



WSBA

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Boards, Committees, and Panels Duties of Chairs, Staff Liaisons, and Board of Governors Liaisons

Preamble

The work of the various boards, committees and panels of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) is critical to the ongoing vitality of the organization and profession. In order to help facilitate the work of these bodies, outlined below are the duties for the committee chair, staff liaison, and Board of Governors liaison(s). Coordination among these participants is critical to the overall success and functioning of these entities. (Note: For ease, the term “committee” is used below to refer to boards, committees and panels.)

Role of the Committee Chair

The function of the committee chair is to guide the committee in its work consistent with the WSBA policies and strategic plan and as outlined by the scope of the work and charge of the committee. The chair must be sufficiently informed to interact knowledgeably with other committee members and WSBA staff.

Responsibilities of the chair include:

- With staff, develop a work plan that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities for the year.
- With staff, become familiar with all aspects of the WSBA, the committee's work, including the committee's purpose, prior work product, and current budget and activities.
- With staff, develop agendas, set meeting dates, and conduct committee meetings.
- Review all materials and attend all meetings. Exercise leadership and communicate clear expectations to committee members about what they are expected to contribute to the work of the committee.
- Move members toward participation and decision making and apply appropriate parliamentary and debate rules to ensure efficient and productive meetings.
- Work with staff to ensure that the work of the committee is carried out between meetings.
- Review draft minutes of committee meetings before their distribution.
- Approve reports on committee activities, including requests to the Board of Governors for action.
- Work with staff to prepare an annual report of the committee's work.

- Report to the committee on decisions of the Board of Governors that affects the committee's work or activities.
- Where appropriate, guide the committee in proposing programs, products and services that will further the goals and objectives of the WSBA.
- Where appropriate, make policy recommendations to the Board of Governors.
- Pursuant to the WSBA Bylaws, request that the Board of Governors remove members from the committee for non-attendance or for cause:
 - “Any member who fails to attend two consecutive regularly called meetings of the committee may be removed from the committee by the Board of Governors, in the absence of an excuse approved by the Chairperson of the committee. A member of a committee or a Chairperson may be removed by the Board of Governors for cause, provided that a member or Chairperson so removed and feeling aggrieved shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board of Governors. As a general principle, a member of a committee or the Chairperson of a committee serves at the pleasure of the Board and neither malfeasance nor misfeasance is required for removal.” (WSBA Bylaws Article VIII)

Role of the Committee Staff Liaison

Effective staff liaisons are essential to the committee and WSBA's overall success. A staff liaison is a key resource to the assigned committee, not simply a recording secretary. The liaison facilitates committee operations by acting as the information conduit between the committee, the Board of Governors and the WSBA organization and also assists the chair with planning and administrative responsibilities.

Note: Too large of a staff role reduces the value of the committee and motivation of volunteers. Too small a role often results in the committee drifting aimlessly and operating inefficiently.

Responsibilities of the staff liaison include:

- Be familiar with all aspects of the committee's work, including the committee's purpose, prior work product, and current budget and activities.
- Work with the chair to ensure that committee work is consistent with the WSBA's goals and objectives.
- Conduct ongoing general assessment of how the committee and its work fit with other projects being undertaken by WSBA and legal or community organizations.
- Understand and advise the committee about:
 - the WSBA and its strategic direction;
 - relevant policies, procedures, rules, and organizational activities, including restrictions imposed by General Rule 12;
 - the financial planning process and related deadlines; and
 - lobby law compliance, if applicable.
- Maintain records and relevant information on committee work.
- Be an active participant at meetings, engaged in discussion, answering questions, offering suggestions, and giving perspective. A liaison anticipates the committee's informational needs and coordinates with the chair the appropriate staff and volunteer input before

discussion and decision making. While the staff liaison does not make policy decisions for the committee, the staff liaison should inform the policy or policies being developed.

- Provide financial planning and budgeting support and guidance.
- Anticipate and provide administrative support.
- Support the WSBA's decisions, even when they may not support the committee's needs or preferences.
- Seek guidance from his or her director/manager or other appropriate resources when information beyond the liaison's expertise is required.

Finance, budgeting, and other planning duties:

- Assist the chair in preparing the committee's financial and program/project planning documents, including an annual budget and an annual report.
- Along with the chair, manage the committee's budget, proactively report appropriate financial information; review monthly financial statements and report financial/budget concerns to his or her supervisor and follows up until the matter is resolved.
- Explain to committee members expense reimbursement policies and procedures and ensure they are being followed.

Resource and administrative support duties:

- Make early contact with the chair to discuss a meeting schedule for the year, taking into consideration deadlines for financial and other planning activities as well as committee projects and reports. The liaison reviews with chairs, particularly new chairs, the committee's charge and goals for the year; ongoing committee projects and programs; the committee's budget and other relevant background; and the need for new committee member orientation.
- Contact the Board of Governors liaison at the beginning of the year to answer any questions about the committee's work in the upcoming year and provide any other information requested.
- Coordinate meetings, including scheduling meeting rooms, arranging for refreshments and technical needs, taking into consideration the committee's budget.
- Work with the chair to develop and distribute agendas, meeting notices, minutes, financial and other planning documents, and other appropriate communications.
- Take minutes at meetings and promptly transcribe them for the chair's review.
 - Minutes should capture the flavor of the discussion and debate by the committee, but should not necessarily be a *verbatim* account of the meeting. All motions and votes should be recorded in the minutes. A report of those committee members present and those absent with an excuse and those absent without an excuse shall be included.
- Coordinate and/or distribute committee reports or other information to committee members, the Board of Governors liaison, and other appropriate sources relevant to the committee work, including staff, committees, sections, and divisions.
- Anticipate and coordinate the timely production of the committee's communications, marketing, research, and other needs with appropriate staff (for example: event promotion, mailings, newsletter production, etc.).
- Assist in the committee appointment process, including the recruitment of members to fill vacancies, bringing diversity to the committee's work.
- Ensure that the committee's content on the WSBA website is current, accurate, and consistent with WSBA external relations norms.

- Coordinate committee e-mail lists, ensuring that participant list is current and policies and rules are distributed as appropriate.

Additional comments:

- Generally committee members draft committee major reports and other work product, unless staff has extraordinary expertise on the issue or activity.
- Only the Executive Director may enter into any legal contract or approve the engagement of consultants and professional service providers.
- Staff does not participate in the committee's vote unless otherwise stated in WSBA policy.

Role of the Board of Governors (BOG) Liaison

Each member of the Board of Governors is annually appointed to serve as liaison between the Board of Governors and one or more sections or committees.

General Purpose:

The function of the Board of Governors liaison is to assist the operation of the particular committee by acting as an information conduit between the committee and the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors liaison is responsible for communicating developments in the Board of Governors to the particular committee and vice versa. The Board of Governors liaison does not participate in the committee's votes unless otherwise stated in WSBA policy.

Specific Duties:

- Attend meetings of the committee.
- Report to the Board of Governors any significant or interesting activities of committees.
- Assist the committee in remaining vital and active within its assigned scope or endeavor.
- Coordinate with the committee chair and staff liaison in bringing relevant developments in the Washington State Bar Association to the attention of the committee and communicating relevant developments within the committee to the Board of Governors as well as other concerned divisions, sections or committees.
- Assist the committee in reporting to the Officers when the committee has fulfilled its designated purpose and is no longer necessary.
- Coordinate with the chair and staff liaison to assist the committee in bringing action or informational items before the Board of Governors.
- Coordinate with staff liaison to call to the committee's attention any WSBA policies that may affect the committee's activities or work schedule.