

NWA Committee and Task Force Guidelines

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Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to serve as a resource for NWA's Board, Staff, and Membership regarding Committees and Task Forces of the Association. NWA hosts and participates in a variety of groups. This document does not encompass all groups; it covers only NWA's "Committees" and "Task Forces" as defined in [NWA's Bylaws](#).

Definitions

Committees

Committees (called "Policy Committees" in the Bylaws) address broad policy issues to further the long-term mission of the Association at the direction of the Board of Directors.

Task Forces

Task Forces may be created to carry out the work of the Association at the direction of the Board to address specific short-term goals or initiatives. The Board of Directors shall not approve a charge to establish a Task Force for longer than two (2) years, but a charge may be renewed for one (1) year upon a vote of the Board of Directors.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Promising Practices Regarding NWA Committees and Task Forces

NWA is committed to developing and applying an EDI lens to each facet of the Association's work; in concrete and evolving ways.

In all business related to committees and task forces, NWA staff, Board members, and committee and task force members shall be committed to EDI work.

EDI considerations should be routinely made in the following areas, but are not limited to:

- The charge of the group;
- Recruitment for the group;
- Group composition;
- Member commitment to and knowledge of EDI considerations;
- The scope of work of the group.

Charges for Committees and Task Forces

To develop a charge, use the **Committee or Task Force Charge Templates**, this document, and [NWA's Bylaws](#).

Per NWA's Bylaws, the Board is responsible for passing a **charge** for each Committee and Task Force that determines:

- The scope of the work for the Committee or Task Force;
- the *duration* of the Committee or Task Force's work;
- the *composition* of the Committee or Task Force; and
- and *one (1) Section* to oversee* the Committee or Task Force.

Charges should reflect a commitment to EDI principles as well as NWA's [Mission, Vision and Health Equity Statement](#).

Upon completion of the Board's charge, committees and task forces are sunset and the ongoing work shall be considered by the Section identified in the charge of the Board of Directors.

*There are five Section Standing Committees: State Agency, Nutrition Services, Breastfeeding, Local Agency, and Vendor Management. As of January 2024, Section oversight is still in a transition phase.

Committee and Task Force Work Plans

Committees and Task Forces should develop work plans to be reviewed/updated annually by the Chair in consultation with the Staff Liaison and Section Liaisons. Work plans will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

[Here](#) is an annual work plan template that can be used.

Committee and Task Force Duration

There are no specific parameters in the Bylaws regarding the duration of a **Committee**; though the goals of the committee, the work, and a desired outcome within a specified timeframe should be outlined in the committee's charge.

Some committees may be considered "permanent" as their role as a separate group related to their scope of work makes long-term sense. At maximum, a 6-year work-plan timeline should be created with the development of a new charge, regardless of the assumed "permanence" of the group.

Task Forces, however, **are limited to two (2) years**, though a charge may be renewed for one (1) year upon a vote of the Board of Directors.

Annually, in partnership with the Committee/Task Force Chairs and NWA staff, the Board will review all committee and task force charges to determine the status of the work and the continued need for the committee or task force over the coming year.

Size and Composition of Committees and Task Forces

Each committee/task force has its membership numbers set by the Board of Directors at the time of its conception/upon annual review. NWA recommends that there be no fewer than 8 people on each committee/task force and no more than 15 (excluding staff and section liaisons).

At least two-thirds of each Committee and Task Force shall consist of Members of the Association. The Board of Directors may permit other individuals to be appointed to Committees and Task Forces, including NWA Partners and non-members.

Membership in the Association is open to the following categories, with individuals meeting such criteria deemed "Members," and the collective Members of the Association known as the "Membership": State Agency Section, Local Agency Section, Nutrition Services Section, Breastfeeding Section, and Vendor Management Section.

The composition of committees and task forces should be designed to reflect the community it is intended to serve/those impacted by the decisions and work done by the group. Committees and task forces should be as diverse* as possible to include a wide range of perspectives and lived experiences.

*i.e., geographic location, demographic/identity information (race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexuality, etc.), job levels and roles, and areas of expertise.

A Note on Non-Members and Partners on Committees and Task Forces

Committees and Task Force may delineate different levels of authority for various roles (i.e., members vs. partners vs. non-members in their charges).

Committee and Task Force Member Terms

Chairs and members of Committees and Task Forces, shall be appointed for a **three-year term** and may serve for **two consecutive terms**, or the life of the Committee or Task Force, whichever is less, unless the length of service is determined otherwise through their office or through the charge of the Board of Directors. All re-appointments for additional terms shall be done in the same manner as an initial appointment to such role.

Terms will start and end in **February/March** and **August/September**, to align with the recruitment/appointment period (twice yearly).

Recruitment, Application and Appointment Process

After consulting with Association Staff, all committee and task force members are appointed by the Chair of the committee or task force, in accordance with the Committee or Task Force's charge.

Applications for open positions are collected during an open period two times per year (Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer). Open positions and due dates for applications will be advertised in partnership with the Member Services and Communications teams with the aim of reaching a diverse and wide pool of volunteers.

Applications will be reviewed by staff and Chairs. A rubric provided by NWA will be used for the initial application review. Chairs will be responsible for final appointment decisions. Once appointments have been finalized, the Member Services team will send out official appointment notices, including the charge, the role and responsibilities, information on term start and end dates, information on the committee leads (Chair and staff liaison), a copy of these guidelines, and next steps.

Committee and Task Force Meetings

Meeting Cadence

At a minimum, Committees and Task Forces should meet for monthly*. Meeting frequency and length may vary based on the work plan.

*unless the charge instructs differently

Meeting Location

All meetings are hosted virtually. Meetings should take place on the NWA Online Community; links to be provided by NWA. Calendar invites should be owned by the staff liaison for the committee/task force.

Quorum

A majority of any Committee or Task Force members shall constitute a quorum.

The minimum number of members necessary to hold a meeting is one-third of the group's members. The Chair and the Staff Liaison must be present for the committee/task force to meet.

Communication Touchpoints with The Board

The Chair of each Committee and Task Force shall consult regularly with the board via their section liaison. These touchpointss should focus on the group's work and requests for feedback/direction.

Section liaisons will send monthly reports to the Board on the work of the committee/task force via [a reporting tool](#) provided by NWA.

Once a year, Chairs, Staff and Section Liaisons, will join an NWA board meeting to discuss their work and review/update their charge.

Communication Touchpoints - Chairs, Section Liaisons, and Staff Liaisons

Prior to committee and task force meetings, Chairs, Section Liaisons, and Staff Liaisons shall touch base on the upcoming meeting to develop an agenda for the upcoming meeting and discuss outstanding issues.

Documentation of Meetings

NWA Committee or Task Force Chairs are responsible for preparing and sending out agendas before meetings, and for documenting meetings via meeting minutes. Taking minutes may be a shared responsibility (i.e., rotate among committee members).

Committee-Related Minutes, Resources, and Documents

Committee and Task Force documents, agendas, meeting minutes, and collected resources will be maintained in a central file by NWA and on the NWA Online Community in the groups "resources" section— to be coordinated between the Committee or Task Force's Chair and the Staff Liaison. NWA's staff liaison will share access to these documents with the committee/task force Chairs and members.

Committee and Task Force Meetings may be recorded with the permission of *all* members of the group present at the meeting. Recordings must be saved and housed in NWA's central files related to the group. Recordings should not be shared outside of the group without permission of the group and agreement by NWA Leadership.

Creation of Committees and Task Forces

The Board of Directors is responsible for the creation of new committees and task forces.

Sunsetting Committees and Task Forces

Upon completion of the Board's charge, Committees and Task Forces shall sunset, and the ongoing work shall be considered by the Section identified in the charge of the Board of Directors.

Committees and Task Forces Role Responsibilities

Chair

TERM: Chairs shall be appointed for a three-year term and may serve for two consecutive terms unless the length of service is determined otherwise through their office or the charge of the Board of Directors. All re-appointments for additional terms shall be done in the same manner as an initial appointment to such role.

ELIGIBILITY: Member of the Section charged by the Board of Directors to oversee the Committee or Task Force. Appointed by and at the discretion of the Board Chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attends all committee/task force meetings; the Chair and at least one NWA staff liaison are required at all meetings.
2. Prepares and shares meeting agendas in advance of meetings on the online community. Meeting leadership may rotate among members.
3. Ensures meeting documentation, with minutes taken by any member unless a secretary role is designated.
4. Leads committee/task force work according to its charge.
5. Manages the NWA Online Community group, including event creation and document sharing.
6. Engages in monthly touchpoints with Section Liaison and Staff Liaison.
7. Prepares reports for the Annual Conference Business Meeting to update the Association on activities in collaboration with Section and Staff Liaisons.
8. Engages in an annual meeting with the Board to discuss the committee work and charge.
9. Monitors and updates committee/task force roster, communicating changes to NWA staff via Staff Liaison(s).
10. Collaborate with committee members on recruitment application questions for new volunteers.
11. Welcomes and orients new committee members to the committee's work.

Section Liaison

TERM: Serves during their section standing committee term or the life of the committee or task force, whichever is less. When deemed in the best interest of the Association, the Section Liaison may be reappointed at the discretion of the Board Chair.

ELIGIBILITY: Appointed by and at the discretion of the Board Chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attends all meetings
2. Engages in monthly touchpoints with the Chair and Staff Liaison regarding meetings/work of the group
3. Carries messages to and from the Section Standing Committee and Committee/Task Force. Submits monthly reports to the Board.

4. Prepares for an annual touchpoint with the Board on the work of the committee and its charge. Joins a board meeting annually to discuss the work of the committee and review the charge.

Committee/Task Force Member

TERM: Serves a three-year term and shall be eligible to serve two consecutive terms, or the life of the committee or task force, whichever is less.

ELIGIBILITY: Determined in the charge of the individual committee or task force. Appointed by the Committee Chair after consulting with NWA staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attends and actively engages in monthly meetings.
2. Must attend a minimum of 80% of the meetings/year. Communicate with the Chair when absent.

Staff Liaisons

TERM: N/A

ELIGIBILITY: Appointed via NWA Leadership, based on staff role in the association. Two co-staff liaisons may be appointed per committee/Task force and the work may be shared.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attend all committee/task force meetings. If there are two co-liaisons, ensure at least one staff liaison attends.
2. Support the Chair in managing the NWA online community group.
3. Owns and sends calendar invites for meetings.
4. Maintains documents and minutes on NWA's internal shared drive.
5. Notify the Staff Committee and Task Force Program Coordinator of any resignations from members or Chairs before term end dates for roster updates.
6. Engage in monthly touchpoints with the Chair and Section liaison overseeing the committee/task force.
7. Attend internal Staff Liaison meetings.
8. Provide support as needed for the Staff Committee and Task Force Program Coordinator.

Staff Committee and Task Force Program Coordinator (Senior Associate of Membership and Events)

TERM: N/A

ELIGIBILITY: Appointed via NWA Leadership, based on staff role in the association.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Under the direction of the Director of Member Services, coordinates the logistical needs of committee and task force program.

2. Supports and acts as resource for staff liaisons, Chairs, and Section Liaison in carrying out the logistical work of committees and task forces - to include coordinating monthly check in meetings.
3. Coordinates the committee and task force recruitment process twice a year.
 - a. Works with the Comms team to share information about recruitment with the membership.
 - b. Updates and collects applications.
 - c. Shares rubrics and applications for review by staff and Chairs
 - d. Collects final scores and shares with Chairs for final appointment decisions
 - e. Sends correspondence related to appointments to new committee/TF members.
 - f. Supports and coordinates onboarding calls for new committee/task force members twice per year.
9. Maintains internal and public facing committee and task force rosters.

Interim Chair

TERM: The Interim Chair role is designed to last no longer than 12 months. If a current committee member shifts into this position, they may stay in the role for up to 12 months, or until a Chair is appointed – whichever comes first. Interim Chairs may shift into the full Chair Role with the approval of the Chair of the NWA Board. If an Interim Chair becomes a Chair, their term start date will revert to the start date in their role as Interim Chair.

1. Interim Chairs will shift out of their current committee role which will become vacant.
2. Interim Chairs may return to an At-Large role at any time before the end of their original term.
3. If someone remains in the Interim Chair role beyond their original term date end, they may stay on until a new Chair is appointed OR they can transition to the permanent Chair role (with agreement by the Chair of the Board).
4. The interim Chair role may last up to 12 months.
5. Special exceptions are always possible with communication/confirmation from the Board Chair.

ELIGIBILITY: The Interim Chair role is ideally filled by a current member of the committee or task force. Appointed by and at the discretion of the Board Chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Same as Chair

FAQs

How long are committee and task force terms?

Committee terms are **three years** with the option of renewing for a second consecutive term; or the life of the committee or task force, whichever is less.

What are the maximum number of seats on a committee?

Each committee/task force has its own membership numbers set by the Board of the Directors at the time of its conception/upon annual review. We recommend that there are no more than 15 people on a committee/TF (excluding staff liaisons and section liaisons).

What are the minimum number of seats on a committee?

Each committee/task force has its own membership numbers set by the Board of the Directors at the time of its conception/upon annual review. We recommend that there are no fewer than 8 people on a committee/TF (excluding staff liaisons and section liaisons).

What are the minimum number of committee members required to hold a meeting?

One third – including the Chair (or Interim Chair). The Section Liaison and Staff Liaison must also be present to meet.

How often do committees meet?

Committees generally meet monthly for 1-1.5 hours, but may meet more or less frequently, depending on their charge and work plan.

Can Partners, Non-Members or Individual Members participate on an NWA committee/task force?

Yes. Each committee or task force has specified roles and representation parameters outlined in their charge which may include partners, non-members, and individual members.

Committees and Task Force charges may delineate different levels of authority for various roles; i.e. members vs. partners vs. non-members.

How should NWA committee Chairs, members or liaisons handle requests for engagement or gifts from external groups?

NWA committee members, chairs, and liaisons are not under any pressure to take gifts or represent NWA at stakeholder events.

How many meetings must committee/task force members attend to remain active?

A committee member must attend at least 80% of meetings to remain active on a committee or task force.

What if a committee/task force member misses more than 20% of meetings?

If a committee or task force member misses more than 20% of meetings, the Chair of the committee/task force may appoint a new member volunteer in their place.

The committee or task force member who is not active should do their due diligence to alert the Chair of the committee if they are unable to fulfill their term. NWA recognizes these positions are filled by volunteers and capacity for engagement may change.

What level of involvement do NWA Staff have on a committee/task force?

NWA Staff are key liaisons in the committee/task force but do not lead the group. An NWA staff member must be present at all committee/task force meetings.

The primary roles of the staff are as follows:

- a. In partnership with the Chair, ensures the work plan and activities align with NWA's staff and board workplans and organizational capacity.
- b. In partnership with the Chair and other Association Staff, manages the appointment process for new members.
- c. Onboarding and offboarding members.
- d. Monitoring term limits
- e. Maintaining rosters

How is a Committee or Task Force Created? When?

NWA's Board of Directors decides when a committee or task force is created, paused or sunset. Each committee and task force is given a charge, which is reviewed annually by the Board. If a committee or task force is sunset, the work of the group is absorbed into the work plan of the standing section committee that oversees the group.

The Board may develop a new committee or task force at any time, but generally will consider the creation/sunset of the group during the annual review process.

What are the communication practices that keep information flowing between the Board, the Staff, and the Committees/Task Forces?

Chairs of committees or task forces engage in at regular touchpoints with the Section Liaison to the committee/task force. Staff liaisons engage with this process as well.

NWA may call additional meetings of key group members to offer support, receive feedback and updates, and to clarify transition-related decisions.