

ONLINE BALLOT PLATFORMS for CHAPTER ELECTIONS

BallotBox <https://ballotboxonline.com/>

Free for 100 voters, one poll at a time (tiered subscription for more)

Opa Vote <https://www.opavote.com/>

Free for 25 voters/10 candidates (scaled pricing over those limits)

Election Runner <https://electionrunner.com/>

Free for up to 10 voters (scaled pricing for more)

Election Buddy <https://electionbuddy.com/>

\$19 for up to 350 voters

AGO Official Documents with required and/or recommended procedures

1.

AGO Bylaws online at <https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AGO-Bylaws-Revision-Approved-by-Videoconference-9-17-2019.pdf>

In Article VIII, Section 3, paragraph 2, under the heading **Chapter Office**:

The slate prepared by the Chapter Nominating Committee shall be delivered to the Executive Committee, recorded in the minutes and announced to the Members of the Chapter prior to March 1 of the election year. Additional nominations may be made by petitions signed by at least five (5) Chapter Voting Members in good standing. Such petitions must be received by the Secretary prior to April 1, or within thirty (30) days after the notification of the members of the Chapter Nominating Committee's slate, whichever is later. Ballots including the Chapter Nominating Committee slate and candidates nominated by qualified petition shall be prepared by the Secretary and distributed either by mail or email (in the form of proxies) or at a general Chapter meeting. Sufficient care must be taken to ensure that either the mailed ballot or notification of the meeting at which voting is to take place reaches every eligible Voting Member. The election shall be concluded by May 31 of the election year. A plurality of votes cast in person or by proxy shall be sufficient for election.

2.

Chapter Management Handbook Articles

Chapter Election Procedures

CHAPTER MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK – October 2017 as approved by National Council January 23, 2018

Chapter Election Procedures

The AGO National Bylaws state the following regarding chapter elections:

1. Chapters may hold elections annually or biennially in even-numbered years.
2. By December 31 of an election year, the chapter executive committee must appoint a chapter nominating committee consisting of at least three members, a majority of whom are not on the executive committee. If a chapter operates on a biennial election cycle, the nominating committee must be appointed in odd-numbered years.
3. The nominating committee must nominate at least one person for each office. Each chapter must elect a dean, secretary, and treasurer; other officers are at the discretion of the chapter. Incumbent officers may be nominated for re-election, unless restricted by chapter operating procedures.
4. The nominating committee is strongly encouraged to nominate a number of persons in excess of those needed to fill the place of members-at-large of the executive committee who are resigning or whose terms expire in the current year, unless restricted by chapter operating procedures.
5. Chapter officers' terms are for one year in the case of chapters with annual elections, or for two years in the case of chapters with biennial elections. As noted in the National Bylaws, Article VII, Section 4: Members at large of the Executive Committee of a Chapter shall hold office for three (3) years (in the case of chapters with annual elections) or four (4) years (in the case of chapters with biennial elections) or until their successors have been duly elected, with one third of the members of the Executive Committee being elected at each election, or in cases of biennial elections one-half of the officers at each election.
6. The slate of nominees submitted by the nominating committee must be delivered to the executive committee, recorded in the minutes, and announced in writing to the membership by March 1. If a chapter operates on a two-year election cycle, the announcement to the membership must be by March 1 of even-numbered years.
7. Additional nominations may be made by petition of at least five voting members in good standing and should be received by the secretary no later than April 1 (or within 30 days after the members have been given the nominating committee's slate, whichever is later).
8. The election must be concluded by May 31. See "Balloting Procedures" in this section for procedures. A plurality (more votes than for any other candidate) of votes cast is sufficient for election.

It is imperative for the dean to inform the nominating committee members of their duties and timeline. A solid, well-run organization relies on committed, trustworthy officers. It is important that the committee nominate candidates who understand the duties of their office and assist the chapter and the Guild.

Given the above, when a prospective nominee is being contacted by a member of the committee the following information should be transmitted to the nominee:

1. We wish to nominate you for the following position in the chapter.
2. The duties you must perform in a timely fashion are set forth in the chapter's operating procedures.
3. You are expected to attend and participate in board meetings.
4. If you cannot attend a board meeting your input is expected via email or telephone call to the dean.
5. We hope you can attend chapter meetings.
6. Can you do all or most of the above?

If the potential nominee cannot or will not do the above it might be wise to consider another colleague for the position.

In seeking a nominee for a position, attempt to match work experience with the office. For example, if a member has a job that demands clerical skills, that member would have the experience for the position of chapter secretary, or if a member works in the financial industry, that member would have the experience for the position of chapter treasurer.

Election Timetable

If your chapter operates on a two-year election cycle, voting must be held in even-numbered years.

December 31 Deadline for chapter executive committee to appoint nominating committee.

March 1 Nominating committee's slate must be given to the executive committee, recorded in the minutes and announced to the membership (in writing).

April 1 Additional nominations made by petition (see National Bylaws, Article VIII. Section 3. Chapter Office.) are due to the chapter secretary by this date, or within 30 days of the announcement of the nominating committee slate (whichever is later).

May 31 Elections must be held by this date. Once elected, new officers should immediately begin to attend executive committee meetings, with voice but no vote, until their official terms begin.

June 30 End of term for chapter officers and executive committee members whose terms have expired.

June 30 Officer Roster updates are due at National Headquarters through ONCARD.

July 1 New officers begin their terms.

Balloting Procedures

There are four methods of conducting a chapter election:

1. by mail
2. in person at a general chapter meeting
3. by a combination of the two above methods
4. online.

By Mail

Voting is conducted entirely by mail. Ballots are sent to all voting members two to three weeks in advance of the election deadline. The members return ballots by mail by a specified date to the chapter secretary. Ballots should be opened by two auditors who are not candidates.

Mailed ballots are not to be signed nor is a proxy statement included. Rather, the envelope is marked "BALLOT" and must have the name of the voting member handwritten on it.

At a Chapter Meeting

It is important to announce well in advance that the election will be held at a particular chapter meeting. Provisions should be made for absentee voting. Eligible voting members should mark their ballots and cast them in such a way that their selections remain confidential. A written ballot is recommended.

Combination Method

This procedure was developed by the Richmond (Virginia) Chapter, and was approved by a registered parliamentarian. It is recommended to all chapters that utilize the combination method.

1. Ballots for enclosure in chapter newsletters and those for in-person balloting should be prepared on different colors of paper.
2. Mailed ballots are not to be signed nor is a proxy statement included. Rather, the envelope is marked "BALLOT" and must have the name of the voting member handwritten on it. The mailed ballots are opened only by the auditors at the time all the ballots are counted. No late ballots should be permitted.
3. Upon receipt, names of ballot-by-mail voters are checked off the voter roster.
4. These are double checked at the time of the in-person balloting.
5. For the in-person election, ballots of the second color are distributed to eligible members who have not mailed in their ballots.

Precautions:

- 1. The deadline for receipt of all mailed ballots must be prior to the meeting at which votes will be cast in person.*
- 2. All mailed ballots should be removed from their envelopes and placed with the in- person ballots prior to counting, in an endeavor to preserve the anonymity of the voters.*

Email and Online Voting

The National by-laws of the AGO do allow electronic balloting. Ballots including the Chapter Nominating Committee slate and candidates nominated by qualified petition shall be prepared by the Secretary and distributed either by email or by using an online voting service. The following reminders and recommendations are offered:

1. Sufficient care must be taken to ensure that ballots reach every eligible Voting Member. Some members who do not have email service may need to receive their ballot by the postal service.
2. Any form of online voting should be completed before any in person voting takes place.
3. It is recommended that voting by email not be used as it does not provide adequate security or anonymity in most situations. Instead, options are available for free voting online through websites such as www.ballotbin.com which can provide secure and fair election results.

3.

Chapter Election Information in Recommended Chapter Operating Procedures

SECTION 6. ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) persons who are voting members of the Chapter in good standing. Not more than two (2) may be members of the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee is appointed by vote of the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Dean (see Section I.2.c). The Nominating Committee shall nominate one (1) or more candidates for each office and an excess of candidates for membership at-large on the Executive Committee in place of those whose terms of office are about to expire. The Nominating Committee shall present the slate to the Executive Committee. The slate of candidates shall be recorded in the minutes, published to all chapter members and announced

to the general membership according to the schedule required in the National Bylaws. Additional nominations may be made by petition if each petition is signed by five (5) voting members of the Chapter in good standing and submitted to the Chapter Secretary within thirty (30) days of the announcement of the slate to the Chapter membership. The slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee and the names of any candidate duly submitted by petition are not subject to discussion or approval by the Executive Committee and may not be vetoed by the Executive Committee or any member thereof, including the Dean.

(NOTE: In Chapters of limited size a Nominating Committee of three members may be necessary, and this should be reflected in the Chapter Operating Procedures. In this case no more than one member of the Nominating Committee of three may be a member of the Executive Committee and the Dean may not be a member of the Nominating Committee of three. In Chapters holding first, second or third election cycles, the slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee shall specify a class for each candidate. See Paragraph 3 below.)

2. ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF CHAPTER LEADERS

The annual election of Chapter leaders, both Officers and members at-large of the Executive Committee, shall take place by May 31 of each year. Ballots including the Chapter Nominating Committee slate and candidates nominated by qualified petition shall be prepared by the Secretary and distributed either by mail or electronically (in the form of proxies) or at a general Chapter meeting. Sufficient care must be taken to ensure that either the mailed/electronic ballot or notification of the meeting at which voting is to take place reaches every eligible Voting Member. The ballots are to be opened and counted only in the presence of at least two Chapter members in good standing including one member who is not currently serving on the Executive Committee. A plurality of votes cast shall be sufficient for election. Newly elected Chapter leaders shall be installed at the next general meeting of the Chapter. Terms of office begin on July 1.

NOTE: Please see the Chapter Management Handbook Section on Balloting to be sure the chapter's election is properly conducted. Questions can always be referred to your Regional Councillor or the AGO office.

3. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT-LARGE.

For Chapters holding the first election cycle and holding elections annually:

The duly elected members at large of the Executive Committee shall be divided into three (3) classes, each class having equal numbers of members numbering not less than one (1) and not more than three (3). Those in Class I shall be nominated for and elected to hold office for a term of one (1) year; those in Class II shall be nominated for and elected to hold office for a term of two (2) years; those in Class III shall be nominated for and elected to hold office for a term of three (3) years. Elected members at-large of the Executive Committee shall hold office only for the term in which they are elected and shall serve until their successors are duly elected and officially installed.

For Chapters holding the first election cycle and holding elections biennially:

The duly elected members at large of the Executive Committee shall be divided into two (2) classes, each class having equal numbers of members numbering not less than one (1) and not more than three (3). Those in Class I shall be nominated for and elected to hold office for a term of two (2) years; those in Class II shall be nominated for and elected to hold office for a term of four (4) years. Elected members at large of the Executive Committee shall hold office only for the term in which they are elected and shall serve until their successors are duly elected and officially installed.

For Chapters already having held their third election cycle, including Chapters preparing a revision of Chapter Operating Procedures:

Elections for members at large on the Executive Committee are held [annually] [in odd numbered years] [in even-numbered years] (NOTE: Choose one of these in accordance with local Chapter needs.)

If an annual election cycle, use the following: Each member at large is elected for a term of three years, one-third of the total number of members at large being selected in each election year.

If a biennial election cycle, use the following: Each member at large is elected for a term of four years, one-half of the total number of members at large being selected in each election year.

4. VACANCIES ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Any member of the Executive Committee may resign from his/her position with such resignation submitted in writing to the Executive Committee. The resignation is effective immediately upon its acceptance by the Executive Committee. A vacancy on the Executive Committee that may result from, but not be limited to, resignation or death of a member, or removal of a member for failure to fulfill responsibilities may be filled by appointment by the Executive Committee of a member nominated by the Dean.* Any Chapter member appointed to fill such a vacancy shall meet all

qualifications to hold office and shall serve for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor or for the predetermined term length until the successor has been duly elected and officially installed.

5. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.

A duly elected Officer or duly elected member at large of the Executive Committee may be removed from office due to inability or failure to fulfill his/her responsibilities only by action of the Chapter Executive Committee as follows:

- a. By simple majority vote the Executive Committee shall authorize the Dean or other officer designated by the Executive Committee to send a formal written notice to the officer or member-at-large in question, stating that action to remove such officer from elected position is pending before the Executive Committee. In the event of such action against the Dean of the Chapter the Sub-Dean shall act as the Chapter's executive officer.
- b. The Executive Committee shall request a response from the Officer or member at large in question within two (2) weeks, or until the next meeting of the Executive Committee, whichever is later. After such time action to remove said Officer or member at large shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Committee.

****Dean appointments are understood to then be approved by majority vote of the Chapter Executive Committee. Above language is as updated by AGO National Council Nov. 4, 2021.***