



BY-LAWS OF THE CHEROKEE COMMUNITY OF THE INLAND EMPIRE

MISSION & PURPOSE

The Cherokee Community of the Inland Empire (CCIE) is a community of Cherokees dedicated to Cherokee history, culture, heritage, tradition, and fellowship. We are a non-political, non-profit Native American organization whose members reside outside the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation and Bands. We have come together on the basis of our shared history and heritage, and out of an interest in the continuation of and a love for the Cherokee People and Nations.

It is critically important that we find innovative ways to retain Cherokee people in stronger ties of culture and responsible citizenship. We believe the concept of "community" is one way to achieve this goal.

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Person(s) desiring membership in the Cherokee Community of the Inland Empire (CCIE), must complete an application and pay annual membership dues. Membership is granted after approval of the application by the council of CCIE. The approval of all membership applications is at the discretion of the Council.

The membership will be valid from July 1 to June 30 of each year. Membership dues shall be paid on an annual basis.

1) Households

Membership is based upon households, not individuals. All persons living in a family household may be registered for one fee. A Household is defined as all persons living in a home to include spouses, life partners or domestic partners and children living in the household. Household members who are living outside the home attending an institution of higher learning, such as college, or who are engaged in active military service, may maintain household membership status. Household members leaving the household the household lose membership in the organization and must reapply under a new household (such as due to marriage, separation, divorce, leaving home, etc.). If a member is dropped from the active membership rolls for any reason, they must reapply and receive approval from the CCIE Council.

The head of household will be the primary applicant on the Membership Application Form. For Cherokee Nation Citizen Household, the primary applicant will be a registered Cherokee Nation Citizen. In the event of dissolution of the household (i.e. divorce, separation or death), the Cherokee Nation Citizen remains the primary applicant with who the membership resides.

2) Categories of Membership

There shall be three categories of members in CCIE

a. Cherokee Nation Citizen

A Cherokee Nation Citizen membership requires that at least one member of a family household be a registered member of the Cherokee Nation. The Membership Coordinator will verify status via the Cherokee Nation Citizenship Card (“blue card”). At least sixty percent (60%) of all members of CCIE must be Cherokee Nation Citizens.

b. Associate

An Associate member is not a registered member of the Cherokee Nation. Associate members will not exceed forty percent (40%) of the household memberships.

c. Provisional

A Provisional member is a non-enrolled member of CCIE. This household is pending approval of the Council for an Associate membership status. This approval is based upon membership vacancies as outlined in the CCIE By-Laws in Article 1: Membership.

3) Voting Rights

All adult members of a household who are at least eighteen (18) years of age and who are listed on the membership rolls as a Cherokee Nation Citizen Member or Associate Member will have the right to vote in all membership elections.

Provisional members will not be granted voting status until they have been accepted by the CCIE Council as either a Cherokee Nation Citizen or Associate Member.

4) Registration

Each household must complete a membership application and pay annual dues of \$25.00 per household. Each applicant must provide proof of Cherokee Nation Citizenship status if requesting Cherokee Nation Citizenship Membership. The membership application must be completed in its entirety. Changes in any household membership including, but not limited to, the following must be reported to the CCIE Membership Coordinator, such as: additional members of the household; members no longer residing in the household; new address or email address; phone number changes; a change in status of any resident in the household with the Cherokee Nation. Additional information may be requested by the CCIE Council.

5) Membership Dues

Annual membership dues of \$25.00 per household are due July 1st of each year. In order to be in good standing, all dues must be paid to date. If a member’s dues are ninety (90) days delinquent, they will automatically be dropped from CCIE membership. In cases of financial hardship a request may be made to the CCIE Council for a waiver of the annual dues.

Each household will be provided a newsletter from CCIE. Newsletters will be sent via email unless otherwise requested. To have the newsletter delivered by regular mail, an additional cost will occur to cover the postage and printing. CCIE will not be responsible for non-delivery of emails where the household fails to update email addresses with the Membership Coordinator.

6) Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated by the Council for the following reasons: (a) violation of the by-laws of the CCIE and/or (b) action that is detrimental to the organization.

Only the Council has authority to investigate and/or terminate a membership. However, any member is entitled to bring to the Council a grievance concerning conduct by any member or Council member which they believe to be in violation of the by-laws and/or action that is detrimental to the organization. The Council shall investigate all grievances. As part of the investigation, the Council is obligated to receive testimony and evidence from the member in question in their own defense. A membership may be terminated only after a consensus of the members of the Council is reached. If a member of the Council is under investigation, he or she may not participate and shall not be counted in the process of reaching consensus on, the question of their termination. The decision of the Council is final.

ARTICLE II: SUBSCRIPTIONS

1) Types of Subscriptions

Non-members may receive an annual subscription to the newsletter upon payment of twenty-five dollars (\$25US).

Honorary subscriptions to the newsletter shall also be provided to specified non-members at the discretion of the Council. Such subscriptions may include, but are not limited to, the Principal Chief and Deputy Chief of the Cherokee Nation, the members of the Tribal Council of the Cherokee Nation, and other selected community leaders and representatives.

The approval of all subscriptions is at the discretion of the Council.

ARTICLE III: MEETINGS

1) Types of Meetings

A meeting of the CCIE shall be held monthly. In addition, the Council shall also meet monthly at a regular time, which shall be decided upon annually by the Council upon their election.

2) Notifications of Meetings

The membership will be notified ten (10) days in advance of the time and place of all general meetings.

ARTICLE IV: COUNCIL

1) Composition of the Council

The Council shall be comprised of seven members, at least four of who shall be registered members of the Cherokee Nation. Each of the seven must be a CCIE member in good standing. Only two members of any family and/or household may serve at any given time excluding spouse and/or significant others.

2) Terms of the Council

Council members shall serve a term of two years. The terms shall be staggered as follows: upon the initial election of seven council members, the top four vote-getters will take two-year terms. The remaining three will take one-year terms. Thereafter, all Council members will be elected to two-year terms.

A Council member may serve two full terms (four years) and then must sit out one year before running again.

3) Council Positions and Duties

The positions of the Council shall be as follows: (a) Chairperson, who shall organize the agenda, coordinate, and conduct Council Meetings. (b) Secretary, who shall take attendance and keep minutes at Council and general meeting, and who shall maintain all other records except as herein provided. (c) Membership Coordinator, who shall keep updated membership rolls, compile an annual membership directory for distribution to the membership, provide notification of pending renewal dates to members, and shall supply current membership lists monthly to the newsletter committee, and provides the election committee with current number of members. (d) Treasurer, who shall keep all financial accounts, and who shall convey information concerning the dues of new and renewed memberships to the Membership Coordinator. (e) Assistant Chairperson who shall facilitate meetings or keep records in the absence of the regular Chairperson or Secretary, and who shall share responsibilities in conducting the general meetings with the Events Coordinator. (f) Events Coordinator, who shall organize, and coordinate the agendas, general meetings, events and pow wow committee and who shall share responsibilities in conducting the general meetings with the Assistant Chairperson. (g) Web-site and Press, who shall be in charge of communicating information to the press, publishing the bi-monthly newsletter and coordinating the web-site committee.

These positions will be designated by the Council members at the first Council meeting after the annual election, and will be designated for a period of time that is at least, but not limited to, one year.

All Council members shall transfer all records that they maintain in their possession to their successors throughout the life of the organization.

4) Quorum

A quorum of the Council shall be reached when four (4) members are present. No official business shall be acted upon unless a quorum is present.

5) Attendance

Council members shall be required to attend at least sixty-seven per cent (67%) (8) of scheduled Council meetings and sixty-seven per cent (67%) (8) of scheduled membership meetings.

6) Vacancy

In case of vacancy, the remaining Council members shall elect a member to serve the remainder of the vacated term.

7) Youth Representative

There shall be a non-voting honorary member to the Council to represent the youth. This member is not bound by attendance requirements. This positions shall be appointed by the Council.

ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS

1) Election Committee

Ninety days prior to the election for Council members, the Election Committee shall be selected. It shall consist of three (3) members of voting age who are in good standing. The Election Committee shall be selected at random by lottery or games of chance.

Candidates and their families are ineligible to serve on the election committee.

2) Announcements of Candidates

Candidates must declare their candidacy no later than sixty (60) days in advance of the election. They will provide a written statement of candidacy and a biographical sketch of no more than 200 words to the Election Committee for publication in the newsletter.

If not enough candidates declare within sixty days prior to the election, then the Election Committee will recruit additional candidates.

3) Election Procedures

Secret balloting will be conducted at the General Meeting. Members in good standing will receive a ballot. The Membership Coordinator will provide the Election Committee the number of current members. Each ballot will be numbered. The Membership Coordinator will provide a roster of eligible members to the Chair of the Election Committee for the purpose of distributing the ballots.

A) Voting

Member will sign the voting roster to receive a ballot. Member will mark their ballots, seal it in the envelope, and drop in the ballot box.

B) Absentee Voting

Absentee ballot requests must be made thirty (30) days before the election to the Election Committee Chair. Absentee ballots will be noted on the Voter Roster. Marked Absentee ballots must be received by the Election Committee by mail the day prior to the election in order to be valid.

A ballot and a self-addressed stamped return envelope will be placed inside a mailing envelope. The mailing envelope will be sealed. The Membership Coordinator shall then provide mailing labels that will be applied to the mailing envelopes. The absentee ballots must be sent out at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the election.

C) Counting the ballots

All ballots shall be opened and counted at the general meeting in which the election takes place. One Election Committee member shall open the envelope and remove the ballot. A second Election Committee member shall record the number on the ballot. The third Election Committee member shall record the votes on the ballot. After all votes have been counted, they shall be recounted by the entire Election Committee for verification of the results.

D) Election Results

Election results will be determined by majority vote.

E) Announcing of the winners

The announcement of the new Council members shall be made at the meeting by the Election Committee, but the vote totals will not be announced. Individual candidates may inquire privately of the Election Committee to obtain their own vote totals.

F) Tie vote

In case of a tie, the Election Committee shall conduct a runoff election by secret vote using the Voter Roster to break the tie.

G) Checks and balances

To prevent tampering ballots, will be numbered and a locked ballot box will be provided. The Election Committee will keep the ballots for thirty (30) days after the election. After thirty days the ballots will be destroyed and the Election Committee disbanded.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS

1) Proposing Amendments

Any member may propose an amendment to these by-laws by submitting to the Council at least sixty (60) days prior to the election of the Council members. The Council will collect all proposed amendments and shall present them for a vote annually at the same time as the election for Council members. The Council shall have the discretion to bring any proposed amended to the immediate vote of the membership if such urgency is deemed necessary. The vote to accept proposed amendments shall be conducted in the same manner as the election of Council members.

2) Accepting Amendments

An affirmative vote of the majority of the returned ballots is required to pass an amendment and to amend the by-laws.

ARTICLE VII: GIFTS AND DONATIONS

1) Acceptance of Gifts and Donations

All gifts and donations must be approved by the Council before acceptance.

2) Contributions by the Organization (CCIE)

All donations or honorariums made by the CCIE up to fifty dollars (\$50 US) must be approved by the Council. Donations or honorariums over fifty dollars (\$50 US) must also be approved by the memberships by vote. The upcoming votes shall be announce in the newsletter and shall be taken at the next general meeting. A simple majority shall prevail.

ARTICLE VIII: REPORTS

1) Required Reports

The Treasurer shall make monthly financial reports to the Council and annual written reports to the membership.

The Council will make annual reports to the membership at the January gathering. The Council will submit the required quarterly reports to the Cherokee Nation Community Association (CNCA). These reports include but not limited to CCIE membership rolls, CCIE financial statement, and CCIE By-Law signature page including each council member's signature, Council Meeting and Community Gathering minutes.

The Membership Coordinator shall compile a membership directory for distribution to members.

ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES

1) Oversight of Committees

The Council shall oversee the function of all committees

2) Types of Committees

There shall be a standing committee called the Newsletter Committee to produce and mail the monthly newsletter. The Newsletter Committee shall be formed by volunteers from the membership.

Other committees may be formed as necessity dictates.

ARTICLE X: ENDORSEMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

1) Endorsements

No member of CCIE shall use the name of the CCIE in political campaigns or as an endorsement of any candidate for political office in the Cherokee Nation or any other election.

The CCIE as an organization is prohibited from campaigning for or endorsing any candidate for political office in the Cherokee Nation or any other election.

2) Representations

No member of the CCIE shall use the name of the organization or represent themselves for direct commercial gain, or for purposes of self-promotion or the promotion of any individual's outside interests, except with permission from the Council.

CCIE members may state their membership for identification purposes only on resumes and other similar applications.

ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION OF CCIE

1) Procedure

CCIE may dissolve at any time by a 2/3 vote of the membership, provided that at least a five (5) day notice of the proposal to dissolve has been given to all members.

2) Distribution of Assets

In the event of the dissolution of CCIE, all remaining assets will be distributed to the organizations which are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or successor provisions thereto,

When dissolution occurs all assets will be disposed accordingly, with a final CCIE Council meeting to dispose of all assets.

Reference:

<https://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Suggested-Language-for-Corporations-and-Associations-%28per-Publication-557%29>