



DEBRE SELAM KIDIST MARIAM FRATERNAL BENEFICIARY ASSOCIATION (DSKMFBA) A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION Bylaws

DSKMFBA

ARTICLE I - Purpose:

Debre-Selam Kidist Mariam Fraternal Beneficiary Association (DSKMFBA) is a nonprofit association registered under the IRC 501(c)(8). The nonprofit status was approved on September 22, 2010. The office is located at 721 Sligo Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910.

DSKMFBA assists in funeral and other services to its members, dependent parents, and children. All members of the association are bound in faith under the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church faith and Order.

Accordingly, members work in union to accomplish worthy and sacred deeds and for that reason have banded together as an association to aid and assist one another and promote the common cause.

As we embark on this collective journey, we acknowledge the following principles and ideals that guide our endeavors:

ARTICLE II - Values:

- A. Compassion: We embrace empathy and kindness as the cornerstones of our work, demonstrating understanding and care for the individuals and communities we serve.
- B. Integrity: We commit to the highest standards of honesty, ethics, and transparency in our actions and decision-making.
- C. Collaboration: We believe in the power of cooperation, fostering partnerships, and collective efforts to address our community's needs.
- D. Innovation: We strive for creative solutions and adaptability to address emerging challenges.
- E. Inclusivity: We promote diversity and inclusiveness, valuing all voices, perspectives, and backgrounds.
- F. Stewardship: We are dedicated to responsible management and allocation of resources for the benefit of our mission and community.

ARTICLE III - Commitment:

We pledge to work tirelessly, united by a shared vision, to create lasting, positive change in the lives of those we serve and the broader community.

ARTICLE IV - Nonprofit Status:

We acknowledge that our association is organized exclusively as a fraternal beneficiary association under Section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the applicable laws of our jurisdiction, and we commit to operate in full compliance with all relevant regulations and guidelines.

In witness whereof, we, the founding members, adopt this preamble as the foundational document of DSKMFBA on March 22, 2010. The principal office of the association is:

721 Sligo Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301)755-4437
Email: dskmfbaedir@gmail.com
Website: <https://dskmfba.org/>

ARTICLE V - NAME

The name of the association shall be DSKMFBA. It shall be a nonprofit association incorporated under the laws of the state of Maryland.

ARTICLE VI - PURPOSE

The purposes of DSKMFBA are through cultural education and artistic production, the center will strive to introduce the rich Ethiopian culture and heritage to the general populace and utilize the same to build bridges with the greater society. With the aim of contributing towards the creation of good citizenry through academic success, the center aims to provide free tutoring and mentoring services to students who stand in need of such support without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, national origin or sexual orientation.

ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Eligibility for membership (18 years old and above).** Membership is admitted after a background evaluation, an assessment of one's dedication, reliability, and commitment to the association, and the completion of annual dues payment.

Section 2. **Initial Registration.** Upon approval by the board, new members are required to pay an initial registration fee as follows:

Membership Registration Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Pursuant to the decision of the Board, the new membership registration fees shall be established as follows:

\$5,000 for individuals aged 18 to 62

\$7,000 for individuals aged 63 and above

These rates shall remain in effect until amended or superseded by subsequent general assembly.

Section 3. **Household Members.** When registering, a member must submit a list of their spouse, dependent parents, and children aged 18 or younger, along with proof of relationship and shared household, to the board.

Section 4. **Membership Approval.** This payment can be made in installments, provided it is completed within six months of registration. Once the payment and prorated annual membership dues are fully settled, the member will receive an ID card, granting full membership and associated benefits.

Section 5. **Annual dues.** The annual membership dues shall be \$_____, unless modified by a simple majority vote of the members. Continued membership is contingent upon remaining current on all dues and meeting participation requirements.

Members may pay the annual dues in **no fewer than four (4) installment payments**, provided that all payments are made within the **90-day grace period** outlined in **Article VIII – Termination of Membership, Section 1: Grace Period.**

For illustration, installment payments should be made as follows:

- **First installment:** on or before **March 31**
- **Second installment:** on or before **June 30**
- **Third installment:** on or before **September 30**
- **Fourth and final installment:** on or before **December 31**

Section 6. **Refund of Registration Fee.** If a member applicant passes away due to illness or an accident while making installment payments, their surviving spouse is entitled to receive 75% of the total amount paid to the association for initial registration and other fees.

Section 7. **Household members.** A member must provide a list of their spouse, dependent parents, and children aged 18 or younger. Proof of relationship and shared household must be submitted to the board.

Section 8. **Household Change:** Members must notify the board, with supporting evidence, of any changes in marital status or adjustments to the household members listed on the initial registration form.

Section 9. **Rights of members.** Members are entitled to one vote for each matter decided by the DSKMFBA after being a member-in-good-standing for a period of no less than three months.

DSKMFBA allows a grace period of 90 days for overdue payments before terminating a member from membership.

Section 1. **Notification:** DSKMFBA should send reminders or notices to the member regarding the overdue payment, providing a clear deadline for payment.

Section 2. **Review of Circumstances:** Before termination, the board will review the members' situation, as there could be forgiving circumstances causing the delay.

Section 3. **Termination:** If the payment is not received after the grace period and sufficient notice, the member shall be terminated from membership in accordance with our policies. When a member

is terminated or voluntarily resigns, no refunds will be issued for membership dues or initial registration fees.

Section 4. **Ownership Interest:** As a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(8) of the tax code, members do not have any ownership interest in the association's assets, except for the benefits outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

ARTICLE VIII – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. **Grace Period:** DSKMFBA allows a grace period of 90 days for overdue payments before terminating a member from membership.

Section 2. **Notification:** DSKMFBA should send reminders or notices to the member regarding the overdue payment, providing a clear deadline for payment.

Section 3. **Review of Circumstances:** Before termination, the board will review the members' situation, as there could be forgiving circumstances causing the delay.

Section 4. **Termination:** If the payment is not received after the grace period and sufficient notice, the member shall be terminated from membership in accordance with our policies. When a member is terminated or voluntarily resigns, no refunds will be issued for membership dues or initial registration fees.

Section 5. **Ownership Interest:** As a nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(8) of the tax code, members do not have any ownership interest in the association's assets, except for the benefits outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

ARTICLE IX- Board of Directors

Section 1. Composition: A Board of Directors shall manage the affairs of the association. The Board of Directors shall consist of no more than five directors. Directors shall serve for two years and may be re-elected for an additional two-year term.

Section 2. Power: The Board of Directors shall have the power to govern the Association, make decisions, and oversee its activities. Directors shall act in the best interests of the Association.

Section 3. Removal and Resignation: Any officer may be subject to removal from his or her position for repeated misconduct, violations of bylaws, or actions that endanger the association, during the Board of Directors meeting convened specifically for this purpose, through a straightforward majority vote. The officer in question shall not possess the privilege of casting a vote in this matter. Furthermore, any officer retains the option to voluntarily resign from their position for any personal reason.

Section 4. Vacancies: In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the position shall promptly be filled through the nomination of board members and subsequent approval by a majority vote.

Section 5. Succession Planning: The board plays a role in succession planning, helping to identify and groom potential future leaders for the association.

Section 6. Powers and Duties of Officers.

The Chairperson has a significant and multifaceted role in guiding the association. His/her duties typically include:

1. **Leadership:** The Chair is the highest-ranking officer in the association and provides overall leadership and direction. He/she sets the tone for the association's culture, values, and goals.
2. **Presiding Over Meetings:** The Chair presides over the board meetings, general membership meetings, and other important gatherings, ensuring that they run smoothly, are productive, and adhere to the association's bylaws and rules of order.
3. **Strategic Planning:** He/she is responsible for working with the board members to develop and implement the association's strategic plan. This includes setting goals, priorities, and strategies to achieve the nonprofit's mission.

4. **Representing the Association:** The Chair acts as the primary spokesperson and representative of the association and must maintain a good standing in his or her personal responsibilities with federal and state governments.
5. **Decision-Making:** The Chair plays a pivotal role in making decisions for the association, including approving budgets, policies, and major initiatives. He/she also provides guidance on complex issues and helps build consensus among board members.
6. **Board Engagement:** The Chair works to engage and motivate board members, ensuring their active participation in the association's activities and decision-making processes.
7. **Crisis Management:** In times of crisis or when the association faces significant challenges, the Chair often takes a lead role in addressing and resolving these issues.
8. **Setting the Agenda:** The Chair helps set the agenda for board meetings and ensures that key issues are addressed and that meetings are efficient and focused.

The Vice Chairperson has a range of responsibilities that include:

1. **Assuming Leadership in the Chair's Absence:** One of the primary roles of the Vice-Chair is to step in and fulfill the duties of the Chair in their absence. This involves presiding over meetings, making decisions, and representing the association.
2. **Supporting the Chair:** The Vice-Chair works closely with the Chair and often takes on various tasks to support their leadership, such as helping to set the meeting agenda, facilitating communication within the association, and collaborating on strategic planning.
3. **Committee Leadership:** The Vice-Chair may lead or participate in committees or subcommittees within the association, helping to oversee specific areas like finance, governance, or program development.
4. **Representation:** The Vice-Chair may represent the association at external events, meetings, or with other associations, promoting the nonprofit's mission and values.
5. **Special Projects:** Depending on the association's needs, the Vice-Chair may take on special projects or initiatives, such as fundraising campaigns, community outreach, or strategic planning.
6. **Engaging with Members:** The Vice-Chair often plays a role in engaging with and mobilizing the association's members, ensuring their involvement and commitment to the mission.
7. **Supporting the Board:** He/she works closely with other board members to ensure effective governance and decision-making within the nonprofit.

The Secretary of the Association plays a crucial administrative role in ensuring the smooth and transparent functioning of the association. The duties include:

1. **Record-Keeping:** Maintaining accurate and complete records of all official meetings, including board meetings, general membership meetings, and committee meetings. This includes recording minutes, resolutions, and decisions made during these meetings.
2. **Meeting Preparation:** Collaborating with the Chair to set meeting dates, prepare agendas, and distribute relevant documents to board members and other attendees in advance of meetings.
3. **Meeting Facilitation:** During meetings, the Secretary records minutes, keeps track of who attends, and ensures that meetings follow the established agenda and rules of order.
4. **Documentation:** Maintaining a secure and organized repository of the association's official documents, including bylaws, articles of incorporation, meeting minutes, policies, and historical records.
5. **Corporate Filings:** Ensuring the nonprofit's compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements, which may include filing annual reports, updating contact information with relevant government agencies, and managing the association's corporate records.
6. **Board Communication:** Serving as a key point of contact for board members, providing them with necessary information, distributing materials, and coordinating their communication with the association.
7. **Transparency:** Ensuring that records are accessible to board members and members of the association as required, promoting transparency and accountability.
8. **Membership Records:** Keeping an up-to-date list of the association's members, tracking their contact information, membership status, and dues payments.
9. **Official Correspondence:** Handling official correspondence, such as sending out notices, receiving and responding to inquiries, and managing the association's email and postal mail.
10. **Elections and Nominations:** Overseeing the election and nomination processes for board members, officers, or other leadership roles, including managing nominations, ballots, and the announcement of results.
11. **Bylaws and Policies:** Ensuring that the association's bylaws and policies are up to date, and assisting with amendments or revisions as needed.
12. **Committee Support:** Assisting and coordinating the work of board committees by keeping records of their activities and helping to schedule and manage their meetings.

The Treasurer plays a critical role in ensuring financial stability, accountability, and compliance. He/she is tasked in safeguarding the financial health of the association while ensuring that resources are used efficiently to fulfill its mission.

His or her responsibilities include the following:

1. Financial Oversight and Management

- The Treasurer shall be responsible for reviewing and approving all disbursements of funds, except for routine or recurring operational expenses such as electricity, gas, water, and other utilities.

Upon the Treasurer's approval, the payment shall be authorized and initialed by either the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, serving as the designated signatory. No payment, other than recurring expenses, shall be made without the prior written or electronic approval of the Treasurer.

- Maintain and oversee the association's financial systems, including accounting, reporting, and budgeting.
- Monitor cash flow and ensure financial sustainability.
- Prepare and present accurate financial statements, including balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow reports.

2. Budgeting and Forecasting

- Lead the annual budgeting process in collaboration with the board.
- Provide financial forecasts to guide decision-making and strategic planning.
- Monitor budget adherence and analyze variances.

3. Compliance and Audit

- Ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and reporting standards (e.g., IRS Forms 990 and 99-T).
- Oversee internal and external audits, including preparing necessary documentation and addressing audit findings.
- Stay updated on changes in nonprofit accounting standards, such as those issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

4. Internal Controls and Risk Management

- Develop and maintain internal controls to safeguard associational assets and prevent fraud.
- Identify and mitigate financial risks.
- Review and refine financial policies and procedures.

5. Collaboration with Leadership

- Provide financial insights and reports to the board of directors.
- Support strategic initiatives with financial analysis and recommendations.

ARTICLE X — MEMBER MEETINGS

Section 1. **Meetings:** The Debre Selam Kidist Mariam Fraternal Beneficiary Association (DSKMFBA) shall hold its annual meeting **once each year (year-end)** in accordance with a schedule established by the Board of Directors. The meeting of the members shall be conducted at a designated location appropriate for such gatherings and in full compliance with the county's Certificate of Occupancy requirements.

Section 2. **Notice of meetings:** Notice of each meeting shall be provided to all members no less than one week in advance, using all available means of communication, including but not limited to robocalls, telephone calls, email, text messages, telegram, and other accessible social media platforms. Because not all members of the Association attend services at Re'ese Adbarat Debre Selam Kidest Mariam Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, an announcement made solely at that location does **not** constitute sufficient notice. Accordingly, no member shall be penalized for failing to attend a meeting based on such limited notice.

Section 3. **Quorum:** The members present at any properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. **Voting:** All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority of those present at the meeting in which the vote takes place.

Section 5. **Special Meetings:** Special meetings are held on the call of the Chair and upon approval of a simple majority of board members.

Section 6. **Required Attendance:** A member who misses any meeting will incur a \$50 penalty for not attending. Exception to this policy is only allowed if the member provides reasonable cause with supporting evidence, subject to the board's approval.

Section 7. **Minutes.** Minutes shall be recorded by the Secretary and dispersed by email no more than seven days following the meeting. The Secretary will redistribute the minutes at least five days prior to the meeting. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting is the first item of business at each regular meeting.

ARTICLE XI — FINANCES

Section 1. **Fiscal Year:** The DSKMFBA fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

Section 2. **Receipt of Funds:** To minimize the risk of fraud and embezzlement, cash payments for membership dues or rental activities are prohibited. Individuals who accept or give cash will face disciplinary action determined by the board.

Section 3. The account of DSKMFBA shall be maintained in the association's name and overseen by the Board of Directors, with the treasurer's sole responsibility.

ARTICLE XIII — AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

Amendments shall be adopted at any meeting where a quorum is present, provided that all association members are given proper notice of the proposed amendment at least seven (7) days before the meeting. Amendments to the Bylaws require a two-thirds (2/3) approval from those members present and voting. These amendments will take effect as specified in the original motion.

ARTICLE XIV — Dissolution of the Association

Upon receiving a positive vote from two-thirds (2/3) of the association's membership, the Board of Directors will convene a special meeting exclusively to discuss the voluntary dissolution of this association. Subsequently, all assets, funds, minutes, and records, after settling all liabilities and obligations, shall be expeditiously transferred to the custody of a suitable association or agency as designated by the Board of Directors. The primary aim in this process is to align with the association's mission, and any remaining assets shall be transferred to comparable nonprofit associations.

Approved By the Board of Directors

Chairperson's Name:	
Signature	Date
Vice Chairperson's Name:	
Signature	Date
Secretary's Name	
Signature	Date