

## **Aikido Kokikai Federation USA FAQ**

The launching of Aikido Kokikai USA is an important milestone in support of the future of Kokikai in the US, and we are pleased to share the next steps and additional information that will help us all in making the kick off of this new organization a tremendous success. This document provides answers to a number of the more common questions that either you or your students might have. In the event you have questions which are not covered in this document or other provided materials, please feel free to reach out to one of the board members directly.

### **Who are the Aikido Kokikai Federation USA board of trustees?**

The following Kokikai members make up the current Kokikai USA board of trustees:

Dan McDougall – President	Gary Snyder – Trustee
Todd Kupper – Vice President	Otto Liebmann – Trustee
Andy Wright – Secretary & Treasurer	Glenn Needs – Trustee
Cecelia Ricciotti – Trustee	Erik Baker – Trustee
Rick Goodman – Trustee	Brian Martens – Trustee
David Nachman – Trustee	Yu Oen – Trustee

The Board of Trustees was selected in consultation with Sensei and senior leaders in the organization and have been initially appointed to a 2 year term. Trustees are not compensated for their participation.

### **How will Aikido Kokikai Federation USA benefit me?**

One of the major benefits that the organization is targeting to provide is an ongoing structure that will allow us all to continue to come together and train at annual camps and regional seminars. As the Kokikai organization enters its fourth decade, Sensei has identified this ability to come together and train as an organization as one of the most important ways we can all ensure that the quality and correct feeling in our technique continues to grow. In addition, the day to day business and administration of the organization in the US needs to become more formalized so that we can continue on the path Sensei has shown us to grow and become stronger in the decades to come. As an instructor, this also means the Aikido Kokikai Federation USA will provide you with formal recognition as a Kokikai instructor provided you meet the annual instructor requirements. Additionally we will provide dojo leaders with a way of managing student registration with Aikido Kokikai Federation USA as well as request and maintain rank certificates for your dojo members.

### **How will my membership fees be used to help the organization?**

Membership fees will help to ensure Kokikai continues to exist and flourish into the future within the US.

Membership fees will be used to:

1. Support the continuing ability for the AKF USA membership to have the opportunity to train with Sensei and other senior AKF USA instructors through national camps and regional seminars. Initially this will be done by providing support for travel and per diem expenses for Sensei or other senior instructors leading these camps and seminars. In the future it may also be to take a more active role in supporting the local dojo's that help set up the annual camps and seminars.
2. Track and maintain a list of active dojos, instructors & students teaching or participating in Kokikai Aikido in the US, and to maintain a current rank listing of all instructor and student members.

As the organization continues to develop there are many other potential benefits we could offer members such as negotiating group discounted insurance rates being available to member dojo's; developing training and marketing materials; etc.

**Since AKF USA is 501c non-profit organization, will my membership fees be tax deductible?**

The direct answer to this is unfortunately not. AKF USA was incorporated as a 501c(7) Social and Recreational organization, and while there were a number of important benefits that led us to select this designation, there are also a few trade offs. Since all of our funding is expected to come from members of the organization (vs. solicited donations from the public) and primarily be used to benefit and advance the organization's goals, qualifying as a 501c(7) designation meant we were not required to register or file reporting in each state where we have a members, which greatly reduced the incorporation, filing and annual compliance costs. This allows AKF USA to keep the annual member fees as low as possible while ensuring the organization's viability. As a trade off, dues, fees and donations are not tax deductible by members and we will have slightly more complex tax filing requirements.

**How will I know what the organization is doing and how our fees are being used?**

As a non-profit, tax exempt organization there are clear and stringent reporting and public disclosure requirements that the organization is required and committed to follow. Besides regular communication from the AKF USA board outlining our goals and progress, all organization meeting minutes, financial documents, required annual reports and state & federal filings will be available to all via the AKF USA website for easy and free downloading.

**Will it be easy for me to set up my dojo and students?**

Yes! Included in this packet is an overview of the registration process to help you get started. If you have other questions, there will be detailed instructions on our membership page. Feel free to reach out to any board member for assistance as well.

**I'm worried about membership fees for my students. What am I supposed to tell them?**

This can be a challenging conversation. As trustees, we have the same concerns. First and foremost its important to note that your dojo and students are yours. Your students are not required to be Kokikai Members. However, going forward, a membership in the Aikido Kokikai Federation USA will be needed to obtain formally recognized rank. To make these conversations and decisions easier with new students, Sensei has agreed to defer the 6th kyu test fees for the first year's membership.

For existing students, it is important to help them understand the benefits that being a member will bring. Only active members will have access to annual camps or regional seminars including those taught by all Senior instructors. Ensuring this access to our membership is a critical component of maintaining our consistent levels of quality in Kokikai technique.

**I have multiple instructors at my Dojo/club, can we all hold Instructor Memberships?**

Yes. As a dojo or club leader and a certified Aikido Kokikai Federation USA Instructor, we rely on your judgement of who is assisting in teaching at your dojo/club. Dojo leaders will be able to control who is eligible to participate with instructor membership from their dojo, provided they meet the minimum instructor requirements which are a minimum rank of Shodan and attendance to at least one annual camp or Senior instructor lead seminar a year.

**I have multiple Dojos/clubs, will I be able to register them all?**

Yes, and this is a great problem to have! There is no limit to the number of dojo's or clubs an dojo leader can register. Dojo/clubs can be registered and managed separately on the Aikido Kokikai Federation USA membership page.

**Why is Sensei not a member of the board for Aikido Kokikai Federation USA?**

Kokikai is indebted to Sensei for his efforts to pioneer and develop our martial art. His position as the pioneer of our art and ultimate lead for direction on technique has not changed. Just as Sensei has shown us with our techniques, Kokikai must continue to evolve; and as Sensei has occasionally joked with us, he will not be here forever. As mentioned before, the goal in creating the Aikido Kokikai Federation USA is to ensure we have an independently viable entity behind our dojos that is positioned to support the continued growth of Kokikai in the USA. As such, Sensei desired that the AKF USA organization be initiated now to prepare and be ready for our future responsibilities independent of Sensei, while still having Sensei as a central unifying force in Kokikai.

**Kokikai looks to be doing great as it is, why the change now?**

Our martial art is built on change, we recognize the need to evolve with the times. Things that remain static can become stale and ultimately lose the strength and cohesion the organization has today. Forming Aikido Kokikai Federation USA will allow us to begin building a foundation for the future to ensure that we have a continued bond connecting Kokikai dojos/clubs; provide a structure for ongoing formal recognition of Kokikai rank, and to maintain Sensei's vision of regular availability of camps and seminars and support for instructors to teach them.

**When does this take effect?**

Sensei has asked us to move quickly; and as such membership and dojo/club registration will begin in September of 2016 and we ask that all students and groups become registered prior to Sensei's Fall visit.

**This is great!! How do I take a more active role?**

As you might imagine, creating Aikido Kokikai Federation USA is no small task. We are grateful for any help or expertise you might offer. Feel free to reach out to a board member about your interest.