

Constitution of the Ghana Association of Oregon (GHASO)

Preamble: We, the members of the Ghana Association of Oregon, being Ghanaians (or affiliated special cases), now residing in Oregon do hereby resolve to form a social, cultural, and non-profit organization for the purpose of maintaining our traditional values and promotion of our welfare and interests as Ghanaians.

Wherefore, we ordain and establish this Constitution for the Ghana Association of Oregon this February 11, 2012.

Article One

Name: The name of the Association shall be the “Ghana Association of Oregon,” abbreviated GHASO.

Article Two

Statement of Purpose: To serve as a social and cultural support network for Ghanaians living in Oregon. To instill cultural awareness in our children and an appreciation of our cultural values and traditions. To take an active role in sharing Ghanaian culture within our wider communities. And, to function as the official mouthpiece of its members.

Article Three

Objectives:

- A) To bring together and foster cordial relationships among Ghanaians
- B) To promote and enhance the cultural heritage of Ghana
- C) To provide a forum to educate our children about Ghanaian culture and values
- D) To promote the general welfare and interests of Ghanaians in Oregon

Article Four

Affiliations:

To protect the viability and cohesion of the Association, it is not affiliated with, nor does it promote any specific ethnic (tribal) group, political party or religion over another.

Article Five

Membership:

- A) Typical Cases
 - 1) Membership is by application
 - 2) Membership shall be open to all Ghanaians, their spouses, and adult children
 - 3) Membership is also open to Ghanaians who are no longer citizens of Ghana by virtue of their naturalization as citizens of other countries
- B) Honorary Membership:
 - 1) May be conferred on non-Ghanaians in the community who in the opinion of the Association, and upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, are deserving of such an honor. Honorees will be selected based on the perception of their overall abiding deep interest in Ghana. in the following cases
 - 2) Special Honorary Membership:
 - a. May be conferred on any person in the community (government officials, educators, etc.) whose attitude and actions are considered to be beneficial to the promotion of a healthy climate between Ghanaians and Americans
 - b. Persons who meet this criteria are not required to pay dues or maintain active membership

C) Benefits of Membership

- a. Members who have paid their dues will have voting rights
- b. Social and networking opportunities
- c. Leadership opportunities
- d. Announcements of special gatherings, activities, or events
- e. Monetary support to be determined by the Executive Committee
 - i. Birth benefit – a monetary gift for the birth of a GAO member’s child
 - ii. Wedding benefit – a monetary gift for the marriage of a GAO member
 - iii. Death benefit – a monetary gift for the death of a GAO member’s mother, father, spouse, or child. This benefit may be collected once in the “mother” category, and once in the “father category.” Lifetime limit – 4 distributions

Article Six

Organization Structure:

A) General Assembly

- 1) Made up of all members of the Association
- 2) Shall be the supreme functioning body of the Association
- 3) It should meet a minimum of three times in any one calendar year (preferably in April, August, and December)
- 4) It shall operate on the basis of consensus and when necessary, decisions shall be arrived at on the basis of simple majority of paid members present and voting

B) The Executive Committee

- 1) Shall consist of three members elected by the General Assembly
- 2) They shall hold office for two years
- 3) To qualify as a candidate for an Executive Committee position, the member shall be in good standing (eg. Dues paid, attends meetings regularly, participates in Association activities)
- 4) Executive Committee members shall hold a specific office for not more than three consecutive terms (6 years total)
- 5) Executive Committee members can be re-elected for another Executive Committee position (in such circumstances the new position will re-start the term consecutive term limits)

a) President

1. Provides leadership for goals/activities during his/her term
2. Oversees all meetings
3. Acts as a primary delegate for the Association
4. Enforces and upholds by-laws
5. Maintains order within the group during meetings and other events
6. Makes final decision in the event of a voting tie
7. Signs all correspondence which is on behalf of the Association
8. Co-signs Association Checks with the Treasurer

b) Vice President

1. Anticipates upcoming events and delegates responsibilities accordingly
2. Sets General and Executive meeting agendas
3. Assists the President in his/her duties
4. Acts as President when current President is absent
5. Organizes Executive Meetings

6. Serves as a liaison to other African organizations, as necessary
7. Serves as the contact person for all committees

c) Treasurer

1. Keeps accurate records of all income and expenses of the Association
2. Collects dues
3. Presents financial statements/reports to the Executive and General Assembly
4. Co-signs Association checks with the President
5. Prepares financial reports (eg. Annual Operating Expenses & Budget)

d) Organizing Secretary

1. Prepares minutes for adoption by the general membership
2. Coordinates all GHASO programming (ie. Independence, Annual Picnic)
3. Maintains minutes and all records of the Association
4. Distributes minutes, flyers, and announcements to members
5. Maintains social media presence, e-mails to the list-serve
6. Maintains and updates member roster and benefit accounts

C) Council of Elders

The Association recognizes the wisdom and experience of the elders of the Ghanaian community in Oregon and therefore endeavors to look to them for advice and assistance when relevant.

- 1) Person of advanced age who have been active in the association for more than 10 years may be, upon formal written request by Executive Committee, to provide a non-binding advisory role for the Executive Committee and the General Assembly at large
- 2) Such individuals may be called upon to mitigate serious tension among Executive Committee members
- 3) If requested, such individuals may preside over events such as weddings, births, and funerals in order to maintain traditional authenticity and modeling for future generations

D) Other Committees and/or bodies appointed by the Executive Committee or General Assembly

Article Seven

Dues:

- A) Annual membership dues shall be paid by all adult members (18 years and above).
- B) Dues are not refundable either in part or in total under any circumstances.
- C) The Annual Membership dues shall be determined annually by the Executive Committee, subject to approval by the General Assembly.
- D) Honorary Members shall pay the same dues as regular members.

Article Eight

Meetings:

- A) The Executive Committee shall convene all general meetings at places and times to be determined by them.
- B) Emergency meetings may be convened at any time by the Executive Committee whenever the need arises.
- C) Quorum: An attendance of one-fourth (1/4) of paid members at any meeting shall constitute a quorum. In the event of an attendance not meeting the quorum, members present may decide to hold the meeting anyway, but decisions taken at such meetings shall not be binding to the Association.

Article Nine

Support in times of personal tragedies, emergencies, and celebrations:

- A) Paid members are eligible for monetary support in times of birth, marriage, and death (See article 4.C.e).
- B) Support in such circumstances is contingent upon available funds at the time of the event
- C) Funding amounts are fixed, explained in the Association by-laws, and voted on annually by the Executive Committee.
- D) The Association will serve as a central point for celebrants and mourners to donate funds for individuals/families in the event that there is a large outpouring of support from the community. These funds will be compiled and distributed to the recipient/s on behalf of the Association in addition to the benefit amounts.

Article Ten

Disciplinary Code:

- A) The Executive Committee shall draft a disciplinary code and submit the same for approval by the General Assembly.
- B) All members shall be deemed bound by the edicts of such a code when approved and will be expected to submit to its findings.
- C) The Executive Committee or a special Disciplinary board appointed by it will be charged to resolve or handle all matters of discipline.

Article Eleven

Elections:

- A) A general meeting shall be convened in August during the second year tenure of office of the Executive Committee members for the sole purpose of electing new Executive Members.

Article Twelve

Terminations (Resignations and Dismissals):

- A) Any member of the Association who violates the accepted codes, rules and by-laws of the organization; or whose public conduct is deemed unbecoming as determined by the Executive Committee (in the case of ordinary members), or by the General Assembly (in the case of Executive Committee members), shall be voted out of the Association and/or office after due deliberations.
- B) Any Executive Member wishing to resign his/her post for whatever reason(s) shall do so in writing to the Committee who will handle the matter as report their disposition to the General Assembly. A general meeting shall be convened in the shortest possible time to elect a replacement.
- C) Any member wishing to withdraw from the Association may do so by writing to the Executive.
- D) Registered members who fail to pay their dues will forfeit the benefits of membership (See article four C.a-e) for as long as they are delinquent.

Article Thirteen

Amendments:

- A) The constitution may be amended in part or wholesale by a vote of a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) majority of the paid up membership present.