

**The Constitution and By-Laws of the
Illinois Black Counselor Association (IBCA)**

*A Chapter of the [Illinois Counseling Association \(ICA\)](#)
Revised Effective July 1, 2026*

Article I – Name

Section 1.

The name of this organization shall be the **Illinois Black Counselor Association (IBCA)**. IBCA shall function as a chapter of the [Illinois Counseling Association \(ICA\)](#).

Article II – Purpose

Section 1. Mission Statement

The Illinois Black Counselor Association (IBCA) is committed to the academic, professional, cultural, and leadership advancement of Black counselors, counseling students, and behavioral health professionals throughout Illinois. IBCA exists to promote multicultural consciousness, advocacy, social justice, professional excellence, and community engagement while creating supportive and affirming spaces for Black and BIPOC behavioral health professionals.

Section 2. Organizational Purpose

IBCA serves as a professional chapter affiliated with ICA and supports the advancement of culturally responsive counseling practices throughout Illinois. The organization shall:

1. Promote professional development and leadership opportunities.
 2. Advocate for equity, inclusion, and social justice within the counseling profession.
 3. Foster mentorship, networking, and support among counseling professionals and students.
 4. Provide culturally responsive resources and educational opportunities.
 5. Encourage community engagement and wellness initiatives.
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Article III – Membership

Section 1. Classification of Membership

All members are expected to support the mission, goals, and activities of IBCA.

A. Professional Membership

Professional Members shall:

1. Be currently employed or recently employed in the behavioral health profession; and
2. Pay all required membership dues.

B. Student Membership

Student Members shall:

1. Be currently enrolled in a behavioral health or counseling-related educational program; or
2. Be a recent graduate of a behavioral health or counseling-related educational program within the past twelve (12) months.

Section 2. Membership Dues

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Membership dues shall be implemented effective **July 1, 2026**. Annual dues amounts and payment procedures shall be determined by the Leadership Circle and approved by membership vote when applicable.

Section 3. Membership Benefits

Active members in good standing shall be eligible for:

1. Monthly support and chapter meetings
2. Discounts on professional development workshops
3. Community engagement opportunities
4. Leadership opportunities
5. Networking opportunities
6. Access to culturally responsive resources
7. Supportive and affirming spaces for BIPOC behavioral health professionals

Section 4. Maintenance of Active Membership

To maintain active membership status, members must:

1. Remain in good standing with IBCA;
2. Pay required membership dues; and
3. Participate in organizational activities consistent with the mission and goals of IBCA.

Article IV – Leadership Circle

Section 1. Leadership Structure

IBCA shall be governed by a five-member Leadership Circle.

Section 2. Leadership Circle Eligibility

To qualify for the Leadership Circle, individuals must:

1. Be a current ICA member in good standing;
2. Identify as African American/Black;
3. Demonstrate the ability to serve a full two-year term;
4. Commit to leading at least one initiative each calendar year;
5. Attend a minimum of nine (9) Leadership Circle meetings annually; and
6. Attend a minimum of six (6) chapter membership meetings annually.

Section 3. Leadership Terms

Leadership Circle members shall serve two-year terms.

Section 4. Leadership Cycle

Elections shall occur during the second year of each leadership cycle. Newly elected leaders shall begin service at the start of the following term.

Section 5. Leadership Initiatives

Leadership Circle members shall participate in and oversee initiatives that support the mission of IBCA, including but not limited to:

1. Advocacy
2. Social Justice

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3. Membership Engagement

Section 6. Treasurer and Secretary Designation

At the beginning of each two-year cycle, the Leadership Circle shall internally designate one member to serve as Treasurer and one member to serve as Secretary.

Article V – Duties of Leadership Circle Officers

Section 1. Treasurer Duties

The Treasurer shall:

1. Collect member dues.
2. Prepare and adhere to an approved budget.
3. Maintain accurate financial records.
4. Transact business through an approved banking institution or financial office.
5. Keep the Leadership Circle informed of the financial strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
6. Ensure books are audited or reconciled annually.
7. Work with fundraising efforts to establish annual fundraising goals and activities.
8. Have maintained active ICA membership for at least one year prior to election.

Section 2. Secretary Duties

The Secretary shall:

1. Record accurate minutes of all meetings.
 2. Maintain permanent organizational records and archives.
 3. Maintain and update roster information.
 4. Maintain official membership records.
 5. Attend all official meetings.
 6. Assist with organizational communication and documentation.
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Article VI – Elections

Section 1. Election Process

Leadership Circle elections shall occur during the second year of each leadership cycle.

Section 2. Nominations

A formal call for nominations shall be distributed through ICA communication channels.

A.

Self-nominations and nominations by members shall be accepted.

B.

All nominees must:

1. Meet Leadership Circle eligibility requirements;
2. Submit a professional biography;
3. Submit a statement of intention outlining their desire to serve in IBCA leadership; and
4. Submit a professional headshot.

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Section 3. Election Procedures

1. Elections shall be conducted at a designated time determined by the Leadership Circle.
 2. Voting procedures shall be communicated to eligible members in advance.
 3. Election results shall be announced following vote certification.
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Article VII – Impeachment and Vacancies

Section 1. Removal from Leadership Circle

A Leadership Circle member may be removed for:

1. Failure to fulfill leadership responsibilities;
2. Repeated unexcused absences;
3. Ethical misconduct;
4. Violation of ICA, ACA, or IBCA ethical standards; or
5. Conduct deemed harmful to the mission or integrity of IBCA.
 - A. A written concern must be submitted to the Leadership Circle.
 - B. The member in question shall be provided written notice and an opportunity to respond.
 - C. Removal shall require a two-thirds vote of the remaining Leadership Circle members.

Section 2. Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs:

1. The Leadership Circle may appoint an interim replacement until the next election cycle;
or
 2. Conduct a special election if deemed necessary.
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Article VIII – Representation at ICA Governing Council Meetings

Section 1.

IBCA shall maintain representation at ICA Governing Council meetings.

Section 2.

The Leadership Circle shall identify and designate an official IBCA representative prior to each ICA Governing Council meeting.

Article IX – Meetings

Section 1.

Leadership Circle meetings and chapter membership meetings shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Leadership Circle.

Section 2.

Meeting notices and organizational events shall be communicated through official IBCA communication platforms, including email and social media.

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Article X – Behavior and Professional Conduct

Section 1.

Members shall conduct themselves in accordance with:

1. The current [American Counseling Association Code of Ethics](#);
2. Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies; and
3. Principles of professionalism, respect, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.

Section 2.

IBCA maintains zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or intentionally harmful conduct.

Article XI – Non-Discrimination

Section 1.

IBCA shall not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, national origin, age, political affiliation, or any other protected status.

Article XII – Amendments

Section 1.

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of active members, provided written notice of proposed amendments is distributed at least fourteen (14) days prior to voting.

Section 2.

Approved amendments shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.

Article XIII – Committees and Task Forces

Section 1. Standing Committees

The Leadership Circle may establish standing committees to support the mission, goals, and operations of IBCA. Standing committees may include, but are not limited to:

1. Membership Engagement Committee
2. Advocacy and Social Justice Committee
3. Professional Development and Conference Planning Committee
4. Scholarship and Mentorship Committee
5. Wellness and Community Engagement Committee

Section 2. Committee Appointments

The Leadership Circle shall appoint committee chairs and members based on organizational needs, member interest, and professional expertise.

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Section 3. Task Forces

The Leadership Circle may establish temporary task forces to address specific organizational initiatives, projects, or emerging issues. Task forces shall dissolve upon completion of their designated purpose unless otherwise extended by the Leadership Circle.

Article XIV – Conflict of Interest Policy

Section 1.

Leadership Circle members and committee leaders shall act in the best interest of IBCA and avoid conflicts between personal, professional, financial, or organizational interests and the interests of IBCA.

Section 2.

Any member with a potential conflict of interest regarding a matter before the organization shall disclose the conflict prior to discussion or voting.

Section 3.

A member with a disclosed conflict of interest may participate in discussion at the discretion of the Leadership Circle but shall abstain from voting on the matter in question.

Section 4.

Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary review consistent with Article VII regarding leadership accountability and removal procedures.

Article XV – Virtual Meetings and Voting Procedures

Section 1.

IBCA may conduct meetings through virtual or hybrid platforms as determined appropriate by the Leadership Circle.

Section 2.

Members participating virtually shall be considered present for purposes of attendance, quorum, discussion, and voting.

Section 3.

Official voting may occur electronically through secure methods approved by the Leadership Circle.

Section 4.

The Leadership Circle shall ensure that virtual meeting and voting procedures maintain confidentiality, fairness, accessibility, and organizational integrity.

Article XVI – Parliamentary Authority

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Section 1.

Meetings of the Illinois Black Counselor Association shall be governed by the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws or superseded by ICA policies and procedures.

Article XVII – Fiscal Year

Section 1.

The fiscal year of IBCA shall begin on July 1 and conclude on June 30 of each year.

Article XVIII – Membership Suspension and Termination

Section 1.

Membership may be suspended or terminated for:

1. Nonpayment of membership dues;
2. Violation of organizational policies or ethical standards;
3. Conduct deemed harmful to the mission, integrity, or reputation of IBCA; or
4. Discrimination, harassment, or other harmful conduct toward members or the community.

Section 2.

Prior to suspension or termination, the member shall receive written notice outlining the concern and an opportunity to respond.

Section 3.

The Leadership Circle shall review concerns and determine appropriate action through majority vote.

Section 4.

A suspended or terminated member may request reconsideration in writing within thirty (30) days of notification.

Article XIX – Quorum Requirements

Section 1.

A quorum for Leadership Circle meetings shall consist of a simple majority of Leadership Circle members.

Section 2.

A quorum for general membership meetings shall consist of active members present at a properly announced meeting.

Section 3.

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Official organizational business, voting, and motions may not occur without quorum being established.

Signatures

We have reviewed and accept the current bylaws for the Illinois Black Counselors Association: ICA Chapter

Leadership Circle: Kimberly Thomas

Leadership Circle: Nathaniel Gilham

Leadership Circle: Jalanie Hart

Leadership Circle: Leslie Davis

Leadership Circle: Toni Sutton