



RICHMOND TAMIL SANGAM

A Non-Profit Socio-Cultural Organization

BYLAWS

(As of 10/14/2023)

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Definitions

Board Members	: President, Secretary, Treasurer
Executive Committee	: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assoc. Treasurer and Committee Directors
General Body	: Eligible voting members of the organization
Quorum	: Executive Committee meeting - Simple majority of Committee members General Body meeting - One-third of eligible voting members Including proxies
Term of Office	: Two consecutive calendar years
Fiscal Year	: Calendar year, January 1 to December 31

Article 1 - Name

- 1.1 The name of the organization shall be "Richmond Tamil Sangam", hereinafter called "Sangam".

Article 2 - Objectives

- 2.1 The Sangam shall be a non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c)(3), social, cultural and secular organization.
- 2.2 To provide support and resources to Tamil families residing in the Central Virginia area.
- 2.3 To offer assistance to new Tamil families relocating to the Central Virginia area.
- 2.4 To promote interaction and networking among Tamil families.
- 2.5 To increase the representation, engagement, and leadership of Tamil families within the broader Asian Indian-origin population.
- 2.6 To cultivate and develop the knowledge in Tamil language and literature within the community.
- 2.7 To organize and host social, cultural, literary and educational events, and charitable initiatives.
- 2.8 To promote community service, by participating in fundraisers, volunteer activities, and by providing support to other non-profit organizations in their charitable projects.
- 2.9 To associate and collaborate with other Tamil Associations across the nation.

Article 3 - Membership

- 3.1 **Membership Eligibility:**
 - 3.1.1 The membership of the Sangam shall be open to all interested in Sangam's objectives and activities.
 - 3.1.2 Those who have acted directly or indirectly in a way or manner detrimental to the objectives and/or interests of the Sangam, as determined by the Executive Committee, shall not be eligible to become Sangam members for a set period of time as determined by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Committee.
 - 3.1.3 The membership of the Sangam shall be approved by the Executive Committee, subject to the condition in 3.1.2.
- 3.2 Sangam membership is available at individual and family levels. Family membership shall be for each household (wife, husband and all dependents). Individual membership shall be for an individual over the age of eighteen years. Each member has one vote in Sangam's proceedings.

3.3 Membership Fee:

- 3.3.1 Sangam membership shall be valid for one calendar year. Members shall renew their membership every calendar year by paying the dues in full in order to continue to avail the privileges and benefits as a member.
- 3.3.2 The amount of membership fee for each level shall be as determined by the Executive Committee.
- 3.3.3 The membership fee shall be non refundable and shall not be prorated for part-year enrollment.
- 3.3.4 All Board and Committee members, Tamil School teachers, sponsors, and volunteers shall be required to pay the membership fee. Membership shall not be granted free of charge in exchange for service.

3.4 Member in good standing:

- 3.4.1 A member in good standing shall mean a member who has paid the dues in full, met all of the obligations and requirements, has not engaged in any actions or behaviors that would lead to their suspension or expulsion, and is considered to be in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Sangam.
 - 3.4.2 A member in good standing enjoys all the privileges and benefits associated with the membership. A member shall be in good standing at the time of participating in any activity of the Sangam.
- 3.5 A member whose actions undermine the Sangam's objectives and/or interests shall be subject to expulsion and rendered ineligible for membership for a duration determined by a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Committee.
- 3.6 Non-members may participate in select Sangam events, as decided by the Executive Committee, by paying a non-member event fee, the amount of which shall be set by the Executive Committee. Non-members shall not have voting privileges or other benefits associated with membership.

Article 4 - Elections

4.1 Election Committee:

- 4.1.1 The Election Committee shall consist of the Advisory Committee members (defined in Article 6) and two members from the outgoing Board.
- 4.1.2 The term of the Election Committee shall end once the new Executive Committee assumes office on January 1 of the upcoming term.

- 4.1.3 The Election Committee shall receive nominations and assess candidates' eligibility, relevant experience and contributions related to Sangam's objectives. If deemed necessary, an election may be conducted as described in Article 4.3.
- 4.2 The nomination form sent to members shall include a comprehensive list of eligibility criteria, the roles and responsibilities of the Officers, as well as the conditions associated with these positions. This is intended to ensure that members submitting nominations are fully informed about the requirements and commitments involved.
- 4.3 If the Election Committee deems it necessary to conduct an election for any of the positions of President, Secretary, or Treasurer, the voting members of the Sangam (General Body) shall elect individuals to these positions.
- 4.3.1 Each membership shall have one vote in the Elections.
- 4.4 Associate Treasurer and Committee Directors shall be selected and appointed by the Election Committee and the incoming Board from the nominations received. Preference shall be given to eligible candidates who have not served in the Executive Committee previously.
- 4.5 The Election and selection process for the upcoming term shall occur during the months of October to November. The new Executive Committee must be established no later than the end of November and it shall assume office on January 1 of the upcoming term.

Article 5 - Officers

- 5.1 The officers of the Sangam shall be the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Associate Treasurer, and the Directors of the various Committees, collectively known as the Executive Committee.
- 5.2 All positions shall be voluntary, and Officers shall not receive any compensation, with the exception of token gifts as a gesture of volunteer appreciation.
- 5.3 All officers shall be members in good standing as defined in Article 3.4. The Officers must have fluency in Tamil language.
- 5.4 **Board Members:**
- 5.4.1 The President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be designated as the Board members of the Sangam.
- 5.4.2 In case of any urgent matters the Board shall have and exercise authority in the management and functioning of the Sangam.
- 5.4.3 A simple majority of the Board members shall be required to make a decision.
- 5.5 **Committees Directors:**
- 5.5.1 Each of the following committees shall have 2 Directors - Communication, Community Outreach, Cultural, Membership and Sports/Youth Wing.

- 5.5.2 The Tamil School shall have a Director and an Associate Director.
- 5.5.3 The Communication Committee shall have an additional Newsletter Director.
- 5.5.4 Total number of Committee Directors shall be limited to 14.
- 5.5.5 The Board shall have the authority to create and dissolve 'Ad-hoc' or special committees for a specific and temporary purpose when a situation or need arises that is not part of regular or established procedures.
- 5.6 No person shall hold more than one office concurrently, except when filling in for other Officers during their temporary absence, as outlined in Article 7.
- 5.7 The term of office for the officers shall be two consecutive years.
- 5.7.1 No person can hold any office for more than two consecutive two-year terms.
- 5.8 **Termination of Officers:**
- 5.8.1 An officer of the Sangam shall be terminated from office if petitioned by more than 50% of the General Body.
- 5.8.2 Officers who directly or indirectly engage in actions detrimental to the objectives and/or interests of the Sangam, as determined by the Executive Committee and the Advisory Committee, shall be subject to the following penalties as decided by the Committee in charge at that time:
- Termination from office and cancellation of membership
 - Barred from becoming a member or an officer, or from participating in Sangam activities for a specified period or a lifetime ban depending on the severity of their actions.
- Additionally, immediate family members of the officers who commit these inappropriate actions shall also be subject to these penalties.
- 5.9 In case of a permanent absence of an officer, the Advisory Committee and the Board shall appoint a successor for the unexpired portion of the term. Permanent absence is defined as unjustified or unreasonable absence from four consecutive monthly meetings and Sangam events combined.
- 5.10 Any permanent vacancy created in the Executive Committee due to any cause shall be filled by the Advisory Committee and the Board by appointing a successor for the unexpired portion of the term.
- 5.11 Any changes to the Executive Committee during the term shall be communicated to the Sangam members.

Article 6 – Advisory Committee

- 6.1 The Advisory Committee shall consist of three members with at least two members from any of the past Board who have served their full term and are currently members in good standing. The third member shall be any Sangam member in good standing. Committee positions shall be voluntary, and no compensation shall be paid.
- 6.2 Members of the Advisory Committee shall be selected and appointed by the incoming Executive Committee, and the Advisory Committee shall be in place within 30 days of the start of the new committee term.
- 6.3 The term of office for the Advisory Committee shall be two consecutive years.
- 6.4 **Responsibilities of Advisory Committee:**
 - 6.4.1 The Advisory Committee shall provide necessary guidance to the Executive Committee and ensure continuity in Sangam activities throughout the term.
 - 6.4.2 The outgoing Advisory Committee shall ensure that all necessary documents are properly transferred from the outgoing Executive Committee to the incoming Executive Committee.
 - 6.4.3 The outgoing Advisory Committee shall ensure that all fiduciary responsibilities including tax return filing, and corporation registration renewal, have been fulfilled by the outgoing Executive Committee.
 - 6.4.4 The Advisory Committee shall act as the internal financial auditor and conduct one audit at the end of each fiscal year.
 - 6.4.5 The Advisory Committee shall also serve as the Election Committee as described in Article 4.1.
- 6.5 The Advisory Committee shall have no authority in the management and functioning of the Sangam.

Article 7 – Duties of Officers

- 7.1 **President:**

The President shall

 - 7.1.1 Manage and oversee the operations of the Sangam, including fiscal and legal obligations.
 - 7.1.2 Present an annual report to the members at the end of the year.
 - 7.1.3 Ensure that the incoming Officers of the Sangam are properly oriented.
 - 7.1.4 Ensure that all accounts, reports, statements, minutes, and other documents related to Sangam's activities are properly organized and filed in accordance with the required standards.
 - 7.1.5 Sign all documents in the name and on behalf of the Sangam.

- 7.1.6 Delegate the responsibilities of an Officer to other Executive Committee members as needed during their temporary absence.
- 7.1.7 Assume the duties of the Secretary or the Treasurer during their temporary absence.
- 7.1.8 Be responsible for ensuring that all Officers strictly adhere to the Bylaws.

7.2 Secretary:

The Secretary shall

- 7.2.1 Work with the President and provide essential administrative support.
- 7.2.2 Record and present the minutes of all the meetings to the Executive Committee and the General Body as appropriate. Records shall be kept in an unalterable media.
- 7.2.3 Attend to all correspondences and present the same to the Executive Committee at its meetings.
- 7.2.4 Be responsible for sending meeting notices and other important announcements to the members.
- 7.2.5 Be the custodian of all the records, minutes, and other documents of the Sangam, excluding those within the purview of the Treasurer.
- 7.2.6 Ensure the timely renewal of the corporation registration with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) and verify that Sangam's Registered Agent information, principal office address and other details are current with the SCC.
- 7.2.7 Assume the duties of the President or the Treasurer during their temporary absence.

7.3 Treasurers:

The Treasurer shall

- 7.3.1 Be responsible for ensuring strict adherence to the financial controls specified in Article 9 - Management of Funds.
- 7.3.2 Collect membership dues, sponsorship and other sources of revenue, and ensure that all funds are promptly deposited into the sangam's bank account.
- 7.3.3 Pay vendors, and make other disbursements as directed and approved by the Executive Committee.
- 7.3.4 Maintain precise financial records of all income, expenditures, and disbursements as specified in Article 9 - Management of Funds.
- 7.3.5 Prepare financial statements and reports as specified in Article 9 - Management of Funds.
- 7.3.6 Prepare and file federal and state tax returns annually, no later than the due dates. The current treasurer shall be responsible for filing the taxes for the previous tax year.
- 7.3.7 Assume the responsibilities of the President solely in the event of the temporary absence of both the President and Secretary.

The Associate Treasurer shall

- 7.3.8 Assist the Treasurer in the discharge of his/her duties
- 7.3.9 Perform all the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence and perform any other duties that may be assigned to him/her by the Board.

7.4 Community Outreach Directors:

The Community Outreach Directors shall

- 7.4.1 Facilitate event management for Sangam and Tamil School
- 7.4.2 Facilitate sponsorship procurement for Sangam and Tamil School
- 7.4.3 Organize various Charity Drives on behalf of the Sangam

7.5 Membership Directors:

The Membership Directors shall

- 7.5.1 Organize membership drives to enroll new members and renew existing members.
- 7.5.2 Collect and securely retain all relevant information of the Sangam members.
- 7.5.3 Verify the membership for all Sangam events including Tamil School Registration.
- 7.5.4 Maintain membership email distribution list for the Sangam.
- 7.5.5 Transfer all collected membership fees to the Treasurer within 10 days.

7.6 Cultural Directors:

The Cultural Directors shall

- 7.6.1 Plan and conduct cultural events for the community.
- 7.6.2 Promote Sangam events.
- 7.6.3 Coordinate with the cultural event participants.

7.7 Sports/Youth Wing Directors:

The Sports/Youth Wing Directors shall

- 7.7.1 Organize indoor/outdoor sport events for the adults in the community.
- 7.7.2 Organize indoor/outdoor sport clinics for the Youth in the community.
- 7.7.3 Engage the young members of the Sangam in various community events and community service activities in collaboration with the Community Outreach Directors.

7.8 Communication & Newsletter Directors:

The Communication Directors shall

- 7.8.1 Maintain Sangam email accounts, website and social media accounts.
- 7.8.2 Send communications to all the Sangam members through email and approved social media.
- 7.8.3 Create and update forms and templates for the Sangam as required.
- 7.8.4 Collaborate with the Newsletter Director to publish a periodic newsletter featuring articles contributed by members of the Sangam.

The Newsletter Director shall

- 7.8.5 Be responsible for gathering articles and other content from members.
- 7.8.6 Edit, proofread and publish the newsletter on time.

7.9 **Tamil School Directors:**

The Tamil School Director and Associate Director shall

- 7.9.1 Have the primary responsibility for educating Tamil School students and fostering their proficiency in both the Tamil language and culture.
- 7.9.2 Be responsible for the overall functioning of the Tamil School.
- 7.9.3 Share the academic and non-academic responsibilities.
- 7.9.4 Liaise between the Tamil School and the Tamil Sangam.

Article 8 – Richmond Tamil School

- 8.1 Richmond Tamil School shall function under Richmond Tamil Sangam.
- 8.2 All teachers of the Tamil School shall serve as volunteers, and shall not receive any compensation, with the exception of token gifts as a gesture of volunteer appreciation.
- 8.3 Income generated by the Tamil School shall be used for the operation and development of the Tamil School. In the event that Tamil School funds are needed for other purposes, prior approval by the Board and Tamil School Directors is required.
- 8.4 The Tamil School shall have a separate bank account from the Tamil Sangam.

Article 9 – Management of Funds

- 9.1 Accurate financial records shall be maintained, with income and expenses regularly documented either in a physical ledger or electronically, using methods such as spreadsheets or accounting software.
- 9.2 Financial statements shall include itemized income and expenses, beginning balance and ending balance.
- 9.3 **Purchases:**
 - 9.3.1 All eligible purchases and other expenses must be substantiated with valid receipts. Expense reimbursements shall be issued only upon submission of proper receipts. Any exception shall be approved by either the President or Secretary.
 - 9.3.2 Debit card usage, whether in person, online, or via mobile, for amounts exceeding \$250 within a calendar month, shall require approval of either the President or the Secretary.
 - 9.3.3 Purchase of tangible assets exceeding \$250 in value must be pre-approved by the Board.
- 9.4 **Financial Accounts:**
 - 9.4.1 In addition to the Treasurers, both the President and Secretary shall be granted online access to the financial accounts. For the Tamil School account the School Directors shall also be granted online account access.

9.4.2 The President shall serve as the alternate signatory for the Treasurer on all financial accounts.

9.5 **Bank Transactions:**

9.5.1 Cash deposits and cash withdrawals are restricted to a maximum of \$500 per transaction and are limited to a total of 2 (two) transactions within a calendar month.

9.5.2 Non-cash transactions, such as check deposits and check issuance, are subject to a maximum limit of \$750 per transaction and are restricted to a total of 2 (two) transactions within a calendar month.

9.5.3 Performing more than 2 (two) bank transactions (deposits and withdrawals) in amounts exceeding \$500 within the same week is not permitted.

9.5.4 Peer-to-peer payment systems and Apps, such as Paypal and Zelle, shall only be utilized for receiving money and not for making purchases or disbursements.

9.5.5 Any exceptions to the limitations mentioned above must receive prior written approval from either the President or Secretary. Email approval is an acceptable method of obtaining such approval.

9.5.6 Fund transfers, regardless of the amount, between different bank accounts shall require prior written approval of the President or the Secretary.

9.6 **Financial Review and Audit:**

9.6.1 The Board shall review and reconcile accounts, resolving any discrepancies within 10 days following the conclusion of each major event.

9.6.2 The Treasurers shall conduct a monthly review and reconciliation of statements received from financial institutions. Any discrepancies identified during this process shall be promptly reported to the Board.

9.6.3 A quarterly financial report (as of March 31, June 30, and September 30) shall be prepared by the Treasurers and presented to the Board for review and approval within 14 days following the end of each quarter.

9.6.4 A fiscal year (January 1 to December 31) financial report as of December 31 shall be prepared by the Treasurers and presented to the Board. Upon Board's review and approval it shall be submitted to the internal auditor (Advisory Committee) no later than January 15 of the following year.

9.6.5 The Advisory Committee shall conduct an annual internal financial audit. The final audited financial report shall be submitted to the Board no later than January 29. The Board shall issue the audited financial report to Sangam members no later than January 31.

9.6.6 At the conclusion of their term, the outgoing Executive Committee and the outgoing Advisory Committee shall be responsible for preparing, auditing, and issuing financial reports for the preceding fiscal year in accordance with the aforementioned deadlines.

9.7 Contracts to Vendors:

9.7.1 Contracts to provide goods or services to Sangam events shall not be awarded to Officers or their immediate family members. However, contributions of goods or services free of cost by an officer or immediate family members is allowed.

9.7.2 For contracts above \$500, multiple quotations shall be obtained for comparative evaluation, and the final award shall be approved by the Board.

9.8 Emergency Fund:

9.8.1 An emergency fund (reserve) shall be established for the Sangam and the Tamil School separately, in the amount approved by the Board to cover unforeseen expenses such as legal fees and liabilities. This fund shall not be utilized for routine day-to-day operating expenses.

9.8.2 Designation and use of the emergency fund requires a two-thirds majority approval of the Executive Committee. and it shall be communicated to the General Body in advance.

Article 10 – Meetings & Record Keeping

10.1 General Body Meeting:

10.1.1 The General Body meeting shall be convened annually, either in person or via teleconference, as determined by the Executive Committee.

10.1.2 Special General Body meetings, if necessary, shall be called by the Executive Committee with a two-thirds majority approval of the Executive Committee.

10.1.3 One-third of eligible voting members including their proxies shall constitute a Quorum in a General Body Meeting. Members who are physically present or via teleconference, and those represented by proxies are counted toward the Quorum requirement.

10.1.4 When necessary, decisions regarding Sangam proceedings and resolutions shall be reached through a two-thirds affirmative vote of members who are present, along with alternative voting methods, such as online or other electronic means, proxy voting, or a combination of these methods, as determined by the Executive Committee.

10.2 Executive Committee Meeting:

10.2.1 The meeting of the Executive Committee shall be held on a monthly basis and as often as necessary.

10.2.2 A simple majority of the Committee members shall constitute a Quorum in an Executive Committee meeting.

10.3 Record Keeping:

- 10.3.1 Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings shall be recorded by the Secretary and shared with the Executive Committee.
- 10.3.2 Minutes of the General Body meetings shall be recorded by the Secretary and shared with the members of the Sangam.
- 10.3.3 Meeting minutes, correspondence, and other documents shall be retained for a specified period, as determined by the Board.
- 10.3.4 Financial records including financial statements, audit reports, tax documents, and receipts shall be retained for a period of at least 7 years.
- 10.3.5 Legal and governance documents such as Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and other essential documents as determined by the Board shall be retained on a permanent basis.

Article 11 – Communications

- 11.1 The Executive Committee shall periodically communicate Sangam’s activities, including Cultural Programs, Community Activities, and other important matters, to the members via email or other social media channels as they see fit.
- 11.2 The primary mode of communication shall be through email sent to the member's registered primary email address.
- 11.3 The Executive Committee shall promote Tamil literary awareness among members of the Sangam through activities such as publishing newsletters featuring contributions from members.

Article 12 – Amendments

- 12.1 Amendments to the Bylaws shall be proposed by the Executive Committee. Any feedback from members must be formally submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 30 days before the scheduled Annual General Body meeting or any Special General Body meeting for due consideration.
- 12.2 The Executive Committee shall provide written communication of the proposed amendments to Sangam members at least 14 days prior to the Annual or Special General Body meeting
- 12.3 Amendments to the Bylaws shall be approved at the Annual or Special General Body meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present at the General Body meeting and those voting by proxy or in absentia. Voting by other means including online or through other electronic means or a combination of multiple methods may be utilized by the Executive Committee.
- 12.4 The amendments shall be effective from the date they are approved by the General Body.

- 12.5 Whenever an amendment to the Bylaws is made, it is essential to ensure that the changes or additions are in harmony with the other clauses within the Bylaws, avoiding any contradictions.

Article 13 - Dissolution of the Sangam

- 13.1 A Motion to consider the dissolution of the Sangam must be petitioned in writing to the Secretary by not less than two-thirds of the members in good standing. The Secretary shall then circulate a notice of the intent of dissolution to all members within fifteen days of receipt of the petition.
- 13.2 Thirty days after such a notice is circulated, a special General Body Meeting shall be called and the motion for the dissolution of the Sangam shall be placed before the General Body. The members shall register their votes in person or in absentia. The votes that are not received before or during the General Body Meeting shall be considered null and void and hence not counted. The notice of the intent of dissolution shall require, for passing, an affirmative vote of four-fifths (80 percent) of the valid votes.
- 13.3 Immediately following the dissolution of the Sangam, the Executive Committee as well as the General Body shall be disbanded. The Board, however, shall continue to function for a period of 60 days. During this period, the Board shall pay off all liabilities from the assets of the Sangam. Remaining assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the Bylaws were adopted by the Sangam.

Article 14 - Miscellaneous

- 14.1 The Executive Committee shall maintain a separate "Policies and Procedures" document as needed, outlining comprehensive procedures for all Committees and operational areas. Any modifications to the Policies and Procedures document shall be approved by the Board.
- 14.2 For matters not explicitly covered in the Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall make decisions by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Executive Committee.

The present amended Richmond Tamil Sangam Bylaw was approved on 10/14/2023 by the Sangam members.