

## Chapter Operating Procedures: What Every Chapter Officer Should Know Phylicia Ross, Manager of Member Engagement and Chapter Support

### Why Your Chapter Needs Operating Procedures

- To inform everyone of the board's intent, goals and aspirations for the chapter
- Prevent confusion and support consistent board action through the establishment of a common source of information for chapter members and officers
- Eliminate the need for reactive, crisis policy making and establish a proactive approach to addressing chapter needs

### What Are Operating Procedures and How Are They Different From Bylaws?

Operating procedures provide a written statement for handling specific issues, executing tasks, and establishing responsibilities. Bylaws should not be confused with operating procedures. Bylaws are a higher and more certain way of how the AGO will operate. They do not address the specific needs of your chapter or cover the details of operations.

### Where Do You Start?

#### *AGO Resources*

[Chapter Documents](#) - find our *Recommended Chapter Operating Procedures* (Update coming soon!)

[Guild Documents](#) - find AGO National Bylaws, see page 5, Article VII on Chapters

[Webinars](#) - click on Chapter Leadership Development for *Chapter Operating Procedures*

#### *Chapter Samples*

Small - [Brooklyn Chapter](#)

Medium - [St. Louis Chapter](#)

Large - [Boston Chapter](#)

Start with your existing Operating Procedures or use one of our samples as a template.

Develop your big picture: Identify the needs of the chapter and establish goals. Ensure your goals are **Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant** and **Time-bound** and enhance the stability and sustainability of your chapter. Establish who needs to be involved in achieving these goals.

#### *About Members-At-Large*

*If an officer position does not have clearly defined duties that support chapter operations do not include it. Many chapters have Members at Large but do not designate responsibilities leading to a confusing and unsatisfactory volunteer experience.*

Get started: Chapter Executive Committee members should have copies of existing Operating Procedures or use a common template.

Divide the work: everyone on the current Executive Committee reviews their area of responsibility and makes recommendations for additions and alterations. Appoint someone to compile the new document and share it with the entire Executive Committee for review. Request a preliminary review from your Regional Councillor and AGO Vice President. Incorporate feedback. Be sure that you include a plan to regularly review and update your Operating Procedures.

Approve it: Chapter Executive Committee approves the new Operating Procedures and sets it before the membership for a vote. Once approved by chapter members, send it to the Regional Councillor and AGO Vice President for final approval. The Dean, Secretary, and Treasurer sign the final document.

Share it: Distribute the new document to your chapter. Make it accessible to new members and officers. Create backups, both digital and hard copies. One of those backups should be AGO HQ, send it to [pross@agohq.org](mailto:pross@agohq.org) and we'd be happy to keep it on file.