

# REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT FORUM OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY BY-LAWS

## Article 1: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Refugee & Immigrant Forum of Santa Clara County.

## Article II: Statement of Purpose and Mission Statement

The purpose of the organization is to inform and educate the general community regarding refugee and immigrant issues, network with organizations providing services to refugees and immigrants, advocate for and promote the self-advocacy of refugees and immigrants, and assist in the successful resettlement of new refugee groups in Santa Clara County.

**Mission Statement:** *The Refugee & Immigrant Forum of Santa Clara County facilitates the successful integration of refugees and immigrants into local communities through collaboration, resource sharing and fostering community awareness.*

## Article III: Functions and Activities

The Forum works to assure the most efficient use of available resources to accomplish the purpose of the organization by:

- A. Assisting in coordination and resettlement efforts.
- B. Participating in planning and policy development for refugee resettlement.
- C. Providing information about and influencing legislative and policy decisions at all levels of government that affect refugees and immigrants.
- D. Promoting cross-cultural understanding.

## Article IV: Membership

### A. Composition and Selection

General Membership in the organization is open to any interested individual, agency or organization. New member individuals, agencies or organizations will be admitted to the Forum after application approval by the current elected officers.

Each individual member shall have one vote, and each agency shall have two votes, one from each representative authorized to attend the meeting from their agency. It is up to each agency/organization to designate an individual and alternate to represent the group. An agency/organization may choose to designate a different representative or representatives to Forum committees than it designates as members for the general meeting of the Forum.

## B. Place and Time of Meeting

Membership meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 11:30am and concluding by 1:00pm unless there is a vote to extend the meeting. Meetings shall be inside the environs of Santa Clara County at a location designated by the membership. Members will be notified of change in the time or place of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance of the designated meeting time.

## C. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of one-third of the members, except that a quorum shall consist of a majority of the members for the purpose of nominating and electing officers at the October and November meetings.

## C. Dues

The fiscal year of the organization shall be by calendar year. There will be membership dues of \$50.00 per individual member and \$125.00 per agency or organization member due at the beginning of the fiscal year. A "member" shall be deemed as an individual, agency or organization that has fulfilled the requirements of the Forum by having paid the dues required by the Forum.

At the sitting officers' discretion, a scholarship or reduced dues shall be extended to a limited number of organizations on a three-year rotating schedule based on availability of funding for that purpose.

## D. Voting

All persons attending general meetings of the Forum shall be entitled to a seat and a voice. Only those individuals, agencies or organizations that are members shall be entitled to vote.

## **Article V: Officers**

### A. Sitting Officers

The officers of the Forum shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### B. Nominations and Election

Nominations for officers for the following year shall be accepted from the floor during the October meeting of the Forum. Self nominations are acceptable. The nominated slate shall be voted on during the November meeting of the Forum for the terms as delineated in Article V, Section C.

### C. Terms of Office

Terms of office will be for one calendar year, for a maximum of two (2) successive terms. The Treasurer's term, as an exemption, shall be for a period of two years, with a possible extension of an additional two-year period.

### D. Duties

The Chair shall perform the duties that the title of the office connotes. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Forum and of the Executive Committee, shall be an ex-officio voting member of all standing committees. Any speakers to the Refugee & Immigrant Forum will be invited to meetings by the Chair. All official correspondence from the Forum will be signed by the Chair. The Chair shall supervise and direct any paid staff.

The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and shall have such other duties as are assigned by the Chair.

The Secretary shall keep and send out full and complete minutes and attendance records of the meetings of the Forum and of the Executive Committee and generally perform all duties pertaining to the office (including assisting the Chair create the agenda, asking for input and announcements from the members in advance of the regular meetings).

The Treasurer shall keep account of the Forum expenses and manage Forum finances, making monthly verbal or written reports to the organization, and shall maintain the Forum membership list, based on paid dues.

The Executive Committee manages the Forum Budget. Committee Chairs make their budget requests to the membership in advance of any event or action. When time does not allow for a membership vote on budget items, the Executive Committee may approve items, but any and all items of note shall be brought before the membership at the next monthly meeting and receipts submitted for reimbursement.

## **Article VI: Committees**

### A. Membership

Membership on standing committees is open to each member of the Forum. Each agency/organization should designate an individual and alternate to represent it on each committee. When a designated member or his/her alternate does not attend three (3) consecutive meetings, they shall be dropped from that committee.

### B. Committees

There shall be two types of committees, standing and ad hoc. Any committee shall exist solely to fulfill the purpose of the forum and mission of the Forum.

1. The Executive Committee will make emergency decisions and become the ad hoc nominating committee if an officer for whatever reason cannot complete his/her term of office.
2. Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Chair as needed.

### **Article VII: Amendments**

These By-laws can be amended by a majority vote of the membership. By-law amendments shall be proposed at one meeting and put to a vote at the next full meeting.