

NABJ-CHICAGO CHAPTER CONSTITUTION

Preamble:

We, the members of the National Association of Black Journalists-Chicago Chapter, believing that Black journalists should bind themselves together in an effort to increase Black employment in the media, to increase the number of Blacks in management positions, to encourage and educate young Blacks interested in pursuing a journalism career, and to monitor and sensitize all media to racism, do enact and establish this Constitution for the governance of our members.

CHAPTER 1.

Article I. Name.

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the National Association of Black Journalists-Chicago Chapter.

Section 2. The symbol of the NABJ-CC shall be the letters, N, A, B, J-C,C with an upright pen on the left and a hanging microphone on the right, surrounded by a silhouette of the Chicago skyline.

Article II. Purpose.

Section 1. The purpose of the NABJ-CC shall be to bring about a union of local Black journalists dedicated to truth and excellence in the news, and full equality in the industry in order:

- (a) To expand and balance the media's coverage of the Black community and Black experience.
- (b) To encourage students to identify careers in journalism.
- (c) To actively seek out and identify job opportunities for Black journalists, and to serve as a clearinghouse for such opportunities.
- (d) To assist Black journalists in upgrading their skills for upward mobility toward managerial and supervisory positions.
- (e) To strengthen the ties between Blacks who work in majority-owned media and Blacks who work in the Black-owned media.
- (f) To sensitize the majority-owned media to racism.
- (g) To award scholarships and internships to Black students.
- (h) To be an exemplary group of professionals that honors excellence and outstanding achievement among Black journalists.
- (i) To encourage journalism schools to appoint Black professors.
- (j) To work with high schools to identify potential Black journalists.
- (k) To chronicle the history of African-American journalists in the Chicago area.
- (l) To do other activities that are not prohibited to non-profit corporations by Section 501 (c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and the rulings and regulations thereunder.

Section 2. NABJ-CC may, after approval of a majority of its members, take positions or act on issues of social or professional concern. NABJ-CC may not endorse or support any candidate for public office.

Article III. Membership.

Section 1. The organization shall be composed of journalists, journalism professors, and students interested in pursuing a career in journalism, who are full members or associate members of the organization.

Article IV. Compliance.

Section 1. This Constitution, adopted in conformity herewith, shall be in compliance with applicable federal or state law governing the transaction of NABJ-CC business.

CHAPTER 2.

Article I. Officers of the Organization.

Section 1. Titles of Officers. The officers of the Organization shall be President, Vice President/Print, Vice President/Broadcast, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian.

Section 2. Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice President/Print, Vice President/Broadcast, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, the Immediate Past President and six elected Board Members-At-Large. The Executive Director shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Board. Candidates for office must be financially current with NABJ-CC and the National Association of Black Journalists at the time of election.

The Past President and the Executive Director will serve as ex officio members of the Executive Board and will serve only in an advisory capacity.

The Executive Board shall share responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organization, and will be responsible for the development of an annual planning calendar and the scheduling of NABJ-CC events.

(a) Only persons who are financially current can serve on the Executive Board.

(b) The Executive Board shall meet at least once every 60 days. Notice of meeting must be given to the general membership no more than 40 and no less than five days prior to the meeting.

(c) In order to conduct official business, three members must be present at an Executive Board meeting.

(d) The Executive Board shall have the power to set policy within the parameters of the By-Laws, establish ad hoc committees, and pass resolutions. A simple majority of the Board must approve all such actions. Policies and resolutions must be dated and approved in writing.

Section 3. Duties and Descriptions of Officers.

(a) The President shall preside over all meetings of NABJ-CC and function as its principal executive officer. The President shall ensure that all resolutions, orders and contracts authorized by the Executive Board are executed.

The President shall also have the power to appoint or remove committee chairs, except as otherwise provided in the By-Laws. The President, in cooperation with the committee, meets with the committee chairpersons to plan strategy and provide direction for the committee, according to the policies of NABJ-CC.

(b) The Vice President/Broadcast and the Vice President/Print shall assist the President in the discharge of those duties, as assigned by the President; and preside, concurrently, in the President's absence.

(c) The Secretary shall serve as the principal communications officer. S/he shall keep, or cause to be kept, full minutes of all meetings; shall maintain formal records; and shall present minutes of all meetings to the membership. The Secretary shall be responsible for providing all meeting notices to the members.

The Secretary also shall oversee all formal communications.

(d) The Treasurer shall serve as the principal financial officer of NABJ-CC. S/he shall be responsible for the maintenance and submission of all financial records of NABJ-CC, the submission of monthly financial reports and an annual financial report to the membership, the deposit of funds authorized to NABJ-CC in an account(s) designated by the Board of Directors and the disbursement of funds of the Organization on order from the President and/or the Board.

The Treasurer's signature is mandatory for any and all disbursements of funds on behalf of NABJ-CC.

Should any disbursement of funds appear to be unlawful, the Treasurer shall submit the question of the legality of such order for the vote of the Executive Board, and s/he shall follow the course outlined by the majority vote of the Executive Board.

The Treasurer shall be bonded.

(e) The Parliamentarian shall be an appointed office of the Board of Directors. The Parliamentarian will be responsible for ensuring compliance of NABJ-CC to its By-Laws, maintaining proper parliamentary procedure and overseeing elections.

The Parliamentarian serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee.

(f) No check shall be issued without the signature of two of the four officers.

Article II. Eligibility for Office and Term of Office.

Section 1. Eligibility for Office. To be eligible for office in the organization, a candidate must be a full member in good standing with NABJ-CC and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Associate members shall not be eligible to hold office in the Organization.

Section 2. Term of Office. Terms shall be for two years. A Board member may serve no more than two consecutive terms unless the majority of the Executive Board makes a determination that the person seeking such office in excess of two terms is valuable to the Organization. Such person shall be allowed to seek additional terms and/or offices. Such permission granted by the Executive Board to seek additional terms and/or offices shall be done on a two-year basis.

CHAPTER 3.

Article I. Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors and Removal of Appointed Personnel.

Section 1. Power and Duties of the Board of Directors.

(a) Executive Director. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to employ by contract, a person of suitable qualifications who, whenever possible, shall be a NABJ-CC member; whose title shall be Executive Director, and whose duties shall be to operate the offices of the Organization. The Executive Director serves at the discretion and direction of the Board.

The Executive Director's salary shall be set by the Board. S/he shall be bonded in a sum to be determined by the Board.

CHAPTER 4.

Article I. Composition of the Membership.

Section 1. The membership of NABJ-CC shall be composed of the Executive Board and all other members in good standing.

Section 2. Associate Members. Associate Members shall be admitted to meetings, may voice a non-binding opinion, and may serve on committees, provided they do not comprise more than one-third of any committee. Associate Members may not vote in any other circumstances.

Section 3. Student Members. Student Members shall be admitted to meetings, may voice a non-binding opinion, and may serve on committees, provided they do not comprise more than one-third of any committee. Student Members may not vote in any other circumstances.

Article II. Membership Meeting, Powers and Voting.

Section 1. Purpose. The membership shall assemble at least once a month at such times and places as may be determined by the Board for the purposes of:

- (a) Hearing and acting upon the reports of the President, Treasurer, Secretary and various committees.
- (b) Providing education and professional development workshops.
- (c) Hearing and acting on such business that may be presented by the membership.

Section 2. Powers. Full Members shall have the power to:

- (a) Adopt amendments to the Constitution.
- (b) Elect officers at least once every two years.
- (c) Do such other things as may be necessary or appropriate for the good of the organization and its members.

Section 3. Voting and Voting Eligibility. Any full member who is in good standing can vote.

CHAPTER 5.

Article I. Membership Eligibility.

Section 1. Full Membership.

(a) Full membership shall be open to working journalists, i.e., writers, reporters, editors, newsroom managers, photographers and artists who produce, gather, disseminate and distribute news and who work for newspapers, television and radio stations, magazines and wire services.

(b) Full membership shall also be open to freelance journalists. Full-time journalists and those who earn a majority of their income from freelancing, who take leaves of absence, retain their membership status during the period of the leave.

(c) Full membership also shall be open to college and university journalism professors who had five years' newsroom experience prior to joining academia.

Full members are eligible to vote, hold office, participate in all NABJ-CC functions and receive all NABJ-CC correspondence.

Section 2. Associate Membership. Associate membership shall be open to all other media-related professionals if their goals and purposes are consistent with this Constitution and the spirit of NABJ-CC and NABJ.

Associate members are eligible to receive all NABJ-CC correspondence.

Section 3. Student Membership. Student membership shall be open to anyone currently a full-time equivalent student at an accredited college or university who either is majoring in print or broadcast journalism, or who indicates a strong interest in pursuing a journalism career (where the college or university has no print or broadcast journalism curriculum). Student membership status shall continue for six months after graduation.

Student members are eligible to receive all NABJ-CC correspondence.

Section 4. All membership applications for full or associate members will be subject to the review of the Membership Committee. The Board may overrule any such committee decision.

Article II. Fiscal year and Membership Dues.

Section 1. All NABJ-CC full and associate members are required to pay dues. The fiscal year of NABJ-CC shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each calendar year.

CHAPTER 6.

Article I. Elections.

Section 1. Election of the Executive Board will occur at the Annual Meeting. Officers shall serve their term on the Board concurrently with their term as board members.

Section 2. Nominating procedure

(a) The Nominating Committee will develop a potential slate of eligible candidates, according to the By-Laws, for general membership.

(b) An official nomination form, which identifies the candidates and offices, shall be mailed to all financially active members by the Secretary during the month of February.

The form will be designed to allow for the addition of at least two names per office by the receiving NABJ-CC members.

(c) The completed nomination, signed, dated and verifiable, must be received by the Chair of the Nominating Committee three (3) weeks prior to the date of election.

(d) Once the nominees have been identified and verified, and have accepted, they will prepare a brief platform statement which lists their qualifications and plans for office. This statement is not to exceed four (4) typed lines. The platform statement will be included on the official election ballot.

Section 3. Voting.

An official pre-printed ballot is required for the election of officers or to make an amendment to the By-Laws. An official ballot must be on NABJ-CC stationery and be signed by the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and two members of the Nominating Committee.

(a) Regular ballots will be available at the meeting site.

(b) Absentee ballots may be obtained by a formal request to the Parliamentarian. The request shall be made in writing, confirmed by phone and returned one week prior to election. Absentee ballots will be distributed up to two weeks prior to the election.

CHAPTER 7.

Article I. Committees.

Section 1. NABJ-CC shall have six standing committees: Membership, Program Planning, Communications, Fund-Raising, Nominating and Media Advocacy.

(a) The Membership Committee shall approve all applications for membership; administer the student scholarship contest; and administer the Annual Membership Drive.

Additionally, this committee will be responsible for activities related to career development, advancement and opportunity.

(b) The Program Planning Committee shall be responsible for all standard NABJ-CC functions, including preparation of the newsletter, planning and executing the Awards Banquet, and the coordination of other program which honor excellence and outstanding achievements by local African-American journalists.

(c) The Communications Committee shall prepare press releases and internal flyers and develop publicity strategies for NABJ-CC-sponsored events.

(d) The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for overseeing all elections and procedures requiring a ballot vote.

(e) The Fund-Raising Committee shall plan and implement all non-standard events and activities designed to generate income for the Organization.

(f) The Media Advocacy Committee shall be charged with monitoring the media for discrimination and other injustices to African Americans in their coverage and employment practices. It shall report to the Board and the membership issues of concern for consideration.

Section 2. Ad hoc committees may be formed by the President, at the direction of the Board, as needed. Ad hoc committees are temporary committees.

Sections 3. Common membership to a committee will be open to the general NABJ-CC membership. Committee membership may be restricted at the request of the Committee Chair and is subject to the approval of the Board. The Nominating Committee is excepted from Board approval and requires a quorum of the general membership for approval.

CHAPTER 8.

Article I. Vacancies, removals from office and successions.

Section 1. The President shall appoint a full member to fill a vacancy created by the departure, resignation or removal from office of any member of the Board. The appointment shall be only for the remaining term in office.

Such appointment requires both the approval of a minimum of four members of the Executive Board and an official notification of the appointment to the general membership.

Section 2. A member of the Board who does not attend three successive, regularly scheduled meetings of the Board shall be deemed to have resigned his/her membership, unless retained by action of the Board.

Section 3. A member of the Board may be removed from his/her office for dereliction of duty or unethical behavior. Two-thirds of the board must vote for removal.

(a) The Board member being removed must be given written notification; and has 30 days in which to make an appeal of the charges for the Executive Board, before a vote can be taken. During this time, the challenged Board member's decision-making authority is suspended.

(b) After the Board has voted to remove one of its members from office, the general membership must be notified of the removal. The membership must also approve the Board member's removal.

(c) A special meeting of the general membership is to be called to vote on the issue of removal. A three-fifths vote of the general membership is required for approval.

Section 4. In the event the President is unable to serve, the remaining members of the Executive Board shall have the power to appoint an Acting President. The Acting President may hold office for a period of no more than 60 days.

An open election is then required to officially fill the President's office and must take place no more than 60 days from the actual date of vacancy.

CHAPTER 9.

Article I. Meetings.

Section 1. There shall be an Annual Meeting of NABJ-CC membership in the month of May. The business to be conducted during the Annual Meeting is confined to:

- (1) the election of officers,
- (2) the reading and acceptance of the annual financial report, and
- (3) approval of increases in membership dues.

Section 2. A regularly scheduled NABJ-CC meeting requires written notification no less than one (1) week in advance of the meeting date. A regularly scheduled meeting should occur at least quarterly. A quorum is required to transact business at a regularly scheduled meeting.

A quorum is defined as three-fifths of the average attendance of any regularly scheduled meeting.

CHAPTER 10.

Article I. Constitutional Amendments and Effective Date.

Section 1. Proposal of Amendments. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any full member.

Section 2. The Constitution may be amended as follows:

(a) The Constitution can be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting membership present. Changes to this Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Parliamentarian at least eight (8) weeks prior to an Annual Meeting. The Parliamentarian will convene and chair the Constitutional Committee to discuss the proposed change. The Committee will circulate the proposed amendment, with a recommendation, to all members at least four (4) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. At the next Annual Meeting, the membership can approve said amendment with an affirmative two-thirds vote and said amendment shall be considered adopted immediately.

(b) Any approved amendments to the Constitution must be circulated to all members.

CHAPTER 11.

Article I. Parliamentary Authority.

Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall be used to provide guidance in governing all NABJ-CC meetings and apply to all matters of The Organization not covered by either the National Association of Black Journalists' constitution or the NABJ-CC By-Laws.