

New England Tamil Sangam (NETS)
A Registered Non Profit Cultural
Organization
By-Laws



Article 1: Nature of Organization

Section 1: Name:

New England Tamil Sangam, hereinafter referred as "**NETS**".

NETS Board hereinafter includes Executive Committee (EC), Social Committee (SC) and Board of Trustees (BOT).

The Executive Committee includes the following officers: President, Vice-President (if any), Secretary, Treasurer, Joint Secretary (if any), Joint Treasurer (if any).

The Social Committee includes coordinators of various subcommittees within the NETS Board. Sub-Committees pertaining to Program Committee, Food Committee, Marketing Committee, Tech Committee, Youth Committee.

General Committee are NETS Members who are not part of NETS Board.

Section 2: Objectives:

a) NETS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts, USA.

- b) Our primary focus will be to promote, preserve and perpetuate Tamil language, culture, and heritage in and around the New England area (Massachusetts and New Hampshire).
- c) The purpose of this organization is to cultivate members' involvement in Tamil Cultural activities.
- d) To promote the literacy, educational, economic, social, and community affairs of Tamil people.
- e) Supporting humanitarian causes for the Tamil community through collaborations with organizations.

Section 3: NETS Organization shall be non-political, should never engage in propaganda or participate in any political campaign for any candidate for public office in Massachusetts or in USA or India or any other country. NETS Board shall not stand in election in USA or India or any other country as well as not support anyone for any political campaign directly or indirectly.

Section 4: NETS does not envisage any financial gain or profit for any of its members in NETS Board . If any member of NETS Board is offering any free services to NETS on behalf of their Organization, they are not eligible to receive any monetary or non-monetary benefits returned from NETS directly or indirectly. Members of NETS shall acquire no interest in NETS property by virtue of their membership therein. No part of NETS asset or property shall be devoted to any personal purpose other than NETS expenses.

Section 5: Any Member(s) of NETS shall not be held personally for any debt incurred by NETS. The extent of liability of members shall be limited to the unpaid membership dues and for no more.

Article 2: Membership, Fees & Events

Section 1: NETS Membership shall be open to everyone supporting the objectives of NETS.

Section 2: NETS Board may disapprove/terminate membership of any individual whose activities are opposed to or are not in harmony with NETS objectives.

Section 3: The Fiscal year of NETS will be Jan 1 - Dec 31 of each calendar year. All membership fees are annual, expires by the end of December. All membership needs to be renewed every year. NETS Membership shall be classified as Individual(Single), Special, Family and Senior.

Section 4a: Any Individual person (not widowed/divorced) above 18 years is eligible for Individual Membership and the membership fee is only for the individual (him/her) and not for the entire family.

Section 4b: Any Individual person (widowed/divorced) is eligible for Special Membership that allows the individual (him/her) along with (Kids and Parents) residing under the same household either permanent or temporary. Special Membership does not include any extended family (Brothers, Sisters, and Cousins etc.)

Section 4c: Family Membership includes the membership fee for the entire family which includes (Spouse, Kids and Parents) residing under the same household either permanent or temporary. Family Membership does not include any extended family (Brothers, Sisters, and Cousins etc.)

Section 4d: Senior Membership includes the membership fee for 2 people residing in the same household who are both above 60 years. Kids cannot be included in Senior Membership, while Parents of Senior Members residing under the same household either permanent or temporary are included.

Section 5: NETS Membership fees shall be determined by the NETS Executive Committee and Social Committee. Any change in the membership fee for the fiscal year (Jan-Dec) is based on the majority voting of Executive Committee and Social Committee in favor of such a proposal. In case of any dispute, it will be approved and finalized by Board of Trustees.

Section 6: Entry for all events are free for NETS Members (Valid Membership) except Special Event(s). Non-members need to pay the entry fees to attend all the events. Both members and non-members shall pay the participation fees, food fees for the events. Membership fees are non-refundable. Participation fees are non-refundable too but considering valid reasons for the absence during event day, participation fees are refundable. All fees said above are determined by the NETS Executive Committee and Social Committee. In case of any dispute, it will be approved and finalized by Board of Trustees.

Section 7:

Usually, there are 4 events conducted by NETS. This can subject to change under the discretion of the Executive Committee, Social Committee only if majority members vote for the same. This includes changing the name of the event as well.

- a) NETS Pongal Vizhaa (happens during month of Jan/Feb).
- b) NETS Chithirai Vizha (happens during month of Apr/May).
- c) NETS Annual Summer Picnic and or Annual General Body Meeting - AGM (happens during month of July/Aug).

d) NETS Children's Day (happens during month of Nov).
All the above said events might be conducted virtually in case of pandemic or other unforeseen situations.

Article 3: Roles of EC, SC & Board of Trustees

Section 1: President

- a) The President shall be the spokesperson for NETS. It is mandatory that the President should speak, read and write Tamil.
- b) The President shall call and preside over the meetings of NETS Board and shall perform the duties of a presiding officer.
- c) The President shall address the NETS Board about the state of the NETS in AGM (Annual General Body Meeting).
- d) The President and/or Treasurer are the authorized signatories for all financial transactions.
- e) The President shall assume charge of the duties of Treasurer and/or Secretary during their temporary absence.
- f) In case of tie during voting at Board meetings, the President shall have an extra vote to break the tie.
- g) The President shall, with the approval of the Board, appoint elected members to Sub Committees/Special Committees (described above) when he/she deems necessary and will be leading these committees.
- h) The President ensures that EC carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the bylaws of NETS.
- i) President is the custodian for all Tamil Sangam Properties. In case of rented storage space, President takes the entire responsibility of maintaining NETS Properties.
- j) For Smooth Transition of Sangam from one period to another, the President, Secretary & Treasurer should personally hand over a transfer document to the successor President. The Successor President will take over his/her office only after the Predecessor President hands over all the documents, records, certificates, checks, properties, technology assets, passwords and any other office papers pertaining to the Sangam. Handover needs to be completed within 2 weeks, once the new President is announced. If the Predecessor President needs additional time, he/she needs to get special approval from Board of Trustees.

k) In addition, the President, by virtue of the office he/she holds in NETS, shall serve as a member in the Board of Trustees after completing their full term. Final Decision will be based on the majority of the Board of Trustees after obtaining the majority voting from EC & SC for the same.

Section 2: Vice President (If any)

- a) The Vice President shall perform all of the duties of the President during his/her temporary absence.
- b) The Vice President shall perform any other duties which may be assigned to him/her from time to time by the President.

Section 3: Secretary

- a) The Secretary of NETS shall convene, call and send notices for all meetings.
- b) The Secretary shall record the proceedings, maintain minutes of all meetings of EC.
- c) The Secretary shall keep a record of NETS official correspondence for their period of 2 years.
- d) He\She shall regularly check NETS mail box, and keep EC informed of relevant mail.
- e) He\She shall maintain current membership database, including email addresses and other contact information of NETS members.
- f) He\She shall honor appropriate requests for information from members.
- g) He\She shall renew business license for NETS and any other statutory renewals with local, state and federal authorities every year.
- h) He\She shall secure insurance for activities and property (auditorium\hall\theater\storage) and any rentals.
- i) He\She hold and preserve all office records, registers, books for their period of 2 years.
- j) He\She shall appropriately document in shared drive to handover them for the next Secretary.
- k) He\She shall perform all other duties pertaining to the Secretary as directed or decided by EC.

Section 4: Joint Secretary (If any)

- a) The Joint Secretary shall assist in Secretary activities, based on the duties assigned by the Secretary.

b) The Joint Secretary shall perform all of the duties of the Secretary during his/her temporary absence with the approval of the President.

Section 5: Treasurer

a) Treasurer shall collect all dues, program fees, contributions, donations and receive all monetary belonging to NETS.

b) He\She shall deposit the amount in NETS name in a bank designated by NETS Board.

c) He\She shall pay all bills after due review (based on need) and upon the instructions of NETS Board.

d) He\She shall notify members or business or any individual about the dues.

e) He\She shall keep and maintain proper and accurate record of all financial transactions and properties as well as all assets and liabilities, receipts and disbursement vouchers and all other financial records and accounts that are required by NETS Board.

f) He\She shall be responsible to file tax returns for NETS as required by IRS guidelines.

g) He\She shall furnish financial reports during BOT Meeting initiated by the President. This meeting must happen at least once in 6 months in their term and should not be combined with any other Board Meeting. It is the responsibility of the current Treasurer to prepare and submit the financial report for the current year and to physically present in the meeting, and to walk-through the items in the report with the entire board. Such reports shall include but not limited to budgets, expenses, disbursements and tax filing.

h) He\She must deposit all money transactions (cash/check/paypal) after the completion of NETS event within 3 weeks. Only minimum balance (\$500) should be retained in paypal account.

i) He\She perform all other duties and responsibilities as a Treasurer as required by NETS Board.

Section 6: Joint Treasurer (If any)

a) The Joint Treasurer shall assist in all Financial activities, based on the duties assigned by the Treasurer.

b) The Joint Treasurer shall perform all the duties of the Treasurer during his/her temporary absence including the authorized signatures for NETS Transactions with the approval of President.

Section 7: Social Committee:

a) Social Committee shall be constituted to extend the capabilities of Executive Committee in various areas of NETS focus namely .

- Technology & Media Team (Website & Email Communication)- Work with Secretary upon the guidance of President.

- Program Coordination Team - Work with Secretary upon the guidance of President.

- Food Coordination Team - Work with President.

- Youth Volunteers Team - Work with President.

- Marketing & Sponsorship Team - Work with Treasurer upon the guidance of President.

b) All Social Committee Members irrespective of the role assigned shall operate only under the overall authority of the President.

c) Maximum term of Social Committee Members is 4 years (not consecutive, total term in NETS).

Section 8: Board of Trustees:

a) The Board of Trustees (BOT) shall be responsible for the strategic and long-term objectives of NETS and hence BOT is entrusted with the responsibility to oversee proper execution of NETS By-Laws and discharge of duties by the EC and SC as outlined in the bylaws.

b) BOT acts as Election Committee and shall conduct election once in 2 years (normally during Nov/Dec - exclusions during pandemic period).

c) Maximum number of BOT members shall not be greater than 7 and minimum 1; out of which 3 BOT members shall be past NETS Presidents who have completed full term in good standing for at least 10 years. 4 of the rest BOT members shall be past NETS Presidents who have completed full term in good standing for at least 7 years.

d) If there is a vacancy, BOT's can conduct an interview for getting the new BOT Member based on the above guidelines. Exceptional Case: If arises vacancies for all BOT positions, then current President can temporarily act as BOT for a period of 3 months or less by filling the position through interview (along with EC) whichever comes first.

e) BOT in general shall be responsible for the governance of NETS and other audit activities as mentioned in other articles.

Any changes to the above clauses in Section 5 needs entire quorum of NETS Board. Failure will lead to legal implications.

Section 9: General

- a) No two persons, with a family or business relationship shall serve in the NETS Board at the same time. This is applicable for EC, SC and Board of Trustees.
- b) No member of NETS Board who gets access to NETS communication medium shall use NETS Email list, Members Address list, NETS Member family details, NETS Web site and NETS Social Media (FB/Instagram/Twitter/Youtube etc) for
- . Personal Glory.
 - . Airing grievances and internal conflicts.
 - . Accusations, bad mouthing, defamation (Libel/Slander), profanity, insults, derogatory/demeaning remarks etc.
 - . Unproven allegations (written/oral).
 - . Proxy voting or enforcing one's wish in to others for committee's decision.
 - . Data Breach.
- c) Personal email(s) shall never be used to address the NETS Members and also NETS designated emails shall never be used to address Personal emails.
- d) All Committee Members will be provided with the email ids with respect to NETS and that should be the only email id to be used to contact NETS Members and others with respect to NETS Matters.
- e) Personal of NETS Money (in any form) including any kind of commission is illegal.
- f) Personal usage of NETS Asset (in any form) is illegal.
- g) If the above clauses are not followed, upon complaints, Board of Trustees need to meet with the Executive Committee and Social Committee and can provide a warning. Failure to follow the above clauses after the warning will lead to Legal Implications on the respective committee member(s) by the Board of Trustees on behalf of NETS.

Article 4: Financial Procedures

Section 1: Checking Account

- a) Money in this account comprises deposit from NETS Membership Fees, Participation Fees, Food (Snacks, Lunch, Dinner) Fees collected from members, non-members from NETS Events. This account is used to pay for NETS Events which includes but is not limited to Programs, Seminars, Lectures, Reimbursements and other expenses

approved by the EC. Any dispute will be addressed by the Board of Trustees.

- b) Any single transaction over \$3,000 from the Checking Account/Saving Account/Paypal Account requires the approval from the Board of Trustees in writing before the execution. Any multiple transaction over \$5,000 from the Checking Account/Saving Account/Paypal Account within a month requires the approval from the Board of Trustees in writing before the execution. This needs to be initiated by the Treasurer with the knowledge of the President. Once approved, the Treasurer will work closely with the EC and SC for the progress. At the start of each President Term, this account should not have more than \$3,000.

Section 2: Money Market

- a) Money in this account comprises of surplus money that will be collected at the end of 2 years of each Term, and also any donations to NETS during that period. After the completion of each President (Full or Partial), money in the Checking Account should be moved to the Money Market leaving only \$3,000 for the next term in the Checking Account.
- b) If the current term does not have starting money of \$3,000 for the next term in Checking Account, then with the Board of Trustees approval can move the \$3,000 from Money Market to Checking Account.

Section 3: Paypal Account

In addition to Bank Transaction, Paypal is the method of transaction for all payments collected for Membership Fees, Participation Fees, Food Fees from Members and Non-Members of NETS. During start and end of each term, no more than \$500 should be in the NETS Paypal Account. After the start of each term, it is the Treasurer's responsibility to move the surplus from Paypal to the Checking Account.

Article 5: Transition Procedures

Section 1: Transition Method

- a) At the end of 2 years, all transitions to new EC (President, Vice-President if any, Secretary, Joint-Secretary if any, Treasurer, Joint-Treasurer if any) should be completed within 21 days of expiration of the outgoing EC's Team as per Mass Corp. If the transitions are not done in the above said time, then the current EC can request extra time to the Board of Trustees in

writing well in advance before expiration. After approval, transition needs to be done within a week. It must also be noted that any delays beyond this stipulated time, without Board of Trustees approval, will give rise to the outgoing EC member(s) being charged with all the attendant cost of maintaining the NETS Organization, including any legal expenses that could be incurred.

- b) The In coming Team will take over the charge only after the Predecessor Team (President, Vice-President if any, Secretary, Joint-Secretary if any, Treasurer, Joint-Treasurer if any) hands over all the bank transactions, documents (including tax related), certificates, checks, properties, technology assets, passwords and any other office papers pertaining to NETS.
- c) The Board of Trustees shall oversee the transition procedure from the outgoing NETS committee to the new NETS committee.

Section 2: Usage of all protected NETS property

- a) Members Email List, Bank Details, Media Details (Website, FB Contacts) beyond one's term in NETS Board will be prosecuted. This is applicable for any individual who has resigned/dismissed and are not part of NETS Board or NETS Member any more. No one should sell, trade, exchange or utilize in any other manner for personal or third party gains regarding the above said protected information.
- b) It must also be noted that if any complaints with proof submitted to NETS and/or NETS Board regarding usage of Members Email List, Media Details (for individual benefit or for other Non-Profit) without the concern of NETS Board will lead to legal charges against that individual. This will give rise to the individual being charged with all the legal expenses that could be incurred by NETS.

Article 6: Absence, Removal & Dissolution

- a) Executive Committee members (Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Joint Treasurer) cannot miss more than 3 consecutive committee meetings without formal information to NETS President and cc'ed NETS Executive Committee.
- b) Social Committee members cannot miss more than 4 consecutive committee meetings without formal information to NETS President and cc'ed NETS Executive Committee.

- c) President cannot miss more than 2 consecutive committee meetings without formal information to NETS Executive Committee.
- d) Under any circumstances, no NETS Board Member has the right to carry forward the dissolution of NETS Organization.
- e) Failure of all above may result in losing their role based on the entire NETS Board discussion. All decision taken by Board of Trustees (full quorum) will be final. It is the responsibility of the member being removed to hand over everything NETS related not limited to (Documentation, Access, Transactions, Bank Related) to President In-Charge. Failure of this will lead to legal implications.

Article 7: Election and Voting

Section 1: Election Procedures

- a) The Board of Trustees (BOT) shall be responsible to conduct elections for the positions (Executive Committee and Social Committee) as Election Committee. BOT's are eligible to vote but must not run for any office in the election being conducted, and they cannot be considered for nomination to any vacant position during the term for which elections are being conducted. BOT shall have the authority to make any election-related announcement to the general body of members by email, website notification and announcements during AGM.
- b) All Officers and members of the Executive Committee, Social Committee shall be elected by the General Body (NETS Members) as per voting procedures. Election needs to be conducted in person but for unrealistic conditions like pandemic, online methods can definitely be followed.
- c) The term of the Executive Committee is 2 years. Maximum years a member can stay in the Social Committee is 4 years but need to stand again for the Social Committee in election once their 2 year term is completed. If a member completes 4 years in SC (in total and not needed to be consecutive) they are not eligible to stand in the election for the Social Committee again in the next election. They can stand for positions in the Executive Committee only.
- d) Following are the positions for which elections will be held.
Executive Committee
President

Vice-President (If needed) - Will be determined by the Election Committee for that election year.

Secretary

Joint Secretary (If needed) - Will be determined by the Election Committee for that election year.

Treasurer

Joint Treasurer (If needed) - Will be determined by the Election Committee for that election year.

Social Committee (Number of positions will depend for each term).

Section 2: Eligibility & Electoral Decisions

- a) The Election Committee (BOT) shall call for nominations to elect the new Executive and Social Committee. The nominees shall be the current members of NETS in good standing. The call for nominations shall be sent by email to the addresses as they appear in the current membership records. NETS Members who are not in good standing cannot run for nominations. Members of the Election Committee (BOT) cannot run for nominations, but can vote.
- b) Election can be conducted in person or via online portal as determined for the current year by Election Committee.
- c) President Nominee shall be an good standing member of NETS for 3 years and have served NETS for at least 2 consecutive years in any position.
- d) EC Nominees shall be an good standing member of NETS for at least 2 years. SC Nominees shall be an good standing member of NETS at least 1 year.
- e) Each registered NETS Membership Email ID gets one vote. No room for proxy voting.
- f) If there are no opposing candidates for any positions, those positions shall be elected as unopposed (unanimously).
- g) In case of tie for position(s), re-election must be conducted for those position(s) using the same guidelines. If nominations are not received for certain position(s), Election Committee shall appoint candidates for such position(s) based on guidelines.
- h) Any past Members (EC, SC, and BOT (previously called Advisory)) of NETS who have resigned/retired/removed for any reason are not eligible to stand for nomination during 5-year period from the date of their resignation/retirement/removal.
- i) All the nominations will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and need to be approved/rejected in order to stand in the election.

- j) A NETS Member in good standing (as stated above) can only make one single nomination, including self-nomination and can be nominated for one post only.
- k) No two persons from the same family can apply for nomination for any post. In such a case, both the nominations will be rejected.
- l) A nominee can withdraw his/her nomination and can nominate for another post during the nomination period according to his or her choice. But this cannot be done after the nomination withdrawal date.
- m) All nominees must definitely agree to NETS By-Laws during their nomination submission and once elected must submit signed NETS By-Laws to Election Committee before their official term starts in Mass Corp(Print and Sign all pages).
- n) Every candidate running for a specific position on the EC and SC shall have equal access to the information needed for campaigning. All campaigns will be sent only from NETS Official Election Committee ID to NETS Member Distribution list. No nominee can email or call the NETS Member for campaign; though they can post in their personal social media for campaigning.
- o) The Board of Trustees shall develop campaign guidelines. The campaign shall ensure fairness, keep order, and preserve the integrity of the election.
- p) The Board of Trustees will have the authority to cancel the nomination of candidates and disqualify them for violating these principles of campaigning.
- q) Any expenses incurred by nominees for election should be on their own, NETS will not pay for the same.
- r) Results announced by Election Committee are Final. In doubt, candidate may seek clarification and review of their case directly with the Election Committee by submitting written notice.

Article 8: Amendments / Ratification of By-Laws

- a) Any amendments or update to the NETS By-Laws can be proposed by any one in NETS Board and should be submitted to the President 60 days before the Annual General Body Meeting - AGM (decided by current team). President have to bring this to Board of Trustees. This must be discussed by NETS Board and decided by Board of Trustees (full quorum) and only upon approval it will be presented in the AGM Meeting and will be incorporated in to the existing by-laws as amendments after the AGM.

- b) Updated By-Laws should be uploaded in to the Mass Corp Website, should be sent to all NETS Members via email and will be effective immediately.
- c) Other than this time, By-Laws will be not touched as and when needed for the benefit of personal interest. Failure to follow will lead to legal implications.
- d) There are some sections in the by-law which remains unchanged
 - Article 1: Section 2 through Section 5
 - Article 3: Section 9
 - Article 4: Section 1a
 - Article 8

Article 9: Representation in other Non-Profits

- a) Any NETS Member in good standing for at least 5 years can represent him/her in another Tamil based non-profit organization as a delegate/life time member. Any such representation should be in written communication to current NETS Board during the start of calendar year. Any such member must have participated in the convention of the non-profit in previous year(s) and also current year and also one of the below clause must be achieved.
 - 1) Participated consecutively at least 2 years in the participating non-profit's convention.
[or]
 - 2) Member who have worked in at least 2 different committees in the participating non-profit.
[or]
 - 3) Member of the executive committee in NETS.
[or]
 - 4) Currently a Board Member in the participating non-profit.
- b) If there are more people available for representation then NETS Board decides the participation member for the current term. Achieving gender balance representation is highly encouraged and maximum allowed participation need to be utilized based on the by-laws of participating non-profit.