

**KNANAYA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S FORUM OF
NORTH AMERICA
(KCWFNA)**

Constitution and By-Laws

(As of December 1, 2015)



PREAMBLE

Historically Knanaya migrations (migration to Kodungallore and migration to Malabar), were led by Clergy and Laity together. During the second half of the 20th century a new migration to different parts of USA and Canada occurred. This latest migration was led by nurses who came to North America individually or in groups. Because of their dedication to their families, these nurses played a key role in building the North American Knanaya community. A few decades later, the Knanaya Catholic Community requested for priests from India to serve this community.

The members throughout North America joined and conducted a very successful and historic first North American Knanaya Catholic Convention in July 1986 under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Mulackal and hosted by the New York association. Following the tremendous success of the first convention, the members realized the need and importance of forming a National Association of the Knanaya Catholics in North America. The first Executive Committee of Knanaya Catholic Congress of North America (KCCNA) was formed in August 1988. KCCNA is a federation of the Knanaya Catholic Associations in North America. KCCNA is a lay organization that strives to maintain and promote the knanaya culture, traditions, and heritage.

Over the years, as the community grew rapidly, the Women's Forum was formed as a sub-organization of KCCNA in 2006 with the theme 'Women Empowering Women'. Women's forum was established for women of the community to come together to share and lead in the growth of the community.

ARTICLE 1

Section 1 – The Name

- a. The name of the association shall be KNANAYA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S FORUM OF NORTH AMERICA, herein after referred as “KCWFNA”.
- b. Definition of "to be Knanaya". To be Knanaya, as well as to remain Knanaya requires individuals to be born of (or born to) both Knanaya parents, and if married, both spouses must also be born of (or born to) both Knanaya parents. For further clarification, and, for the purpose of this constitution, "born of" and "born to" refers to having birth or biological parents.

ARTICLE 2

Section 1 – Mission Statement

The Knanaya Catholic Women’s Forum will be a platform for women to meet, share ideas, organize, strive, strengthen, reflect, and empower their value in the Knanaya community.

Section 2 – Vision Statement

To empower women, sustain our cultural heritage, and share our resources to help needy Knanaya women.

Section 3 – Aims and Objectives

Share knowledge and expertise and provide leadership roles from the women’s perspective with KCCNA.

- a. Create a community network for women and support them in the challenging task of assimilating Indian Knanaya culture in North America.
- b. Bridge the gap between women of all ages
- c. Promote career advancement, networking and leadership among Knanaya women
- a. Improve family relations and promote a healthy, supportive environment for Knanaya Catholic Women
- b. Encourage women to seek help when facing hardship or abuse.
- c. Inculcate Knanaya culture in our children.
- d. Organize gatherings among all members of KCWFNA units maintaining unity and good communication
- e. Establish the growth of local K.C.W.F. units where ever needed.
- f. Award scholarships, medals, stipends, educational aids and loans to deserving candidates/organizations

Section 4 – Fees and Compensation

Directors and members of committees may not receive any compensation for their services. The service by the Women’s Forum board members, which includes KCWFNA executives, local executives, and local board members, will be done voluntarily and no fees is to be expected or charged for their services.

ARTICLE 3

Section 1 – Representation in KCCNA

- a. KCWFNA shall be the women's wing of Knanaya Catholic Congress of North America (KCCNA).
- b. The KCWFNA President, Secretary and Executive Vice President shall by virtue of their position be National Council members of KCCNA with voting power.
- c. KCWFNA shall be the Federation of Women's Forum Representatives of all member associations of KCCNA.

Section 2 – Membership

- a. Women's Forum of local Associations of KCCNA shall be members of the KCWFNA.
- b. Criteria
 1. Shall be born of Knanaya parents.
 2. Shall be married or over the age of 25 if single.
 3. Shall be residing in the United States or Canada.
 4. If married, spouse must be born of Knanaya parents.

Section 3 – Membership in KCWFNA National Council

Women's Forum Executive Members of local Associations (President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, and Treasurer) shall be members of National Council of KCWFNA.

ARTICLE 4

Section 1 – Executive Committee

a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the following 8 members:

1. President
2. Executive Vice President
3. General Secretary
4. Joint Secretary
5. Treasurer
6. Joint Treasurer
7. Regional Vice President 1
8. Regional Vice President 2

The term of office for elected members of the Executive committee will be a two year period concurrent with the KCCNA National Council term.

Section 2 – Duties of the Executive Committees

The President

- a. Shall be the executive officer of KCWFNA
- b. Shall preside over the Executive Committee, National Council, and all other general meetings of the KCWFNA
- c. Shall direct General Secretary to call the Executive committee and National Council meetings of KCWFNA.
- d. Shall maintain effective communication with local units.
- e. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local women 's forum units.

Executive Vice President

- a. Shall perform the duties of President in her absence.
- b. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local women's forum units.

General Secretary

- a. Shall call for National and Executive meetings in consultation with the President.
- b. Shall keep minutes of meetings and send minutes of meetings to KCWFNA national council members in a timely manner
- c. Shall send out meeting notifications at least three weeks in advance except in emergencies
- d. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

Joint Secretary

- a. Shall assist the Secretary with duties and functions.
- b. In the absence of General Secretary, shall assume all the duties of General Secretary.
- c. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

Treasurer

- a. Shall maintain accounts for KCWFNA including Project Deepti (see Appendix 1) and any special projects established by KCWFNA and present them in the National Council meeting biannually.
- b. Shall make financial statements available throughout the year
- c. KCWFNA financials shall be audited by KCCNA auditor
- d. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

Joint Treasurer

- a. In the absence of Treasurer, shall assume all the duties of Treasurer.
- b. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

Regional Vice President 1

- a. Shall function as a liaison for KCCL
- b. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

Regional Vice President 2

- a. Shall function as a liaison for KCJL
- b. Shall represent her region and communicate with the local KCWF units.

ARTICLE 5

Section 1 – Executive Committee Meetings and National Council Meetings

- a. Executive committee meetings shall be held at least once every four months and National Committee meetings are to be held at least every six months
- b. The place, date, and time is to be decided by the executive committee and to be notified to all members three weeks in advance except in emergencies
- c. Teleconference is an acceptable way of conducting both executive and national council meetings
- d. Decisions may be made using electronic voting under circumstances where there are differences in opinion among national council members

ARTICLE 6

Section 1 – National Elections

A unanimous decision was made at the KCWFNA National Council 2011-2012 to avoid election to appoint the next KCWFNA executives. This decision was made as a result of a common interest among the Women's Forum National Council members for the transparent business orderliness.

- a. KCWFNA will group the member units into per KCCNA constitution (eight regions). Each region will nominate only one person to the KCWFNA executive. The nominee must be a current local Women's Forum unit executive.

- b. The following are the eight regions of KCWFNA:

Arizona, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Jose (California region)

Atlanta, Miami, Tampa (Florida region)

At Large, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington

Canada

Chicago

Connecticut, New Jersey, New York (Greater New York region)

Dallas, Houston, San Antonio (Texas region)

Detroit, Minnesota, Ohio

- c. In the regions with more than one unit, the units will rotate between each other on who will appoint a nominee to the KCWFNA executive. The regions with multiple units should conduct meetings locally to elect or nominate the delegate in mutually agreeable terms.

The nominated executives may decide among themselves who will take each executive position in mutually agreeable terms. No same executive position may be filled by the same region for two consecutive terms, and the existing Executive is responsible for ensuring that each position is not filled by the same region for two consecutive terms. In the event that there is more than one candidate for one particular position, the person will be chosen by electronic voting.

- d. All prospective candidates running for the KCWFNA executive position must file the nomination using the form attached in Appendix 2 to the current KCWFNA president during the

filing period. Filing period is from January 1st - January 10th of the election year. Either the candidate or a representative of the candidate may file the nomination by mail, email, or in person. Filings made by mail must be received by the last day of the filing period.

e. The current KCWFNA Executive Committee will verify the candidacy and publish the candidate list by January 15th.

f. Candidate may submit the withdrawal of candidacy on or before January 17.

g. Within 5-10 days, Executive committee shall hold a conference call to give each prospective candidates 2 minutes to present their qualifications to the national council members. Candidates shall be given a final chance to withdraw during the conference call if they desire.

h. Experienced candidates who have served for the Women's Forum in preceding terms at either Unit or National level shall get priority in the selection for the National Executive Board. Candidate who has served in the unit board or has been members of Women's Forum National Council or KCCNA National Council shall get preference over a candidate with no experience.

1. Qualification of President Candidate:

Person who had demonstrated leadership/ organizational skills in Women's Forum or outside entities shall get preference.

2. Qualification of Secretary Candidate:

Person with computer skills shall get preference

i. A member shall be in the KCWFNA Executive board for only a maximum of two terms during their life-time.

j. Selection of Executive Committee position by electronic voting:

Remote Electronic Voting is an election system that allows a voter to record her secure and secret ballot electronically. Electronic voting can reduce election costs and increase civic participation by making the voting process more convenient.

All KCWFNA national members are eligible to vote.

An email shall be sent out to national council members with instructions on how to cast an electronic vote including the voting date and time period. 3-5 days shall be given as the voting period to ensure maximum participation.

In an event there is a tie, KCWFNA shall abide by the process that software vendor has selected to choose the winner. Runoff voting shall not be conducted if there is a tie. The results shall be posted within 24 hours after the end of the voting period either by email or on the same site the individual members have voted.

It shall be conducted before Feb 1st of each term or at least 45 days prior to the KCCNA election. Electronic voting shall be conducted in the same year as the KCCNA Executive election.

k. The Executive committee shall hold office for two years.

l. The management of the affairs of the KCWFNA shall be vested with the KCWFNA Executive Committee and KCCNA subject to the direction of the Constitution

m. The executive Committee shall have the power to appoint sub committees for special purposes as and when required.

n. Any Vacancy of the Executive Committee shall be filled as early as possible by Executive Committee, to be ratified by the next National Council Meeting.

o. KCCNA Executive committee has the right to take disciplinary action on members of the Executive committee who act against the Constitution or involved in any acts of violence, crime, theft, or immoral behavior.

p. If a member of the Executive Committee wishes to resign from their position, the resignation should be sent to the KCCNA Executive committee or the President.

q. Spiritual Director of KCCNA shall be the Spiritual Director of KCWFNA.

Section 2 – Local Elections

Local member associations shall elect new local executive leaders by December 31st, prior to the national KCCNA election year.

ARTICLE 7

Section 1 – Patron

The Patron of the Forum will be the Archbishop of Kottayam

ARTICLE 8

Section 1 – Official Language

The official Language of KCWFNA will be ENGLISH.

All documentation required shall be submitted in the official language of the Federation.

ARTICLE 9

Section 1 – Address

The office of KCWFNA shall be located at the address of the incumbent President or at premises to be decided by the National Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 10

Amendments

- a. All proposals to change the constitution and by-laws are to be communicated to the Executive Committee in writing at least two months prior to the meeting of the National Council.
- b. The necessary quorum for deciding an additions, deletions, or modifications to the constitution and by-laws of KCWFNA shall meet when fifty percent (50%) of the national council members are present. If the necessary quorum is not present at the convened meetings then a follow-up meeting could be called after at least one month of the first meeting. For the follow-up meeting, the quorum shall be met when 30% of the national council members from the same term are present.
- c. Additions, deletions, or modifications to the constitution and by-laws of KCWFNA shall be approved by two-thirds majority of the national council members with the necessary quorum. In a follow-up discussion called due to lack of quorum in the first meeting, if less than 50% of the National council members are present but at least 30% are present, then an approval by three quarters majority is needed to approve the additions, deletions, and modifications.
- d. The by-laws and constitution shall be reviewed at least once every five years.

ARTICLE 11

The Oath of Office

I, (Name in full) do hereby solemnly swear that I will carry out the responsibilities and duties of my office(name of office) to the best of my ability and uphold the constitution of the Knanaya Catholic Women's Forum of North America. So help me God, my Lord, Jesus Christ.

Drafted by Molly Johnson Purayampallil: 10/20/2008

Updated by KCWFNA Executive Committee: June 10, 2010.

Updated by KCWFNA Executive Committee: December 27, 2012.

Updated by KCWFNA Constitution Review Committee: October 14, 2015

ARTICLE 12

These constitution and By Laws have been unanimously passed at the KCWFNA National council conference call meeting held on twentieth day of December in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twelve, when the constitutional amendments were appropriately included in the agenda after which they came into effect.

In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names:

SD
Gracy Vachachira
(President)

SD
Lizy Thottapuram
(Secretary)

SD
Jismol John Puthusseril
(Vice President)

SD
Prathibha Thachet
(Joint Secretary)

SD
Merlin Kallarakanil
(Treasurer)

12-20-2012,

Chicago

ARTICLE 13

The constitution and by-laws have been reviewed and amended by KCWFNA Constitution Review Committee on October 14, 2015.

In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names:

Certified by:

Golda Kattapuram (Los Angeles), Chair, Constitution Review Committee
Omana Cherukara (Houston), Constitution Review Committee member
Jaimol Kalapurarckal (Florida), Constitution Review Committee member
Lisie Tharathattel (New York), Constitution Review Committee member
Meyamma Vettikkattu (Chicago), Constitution Review Committee member

And by:

Prathibha Thachet, President, KCWFNA

These Constitution & Bylaws have been unanimously adopted along with the amendments listed herein as Schedule 1, List of Amendments, by the KCWFNA National Council meeting held on December 1, 2015.

Schedule 1: List of Amendments

1. Preamble
2. Article 1 Section 1 b.
3. Article 2 Section 2
4. Article 2 Section 3 c.
5. Article 2 Section 4
6. Article 3 Section 2 a.
7. Article 3 Section 3
8. Article 4 Section 1 a.
9. Article 4 Section 2.
10. Article 5 Section 1
11. Article 6 Section 1
12. Article 6 Section 1 c.
13. Article 6 Section 1 d.
14. Article 6 Section 1 e.
15. Article 6 Section 1 f.

16. Article 6 Section 1 g.
17. Article 6 Section 1 h.
18. Article 6 Section 1 i.
19. Article 6 Section 1 j.
20. Article 6 Section 2
21. Article 10 Section d
22. Article 13
23. Appendix 1
24. Appendix 2

Appendix 1: Project Deepti

**“Project Deepti”
KCWFNA Educational Endowment Scheme**



Project Deepti (Ray of Hope) is a KCWFNA Educational Scholarship Scheme to provide financial support for the education of Knanaya women admitted to professional courses. Education of women is the optimal way of empowering women. KCWFNA is the women's wing of KCCNA.

The amount endowed to the scholars, need not be paid back if the scholar finishes the professional course. To be eligible for this scholarship, the girls must be admitted to a professional program, must meet the financial-income criteria as described below, must be a member of a Knanaya parish, and be recommended by a Knanaya parish Vicar OR an executive member of Knanaya Catholic Congress. Applications will be approved by the KCWFNA executives.

This scheme will be initiated (the principal will be deposited) the year of 2016-2017 from the profit generated from the raffle ticket sale done by KCWFNA executives and board members of the term 2015-2016.

The initial Scholarship will be provided using the interest generated in the year of 2017.

Most eligible Scholars must meet the following criteria:

1. Admission to professional program after Plus 2 only in general merit (not capitation merit).
2. Professional courses can be Engineering, Nursing, Medicine, Agriculture, Pharmacy, Microbiology, Physical Therapy, Law, M Phil, Computer applications, Business Administration, Accounting or other equivalent courses.

3. Family income must be less than Rs 20,000 per month or Rs 2.5 lakhs per year.
4. Must be of Knanaya Origin.
5. Recommendation letter by a Knanaya parish Vicar OR an Executive committee member of Knanaya Catholic Congress.
6. Children of Widows or Handicapped girls will get special consideration for the scholarship.
7. Must provide proof of completion of the program once the course is done otherwise the scholar will be liable to pay back the money to KCWFNA.
8. Proof of annual household income must be provided from the Panchayat office.

Each year, female scholars in the community will be selected and provided a scholarship from the interest generated. The interest will be equally divided among the scholars. The same student can apply for a maximum of 3 times for this scholarship. The trustees of this Scheme shall be the contemporaneous KCWFNA Executives. The current and upcoming Presidents and General Secretaries of KCWFNA shall be permanent committee members of the Project Deepti Committee.

Upcoming KCWFNA executives can add to the principal amount as years go by to increase the principal amount (thus increasing the interest rate) and or the number of girls that are being helped.

In any case if this scheme is discontinued, the principal amount must only be donated for a non profit organization that provides education for the women in the Knanaya Community and be used for educational purpose only. KCCNA officers must be updated on any deposits and any withdrawals of this account.

DEEPTI EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM



WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN

KNANAYA CATHOLIC WOMEN'S FORUM OF NORTH AMERICA (KCWFNA)

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS PRIOR TO THIS DATE: _____

SECTION 1

DATE APPLYING: _____

NAME: _____ SEX (FEMALES ONLY) Y/N _____

AGE: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

SECTION 2

FATHER'S NAME: _____

MOTHER'S NAME: _____

HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL INCOME: _____

BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER: _____

ROUTING NUMBER: _____

NAME OF THE ACCOUNT HOLDER: _____

SECTION 3

KNANAYA PARISH: _____

AUTHORIZING PARISH VICAR or KCC EXECUTIVE MEMBER: _____

RECOMMENDATION LETTER INCLUDED: (Y/N) _____

SECTION 4

NAME OF THE PROGRAM ADMITTED TO: _____

NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE: _____

ADDRESS OF THE COLLEGE: _____

CONTACT PERSON FROM THE PROGRAM: _____

PHONE NUMBER OF CONTACT PERSON: _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS: _____ CURRENT YEAR OF THE PROGRAM: _____

SECTION 5

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING ALONG WITH THIS APPLICATION FORM:

PROOF OF ADMISSION: (Y/N)

REPORT CARD/MARK LIST: (Y/N)

PROOF OF ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM PANCHAYAT: (Y/N)

SIGNATURE OF THE APPLICANT: _____

SIGNATURE OF THE PARISH VICAR OR KCC EXECUTIVE: _____

SIGNATURE OF A PARENT: _____

******* APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE DATE. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL RESULT IN DENIAL OF THE APPLICATION *******

******* OFFICE USE ONLY *******

DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED: _____ PERSON APPROVING: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

PROOF OF COMPLETION OF THE COURSE ONCE THE COURSE IS COMPLETED: (Y/N) _____



Appendix 2:

Knanaya Catholic Women's Forum of North America (KCWFNA)

Election Nomination Form

ELECTION YEAR _____

Position Seeking _____

Name of Candidate _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Local Women's Forum Unit (*must be an executive member of the local Women's Forum Unit*)

Position in Women's forum local unit _____

Describe Prior Experience/Qualifications working in National or Local level (eg: *served as the President of KCCSC Women's Forum from 2010 - 2012, served as a KCCNA NC from 2012 - 2014, KCYL Secretary from 1998 - 2000*) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Proposed By (*must be an executive member of the local Women's forum or local association unit*):

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Association _____ Position in Association _____

Signature _____ Date _____