

**Black Commissioned Officers
Advisory Group (BCOAG)
Bylaws**

Supplement to the BCOAG Charter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article	Page
I. General	4
A. Governing Body	4
B. Operational Year	4
II. Membership	4
A. Voting Members	4-5
B. General Members	5-6
C. Ex-Officio	6
III. Term of Appointment for Members	6
A. Initial Term	6
B. Reappointment	6
C. Alternates	6
D. Attendance & Absenteeism	6-7
E. Removal	7
F. Resignation	7
G. Replacement of a BCOAG Vacancy	7-8
IV. Executive Committee	8
A. Election and Term of Appointment	8
1. Chair	8-9
2. Chair-Elect	9
3. All Executive Committee Members	9
B. Duties and Responsibilities	9
1. Chair	9-10
2. Chair-Elect	10
3. Executive Secretary	11
4. Correspondence Secretary	11
5. MOLC Representatives	12
6. Treasurer/COF Liaison	12
7. Immediate Past Chair	12
V. Committees	13
A. Term of Appointment	13
B. Duties and Responsibilities	13
C. Standing Committees	13
1. Awards Committee	13
2. Career and Professional Development Committee	14
3. Communications and Public Relations Committee	14
4. Health Disparities Committee	14-15

5. Community Outreach	15
6. Membership Committee	15
7. Social Committee	16
8. Recruitment, Retention, and Readiness Committee	16
D. Ad Hoc Committees	16
1. Charter and Bylaws Committee	16
VI. Operation	17
A. Decision Making	17
B. Committee Projects	17
C. Transitioning	18
VII. Meetings	18
VIII. Awards and Certificates	18
A. Special Assignment Award	18
B. BCOAG Awards	19
1. Hildrus A. Poindexter Award	19
2. George I. Lythcott Award	19
4. Retired Officer Recognition Award	19
5. BCOAG Chair's Award	20
C. Certificate of Appreciation	20
D. Letter of Appreciation	20
IX. Standard Operating Procedures	20
X. Bylaws Revision	20
XI. Version Control	21
XIII. Acknowledgement	21
XII. Approval	21

I. General

The Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG) was established in 1990 as an advisory group to the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) to represent the interests and concerns of Black Officers within the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). The BCOAG Charter states that BCOAG provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General and the Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) on issues of interest and concern of Black officers in the USPHS and on issues relating to the professional practice and the personnel activities of civil service and Commissioned Corps personnel. BCOAG provides similar advisory assistance, upon request, to the Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) of the Public Health Service (PHS) and to non-PHS programs that routinely use PHS personnel. In an effort to better clarify the BCOAG Charter, this document provides general guidance on the operation of BCOAG.

The purpose of this document is to supplement the BCOAG Charter and to further clarify and define the general operational responsibilities of the BCOAG Executive and Committee members. This document also defines and governs the role and function of the advisory group. The Bylaws will be updated and revised according to the future requirements of the BCOAG Executive Committee (EC) and voting members.

A. Governing Body

The Executive Committee is the governing body of BCOAG and consists of the following officers: Chair, Chair-Elect, Executive Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, two MOLC Representatives including Immediate Past Chair, and Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) Liaison.

The committees, established under the EC, are responsible for managing and carrying out specific functions and duties.

B. Operational Year

The operational year corresponds to the calendar year that begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st of that year.

II. Membership

A. Voting Members

1. Nomination of voting members begins on May 1st of each year and ends no later than July 1st of each year. The number of active voting members is limited to twenty (20).
2. The selection of new voting members is finalized by September 1st. A final list of nominees will be sent by the Chair to the Surgeon General for approval. The final

- nomination package for new voting members is submitted to the MOLC Chair no later than September 15th of each calendar year.
3. Voting members are formally introduced to the general body during the first meeting of the operational year.
 4. Voting members are expected to serve in the following manner:
 - 4.1 Dedicate the necessary time to attend meetings and perform duties related to BCOAG
 - 4.2 Actively participate in discussions with a willingness to listen to and respect other viewpoints
 - 4.3 Consider the welfare of the group over personal interests
 - 4.4 Accept and follow through on assignments
 - 4.5 Actively participate in at least one project annually
 - 4.6 Actively participate in meeting discussions and provide input to BCOAG leadership in a timely manner
 5. Voting members are expected to serve on the BCOAG EC and Standing Committees and to assist BCOAG activities.
 - 5.1 Each voting member shall be a contributing, active participant in at least one (1) BCOAG committee, but may serve on as many committees as desired.
 - 5.2 If voting members do not sign up for any positions in BCOAG, the officers will be assigned by the Chair/Chair-Elect/Chair of the Membership Committee to any unfilled position upon approval from the EC.
 6. Voting members are expected to attend all official BCOAG meetings.
 - 6.1 If a voting member is unable to attend, it is the voting member's responsibility to appoint an alternate.
 - 6.2 To encourage the participation of BCOAG general members, the alternate should be a non-voting member who is familiar with the voting member's responsibilities in BCOAG.
 - 6.3 While acting on behalf of the voting member, the alternate has the full rights and privileges of the voting member.
 - 6.4 If an alternate is unable to attend for the voting member, an excused absence may be requested from the Chair prior to the meeting.

B. Non-Voting Members

This type of membership is open to all individuals who are supportive of the mission of BCOAG and interested in assisting BCOAG in achieving its objectives. Non-voting

members may serve as committee co-chairs and committee members, and may participate in any activities but do not have voting privileges.

C. Ex-Officio

This membership consists of former BCOAG Chairs who serve in an advisory capacity to assist new EC officers.

III. Term of Appointment for Members

A. Initial Term

The US Surgeon General appoints voting members for a three-year term with the possibility of serving no more than a total of six (6) years. The official term begins January 1st of the following operational year.

B. Reappointment

A member completing his/her first three-year term on the BCOAG is eligible for reappointment for one additional three-year term. Voting membership is limited to six (6) years of service. Voting members seeking reappointment must reapply.

C. Alternates

Each voting member shall recommend a single individual who shall serve as his/her alternate. The alternate must be identified at the beginning of the operational year and their name should be forwarded to the Chair and Executive Secretary. The alternate shall be a non-voting member of BCOAG and be in compliance with DCCPR basic readiness standards. If a voting member is unable to find an alternate, the BCOAG Chair shall assist in identifying a non-voting member to serve as an alternate.

1. Alternates should be paired with one (1) voting member only.
2. Alternates cannot fill-in for another voting member when they are not needed by their assigned voting member.
3. Alternates for the BCOAG Executive Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, COF Liaison, and MOLC Liaisons should support the respective positions and have a working knowledge of the positions in order to fulfill these functions in the event of a short-term vacancy.

D. Attendance & Absenteeism

Any voting member who misses two (2) meetings in an operational year without just cause may, at the discretion of the BCOAG, be officially warned or asked to resign voluntarily; the voting member shall be considered "inactive" and not eligible for

inclusion on the website's roster including the Committee's end-of-year Letter of Appreciation.

1. Voting members who are absent but have arranged for an alternate to serve in their capacity will have their absence excused and will be marked "absent with alternate", or "AWA" noted on their attendance record.
2. Voting members who do not make arrangements will be marked as having an "unexcused absence" which will count against their attendance record.
3. Voting members who make arrangements with the Chair and whose alternate is not available for the meeting shall have an excused absence noted on their attendance record.
4. Voting members with unforeseen circumstances or emergencies, and are unable to contact the BCOAG Chair prior to meeting may have their attendance marked "absence excused" after discussion of the circumstances with the BCOAG Chair.
5. Non-voting members should submit their attendance to the Executive Secretary.

E. Removal

BCOAG shall have the option to initiate a request to the Surgeon General to terminate membership. The voting member's supervisor will be notified of the member's dismissal or resignation from BCOAG. Notification of removal will be documented in the member's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).

F. Resignation

A voting member who wishes to resign from his/her term will be required to complete the following procedures:

1. Submit a formal letter to the BCOAG Chair and the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) for resignation from a BCOAG position.
2. Give a two (2) week notice in advance in order to allow BCOAG to find a replacement.

G. Replacement of a BCOAG Voting Member or Committee Chair Vacancy

1. In the event of a permanent, in-term BCOAG voting member vacancy, as a result of resignation or other unforeseen situations, the BCOAG Chair may appoint another committee chair or EC Member among voting members to ensure that the duties of the vacant position are achieved.

2. In the event of a short-term vacancy as a result of medical or maternity leave, work detail, deployment, or other reason:
 - 2.1 The position may remain vacant until the EC member or committee chair is available to return to his or her duties
 - 2.2 The committee co-chair or EC member alternate should ensure that the duties of the vacant position are achieved
 - 2.3 In the event that the EC member alternate and committee co-chair are also unavailable to fulfill the duties of the vacant position, the BCOAG Chair may request that another voting member fulfill the duties of the vacant position. In the event that no voting members are available, the BCOAG Chair may request that a non-voting member fulfill the role of the EC member or committee Chair

Any interim alternate appointments will expire when the original EC member or committee chair is available to return to his or her duties or when the term of the original EC member or committee chair expires.

IV. Executive Committee

The EC, as the governing body, manages the daily operations of BCOAG. The EC members may be expected to devote extra time and effort in addition to attending to the minimum core duties and responsibilities stated below.

A. Election and Term of Appointment

Election

The election of the EC officers and committee chairs is held in the month of November each year. In the event that a position is vacant after the elections, the BCOAG Chair may appoint a voting member to this position with concurrence from the Executive Committee.

1. Chair

The BCOAG Chair shall be elected as the Chair-Elect in the year prior to serving as Chair. If the Chair-Elect is unable to progress to Chair, the BCOAG may choose to elect a Chair without serving first as Chair-Elect. Alternately, the BCOAG voting members may choose to re-elect an incumbent Chair if the Chair-Elect is unwilling or unable to progress to Chair in the subsequent year.

Under no circumstances will any officer be allowed to serve more than two (2) years as BCOAG Chair. At the expiration of the Chair's membership term, the Chair may serve an additional year as a member of the EC in the position of Immediate Past Chair.

If the term of the Chair coincides with the expiration of that individual's voting membership to BCOAG, the Chair may serve one (1) additional year as an ex-officio member of BCOAG provided the individual's supervisor is informed and concurs with the extension, unless reappointed as a voting member per the provisions of **Article II: Membership**. For example, a BCOAG member can be appointed and serve as Chair-Elect in his/her third year and then serve a fourth year in an ex-officio status (non-voting) as Chair if not reappointed to a new three-year term.

2. Chair-Elect

The BCOAG Chair-Elect shall be elected from among the voting membership. The Chair-Elect serves a three-year term (first year as Chair-Elect, the second as Chair and third as Immediate Past Chair); there is no re-election of the Chair-Elect position. There will be an annual election for Chair-Elect.

3. All Executive Committee Members

All Executive Committee members, excluding the Chair and the Immediate Past Chair, are elected from among the voting members by a simple majority vote. Nominations begin in October of each year, and elections are held in November of each year. Appointments are one-year terms with the possibility of serving one (1) additional consecutive term in the same position, with the exception of the Chair-Elect.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Chair

The Chair shall:

- 1.1 Carry out and implement the mission, goals, objectives, and functions of the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws
- 1.2 Assume responsibilities for representing BCOAG to all government agencies and media
- 1.3 Work closely with the Immediate Past Chair, ex-officio members and any prior BCOAG Chairs to ensure a smooth transition and proper continuation of BCOAG business
- 1.4 Submit the BCOAG annual business plan to the Executive Committee for approval and disseminate to the BCOAG Membership thereafter
- 1.5 Lead the BCOAG Executive Committee meetings
- 1.6 Lead BCOAG general meetings
- 1.7 Coordinate all BCOAG activities and ensure Committee members follow-up on assigned tasks or projects
- 1.8 Facilitate the approval of Committees' goals and budgets during the first two (2) months of the year (Jan 01 – Dec 31) and conduct a mid-point evaluation at the end of the second quarter

- 1.9 Work closely with and involve the Chair-Elect in Chair responsibilities and activities
 - 1.9.1. Discuss policies and procedures required to Chair BCOAG with the Chair-Elect throughout the operational year
 - 1.9.2. Provide the Chair-Elect the opportunity to preside over two or more General Body meetings
- 2.0 Submit a list of voting member nominees to the Office of the Surgeon General for approval
- 2.1 Facilitate the formal introduction of new Voting members to the general body during the first meeting of the operating year
- 2.2 Submit the Special Assignment Award and Recognition Certificate for qualified BCOAG voting members to the Office of the Surgeon General for approval
- 2.3 Facilitate the formal introduction of new Voting members to the general body during the first meeting of the operating year
- 2.4 Submit the Special Assignment Award and Recognition Certificate for qualified BCOAG voting members to the Office of the Surgeon General for approval
- 2.5 Oversee the election of Executive Committee Officers and standing Committee chairs
- 2.6 Facilitate the orientation of the new Executive Committee members and Committee chairs and ensure that outgoing Executive Committee Members and Committee Chairs provide a written description of all duties and related resource/tools to the respective incoming members
- 2.7 Generate the End-of-term Summary Report, one to two pages in length of the BCOAG activities during term
 - 2.7.1. The content of the report shall be prepared from summaries of activities provided by various Committee chairs
 - 2.7.2. The annual report shall be distributed to the BCOAG General Membership as an addendum to the meeting minutes no later than the second meeting following the conclusion of term

2. Chair-Elect

The Chair-Elect shall:

- 2.1 Assist the Chair with the responsibilities and duties listed above
- 2.2 Assist the Chair in the implementation of action items, activities and other deliverables of all Committees
- 2.3 Work closely with the Chair to learn the policies and procedures required to chair BCOAG
- 2.4 Exercise all the rights and responsibilities granted to the Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws in the absence of the Chair
- 2.5 Assume the responsibilities of the Chair in the event that the Chair is unavailable

The Chair-Elect must be a voting member.

3. Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary shall:

- 3.1 Assist BCOAG Chair in preparing meeting agendas
- 3.2 Record all meeting discussions and prepare meeting minutes
- 3.3 Maintain permanent files containing the BCOAG minutes and reports
- 3.4 Keep attendance of all meetings and notify the Chair and Chair-Elect if a voting member has missed two (2) BCOAG meetings
- 3.5 Monitor the attendance of voting membership to ensure proper organizational representation
- 3.6 Determine if a quorum of voting members is present in order to conduct BCOAG business; a quorum is defined as a minimum of fifty percent (50%) attendance by voting members.
- 3.7 Exercise all the rights and responsibilities granted to the Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws in the absence of the Chair and Chair-Elect
- 3.8 The Executive Secretary must have a working knowledge of Robert's Rule of Order
- 3.9 Assume the responsibilities of the Chair-Elect in the event that the Chair-Elect is unavailable
- 3.10 Assume the responsibilities of the Correspondence Secretary in the event that the Correspondence Secretary is unavailable for one-time occasions (In case of a short-term vacancy, the Correspondence Secretary's alternate should fulfill the role)

The Executive Secretary must be a voting member.

4. Correspondence Secretary

The Correspondence Secretary shall:

- 4.1 Manage the announcement submissions and listserv requests in the BCOAG email account weekly
- 4.2 Forward inquiries sent to the BCOAG email account to the appropriate Executive Committee members
- 4.3 Disseminate all correspondence to BCOAG members in a timely manner through weekly announcements and as directed by the BCOAG Chair
- 4.4 Manage the BCOAG listserv
- 4.5 Assist BCOAG Chair with preparing the End-of-Term Summary Report
- 4.6 Keep an electronic copy of the most current version of BCOAG's Standard Operating Procedures in the BCOAG Google Drive
- 4.7 Assume the responsibilities of the Executive Secretary in the event that the Executive Secretary is unavailable for one-time occasions (In case of a short-term vacancy, the Executive Secretary's alternate should fulfill the role)

The Correspondence Secretary must be a voting member.

5. Minority Officers Liaison Council (MOLC) Representatives (2)

There are two MOLC representatives. One of the MOLC representatives is elected by majority vote by the BCOAG voting membership, the other MOLC representative shall be the immediate past chair.

The MOLC Representatives shall:

- 5.1 Represent BCOAG at all MOLC meetings
- 5.2 Fulfill the rotational responsibilities within the MOLC
- 5.3 Report to BCOAG voting members the pertinent information from the MOLC and Chief Professional Officer (CPO)/Surgeon General Professional Advisory Committee (SGPAC) meetings
- 5.4 One of the MOLC representatives is elected by majority vote by the BCOAG voting membership, the other MOLC representative shall be the immediate past chair

6. Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) Liaison

The COF Liaison shall:

- 6.1 Maintain a record of all financial transactions
- 6.2 Prepare a monthly financial report for the BCOAG Chair
- 6.3 Provide monthly updates to the BCOAG members during monthly BCOAG meetings
- 6.4 Prepare a budget plan for the new operational year
- 6.5 Review budget plans submitted by BCOAG committees and submit recommendations
- 6.6 Maintain inventory of BCOAG merchandise available for purchase
- 6.7 Coordinate transactions related to the sale of BCOAG merchandise
- 6.8 Monitor BCOAG post office box

The COF Liaison must be a voting member.

7. Immediate Past Chair

Following a term as Chair, the individual may serve a one year term as Immediate Past Chair, regardless of his/her voting membership status. The Immediate Past Chair will provide advice and assistance to BCOAG and its EC. The Immediate Past Chair will serve as one of the two MOLC representatives.

The Immediate Past Chair **does not** have to be a voting member.

V. Committees

Committees are created to better serve the mission of BCOAG. A committee may be either a standing one, in response to on-going assignments or an *ad hoc* one/working group(s), in response to specific (or short-term) assignments.

A. Term of Appointment

The standing committee chairs are elected from among the current and newly-elected voting members by a simple majority vote by current voting members. Nominations begin in October of each year. The election is held in November of every year. Chair serves a one-year term with the option of serving one additional term. All *ad hoc* committees' chairs are selected from the pool of voting members by the Chair of BCOAG, in concurrence with the EC. All Committee Co-Chairs are determined by each relevant Committee Chair and should be familiar with the duties of the Chair and act in the Chair's absence. The Co-chair shall exercise all the rights and responsibilities that are granted to the committee Chair by the BCOAG Charter and Bylaws in the absence of the Chair.

Committee Co-Chair and Committee members can be non-voting members.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

The following are descriptions of standing committees within the BCOAG. Committee Chairs provide leadership and direction to committee members in order to meet specific goals and objectives (see below). Committee Chairs are responsible for keeping records of resources and accomplishments and providing necessary information for the BCOAG Chair's End-of-Year Report. *Ad hoc* Committees/working groups created in response to specific (or short-term) assignments are not listed in these by-laws, but their function and accomplishments will be described in the End-of-Term Summary Report of BCOAG activities and accomplishments.

C. Standing Committees

1. Awards Committee

The Awards Committee shall:

- 1.1 Prepare the BCOAG nomination packages and submit to the BCOAG Chair who shall forward them to the OSG for final approval
- 1.2 Prepare any other ad hoc award nominations on behalf of BCOAG
- 1.3 Prepare the Special Assignment Award nomination package and submit to the Chair who shall forward it to MOLC for final approval
- 1.4 Draft memoranda recognizing outgoing BCOAG members and the Chair upon the expiration of appointments
- 1.5 Develop other recognition strategies

2. Career and Professional Development Committee

The Career and Professional Development Committee shall:

- 2.1 Provide guidance and support to all BCOAG members in career development
- 2.2 Organize the BCOAG training sections
- 2.3 Update and monitor the BCOAG mentor/mentee program
- 2.4 Monitor issues and concerns in career development/advancement

3. Communications and Public Relations Committee

The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall:

- 3.1 Evaluate and Maintain the BCOAG website to ensure that a useful format and structure of the website content is established and maintained
- 3.2 Maintain BCOAG Listserv
- 3.3 Enhance BCOAG visibility in Commissioned Corps, as well as in the general public by ensuring that useful and up-to-date information of interest to BCOAG is readily available
- 3.4 Work in conjunction with other Committee members in the development and updating of website content such as posting BCOAG meeting minutes and BCOAG related pictures on time
- 3.5 Assist the BCOAG Chair in communication with other agencies and media
- 3.6 Monitor public information on Black affairs
- 3.7 Plan for Black History Month Celebration Activities
- 3.8 Review and update periodically the BCOAG brochure
- 3.9 Maintain and update the BCOAG poster
- 3.10 Identify and organize at least one committee project per year to enhance the visibility of the BCOAG by interacting with the PACs, CPOs, OSO, minority communities, and other agencies and the media

4. Health Disparities Committee

The Health Disparities Committee shall:

- 4.1 Increase awareness about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for the prevention of chronic disease
- 4.2 Educate about the warning signs, symptoms and risk factors of chronic disease through early detection and screening
- 4.3 Provide resources and educational materials to empower the Black community to take charge of their overall health and well-being
- 4.4 Develop culturally-appropriate informational tools, using existing resources from various government and/or private entities. These tools will focus on diseases that disproportionately affect the Black community;

in addition, the tools will be disseminated via community events and other venues (i.e., churches, health fairs, county health departments, community centers, sororities/fraternities, and family reunions); the committee will also develop additional health-related informational tools as needed

- 4.5 Identify opportunities to partner with the BCOAG Outreach Committee to expand our efforts and increase awareness of health promotion behaviors
- 4.6 Create evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of committee activities

5. Community Outreach Committee

The Community Outreach Committee shall:

- 5.1 Develop and coordinate opportunities for BCOAG members to actively engage in activities that protect, promote, and advance the health, safety, and wellness of Black and other minority communities where we live and work
- 5.2 Increase the visibility of the USPHS and BCOAG by participating in community outreach activities
- 5.3 Serve as an advocate for minority communities by offering our expertise on innovative ways to decrease racial and ethnic health disparities and related issues among Blacks
- 5.4 Provide guidance to the Office of the Surgeon General and the BCOAG general body on public health issues related to Blacks and other minority communities

6. Membership Committee

The Membership Committee shall:

- 6.1 Coordinate all activities related to the nomination of voting members to the BCOAG
- 6.2 Solicit support and interest from the general BCOAG members in recruiting activities
- 6.3 Prepare the Membership Packet for nominated voting members and submit to BCOAG Chair who shall forward it to the OSG by October 30th of each year
- 6.4 Identify and organize at least one BCOAG driven recruiting project per year
- 6.5 Work with the Career and Professional Development and Awards Committees for retention of officers to the PHS or BCOAG
- 6.6 Obtain an annual statistical report from the DCCPR on the number of Black officers serving in the PHS, by categories and agencies

7. Social Committee

The Social Committee shall:

- 7.1 Provide an avenue for members to network and build sustained relationships outside the work setting
- 7.2 Coordinate BCOAG sponsored events for PHS officers that provide opportunities to build cohesiveness and enhance esprit de corps while engaging in activities with family and friends in a casual environment
- 7.3 Host an annual social event encouraging participation from all BCOAG members within the USPHS

8. Recruitment, Retention, and Readiness Committee (3R's Committee)

The 3R's Committee shall:

- 8.1 Expand recruitment activities
- 8.2 Maintain ties with Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- 8.2 Represent BCOAG at the Officer Basic Course open house and ceremonies
- 8.3 Facilitate the transition and progression of officers through retention and/or education
- 8.4 Report on updates regarding readiness and deployment to BCOAG membership
- 8.5 Promote healthy living and eating and provide opportunities for officers to perform the Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT)

D. Ad Hoc Committee

1. Charter and Bylaws Committee

The Charter and Bylaws Committee shall:

- 1.1 Review and revise the charter every five (5) years, and bylaws every three (3) years
- 1.2 Ensure approval of all changes to the existing charter, bylaws and SOPs by the voting members
- 1.3 Prepare all member-approved changes in the BCOAG charter and bylaws and submit to the BCOAG Chair to forward to the Surgeon General for final approval

VI. Operation

A. Decision Making

1. The Chair shall convey any information or idea to the EC.
2. The Chair shall seek input from the EC and relevant Committee chairs as needed.
3. Committee members should express any concerns about BCOAG or suggestions through their committee chairs.
3. EC members shall vote and the majority rules (51% or above). Voting will be performed only after complete and meaningful discussions have taken place. If there is a dispute among EC members and/or tie in voting, then it should be brought up to the voting members for a vote.
4. The Chair shall announce the decision to general voting members, regardless of the outcome of the vote. If a majority of all voting members agree that further discussions of the decision are necessary, then such discussions will take place.
5. The Chair shall ask the MOLC representative(s) to share the final decision with MOLC.

B. Committee Projects

All committee projects should be related to the mission and goals commonly agreed on by the committee and the BCOAG governing body. Each committee should follow the steps outlined below for each project as a guide and make sure to keep the BCOAG leadership apprised of the current status of each project through the committee monthly report.

Committee Chairs shall:

1. Identify specific projects through collective committee member brainstorming, conferring with other PHS officers and BCOAG leadership.
2. Gather additional information as needed.
3. Review the committee's need for outside assistance.
4. Determine what assistance BCOAG or other junior officers can provide, including whether other committees or general members may be of assistance.
5. Create an action plan with timeline.
6. Identify a project lead.
7. Identify and assign specific tasks.
8. Establish a reasonable timeline to complete tasks and discuss results.
9. Evaluate results and assign new tasks, if appropriate.
10. Keep appropriate BCOAG leadership apprised of project status.
11. Ensure appropriate and timely record keeping for each of task.
12. Repeat the above steps as needed, until the project is completed.
13. Ensure acknowledgement of project completion and project team members to BCOAG leadership and other authorities as appropriate.

C. Transitioning

New Member Orientation

1. Each EC member and committee chair should conduct an orientation for new EC members and committee chairs. This orientation should include the roles and responsibilities as outlined above and the minimum criteria for maintenance of good standing as a BCOAG voting member. The following areas should be emphasized during the orientation:
 - 1.1 Importance of the position
 - 1.2 All duties and responsibilities of the EC member or committee chair
 - 1.3 Mission and objectives of the EC position and the committee
 - 1.4 The bounds of committee activity and authority
 - 1.5 BCOAG bylaws, policy, practices, and procedures
 - 1.6 Past accomplishments and current work of the committee
 - 1.7 Assignments of committee members
 - 1.8 Criteria used for accepting new committee members

2. Outgoing EC members and committee chairs shall provide a written description of all duties; functions performed and related resource/tools to the incoming voting members that are replacing him/her. This is to be done prior to the first meeting of the new voting member's term which is the second Thursday of January of each year.

VII. Meetings

BCOAG general meetings are to be held monthly for all BCOAG voting and non-voting members. Voting members are required to attend all official or scheduled meetings to ensure that a quorum is met. If a voting member is unable to attend, it is that voting member's responsibility to ensure that his or her alternate is able to attend. If an alternate cannot attend for the voting member, an excused absence may be requested from the Chair prior to the meeting. BCOAG voting member meetings are to be held at least quarterly. Only voting members are required to attend these meetings to discuss and vote on current and outstanding BCOAG business. It is necessary that all voting members try to attend these meetings to ensure that a quorum is met. If a voting member is unable to attend the meeting then they need to follow the guidelines for attendance and absenteeism. Meeting dates and times will be determined by the BCOAG Chair.

VIII. Awards and Certificates

A. Special Assignment Award

A voting member who has contributed significantly (met the requirement of 30-days of cumulative activities) may qualify to receive this award once per three-year term.

B. BCOAG Awards

BCOAG offers three (3) awards annually that are presented at the annual PHS COF Symposium: the *Hildrus A. Poindexter Award*, the *George I. Lythcott Award*, and the *Retired Officer Recognition Award*.

These awards honor members of the USPHS commissioned corps or equivalent civil service professionals who make significant contributions to the advancement of the nation's health. Current voting members are not eligible for these awards. BCOAG also offers the BCOAG Chair Awards.

1. Hildrus A. Poindexter Award

The candidate must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrated significant contributions toward improving the health of Blacks and other minorities in the United States and abroad
- Continually demonstrates exceptional dedication to the mission of the PHS
- Demonstrated outstanding leadership (academically, administratively, programmatically, and/or internationally)
- Demonstrated excellence in his/her professional field
- Demonstrated significant contributions to the community
- PHS officer or civil service employee (with a minimum of seven (7) years of service within PHS) for outstanding service contributing to enhancing access to healthcare for underserved populations

2. George I. Lythcott Award

The candidate must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Contributions to the program and OPDIV objectives have reflected a sustained high quality of work performance
- Work performance or a single important achievement has been characterized by outstanding leadership initiative and/or the application of unique skills and creativity
- Overall work performance or a single activity has clearly contributed to the mission of the PHS
- Participation in activities within or outside PHS has had a positive impact on improving the health status of the Nation's medically underserved populations
- Any PHS Commissioned Corps officer (Grade O-2, O-3, or O-4) with a minimum of five (5) years of service in the Corps

3. Retired Officer Recognition Award

This award recognizes those Black PHS Commissioned Corps officers who served with distinction for a decade or more fostering the mission of the PHS. Two individuals will be recognized each year.

4. BCOAG Chair Awards (2)

This award was created to recognize officers (one voting member and one non-voting member) who provided exemplary support to the Chair during the past year. These officers have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have exceeded expectations of the Chair by supporting BCOAG's mission, their fellow officers and the community at large. The recipients of the awards are chosen by the chair and are revealed at BCOAG's November or December General Body Meetings.

C. Certificate of Appreciation

The Certificate of Appreciation from the BCOAG EC is presented annually to non-voting members who make significant contributions to BCOAG. This certificate may also be presented, as appropriate, to anyone who has significantly contributed to the mission of BCOAG. The Certificate of Appreciation is prepared by the Award Committee. Excluding the voting membership criteria, the certificates of appreciation and the Special Assignment Ribbons follow the same nomination process.

D. Letter of Appreciation

The BCOAG Chair may present a letter of appreciation to a BCOAG member who contributes significantly to a BCOAG activity. The intent of a letter of appreciation is to demonstrate BCOAG's gratitude for an individual's effort in contributing to the mission of BCOAG. Such an effort can include a presentation to BCOAG committees, and/or participation in BCOAG events. Members are eligible to receive a letter of appreciation more than once per term.

IX. Standard Operating Procedures

A Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) handbook will be developed to provide detailed instructions on the operation of BCOAG. This SOP provides guidance on matters not addressed by the BCOAG Charter or Bylaws. The Correspondence Secretary is responsible for maintaining these SOPs. All SOPs should be reviewed annually by the respective EC members and committees. The Charter and Bylaws Committee will provide general guidance and assistance in drafting and revision processes of these documents.

X. Bylaws Revision

BCOAG bylaws should be reviewed at least once every three (3) years. Revised bylaws should be submitted by the Charter and Bylaws Committee, approved by a simple majority vote of the voting members, and signed by the Chair. These bylaws have been ratified by a quorum of the voting membership on December 7, 2015.

XI. Version Control

This is Version: 2015

XIII. Acknowledgement

BCOAG members prepared this document noting that its development and maintenance are a continuous process.

XII. Approval

Submitted By:
LCDR Mutiu Okanlawon, Chair
Charter and Bylaws Committee

Approved by:
CDR Hamet Touré
Chair, BCOAG