

# 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.

## **Vision**

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 (Mission)**

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.

## **Values**

The BCBRG is firmly committed to diversity and inclusion and was formed with these values. Working together among us and with our allies is pivotal in accomplishing more than we can do individually. This spirit is at the core of what we stand for and one that needs to continue if we are to be successful.

## **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 Active Membership elects the Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.
- **Administrative Liaisons:** The Active Membership elects the Administrative Liaisons. The Administrative Liaisons 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.

### *Removal*

- An elected member may be removed from the BCBRG by a majority vote of the Active Membership or their host state agency.
- If a member is removed, the Chair, Past Chair and/or Co-Chair will provide the host state agency a full reasoning for the removal.



## *Community 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:

- Develop, in coordination with the rest of the Executive Board, meeting agenda.
- Acts as the lead facilitator for all meetings of the Executive Board and BCBRG.
- 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.
- Ensure timely completion of deliverables and elevate necessary matters to OFM.
- Serves a one-year term and then moves to the Past Chair position.

#### Co-Chair

- Develop, in coordination with the rest of the Executive Board, meeting agenda.
- 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.

#### Administrative Liaisons (2)

- Documents and maintains all meeting notes and documentation related to the BCBRG.
- Schedules meeting space and disseminates information relating to the BCBRG.
- Develop, in coordination with the rest of the Executive Board, meeting agenda.
- 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 other state agency 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.

### **Office of Financial Management**

- Provides guidance and consultation to elected leadership and serves as the principle administrative contact on behalf of OFM for external stakeholders.
- Attends monthly BRG meetings.
- Provides policy guidance for group leadership and deliverables.
- Advocate on behalf of BRG to OFM leadership

### ***Subcommittee Leads***

- Schedules and facilitates subcommittee meetings.
- Submit recommendations from subcommittee to the Executive Board for review and then Active Membership for a vote.
- Reports on subcommittee activities.
- Informs subcommittee of executive decisions and BCBRG activities.

### ***Active Membership***

- State employees who have attended at least one general membership meeting in the past six months.
- Assist with the advising and developing of strategies for promoting BRG goals.
- Plan and participate in the activities of the BCBRG.
- Have voting responsibilities.
- Promote the values of the Black Community.
- Act as liaisons between the activities of the BCBRG and communities.
- May serve on a subcommittee.
- Active members who have not attended a meeting in six months will have their Active Member status changed to the Community at Large.

### ***Community at Large***

- Composed of individuals who have not attended a general membership meeting in the past six months and do not have voting responsibilities.
- Individuals who are interested in occasionally participating and want to receive communications and updates on BRG progress.



- Follow the guidelines applicable to state employees as established by state rules, regulations, and policies.
- Promote the values of the Black Community.

## ***Subcommittees***

*Subcommittees can be created and/or dissolved at any time to fit the needs of the BRG.*

### **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.
- Develops and maintains mentorship program.
- Partners with diverse organizations that refer Black people to State employment.

### **History and Activities**

- 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 and family events for Black people.
- Plans Black History activities.
- Develops Black History Month activities and events.
- Network with community organizations.
- Develop volunteer opportunities for BCBRG.
- In coordination with leadership, perform outreach on behalf of the BCBRG.
- Highlights NW Black History.
- Assists with suggesting speakers for general membership meetings.

### **Membership Engagement and Support**

- Welcomes new members to and engages existing members with BCBRG community.
- Assists in developing information for Black state employees.
- Providing ally resources and support.
- Assists leadership with suggesting and confirming speakers for general membership meetings.

### **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.

#### Data

- Develops and deploys mini and regular surveys and analyzes, interprets and presents data to provide active member perspective to direction of BCBRG and policies and procedures of Washington State as an employer.

#### Legislative

- Tracks, analyzes and reports on bills of interest to the BCBRG.
- Reviews policies, procedures and news that may impact the Black Community.

## **Elections**

#### Elected Board Officers

- Chair
- Co-Chair
- Administrative Liaisons

#### 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 Active Membership 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.



## **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**

General 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.
- Finalize the Activities Plan for the next year.
- 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 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 Administrative Liaisons 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 Active Membership 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, 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>

O'Neill, R. (2016). The importance of a diverse and culturally competent workforce. *BusiDate*, 24(3), 9-13.

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