

ANDENET MEREDAJA EDIR (AME)

BYLAW

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The Foundation of Andenet Meredaja Eder (AME)

Introduction:

The number of Ethiopian population in the North America, especially in the State of California keeps growing with time. With this growth, services to accommodate the needs of the Ethiopian community should be thought of. One such service is preparing for the funeral service of loved ones or sending their remains back home for a proper burial. Funeral services or the process of sending the remains back home places an immense financial burden on individual family. Back in Ethiopia, these financial burdens were alleviated by forming a community support group known as "Edir". Therefore we, Ethiopians and Ethiopian origins residing in the Greater Bay Area, decided to establish similar support group known as Andenet Meredaja Eder (AME) as a non-profit organization pursuant to 501 (C) 12, federal tax exempt status.

The Objectives:

As we go through our day-to-day lives, we encounter the ups and downs of what life has to offer. We can foresee and prepare ahead of time to welcome most pleasant events in our life, but as it is the law of nature, we also come across unpredictable sad events and loss. The sudden passing of a family member creates emotional and financial stress. Members of the Ethiopian community are not immune to these facts, especially, the

financial stress caused by the higher cost of funeral services.

To help ease the financial burden, AME has been created as members only establishment with the following objectives. AME under an administrative board chosen from the general assembly uses a membership dues from each registered member to provide financial assistance during the loss (death) of family member according to the rules and regulations stated in this bylaw.

AME's Functions:

To fulfill its objectives, AME shall have the following functions.

1. Register new members.
2. Collect registration fee and membership dues to provide financial assistance when AME member dies.
3. Deposit the registration fee and membership dues in AME's bank account.
4. Provide financial assistance, in accordance with the bylaws, when a member dies.
5. Notify the death of a member to its general membership.

Section 1- Naming, Emblem, and what it represents

- 1.1- The name of the non-profit corporation shall be known as Andenet Meredaja Edir (AME).
- 1.2 - The emblem shows a circle with Green, Yellow, and Red colors as well as the Ethiopian flag, and around the circle it shows connected hands.
- 1.3 - The presence of the Ethiopian flag signifies the country where members are from, and the connected hands demonstrate solidarity to overcome any challenge.
- 1.4 - The emblem is displayed on membership identification cards and all AME stationeries.
- 1.5- AME is the sole owner of this emblem and the use of this emblem by anyone other than AME is prohibited.
- 1.6 - AME is free of race, religious, political affiliation, and gender discriminations. Furthermore, AME will not entertain issues other than those described in its bylaws.

Section 2 - AME members and their authorized agents

- 2.1 - A member qualified to receive benefits is one who:
 - * complies with the requirements of the bylaws

- * paid the registration fees as well as the membership dues.
- * whose full name and address is registered in AME's master file
- * whose membership has not been previously revoked.

2.2 - Member's authorized agent is someone, whose name is registered with AME by the member as his/her authorized agent. The authorized agent is authorized to receive financial benefits due to the member under the bylaws.

2.3 - Before payment of the financial benefits, AME shall verify the identity of authorized agent by requesting presentation of two different government issued identifications.

2.4 - A member has a right to appoint a representative to act on his/her behalf to pay the membership dues. However, if the representative fails to carry out her/his duties, the member shall be held responsible.

2.5 - All words expressed herein can only have meanings intended for these bylaws.

Section 3 - AME membership qualifications

- 3.1 - Membership shall be open to all Ethiopians and Ethiopian origin at least 18 years old and residing in and around the Greater Bay Area, in the following nine counties San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, Marin and Sonoma. Members must understand the purpose and objectives of AME and willingly abide by the governing rules and regulations stated in its bylaws.
- 3.2 - AME membership is based on an individual basis. Each person must be registered as a member. AME shall provide the financial support only to registered members.
- 3.3 - Anyone who is legally married to an Ethiopian or an Ethiopian AME member may also apply for membership. While AME is based on Ethiopian cultural practices, any individual, who accepts the bylaws and interested in promoting the purposes of AME may become a member in accordance with these Bylaws. AME does not restrict membership on the basis of race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin.
- 3.4 - Applicants are required to appear in person at AME's office and provide proof of residency in the Bay Area before completing the membership application forms.

- 3.5 - Membership shall be guaranteed only after completing the application form, paying registration fee of \$25.00, membership fee in the amount of \$250.00, and receive membership ID.
- 3.6 - If after registration a member changed his/her address to any state within the United States, his/her membership status shall remain active as long as he/she fulfills his/her timely payment of dues.
- 3.7- Applicants who submit their application for membership after the first amendment of the bylaws, on September 22, 2018 shall be subject to the following requirements.
1. Membership fee in the amount of \$250.00 and \$25.00 registration fee of
 2. There shall be a one year waiting period before receiving any financial support from AME.
 3. If there is death within the AME membership during the one year waiting period, the new member, however, is not relieved from his/her obligation to pay the membership dues required pursuant to the bylaws.
- 3.8 - Any dispute between AME members and the administrative office arising from the application and interpretation of the bylaws shall be resolved only through AME appointed arbitrator. The Arbitrator is authorized to engage in mediation to resolve the dispute between the two parties.

Section 4 – AME member’s children rights and responsibilities

- 4.1 - AME member’s children or adopted children under the age of 18 can be added to their father's or mother's registration.
- 4.2 - AME members who want to add their children or adopted children will be required to provide the child’s birth certificate during registration.
- 4.3 - Newly born child can be added on his/her parent’s registration only after one month of birth and by providing their birth certificate as proof. No newly born child should be registered until after one month of age after birth to be become eligible for membership through the parents.
- 4.4 - When officially registered member’s child or adopted child passes away (dies), AME will provide financial assistance in the amount of \$13,000.00 or in the prevailing new amount established pursuant to the bylaws to the parent under whose name the child was registered.
- 4.5 - When a child member turns 18 years of age, AME will cancel his/her membership benefit as child or adopted child.
- 4.6 - Those children whose membership has been canceled for turning 18 years of age can apply as an adult member within one month and pay a membership fee in the amount of \$150.
- 4.7 - Children in order to be registered as a member must reside with their parents.

- 4.8 - When the parent that registered the child passes away, as long as the other parent is an AME member, the child's membership can be transferred under the remaining parent. If the remaining parent is not a member of AME, then the child's membership will be canceled, and if the child dies after cancelation, AME will not provide financial assistance.

Section 5 – AME member's Registration and Membership dues

Membership fee

- 5.1 - Applicants who want to join AME is expected to pay a membership fee in the amount of \$250.00 and a registration fee of \$25.00 a total of \$275.00.
- 5.2 - Membership dues: Whenever there is death within the AME membership, a membership dues of \$25.00 will be collected.
- 5.3 - Benefits paid: when there is death within the AME members, AME will provide a financial assistance in the amount of \$13,000.00, or the prevailing amount at the time of death as established pursuant to the bylaws to the authorized agent or if the deceased is a child, to the parent that has registered the child.
- 5.4 - AME members shall not transfer their membership rights to others.

Section 6 - Members payment options

The only acceptable payment options are

- 1 - Cash payment.
- 2 - Personal check.
- 3- On-line payments.

Section 7 – Time limit for Membership Dues and associated penalties

- 7.1 - Once the passing (death) of AME member is announced thru various communication mediums, each AME member shall have 30 days to pay the membership dues of \$25.
- 7.2 - Payments received after 31 to 59 days shall accrue a penalty in the amount of \$10.00.
- 7.3 - Payments received after 60 to 89 days shall accrue a penalty in the amount of \$25.00.
- 7.4 - Unpaid membership dues past 90 days shall result in membership cancellation and forfeiture of the right to receive the \$13,000 (or any amount AME adopts as financial benefits pursuant to its bylaws) at the time of death.
- 7.5 - AME shall not waive penalties for member's failure to provide to AME at least one of these communication mediums.

Section 8 – Board members authorities

- 8.1 - The board members are authorized to enforce the implementation of the rights and responsibilities described in these bylaws.
- 8.2 - If a member of the board chooses to resign or fails to attend five consecutive board meeting without notification or acted in a manner that degrades the integrity of the Edir and its principles, the remaining board members, after evaluating the case, can revoke his/her board membership and replace him/her with a new board member.
- 8.3 - When any of the rules described on this bylaw are discovered to be divisive and/or not to the standards of the Edir's vision, the board members can call a meeting to improve and/or replace the rules. Implementation of any change requires the approval of the general assembly.
- 8.4 - As the work load calls for additional help, and volunteers are not available; the board has a right to hire and fire temporary employees.

Section 9 – Number of board members and their functions

AME shall have nine board members of which four executive board members and five board members.

The positions are:

- 1-Chairperson
- 2-Vice Chairperson
- 3-Secretary
- 4-Treasurer
- 5-Director
- 6-Director
- 7-Director
- 8-Director
- 9-Director

Section 10 – Duties of the board member

The board members shall have the following duties.

10.1- Chairperson

10.1.1 - AME's board members Chairperson shall prepare the meeting agendas and lead the board member meetings.

10.1.2 - The Chairperson, after giving a notice to the administrative board, shall attend meeting representing AME.

- 10.1.3 - The Chairperson shall communicate with different organizations on behalf of AME.
- 10.1.4 - The Chairperson shall deal with other agencies and sign documents following AME's guidelines.
- 10.1.5 - The Chairperson together with the vice chairman or the chief accountant shall sign checks on behalf of AME.
- 10.1.6 - The Chairperson shall oversee and approve all AME's functional activities.
- 10.1.7 - When there is death within AME membership, the Chairperson will make sure that the deceased family received the financial benefits in a timely manner.

10.2 - Vice Chairperson

- 10.2.1 - In the absence of the board Chairperson, the Vice Chairman shall assume all the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson.
- 10.2.2 - In the absence of the board secretary, the Vice Chairperson shall also act as the board secretary.
- 10.2.3 - During the board meetings in the absence of the board Chairperson and the secretary, the Vice Chairman shall elect one person from the remaining board members to temporarily assume the position of the secretary.
- 10.2.4 - The Vice Chairperson signs on AME's pay checks together with the board Chairperson or the secretary.

10.3.- Secretary

10.3.1- Keep Minutes. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that accurate minutes of meetings are taken and approved. The minutes shall include, at the minimum:

- date, time, location of meeting;
- list of those present and absent;
- list of items discussed;
- list of reports presented;
- text of motions presented and description of their disposition.

The Secretary signs a copy of the final, approved minutes and ensures that this copy is maintained in the corporate records. The Secretary signs a copy of the final, approved minutes and ensures that this copy is maintained in the corporate records.

10.3.2- Secretary is Custodian of records

The Secretary ensures that the records of the organization are maintained as required by law and made available when required by authorized persons.

These records may include founding documents, (e.g. articles of incorporation, bylaws), lists of directors, board and committee meeting minutes financial reports, and other official records.

10.3.3 - Secretary keeps Membership Records

The Secretary ensures that official records are maintained of members of the organization and Board. He/she ensures that these records are available when required for reports, elections, other votes, etc. The Secretary shall be responsible for collecting membership applications and supporting documents and present them to the board for processing. The Secretary shall be responsible for collecting and safeguarding, names, addresses, and supporting documents.

10.3.4 – Bylaws

The Secretary ensures that an up-to-date copy of the bylaws are available at all meetings.

10.3.5 – Communication

The Secretary ensures that proper notification is given of Boards' and members' meetings as specified in the bylaws. The Secretary manages the general correspondence of the Board except for such correspondence assigned to others.

10.3.6 – Meetings

The Secretary provides items for the agenda as appropriate. In the

absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the Secretary calls the meeting to order, presiding until a temporary chairperson is elected.

The Secretary records meeting minutes as described above, the Secretary may perform these duties for Member meetings (e.g. Annual General Meeting or special meeting).

10.3.7 – Authority to sign checks

The Secretary signs on AME's paychecks together with the board Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.

10.4 – Chief Accountant

10.4.1 – The Chief Accountant is responsible for organizing, planning and evaluating AME's financial functions.

10.4.2 – The Chief Accountant is responsible for securing AME's checks and receipts.

10.4.3 - The Chief Accountant presents AME's financial activities to the board members every three months, and to the general assembly meetings annually.

10.4.4 - The Chief Accountant prepares and updates AME's computerized income and expense reports.

10.4.5 - The Chief Accountant is responsible for account payables.

10.4.6 - When the Chief Accountant's term limit ends or if he/she willingly resigns, he/she will surrender all accounting documentations and computerized data to the assigned auditor and the newly elected accountant.

10.5 – Accountant

10.5.1 - In the absence of the Chief Accountant, the Accountant assumes all accounting duties and responsibilities.

10.5.2 - The Accountant is responsible for overseeing the bank deposits and transactions and prepares monthly statements. Provides available documents for auditing.

10.5.3 - The Accountant together with the Chief Accountant prepares financial reports to present to AME's board members every three months.

10.6 – Treasurer

10.6.1 - The Treasurer is responsible to maintain issue receipts which are numerically ordered and be used as signed receipts to all payments made by AME members.

10.6.2 - The Treasurer is responsible for depositing the collected fund in AME's bank account in timely manner.

10.6.3 - The Treasurer shall provide all financial documents and receipts to the financial auditor upon request.

10.6.4 - When his/her term limit ends, the Treasurer surrenders all receipt books, transaction documents and financial records to the assigned auditor and the newly elected treasurer.

10.7 – Public Relations Officer

10.7.1 - The Public Relations Officer, when directed by the administrative board, shall provide verbal or written briefings pertaining to AME.

10.7.2 - The Public Relations Officer shall dedicate his time promoting AME values. Advertises planned board members and general assembly meetings and prepares venues to accommodate the events.

10.7.3 - The Public Relations Officer, when directed by the board, shall attend meeting on behalf of AME.

Section 11 – Board members term limits

11.1 - The AME board members term limit shall be two years. But the four members elected with highest vote shall serve for four years while the remaining four shall serve for only two years. This is done to ensure smooth transition and to guide the newly elected board members during the transition period.

- 11.2 - The AME general assembly shall have a sendoff ceremony to the board members finishing their term limit. The newly elected replacement board members shall be introduced to the general assembly before starting their duties.
- 11.3 - The election committee may submit the names of termed out executive board member for re-election if deemed necessary.
- 11.4 - Board members are limited to serve only for two consecutive terms, with one term consisting of two years. However, a board member who has served 2 consecutive terms shall be eligible to be reelected 2 years after she/he completed her/his two consecutive terms.

Section 12 - Election committee

- 12.1 - The Board shall choose three members from the general assembly to serve as election committee.
- 12.2- The election committee shall carefully identify potential nominees among the general assembly and limit the number of nominees to double the size of available positions based on the following requirements.
- 1 - The nominee must be 25 years of age or above.
 - 2 - The nominee must not have any criminal record or conviction.

3 - The nominee must be known for his/her good behavior.

4 - The nominee must not file for bankruptcy.

5 - The nominee must be free from racial, religious, political, and gender discrimination.

6 - The nominee must acquire experiences needed for AME's functions.

12.3- The election committee shall submit the list of the potential nominees that fulfill the requirements provided under 12.2 above to the Secretary of the Board. After receiving the board input and recommendation, the Election Committee, shall present the list of the nominees to the general assembly for election.

12.4 - At the same time that Election Committee selects potential nominees for the Board, the Board shall also appoint, by a majority vote, five, non- voting, associate Board members, who are volunteers and willing be trained in the duties and function of the Board so that these associates would provide a future pool from which the Election Committee selects potential nominee as a full- fledged board member may be made.

Section 13 – AME auditing committee’s functions and term limits

- 13.1 - AME shall have an auditing committee to oversee all financial activities.
- 13.2 - The auditing committee shall have three members elected by the general assembly to serve for two years. If any member of the auditing committee seeks to serve for a second term, he/she must go through the election process again.
- 13.3 - The auditing committee answers only to the general assembly
- 13.4 - This committee closely supervises the Edir’s income and expenses transaction. The board Chairperson and the Treasurer shall ensure that all financial documents and other documents necessary to accomplish its duty under the bylaws are promptly provided.
- 13.5 - The auditing committee shall report its findings to the board and to the general assembly in writing.
- 13.6 - During the board’s election process, the auditing committee shall supervise the election process and report its findings to the general assembly.
- 13.7 - The auditing committee shall oversee the transfer of AME documents, funds, and assets between the termed out administrative board members and the newly elected administrative board members.

13.8 - The auditing committee shall audit the electronic data transfers, bank transaction activities, and financial documents without any prior notice.

13.9 -The auditing committee shall have the responsibility to return any financial documents, files, and evidentiary reports to the board after the audit is done.

Section 14 – Board members immunity

14.1 - AME board members will not be individually responsible for any of AME’s financial debts.

14.2 - Any board member shall be legally responsible if they use AME’s properties or funds for their own personal benefit.

Section 15 - AME’s annual general assembly meetings and voting procedure

15.1 - AME's general assembly shall be held once a year at the place and time to be noticed by the Board 60 days before the meeting. Attendance at the annual meeting is mandatory. Failure to attend the duly notices meeting, without justifiable grounds, shall subject a member to sanctions. The board shall issue a written memorandum which shall provide the reason for justifiable absence and in the event any absence which does not quality as justifiable, the amount of sanctions to be applied.

15.2 - Special general assembly meeting shall be called for issues requiring immediate action.

- 15.3 - General assembly meeting can be called if 30% of AME members submit a verified and signed petition to the board.
- 15.4 - Vote casting shall be held through secret ballots.
- 15.5 - 51% of the general assembly vote shall be required to pass any resolution.
- 15.6 - If a meeting is called to decide on matters affecting the existence of AME and or structure or fundamental goals and purposes, 75% of the membership vote shall be required.
- 15.7 - Quorum is achieved when one-eighth of the general assembly members are present except for details mentioned on section 15.6.
- 15.8- When the administrative office calls for regular general assembly meetings or special general assembly meeting, and if after the first scheduled meeting enough members did not show up, the meetings shall be adjourned next scheduled meeting. At this second scheduled meeting, the meeting will resume with available members present to resolve the meeting agenda.

Section 16 - Causes for termination from AME membership

The occurrence of any of the following events shall constitute grounds for termination of membership in AME.

16.1-Failure of a Member to pay dues, fees, contributions or assessments required under the bylaws and or by Board resolution by the date they become payable.

16.2- A member acts or conducts himself/herself against the bylaws herein or behaves in such a manner that is divisive and disruptive and continues such behavior or misconduct after a written warning is given by AME to the member to cease and desist from such behavior.

16.3- Upon the occurrence of any of events described in paragraph 16.1 and 16.2, the Board may initiate proceedings for termination of membership by adopting a resolution of intention to take such action against the affected member. The resolution must be adopted by a majority vote of the entire Board. A written notice shall thereupon be given to the affected member stating the termination of membership and the facts and circumstances relied upon by the Board as the justification for such intended action. The notice shall also specify the date on which the Board proposes to take such action, which shall be not less than thirty (30) days from the date of the notice. The notice shall further advise the affected member that the member is entitled to an opportunity to be heard, either orally or in writing, prior to the date of the intended action. Upon request by the member, the Board shall schedule a meeting for the purpose of hearing any evidence the member desires to present to the Board in person or through a representative selected by the affected member. The decision by

the Board concerning termination of membership shall be final and binding.

16.4- A member whose membership is terminated for any reason, a member who resigns or withdraws from membership in AME shall forfeit any dues, fees, contributions or special assessments paid during membership.

16.5- A member whose membership has been terminated for non- payment of fees, dues, contributions or assessment shall be eligible to rejoin the AME by submitting a petition to the Board. Such petition must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire Board. A former member would be considered to rejoin once they submit a new application, pay the prevailing registration fee, pay a \$150 penalty. The readmitted member would be considered as a new member and shall be subject to the one year waiting period before receiving any financial benefit.

Section 17 - Members address change notification

17.1 - AME members should call or email the office to notify their address change as soon as possible. The office shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience.

Section 18 – Acceptable reasons and actions to take when AME member’s contribution got delayed for health and other reasons

18.1 - The following circumstances shall be grounds for waiver of late payment penalty:

- a. If the member is sick and admitted into a hospital.
- b. If the member is imprisoned and his/her family members informed the Chairperson of AME, applicable penalties shall be waived.
- c. A member who falls in the above category shall notify AME within 89 days his eligibility for penalty waiver with supporting documentation. After 90 days, their membership shall be terminated according to the regulations on section 7, sub section 7.4 of this bylaw.

Section 19 – Informing the Death of Member to AME

- 19.1 - When there is death within the membership, any other member who is able to verify the death of a member shall notify the AME within the time limit mentioned below.
- 19.2 - If the member dies in the bay area, his/her family members or his/her representative should inform the AME office within 15 days.
- 19.3- If the member dies outside of the bay area or California, but within the United States, his/her family members or the representative should notify the AME office within 30 days.
- 19.4 - If the member dies outside of the United States, the office should be notified within 60 days.
- 19.5 - If death of a member occurred outside of the United States, the decedent's family or the

representative shall have 90 days from the date of death to submit the official death certificate and supporting document. The requested documents should be authenticated by appropriate governmental authorities at the country of death.

19.6 - If the deceased lived outside of the United States for more than one year and his/her burial service is held in the country he lived in, AME will not provide any financial support.

19.7 - If necessary, the AME office shall request the member's death certificate from any issuing agency or from the member's representative.

Section 20 – AME's Notification of Death to its Membership

20.1 - The AME office shall announce the passing (death) of a member within 24 hours receiving and confirming the death by using telephone, email or text messages. Any member's request to delay such announcement is not binding on AME.

Section 21 – Size of Membership, Membership Dues and Benefits

21.1 - To alleviate the financial condition of members, the Board is hereby given discretion, to adjust downward the membership dues due from each member in the event three or more members dies within one-month period. In making such adjustment the Board shall take into consideration only the financial health of AME.

Section 22 – Handling Multiple Deaths with AME Membership

22.1 - In the event of more than three deaths of members within one month, AME shall determine the amount of membership dues due from each member in order to alleviate a financial burden caused by multiple deaths.

Section 23 - AME's website

23.1 - AME’s website is www.andenetedir.com

Section 24 - AME's office address

24.1 - AME's office address is 6116 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland CA 94609.

24.2 - The Post office box number is 3744 Oakland, CA 94609.

24.3 - The phone number is (510) 823-0700.

Section 25 – Amendment to AME bylaws

25.1 – As long as it is not contradicted with the basic objective of the Edir and will contribute to the growth of the Edir this bylaw can be amended by the vote of the general assembly. To amend the bylaw the general assembly should vote by more than 50 percent.

Section 26 – AME’s Prevailing Language

26.1 - In the event of conflict or ambiguity between the English and Amharic version of any provisions of the bylaws, the English version shall prevail.

Section 27 - Addendum to AME bylaws

27.1 - This bylaw supersedes the previous version dated April 25, 2015 and is approved and amended by the AME general assembly members on this date

27.2 August 12 2017 revised and amended by general assembly decision

27.3 September 22 2018 for the second time revised and amended by general assembly decision

