

# SISTERS IN CRIME, INC.

## [insert chapter designation] Bylaws

Effective [insert date of vote approved]

*Serve as the voice for excellence & diversity in crime writing*

### ARTICLE I

#### **Name and Seal:**

**Section 1.** The name of this organization shall be [insert chapter designation] Its seal shall be a design adopted by its Executive Committee, if desired. Its principal location shall be [insert city, state, or regional designation].

### ARTICLE II

The mission of Sisters in Crime, Inc. is to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers.

### ARTICLE III

**Membership:** Membership is open to all persons worldwide who have a special interest in crime and mystery writing and in furthering the purposes of Sisters in Crime, Inc., as defined in Article II.

**Section 1. PROFESSIONAL Membership.** A PROFESSIONAL member is a paid-up member of both Sisters in Crimes, Inc., and [insert chapter designation] who is one of the following: an author pursuing a career in crime and mystery writing, a bookseller, a publisher, a librarian, an editor or one who has a business interest in promoting the purposes of Sisters in Crime, Inc., as defined in Article II.

**Section 2. ACTIVE Membership.** An ACTIVE member is a paid-up member of both Sisters in Crime, Inc., and [insert chapter designation] who does not have a business interest in promoting the purposes of Sisters in Crime, Inc. This includes, but is not limited to, fans and readers.

**Section 3. HONORARY Membership.** An honorary member is a person who is elected as such by a 2/3rds majority vote of the chapter membership. No dues at the chapter level are required. This election does not include an honorary national membership.

**Section 4. INSTITUTIONAL Membership.** An institutional member is an organization such as an educational institution, business firm, or other group.

### ARTICLE IV

#### **General Management:**

**Section 1.** The general management, control, and direction of the affairs, funds, and property of [insert chapter designation] shall be vested in the "Executive Committee."

**Section 2.** No part of the net earnings of [insert chapter designation] shall inure to the benefit of any member, director, or officer of the organization, or to any private individual, provided, however that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to, or for, [insert chapter designation] (subject to the provisions of Article VI).

**Section 3.** If there is a cash surplus at the end of the fiscal year, it shall be retained in the treasury of [insert chapter designation] to be used to further the purposes of the organization.

**Section 4.** No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office (including the publishing or distribution of statements) except as authorized under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

## ARTICLE V

### Officers (the “Executive Committee”):

**Section 1.** The officers of [insert chapter designation] shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall be Professional or Active members of both Sisters in Crime, Inc. and [insert chapter designation]. These officers shall constitute the Executive Committee. Each officer may serve two one-year elected consecutive terms in the same capacity.

In the event that a decision needs to be made quickly without time to poll the general members, the Executive Committee may make that decision. Votes, which may be collected by e-mail, shall be tabulated and recorded by the Secretary.

**Section 2.** The President shall preside at (or delegate a representative to) all membership meetings and call and preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee. The President sets goals and responsibilities, serves as ad hoc member of any standing committees, polls members on major decisions, keeps members informed, serves as group spokesperson, acts as liaison with other Sisters in Crime, Inc. chapters or related organizations, plans special events, and performs such other duties as the Executive Committee may from time to time determine.

**Section 3.** The Vice-President shall substitute for all or part of the above if the President is unable to fulfill her obligations, attend Executive Committee meetings, and may act as chairperson for a special event.

**Section 4.** The Secretary shall take minutes at all general membership and Executive Committee meetings, handle correspondence in coordination with the President, keep a file of publications and publicity, and perform such other duties as may be directed by the Executive Committee including the maintenance of a membership roster and information on the chapter’s website.

**Section 5.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for all financial matters of [insert chapter designation] including the collection of dues and other income and payment of expenses, maintain bank account(s), keep accurate financial accounts, and prepare and submit a financial statement whenever the Executive Committee or general membership requests it. The Treasurer, or any person or persons designated by the Executive Committee, may make disbursements from the treasury as authorized by a majority vote of the Executive Committee and general membership.

**Section 6.** Should there be a vacancy in the Presidency at any time, the Vice-President shall succeed to the Presidency and shall serve until the next annual election. Any other vacancy of an office shall be filled by a vote of the Executive Committee and the successor shall hold office until the next annual election.

**Section 7.** None of the officers of [insert chapter designation] or any other members of the Executive Committee will receive a salary or compensation for services rendered except for reasonable reimbursement of expenses incurred with their service on behalf of the organization.

**Section 8. IMPEACHMENT OF OFFICERS.** Officers can be impeached for dereliction of duty or malfeasance by a majority vote of the general membership, present or voting by proxy at a regularly or specially scheduled meeting with at least 10 days notice of the matter under consideration being sent to the membership. Impeachment includes (a) notifying the officer in writing of the charge(s) and by whom made, as well as filing said charge(s) with the Executive Committee, and (b) investigating the charge by a committee of members, none of whom is a member of the Executive Committee and chaired, if possible, by a former president or other officer of [insert chapter designation]. The committee will be selected by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Following the investigation of the charge(s), if a majority of the investigation committee votes to proceed, the committee will hold a hearing under circumstances that will give the accused officer(s) ample opportunity to present a defense. If the investigating committee recommends impeachment by a two-thirds vote, notification of the call for impeachment will be sent to all members together with a statement summarizing the recommendations of the investigating committee. The membership will vote on impeachment of the officer(s) at the next membership meeting after a full and open hearing of both sides.

## ARTICLE VI

### Committees:

**Section 1.** Standing Committees shall be established by the Executive Committee, as needed. Chairs of the Standing Committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee from the membership. Chairs shall serve at the pleasure of the Executive Committee. They must be Professional or Active members of the organization.

Standing committees and their chairs may include:

- 1) A Membership Committee to keep a computerized spreadsheet or list of all members including the payment of annual chapter dues with current contact information, to confirm membership in SinC-National, and to maintain the chapter's group listing on the SinC website;
- 2) A Program Committee to work in conjunction with the chapter's President and/or Executive Committee to plan the chapter's monthly program meetings, workshops, speaker or author-support at book signing events;
- 3) A Publicity/Media Committee to submit chapter news to the parent SinC newsletter; write a chapter newsletter on an ad hoc basis, if desired; contact and respond to media inquiries; keep a record of member authors' published work; update information on the chapter website; maintain chapter information on social media websites.

**Section 2.** Ad Hoc and Pro Tem Committees shall be appointed by the President and/or Executive Committee, as needed.

## ARTICLE VII

### Meetings:

**Section 1.** [insert chapter designation] shall meet at least once a month at a designated location or on another schedule as determined by the Executive Committee. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the parliamentary procedure prescribed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order or by any other generally accepted procedure agreed upon by the Executive Committee and announced to the members.

**Section 2.** Executive Committee meetings may be held when and where the Executive Committee determines, either in person, by proxy or by conference call or other media access. A quorum of at least 3/4ths of the Committee members must be present.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Elections and Nominations:

**Section 1.** Officer election will take place at the regular chapter meeting each December. The vote will be made by secret ballot or by a show of hands. An absentee ballot can be sent to members who are unable to make the meeting in order to vote by proxy. The deadline for returning the absentee ballot is at least one week before the election. Only fully paid-up Professional or Active members may vote. In the event of a tie, a run-off election will be held. Chapter governance will change hands the following January 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Section 2.** Nominations may be made by general members. Nominations should be suggested to the Executive Committee who will prepare a slate of nominees. The deadline for submission of nominees is one week before the October meeting.

## ARTICLE IX

### Dues:

**Section 1.** Every member shall pay chapter dues annually. The amount of chapter dues is determined by the Executive Committee. If a member joins in the 10<sup>th</sup> calendar month or after, dues paid will cover the following year as well.

**Section 2.** An increase in dues may be proposed by the Executive Committee and voted on by a simple majority of the members present and voting at a regularly or specially scheduled meeting with at least 10 days' notice of the increase having been sent to all members.

**Section 3.** Members of [insert chapter designation] are also required to be members of Sisters in Crime, Inc. SinC's organizational dues are collected separately by SinC. Collection of these dues is not the responsibility of the chapter, but the chapter is responsible for confirming that SinC dues have been paid.

## ARTICLE X

### Discipline:

**Section 1.** NON-PAYMENT OF DUES. Chapter membership may be terminated if dues have not been paid by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Section 2.** MISCONDUCT. "Misconduct" is defined as conduct inimical or harmful to the purposes and/or good reputation of Sisters in Crime, Inc. The Executive Committee may suspend or expel a member for misconduct, but may do so only after a full investigation has been made. The investigation shall include (a) written notification to the member of the charge and by whom made; (b) arrangement for a hearing, either before the Executive Committee or before a committee appointed by the Executive Committee; and (c) holding the hearing, in circumstances that will give the accused member ample opportunity to present a defense. If the hearing is before a committee, the committee may make a recommendation but the decision will be made by the

Executive Committee. If the accused member is unavailable, or refuses to participate in the hearing, or makes unreasonable demands regarding the arrangement, the Executive Committee may proceed with the investigation, and act, without a hearing.

## ARTICLE XI

### Bylaws and Amendments:

**Section 1.** These bylaws shall constitute the bylaws pro tem of [insert chapter designation] upon approval by the Executive Committee and shall continue as bylaws pro tem until amended and/or approved by a majority of the Professional or Active membership at a regular meeting or by absentee ballot. Bylaws shall be distributed to the members of [insert chapter designation] thirty (30) days prior to a chapter meeting, accompanied by an announcement that a vote on the bylaws will take place at that meeting. Absentee ballots may be sent to members upon request. Approval of the bylaws require an affirmative vote of a majority of the members participating in the vote.

**Section 2.** Proposals to amend the bylaws must be authorized by the Executive Committee or be presented to the Secretary over the signature of 20 percent of the membership. To be effective, an amendment to the bylaws must be distributed to all members and follow the voting approval process outlined above.

## ARTICLE XII

### Dissolution:

**Section 1.** [insert chapter designation] will be dissolved only after such proposal has been accepted by two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee and notice has been distributed to the membership and to the parent SinC organization. Voting on the proposal shall take place at a monthly meeting or at a special meeting called by the Executive Committee. Such voting shall be done by the members in person or by proxy. Approval to dissolve the chapter requires a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by the members who participate in the voting.

**Section 2.** Upon dissolution of [insert chapter designation] its property and assets shall be distributed as follows: (a) all liabilities and obligations of the chapter shall be paid, satisfied, and discharged, or adequate provision made hereafter; (b) assets held by the chapter requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; and (c) any remaining assets shall be distributed among such tax-exempt institutions or charities whose purposes are in whole or in part compatible with those of Sisters in Crime, Inc. These institutions may be proposed by the Executive Committee but must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote by those members present in person or by proxy at a special meeting held for the purpose.

**Section 3.** Information about the dissolution of the chapter will be posted to the chapter's website and include the redirection of interested parties to the contact information available on the parent SinC website or to other nearby chapters. The website's domain name will be maintained until its next annual cycle or for at least six months after dissolution at which time the website will be removed from the internet and the domain name returned to the public domicile.

## ARTICLE XIII

### Rules of Procedure and Parliamentary Authority:

**Section 1.** Any policies or procedures not contrary to law or to these bylaws may be approved or amended by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. A record of such policies and procedures will be kept by the Secretary or her designee. Notification of policy or procedural changes will be sent to members in the next regular mailing; announced at the next regular meeting; or published in the chapter's newsletter.

**Section 2.** All meetings of [insert chapter designation] and its Executive Committee will be conducted in accordance with the parliamentary procedures described in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, or by another generally accepted procedure agreed upon by the Executive Committee and announced to the members.

### **Sisters in Crime official tagline: SinC UP with Great Crime Writing!**

Beth Wasson, Executive Director  
Sisters in Crime, Inc.

P.O. Box 442124, Lawrence, KS 66044

[www.sistersincrime.org](http://www.sistersincrime.org)

[admin@sistersincrime.org](mailto:admin@sistersincrime.org) 785-842-1325