



AMERICAN HERBALISTS GUILD

A Message to Our Membership

Strengthening Our Governance to Better Serve You and Our Profession

June 2026

Dear AHG Members,

We're writing to share an important update on recent work the Board of Directors has completed to strengthen AHG's governance and committee structure.

Over the past several months, the Board has been working to formalize and clarify how different parts of AHG operate. Much of this work builds on systems that already existed in practice, but have now been clearly defined and documented to improve consistency, accountability, and transparency.

The goal of this work is simple: to ensure AHG remains a strong, well-organized professional guild that continues to serve its members effectively and protect the integrity of the Registered Herbalist (RH) credential as the profession grows.

In practical terms, this means we now have a clearer structure for how member expertise feeds into organizational decisions, and how final governance responsibilities are held by the elected Board.

A more detailed summary of these changes is included for members who would like to review the structure and specific updates.

Board Transitions and Opportunities to Engage

As AHG continues this work, we also want to recognize members whose service has helped move the organization forward.

We extend our sincere gratitude to **Maria Noël Groves** and **Andrew Appello** for the time, energy, and leadership they contributed during their service to the Board of Directors. While we are saddened to see them step away from Board service, we are deeply appreciative of their commitment to the Guild and their efforts to help strengthen AHG and support the profession of herbal medicine. Their contributions have helped build momentum for the work ahead, and we thank them for all they have given to this organization.

Members interested in reading Maria's message in full may refer to the **April Board Minutes**, available in the Board materials section of the AHG website

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome **Sarah Richards** to the Board of Directors.



Sarah already brings meaningful experience and involvement within AHG through her service on the **Membership Advisory Committee** and **Education Advisory Committee**, as well as her leadership as **Chair of the DMV Chapter**. Combined with her experience as a **Clinical Herbalist**, Sarah brings valuable perspective and a strong commitment to member engagement, education, and community building. We look forward to collaborating together as we continue advancing AHG's mission.

Looking Ahead

Member participation remains an important part of AHG's future.

Please keep an eye out for the **2026 Call for Nominations**, anticipated to open in **mid-July**. Board service is one of the ways members help shape the future of the Guild, and we encourage members interested in contributing their experience, perspective, and leadership to consider participating in the nominations process.

Thank you for continuing to strengthen AHG through your membership, service, and engagement.

Sincerely,
Board of Directors
American Herbalists Guild



Strengthening AHG's Governance: What the Board Has Done and What it Means for You

Over the past several months, your Board of Directors has formally established the committee structure and governance policies that will guide AHG going forward.

A Formal Committee Framework

- The Board has established six oversight committees (Governance, RH, Ethics, Finance, Education, and Community) composed of directors with delegated Board authority.
 - The Board has also established six advisory committees (ARAC, ERAC, Education, Chapters, Membership, and DEI), where members with relevant expertise provide recommendations that inform governance decisions.
 - Each committee now operates under a formal Board resolution with a defined scope, reporting structure, and accountability framework, replacing prior informal practices.
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Your Credential is Better Protected

- The RH Oversight Committee provides the independent governance required for certification mark compliance.
 - This structure strengthens the legal standing and integrity of the Registered Herbalist (RH) designation as AHG advances USPTO certification mark registration.
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A Fairer Ethics Process

- Ethics complaints now go directly to a dedicated Board-controlled email address rather than through staff.
 - The process is overseen by Board directors, with peer review for RH-specific cases and a formal recusal policy to ensure fairness and integrity.
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Greater Transparency and Accountability

- Abbreviated Board minutes will be posted on the AHG website.
 - A governance and policies section will include bylaws, ethics procedures, and public financial filings.
 - A formal annual report is being developed.
 - A tiered document access policy protects sensitive records while maintaining appropriate transparency.
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Your Expertise Has a Formal Home

- Advisory committees ensure member knowledge is formally integrated into governance decisions.
 - Member work in admissions, education, and chapters now feeds directly into structured Board processes.
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Additional Changes

- Updated RH application requirements (80 cases / 5-year window)
 - Dissolution of Associate Membership category
 - Updated Chapter EIN SOPs and onboarding documentation
- The full governance framework and committee table are included in the following section for reference.



Appendix: Full Governance Framework

Formal Committee Framework

The Board has adopted a series of resolutions that formally establish AHG's entire committee structure on a sound legal and organizational footing. Previously, many of our committees operated on the basis of longstanding informal practice. AHG has now reached a stage of organizational maturity where formal structures grounded in our bylaws are both appropriate and necessary.

The new framework organizes AHG's committees into two clearly defined tiers:

- **Oversight committees** are composed exclusively of Board directors and carry delegated Board authority to make governance decisions within defined areas. These are the committees that can act on the Board's behalf.
- **Advisory committees** include both directors and non-director members with relevant expertise, and provide recommendations and input to the oversight committees and the Board. These committees are where member expertise directly informs organizational decision-making.

This pairing ensures that the deep knowledge our experienced members bring to admissions, ethics, education, and community engagement continues to shape organizational decisions—while final governance authority rests clearly with the Board, as our bylaws require. Each oversight committee has a paired advisory committee (or committees) that feeds recommendations upward, creating a clear and accountable chain from member input to Board action.

Why This Matters to You

For members, this structure creates several concrete benefits:

- **Your expertise has a formal home.** Advisory committees provide a defined channel for member knowledge to reach the Board. Whether you serve on the ARAC reviewing RH applications, the Education Advisory Committee shaping CEU programming, or the Chapters Advisory Committee developing resources for your region, your work feeds directly into the governance process through a documented structure.
- **The RH credential is better protected.** The RH Oversight Committee provides the independent, Board-authorized governance that certification mark compliance requires—structurally separated from general organizational management. This strengthens the legal standing and public credibility of every RH member's credential.
- **Ethics complaints are handled fairly.** The Ethics Oversight Committee now manages the entire complaints process from intake through Board recommendation, with a dedicated confidential email address, peer review for RH-specific complaints, and a formal recusal policy protecting the integrity of the process.



- **Organizational decisions are more transparent.** Abbreviated Board minutes will be posted on the AHG website beginning in 2026. A governance and policies section will provide access to the bylaws, the ethics complaint process, and publicly available financial filings. An annual report will keep you informed of organizational activities and finances.

The Complete Committee Structure

The following table lists all committees the Board has formally established or designated by resolution:

| Committee | Type | Role |
|--|-----------|---|
| Governance Committee | Oversight | Bylaw compliance, board policies, nominations and elections, executive director evaluation, and oversight of all advisory committee work |
| RH Oversight Committee (RHOC) | Oversight | Delegated authority over the RH credentialing process; ensures independent, consistent, and documented admissions decisions consistent with certification mark requirements |
| Ethics Oversight Committee (EOC) | Oversight | Delegated authority over the ethics complaints process; manages direct complaint intake, oversees investigations, and prepares formal recommendations to the Board |
| Finance Committee | Oversight | Budget oversight, financial reporting, audit coordination, tax compliance, and financial policy development |
| Education Oversight Committee (EdOC) | Oversight | Delegated authority over organizational education governance, including CEU course approval, education programming, and educational standards |
| Community Oversight Committee (COC) | Oversight | Board-level oversight of chapters, membership, and diversity, equity, and inclusion activities; coordinates the three community-focused advisory committees |
| Admissions Review Advisory Committee (ARAC) | Advisory | Peer-expert review of RH applications; recommends admissions decisions to the AOC |
| Ethics Review Advisory Committee (ERAC) | Advisory | Conducts investigations as directed by the EOC; provides advisory reports and recommendations |
| Education Advisory Committee (EAC) | Advisory | Advisory input on curriculum, continuing education standards, and CEU programming; reports to the EdOC |
| Chapters Advisory Committee | Advisory | Advisory input on chapter operations, resources, onboarding, and inter-chapter coordination; reports to the COC |
| Membership Advisory Committee | Advisory | Advisory input on membership policies, benefits, recruitment, retention, and engagement; reports to the COC |
| DEI Advisory Committee | Advisory | Advisory input on diversity, equity, and inclusion across AHG programs, events, membership, and organizational culture; reports to the COC |

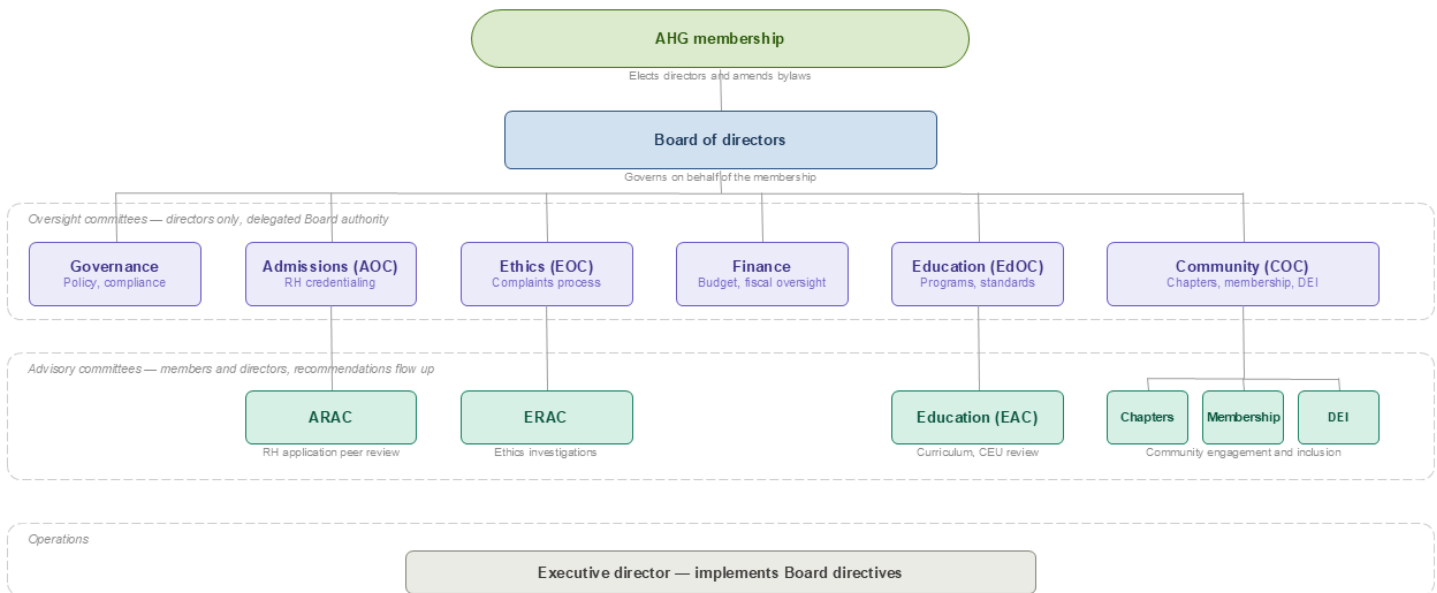


In addition to these standing committees, the Executive Committee—composed of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Director—is established directly by the bylaws and may exercise Board authority when the Board is not in session.

How the Structure Works

The governance framework operates through a clear chain of authority. The Board of Directors holds ultimate governance authority over AHG’s activities and affairs. Oversight committees exercise delegated portions of that authority within defined scopes—admissions, ethics, education, finance, community engagement, and governance policy. Advisory committees, which include non-director members with relevant expertise, conduct the substantive work of review, investigation, and recommendation. Their output flows upward to the appropriate oversight committee, which evaluates it and either acts within its delegated authority or presents a formal recommendation to the full Board.

The Executive Director serves as AHG’s operational leader, implementing Board directives, managing staff, and administering day-to-day operations. Under the new structure, the Executive Director continues to participate in advisory committee meetings in a non-voting advisory capacity, providing operational information and logistical support, as well as inspiration. The Executive Director does not serve on oversight committees, which are composed exclusively of directors—ensuring that governance decisions remain with the Board, who are elected representatives of you, the membership.





Protecting the RH Credential

The Registered Herbalist (RH) designation is the cornerstone of AHG's professional identity. As AHG advances its certification mark registration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the governance structures supporting the credential must meet the standards USPTO requires of certification mark owners—including documented independence of the credentialing function from general organizational management.

The RH Oversight Committee directly addresses this requirement. By establishing a formal, Board-authorized governance body with delegated authority over credentialing—with the Admissions Coordinator's substantive work directed by the committee rather than through general management—AHG has built the independent oversight infrastructure that certification mark compliance demands. For current and prospective RH members, this means the admissions process is governed by a documented, transparent, and accountable structure that protects the value of your credential.

A Strengthened Ethics Process

The Board has adopted a comprehensive Ethics Complaints Governance Resolution that restructures how ethics complaints are received, reviewed, and resolved. Complaints are now submitted directly to a dedicated, Board-controlled email address monitored by the Ethics Oversight Committee Chair. The entire process—from initial review through investigation and Board recommendation—is overseen by Board directors, with investigations conducted by the Ethics Review Advisory Committee. For RH-specific complaints, only RH-credentialed committee members participate in review, ensuring peer evaluation by practitioners who understand the standards of herbal practice. A formal Recusal and Information Access Policy protects the integrity of the process when conflicts of interest arise.

Additional Policies and Updates

Alongside the committee restructuring, the Board has adopted several supporting policies and taken action on membership matters:

- **Organizational Document Access Policy** — a tiered records framework protecting sensitive Board materials while keeping operational records accessible.
- **Committee Membership Agreement** — all committee members now sign a formal agreement acknowledging responsibilities, confidentiality obligations, and commitment to AHG's mission.
- **Chapter EIN SOPs and Onboarding** — updated documentation providing clearer guidance and support for AHG's regional chapters.
- **Associate Membership Dissolution** — membership categories simplified
- **RH Application Requirements** — updated to reflect current standards, including 80 documented cases within a five-year window.



Looking Ahead

This governance work continues. A Nominations and Elections Standard Operating Procedure is under development to ensure future Board elections are conducted transparently and consistently. The Board is developing a formal Executive Director evaluation process. A Whistleblower Policy is under review by legal counsel.

We recognize that governance may not be the most exciting topic in herbal medicine. But it is the foundation upon which everything else rests—the credibility of the RH credential, the fairness of the ethics process, the transparency of organizational decisions, and ultimately the trust that the public, policymakers, and the broader healthcare community place in our profession. When our governance is strong, our profession is strong.

We are grateful for your continued membership, your trust in this organization, and your commitment to the profession of herbal medicine. If you have questions about any of these changes, we encourage you to reach out to the Board through the contact information on the AHG website.

In service to our profession and our community,

The AHG Board of Directors