

OPENING STATEMENT BY CO-CHAIRS, NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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This event and assignment planning guide is developed to help ASALH branches enjoy productive, collaborative, cooperative team work. Committees are formed and assigned particular tasks to enhance annual programming goals. As a branch, you have decided as a team what your mission will be ensuring that your mission is in alignment with the mission of ASALH HQs. Committees, in the planning of events, programs, and collaborative activities with others in your community, will always align your work with the mission of ASALH. The Mission of ASALH is:

“ To promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the global community.”

A branch has three program requirements each year: Black History Month (in February); Founder's Day (on or around September 9th); and Woodson Birthday (on or around December 19th). Additional programs are at your discretion and are welcomed as we encourage our branches to engage your community with the knowledge of our founder Dr. Woodson, the existence of and ability to tour the Carter G. Woodson Historic Site [in Washington, DC] as the 389th Unit of the National Park Service, and ASALH as the Association founded by Dr. Woodson in 1915. Begin speaking all three entities in one breath and their meaning to the education of not only African Americans, but all people around the world. By speaking these three in one breath, we will begin to correct the lack of association of Dr. Woodson's name, the existence of the Association he founded, and Black History Month that people everywhere acknowledge but many have no idea the origin of this celebration. The tools you have been provided in your toolkit [housed on the branch private website [<https://asalh.org/branch-members-call/>]] will be valuable to your work as a branch; and, your Event Planning led by your Committee chairs and members. Be sure to visit this website often for answers to questions and work harmoniously as branch and committee members in your quest to promote the Founders of Black History Month in the area where you live. The Annual Black History Theme should resonate throughout your community annually because you have educated your community of its existence and its meaning by sharing broadly the abstract provided by Headquarters each year.

All Branch Presidents become ex-officio members of Committees formed within the branch. As a reminder, ASALH branch presidents are looked to as the person to convey ASALH's mission, articulate your local branch mission and vision, and ensure these goals and objectives are met. The President is responsible for conducting the business of this branch as its official representative and serves as the official contact with the Headquarters of ASALH. The branch president has been tasked by HQs to seek the strengths and talents of the branch membership and utilize the membership volunteers to the good of your local branch and ensure that the local branch goals and objectives are always in line with the governance of the national leadership. The President of the branch serves as chief mentor in an intergenerational branch environment that seeks to serve and teach service as a goal.

As branch members, the role of President should be made easier in that although the President can attend all Committee meetings, the President should NOT be obligated to attend every committee meeting because the committee takes minutes at every Committee meeting and will make sure the President is made aware of decisions made by the committee. Because of the mentoring and service model that HQs directs all branches to replicate, Committee work should reflect the mission and vision put in place by the branch in concert with its leadership. All Committee work will be shared in advance of implementation with the President, but the President should not act as a dictator, but a guide as the President of a branch seeks out the strengths and talents of its members allowing the members to exercise their creativity and ideas, remembering that the President has carefully assigned Committee work to those with certain talents, skills, and abilities. The President should always be available to help with decisions that may be difficult for the Committee if needed. The President is using wisdom when the membership of the branch, in service to the Committees formed, are provided opportunity to grow and learn in the capacity of Committee Chairs and Committee Members conducting event planning work.

As branch members, you will remember during your installation, the word 'responsibility' was repeated many times. Remember your commitment as a team of branch members. Your work as a member of the team will play out as you lead and serve in Committee work and as officers of this branch. You all share in the responsibility to ensure that because your ASALH branch is located in the community you serve, the entire community will be affected because your branch exists. You are to be committed to reaching out to your local schools, libraries, churches, community centers, and your biological and extended families sharing this rich history. Everyone in your community should know Dr. Woodson and know the Annual Black History Theme each year for use during Black History Month celebrations throughout your region. This is the responsibility of not just your officers, but every member of this branch. We all share in the responsibility to ensure that ASALH progresses, and is committed to the ideals and legacy of our founder, Dr. Carter G. Woodson. The challenge, today, is not just to the officers, but also to all who recognize that the history, life and culture of people of African descent is vibrant, whole and sound! Further, that the work of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is as vital to the present as it is to the future.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING BRANCH MEETINGS

Our goal is unity of collaboration and purpose.

“ To promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the global community.”

YOUR CONDUCT IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND AS A BRANCH MEMBER SHOULD FOLLOW THESE VALUES:

AUTHENTICITY – *CHOOSE TO BE GENUINE, REAL, SINCERE*

INTEGRITY – *DOING THE RIGHT THING EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING*

COLLABORATION – *OPERATE AS A TEAM PLAYER—REMEMBER--IT’S NOT ABOUT YOU—IT’S ALL ABOUT US AS A TEAM AND THEM AS THE PEOPLE WE SERVE*

LISTENING WITH RESPECT—*QUICK TO LISTEN; UNDERSTAND BEFORE SPEAKING*

SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS – *REMEMBER MEEKNESS IS NOT WEAKNESS BUT POWER UNDER CONTROL*

Responsibilities of Committee Representatives

Chair – Appointed by the President

- Leads the meeting discussion
- Ensures an agenda is prepared
- Follow the agenda and keep to the scheduled time
- Designate a note taker for the meeting.
 - Be sure the volunteer note taker is aware in advance that the minutes should be completed within 24 hours.
- Complete a timeline according to the due dates needed for the planned event or assignment
- Encourage members of the committee to follow the timeline; Encourage members to ask for help if needed
- Encourage everyone to do their part and to be honest if the role is overwhelming for them
- Before leaving the meeting, make sure each committee member, assigned a duty, is clear on the their assignment.
- Ensure minutes of the meeting are submitted to the President within 24 hours of the meeting
- If the minutes are not prepared, as chair of the Committee, call or email (for a record) the President to provide an update—then provide minutes when they are available.
 - Never leave your leadership wondering about the status of an event or an assigned duty
- For the good of the entire branch, make sure no one on the committee creates anything that is not reviewed first by you as Chair, then shared with the President before it is implemented or presented to the public.
 - Having clear lines of communication is extremely important for branch members to understand the process taking place with the event or assignment
- You are the heartbeat of the Committee; Make sure there is always a harmonious, productive atmosphere because you are first, presenting yourself as a harmonious, collaborative, cooperative member of the Committee.

Members of the Committee

- Your contact for Committee business is the Chair of the committee (assigned by the President—NOT the President)
- Take assignments seriously
- Complete assignments in advance of the next meeting
- If you have questions that need to be answered to complete an assignment, contact the Chair in advance, not on the day of the meeting
 - Never leave a meeting confused; Ask questions and get understanding
- Work to complete assignments and don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know.
- Be willing to volunteer and take on assignments you have not done before if a volunteer is needed.
 - You will be supported in each endeavor—Be a willing vessel.

President

- Ex-officio Member of all Committees
- Although the leader of the Branch, as an ex-officio member of all committees, be sure to select Committee Chairs, when you can, according to their skills and abilities.
- Give the Chair of the Committee the leadership—Do not take on the leadership role on any Committee. You are a support for the Committee when needed.
- Make sure your Committee Chairs know you trust their leadership.
- Allow persons who are willing to try something new, as a learning experience, to serve in the capacity of Chair. Then you should either mentor them, or appoint someone to work alongside them as a mentor and support.
- If a chair is appointed who is new in a role they have volunteered to do, be willing to attend those meetings, or assign someone you know has the skillset to mentor this person into the role.
- Your role is always succession planning, so use wisdom in growing and supporting members of your branch by allowing them opportunities to learn and grow.
- You should not have to attend all committee meetings because you will put faith and trust in the committee chairs you appoint.
- Encourage Committee Members to engage younger people on committees as a learning experience.
- Review the “Branch Mentor Guide” often as a reminder

Note: All Branch Members are welcome to attend committee meetings. Make known your committee meeting dates and times. On occasion, impromptu meetings may be needed where there is no time to inform everyone. These guidelines should be followed for general branch meetings as well.