

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE BLACK CAUCUS  
OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
(As Amended, January 31, 1999)**

**CONSTITUTION**

**Preamble**

*Whereas, there exists a critical lag in the development of librarianship for Blacks, and*

*Whereas, there are inadequate outlets for studies and reports dealing with issues relating to Black American citizens, and*

*Whereas, the library profession in general and the American Library Association (ALA) in particular have been slow in responding to the problems of Black people,*

*Therefore, we the Black members of the American Library Association have banded together to form this organization.*

*January 21, 1970*

**Article I. Name**

This organization shall be known as the BLACK CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (BCALA).

**Article II. Purpose**

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association is organized exclusively to promote the development of library and information services for African Americans and other people of African descent.

Specific purposes of the Black Caucus shall be:

1. To call to the attention of the American Library Association the need to respond positively in behalf of the Black members of the profession and the information needs of the Black Community by reviewing, analyzing, evaluating, and recommending to the American Library Association actions on the needs of Black librarians which will influence their status in the areas of recruitment, development, advancement and general working conditions; and to provide information on qualifications of Black librarians.

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 2.*

2. To review the records and evaluate the position of candidates for the various offices within ALA to determine their potential impact upon Black librarians and services to the Black community.
3. To monitor the activities of the Divisions, Round Tables and Committees of the American Library Association by active participation within these groups, to make sure that they are meeting the needs of Black librarians.
4. To serve as a clearinghouse for Black librarians in promoting wider participation by Black librarians at all levels of the profession and the Association.
5. To support and promote efforts to achieve meaningful communication and equitable representation in state associations and on the governing and advisory boards of libraries at state and local levels.
6. To facilitate library service which will meet the informational needs of Black people.
7. To encourage the development of authoritative information resources about Black people and the dissemination of this information to the larger community.
8. To open up channels of communication to and through Black librarians in every unit of the ALA.

Article III. Limitations

The Black Caucus shall engage exclusively in such educational, charitable, and scientific activities as will qualify it for exemption from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding sections of any future Federal tax code).

Article IV. Membership

Section 1. Membership in the Black Caucus of the American Library Association shall be open to any person interested in library services who is willing to maintain good financial standing with the organization in accordance with Article IX, Section 1.

Section 2. It shall be the policy of the Black Caucus to encourage its members to become members of ALA.

Section 3. Persons from other than the Black race may become members upon payment of the annual membership fee.

Article V. Officers and Their Election

Section 1. The officers of this organization shall be: President, Vice President/President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected by secret ballot of membership in accordance with provisions in Article V of the Bylaws.

Section 3. There shall be an Executive Board, elected by the membership, whose duties shall be to assist the President in policy making decisions affecting the organization and to act on behalf of the organization in between regularly scheduled meetings.

Article VI. Meetings

Meetings of the Black Caucus shall coincide with the Annual and Midwinter meetings of the American Library Association.

Article VII. Disposition of Assets

No part of the net earnings of the Black Caucus shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, directors, officers or other persons, except that the Black Caucus shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation to members, directors, officers, and other persons for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of Section 501(c)(3) purposes.

Upon the dissolution of the organization, the Executive Board shall, after paying all of the liabilities of the Black Caucus, dispose of its assets by distributing them to one or more organizations as shall at that time qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future tax code) as the Executive Board shall determine.

Article VIII. Amendment

The Constitution of this organization may be amended by two-thirds vote of the members responding in a mail ballot, and shall become effective when ratified by two-thirds of those members present and voting at a membership meeting.

## **BYLAWS**

### Article I. Name

This organization shall be known as the BLACK CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (BCALA).

### Article II. Purpose

The purposes shall be as stated in Article II of the Constitution.

### Article III. Membership

Section 1. Membership in the Black Caucus of the American Library Association shall be open to any person interested in library and information services who is in good financial standing with the organization.

Section 2. Persons from other than the Black race may join the Black Caucus upon payment of the annual membership fee. Affiliate members may not hold office in the Black Caucus.

Section 3. There shall be an annual membership fee to be determined by the Executive Board.

Section 4. It shall be the policy of the Black Caucus to encourage its members to become members of the American Library Association.

### Article IV. Officers and Duties

Section 1. The President shall:

- a. Be responsible for general leadership of the Black Caucus, which includes the following specific tasks:

Presiding at Executive Board and General Membership meetings; preparing agenda; appointing committee chairpersons and members; serving as a spokesperson for BCALA; delivering an Inaugural Address, and other addresses as appropriate, to the membership; delivering a Farewell Address and passing the gavel at the end of the term of office; performing such other duties as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws.

- b. Initiate programs of action which will call attention to the needs of the members of the Black Caucus in particular, and ALA members in general.

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 5.*

- c. Implement the purposes and objectives of the Black Caucus as stated in this document.
- d. Implement those decisions passed by the membership and/or the Executive Board.
- e. Assume responsibility for keeping the membership informed of events through Black Caucus publications and/or other media.
- f. Transfer past records to the designated repository and his/her records to the succeeding President within 60 days after leaving office.
- g. Be elected to serve a two-year term.

Section 2. The Vice-President/President-Elect shall:

- a. Be responsible for performing all duties of the President in the absence or disability of that officer, and performing such duties as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws.
- b. Represent the President, when requested, in the affairs of the Black Caucus.
- c. Assist the President in carrying out official duties.
- d. Serve as Chairperson of the Program Committee.
- e. Transfer past records to the designated repository and his/her records to the succeeding vice-chairperson within 60 days after leaving office.
- f. Be elected to serve a two-year term as Vice-President, followed by a two-year term as President.

Section 3. The Secretary shall:

- a. Be responsible for recording and reporting the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and general membership; maintaining records of other Black Caucus business; performing such other duties as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws.
- b. Keep an official copy of the Constitution and Bylaws and other official documents (non-financial) of the Caucus.

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 6.*

- c. Send notices of meetings and copies of the minutes to the appropriate persons, and ballots as required to the total membership.
- d. Assist the President and Vice-President, when requested, in their duties.
- e. Prepare a list of names, addresses, telephone, and other numbers of all officers, Executive Board members, and Committee Chairs for distribution at Midwinter and Annual meetings of the Black Caucus.
- f. Transfer past records to the succeeding secretary within 60 days after leaving office.
- g. Be elected to serve a two-year term.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall:

- a. Be responsible for all fiscal matters and handling all financial transactions of the Black Caucus; performing such other duties as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws.
- b. Maintain financial records, which include: preparing and presenting an annual budget for the organization to the Executive Board for approval, and for audit to the chair of the Budget and Audit Committee.
- c. Request hotel reservations for the Black Caucus Suite, and Executive Board and general membership meeting room reservations in conjunction, respectively, with the President and the chair of the Program Committee.
- d. Solicit, in conjunction with the chair of the Budget and Audit committee, requests from offices and committee chairs, and present a budget allocation request report to the Executive Board for review and approval at the Midwinter meeting.
- e. Prepare and send updated membership mailing lists to the Secretary and Newsletter Editor in March and September of each year.
- f. Transfer past records to the designated repository and his/her records to the succeeding treasurer within 60 days after leaving office.
- g. Be elected to serve a two-year term.

Section 5. The Immediate Past-President shall:

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 7.*

- a. In the two-years following his/her presidency serve as a member of the Executive Board with all the responsibilities and rights accruing thereto.
- b. Act as a consultant and resource person to the President and Vice-President in matters appropriate to their offices.
- c. Serve as appointed by the President an ex-officio member on committees.

Article V. Elections

Section 1. The offices of Vice-President/President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and eight (8) of the fifteen (15) member Executive Board shall be elected by secret mail ballot of membership in even-numbered years. Seven (7) of the fifteen (15) member Executive Board shall be elected by secret mail ballot of membership in odd-numbered years.

- a. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes in an election years shall serve a two-year term.
- b. In case of ties in the number of votes received by candidates for any election, the candidate to serve shall be determined by lot.
- c. In case of vacancies to be filled during a term, the candidate to serve shall be nominated by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 3. All candidates for office must:

- a. Be members in good standing.
- b. Submit a written verification to the Nomination and Elections Committee, of a willingness to serve.
- c. Submit a brief written statement, not to exceed 250 words, of philosophy for implementing Black Caucus Goals.

Section 4. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall submit a minimum of two candidates for each office, except the President which is succeeded by the Vice-President/President-Elect.

Section 5. Candidates for any office may be entered by petition, provided they meet the requirements stated in Article V, Section 3 and have signatures of ten members in good standing with the Black Caucus. Such petitions must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Nominations and Elections Committee no less than sixty (60) days prior to an Annual meeting. The Nominations and Elections Committee

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 8.*

shall make no distinction between candidates nominated by the Elections Committee and petition candidates.

Section 6. Mail ballots shall be sent to the membership by the Secretary forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual meeting. Ballots must be returned to the Chairperson of the Nominations and Elections Committee thirty (30) days prior to the Annual meeting. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be responsible for the tabulation of votes and submission of the report of election results to membership at the Annual meeting.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. Meetings of the Black Caucus shall coincide with the Annual and Midwinter meetings of the American Library Association.

Section 2. The membership shall be notified, thirty days in advance of all meetings. The notification shall include the meeting time and place, a tentative agenda, a financial statement, and any written data which will require Black Caucus action.

Article VII. Executive Board

Section 1. The Executive Board shall:

- a. Serve as the governing body of the Black Caucus, and is responsible for acting on behalf of the membership by setting policies; hearing and acting on reports, recommendations, proposals and resolutions; initiating actions; reviewing and approving goals and objectives; budget request and allocations; performing such other duties as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers, the immediate past President and the fifteen members elected by the membership to serve on the Executive Board. The President of the Black Caucus shall preside as Chair of the Executive Board, without vote, except to break a tie.

Section 3. Executive Board members shall serve for a term of two years on a staggered basis.

Section 4. All Executive Board proceedings shall be reported to the membership by the Secretary and acted upon as necessary.

Article VIII. Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a. Those Committees which are necessary for the effective operation of the organization and appointed, as needed, by the President in consultation with the Executive Board. Committee appointments are for two-year terms with the possibility of re-appointment.
- b. Standing Committees of the organization shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Affiliates/Chapters Committee

Shall serve as the liaison between non-voting affiliate members in accordance with Article III, the Chapters in accordance with Article X, and the Black Caucus Executive Board; solicit state or local organizations of Black library and information service personnel to affiliate with the Black Caucus as Chapters; maintain and transfer as appropriate records and files on non-voting affiliate members and Chapters.

2. Affirmative Action Committee

Shall prepare the organization's Affirmative Action Position Statement; keep abreast of affirmative action legislation, national, state and local, as it relates to Black Caucus activities; advise the Executive Board and membership of affirmative action activities as appropriate; establish procedures for Executive Board review and approval on:

- a. gathering and publishing affirmative action data,
- b. receiving and acting on affirmative action complaints,
- c. receiving and supporting affirmative action cases,
- d. monitoring ALA's affirmative action policies and practices,
- e. monitoring nominations and committee appointments of ALA and its divisions.

3. ALA Relations Committee

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 10.*

Shall keep abreast of ALA Council and Divisional activities, and local state, national and international legislation, as they relate to Black Caucus activities; advise the Executive Board and membership of such ALA activities and legislation that require direct input by the Black Caucus; recommend action to be taken by the Executive Board and membership on such ALA activities and legislation.

4. Awards Committee

In accordance with the awards manual and procedures reviewed and approved by the Executive Board, shall administer the Black Caucus awards; solicit nominations, select the recipient, and present the Annual Distinguished Service Award; present, in conjunction with the President, Certificates of Appreciation and Special Recognition Plaques.

5. Budget/Audit Committee

Shall monitor fiscal affairs of the Black Caucus; audit the financial records submitted by the Treasurer, solicit in conjunction with the Treasurer budget request from officers and committee chairs and present a budget allocation request report to the Executive Board for review and approval at the Midwinter meeting; make recommendations to the Executive Board in all areas of financial management; participate in any fund raising activities reviewed and approved by the Executive Board.

6. Constitution and Bylaws Committee

Shall maintain a constant review of, and issue to the membership the Constitution and Bylaws, recommend needed changes to the Executive Board and membership, and attend all Executive Board and membership meetings.

7. Fund Raising Committee

In accordance with Article IX. Finance, shall coordinate and engage in fund raising activities to support the programs and activities of the Black Caucus; coordinate fund raising activities with the Treasurer, and in conjunction with the chair of the Budget/Audit Committee; solicit ideas and support for, and inform the membership of, fund raising activities, solicit donations from funding sources.

8. Membership Committee

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 11.*

Shall develop and coordinate membership promotion activities; keep current records of membership status; recommend to the Executive Board policies relating to membership and dues; prepare a Membership Directory in cooperation with the Publications Committee.

9. Nominations and Elections Committee

In accordance with Article V. Elections, and procedures for conducting elections reviewed and approved by the Executive Board, shall solicit nominations for office; prepare, receive and tally ballots for election; report results of elections to the Executive Board and the membership.

10. Program Committee

Shall plan and initiate programs and activities for the membership; recommend and coordinate programs that will enhance the growth, interest and informational needs of the membership; schedule, in conjunction with the Secretary, Treasurer, and in coordination with the President, meeting rooms for the Executive Board and membership meetings.

11. Public Relations Committee

Shall engage in public relations activities to highlight the Black Caucus; publicize the services, events, and activities of the Black Caucus, in coordination and cooperation with appropriate committee chairs; promote and develop media to enhance the image of Black librarians.

12. Publications Committee

Shall coordinate and assist in the production of Black Caucus publications, including such publications as the Annual Report, Membership Directory and Newsletter; solicit and prepare information for inclusion in Black Caucus publications; assist the President in preparing information for publication on the Black Caucus.

13. Recruitment and Professional Development Committee

Shall promote and develop strategies for recruiting Blacks into the field of library and information science; conduct an orientation session to acquaint new or interested members with the purpose, services and

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 12.*

programs of the Black Caucus in particular and of ALA in general; provide information and activities to facilitate Black librarians' professional career development.

14. Committee on Services to Children and the African American Family

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces

Those Committees and Task Forces which are necessary to carry out organizational functions, studies, or activities of a short duration, and appointed, as needed, by the President.

- a. Such Committees and Task Forces shall file records and reports with the Secretary upon completion of the specific assignment
- b. Such Committees and Task Forces shall either cease to exist upon completion of the specific assignment, be retained depending on the need in that area, or be established as a Standing Committee in accordance with Article VII, Section 1.

Section 3. All committees and task forces shall submit reports to the Executive Board at Midwinter and Annual meetings; submit written reports in advance to the Secretary for distribution to the Executive Board; schedule oral reports in advance with the Secretary to be included on the Executive Board agenda; submit written articles to Black Caucus publications, including the Annual Report and the Newsletter; submit scheduled budget requests to the Treasurer in conjunction with the Budget/Audit committee chair for the budget allocation report at the Midwinter meeting; maintain and transfer records to succeeding chairs.

Article IX. Finance

Section 1. Operational funds shall be from membership fees, publication advertising fees, and fund raising activities as approved by the Executive Board.

Section 2. The Black Caucus shall accept voluntary contributions unencumbered by obligations.

Section 3. The Black Caucus shall actively solicit funds for pursuit of projects that advance the objectives of the organization.

Section 4. Disbursement of funds -- regardless of source, shall be made by the Treasurer only on the authorization of the President. All obligations in the name of the Black Caucus shall be made only with approval of the President.

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 13.*

Section 5. The President's authorization for financial obligations shall be limited, set figure to be determined by the Executive Board. Approval for obligations above this amount shall be obtained from the Executive Board.

Section 6. The Black Caucus is a non-profit organization, duly incorporated, and may solicit funds or hold fundraisers for purposes stated in the incorporation document without legal penalty.

Article X. Endowments

Section 1. There are hereby created funds to be known as the Endowment Funds of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

Section 2. These funds are to be administered by a Trustees Committee(s) which will be appointed by and will report to the Executive Board.

Section 3. The funds are to be made from donations, gifts, subscriptions, and bequests therefore, with the principal held in trust in perpetuity and invested in the manner prescribed by the Trustees Committee(s).

Section 4. The income only of the endowments shall be expended in the manner prescribed by the Trustees Committee(s) and approved by the Executive Board to support the activities of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association.

Article XI. Chapters

Section 1. The Black Caucus may recognize Chapters as affiliates on recommendation of the Executive Board.

Section 2. A Chapter is any state or local organization of Black library and information service personnel who are duly organized as a body with officers and a set of Bylaws to govern their operation.

Section 3. State or local organizations of Black library and information service personnel desiring to affiliate with the Black Caucus must submit to the Affiliates/Chapters Committee chair, as liaison to the Executive Board, a written request to affiliate with the following information:

- A current copy of the organization's Bylaws,
- A rationale for wanting to affiliate with the Black Caucus,

*BCALA Constitution and By-Laws, 1/31/99, p. 14.*

- A statement of willingness to pay affiliate dues as set by the Executive Board,
- A commitment to keep the Black Caucus apprised of organization's activities.
- A commitment to encourage its members to attend Black Caucus and ALA meetings and to participate in professional services which promote the interest and concerns of other Blacks in the profession.
- Serve as host to the Black Caucus when it meets in the organization's city, and provide information and resources that will assist the membership while in the city.

Section 4. Action shall be taken on the request to affiliate at the first meeting after receipt of the request. The affiliate group shall be notified of the Executive Board's action within thirty days of the action.

Article XII. Endorsements

Endorsement is defined as the Black Caucus, as a body, taking a position in support of or in opposition of a candidate for election to an ALA or Divisional office.

Section 1. The Black Caucus shall not engage in endorsement of any candidate for ALA elected office, except as follows:

- a. When petitioned by a member of the Black Caucus with 25 current members signatures.
- b. When presented by a member in a motion, and seconded and approved at a membership meeting.

Section 2. A vote of the membership shall be necessary to endorse any candidate meeting the conditions on Article XII, Section 1.

Section 3. Past practices shall not be a precedence. Such occasions will be considered on a case by case basis.

Article XIII. Parliamentary Authority

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER, the latest Revised Edition.

Article XIV. Amendments

Section 1. Bylaws.

- a. Proposed amendments to the Bylaws, upon approval of the Executive Board, shall be presented at an annual membership meeting for a vote of the membership.
- b. The Bylaws of this organization may be approved by two-thirds vote of the members in attendance at any Annual meeting.

Section 2. Constitution.

- a. Amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted to membership by mail ballot prior to the next meeting where results will be reported, and published in the Newsletter.

Section 3. The Constitution and Bylaws take effect when ratified by two-thirds of those members present and voting at a membership meeting.

Amended January 31, 1999

Dr. Madison Mosley, Jr., Chair  
Constitution and By-laws Committee

Mr. Gregory Reese, President 1996-1998  
Ms. Gladys Smiley Bell, Vice President 1998-2000