

**Bylaws of the
Association of Armenian Church Choirs
Western Diocese**

Armenian Church Western Diocese

Article I – Name and Scope

1. The name of this organization shall be the Association of Armenian Church Choirs Western Diocese, hereafter referred to as the AACCWD
2. The AACCWD is an organization of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, hereafter referred to as the Diocese, and operates under the authority of the Primate and the Diocesan Council
3. All choirs that come within the jurisdiction of the Diocese shall constitute this Choir Association.
4. The name of the local church and of the city combined shall constitute the name of each local choir as follows: “Choir of the (name of local church) of (city)” or “(name of local church) Armenian Church Choir of (city)”. A local choir may designate a special name for itself, subject to the approval of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council

Article II – Objectives

1. To promote the teaching of sacred music of the Armenian Church
2. To encourage the choirs to learn and adhere to the liturgical rites, canons, and doctrines of the Armenian Church and to promote their faithful practice.
3. To assist the choirs within our Diocese to develop their local organization and activities
4. To promote the appreciation and use of Armenian music.

Article III - Policies

1. To maintain cordial relations and cooperate with all organizations working under the jurisdiction of the Diocese.
2. To work in harmony and cooperate with the Parish Priest, Parish Council, Choir Director, Altar Servers, and Organists of the local parish to assure the proper celebration of all liturgical services.
3. To create and maintain cordial and cooperative relations with Armenian and other musical organizations whose aims, policies, and activities are consonant with the objectives and policies of the AACCWD.

Article IV – Organization

1. The Parish Priest is the President of the Choir. In parishes where there is no priest, the Parish Council Chairman shall act as President of the Choir with all powers herein provided for the priest.
2. Choir members shall be at least sixteen years of age, be baptized or confirmed members of the Armenian Church, and be approved by the Parish Priest and the Choir Director.
3. In a parish without a choir, interested persons eligible to become members may form a choir with the approval of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council and the assistance, where needed, of the Central Council of the AACCWD.
4. The Parish Priest shall appoint the Altar Servers. They shall attend choir rehearsals to continue their education of liturgical music.
5. The Choir Director shall be appointed by the Parish Priest with the consent of the Parish Council and shall be subject to the authority of the Parish Priest.
6. The duties of the Choir Director shall be:
 - a. To conduct the choir during services, rehearsals or programs.
 - b. To teach the music, text and meaning of the hymns of the Divine Liturgy, the Offices and special services, as well as other Armenian music.
 - c. To supervise the conduct of the members of the choir during services, rehearsals, or programs.
7. With the approval of the Parish Priest, the Choir Director may select one or more assistants, who shall be subject to the authority of the Parish Priest.

8. The Parish Priest in consultation with the Choir Director shall appoint Organists. Organists shall attend rehearsals and services and receive directions from the Choir Director in all matters of musical accompaniment for the choir.
9. There shall be at least one choir rehearsal a month. Special rehearsals may be called as needed.
10. Guest singers may be invited by the Choir Director to sing in the choir with the permission of the Parish Priest.
11. Any member of the local parish who shows a special and active interest in the realization of the aims of the choir may be elected as Honorary Member by the membership meeting, with the approval of the Parish Priest. Honorary Members may participate in meetings without the right to vote.

Article V – Meetings

1. The fiscal year of the local choir shall be from January 1st to December 31st or any other year consistent with the policy of the local parish.
2. The choir shall have an Annual Meeting in the month of January. The function of the Annual Meeting shall be:
 - a. To receive and approve the Annual Report of the Executive Committee.
 - b. To elect the following from a double slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee:
 - i. Executive Committee Members
 - ii. Nominating Committee of three persons to serve for a term of one year.
 - iii. Delegates for the Annual Assembly of the AACCCWD.
 1. The election of delegates may, by the decision of the Annual Meeting, be held at a later date.
 2. In the event an elected delegate is unable to attend the Assembly, the person who received the highest vote short of the election shall serve as delegate.
 3. To elect any other special committees deemed necessary.
3. A report of the Annual Meeting and an Annual Report, including a financial statement, shall be given to the Parish Council. At the end of the fiscal year, the choir shall retain a portion of monies (designated by the Parish Priest and the Parish Council) and shall transfer the remainder to the Parish Council to be added to the funds of the local parish.
4. Local choirs may establish membership dues and determine the amount of such dues.
5. A member shall be eligible to vote two months after joining the choir and to hold office six months after joining. Continuing membership status shall be evaluated annually by the Parish Priest and/or the Choir Director, and shall require participation in choir activities (Divine Liturgy, special services, rehearsals, meetings) a minimum of ten times during the year.
6. Membership meetings shall be held at least three times a year, one of which shall be the Annual Meeting. The functions of the meetings shall include the following:
 - a. To formulate plans for accomplishing the objectives of this organization.
 - b. To discuss proposals and Bylaws amendments to be presented at the Annual Assembly of the AACCCWD.
 - c. To receive the report of the Assembly from its delegates.
 - d. To decide on participation in undertakings on behalf of the church or any of its organizations.
 - e. To authorize special expenditures, subject to approval by the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.
7. Elections of the Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Delegates and Honorary Members shall be by secret ballot and by majority vote,

Article VI – Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee of the choir shall consist of the following officers:
 - a. The Parish Priest who shall be the President of the Executive Committee shall preside at all membership meetings.
 - b. The Chairman who shall conduct all executive and membership meetings held during the year and shall prepare the agendas for the meetings, in consultation with the Parish Priest.
 - c. The Vice Chairman who shall assume the duties of the Chairman in the latter's absence.
 - d. The Recording Secretary who shall keep accurate record of executive and membership meetings. The Recording Secretary shall keep on file the Bylaws of the AACCCWD and any rules of the

choir, the list of choir members and of active committees, the choir archives, and an inventory of the property of the choir.

- e. The **Corresponding Secretary** who shall inform the choir of meetings and rehearsals, shall conduct the correspondence of the choir, and shall assume the duties of the Recording Secretary in the absence of the latter
 - f. The **Treasurer** who shall keep an accurate account of all the income and expenditures of the choir and shall be responsible for the payment of all expenses authorized by the Executive Committee, obtaining a signed and dated receipt upon making said payments. The Treasurer shall present a report to executive or membership meetings whenever requested and shall prepare the annual **financial statement for the Parish Council and the Central Council of the AACCCWD**. All monies shall be deposited under the name of the choir in a bank designated by the Executive Committee. All bank withdrawals made in behalf of the choir must be made upon the signature of the Treasurer and one of two other designated members of the Executive Committee.
 - g. The **Publicity Director** who shall prepare announcements, articles, and ads of activities by the choir, with approval of the Executive Committee.
 - h. The **Advisor or Advisors** who may assume responsibility for special projects.
 - i. The **Choir Director** who shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
2. Members of the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine members who shall be elected for a term of two years, subject to ratification by the Parish Priest and the Parish Council. At the first election, the terms of one-half of the members of the Executive Committee who received the least number of votes shall expire at the end of one year. Unless new nominees for election to office are not available, no person shall be a member of the Executive Committee for more than three consecutive terms, but may be reelected after the lapse of one year,
 3. In the case of vacancy in the Executive Committee, the person who received the highest vote short of election at the last Annual Meeting shall be invited to complete the unexpired term of the member he replaces, subject to ratification by the Parish Priest and the Parish Council
 4. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed.
 5. The Executive Committee shall carry out the decisions of the membership meetings, supervise the activities of committees, cooperate and communicate with the Central Council, and strive to fulfill the objectives and policies of the AACCCWD

Article VII – Junior Choir

1. The AACCCWD encourages choirs to help organize and develop junior choirs, with the approval of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.
2. The Parish Priest in consultation with the Choir Director shall appoint the Junior Choir Director.
3. The Parish Priest and the Junior Choir Director shall approve junior choir members.
4. The Parish Priest, in consultation with the Choir Director and the Junior Choir Director, shall determine the occasions on which the junior choir shall participate in services or programs.
5. The junior choir may be under the care and supervision of the Executive Committee of the choir.
6. The Executive Committee of the choir may provide the robes, books, and all materials essential to the junior choir.
7. A report on the progress and activities of the junior choir shall be included in the local choir Annual Report to the Central Council and to the Parish Council
8. A junior choir member upon reaching 16 years of age may then become a choir member.

Article VIII – Annual Assembly

1. Delegates from the choirs of the Diocese shall convene at least once a year for an Annual Assembly
2. The following shall be delegates to the Assembly:
 - a. Parish Priest
 - b. Choir Chairman
 - c. Choir Director
 - d. Organist
 - e. A representative of the Altar Servers
 - f. Additional representatives from the choir in accordance with the next section.

3. The number of additional delegates a choir may send to the Assembly is based on the following proportions:
 - a. For up to 20 members, 1 delegate
 - b. For 21 to 40 members, 2 delegates
 - c. For 41 or more members, 3 delegates
4. Each delegate shall present credentials signed by the Parish Priest and Choir Chairman of the local choir to the AACCCWD Central Council prior to the Assembly.
5. The presence of a majority of the registered delegates shall constitute a quorum in the Assembly.
6. Each delegate shall have one vote, which is non-transferable.
7. The Primate or the locum-tenens is the President of the Assembly, and he, or his designee shall preside over all sessions of the Assembly. The elected officers of the Annual Assembly shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary who shall be elected by the Annual Assembly and shall hold office until their successors are elected.
8. The elected officers of the Assembly shall be elected from among the delegates at the Assembly.
9. The Chairman of the Assembly shall appoint a Parliamentarian and a Sergeant-at-Arms who shall serve for the duration of the Assembly.
10. The duties of the Annual Assembly shall be:
 - a. To receive and accept the Annual Report of the Central Council and standing committees.
 - b. To approve the budget for the next fiscal year.
 - c. To elect the Central Council, the officers of the Assembly, the Nominating Committee, the Auditing Committee, and any other standing or special committees that it may establish.
 - d. To deliberate upon matters placed on the agenda by the Central Council and adopted by the Assembly. Other matters of new business may be added by majority vote of the delegates.
 - e. To decide the time and place of the next two Annual Assemblies.
11. A Special Assembly may be convened on the initiative of the Central Council, upon the written request of one-half of the choirs, or upon the instructions of the primate.
12. All decisions of Annual or Special Assemblies become effective upon the approval of the Primate and the Diocesan Council

Article IX – Central Council

1. The Annual Assembly shall elect from among active choir members, seven persons to constitute the AACCCWD Central Council. Term of office shall commence following ratification by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
2. Members of the Central Council shall be elected for two -year terms. The first year the four members who receive the most votes will serve for two years, and the next three will serve for one year. A member shall not serve on the Central Council for more than two consecutive terms, but may be reelected after a lapse of one year.
3. Clergy who are members of the Diocese shall be eligible to election to the Central Council.
4. All elections shall be by secret ballot and decided by majority vote of the delegates present and voting at the Annual Assembly.
5. The Central Council may fill a vacancy by inviting the person who received the highest vote short of election at the previous Assembly to complete the unexpired term of office, upon ratification by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
6. The Central Council shall keep a permanent record of its proceedings and those of the Assembly and send copies of it to each choir and to the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
7. At least thirty days prior to the date of the Assembly, the Central Council shall issue invitations to each choir and shall include the agenda prepared by the Central Council and approved by the Primate.
8. Central Council members shall be ex-officio delegates to the Annual and Special Assemblies.
9. The Central Council shall transmit the decisions of the Assembly within thirty days to the Primate and the Diocesan Council for approval. Thereupon, the approved Minutes of the Assembly shall be sent to the choirs within sixty days.
10. The Primate or the locum tenens is the ex-officio President of the Central Council, and he, or his designee, shall preside over its meetings.
11. The Central Council shall elect by secret ballot the following officers:

- a. **Chairman**, who shall conduct all meeting of the Central Council and shall see that the decisions of the Assembly and of the Central Council are carried out. The Chairman shall prepare the **Annual Report of the Central Council** and shall submit a report of all decisions made by the Assembly, signed by the Chairman and the Secretary of the Assembly, to the Primate and the Diocesan Council for ratification.
- b. **Vice Chairman**, who shall assume the duties of the Chairman in the latter's absence and shall also be responsible for standing committees of the AACCWD.
- c. **Recording Secretary**, who shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Central Council.
- d. **Corresponding Secretary**, who shall issue invitations to the meetings, conduct correspondence in accordance with the decision of the Central Council and of the Assembly and keep a file thereof, maintain a list of names and addresses of all churches, Parish Priests, Choir Directors, Executive Committees and members of the choirs and shall act as Recording Secretary in the latter's absence.
- e. **Treasurer**, who shall keep a complete record of the revenues and the expenditures of the Central Council, shall make payments as directed by the Central Council and the Assembly, obtaining signed and dated receipts thereof, shall submit financial statements to the Central Council at each meeting, shall deposit all funds in a depository under the name of the AACCWD, making withdrawals only over his signature and the signature of one or two other designated members of the Central Council, and shall submit his records annually to the Auditing Committee.
- f. **Advisor(s)**, who may be responsible for special projects of the AACCWD.

Article X – Committees

1. The **Auditing Committee** shall consist of three persons elected for a term of one year. This committee shall examine the Central Council financial records and present a report on its findings to the Annual Assembly.
2. The **Nominating Committee** shall consist of three persons elected for a term of one year. This committee shall prepare a double slate of candidates for election to the Central Council, Auditing Committee, Nominating Committee, the Chairman and Secretary of the Annual Assembly and shall present its report to the Assembly.
3. The Central Council shall appoint from among delegates to the Assembly, committees on proposals and amendments, resolutions, good and welfare, budget, and any other committee deemed necessary, subject to ratification by the Assembly.

Article XI – Funds

1. The AACCWD fiscal year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.
2. The Central Council is authorized to make special appeals to choirs or the Armenian community at large for funds for specific purposes if and when the need for such funds arise, upon the approval of the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
3. The host choir shall send half of the net proceeds of the Annual Assembly to the Central Council within ninety days after the Assembly.
4. On the Sunday closest to Archangel's Day, or any other suitable Feast Day, the local choir shall make a special plate collection and shall forward the proceeds to the Central Council to assist in the Council's general programs and current expenses.
5. Funds may be established for any project, which may help the choirs of the Diocese in the performance of their duties, subject to the approval by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Article XII – Amendments and Proposals

1. The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Annual Assembly.
2. All amendments to the Bylaws and proposals intended to be presented at the Assembly shall be submitted in writing to the Central Council not less than ninety days prior to the Assembly.
3. The Central Council shall send all amendments to the Bylaws and proposals intended to be considered to the choirs not less than sixty days prior to the Assembly.

4. All amendments ratified by the Assembly shall go into effect only upon approval by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.

Article XIII – Diocesan Bylaws

1. The Diocesan Bylaws shall supercede and supplement these Bylaws. The Primate and the Diocesan Council shall decide final questions, policies, and procedures not resolved by these Bylaws or at the Annual Assembly

Article XIV – Dissolution

1. In the event of the dissolution of an organized choir, all its funds, records, and equipment shall be transferred to the Parish Council and a report of such transfer shall be sent to the AACCCWD Central Council.
2. In the event of the dissolution of the AACCCWD, all funds, records, and equipment shall be transferred to the Diocese. The AACCCWD may be dissolved as follows:
 - a. By three-fourths vote of the delegates registered and voting at an Annual Assembly, subject to the approval by the Primate and the Diocesan Council.
 - b. By the Diocesan Assembly.