitution, and Bylaws of the association. He/she shall issue call for meetings of the General Body, the Executive Committee at the directive of the president, assist the president in preparing the agenda before each meeting and prepare the minutes of the meetings. He/she shall perform the official correspondence of the association and all correspondence shall be done as specified in Article XII and through Technology Committee.

He/she shall maintain an updated list of all paid members. He/she shall be responsible for the maintenance of records, documents, accurate postal and email addresses, official correspondence of the organization, and reports of any Ad-hoc Committees. He/she shall be responsible to ensure that all reports, documents, and records are kept and filed as required by law. He/she shall be responsible for transferring all the records of GRTA to the incoming Secretary within five days after the end of his/her term.

Treasurer: The Treasurer and President shall be the only authorized persons to sign the checks individually up to \$500. Any check exceeding \$500 shall require the signatures of both Treasurer and President. He/she shall be responsible for issuing notice and collection of all dues and deposit the same in such banks or trusts as the Executive Committee may designate. He/she shall maintain an updated list of all paid members. He/she shall operate all accounts as per Article IX. He/she shall have custody of all accounts, receipts, and disbursements. He/she shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Executive Committee and provide this information to the General Body. He/she shall perform such other duties and exercise such other powers incident to the office of Treasurer by law. He/she shall file tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service for the year in office and provide appropriate records for financial audits. He/she shall transfer all records, documents, and accounts to the incoming Treasurer within five days after the end of his/her term.

Cultural Coordinator: The cultural coordinator shall be responsible for preparing guidelines, soliciting and approving cultural items with the consultation of executive committee, contacting and coordinating performers, preparing agenda for cultural events, organizing prize distributions, coordinating audio and stage management activities, and presenting cultural items to the audience. Although cultural coordinator serves as the lead person, the Executive Committee as a whole shall be responsible for the overall planning and implementing of any GRTA Events.

Meetings: The Executive Committee shall meet at least once in three months. The quorum shall be a majority of the membership. The GRTA Secretary, in consultation with the President, shall prepare the agenda. Agenda shall be limited to the objectives of GRTA, if three or more of the Executive Committee member's request in writing a special meeting of the Committee, the Secretary shall call for a special meeting scheduled to meet within two weeks of the written request. Special meeting agenda shall be limited to the topics mentioned in the written request. In case of any such special meetings, the secretary shall provide a minimum of seven days' notice to all Executive Committee members.

Article V: VACANCIES

The Executive Committee shall take appropriate action to fill any vacancies in the Executive Committee, no later than two months of such occurrence. Any such interim vacancies can be filled by seeking nominations from the membership in good standing and filled in by the Executive Committee if term of the current committee is at least for three months. Approval of the two-thirds of the serving Executive Committee members shall be required for any such appointment.

Article VI: TERMINATION

Any member of the Executive Committee, who fails to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without properly informing to the President, shall be terminated without prejudice. Any such vacancies shall be filled as stated in Article V.

Article VII: IMPEACHMENT/REMOVAL

Any member of the Executive Committee may be removed or impeached on the grounds incompetence, corruption, favoritism, extortion, or oppression in office, or gross misconduct in a special General Body meeting called for such purpose. Approval of two-third of the membership shall be required for such impeachment/removal.

Article VIII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 1 The officers of the Association shall be elected at the general body meeting of the members of the Association on or before Sankranti day celebration. This meeting shall be chaired by Parliamentarian, who shall be appointed by the President (as provided in Article IV). Parliamentarian must be a member in good standing and not a contestant or nominator of any contestant in the election or a member of the Executive Committee. Members in good standing shall be eligible to vote as stated in Article III.
- 2 A nominating committee consisting of three members, appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall seek and propose the candidates for election to all the offices. The nominating committee shall not include any member who is either contesting for any position or nominating/seconding any contestant for any position. Nominees for offices shall be members in good standing and must give their consent in writing at the time of the nomination. Nominations may also be made by any member in good standing of the Association by writing to the Nominating Committee before the due date. No one should contest for or serve in more than one position in one year. Nominations must be received and shall be closed two weeks before the election date at 6:00 P.M. The members, who propose or second a candidate for election, must be members in good standing. Nominations can be withdrawn TWO days before the election date by duly notifying the nominating committee in writing. The valid nominations, as certified by the Nominating committee, shall be published within 24 hours, after the expiration of the withdrawal date. The candidates can request for a list of members in good standing who can vote at the general body meeting and the executive committee must make such list available within 24 hours of request once the election date is confirmed. Nominating Committee can solicit floor nominations on the day of election only in the event no prior nominations are received for any of the positions.
- 3 The parliamentarian with the help of nominating committee shall be responsible for conducting the elections. To ensure fair election process, the voting shall be conducted by a secret balloting whenever there is a contest.

Article IX: GRТА FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

GRТА shall maintain separate funds for specific purposes. All financial records shall be maintained as required by IRS.

- a. ***General Operations Account:*** Annual membership fees, advertisement revenue, food revenue, movie collections, and miscellaneous income shall be deposited in the General Operations Account. The funds from this account alone should be used to organize events and incur any administrative and organizational expenses GRТА needed from time to time.

- b. **Endowment Account:** This account consists of all the funds received towards Patron Membership Fee and any other special income received. Also any surplus amount exceeding \$3,000 that is available in the General Fund account at the end of fiscal year shall be transferred into this account. The withdrawal of funds from this account to meet any general/operational expenses of GRTA requires the approval of general body. However, the Treasurer, with the approval of the GRTA executive committee, may invest these funds in a C.D. account from time to time to earn a higher interest than a regular bank account. The GRTA executive committee shall have the powers, only in case of emergencies, to withdraw any interest that is earned on this account, to meet GRTA operational expenses. Such amount shall not exceed \$500 and only one such withdrawal shall be permitted without the approval of the General Body.

GRTA, being a community organization, realizes that it has a responsibility to help and rise to the occasion when a tragedy strikes a family/person or community. On such occasions the Executive Committee has the power to raise funds to support such causes. All donations and special income derived through the special efforts shall be deposited in this account and such funds may be utilized for the cause in the manner that the Executive Committee agrees.

- c. **Audit of the accounts:** President, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall appoint a three- member audit committee and name one of them as chairperson of the committee to audit the accounts every fiscal year. Such committee shall be in place by the end of November of every fiscal year. Only GRTA members in good standing shall be eligible to participate in the committee. However, the audit committee shall be permitted to obtain any professional help from an accountant to complete the assigned task. The committee shall verify all the accounts operated by GRTA and submit a report to the Executive Committee by January 5th of the following year and Executive Committee must make the report available to all the membership during the Sankranti Event. (This section was amended in November 2021)

Article X: GRTA EVENTS / CELEBRATIONS

GRTA shall celebrate at least one festival in a calendar year: Ugadi. Any additional events may be celebrated if the majority of the Executive Committee members are in agreement.

Article XI: AD-HOC COMMITTEE

GRTA President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, is empowered to establish ad-hoc committees to accomplish such tasks and operations as to realize the objectives of the association, to investigate specific problems, procedures and matters of interest, and to make recommendations to the executive committee. In no event shall an ad-hoc committee, except for the audit committee to exist beyond the end of the term of the Executive Committee that establishes it.

Article XII: E-MAILS, WEBSITE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Realizing that technology has vital role to play in promoting organizational activities, GRTA shall establish a website, email list and Technology Committee. GRTA has sole proprietary rights to both the website and email list. No individual Executive Committee member owns any personal rights/ownership to these items. The Executive Committee shall maintain website and emails in a dignified manner.

No member of the Executive Committee shall use them for:

- (a) Personal glory;
- (b) Airing grievances and internal conflicts;
- (c) Accusations, badmouthing, profanity, insults, derogatory/demeaning remarks, etc.; or
- (d) Any other purposes that are detrimental to GRTA image and principles.

Technology Committee: Technology committee shall have GRTA president, GRTA secretary, and three other appointed members. The president, with the authorization of the Executive Committee, shall appoint three members with required knowledge and skills of technology in web designing and e-mail needs, and name one of the three persons as the chairperson of the Committee. The members shall be members of GRTA and shall not be the members of the Executive Committee. Other members of the Executive Committee or any GRTA members with conflict of interest with the Executive Committee shall not be eligible to serve on this committee.

The committee shall directly be responsible with all its functions to the Executive Committee. It shall help designing and maintaining the web site and processing emails for day-to-day operations. The content in website shall reflect only factual information pertaining to the values and objectives of GRTA.

It shall have an accurate list of email addresses, which shall be used to broadcast only the messages that promote the values and the objectives of the association as authorized by the president from time to time.

All the official correspondence from secretary or president shall be posted on the web or sent by email at their request. The committee shall recommend from time to time to the Executive Committee the methods to increase revenue and better communication through web site and emails. GRTA members may send any community messages to the GRTA President or Secretary and request them to post it.

Article XIII: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Generally when there is a difference of opinion among the members of the executive committee, the majority opinion shall be the binding. However, if a member perceives himself/herself to have been constantly harassed or deprived of his/her ability to serve the organization, the following procedure is to be adopted:

- a. When an executive committee member(s) could not resolve the differences within the committee, any member involved should make a written request to the President to form a three-member ad-hoc committee and name one of them as the chairperson for an appeal process within 10 days of receiving notice. All parties to the grievance shall submit in writing that they will abide by the recommendation of such committee. The accuser side and the accused side can each suggest one GRTA member in good standing but not a member of the Executive Committee to the president for inclusion in the ad-hoc committee. The third person shall be by the President with the authorization of those Executive Committee members, who are not parties to the grievance. If the president himself/herself is the subject of dispute, the Vice President should perform this function.
- b. The committee Chair shall then correspond with all the committee members involved and solicit all supporting documentation from each of them and distributes it to other committee members for review.

- c. The committee shall then meet to discuss the materials reviewed and initiate its deliberations. The committee, at this time, may choose to conduct interviews with one or more members involved, individually or combined, to gather additional relevant information.
- d. The committee shall prepare a complete report and submit it with its recommendations to the President, which shall be no later than 30 days from date of formation of the committee.
- e. President shall inform the committee's recommendation(s) to all parties involved and implement it within 24 hours of receiving the report.
- f. The committee's recommendation(s) on the issues involved shall be the binding agreement for the Executive Committee.

Article XIV: RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations shall conclusively bind GRTA and all persons acting for or on behalf of it:

1. No part of the net earnings of GRTA shall be distributed to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any member in furtherance of the objectives set forth herein.
2. No part of the activities of GRTA shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign including the publication or distribution of statements on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws, GRTA shall not carry on any activities not permitted by an organization:

- a. Exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law, or
- b. That can accept tax-deductible contributions under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.

Office holders of GRTA shall avoid conflicts of interest in carrying out their responsibilities.

Article XV: INDEMNITY

- The Executive Committee members shall not be held personally liable for any actions and decisions taken on behalf of the association.
- The GRTA members listing (mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number) shall be used for distribution of GRTA related information only.
- The GRTA members listing (mailing address, e-mail address and phone number), equipment, individual software, web pages developed during the year; photographs taken during the programs (performed by the professional artists), etc. are the association's property. No one

should sell, trade or exchange or utilize in any other manner for personal or third-party gains without obtaining the permission of the general body.

Article XVI: DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, the Executive Committee shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the association, dispose-off all the assets of the association exclusively for the purposes of the association in such manner, or to such association or associations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt association under section 501(c) (3) and 170 (C) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or Federal, State, or Local government for exclusive public purpose.

Article XVII: AMENDMENTS

- a. The constitution may be amended with the approval of the majority of the members (60 % or more) attended to general body meetings.
- b. The amendments and the time and place for the meeting shall be notified to all members at least 30 days in advance.
- c. All amendments shall be submitted in writing to the President to enable him/her to circulate 30 days in advance.
- d. Only those members present at meeting shall be eligible to vote.

Acknowledgement:

The present amended GRTA Constitution is proposed by executive committee on December 27th, 2020 in the General Body Meeting and presented for approval on November 28th, 2021 during General Body Meeting and approved by members at large.

General Body meeting attendees on December, 27th 2020: Mr. Jagan Nallaparaju, Mr. Kiran Darla, Mr. Ramarao Kottapalli, Mr. Prasad Nallapaneni, Mr. Sanjay Thirunagari, Mr. Swamy Boggarapu, Mr. Eswar, Mr .Venkat Dodda, Mr. Raghu Meka, Mr.Gowtham, Mr. Narayana Mara, Mr. Rajendar Molakalapalli, Mr. Venubabu Ravipudi, Mr. Rajendra Konduru, Mr. Suresh Rudraraju, Mr. Vinod Ravuru, Mr. Sankar Makineni, Mr.Raju Kocherlapati, Mr.Krishana Reddy Yenika and Mr. Vijay Vemuri.

General Body meeting attendees on November, 28th 2021- Mr. Srinivas Chintagunta, Mr. Jagan Nallaparaju, Mr.Kiran Darla, Mr.Seshi Bandlapalli, Mr.Rajendar Molakalapalli, Mr.Venubabu Ravipudi, Mr. Rajendra Konduru, Mr.Suresh Rudraraju, Mr.Sudhendra Ayyam, Mr.Vinod Ravuru, Mr.Vijay Vemuri,Mr.Sanakar Makineni and Mr.Krishna Reddy Yenika.

Signatures:

Name	Contact Info	Signature
Mr. Sankar Makineni (President)	809-365-2578	