

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The American Inns of Court is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization which is a IRS tax exempt status. A local inn of court may join this group exemption and therefore provide a tax deduction for your members as well as tax benefits to the Inn.

An Inn is governed overall by two documents:

When the Inn first organized, your Inn applied for and was granted an Organizational Charter from the national foundation. The Charter is a set of written guidelines providing a strong foundation for the local Inn to operate which are consistent with AICF's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and polices. It covers the basics of the Inn organization: Objectives; Organization, including governing body and officers; Membership; Finances; Meetings and activities; and Pupillage groups.

Organization & Governing Documents

- 501 (c)3 non-profit, tax exempt
- Organizational Charter
- Local Inn Bylaws
- Policies & Procedures
 - Membership
 - Mentorship
 - Programming
 - Meetings & activities
 - Dues structure & payment



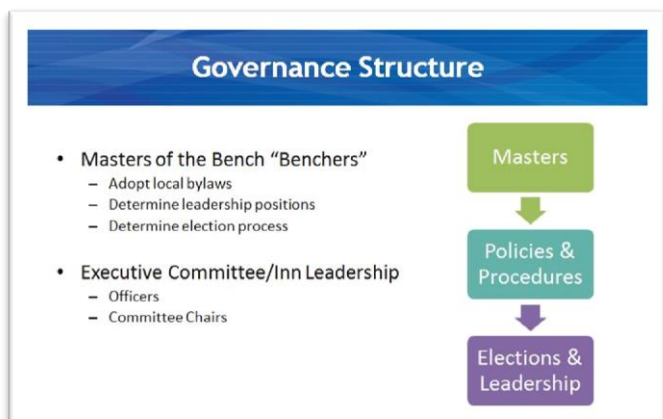
Second, the local Inn bylaws are a written organizational structure by which the Inn is administered. This document outlines: Organizational structure; Membership; Meetings and attendance; Voting and Elections; Fiscal Matters; and Adoption and Amendments.

Besides local Inn Bylaws, your Inn should have or develop policies and procedures for: Membership-- including member rotation, recruitment, and an attendance policy; Mentorship; Programming; Meetings and Activities; and Due Structure and payments.

Governance Structure

The ultimate authority of each Inn rests with the Masters of the Bench. The Masters determine the policies of the Inn in order to accomplish its purpose as set forth in the Inn's Charter.

The executive committee and/or Inn leadership exercise the authority of the Masters between Masters of the Bench meetings.



The enthusiasm and commitment of the leaders of the Inn provide an important role model for the other members. The health and vitality of the Inn depend directly on the vigor and vision that the executive committee brings to the running of the Inn.

The Masters of the Bench should adopt bylaws to document procedures to be followed by the Inn. One such procedure is the determination of leadership positions and election process whereby the officers

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

are selected for the executive committee. Although the Masters of the Bench are responsible for establishing the procedure for electing leaders, they may choose to delegate this authority to the Inn to vote on some or all of the officer positions.

As a leader of your inn, it is important to understand the two important components of running your inn, leadership and management.

Leadership Roles

Following are brief descriptions of the various officers that an Inn may have, including: President, Counselor, Secretary/Treasurer, Administrator, Program Committee Chair, and Membership Committee Chair. A written job description should be created and provided to each officer.

Samples of these job descriptions are found on the Inns of Court website. Your Inn may have additional roles that are key to successful operations. Be sure your governance documents, including your bylaws and policies support and define these roles.

Leadership Roles	
President <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Presides at all Inn functions and is accountable for Inn policy compliance	Counselor <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Assists President in his/her duties and is liaison with local federal/state courts
Secretary/Treasurer <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Accounts for all money collected/spent and maintains all financial, membership and leadership records	Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Performs many of the administrative duties of the Secretary/Treasurer on a permanent basis and serves as administrative point of contact

The **president** provides general leadership and guidance to the officers and membership of the Inn. In addition, the president performs the following duties:

- Preside at all Inn functions
- Ensure that the officers and the executive committee perform their duties
- Maintain contact with the national office and national board of trustees
- See that the Inn adheres to the policies of its charter and other policies promulgated by the national board of trustees
- Lead the executive committee in participation of the Achieving Excellence Program and progress toward goals.
- Works towards creating and supporting opportunities for a high quality membership experience throughout all Inn activities; focusing on member needs and values.

The **counselor, vice-president or president-elect** as some Inns prefer, assists the president in all of his or her duties. Experience has shown that it is beneficial that either the president or counselor be a judge. The counselor also performs the following duties:

- Execute the functions of the president in his or her absence
- Establish and maintain liaison with the local federal and state courts

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Oversee, in conjunction with the program committee, the operation of the pupillage teams
- Supporting the President's role in delivering member value and a high quality member experience

The **secretary/treasurer**, whose duties may also be divided between a secretary and a treasurer, regularly accounts to the executive committee, and if requested, to the Masters of the Bench, for all monies collected and spent. In addition, he or she may perform the following duties unless specifically assigned to the administrator.

Treasurer's duties include:

- Maintain all financial accounts – establish the Inn's budget, invoice members, collect dues and pay all bills
- Provide requesting members with IRS form W-9
- Ensure member dues to the national organization are held in reserve from the operating income and submit member dues to national: Full payment due by 1/31 of each year
- Ensure the appropriate tax form is filed annually with the IRS, with a copy submitted to the National Office.

Secretary's duties include:

- Send notice of each meeting of the Inn, of the Masters of the Bench, and of the executive committee
- Record and circulate minutes
- Maintain records of attendance
- Update, maintain and submit annual membership rosters and leadership information to the national office by due dates

Ideally, each Inn should have an administrator who performs some or all of the administrative duties of the secretary/treasurer on a permanent basis. When the administrative duties of the secretary/treasurer pass yearly from person to person, records can be lost and succeeding officers may not easily be able to follow previous procedures. For this reason, a permanent administrator has been found to be of great value.

The **administrator** need not be an attorney or a member of the Inn. In some cases, the local Inn pays the person. The position may require six to eight hours per month, depending on the duties assigned. Some of those duties may be:

- Perform many or all of the administrative responsibilities of the secretary/treasurer
- Arrange for refreshments and food at meetings of the Inn and annual banquet
- Furnish staff support to the committees of the Inn
- Serve as an important contact point for the national office, assuring that the leadership information and the membership roster are submitted in a timely manner.

The **program committee chair** leads the program committee, which is composed primarily of members who are not officers. The program development process is often central to the member experience, so ensuring that pupillage teams are all working collaboratively and emphasizing the importance of creating a welcoming environment for all team members is part

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

of the program committee chair's role. The program committee directs the educational component of the Inn. Committee duties include:

- Devise a general framework for the year's programs in advance of the first Inn meeting with the approval of the executive committee



with the approval of the executive committee

- Create pupillage teams ensuring a balance of Masters, Barristers, Associates and Pupils on each team to foster informal mentoring opportunities.

- Select program topics and assign them to the pupillage teams
- Supervise and consult with the pupillage teams as necessary while they develop the details of their programs
- Submit programs with a

completed Program Report Form to the national office

- Conduct and review program evaluations for each program
- Incorporate feedback from evaluations into future programs to ensure that members needs are addressed.

The **membership committee chair** leads the membership committee. While the Masters of the Bench or the executive committee make the actual selection of new members, a small membership committee can serve the valuable function of building a file of potential members for future consideration. The membership chair and its committee are responsible to:

- Coordinate presentations at local or state bar meetings and presentations at section bar meetings for recruitment of new members
- Screen applicants and make recommendations for new members
- Maintain the list of members who become eligible for new member statuses each year. For example, the membership chair should maintain a list of members by years of experience and know when each member should be advanced from Associate to Barrister, Barrister to Master and Master to Emeritus. Incorporate this information in the recruitment process so that the Executive Committee is aware of the number of vacancies in each membership level annually.
- Ensure that the membership recruitment process is supportive of the pupillage team design, ie; ensure that the correct numbers of Masters, Barristers, Associates and Pupils are kept in balance to provide balance on each pupillage team.

Other Team Members

Additionally, many Inns have a number of other officers to assist in managing and handing the administration of the Inn. Some of these include:

- President-elect to ensure a smooth transition in leadership from year to year.
- Appointment of a reporter to regularly submit news and photographs of the Inn's activities for publication in *The Bench*er and other news outlets.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Web Administrator is responsible for maintaining and updating the information published on your Inn's site. (An Inn website which is connected to the national site is provided free of charge).

Also, the president or the executive committee may appoint members to other committees to accomplish specific tasks. These may include: mentoring, law school liaison, court liaison, and social. If this is not done, many of these tasks will fall on the executive committee to accomplish.

Effective Leadership Strategies

There are many strategies that can be put in place to maintain effective leadership.

- Rotation of leadership to keep your Inn strong by consistently developing new leaders.
- Set term limits for officer positions to avoid burnout. A typical term is two years. Occasionally, the Treasurer or Administrator role can be longer, but the Executive Committee should plan for an annual option for officers to roll off as the Inn grows and matures.
- Elect officers and appoint committee chairs/members before the Inn adjourns for the summer. This allows the new leadership to plan for the coming year, learn about their officer responsibilities and fill membership vacancies.
- Delegate and enlist volunteers to perform the tasks and responsibilities of running an Inn. Some Inns have co-chairs that have staggered terms to help ensure that continuity is maintained in the position. This has many benefits:
 - Individuals avoid having to carry a heavy burden;
 - Members can continue the operations if someone is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities; and
 - Cultivate new leadership.
- Remember, officer and leadership roles can be held by any level – Masters, Barristers and Associates, even Pupils, are more than willing to lend a hand in the operations of the Inn. Don't overlook this source of energy and enthusiasm.
- Consider having an Inn Administrator, without specified term limits, which will assist in developing consistency from year to year.



Leadership and the High Quality Member Experience:

Throughout all levels of leadership, the culture of the Inn is developed. Please keep in mind the elements of delivering a high quality membership experience as each Inn leader plans their duties for the year. Leaders should ask: Are we doing all we can to provide great networking opportunities within each Inn meeting and outside of the regular meetings? Are our programs engaging, entertaining and relevant to our member's needs? Are our Inn activities raising our member's professional profiles? Are we encouraging participation in mentoring activities? Do

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

our outreach efforts have the desired outcome of contributing to the mission of the Inns of Court? Are our efforts meeting member needs as expressed in the most recent Member Satisfaction Survey? As these questions are asked and as improvements to programs and opportunities are made, leaders will have fostered a culture that is supportive and integral to delivering a high quality member experience.

And finally, remember that holding an office or providing other leadership requires work and personal sacrifice and should be rewarded. Members who have assumed these responsibilities deserve recognition. The year-end dinner or final meeting is a good time to acknowledge their service to the Inn.

Support and Resources

You are not alone in your service and efforts. There are many resources that you can call upon for help. Any member of the national office staff will happily assist you with a question; however, there are staff positions dedicated to supporting local Inns and their members.

The Director of Chapter Relations serves as the primary liaison between Inns and the national office, specifically targeting Inns that are organizing or that may need a little extra support. Contact the Director of Chapter Relations for questions about improving your Inn's performance, services or programs of the Foundation and more.

Finally, look to other Inns and its leaders for ideas and support. In many cases, there is at least one other Inn of Court in the same city or county as your Inn, or you can also find a partner Inn who shares your specialty. It is beneficial for there to be strong channels of communication between or among inns. Some benefits can include:

- Sharing resources, such as administrative support or membership waiting lists or even just program ideas specific to your local area or specialty;
- Saving money by coordination of efforts, such as jointly contracting with a caterer or restaurant or joining member recruitment efforts; and
- Sharing questions, answers, challenges and best practices to find ways to help each Inn grow stronger and successful.

INN LEADERSHIP RESOURCES home.innsocourt.org/forleaders

Do you have a question about running your Inn? The national office provides leaders and executive committee members of American Inns of Court services and support to assist in the administration of Inns - from a "game plan" for the year and specific activity materials to what you need to know for your leadership role in the Inn.

Achieving Excellence

- [Administration](#)
- [Communications](#)
- [Inn Program Development](#)
- [Mentoring](#)
- [Outreach](#)
- [Additional Requirements](#)
- [Achieving Excellence Overview \[pdf\]](#)
- [Achieving Excellence Checklist \[pdf\]](#)
- [Recurring Items Confirmation \[pdf\]](#)

Inn Administration Resources

- [Inn Management System](#)
- [Local Inn Website](#)

Finance and Insurance Resources

- [Local Inn Budgeting](#)
- [Tax Exemption and Filing](#)
- [Insurance Coverage](#)

National Events

- [Inn Leadership Summits](#)
- [Celebration of Excellence](#)

Inn Leadership Role	Inn Leadership Role Materials
Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn Administrator Job Description
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn President Job Description
Secretary-Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn Secretary-Treasurer Job Description
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn Counselor Job Description
Program Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn Program Committee Chair Job Description
Membership Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Inn Membership Committee Chair Job Description

Additional materials specific to roles of Inn leaders are available on our [Leadership Topics](#) site.