

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Executive Committee Officer Roles & Responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

The work of the section executive committees (also collectively known as “Section Leaders”) of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) is critical to the ongoing vitality of the organization and profession. To help facilitate this work, outlined below are duties and best practices for section leadership.

SECTION GOVERNANCE

Each section has its own set of bylaws and is governed by an executive committee. WSBA Bylaws and policies provide overall direction and parameters for sections; individual section bylaws outline executive committee structure, the election cycle, terms of office, voting eligibility, and membership criteria. While each executive committee has some discretion in how it operates, each section must have a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (or Secretary/Treasurer). Many sections also find the Chair-Elect and Immediate Past Chair positions to be helpful in terms of succession planning and continuity.

Chair: The function of the Chair is to guide the executive committee in its work consistent with WSBA policies and the section’s bylaws. General responsibilities include:

- Scheduling and facilitating regular meetings of executive committee and ensuring information is available to all executive committee members, WSBA staff, and the public consistent with WSBA’s Open Meetings Policy
- Preparing meeting agendas and submitting the required annual report
- Providing leadership and focus with respect to the section executive committee’s annual work plan and goals
- If desired, developing a strong process for commenting on relevant legislation, including the process for ensuring all advocacy work is consistent with General Rule 12
- Cultivating leadership and participation among executive committee members
- Preparing for succession at the end of the term

Quick Tips for Chairs:

- Send agenda several days ahead of the meeting—this doubles as a meeting reminder!
- Be sure to include your Board of Governors Liaison and Sections Program Specialist in your meeting invites

Chair-Elect: The Chair-Elect should be prepared to take on the responsibilities of the Chair as needed and/or as outlined by section bylaws.

Treasurer: The Treasurer should be familiar with all WSBA fiscal policies as they relate to sections. General responsibilities include:

- Understanding the section's monthly financial statements, including *summary*, *detail*, and *fees* statements
- Providing a financial status report at each executive committee meeting
- Preparing the annual budget and narrative based on historical spending patterns and the future goals of the executive committee

Secretary: The function of the Secretary is to take meeting minutes and prepare them for review and approval by the executive committee.

Quick Tip for Secretaries:

- Send approved minutes to the Sections Team to adhere to WSBA Open Meetings Policy

Immediate Past Chair: Most sections maintain an Immediate Past Chair position to retain institutional knowledge and strong leadership succession. Some section bylaws also designate the Immediate Past Chair to run the nominations committee as part of the annual election cycle.

QUESTIONS?

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