



# **AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSTITUTION**

## **ARTICLE I - PREAMBLE**

**We, the “American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for Natural Resources Conservation Service”, in the spirit of cooperation and support of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) mission, have elected to organize and form an association to advocate for service to reservations and Indian Lands, and for the meeting of trust responsibilities. The association promotes the recruitment, retention, and professional development of American Indian and Alaska Native employees. Membership in the association is open to all interested parties. With the following charter and companion bylaws, we will achieve our vision by:**

- A. Advocating for a culturally diverse workforce.
- B. Serving as a liaison between the American Indian and Alaska Native communities and NRCS.
- C. Identifying and resolving barriers to employment of American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- D. Shaping the future of natural resource management.

The Chief of the NRCS endorsed this association by letter, dated April 10, 1997.

## **ARTICLE II - NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The name of the association shall be the “American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for Natural Resources Conservation Service”. Hereafter, shall be referred to as the “Association”.

## **ARTICLE III – ASSOCIATION MOTTO**

“RESPECT, HARMONY AND BEAUTY”

## **ARTICLE IV - PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The purpose of the American Indian/Alaska Native Association for the Natural Resources Conservation Service is to strengthen the NRCS mission by providing educational opportunities that foster the recruitment, retention, professional development, and career advancement of American Indians and Alaska Natives within NRCS and other federal agencies. Furthermore, the Association provides various training opportunities to improve NRCS services and outreach to American Indians and Alaska Natives

and to promote higher educational opportunities by sponsoring a sustaining scholarship program. This purpose will be fulfilled by providing a forum that:

- A. Serves an advocacy role for increased recognition of American Indians and Alaska Natives as a viable part of the NRCS workforce.
- B. Promotes a greater sense of pride, professionalism, and unity among American Indian and Alaska Native employees.
- C. Serves to increase awareness of American Indian and Alaska Native cultures to the leadership of the NRCS, other federal agencies, and fellow employees.
- D. Develops a network that fosters a productive working relationship between NRCS and advisors at colleges and universities, and other American Indian and Alaska Native organizations, which will enhance recruitment of American Indians and Alaska Natives into NRCS.
- E. Assists the technical and leadership development of employees to meet current and future NRCS needs by sponsoring workshops, seminars, field days, and similar events.
- F. Creates opportunities for employees to gain experience, visibility, and recognition.
- G. Encourages a recruiting, networking, and mentoring program that is sensitive to cultural, individual, and professional needs of employees to aid in their retention, development, and advancement.
- H. Enhances employees' knowledge of local, state, national, and international issues and concerns relative to USDA and NRCS.
- I. Serves as a liaison between NRCS and the American Indian and Alaska Native community and tribal units in promoting the conservation of natural resources.

#### **ARTICLE V - GOVERNMENT**

Laws - The laws of this Association shall consist of the Constitution, the Bylaws, the Robert's Rules of Order, and any additional regulations passed by the National Council.

#### **ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Eligibility - Any person or organization subscribing to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association is eligible to apply for membership.
- B. Class - The membership in this Association shall be the following classes as defined by the Bylaws: Charter, Regular, Life, Associate, Institutional, and AIANEA Elder Council Lifetime.

## **ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Membership will cover a twelve-month period of the calendar year (January - December). The dues fee structure is:

CHARTER (open season 1/1/96 - 7/1/96) \$100.00 for 1996

Regular \$25.00 per annum

Associate \$15.00 per annum

Life Charter or Regular \$250.00 one-time payment

or \$65.00 per year for a 4 year period

Institutional (American Indian Junior Colleges) \$100.00

Institutional Tribal (other) \$500.00 (\$1,000) per annum

AIANEA Elder Council Lifetime (Fee Waived)

Dues will be paid on a calendar year basis (January 1 to December 31) and are not pro-rated during the calendar year in which the Association is joined.

## **ARTICLE VIII - ORGANIZATION**

A. The Association will consist of Officers and Regional Representatives, known as the National Council. The National Council will consist of three officers (President, First Vice-President, and Second Vice-President) and six Regional Representatives (one per region). The Treasurer and Secretary are appointed by the vote of the National Council.

B. There will be six regions:

1. East

Delaware, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia

2. Southeast

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia

3. South Central

Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

4. Midwest

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin

5. Northern Plains

Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

6. West

Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Pacific Basin, Utah, Washington

- C. Election of officers and regional representatives will be in accordance with Article X of this Constitution.
- D. Treasurer - The Treasurer is appointed by the National Council and has neither voting privileges nor the right to make or second motions as a National Council member.
- E. Secretary - The Secretary is appointed by the National Council and has neither voting privileges nor the right to make or second motions as a National Council member

#### **ARTICLE IX - CHAPTER**

There is one National Chapter of the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

#### **ARTICLE X - ELECTIONS**

- A. The position of Second Vice-President is an elective office. The offices of First Vice-President and President are successive from the Second Vice-President and First Vice-President offices, respectively. All Officers will serve for a term of one year.
- B. The Regional Representatives will be elected by the respective membership of the region represented for a period of two years. The terms for Regional Representatives shall be from January 1 through December 31 of the second year. The terms of the six elected Regional Representatives shall be staggered so that three members are elected every other year to serve a two year term. The order of elections will be West, Southeast, and Midwest in one year followed by South Central, Northern Plains, and East the next year.
- C. Nominations for Second Vice-President and Regional Representatives will be made by the general membership. Charter Officers and charter Regional Representatives will be determined by the organizational task force established to organize the Association.
- D. Election of the Second Vice-President and Regional Representatives will be by membership ballot. The nominees receiving the majority of votes shall be elected.
- E. The terms of the Officers shall be on a calendar year basis from January 1 through December 31.
- F. Anyone with current Charter, Regular, Life, or Institutional membership in the Association shall be eligible to vote in any election of Officers and/or for the Regional Representatives in their region.
- G. All members of the National Council, including Officers, Regional Representatives, Secretary and Treasurer, must have, when nominated, and remain while in position, a current membership in good standing in this Association. Memberships shall be current effective the beginning of each year, which is January 1.
- H. All Officers, in addition to being a current member in good standing in this Association, shall also be either an active or retired NRCS employee.
- I. If the Second Vice-President or Regional Representative resigns during his/her term, the National Council may either decide to hold a special election or fill the position with the person who had the second highest number of general election votes.

#### **ARTICLE XI - STANDING COMMITTEES**

- A. Standing committees shall be designated, directed, and approved by the National Council.

B. The Chairperson of any committee shall report to the National Council.

## **ARTICLE XII - FINANCES, BOOKS AND RECORDS**

- A. No financial resources or net earnings of the Association shall be distributed to its members, officers, regional representatives, or other private persons. The Association shall be authorized and empowered to pay a reasonable compensation for service rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article IV. No part of the activities of the Association shall be used in attempting to influence legislation, and the Association shall not participate in the publishing or distribution of statements for any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Association shall not expect to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities, or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the Association.
- B. Records and financial statements will be prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- C. Any financial request that exceeds \$300.00 will be submitted to the Treasurer and the National Council for approval and will require signatures of the Treasurer and one other Officer.
- D. Should the Association dissolve, its assets must be distributed as stated in the Article of Incorporation of American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for Natural Resources Conservation Service and as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

## **ARTICLE XIII – ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS**

- A. The official publications of the Association are:
1. Association Constitution
  2. Association Directory
  3. Association Bylaws
  4. Association Newsletter
  5. Association website [www.AIANEA.com](http://www.AIANEA.com)

## **ARTICLE XIV - DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- A. An affirmative two-thirds vote of the Association voting members will be required to dissolve the Association. The Association shall be dissolved within sixty (60) days of the affirmative vote. A special ballot for this purpose shall be prepared and mailed to members.
- B. A special meeting of the National Council shall convene to implement dissolution. Such a meeting requires written membership notification of at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE XV - MEETINGS**

- A. An annual meeting of the membership will be held. Special meeting(s) will be held as provided by the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE - XVI - AMENDMENTS**

- A. Amendments to the Association Constitution and Bylaws may be proposed in writing by any Charter, Regular, Lifetime, and/or Institutional member at any regular or special meeting of the Association or at any time to their Regional Representative.
- B. Amendments require two-thirds vote of the National Council, provided the proposed amendment has been provided to each member at least one month prior to the National Council meeting in which the vote is taken.
- C. The amendment(s) shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP**

#### **A. CHARTER MEMBERSHIP**

Charter membership will be granted to those members of the Association who financially support the Association prior to the adoption of the Constitution and Bylaws. Financial support is defined at \$100.00 during the period January 1 – July 1, 1996.

#### **B. REGULAR MEMBERSHIP**

Any person eligible for regular membership under the Constitution shall be deemed a member upon payment of current and annual dues.

#### **C. LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

Any person eligible for regular membership under the Constitution shall be deemed a lifetime member upon payment of current lifetime dues.

#### **D. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who has rendered notable service to the objectives of the Association may be granted associate membership upon vote by ballot of three-fourths of the members present and voting at the annual meeting of the Association. The membership, however, shall be notified in writing by the National Council of any person recommended for associate membership at least one month before the annual meeting when the voting for such membership will occur. Associate membership shall have all of the rights and privileges of a regular membership, except those of making motions, voting, or holding office. Associate membership shall have none of the obligations of a regular membership.

#### **E. INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

Any organization that subscribes to the purpose of the Association is eligible for membership after approval by vote of the voting membership. Institutional membership shall have all of the rights and privileges of a regular membership, except those of holding office. Institutions will be recognized as one membership having a vote.

#### **F. AIANEA Elder Council Lifetime Membership.**

Any Elder member of the AIANEA Elder Council will be granted lifetime membership, with dues waived. All benefits of a lifetime membership will be included

## ARTICLE VIII ASSOCIATION

### DUTIES AND AUTHORIZATIONS OF OFFICERS AND NATIONAL COUNCIL

Representing AI/ANEA protocol to accomplish this responsibility, the National Council can establish committees to develop policies, position papers, and educational information that will effect changes in policy and program delivery for Indian resources and Indian people. The work of such committees will be presented to tribal governments, tribal organizations, or NRCS state and national officials only after the work has been reviewed, approved, and signed off by the National Council. The responsibilities accepted by the National Council in representing the members and Indian interests means that the officers, individual council members, and individual members must have approval of the National Council to present any opinions or positions representing the Association.

Communication Protocol Any National Council member representing the Association will advise the President and the National Council. Council members will report of any speaking engagements, meetings, and situations to the National Council either by verbal, written, or email communication. This will be recorded in the National Council meeting minutes.

#### A. President

The major duties of the President shall be to:

1. Serve as chief executive officer of the Association and preside at all meetings of the Association and its National Council.
2. Act as official spokesperson for the Association.
3. Serve as ex-officio member of all committees.
4. Call meetings of the National Council prior to all regular meetings of the Association.
5. Fill vacancies among the regional representative membership of the National Council, subject to the approval of the majority of the National Council.
6. Fill vacancies in the manner prescribed by the Constitution and Bylaws.
7. Appoint committee Chairpersons with approval of the National Council.
8. Encourage all elected officers and committee Chairpersons to perform their respective duties.
9. Direct the Secretary to call regular and special meetings of the Association and National Council.
10. Perform other duties as imposed by resolution of the National Council.
11. Enforce observance of the Constitution and Bylaws.
12. Obligate and commit the Association in conditions consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws and established policies of the Association, and subject to ratification by a majority of the National Council.

#### B. First Vice President

The major duties of the First Vice-President shall be to:

1. Assist the President in the conduct of activities of the Association.
2. Perform the duties of the President when the President is temporarily absent.
3. Complete the remaining term of the President in the event that a vacancy occurs.

4. Assume the duties of the President when the incumbent's term expires.
5. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
6. Act as liaison between the National Council and the Chairpersons of committees.

#### C. Second Vice-President

The major duties of the Second Vice-President shall be to:

1. Assist the President and First Vice-President in the conduct of the activities of the Association.
2. Serve as a member and Chairperson of the Audit, Budget/Finance, and the Constitution and Bylaws committees. Provide for an annual financial audit prior to the annual training conference.
3. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
4. Assume the duties of the First Vice-President when the incumbent's term expires.

#### D. Treasurer -- The Treasurer is appointed by the National Council and has neither voting privileges nor the right to make or second motions as a National Council member.

The major duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

1. Properly collect the membership dues. Proper collection of dues shall include the annual issuance of bills for collection to all members for subsequent year dues no later than December of each year, the collection of dues for new members, and the issuance of a receipt to members having paid membership dues.
2. Have custody of all funds of the Association that shall be deposited in saving and checking accounts in a bank approved by the National Council.
3. Maintain a complete and accurate accounting of all funds of the Association.
4. Make all disbursements and withdrawals by check.
5. Submit a report at each regular meeting of the Association that covers receipts, expenditures, and balance of funds on hand.
6. Make a full financial report at the end of each calendar year with copies circulated to the members.

#### E. Secretary -- The Secretary is appointed by the National Council and has neither voting privileges nor the right to make or second motions as a National Council member.

The major duties of the Secretary shall be to:

1. Conduct all correspondence as the President of the Association may direct.
2. Notify members, through Regional Representatives, of general or special meetings.
3. Prepare and distribute to the members of the National Council and standing committees, copies of the minutes of each of the meetings of the Association and copies of other material as deemed necessary by the President.
4. Keep accurate and complete records of all proceedings of the Association and National Council in the "Minutes Book" of the Association and be responsible for their preservation. When approved by the National Council, these records shall serve as the official "Minutes" of the Association.

5. Provide expertise in the resolution of formal questions concerning the method and conduct of meetings of the Association and its National Council in accordance with “Robert’s Rules of Order”.
6. Conduct elections and determine those eligible to participate in business actions of the Association.

#### F. Regional Representatives

The major duties of each Regional Representative shall be to:

1. Serve as an official member of the National Council.
2. Represent membership in their respective administrative regions at general and special meetings of the Association.
3. Inform membership in their respective administrative regions of general and special meetings of the Association.
4. Present issues and concerns from members within their administrative regions, including amendments to the Association Constitution and Bylaws.

G. National Council -- The National Council, consisting of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and Regional Representatives shall function as a board of directors to develop, recommend, and promote NRCS policies, programs, and staffing that will benefit and serve the needs of Indian resources and Indian people. A 66% quorum is needed to conduct business.

The major duties of the National Council shall be to:

1. Manage, conduct, and have general supervision over the affairs of the Association.
2. Set the time, place, and date of the Association meetings.
3. Make any necessary expenditures for any activity approved by the membership.
4. Conduct all business in a financially responsible manner and maintain the fiscal integrity of the Association.
5. Appoint and approve the Secretary and Treasurer.

H. Historian – The Historian is an appointed position, which has neither voting privileges nor the right to make nor second motions as a National Council member.

Major duties of the Historian shall be to:

1. Record and maintain the history of the Association.
2. Duties for AIANEA Historian will be outlined by the AIANEA National Council.

## **ARTICLE IX - CHAPTER**

### **MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Association shall be called at least once per year by the President on dates to be set by the National Council and at such other times as a majority of the National Council so requests. Teleconferences and videoconferences are acceptable forms of meetings.

## ARTICLE XI – STANDING COMMITTEES

- I. The standing committees are the nucleus of the communication network through which active members are to be kept informed of the items and issues of interest that come to the attention of the Association.
- II. Chairpersons of these committees shall be members of the Association who are appointed each year by the President, subject to approval of the National Council. Each Chairperson shall select a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. A written report shall be prepared and presented to the National Council on a quarterly basis (September, December, March, and July).
- III. All committee members shall be current members in good standing prior to serving on these committees.
- IV.
  - A. Agriculture Committee
    1. Enhance awareness of American Indians and Alaska Natives in foreign and domestic agricultural achievements, opportunities, and economic development programs.
    2. Enhance awareness of distribution of wealth, including land tenure, inheritance taxes, trust status, landbase, and related problems as pertains to American Indians and Alaska Natives and other ethnic minorities.
    3. Review USDA agricultural policy and provide recommendations to the National Council
    4. Be aware of the role of international organizations, including cartels and involvement of American Indians and Alaska Natives in production and marketing structure for agriculture in developing nations.
    5. Work with USDA-NRCS NHQ, Regional and State Management, and the Liaison Committee Chair to define and support the program delivery needs of the tribes and American Indian producers. This should be accomplished by developing a database of tribal and American Indian producer resources and needs.
  - B. Communications Committee
    1. Cooperate with and coordinate efforts of other groups and organizations to enhance development and dissemination of newsworthy information that relates to or would be of interest to American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture.
    2. Encourage news media, including trade journals to carry and identify more information that relates to positive roles of American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture.
    3. Enhance awareness of the role of American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture through improved communications.
    4. Prepare the official programs for all of the Association sponsored events that require program formats, speakers, presenters, etc.
    5. Prepare the official publications of the Association.
    6. A photography committee, subcommittee of the communication committee, shall be established as deemed necessary to capture pictures from the Association annual conferences and distribute the photography to its members and guests. The Chair

of the communication committee will serve as a member of the photography subcommittee.

#### C. Liaison Committee

1. Define and support standardization of the USDA-NRCS Liaison position descriptions as they relate to tribal and American Indian program delivery.
2. Review issues and determine the support needed by the American Indian/Tribal Liaisons to effectively deliver programs to the tribes (including Trust Responsibilities and Outreach Requirements as required respectively) and American Indians as they relate to agricultural production. This should be accomplished with the Chair of the Agriculture Committee.

#### D. Land-Grant Institutions

1. Develop and maintain lines of communication between the Association and 1994 Institutions and officially recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Student Organizations and other colleges. Attention should be focused on two and four-year institutions that have agriculture-related curricula.
3. Advocate in the educational communities for training and developing American Indian and Alaska Native youths for careers in NRCS.
4. Maintain liaison with National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education on matters of mutual interest.

#### E. American Indian Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) Committee.

1. Advocate the employment of American Indians and Alaska Natives in agriculture, both domestic and foreign.
2. Keep abreast of changes and facilitate efforts to enhance participation of American Indians and Alaska Natives in various programs.
3. Develop and maintain contacts and relationships with American Indian and Alaska Native oriented organizations, groups and agencies, as well as individuals with interests that are related to agriculture.
4. Define and support the program delivery needs of tribes (Federal and State Recognized Tribes, Community Based Organizations, and American Indian Producers). The objective is to work within required Trust responsibilities and Outreach Requirements. This should be accomplished with the Chair of the Agriculture Committee.

#### F. Audit Committee

1. This committee shall consist of the Second Vice-President and Chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee as official members, and the President and Treasurer as ex-officio members. The Second Vice President shall be the Chairperson of the Audit Committee. The committee shall audit the books of the Association annually by February 15<sup>th</sup> of the new year and report the findings to the National Council.

#### G. Constitution and Bylaws Committee

1. This committee, with the Second Vice-President as the Chairperson, shall be appointed annually by the President. Its duties shall be to review and recommend to the National Council for approval, all proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws prior to submission in writing to the general membership.

#### H. Ad Hoc Committee

1. The President may appoint members of these committees and representatives to other organizations whenever deemed advisable by the Association or the National Council.
2. Ad Hoc Committees appointed by the President will be active for a one year period or until the assigned task has been completed

#### I. Strategic Planning Committee

1. Work with the National Council, AI/ANEA membership, American Indian/Tribal Liaisons, and American Indian SEPM's to develop and update the AI/ANEA Strategic Plan every 3 years, or as needed, as determined by a majority vote of the National Council. The final AI/ANEA Strategic Plan will require approval through a majority vote of the National Council.

#### J. Scholarship Committee

The purpose of this committee is to develop a sustaining Scholarship Program for the Association and select recipients of the annual scholarships. This committee will consist of at least six members, including the Chairperson, with at least one representative from each region. Each member will serve for a three-year term. The committee members' terms will be staggered so not more than one half of the committee will be replaced each year. The committee will have a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The primary duties are:

1. Initiate fund raising projects to generate monies for the scholarship fund.
2. Be responsible for soliciting contributions to the scholarship fund from individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations, Tribes, etc.
3. Secure one dollar of each registration fee at the Annual Training Conference for deposit into the scholarship fund.
4. Work with the National Council to invest the cash principal in savings accounts, certificate of deposits, bills, notes, and other investment securities, which are either insured by or the repayment of which, is guaranteed by the United States Government.
5. Report activities and proposals to the National Council at regularly scheduled meetings or teleconferences. Submit written reports on the status of the committee's respective funds to the President and Treasurer prior to scheduled National Council meetings.
6. Determine the number and value of scholarships to be offered for the current year. Money for scholarships will come from the auction at the Annual Training Conference and interest earned during the year, along with any outside contributions made to the scholarship fund. Once an adequate amount of cash principal is earned, only the interest earned during the year will be used for the

scholarships. At that time, interest that is not used for scholarships will be added to the cash principal.

7. Solicit applicants and select recipients of the annual scholarships based on established guidelines.
8. Provide news releases for each successful candidate.
9. Arrange for appropriate recognition of scholarship winners at the Annual Training Conference.
10. Maintain a list of scholarship recipients.
11. An auction committee shall be established as deemed necessary to coordinate the donations of items and the format for holding an auction(s), live and or silent, at the annual conferences. The Chair of the scholarship committee will serve as a member of the auction subcommittee.

#### K. Conference Planning Committee

1. Members should include the President and Treasurer.
2. The Chairperson will work with the National Council to establish the overall conference budget for submission to NHQ and other sources of funding.
3. All conference expenses submitted for reimbursement from NRCS, USDA or other federal funding sources will be within federal guidelines.
4. The conference committee shall submit budgets for their respective conference functions to the National Council for approval. The Budget/Finance Committee shall have the ultimate responsibility of approving budgets for the conference committee and approving expenditures.
5. The Chairperson will maintain responsibility for fiscal actions of the committee and compile all expenses for reimbursement with the budgeted committee allocation. All requests for reimbursement will be supported by receipts and will be submitted to the Budget/Finance Committee for approval and to the Treasurer for payment.

#### L. American Indian Heritage Poster Committee

1. The Chairperson will work with the NRCS National Tribal Relations Coordinator and the AIANEA Regional Representative, from which region the State is selected, to develop the American Indian poster, obtain funding and provide any assistance needed to get the posters mailed by October 1. Chairperson is to ensure the posters are mailed by deadline date so States have sufficient time to get the poster to the field offices and Tribes by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. The recommendation of the AIANEA Association is that a standard size of 18”x24” be established for the American Indian Heritage poster. The artist can choose a portrait or landscape print style. A selection letter with contact information and the sample guidelines will be sent to the State that is selected for the poster development each year from the AIANEA President.
3. The chairperson will contact the NRCS National Tribal Relations Coordinator in December to initiate the process for getting the upcoming year poster produced.

4. The AIANEA Association will accept offers from States that want to volunteer to develop the American Indian Heritage poster and will select a State to complete the project. The Association will continue the rotation between the association regions that will ensure diversity of the poster and provide an opportunity for all Tribes to participate in the process.
  - a) 5. The committee will select the State to develop the American Indian Heritage poster two (2) years in advance. This should give the States ample time to devote to the project and to work with the Tribal Artist selection process.
- b) M. Elders and Elders' Committee
  1. Elders are a respected part of our Association's cultural and spiritual foundation and voice. The Elders are respected for their good hearts and their generosity in sharing the knowledge and wisdom they have gained throughout their lives. The AIANEA Elders, through their commitment to the AIANEA mission and vision, assist the association and its members to travel our life's path, fulfill the NRCS Mission, and educate others about American Indian culture.
  2. The role of an AIANEA Elder includes: Preserve, strengthen, or renew cultural and/or spiritual practices, beliefs and values in their own lives and communities, then serve as an example to the AIANEA members and NRCS leaders.
    - a. Engage other Elders, AIANEA members, and NRCS employees in activities that demonstrate traditional knowledge, practices, and/or beliefs, where culturally appropriate.
    - b. Increase and build Elder and AIANEA member leadership capacity through integrated educational or mentoring programs.
    - c. Increase access to and sharing of cultural customs and beliefs through the use of appropriate technologies (traditional and/or modern), as a means of reviving or preserving tribal language, arts, history, or other culturally relevant topics. This includes teaching at AIANEA annual training conferences.
    - d. Possess and enhance personal skills that include a connection to natural resources; experience with bureaucracy; and communication skills. Utilize these skills to fulfill the role of an AIANEA Elder.
    - e. Serve as the voice for future generations, utilizing all forms of media, to share Elders' concerns about natural resource issues across the nation.
    - f. Utilize the support and assistance of the Elder Representative, Elders' Committee, and National Council.
    - g. Participate in as many Elders' Council and Committee teleconferences and meetings as possible.
  3. The Elders', Elders' Committee's, and National Council's Role in Replacing Elders:
    - a. The AIANEA Elders' Council will include no more than nine (9) Elders. The AIANEA Elders' Council and Committee, and the National Council will have the option to increase or decrease the number of Elders on a case by case basis.

- b. When replacing retiring Elders, all efforts will be made to promote diversity by seeking a new Elder from non-represented AIANEAs or regions. Local Elders can be invited as “honored guests” to attend the annual training conferences and be given a place of honor and recognition at the conference.
- c. In the event an Elder decides to discontinue their role as an AIANEAs Elder due to health or other reasons, the Elder will be replaced as soon as is reasonably possible. The Elders’ Committee will seek guidance from remaining Elders when replacing the retiring Elder. The retiring Elder may also recommend a specific replacement Elder.

4. Process to add new AIANEAs Elders to the Elders’ Council:

- a. AIANEAs members can suggest a person as a potential AIANEAs Elder. The member and potential candidate should review the roles as defined above prior to following the remainder of the process. The member and potential candidate will develop information about the candidate, including a biography, which will be submitted to the Chair of the Elders’ Committee. Regional Representatives on the National Council, from areas that are not represented on the Elders’ Council, will be encouraged to solicit Elders from their region.
- b. The Elders’ Committee Chair will provide the biography information to the members of the Elders’ Council and Committee. The Committee Chair will include, for discussion, the new proposed Elder as an agenda item for the upcoming Elders’ Committee teleconference.
- c. During the teleconference, the Elders’ Council and Committee will determine whether or not to make a recommendation to the AIANEAs National Council to approve the candidate as an AIANEAs Elder.
- d. If the Elders’ Council and Committee agree to make a recommendation to the National Council, then the Elders’ Committee Chair will submit this as an agenda item for the upcoming National Council teleconference.
- e. The Elders’ Committee Chair or appointee will present the agenda item during the National Council teleconference. The AIANEAs National Council will review all recommended Elder candidates and vote to approve or deny the recommendations.

5. Elders’ Committee Members are responsible for the following additional duties:

- a. Elder Representatives will assist the Elder they are responsible for as needed, to ensure proper communication, conference travel arrangements, and at the conference.
- b. Ensure proper acknowledgement, respect, and honor is given to the Elders.
- c. Provide assistance as needed to make arrangements for Elder gifts and offerings (ie: sweet grass, tobacco, sweet sage).

- d. Ensure proper traditional items are at the training conference, including the eagle staff and hide.
  - e. Ensure arrangements are made for the AIANEA Drum Group and drum to be an integral part of the training conference.
  - f. Participate in as many committee meetings and teleconferences as possible and provide the requested feedback and input.
  - g. Provide feedback to the National Council, to include challenges, opportunities, and accomplishments.
- c) N. Awards Committee
- a. The Purpose of this committee is to coordinate and recognize contributions by nominated AIANEA member(s) through out the year. The committee will have a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The primary duties are:
    - b. a. Receive annual nominations in each available category from AIANEA members.
    - c. b. Review nominations and select the award winners, which will be presented at the annual conferences.
    - d. c. Choose appropriate recognition items and submit to the national council for approval.
    - e. d. Ensure that the award items are on hand at the annual conferences.
- b) O. Duration
- a. 1. Officers/Chairpersons of both standing and ad hoc committees shall serve from the time of appointment until the end of the calendar year.

## **ARTICLE XII - FINANCES, BOOKS, AND RECORDS**

Proposals for financial support or financial requests shall be submitted to the National Council for approval. Reimbursement for travel shall be according to federal travel guidelines and policy.

AI/ANEA Constitution and Bylaws March 08, 2002 Approved by National Council  
 Constitution and Bylaws Amended July 14, 2006 Approved by National Council  
 Constitution and Bylaws Amended January 12, 2007 Approved by National Council  
 Constitution and Bylaws Amended October 12, 2007 Approved by National Council  
 Constitution and Bylaws Amended October 16, 2008 Approved by National Council