

**THE
AMERICAN
COALITION
FOR
GOOD
GOVERNMENT
HANDBOOK (2011)**

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The American Coalition for Good Government

P.O. Box 285 Syracuse, NY 13205-0285

“Working Together for Community and Economic Dignity”

Welcome and Congratulations!

Thank You for joining our political vision. This is an exciting opportunity to improve the overall health of politics in the United States of America and abroad. Investing in our political community is important to the American Coalition for Good Government and **right now** we can demonstrate our role in advancing the common good by simply taking a stand and participating.

The American Coalition for Good Government knows that when we reach out a hand to one, sharing knowledge, dignity and experience, we influence the condition of all – and then, everyone wins!
We encourage you to:

Utilize our outreach tools and share our website, www.coalitionforgoodgovernment.org with your family, friends, and business associates.

Are you willing to become our Representative in your area? Let us know.

Submit local articles of interest for our review to info@coalitionforgoodgovernment.net

Your participation in this collective effort to advance **Political and Economic Dignity** on a local and national level demonstrates a willingness to meet the challenge!

Best Wishes,

The Membership Committee

History of the American Coalition for Good Government

The American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG) was established in 1997 after a landmark address by Imam W. Deen Mohammed on community responsibility. The event took place in Charlotte, North Carolina and was well attended by Muslim elected officials and political leaders, who were, at that time, members of the Muslim American society under the leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed. Imam Mohammed outlined a blueprint for political involvement and emphasized the importance of representative government and the obligation we have as Muslims, to shoulder our public responsibility. ACGG established eight regions nationally and executed numerous political support activities assisting councilperson, state representatives, and governors, congressional and presidential aspirants through our ACGG national Network. In 2000, ACGG initiated a national presidential survey and voter registration drive in order to encourage greater participation from the Muslim American community. ACGG has the largest number of elected and appointed officials of any Muslim community in America.

American Coalition for Good Government – Mission and Vision Statement

The American Coalition for Good government has set out to bring overlooked Americans back into the political process. With a membership pool of 2.5 million members across America – from carpenters, educators, to stay-at-home moms to business leaders – we work together to realize the progressive promise of our country. The American Coalition for Good Government is a service – a way for busy but concerned citizens to find their political voice in a system dominated by big money and big media.

Our Mission: To develop a political climate for growth in American politics by enhancing (empowering) leadership to change the circumstances that prevents us from realizing the good life.

Our Vision: To educate and empower American citizens to improve government.

The American Coalition for Good Government family of affiliates is primarily focused on education, economic development, and advocacy for local and national issues.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR -THE AMERICAN COALITION FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT (ACGG)

The purpose of the American Coalition for Good Government committee structure is to provide a working structure whose objective will be to function as instruments in achieving the Mission and Vision of the ACGG. The committees are as follows:

- Steering Committee
- Planning Committee
- Legal Committee
- Finance Committee
- Communications Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Membership Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AMERICAN COALITION FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT (ACGG) COMMITTEES PROCESS

The framework of the American Coalition for Good Government is based on a **Committee Structure**. This means that the organization will not have traditional leadership based on president and vice-president. The Structure is based on committees and their functions within the organization.

The ACGG consist of seven (7) committees with specific functions – **Steering Committee, Planning Committee, Public Relations Committee, Communications Committee, Membership Committee, Finance Committee, and Legal Committee.**

The responsibility and structure of each committee is as follows:

1. **Steering Committee** – the steering committee will develop the organizational agenda and prioritize the business of the American Coalition for Good Government.
2. **Planning Committee** –the planning committee will organize and implement the activities of the ACGG during a given period.
3. **Public Relations Committee** – the public relations committee will develop relationships with other organizations. This includes the development of strategies to increase public awareness of which the ACGG is, coordinating media and public relation campaigns, establishing and maintaining goodwill with the general community and serving as the contact point for press releases, promotional activities and support material for the ACGG. As well as, developing mentorship training programs for new and young ACGG members.
4. **Communications Committee** – The communications committee will have the responsibility of conveying information to and from internal and external stakeholders. This committee will consist of a Writers Bureau, Web-site Development Team and an Outreach Team.
5. **Membership Committee** – the membership committee will recruit, provide new member orientation, process new members, maintain membership records and provide key organizational information to all members of the ACGG.
6. **Finance Committee** –the finance committee will address finance issues that have the potential to impact the American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG), it's 501c 3, and all aspects of the organization's fiduciary responsibilities.
7. **Legal Committee**- the legal committee will have the responsibility to address legal issues that may have the potential to impact the ACGG.

Each ACGG region will enlist people to fill the above mentioned committees. These functions can be duplicated in cities where there are more than one Masjid/Islamic Center. In these situations the ACGG participants/members will share responsibilities. The Chairs of each committee will derive through a voting process, sending representatives to the region to formulate the committees functioning on a regional level. All regions will convene annually to elect a representative from each committee to form/represent the national Steering committee. The Steering committee will elect its officers.

MASJID/ISLAMIC CENTER LIAISON

In addition to the fore mentioned committees each Masjid/Islamic Center will have a liaison. The responsibility of the liaison will be:

- To promote and coordinate ACGG's activities at the local level
- To work with existing groups to promote Good Government.
- To ensure that the language and culture of ACGG is being demonstrated at the local level
- To facilitate on-going communications with the ACGG Steering Committee
- To work in conjunction with and under the direction of ACGG steering Committee and/or Regional Coordinator
- To develop membership strategies within their Islamic community and within their city

CGG COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AT THE MASJID LEVEL

- Conduct ACGG meetings at the local level
- Conduct trainings, workshops and classes

STEERING COMMITTEE

Purpose: The purpose of the Steering committee will be to decide the organizational agenda and to prioritize the business of the American Coalition for Good Government. The steering committee will consist of the following ACGG members:

- Committee Chairpersons
- Regional Coordinators.

The Steering Committee will consist of the following positions: Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Their responsibilities are as follows:

- Chairperson – provide general leadership for the organization and act as the head of the ACGG.
- Co-chairperson – to perform the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson.
- Secretary – to keep records of the Steering committee meetings and to ensure all pertinent documents of the ACGG are secured and produced as needed.
- Treasurer – to maintain the financial records of the organization, ensuring finances of the organization are disbursed appropriately.

The chairs of each committee will derive through a voting process, sending representatives to the region to formulate the committees functioning on a regional level. All regions will convene annually to elect a representative from each committee to form/represent the national steering committee. The national steering committee will elect its officers. The term for the Steering Committee positions will be one (1) year with no one serving more than two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms.

Regional Coordinator: positions will be appointed positions and the term for the position will be two (2) years. The role of the Regional coordinator will be to ensure the organization operates effectively in the regions and according to ACGG guidelines and procedures.

Committee Chairpersons: Each region will have a representative to the various committees of the American Coalition for Good Government. The committee chairperson will come from the individual regions and the representatives from the regions will elect a chairperson who will be a member of the Steering Committee. Their responsibility on the Steering Committee will be to represent their committee and the overall interest of the ACGG.

Committee chairpersons will serve for one (1) year and may not exceed two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms in the position.

Advisory Council: the Steering committee will also establish an Advisory Council to seek strategic guidance and advice. The Advisory Council may consist of elected officials, appointed officials, community organizations, Imams and Business Leaders. An Advisory council member will serve for one (1) year and may not exceed two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms in the position. The Steering Committee will reserve the right to override the Advisory Council member term upon review. The

position will be an appointed position by the Steering Committee (requires a 2/3 approval of Steering Committee members). The Advisory Council members will not be required to have prior ACGG membership or involvement.

Vacancies: When a vacancy exists due to a resignation or removal (a unanimous vote among Steering committee members can remove a Steering Committee Member or Advisory Council member) of a Steering committee member. The Steering committee will nominate someone to replace the member by a 2/3 approval vote of members present.

Meetings: the Steering committee will conduct quarterly meetings (every three (3) months). A simple majority of committee members will constitute a quorum.

Voting: Each Steering committee member will have one (1) vote.

Special Meetings: The Steering committee Chairperson may call a special meeting to address a specific topic as needed. The meetings can be conducted face to face, on-line or via conference call. A Quorum for the meetings will be a simple majority of Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee reserves the right to go into Executive Session to discuss matters they deem necessary.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Purpose: the purpose of the Planning Committee will be to plan the activities of the ACGG during a given period. Activities to be planned will be organizational specific and may consist of the following:

- Fund Raisers
- Educational Seminars/Workshops
- Voter Registration Activities
- CGG Conferences
- Political Forums
- Political Platforms

Structure: The committee will consist of representatives from each region and a Chairperson who will be elected from amongst the representatives (simple majority needed to seat the chairperson) to guide the committee and to serve on the Steering Committee. The committee will also consist of a co-chairperson and secretary.

The committee will meet quarterly (every three (3) months), or as the committee deems necessary with the purpose of updating, analyzing and projecting future activities for the organization. The committee will consist of appointed members from the various sections.

Responsibilities:

- The committee will develop plans and seek approvals from the Steering committee on proposed plans. For an initiative to be considered it must be received 30 days prior to the planning committees' quarterly meeting. At least one copy of the proposal should be submitted to the committee, who will evaluate it and determine whether to pursue it. A plan may be deferred to another meeting (of the committee) depending on the urgency and quantity of items needing to be addressed.
- **Organizational Initiative Calendar** – The organizational initiative calendar will be planned and updated during the quarterly meetings and submitted to the Steering Committee for approval (also submitted to Advisory Board for recommendations). All proposed initiatives must contain time frames, a description of the initiative, and benefit of initiative, anticipated end results of initiative and the responsible persons.

Approval of Initiatives: After an item has been approved by the Steering committee it will be posted on the organization's website for the general membership to review. The initiative will remain on the website for a two (2) week period. After the elapse of the time period and review of comments related to the initiative, the initiative will be placed on the Organizational Initiative Calendar and pursued.

LEGAL COMMITTEE

Purpose: The Legal committee will have the responsibility to address legal issues with and have the potential to impact the American Coalition for Good government.

Structure: The committee will be composed of attorneys who are in agreement with and committed with the mission and vision statements of the ACGG. The committee will consist of attorneys representing the various sections of the ACGG structure. They will be appointed by and approved by the ACGG Steering Committee. Each member of the committee will serve a term of one (1) year not to exceed two consecutive (2) one year terms. The Steering Committee will reserve the right to override the Legal Committee member term upon review.

The committee member will select a chairperson from amongst the committee who will serve as a member of the Steering Committee.

The committee will meet twice annually but will have an appointed representative (attorneys will be on a monthly rotation) who will be available to advise the ACGG Steering Committee and other Committees on legal matters.

Finance Committee

Purpose: The Finance Committee will have the responsibility to address finance issues that have the potential to impact the American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG), it's 501c 3, in all aspects of the organization's fiduciary responsibilities.

Structure: The committee will be composed of accountants/treasurers that are in agreement with and committed with the mission and vision statements of the ACGG. They will be appointed by their peers and approved by the ACGG steering committee. Each member of the committee will serve a term of one (1) year not to exceed two consecutive (2) one year terms. The Steering Committee will reserve the right to override the Finance Committee member(s) term upon review.

The committee members will select a chairperson from amongst the members who will serve as a member of the Steering Committee and handle the finances of the national body.

The committee will meet twice annually but will have an appointed representative (accountants will be on a monthly rotation) who will be available to advise the ACGG Steering Committee and other committees on an as needed basis.

Communications Committee

Purpose: The overall purpose of the communications committee will be to convey and receive information from all ACGG internal and external stakeholders. This includes the general community, ACGG general membership, ACGG Steering committee, ACGG Committees, ACGG Advisory Board, ACGG Web-site, Muslim Journal Articles and other affiliated organizations.

- The communications should enhance the mission and vision of the ACGG
- The communications should enhance what is working well with the ACGG, as well as, within the various sections.
- The communications should incite participation within and outside of the ACGG related to the mission and vision of the ACGG.
- The communications should strategically work to sustain and build membership within the ACGG. This can be accomplished by exhibiting real and perceived progress within the ACGG.

Structure: The committee will consist of representatives from the various ACGG sections. The committee will elect a chairperson to serve on the Steering Committee. The Chairperson will serve one, one (1) year term not to exceed two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms. A secretary will also be elected from amongst the committee members. A simple majority of the committee members will be needed to select a chairperson and secretary. The committee will consist of the following sub-committees:

- **Writer’s Bureau** – the bureau will compose and solicit articles pertaining to ACGG activities. Articles must be educational and newsworthy. Articles shall be posted on the organizational website, submitted to Muslim Journal, submitted to other publications and submitted to television and radio programs as needed.
- **Web-site Development Team** – This team will develop a standard organizational web site, draft policies for website postings and usage; develop layouts for websites (page contents; organize content and presentations for the website; work closely with Planning committee.
- **Outreach Team** – the purpose will be to collaborate with other committees to transfer information accurately to stakeholders.

Public Relations Committee

Purpose: to seek out and develop relationships with other related organizations by:

- Developing strategies to increase public awareness of who the ACGG is and what it stands for.
- Coordinating media and public relations for the ACGG
- Developing public relations campaigns targeting the ACGG mission and vision statements in order to increase awareness of the ACGG.
- Developing initiatives to increase appreciation for the ACGG and the political process.
- Establishing and maintaining good will relationships with the general community and other organizations who share a similar vision with the ACGG.
- Serve as the contact point for press releases, promotional activities and support material for ACGG. This will also include conference’s attendance and handling ACGG complaints.
- Develop a mentorship training program for new and young members.

Structure: The committee will consist of members representing the various sections. The committee will consist of a chairperson, who will serve on the steering committee and a secretary. Both positions will be elected by the committee members for a one (1) year term not to exceed (2) two consecutive (1) year terms.

Each region will also consist of a Public Relations team who will serve and address the issues of a given region.

Membership Committee

Purpose: to recruit, provide new member orientation, process new members, maintain membership records and provide key organizational information to all members of the ACGG.

Responsibilities:

- Review criteria for membership and membership dues.
- Update and remind members of expiring membership and dues.
- Develop policies and plans to ensure retention and growth of membership.
- Support the interest of ACGG and its membership.
- Develop and critique membership incentives.

Duties:

- Receive and review registration forms from new members.
- Ensure proper classification of members according to dues rates.
- Coordinate with communications committee, membership letters (write letters and updates to members annually).

Structure: the committee will consist of representatives from each region. A chairperson (will serve on the steering committee) and secretary will be selected by committee members. Each will serve a one (1) year term not to exceed two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms.

AMERICAN COALITION FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT – LOCAL AND NATIONAL COORDINATION

- The structure of the American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG) consists of the following committees and non-committee positions: Steering Committee, Planning Committee, Public Relations Committee, Communications Committee, Membership Committee, Legal Committee, Finance Department, Regional Coordinators and Masjid/Islamic Center Liaisons. Each region and local affiliate will reflect the national structure with the understanding that every Masjid/Islamic Center, city or region may not be able to populate each committee due to a shortage of resources.
- The ACGG will have a not for profit status on the national level and the Steering Committee will be the only portion of the organization to officially utilize the non-profit status in the name of the American Coalition for Good Government. Local affiliates of the ACGG will not be required to obtain a not for profit status.
- Each affiliated Masjid/Islamic Center or city will be required to have a Masjid Liaison. The Liaison's responsibility will be to coordinate ACGG activities on the local level, activities such as, voter registration, community forums, disseminating ACGG information, coordinating ACGG activities, as well as addressing and coordinating local issues unique to a given area. The Masjid/Center liaison will be responsible for escalating (sending notice up the ACGG structure) information/issues impacting the political educational environment of a community.
- The escalation process will be as follows:
 - Masjid Liaison escalates issue to Regional Coordinator
 - Regional Coordinator reviews issue and determines if escalation of issue is necessary.
 - If so, the issue is escalated to the Steering Committee or to the appropriate committee for clarification or to other Regional coordinators for clarification.
- After review by the Steering Committee/Appropriate Committee or other Regional Coordinator(s) a recommendation will be forwarded to the parties initiating the inquiry.
- Issues will be evaluated based on the impact they may have on the local, regional and/or national political environment.
- Overall the objective of the local and national coordination will be to deliver the best experience possible to all members and affiliates of the American Coalition for Good Government.
- This framework can also be used to address issues that may have regional rather than national significance.

GETTING STARTED

Step 1

Visit the American Coalition for Good Government website at www.coalitionforgoodgovernment.org

Step 2

Confer with the Imam or governing body of your Masjid/Islamic Center to determine whether a functioning American Coalition for Good Government (ACGG) body exists within the Masjid or Islamic Center

- *If yes, Join in the work!!!!*
- *If no*

Step 3

Have the Imam or governing body of the Masjid or Islamic Center to appoint or designate a person as the Masjid Liaison to ACGG

Step 4

Contact your Regional Coordinator/National Coordinator to be informed of the national objectives

Step 5

Masjid Liaison should begin to educate the community and recruit persons to work with the ACGG body.

AMERICAN COALITION FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT – ACTIVITIES

- Voter Registration – goal of the ACGG is register 100% of all eligible voters in ACGG affiliated Masjid/Islamic Centers prior to the 2012 national election.
- Community Forums – inviting political and public officials to make presentations related to issues impacting the local and national community.
- ACGG Liaisons and ACGG members establishing meetings with public officials to introduce the ACGG and invite the officials to the local Masjid/Islamic Center (this should include City Council persons, County commissioners, State Representatives, Federal Representatives, Judges, Mayors and other public officials).
- Assisting with and contributing to the establishment of a Political Platform for the ACGG.
- Writers Bureau – participating in the ACGG writers' bureau (this will include letters to officials, open letters addressing issues, position statements and newspaper).

APPENDIX

- The United States Constitution – <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#>
- The Civil rights Act of 1964 – <http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/documents/ycr/civilr64.hth>
- Voters Right Act of 1965 – <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html>;
- United States Codes – <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>
- Registering to vote and voting by state – www.usa.gov/citizen/topics/voting/register.shtml
- Voter Registration Deadline by state – <http://www.register-vote.com/>
- U.S. Government Departments and Agencies – A-Z Index – http://www.usa.gov/agencies/federal/all_agencies/c.shtml
- National Legal Aid & Defender Association (for legal information) info@nlada.org
- Gallup Organization (search thousands of poll results, special reports, societal trends and social audits) – www.gallup.com
- Library of Congress – www.loc.gov
- U.S. Census Bureau – www.census.gov
- U.S. Department of Labor – <http://stats.bls.gov>
- CNN Student News: (U.S. and World news multimedia site tailored to the needs of students) – www.cnnfyi.com
- Americanmuslim360 – Blogtalkradio – Americanmuslim360@yahoo.com
- Muslim Journal – muslimjrnl@comcast.net – Islamic International and National weekly community publication

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