

# WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

## WSBA Board of Governors Liaisons

The Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors (BOG) is the governing body of the Bar. It determines the policies of the Bar and approves its budget each year. Members of the BOG are "expected to engage with members about BOG actions and issues, and to convey member viewpoints to the Board.' Additionally, '[e]ach Governor is appointed to serve as a BOG liaison to a committee, task force, council, section, board or other entity [...]."<sup>1</sup>

WSBA has Board of Governors (BOG) liaisons to ensure strong, two-way communication and partnership between the Board and the many WSBA entities and external organizations it interacts with. Liaisons help the Board remain informed about the work, needs, and perspectives of these groups, while also helping entities stay connected to WSBA governance, priorities, and decisions.

At their core, BOG liaisons serve as connectors. They share information from the Board, gather input to take back to the Board, and help build and maintain constructive relationships that support WSBA's mission.

### ***Role & Responsibilities of a BOG Liaison***

The primary role of the BOG liaison is to facilitate a dialogue between the WSBA BOG and the entity by:

- Sharing information and gathering input regarding BOG discussions, issues and actions. The BOG liaison may do this by attending a meeting and requesting time on the entity agenda or sending communications to the entity members or leaders (chair, co-chair, etc.).
  - Liaisons should clarify when they are sharing their own views vs. an official WSBA position following Board action.
  - Liaisons should include the staff liaison in communications with the entity or its chair.
- Serving as a point of contact for the entity as it relates to BOG discussions, issues and actions.
- Recruiting new volunteers and participating in the nominating team review of volunteer applications for appointments to the specific entity to which they are a liaison. (Only WSBA Entities).

*Additionally, a BOG Liaison may:*

- Engage in events and/or meetings, if requested.

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<sup>1</sup> WSBA Bylaws, Article IV.A.2e

- If attending a meeting, liaisons may request a short agenda segment to share updates or request input.
- If not attending, a liaison may relay needed updates or requests for input via email, to the entity Chair or President.
- Advise and assist entity when presenting or seeking to raise an issue before the BOG or seeking to provide formal input for consideration by the Board of Governors.

*BOG Liaisons do not:*

- Vote on matters of the entity<sup>2</sup>. (BOG Liaisons are not members of those entities.)
- Receive reimbursement from the entity. Reimbursement for such activities is considered a Board of Governors expense.

### ***Entities Eligible for Appointment of a BOG Liaison***

The WSBA President appoints Governors (and occasionally Officers) to serve as BOG Liaisons to groups of entities:

1. *WSBA Entities*. Most WSBA entities are assigned a BOG liaison.<sup>3</sup>
2. *External Entities*. BOG liaisons are also assigned to various affinity bar associations in Washington state upon request (see below for more information).

### ***BOG Liaison Appointment and Term***

The term of the BOG liaison is one year corresponding with the term of the Board of Governors which is beginning at the end of the September Board meeting. BOG liaisons are appointed by the incoming WSBA President. The process is administered by the Office of the Executive Director. When making the appointments, the WSBA President, may in their discretion, invite input from the members of the Board of Governors, staff and/or entity volunteers. An entity may provide input to the President via email at any time or email [boardfeedback@wsba.org](mailto:boardfeedback@wsba.org). An entity may have the same BOG liaison for more than one year.

The WSBA aims to publish the list of final BOG liaisons no later than September 1 each year. Emails will be sent to the leaders of all participating entities informing them of their new liaison. Additionally, a list of BOG liaisons is published on [wsba.org](http://wsba.org).

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<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the WSBA Bylaws, “Governors appointed to serve as BOG liaisons are not voting members of those entities. BOG liaisons must not be excluded but will not participate in those entities’ executive sessions or confidential deliberations except when requested to do so as a resource.” (WSBA Only)

<sup>3</sup> Exceptions include the Adjunct Disciplinary Counsel Panel, Hearing Officer Panel and Disciplinary Board.

## **Requesting a BOG Liaison Appointment for your Entity (For External Entities Only)**

### **Entities currently with a BOG Liaison:**

All affinity bars currently have a BOG Liaison will receive an email every year with a request to affirm their continued desire for a liaison. This affirmation will be conducted through the online [Participation Form](#) by May 1 each year.

The purpose of the form is to ensure accurate contact information, understand your entity's planned work, and better support your activities in the coming year. A participating group can also use this form to opt-out. Completion of the form is not required to keep a liaison.

Please note however, that if an affirmation form is not completed for approximately three consecutive years, the WSBA President may not appoint a liaison to the entity for the coming year.

- If any entity would like to **provide input** for the WSBA President's consideration during the appointment process, the entity should complete the same Participation Form or email [boardfeedback@wsba.org](mailto:boardfeedback@wsba.org).
- If an entity would like to **opt-out of the program**, they must request such in the same Participation Form. An entity may opt back-in by completing the process below.

### **Entities currently without a BOG Liaison:**

Entities seeking to have a liaison appointed for the coming year must submit their request by completing the [Participation Form](#) by May 1 each year.

All information and requests will be reviewed and processed by the Office of the Executive Director.

The criteria below will be used when assessing requests for a BOG liaison:

1. Alignment to WSBA mission
  - a. The organization's mission, purpose, or core activities should directly relate to:
    - i. Advancing the legal profession in Washington
    - ii. Supporting WSBA's public-protection mandate
    - iii. Promoting access to justice
    - iv. Improving equity, inclusion and representation within the profession.
2. Statewide or broad professional impact
  - a. The organization should have demonstrated influence, engagement, or relevance that extends beyond a single workplace or niche group. This may include:
    - i. County bar associations,
    - ii. Affinity bars representing historically marginalized groups,
    - iii. Specialty bars with established membership and statewide reach.
3. Clear governance structure and stability
  - a. A functioning leadership or board,
  - b. Established bylaws or governance framework

- c. Regular meetings or programming
- d. Sufficient operational stability to engage meaningfully with the Board of Governors.
- 4. Meaningful opportunity for two-way engagement
  - a. A liaison assignment should provide clear value to both the external entity and the BOG. Examples include:
    - i. Issues or initiatives that require coordination with WSBA leadership
    - ii. Opportunities to share community perspectives with the BOG
- 5. Demand and capacity for liaison support
  - a. The entity should have an ongoing need for formal communication with the BOG, and the capacity to actively utilize the liaisons.
  - b. The number of liaisons already assigned relative to organizational workload.
- 6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considerations
  - a. The President may prioritize organizations that:
    - i. Amplify voices historically underrepresented in the legal profession,
    - ii. Support diversity with WSBA leadership pipelines,
    - iii. Help broaden representation in governance roles.
- 7. Historical relationship and/or demonstrated collaborative work with WSBA.
  - a. Organizations with a record of partnership, shared programming, or participation in WSBA efforts may warrant liaison engagement to continue or enhance those relationships.