

BLACK COMMUNITY BUSINESS RESOURCE GROUP (BRG)

CHARTER AND BYLAWS

*A business
resource group
for members of
the Black
Community and
their allies.*

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Charter

Background

Organizations experience greater success and creativity through a demographically diverse workforce. They are also better able to understand and meet client needs if the makeup of its workforce at all levels is reflective of the community/customer base (O'Neill, 2016). Individuals may think that "because we've read about a certain issue or engaged with a particular people, that we "get it" and can speak for something or about someone ... that we somehow know enough that we don't need their perspectives in the room" (Mariani, 2017). The reality is "[t]ime and time again, from corporations to government and other civic entities, we see missteps by leaders and organizations because they fail to consider how people of various backgrounds might view their message or be affected by a given policy" (Mariani, 2017).

Executive Order 12-02 states, "Washington State is committed to developing and maintaining a high performing public workforce that provides access, meaningful services, and improved outcomes for all citizens. In order to achieve these aims, state leaders must be able to apply diverse perspectives and experiences to the examination of the issues facing the state. Such diversity enhances the fullness of our understanding of these issues and opens opportunities for the consideration of new and better solutions."

The Black Community has made an integral, yet undervalued, contribution to the United States since Africans were brought to America as slaves. When it comes to inequality and discriminatory practices, Washington State's story is no different than the original thirteen colonies and other territories that would become states establishing the national narrative of inequity - even after the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite [invaluable contributions](#) to our state, black people were and continue to be underrepresented and underestimated in public service.

A Business Resource Group for the Black Community will change the state's narrative and give an identity and voice to current employees while enforcing policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and respect in the workplace.

Purpose

This Business Resource Group serves as a means to:

- Promote state government as an employer of choice supporting efforts that increase representation of individuals of the Black Community at all levels of employment.
- Better the lives of state employees through advocacy, outreach, opportunity, and advisement to the Governor and agencies on policies that affect state-employed black people, and ultimately, communities in which they live and serve.
- Contribute to a more diverse understanding of the unique, multi-faceted aspects of the Black Community in Washington State.
- Integrate the history, cultural experiences, values, and knowledge of both black people and their allies into the workforce of Washington State government.
- Provide advice and assistance to state agencies' regarding strategies to hire, retain, and develop black people in Washington State government.

- Apply diverse perspectives and experiences to the examination of the issues facing Washington State. Diverse perspectives enhance the fullness of our understanding of these issues and open opportunities for the consideration of new ideas and better solutions.

Definitions

The ***Black Community***, although not easy to define, is comprised of people who do not necessarily share culture, ancestry, location, or language. In America, it is the color of our skin and other physical characteristics that unites us in shared experiences.

An ***ally*** is a person of one social identity group who advocates and supports members of another group; typically a member of the dominant identity advocating and supporting a marginalized group (DEI Definitions and Competencies Workgroup). The term “ally” is not a noun, it is an action word. An ally is a person who *acts* in alliance.

A ***state employee*** is an individual who serves the Washington State Community in their professional role. State employees work for the government at the state level, i.e. agencies, higher education, boards, commissions, etc.

Description

The US Census defines this community as “Black/African American - a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (United States Census, 2018).

However, there are other groups of individuals in this community who have come to America from other countries such as Trinidad, England, Haiti, and Jamaica. Thus, the Census definition is not inclusive. This is why we also choose not to define this group as an African American Business Resource Group.

This community comes in various beautiful shades and tints, from rich vanilla to deep ebony. Even those whose skin color allowed them to pass as white in America to escape slavery, segregation, and other forms of racism understand the barriers against and inequities faced by the community they came from. There is an array of other stunning and distinguishing physical characteristics as well. Our cultures are rich and diverse. And so is this Community.

Goals

- Provide a professional network and opportunities aimed at increasing the number of black people in positions of leadership.
- Connect members of the Black Community with mentorship resources.
- Collaborate with other Business Resource Groups, the Commission on African-American Affairs (CAAA), and other partners.
- Bring awareness of the psychological trauma of the black experience.
- Provide information, strategies, and recommendations to State executives, management, employees, and the public regarding the Black Community perspective to the State, region, and local government and communities.
- Recruit black people to state service through outreach and educational activities.
- Retain black people by providing a support structure, and career progression assistance.
- Create an inclusive work environment for Black employees.

- Recognize, honor, and elevate Black history by planning activities that promote cultural awareness and understanding.
- Raise the level of engagement and representation of the Black Community in State government.
- Raise awareness in the community to bring to light there are opportunities for black people in state government.

By-Laws

The BCBRG is governed by a set of By-Laws that outlines the group’s membership, operational processes, and scope of activities. The BCBRG does not act as an alternative employment mechanism for addressing employee grievances and operates in alignment with all related bargaining agreements, rules, and laws.

Membership

Membership is open to all state employees who are interested in promoting the values, principles, and activities of the BCBRG. Identifying as a member of the Black Community is not a requirement of membership.

Executive Board

- **Chair:** The Chair is the person who served as the previous years’ Co-Chair. The Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Past Chair.
- **Co-Chair:** The Executive Committee elects the Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.
- **Analyst:** The Executive Committee elects the Analyst. The Analyst will serve a one-year term. Additional terms may be consecutive.
- **Past Chair:** The position of Past Chair is served by the Chair of the previous term.
- **Executive Sponsor:** The Executive Sponsor is a non-elected position. An executive leader in state government with shared interest in the mission of the business resource group.

Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee members are state employees who have been selected by their agencies.
- Charter agencies will renew their list of representatives by providing the Secretary a confirmation of their representatives before July 31st of each year.
- Charter agencies can provide one primary and one alternate employee to serve on the Executive Committee. Other employees are encouraged to participate in BCBRG activities as a member of the Black Community at Large.
- Charter agencies will be asked to provide replacement representatives when their appointed representative cannot continue with the BCBRG for their appointment period.

Removal

- A member may be removed from the BCBRG by a majority vote of the Executive Committee or their host state agency.
- If the Executive Committee removes a member, the Chair will provide the host state agency a full reasoning for the removal.

Members at Large

- May, or may not be, state employees.
- Individuals interested in promoting the values of black people, the principles, and activities of the BCBRG.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Board Officers

Chair:

- Acts as the lead facilitator for all meetings of the Executive Board and Committee.
- Acts as a representative of the BCBRG to the Executive Sponsor, leadership, and others as needed.
- Invites state agencies or other guests to BCBRG meetings and activities to provide information on benefits, entitlements, or other information.
- Serves a one-year term and then moves to the Past Chair position.

Co-Chair

- Assumes the role of Chair in their absence.
- Assists the Chair with responsibilities.
- May sit as an ad-hoc member on subcommittees.
- Serves as the lead to the Charter and By-Laws subcommittee.
- Serves a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.

Analyst

- Maintains all meeting notes and documentation related to the BCBRG.
- Assists the Executive Committee in scheduling meeting space and disseminating information relating to the BCBRG.
- Coordinates correspondence on behalf of the Executive Board.
- Maintains membership and attendance rosters.
- Receives input from subcommittee leads, the Executive Board and the Executive Sponsor regarding the Activities Plan and compiles the final document to be incorporated into the By-Laws.
- Serves a one-year term, additional terms may be consecutive.

Past Chair

- Assists the current Chair as needed.
- Provides continuity in the leadership and direction of the BCBRG.
- Facilitates the election of officers by accepting nominations, preparing all ballots, and providing oversight of the election process.
- Serves a one-year term.

Executive Sponsor

- Ideally appointed at the agency director level or above, provides executive level guidance to members of the BCBRG.
- Champions activities supported by the BCBRG by collaborating with state agencies' leadership to foster their engagement and commitments of support.
- Assists the BCBRG to identify and capitalize on available resources to complete the BCBRG Action Plan and activities.

Executive Committee

- Consists of state employees selected by and assigned to represent their agencies as members of the BCBRG.
- Have voting responsibilities.
- Serves as a steering committee.
- Participate in strategic planning activities for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Serve in at least one subcommittee.
- Attend BCBRG general meetings.
- Participate in BCBRG activities.
- Report back to their individual agencies on the work of the BCBRG.
- Adhere to all applicable state rules, regulations, and policies at BCBRG activities and events.

Subcommittee Leads

- Schedules and facilitates subcommittee meetings.
- Submit recommendations from subcommittee to executive committee for review and vote.
- Reports on subcommittee activities.
- Informs subcommittee of executive decisions and BRG activities.

Members at Large

- Follow the guidelines applicable to state employees as established by state rules, regulations, and policies.
- Do not have voting responsibilities.
- May serve on a subcommittee.
- Promote the values of the Black Community.
- Plan and participate in the activities of the BCBRG.
- Act as liaisons between the activities of the BCBRG and communities.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees can be set up at any time to fit the needs of the BRG and the community.

Charter and By-Laws

- Establishes and reviews the Charter and By-Laws of the BCBRG.
- Conducts review of Charter and By-Laws annually in the month of July.
- Convenes as needed to review, update, or modify the Charter and By-Laws.
- Presents a report on changes or modifications to the BCBRG Charter and By-Laws during the August meeting for review and approval.
- The Co-Chair acts as the lead of this committee.

Professional Development and Leadership Support

- Mobilizes BCBRG members and initiatives to assist state agencies in their efforts to recruit, mentor, and promote Black people within state service.
- Partners with diverse organizations that refer Black people to State employment.

Recognition and Employment Support

- Acts as a focal point for state agencies to recognize, value the contributions, and honor Black people within state service.
- Supports the planning and hosting of state agency-funded recognition events for Black people.
- Assists in developing information for Black state employees, or spouses of Black state employees, on their benefits and entitlements.

Marketing and Communication

- Work closely with the communications community to produce press releases for events (to announce in advance or after an event).
- Maintain a list of media contacts and proactively reach out to various media entities for upcoming events.
- Compile data on BCBRG activity outcomes, impact, and success and work with staff to determine where to best disseminate this information.
- Develop news stories for the BCBRG quarterly newsletter and write and submit articles on a timely basis.
- Obtain photos from external media entities to be integrated into the newsletter.
- Continuously update the BCBRG's social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) to reach a broad audience of potential volunteers, employees and the Black community at large.
- Post news, event reminders and success stories and upload pictures, photos, and compelling stories to spike user interest, feedback, and participation.
- Act as a conduit for inquiries and questions about Black issues to organizations that support Black Americans.
- Work with BCBRG members and Officers to prepare an annual report on BCBRG activities to be presented during the September Annual Meeting.

Allies (to be determined by membership)

Data (to be determined by membership)

Elections

Elected Board Officers

- Chair
- Co-Chair
- Analyst

Election Process

- During the month of May, any current General Committee member may submit nominations for the elected officer positions to the Past Chair. Nominations must first be confirmed and accepted by the Nominee.
- The Past Chair will conduct the elections of officers prior to June 30th of each year. The elections process must be documented and approved by the Executive Officers by May 1st.
- Anonymous surveys will be used. A majority vote of the Executive Committee will determine the Elected Officers. Ties will be broken by a coin toss.
- The Elected Officers terms are from July 1 – June 30.
- The Executive Board may appoint a member of the General Committee into a vacant Elected Officer position in times of unexpected vacancies subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

Supporting Agencies

Agencies that offer direct services to state employees and are in alignment with the BCBRG Charter and Activities Plan may be called upon to provide assistance, information, and services. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Department of Enterprise Services (provides personnel action support for such services as recruitment and staff training).
- Commission on African-American Affairs (connects African-Americans to earned benefits and entitlements).
- Employment Security Department (provides employment and training services to employers and job seekers).
- State Human Resources Division (provides human resource services to agencies and state employees).

Meetings

Executive Committee (to be determined by membership) meetings will be held from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM on the third Thursday every month of the year, **except** for November and December.

In the month of October, an Annual Meeting of the BCBRG will be held. Items on the agenda for this meeting will include:

- Presentation of the Annual Report.
- An update report by the Charter and By-Laws Committee.
- Confirm and orient new agency representatives to the Executive Committee.
- All BCBRG business will be conducted in an open and transparent manner that is expected of all public servants.

Subcommittees

All standing subcommittees should meet independently from the Executive Committee meetings on a regular basis to ensure completion of all initiatives and work activities identified in the Activities Plan and by the subcommittee lead.

Activities Plan

Each year, the BCBRG Analyst will work with the leads for the subcommittees, the Executive Board, and the Executive Sponsor in generating an Activities Plan. The plan will include the following:

- A list of planned activities in support of the Charter and By-Laws to include the focus of each subcommittee.
- Methods to measure the success and/or performance of each activity.
- Measurable goals that will be tracked and reported in the Annual Report.

The Activities Plan will be approved by the Executive Committee during the annual meeting.

The current Activities Plan shall be a part of the BCBRG By-Laws and shall be incorporated into the By-Laws by reference at the time it is approved.

Staffing/Operational Costs

Costs for all BCBRG activities will be absorbed by the supporting agencies. Costs may include, but are not limited to, de minimis use of state resources, as approved by each executive committee member's agency, to include:

- Email
- Meeting Rooms
- Transportation
- Presentation or Handout Materials
- Staff resource time

Support for other BCBRG activities such as data collection, hosting a BCBRG information web site, records storage, or other costs may be funded by the supporting agencies.

Dissolution

Should the BCBRG become dissolved and no longer be a functioning entity, any resources or products will be turned over to an appropriate state agency or Black support group in accordance with applicable RCW/WAC rules, and policies.

Works Cited

Mariani, T. A. (2017). Why Meaningful Diversity in Government Matters. *Pacific Standard*. Retrieved from <https://psmag.com/news/why-meaningful-diversity-in-government-matters>

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United States Census Bureau. (2018, January 23). *Race: About*. Retrieved from Census.gov: <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>