



Caring for Oregon

ONA Bargaining Unit Governance Model

Approved on February 20, 2026

Introduction:

Our power and ability to affect change in worksites and health systems and advocate for patient care comes from member engagement. Focused and effective engagement requires thoughtful planning and leadership. Experience has shown us that having member leaders focused on specific portfolios of our work helps ensure members have regular opportunities for meaningful engagement and to support the bargaining unit in functioning effectively.

ONA bargaining units must adhere to all ONA bylaws and policies at all times.

Bargaining Unit (BU) Leadership Councils

The BU Leadership Council will be responsible for making decisions on behalf of bargaining unit members related to the negotiation and enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement, maintenance of strong membership, planning and execution of issue campaigns, member engagement, and the overall advocacy work for members.

BU Council Portfolios:

BU Council Co-chairs (2): Two members responsible for scheduling and facilitating BU council meetings, preparing agendas, taking meeting minutes, confirming attendance, ensuring follow-up on agreed upon tasks and projects. Lead the work of liaising with ONA staff and securing additional resources and support where needed.

Grievance Co-chair: Responsible for coordinating the work of stewards including holding regular meetings, communicating about representation needs to ensure that members have representation when needed, and working with labor representative to provide training and mentorship to stewards. Grievance co-chair is also responsible for supporting stewards in filing grievances as well as working with their labor representative to ensure that grievances are filed with the ONA

office in a timely manner and updates provided per ONA's process for grievance tracking. In addition, they shall provide a report on grievance activity to the BU council so that opportunities for issue organizing might be identified.

Membership/Contract Action Team (CAT) Co-chair: During contract campaigns, this member is responsible for collaborating with the ONA Labor Representative and the bargaining team to develop a campaign plan. They recruit and train CAT members, convene and facilitate CAT meetings, and support CAT members in implementing campaign actions to ensure follow through on commitments made by CAT members. In between contract campaigns, this member shall be responsible for ensuring that new hires are provided with an ONA new employee orientation (NEO) and sign up for membership. They may fulfill these duties through collaboration with the labor rep, stewards, and/or CAT members. This member shall be responsible for updating member contact information on a regular basis to ensure ONA has current phone and email information for all members. In addition, they will keep the BU council informed of CAT activities during contract campaigns.

Finance Co-chair: Responsible for ensuring that expenditures of bargaining unit funds are handled according to ONA policy. This includes providing ONA Finance department with a record of the vote by the leadership council to expend the funds and copies of receipts. This member will also be responsible for assisting individual bargaining unit members with reimbursement requests for expenditures made for ONA related activities that have received prior approval through the leadership council or ONA staff. In addition, they shall provide the BU council with a report on the status of bargaining unit funds including current balance and an accounting of any transactions since that last report.

Professional Practice Co-chair: This member shall serve as chair of the facility's professional practice committee. They shall be responsible for fulfilling the duties of that position as determined by the process agreements of that committee or as articulated by the collective bargaining agreement. They shall also provide regular updates to the BU council of emerging practice concerns or other issues that may impact members. In addition, this member shall be responsible for working with other members serving on the committee to prepare strategic approaches to the work and ensure members are working together for the greatest impact.

Communications Co-chair: This member shall work with the labor representative, the BU council, and the bargaining team to ensure that members are receiving regular updates through newsletters and social media channels (if applicable). This may include administering the bargaining units social media channels in

accordance with ONA policies. During contract campaigns, this member will coordinate with the bargaining team and the CAT team to ensure communications about actions and negotiations are provided in a timely and effective manner to members.

Workplace Violence Prevention Co-chair: This member shall serve as chair, co-chair or member (depending on the structure of the committee) of the facility's workplace violence or equivalent committee. They shall be responsible for fulfilling the duties of that position as determined by the process agreements of that committee or as articulated by the collective bargaining agreement. They shall also provide regular updates to the BU council of emerging workplace safety concerns or other issues that may impact members. In addition, this member shall be responsible for convening other ONA members serving on the committee to prepare strategic approaches to the work and ensure members are working together for the greatest impact.

Staffing Committee Co-Chair: This member shall serve as co-chair of the facility's staffing committee. They shall be responsible for fulfilling the duties of that position as determined by the process agreements of that committee or as articulated by the collective bargaining agreement and the law. They shall also provide regular updates to the BU council of emerging concerns or challenges that may impact members. This member shall be responsible for working with their labor representative to monitor and report staffing law violations as prescribed by Oregon law. In addition, this member shall be responsible for convening other members serving on the staffing committee to prepare strategic approaches to the work and ensure members are working together for the greatest impact.

Bargaining Team Co-Chair: During contract negotiations, a member of the negotiations team will agree to serve as liaison for the negotiations team and sit on the Bargaining Unit Leadership Council for the duration of negotiations.

Additional Co-Chairs: The Bargaining Unit Leadership Council may create additional committees and Co-chair positions as needed. These Co-chairs will serve to facilitate other committees as defined by the collective bargaining agreement, perform specific work of the bargaining unit, or represent specific groups within the bargaining unit. Added Co-chairs will collaborate with other BU council members as necessary to carry out their assigned duties and make regular reports of their work to the BU council.

BU Leadership Council seats:

Bargaining units should always endeavor to elect the maximum number of co-chairs to support effective work of the unit, and to prevent a small number of members from having to carry every role. However, it is understood that smaller bargaining units may not be able to elect an optimal number of co-chairs (as described above) and may therefore need to condense some roles into a fewer number of BU council seats.

Where specific positions or roles are elected through a separate process (i.e. staffing committee, workplace violence, or professional practice co-chairs) external to the bargaining unit, those processes will continue. Bargaining Unit Leadership Councils will decide whether to seat those positions with the Council.

Each bargaining unit should determine the number of co-chairs it will have, and which portfolios are carried by each position, based on bargaining unit size and following the guidelines below. In no case will a bargaining unit have fewer than two co-chairs.

Suggested BU council seat numbers based on bargaining unit size:

BUs of less than 20 members are expected to maintain a minimum of two co-chair positions (with the various portfolios divided between them).

BUs of 20-199 members shall elect a minimum of four chair positions (or more wherever possible):

- BU council co-chair with a finance and communications portfolio
- BU council co-chair with a grievance portfolio
- Membership/CAT co-chair
- Staffing committee co-chair
- Other co-chair positions as needed or required by the CBA

BUs of 200-999 shall elect a minimum of six chair positions (or more wherever possible)

- BU council co-chair with a finance portfolio
- BU council co-chair with a communications portfolio
- Grievance co-chair
- Membership/CAT co-chair
- Professional practice co-chair
- Staffing committee co-chair

- Other co-chair positions as needed or required by the CBA

BUs of 1000+ members shall elect a minimum of nine chair positions (and more wherever needed to effectively operate the bargaining unit)

- BU council co-chair
- BU council co-chair
- Grievance co-chair
- Membership/CAT co-chair
- Finance co-chair
- Professional Practice co-chair
- Communications co-chair
- Workplace Violence Prevention co-chair
- Staffing committee co-chair
- Other co-chair positions as needed or required by the CBA

Bargaining Teams

Bargaining team size should be determined by the collective bargaining agreement and/or the needs of the bargaining unit as determined by the BU council.

BU council members should volunteer to serve on the bargaining team where there is interest and then appoint additional members solicited as volunteers from the membership.

The BU council can remove bargaining team members who do not attend meetings regularly or who fail to follow the rules and practices established by the team.

Elections

Terms of office will be based on the term of the collective bargaining agreement. Four to six months following the ratification and implementation of a new CBA, the BU Council will begin the election process by making a call for nominations for BU Leadership Council positions to the membership.

The nominations period shall be open for no less than 30 days. During the nomination period, members will submit in writing names of candidates for BU Co-chair positions to the BU Leadership Council.

Following close of the nomination period, the BU Leadership Council will verify with the ONA Membership Team that all nominees are in good standing.

The BU Leadership Council will confirm that the nominees have consented to serve.

The BU Leadership Council submits the names of nominees to the ONA staff member who will construct a ballot reflecting the eligible nominees which will be reviewed and approved by the BU Leadership Council.

No later than (14) calendar days prior to the opening of the elections, the Communications Co-chair will email a list of all candidates to the membership.

Where only one eligible candidate is nominated for a position, an election will not occur for that position, and the candidate will be awarded the position.

Voting shall be by secret ballots of the ONA Members (as verified by the ONA Membership Team) and open for a period of no less than three days (and longer where necessary to accommodate the member participation).

Candidates who receive the greatest number of votes by secret ballot of ONA Members shall determine who is awarded each BU Leadership Council seat. Proxy voting will not be permitted. A tie vote will be decided by coin toss or a random drawing.

Changes in membership status during voting- Non-members and/or fee payors will have the opportunity to sign up as full members in order to participate in ratification voting. Membership applications and a ballot request form must be submitted at least two business days before the close of voting to ensure ample time for processing and ballot distribution.

The new BU Leadership Council will be seated no more than 30 days following the conclusion of the election (and reporting of results). The outgoing BU Leadership Council will work to onboard newly-elected Co-chairs and conduct transitional meetings for that purpose during the period between the election and seating of new Co-chairs.

Objections or concerns related to the nomination and elections process should be reported to the ONA Labor Cabinet in writing no later than five business days of the announcement of the election outcome. The Cabinet will adjudicate irregularities and render its decision in no more than 20 days.

Appointments

The BU Leadership Council can make appointments for vacant or new Council or committee seats as needed. When a vacancy occurs, a call for volunteers will be circulated among the membership for no less than fourteen (14) days. Each volunteer will be required to fill out a consent to serve form and submit to the BU Leadership Council by a specific date and time. The BU Leadership Council will then review the forms submitted and make the needed appointments by consensus or simple majority vote (> 50%) of a quorum of the BU Leadership Council.

Contract Ratification

At least five (5) days prior to contract ratification or other vote, the Communications Co-chair will distribute a summary of the issue to be voted on. For contract ratification votes, the bargaining team will share a summary of the tentative agreement and the date, time and place of the vote. As soon as it becomes available, the bargaining team will share a copy of the (redline) tentative agreement.

The duration of voting will be determined by the BU Leadership Council, in collaboration with the bargaining team.

Voting shall be by secret ballot of ONA members.

A simple majority (> 50%) vote of the voting bargaining unit membership shall decide the issue. Proxy voting is not permitted.

Voting will be conducted by ONA using a secure electronic voting system. The BU Leadership Council may also choose to conduct an in-person vote.

Non-members and/or fee payors will have the opportunity to sign up as full members in order to participate in ratification voting. Membership applications and a ballot request form must be submitted at least two business days before the close of voting to ensure ample time for processing and ballot distribution.

In cases where the bargaining unit is voting on whether to strike and in other situations identified by the BU Leadership Council, the entire bargaining unit will be allowed to vote, including non-members.

Committees

The Grievance committee will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Oversee the processing and investigation of all grievances filed by members;
- Responsible for securing representation for member, if requested;
- Report to the Bargaining Unit Leadership Council and ONA all grievance filings in a timely fashion;
- Supply all case documentation to ONA for tracking and filing;
- Recruit and train additional committee members in member representation and the processing of grievances.

The Contract Action Team (CAT)/Membership committee will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Encourage bargaining unit members to sign up as full members of ONA;
- Help welcome new employees to ONA and provide orientation to union membership in both formal informal settings;
- Recruit and train members to serve as liaisons between work units and the Bargaining Unit Leadership Council and the bargaining team (during contract campaigns);
- Communicate information to members using printed materials and one-on-one conversations;
- Collect information and provide feedback from members as needed;
- Support the bargaining process by collaborating with the bargaining team and ONA staff to create a contract campaign strategy and timeline;
- Engage members in contract campaign actions;
- Encourage member participation in elections and ratification votes.

The Professional Practice committee or equivalent will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Make recommendations for educational and training programs compatible with identified facility goals;
- Make recommendations to the facility of ways and means to improve patient care;
- Perform functions specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

The Labor-Management Committee (LMC) or equivalent will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Bring member issues, both contractual and extra-contractual, to labor-management meetings for resolution;
- Track and follow up on open issues as needed;
- Perform functions specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

Workplace Violence Prevention or equivalent committee will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Survey, educate, and engage members in advocating for a safe workplace;
- Perform functions specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

ONA nurse staffing committee members will coordinate the following activities in cooperation with ONA staff:

- Collaborate with work units to draft and adopt union proposals for unit-based and housewide staffing plans;
- Analyze unsafe staffing complaints and concerns and take necessary actions to address those in collaboration with impacted members;
- Perform functions specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

The BU Leadership Council can create new/additional committees (and appoint chairs to the council) as needed.

Authorized Use of Bargaining Unit Funds

Bargaining unit funds will be used to negotiate and enforce the collective bargaining agreement, build membership, conduct issue campaigns, and engage members in the advocacy work of the unit.

Concerns about expenditures that are not focused on the above activities should be reported to the ONA Labor Cabinet. Members disagreeing over expenditures must submit their arguments in writing. The Cabinet will adjudicate questionable expenditures and render its decision in no more than 90 days.

BU Council Quorum and Decision Making

A simple majority (> 50%) of BU Leadership Council members must be present for any formal decision of the Council. Where BUs have only have two Co-chairs, both must be present to make formal decisions. Wherever possible, decision making should happen by consensus of the BU Leadership Council. Otherwise, decisions

will be made by a simple majority (> 50%) of a quorum of the BU Leadership Council members. Where there is a tie vote of the BU Leadership Council, the measure in question fails.

Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Bargaining Unit Leadership Council and all decisions and votes of the BULC shall be recorded in those minutes. Except for sensitive or strategic matters, minutes will be shared with members as a part of bargaining unit updates or newsletters.

Minutes shall be posted on the ONA BU webpage.

Meetings shall be held monthly and all Bargaining Unit Leadership Council members shall be given reasonable advanced notice of any meeting.

BU Stewardship

Where a bargaining unit cannot elect at least two co-chairs to divide BU portfolios between, the Labor Cabinet, in collaboration with ONA staff, will assume operation and work of the bargaining unit until such time that additional BU Leadership Council members can be identified and appointed. In those cases, the Cabinet will make appointments of volunteers or members recruited by leaders and staff.

Governance Model Implementation Timeline for New and Existing Bargaining Units

Newly organized bargaining units will implement this governance model immediately upon ratification of the first collective bargaining agreement.

The Cabinet will create a mechanism for evaluation of and member feedback for this new model and will plan to make adjustments/improvements to the policy based on the experiences of the bargaining units where this model is implemented.

For existing bargaining units, this governance model will be implemented (and elections held) within three years of the date of approval of this policy, though any bargaining unit can choose to adopt it sooner. Following implementation of the new governance model, no prior procedures (e.g. BU Bylaws) for operation of a BU shall be applicable.

Where BU contract language and/or the employer's understanding of union terms and leadership titles conflicts with this model, BU leaders will collaborate with ONA staff as to how best to navigate those differences. The Bargaining Unit Leadership Council will choose when to make contract proposals to correct differences in terms and language. ONA's internal governance processes and terminology are

ultimately never determined by the employer and so can be adjusted as needed—both internally and externally.

Constituent Associations

Where bargaining units are also identified as a singular constituent association, the functions that are exclusively performed in the capacity of a constituent association shall be governed by ONA Board of Directors' policies and/or ONA Bylaws. All remaining functions and structures are governed by this model.

Questions or concerns about Labor Cabinet policies should be directed to the ONA Labor Cabinet and/or Labor Staff.