

**AMGA State Advisory Council
Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
As Updated
January 2026**

The Standard Operating Procedures of the Advisory Council (AC) will be in accordance with mandates set by the Bylaws of the Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA).

Objectives and Responsibilities:

- The primary objective of the AC is to serve as a communications link among the local Master Gardeners Associations (Local MGA), as well as between the Local MGAs, the AMGA Board of Directors (AMGA BOD), and the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator (Coordinator). The exchange of information, ideas, concerns, and solutions will occur on a regular basis and may be initiated by any one of these groups.
- Specific responsibilities of the AC will include providing a list of potential candidates for the AMGA BOD to the AMGA Nominating Committee and assisting in identifying MGs for AMGA standing and special committees.
- The AMGA BOD may ask the AC to perform other duties as needed.

Membership, Election of Officers, and Terms of Office:

- Each Local MGA identifies one member to serve as its AC Representative (AC Rep). A term of no less than two years is recommended. Each Local MGA is encouraged to identify an Alternate Representative to regularly attend meetings. All AC Reps and Alternates must be members in good standing of the AMGA. Members in good standing have placed 25 community service hours and 10 CEUs into the service report, paid local and state association dues and signed the most recent Memorandum of Understanding provided to EMG Volunteers by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.
- A volunteer Nominating Committee will be formed at the third meeting of the election year, and elections will be held at the fourth meeting of that year. Self-nomination for all positions is encouraged. AC Reps will receive the proposed slate via email no later than two weeks prior to the election date. Nominations may be accepted from the floor at the time of the election provided the individual being nominated has agreed prior to the nomination. Vote will be by show of hand unless there are nominations from the floor, in which case, vote will be by secret ballot. Should the vote be taken over an electronic meeting space, the AC Representatives

will vote by chat or roll call, and the AC Secretary will record the votes with assistance if needed.

- Officers will serve a two-year term beginning January 1 following their election and will serve no more than one term in the same position. In the event of an appointment to fill in a vacant office, three consecutive AC meetings will be considered equal to a complete year.

Organizational Structure, Duties and Meetings

The elected officers of the AC will be Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. The Chair has the option to appoint a Parliamentarian. All officers including the Parliamentarian must be members in good standing of the AMGA and active participants of the AMGA Advisory Council. Members in good standing have placed 25 community service hours and 10 CEUs into the service report, paid local and state association dues and signed the most recent Memorandum of Understanding provided to EMG Volunteers by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

The Chair Will:

- Schedule a physical or electronic meeting space (if necessary), notify AC Reps, AC Alternate Reps, Presidents, the AMGA Board of Directors, and the Home Horticulture Regional Extension Agents of the location, and preside at all meetings.
- Attend AMGA BOD meetings and report to the AC any actions from the latest meeting that have not been reported in the AMGA quarterly newsletter Pathways and will not be addressed by any guests.
- Prepare meeting agendas focusing on Local MGA issues and concerns and distribute them to all AC Reps, AC Alternate Reps, Presidents, AMGA Board of Directors, and the Home Horticulture Regional Extension Agents at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Any invited guests, the AMGA President or their designated representative, AMGA Conference Chairs, AMGA Committee Chairs (optional), and the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator will be scheduled to briefly report during the first portion of the meeting.
- If the Vice Chair or Secretary is unable to complete a term, the Chair will appoint another AC Rep to fill the unexpired term.

The Vice Chair Will:

- Within two weeks of the meeting, contact any AC Reps who did not attend a quarterly meeting.
- Preside at meetings and attend AMGA BOD meetings in absence of the Chair.
- Oversee special projects as requested by the Chair.

- If the Chair is unable to complete a term, the Vice Chair will assume the duties of the Chair for the unexpired term and will appoint another AC Rep to fill the unexpired term of the Vice Chair.

The Secretary Will:

- Record proceedings of meetings and maintain a list of Local MGA AC Reps in attendance at each meeting.
- Provide a copy of the attendance list to the Vice Chair within one week of the meeting.
- At the conclusion of each AC meeting, develop a list of bullet points that cover the major actions of that meeting. These should be distributed to the entire AC email list. At the bottom of the bulleted list, a statement will be included instructing the members where to find the draft minutes for complete information on any of the topics. The statement should include the URL to the Draft Minutes on the AMGA website.
- Distribute Draft Minutes of meetings to the AMGA website within one week. Upon a vote of approval of the minutes at the following Advisory Council meeting, the AC Secretary will contact the AMGA website team to move the Draft Minutes to Approved Minutes.
- Maintain a current Master List of AC Reps, AC Alternate Reps, and local association presidents and provide this list annually to AC Reps, AC Alternate Reps and AMGA BOD.

The Parliamentarian (appointed at discretion of AC Chair) Will:

- Be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.
- Provide advice to Chair and other members of the AC.
- Help maintain order during meetings.

AC Representatives (AC Reps) Will:

- Be encouraged to hold a two-year term as their Local MGA's AC Rep
- Bring pertinent and updated Local MGA information (form attached) to the AC.
- Regularly attend scheduled meetings.
- Share during each AC Meeting local concerns, activities with other AC Reps in forums designed to encourage open communication.
- Report proceedings of AC to their local association.

- Notify and update the change of contact information of the AC Reps and AC Alternate Reps to the AC Secretary.
- Should the Local MGA Rep or its' Alternate Rep not be able to attend a meeting, the AC Rep should seek a substitute for their Local MGA for the appropriate meeting and inform the Secretary of the substitution.
- Encourage members of their Local MGA to attend AC meetings as guests to promote a wider understanding of the function and operation of the AC. Each elected officer will pass along all lists and records of the office to his/her successor.

Meetings, Quorum, and Voting:

Meetings will be scheduled quarterly, generally on the first Tuesday** of February, May, August, and November, at an easily accessible, central location. Guests may attend an AC meeting with voice but no vote. Advisory Council Representatives present will form the quorum at any meeting, and a simple majority will carry the vote. Proxy or absentee votes will not be accepted. Each Local MGA has only one vote, and only the EMG Volunteer identified as the Advisory Council Representative by that Local MGA, or the official Alternate Representative in the Representative's absence, will be able to vote unless a substitute has been designated and reported to the Secretary. Substitutes reported to the Secretary at any time prior to a vote being taken may vote. The Chair votes only in the event of a tie.

Should the vote be taken over an electronic meeting space, the Representatives will vote by chat or roll call, and the Secretary will record the votes.

**The first Tuesday of the month is sometimes an election year. Extension Master Gardener Volunteers who work at the polls are commended. However, the Advisory Council meeting dates will stay the same and Representatives who cannot attend are encouraged to send their Alternate Representative or other substitute.