

LOCAL BRANCH COMMITTEE Standard Operating Procedures

COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE



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OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

References

COA Governing Documents

- Strategic Plan
- Bylaws

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Article

I. PURPOSE

The Commissioned Officers Association of United States Public Health Service (COA) Local Branch Committee Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provides operational and procedural guidance for the COA's Local Branch Committee.

This SOP applies to all documents created that are related to all functions within the COA Local Branch Committee to establish policies, processes, records, and acceptance criteria under the auspices of the COA. This SOP does not apply to documents created by other organizations outside of the COA Local Branch Committee.

II. MISSION

The mission of the Local Branch Committee is to improve the vitality of local COA branches and to strengthen ties between local branches and the National COA. This mission is conducted primarily by facilitating communication and collaboration among local branches and National COA. This committee seeks to create an environment in which all Local Branches understand national level COA issues and communicate them to their members, National COA understands the needs of local branches and responds effectively to them, and local branches are empowered to flourish and be relevant to their members, ultimately to the benefit of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

III. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES & ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Committee Responsibility

The Local Branch Committee shall work with the COA Board of Directors and COA staff to facilitate issues and activities of Local Branches.

Section 2. Structure

The Local Branch Committee consists of one Committee Chair, one Vice-Chair, and COA volunteers who are designated as Committee members. The Local Branch Chair may form other permanent or ad-hoc subcommittees within, as needed.

- A. Chair: The Local Branch Committee Chair shall be currently serving on the COA Board of Directors and is to be appointed by the Chair of the COA Board of Directors. The Local Branch Chair acts as a liaison between the COA Board of Directors and the COA Local Branch Committee. The Local Branch Committee Chair and Vice-Chair facilitates, organizes, and maintains order in meetings; advises the Local Branch Committee on new and existing projects; and reviews and finalizes Committee-specific documents. The current Local Branch Committee Chair and Vice-Chair may have input on the selection of the next Local Branch Committee leaders.

- B. Vice Chair: The Local Branch Committee Vice Chair shall be currently serving on the COA Board of Directors and is to be appointed by the Chair of the COA Board of Directors. The Local Branch Vice Chair assists the Committee Chair on any administrative committee work and acts for the Chair in case of deployment or any other leave of absence. The Chair and Vice Chair can divide duties in whatever fashion they agree upon.
- C. Committee Members: The Local Branch Committee is open to any active National COA member. Committee members may be appointed to help complete specific projects or assist with specific tasks. The size of the Local Branch Committee shall be adaptable to meet the Local Branch Committee's mission, as determined by the Local Branch Chair. Committee members should attend meetings regularly and volunteer for committee activities as they arise to be considered active members and to receive a letter of appreciation.
 - i. Recruitment of Committee members: Wide, open call for committee members is conducted using a blast e-mail through COA and the Commissioned Officers Foundation (COF) of the USPHS, Frontline, and via COF Symposium recruitment.

IV. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Section 1. Responsibilities

The Local Branch Committee Chair must keep the Committee viable and productive through aligning the meetings and projects to facilitate the mission of the Local Branch Committee. The Local Branch Committee Operational year is from July 1 – June 30.

- A. The Local Branch Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will have the following responsibilities, which can be divided between the two as agreed upon:
 - i. Prepare written reports (to be included in the minutes) for Committee meetings to communicate project progress and Committee activities. Meeting minutes shall be stored in the Local Branch Google Drive associated with the Local Branch gmail account (nationalcoalocalbranch@gmail.com).
 - ii. Prepare written and/or verbal reports for the COA Board of Directors meetings.
 - iii. Manage Local Branch Committee gmail account (nationalcoalocalbranch@gmail.com) and respond to inquiries from local branches
 - iv. Review Committee SOP and the following Committee documents located on the COA Local Branch Resource page at least annually.
 - a. Local Branch Orientation
 - b. Local Branch Handbook
 - c. Local Branch Bylaws Template
 - v. Collaborate with other COA Committees, such as Constitution &

Bylaws, Outreach, and Comms/PR to work on projects and initiatives that benefit the local branches. Provide guidance and input to Awards Committee regarding Local Branch individual and group awards.

- vi. Involve as many Committee members as possible in discussions by soliciting opinions and experiences.
 - vii. Ensure Committee members understand expectations for assigned tasks and projects.
 - viii. Ensure individual project milestones are met, and if not, identify the cause and rectify the problem.
 - ix. Provide orientation to new Committee members to review the mission of the Committee, current projects, time and frequency of meetings, etc.
 - x. Maintain accurate records of Committee attendance.
 - xi. Prepare End-of-the-term Certificates of Appreciation (see Appendix A) for Committee volunteers
 - The COA National Membership Coordinator issues letters of appointment and letters of appreciation to the Local Branch Presidents
 - xii. Chair and Vice Chair will, at least annually, attempt to make contact with any branches that are not attending meetings, to obtain “proof of life,” i.e., proof that the branch is still active, viable, and in existence.
- B. The Local Branch Committee Secretary, if appointed, will have the following responsibilities. If a Committee Secretary is not appointed, the Committee Chair or Vice-Chair will assume the following responsibilities:
- i. Schedule and manage meetings (e.g., via Zoom; Google calendar)
 - ii. Manage listserv of Branch Presidents
 - iii. Distribute agenda to Local Branch Committee members prior to meetings
 - iv. Prepare Local Branch Committee meeting minutes for review and approval by Chair or Vice-Chair.
 - v. Maintain accurate records of Committee attendance in the above-mentioned minutes.
- C. Committee Members have the expected roles and responsibilities:
- i. Be willing and able to give the necessary time to attend meetings and perform any assigned duties.
 - ii. Actively participate in discussion and be willing to listen to and respect others’ viewpoints.
 - iii. Think in terms of the welfare of the group rather than personal interests.
 - iv. Accept and follow through on assignments.
 - v. Represent the interests of Local Branches.

Section 2. [Meetings](#)

The Local Branch Committee will hold internal planning meetings often as mutually decided upon by the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Local Branch Committee will also hold Local Branch Leadership calls for Branch Presidents (or proxy) each month. Most often, the agenda consists of a welcome message, Executive Director (ED) Report, announcements by Chair or Vice-Chair, and at times, a brief training or presentation relevant to the interests of the members. Examples of meeting subjects include Local Branch Orientation, branch finances, communications and PR strategies, managing local branch bylaws, community service opportunities, presentations by local branches, awards, local branch logos and emails, and other topics as requested by the local branch leaders.

Meeting minutes are stored in the Local Branch Google Drive.

Section 3. [Branch Presidents: Attendance and Reporting](#)

Each Local Branch's President or a proxy must attend each monthly Local Branch Leadership meeting. These meetings allow Local Branch Presidents to learn important updates, policies, and guidance from National COA to take back to their local branches; additionally, local branches can ask questions to National COA. Attendance at the monthly meetings serves as "proof of life" of a branch and will be taken into consideration for annual Local Branch awards.

Near the end of each operational year (typically May or June), the Local Branch Committee will release the Annual Branch Updates Form (created in collaboration with the National COA Membership Coordinator). This is typically in Survey Monkey or a similar platform. Branch Presidents must complete the Annual Branch Updates Form after the completion of their Local Branch elections.

Appendices

Appendix A. End-of-the term Certificate of Appreciation

Appendix B. Sample end-of-year Letter of Appreciation to Branch President (issued by COA Membership Coordinator)

Appendix A. End-of-the Year Certificate of Appreciation

This certificate can be found on OnBoard in the Resources folder.

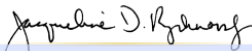
CERTIFICATE

OF ACHIEVEMENT

This acknowledges that

Rank and Title

Put achievements text here.


Jacqueline Rychnovsky, PhD, CAE
Captain, USN, Ret.
Executive Director



Date



June 1, 2024

Dear Local Branch Presidents,

We are writing this letter to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your exceptional leadership as a Local Branch President for the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA). Your dedication and commitment to leading branch activities has been truly remarkable, and I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the vital role you play in our organization.

Local branch involvement is crucial in focusing on the four priority areas of the national COA: Grow, Engage, Serve, and Advocate. Your leadership and proactive approach have contributed to advancing these priorities and ensuring that our branch remains at the forefront of representing the interests of U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers.

The significance of having a strong local branch cannot be overstated. It is through the collective efforts and passion of individuals like you that COA can effectively serve as the sole advocacy organization dedicated exclusively to representing our esteemed officers. Your unwavering dedication to our causes and your willingness to go above and beyond exemplify COA's motto, "Your Corps, Your Causes."

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we want to convey our sincerest appreciation for your outstanding service. Your leadership has been instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and purpose within our branch, and we are immensely grateful for your contributions.

Once again, thank you for taking on this vital leadership role and for your exceptional service to the Commissioned Officers Association. Your dedication and passion inspire us all, and we are honored to have you as a Local Branch President.

With deepest gratitude,

Luis Rodriguez
Captain, USPHS
Chair, Local Branch Committee
Member, Board of Directors

Traci Murray
Lieutenant Commander, USPHS
Vice Chair, Local Branch Committee
Member, Board of Directors

James Gooch
Commander, USPHS
Chair, Board of Directors

Jacqueline Rychnovsky
Captain, USN (Retired)
Executive Director