

**BYLAWS OF
THE HOUSTON ASSOCIATION
OF BLACK JOURNALISTS, INC.**

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be known as The Houston Association of Black Journalists, Inc., hereafter referred to as “HABJ, INC.”

ARTICLE II – SCOPE OF OPERATION

HABJ, INC., is incorporated in the State of Texas pursuant to the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act (Tex. Rev. Civ. Stat. Ann. Art 1936.) HABJ, Inc. shall exercise only such powers and engage in only such activities, as are consistent with the requirements of the exemption established in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and the Regulations promulgated thereunder, as the same now exist or as they may hereafter be amended from time to time.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSES

The purpose of the Houston Association of Black Journalists is to:

- Strengthen ties among Black journalists;
- Promote excellence in achievement of African American journalists;
- Work closely with all media to ensure a fair work environment for its members;
- Work closely with media managers to ensure opportunities are created for African Americans to enter the ranks of management;
- Work closely with all media to ensure fair, accurate coverage of the African American community and the community at-large;
- Encourage the African American press and Black journalists to become media owners;
- Sponsor development programs to encourage African American high school and college students to become journalists;
- Sponsor college scholarships for students interested in pursuing careers in journalism;
- Sponsor internships for high school and college students;
- Host workshops to help professionals and students stay current on technology and important developments in media;
- Serve as a clearinghouse for employment opportunities and expand job opportunities for HABJ members;
- Educate African American and minority communities on media access and their rights and responsibilities as consumers and supporters of the media;
- Host journalism institutes to enhance the skills of HABJ members and students;
- Provide informational and training services to the general public.

A new Strategic Plan will be compiled biannually, stating the goals of the chapter.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1

Membership in HABJ, Inc. shall be open to working journalists, associate communicators and full-time college journalism or communications students.

Working journalists shall include those journalists whose full or part-time job is to produce, gather, disseminate or distribute news, e.g., reporters, producers, editors, photographers and news technicians. Working journalists also include professionals who work in the multimedia industry.

Associate members shall include journalists who spend less than 50 percent of their working time producing, gathering, disseminating or distributing news. Associate members shall also include media relations professionals, communications educators and freelance journalists.

Student membership shall be open to those who are enrolled full time in a journalism or communications course of study at an accredited college or university.

Some memberships will be evaluated on an individual basis.

SECTION 2

At least two thirds of the voting membership of HABJ, Inc. shall consist of working journalists. The remaining portion, if any, shall consist of associate members. An unlimited number of student members, who shall have no voting rights, can join HABJ, Inc.

SECTION 3

Annual chapter membership dues for working journalists and associate members will be increased to \$40, effective February 1, 2007. Annual chapter membership dues for students will be \$15. Dues are effective for a calendar year (January through December) and must be renewed annually to be considered an active member of the chapter. These dues may be modified by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board provided, however, that (1) dues shall not be modified more than once during any calendar year, and (2) no single increase shall exceed 50 percent.

All members of HABJ, Inc. shall be required to pay dues. Only members who have paid dues (excluding student members) shall be eligible to vote on HABJ, Inc. matters. Dues can be paid at any time during the year and will not be pro-rated.

Each HABJ member is encouraged to work on at least one chapter committee. The president shall appoint the members of the various committees of HABJ, Inc., making every effort to accommodate the specific interest and preferences of the individuals so appointed.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 1 – TERMS OF OFFICE

HABJ shall have a President, Vice President-Print, Vice President-Broadcast, Vice President-Multimedia, Secretary, Treasurer and Sergeant-at-Arms. Each officer shall be a dues-paying member of HABJ.

To maintain the progress and momentum of the chapter, all officers on HABJ's Executive Board will serve in their respective positions for two-year terms. There is no limitation on the number of terms an individual may serve in one position, as long as the terms are not consecutive.

The president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and sergeant-at-arms and committee chairpersons shall constitute the Executive Board (the Board). The Board shall have the right to call special meetings of HABJ, Inc.

The chapter will pay the registration fee for one officer (President) to attend NABJ's regional and national conferences. If the President can not attend, a Vice President or other Executive Board member may attend to represent the chapter.

When the President leaves office, he/she will remain on the Executive Board as Past President, primarily in an advisory capacity.

SECTION 2 – PRESIDENT

The President shall preside over all Board Meetings and general meetings of the HABJ, Inc. membership and shall cast the deciding vote in cases of ties. The President shall be responsible for making sure all decisions of the Board and HABJ, Inc. membership are carried out. The Board shall decide on, and the President shall carry out, the agenda of each HABJ, Inc. meeting. The President shall also serve as spokesperson for HABJ, Inc.

Whenever possible, the President shall obtain the approval of the majority of the members present at a general membership meeting before publicly asserting any position on behalf of HABJ, Inc. However, if the President believes that, because of special circumstances, immediate action is necessary, the President shall be authorized to speak for HABJ, Inc. upon receiving, from 2/3 of the members of the Board, express support for the specific action or position the President proposes to take.

When the President leaves office, he/she will remain on the Executive Board as Past President. This position will serve as an advisor to assist the new President as needed. The Past President will have the same rights as other Executive Board members, and will serve a one-year term.

SECTION 3 – VICE PRESIDENT-BROADCAST / VICE PRESIDENT-PRINT / VICE PRESIDENT-MULTIMEDIA

The Vice Presidents shall work with the President to carry out the decisions of the Board and HABJ. Inc. membership.

The Vice President-Broadcast, Vice President-Print and Vice President-Multimedia shall also perform the duties of the HABJ, Inc. President in his or her absence on an equally divided rotation. For example, should the President be unable to perform for any period during January-April, the Vice President-Broadcast shall substitute. Should the President be unable to perform for any period during May-August, the Vice President-Print shall substitute. Should the President be unable to perform for any period during September-December, the Vice President-Broadcast shall substitute. In the event one Vice President is unable to serve during the specified period, another shall substitute.

The Vice President-Broadcast, Vice President-Print and Vice President-Multimedia shall also perform the duties of publicity for the organization's events and activities. The Vice President-Multimedia will be responsible for the management of HABJ's Web content and the design of all electronic communications. VP Multimedia is responsible for updating and maintaining the website. When applicable, the VP Multimedia is responsible for creating online surveys (i.e., Survey Monkey) and forwarding to the surveys to the Membership Chair for distribution to the membership.

SECTION 4 – SECRETARY

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping minutes of all meetings of the HABJ, Inc. membership or Board. The Secretary shall also ensure that a complete file is maintained of all HABJ, Inc. documents, including lists, correspondence, notices and evidence of actions taken by the membership and/or the Board. The Secretary shall also make sure that meeting notices are sent out at least five (5) days prior to regular or special HABJ, Inc. meetings. The Secretary is responsible for creating a summary of the minutes for all meetings. The Secretary is also responsible for all correspondence to the Executive Board and the Advisory Board. The secretary will forward all correspondences to the membership to the Membership Chair.

SECTION 5 – TREASURER

The Treasurer shall maintain a complete financial record of all monies received and spent by HABJ, Inc. No checks shall be issued without the signatures of the Treasurer and the President, but in the absence of either of these officers, the Secretary may sign for the absent officer. The Treasurer shall provide a report of all HABJ, Inc. income and expenditures for examination by the membership at each general membership meeting.

At each general membership meeting, the Treasurer shall present, for approval by a majority vote of the members present, a list of expenditures expected to be made during the next month. Such expenditures shall not be made unless approved by the membership. Notwithstanding the above, however, if, in the judgment of the majority of the Board, an expenditure or expenditures must be made before the next membership meeting, the Board shall have the authority to make an expenditure or expenditures not exceeding a total of \$250 without first obtaining the approval of the membership.

SECTION 6 – SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

The Sergeant-At-Arms shall be highly knowledgeable of Parliamentary procedure and shall have a complete understanding of Robert's Rules of Order and the organization's By-Laws. The Sergeant-At-Arms shall advise the President on proper procedures for conducting meetings of HABJ, Inc. Sgt at Arms is the Chair of the Bylaws Committee.

SECTION 7 – COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Each HABJ, Inc. standing committee shall have a chairperson who, along with the chairpersons of the other HABJ, Inc. standing committees, and the above-enumerated officers, shall comprise the Board. Each Chairperson shall be elected by an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting membership.

To maintain the progress and momentum of the chapter, all chairpersons on HABJ's Executive Board will serve in their respective positions for two-year terms. There is no limitation on the number of terms an individual may serve in one position, as long as the terms are not consecutive.

Each Chairperson shall be responsible for carrying out the programs and functions of his or her respective HABJ, Inc. committee. A Chairperson shall hold a meeting of his or her committee at least monthly and be responsible for keeping a current list of his or her committee members. Chairpersons shall be responsible for informing committee members of meeting dates, times and locations.

SECTION 8 – EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall carry out the day-to-day business of HABJ, Inc., which shall include, but not be limited to, banking accounts, meeting locations, correspondence and HABJ, Inc. programs and events. The Executive Board develops and presents to the general body mandatory events for the year. Special events can be developed by the Special Events Chair and Committee.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

HABJ general meetings shall be held bimonthly for business purposes. Other programs/events may be held in the remaining six months of the year. The Executive Board shall meet at least six times per year.

The rules of Parliamentary procedure shall apply during all meetings of HABJ, Inc., including meetings of the Board. Interpretation of those rules shall be the responsibility of the Sergeant-At-Arms.

SECTION 1 – VOTING PROCEDURES

A majority vote is necessary to act upon any HABJ, Inc. business. However, before any action can be taken, a quorum of a majority of the voting HABJ, Inc. membership must be present. A quorum of six (6) board members shall be required to act upon any HABJ, Inc. business at a Board meeting.

ARTICLE VII – ELECTION PROCEDURES

SECTION 1 – ELECTIONS

Elections of HABJ, Inc., Officers and Board members shall be held during the October general membership meeting. Prospective HABJ Executive Board candidates must declare their intent to run for an HABJ office at least 14 days prior to the October general membership meeting.

Proxy votes shall be accepted from HABJ, Inc. members unable to attend the general membership meeting only if they have been approved by the HABJ, Inc. Secretary.

Counting of the ballots shall be handled by an Election Marshall, who shall be an HABJ, Inc. member nominated by the Board and approved by a majority of the membership present at a general meeting. The election Marshall may appoint two deputies from among the dues paying membership. Neither the Election Marshall nor either of his or her deputies may be a candidate for any HABJ, Inc. office under consideration.

Each candidate for an HABJ, Inc. office shall be permitted to appoint his or her Election Poll Watcher to observe, but not assist, the counting of ballots by the Election Marshall.

All election candidates must receive a majority of the membership's votes to be placed in an Executive Board position.

SECTION 2 – RESIGNATION/REMOVAL OF OFFICERS OR MEMBERS

The Board shall have the authority to replace Board members who have not been active in HABJ, Inc., or have not been able to carry out their responsibilities as Board members.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDING THESE BY-LAWS

These By-Laws can be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3's) of the HABJ, Inc. members present at an HABJ, Inc. general membership meeting. A quorum of 51% of paid HABJ, Inc. members present is required at any general membership meeting at which amendment of these By-Laws is to be voted upon.

Proposed changes to these By-Laws must be submitted to the HABJ, Inc. president and secretary in writing at the HABJ, Inc. general membership meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which the proposed change shall be discussed and voted upon.

The President shall inform the membership of the proposed change at that time.

The President shall then submit the proposed change to members at the next general membership meeting for a vote.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

HABJ, Inc. shall have the following standing committees:

- A. **WAYS AND MEANS** - which shall help handle fund raising aspects of the organization.
- B. **SPECIAL EVENTS** - which shall handle guest speakers, special events and other organizational projects.
- C. **ACCOUNTABILITY** - which shall monitor the activities of media, its overall programming, management and compliance with FCC regulations.
- D. **EDUCATION** - which shall encourage students to enroll in and complete journalism, communications or mass media courses of study, and help secure scholarships for prospective journalism students. The Education Chairperson may appoint a Student Representative to serve on the Education Committee. This individual will assist the Education Chairperson in establishing a rapport with area high school and college students and ensure that area student ABJ chapters' documentation is in order for national affiliation. Education Chair is also the Chair of the Scholarship Committee.
- E. **MEMBERSHIP** - which shall solicit new members, maintain the membership history, and disseminate membership cards to current members upon notification by the treasurer and/or secretary. Membership Chair is responsible for all correspondence to the membership and general body.
- F. **NEWSPAPER** – will be chaired by the Vice President-Print. This committee will be responsible for producing at least three issues of the *HABJ Journal*, HABJ's official newspaper, per year.

ARTICLE X – ADVISORY BOARD

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to advocate and promote the mission of the Houston Association of Black Journalists. As goodwill ambassadors for HABJ, Advisory Board members encourage journalism professionals to join and support the organization. An Advisory Board member will help to develop and participate in fundraising activities for HABJ and be an active participant in programs hosted by HABJ. Advisory Board members are encouraged to attend general and Executive Board meetings.

Each Advisory Board member agrees to annually contribute a minimum of \$250 to the HABJ Scholarship Fund and serve a two-year term. An Advisory Board member's term is renewable.

The Executive Board will appoint new members to the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board shall meet twice a year.

ARTICLE XI – CHAPTER LOGO

The chapter logo may only be used with written permission from HABJ.

*The Board shall appoint such ad-hoc committees
as it deems necessary.*

*An ad-hoc By-Laws Committee shall review the
HABJ, Inc. By-Laws at the end of each calendar year
to consider the recommendation
of changes to these By-Laws.*

Last updated on June 12, 2007