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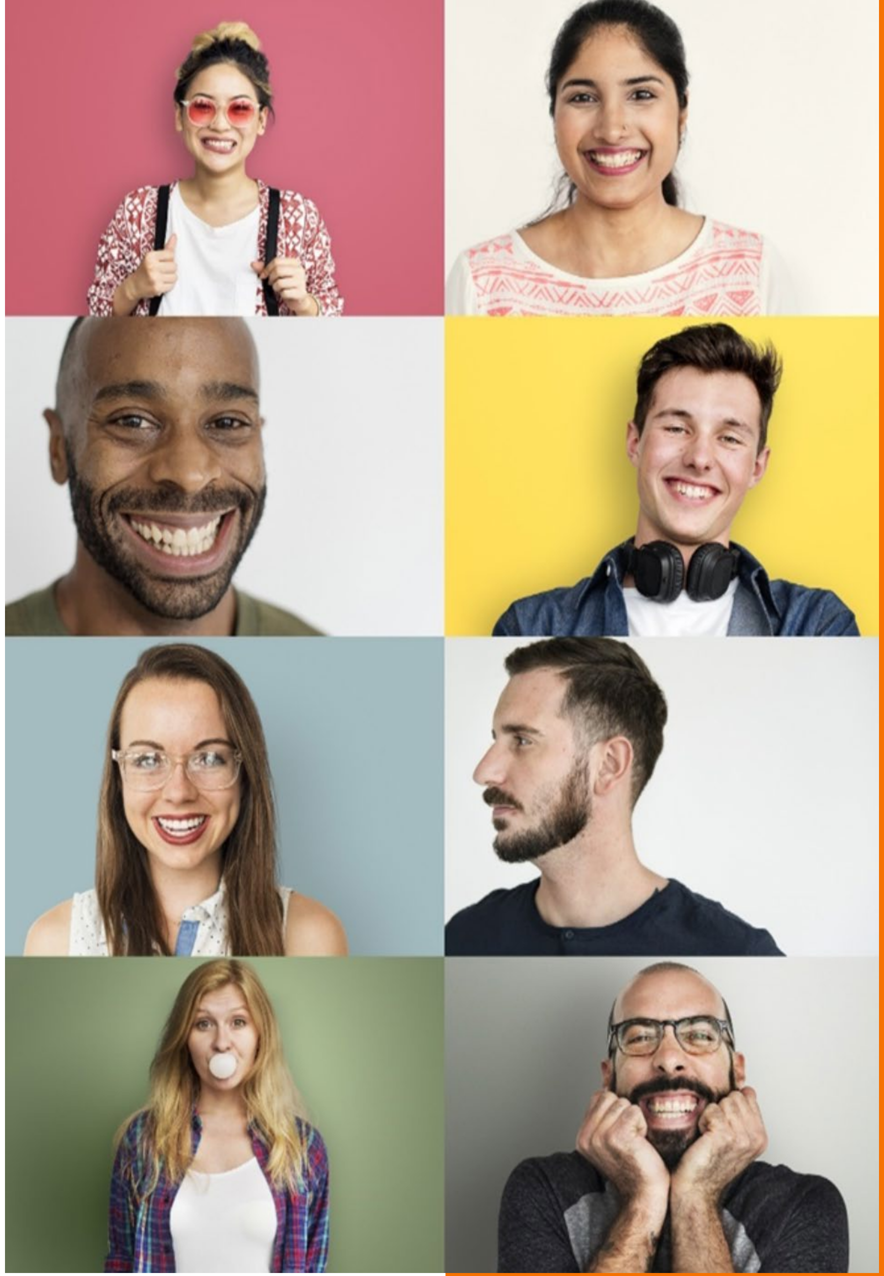

Co-Chair Leadership Orientation

Leading effective, inclusive, Brown Act-compliant meetings

May 20, 2026

Today's Focus

A streamlined one-hour training focused on the essentials co-chairs need most.

- Understand the co-chair role without overcomplicating it
- Prepare for meetings in partnership with staff
- Facilitate inclusive, focused, and respectful discussion
- Manage motions, public comment, conflict, and time
- Represent the Commission or committee with consistency and integrity

What's Your Why?

Leadership reflection and engagement exercise.

1. Why did you step up for leadership at this moment?
2. What do you hope to contribute to the Commission or your committee?
3. What kind of meeting leader do you want to be?

Your "why" is more than a reason … it is the reminder that keeps you grounded, especially when leadership gets real.

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The Co-chair Role in One Sentence

Lead the work, facilitate the process, and protect the integrity of the table.

1 Lead the work

Help the body stay connected to its charge, workplan, deadlines, and decisions.

2 Facilitate the process

Guide discussion fairly, keep the agenda moving, and ensure members understand what is being decided.

3 Protect the table

Uphold transparency, equity, Brown Act compliance, conflict-of-interest rules, and respectful conduct.

Quick Quiz #1: Co-Chair Role

Which one best describes the Co-Chair role?

A. Make all final decisions for the committee
B. Facilitate the process and help the body do its work
C. Speak the most because you are the leader
D. Replace staff during meetings

Commission Co-chair Essentials

Unique responsibilities for Commission co-chairs

- Serve as co-chairs of the Executive Committee and provide overall leadership
- Represent Commission decisions in coordination with staff
- Support alignment across committees and caucuses
- Serve on the CDPH Office of AIDS Community Planning Group, as assigned
- Support time-sensitive matters in a way that respects the public process

Committee Co-chair Essentials

Keeping committee work productive, clear, and connected to Commission

- Lead committee activities consistent with the committee charge and workplan
- Set agendas with staff assistance and prepare members for decisions
- Facilitate committee meetings and summarize key discussion points
- Support work product development and workgroup follow-through
- Elevate recommendations, barriers, and next steps to the Commission or Executive Committee

Executive Committee Essentials

All co-chairs are now part of the Executive Committee.

- Helps coordinate leadership across the Commission and standing committees
- Serves as the main place for cross-committee alignment, agenda planning, and leadership communication
- Identifies timing issues, upcoming decisions, and matters needing coordination before they reach the full Commission
- Surfaces barriers, flags urgent issues, and supports continuity between meetings
- Meets on the 4th Thursday from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

The Executive Committee is not meant to redo committee work … it helps connect the dots, support readiness, and strengthen follow-through.

Quick Quiz #2: Executive Committee

True or false:

The Executive Committee is where committee work should be completely redone before going to the full Commission.

The Co-chair Leadership Posture

Neutrality
Facilitate the process without controlling the outcome.

Active listening
Reflect what you heard and clarify what is being asked.

Emotional steadiness
Slow the room down when tension rises.

Equity lens
Notice who is speaking, who is missing, and who may need support to engage.

Follow-through
Name decisions, assignments, and next steps before moving on.

Humility
Ask for help, correct course, and keep learning.

Leadership is most visible when the room is unclear, divided, rushed, or emotionally charged.

Before the Meeting: Preparation Checklist

A prepared co-chair helps the meeting feel calm and organized.

- ❑ **Review** the agenda, packet, minutes, and any related policies
- ❑ **Meet** with staff to confirm the purpose and desired outcome of each item
- ❑ **Know** which items are information, discussion, or action items
- ❑ **Identify** likely questions, conflicts of interest, or timing issues
- ❑ **Prepare** brief opening language and transitions between agenda items

How to Facilitate the Agenda

Using a standard agenda flow to keep the meeting organized and compliant.

Agenda section	Co-chair facilitation focus
1. Administrative matters	Call to order, roll call & conflict of interest, code of conduct & meeting guidelines, agenda approval, and prior minutes. Set the tone, confirm quorum, and make sure the body knows what is before it.
2. Public comment	Pause and clearly invite public comment. Remember that public comment may be in person or submitted electronically, and it becomes part of the record. Each public comment is allowed 2 minutes per item.
3. New business	Give members an opportunity to suggest future topics or emergent matters within the rules. Clarify whether anything is for discussion only versus future action.
4. Reports and presentations	Frame each report so members know whether they are receiving information, asking questions, or being asked to act later.
5. Discussion and action items	Move item by item. Name the purpose, manage discussion, take public comment as needed, and clearly restate motions before the vote.
6. Next steps, announcements, adjournment	Before closing, recap assignments, confirm the next agenda direction, allow announcements under the posted process, and adjourn clearly.

A good agenda rhythm helps members know where they are, what is expected, and when decisions are being made.

Quick Quiz #3: Agenda Items

Which agenda item usually needs the clearest facilitation?

A. Information item
B. Discussion item
C. Action item
D. Announcements

Brown Act Essentials for Co-chairs

The core rule: public business happens in public, with proper notice.

- Stay within the posted agenda and avoid action on non-agendized items
- Avoid serial meetings and quorum-based discussions outside noticed meetings
- Be careful with emails, texts, side conversations, and reply-all discussions
- Make sure public comment is offered at the appropriate time
- Pause and ask staff or County Counsel when a process question arises

When in doubt, slow down and ask for guidance before moving forward.

Quick Quiz #4: Brown Act

True or false:

If a topic is important, the committee can discuss and vote on it even if it was not listed on the agenda.

Remote participation and SB 707 reminders

Co-chairs should know the basics, but staff will help manage details.

- Members should contact staff as early as possible when they need to participate virtually
- Remote participation may require specific Brown Act conditions and disclosures
- Audio and video expectations should be followed unless an approved exception applies
- The body still needs to protect quorum and public access requirements
- Staff should be consulted before the meeting when virtual participation may affect quorum or voting

Conflict of Interest Essentials

Transparency protects the Commission, the member, and the community.

- Conflicts should be disclosed early and clearly
- Members may need to recuse from discussion or voting depending on the item
- The packet and roll call can be used to identify known conflicts
- Co-chairs should not shame members for conflicts; they should manage the process
- When uncertain, pause and ask staff or County Counsel for guidance

Quick Quiz #5:
Conflict of Interest: Can They Participate?

Scenario:
The committee is discussing a recommendation related to a Ryan White-funded service category. One member works for an agency that currently receives Ryan White funding in that same service category. The member says, “I can still speak generally because I know this issue really well.”

Question:
What should the Co-Chair do?

A. Let the member continue because their expertise is valuable.
B. Ask the member to leave the meeting immediately.
C. Pause the discussion, acknowledge the expertise, and ask staff to clarify whether the member should recuse from discussion and/or voting.
D. Allow the member to speak, but not vote.

Robert's Rules: What Co-chairs Really Need

You do not need to memorize the book. Know the basic flow.

- One item at a time, one main motion at a time
- A motion and second are generally needed before formal debate and vote
- Clarify the motion before voting: "The motion before us is…"
- Ask for discussion before calling the vote
- Announce the outcome clearly for the record

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After the Meeting: Close the Loop

Confirm action items with staff

Staff will draft and send out recap and meeting minutes

Use the recap for follow-up activities

Meet with staff to debrief and prepare for next meeting

Develop next agenda based on decisions and pending items

Good recap questions:

What did we discuss? What did we decide? What happens next?

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Partnership with Staff

- Staff prepare agendas, packets, minutes, logistics, and compliance support
- Co-chairs bring leadership judgment, meeting awareness, and member perspective
- Pre-meetings help surface risks, timing issues, and decisions needed
- Staff can help draft scripts, motions, recaps, and follow-up language
- When unsure, ask early … staff would rather troubleshoot before the meeting than during it

Language for Difficult Moments

Firm, respectful, and process-centered.

When comments become personal

"I'm going to pause us here. Let's keep comments focused on the issue before the body and not on individual motives or character."

When the issue is unclear

"Let's pause and clarify the question before us. Are we being asked for feedback, direction, or action?"

When one person dominates

"I want to make sure we hear from members who have not spoken yet. I'll come back to you if time allows."

When tension is high

"I'm going to call a brief recess so we can reset and make sure we are proceeding in a way that supports the work and respects everyone at the table."

Co-chairs can be warm and still hold boundaries.

Scenario Practice: Discussion is Drifting

Use the facilitation rhythm to bring the group back.

Scenario

During an action item, members begin discussing a related but non-agendized issue. The conversation is important, but the body is running out of time and public comment has not yet been taken.

Ask yourself

1. What is the agenda item before the body?
2. Is action being requested today?
3. What needs to be paused, referred, or placed on a future agenda?
4. When should public comment happen?

Practice Response: "This is important, but it is outside the action before us. Let's capture it for a future agenda and return to the item noticed today."

Scenario Practice: Conflict at the Table

Use neutrality, boundaries, and a process reset.

Scenario

Two members strongly disagree about a recommendation. One member begins questioning another member's motives and the room becomes tense.

Ask yourself

1. What boundary needs to be named?
2. How can disagreement stay focused on the issue?
3. Is a recess needed?
4. What should be summarized before continuing?

Practice response: "I'm going to pause us here. Let's keep comments focused on the recommendation, not on individual motives."

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Scenario Practice: Conflict of Interest

Slow down the process and protect the integrity of the vote.

Scenario

A member begins speaking passionately on a service category recommendation, then another member reminds the room that the person may have a conflict because their agency is funded in that category.

Ask yourself

1. Has the conflict been disclosed and clarified?
2. Does the member need to recuse from discussion and/or voting?
3. Should staff help clarify the process?
4. What should be stated before moving forward?

Practice response: "Let's pause and clarify the conflict-of-interest question before we continue so the process is clear and the record is protected."

Co-chair quick checklist

A one-slide tool for every meeting.

Before

- Review agenda and packet
- Prep with staff
- Know action items
- Anticipate COI/quorum issues

Opening

- Call to order
- Roll call/quorum
- COI disclosures
- Public comment instructions

During

- Frame each item
- Track time
- Invite balanced participation
- Clarify motions and votes

After

- Confirm action items
- Support recap/minutes
- Follow up on assignments
- Shape next agenda

Co-chairing is a practice. Preparation + calm facilitation + follow-through will carry most meetings.

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Final Quick Quiz / Wrap-Up

Question 1: What is the Co-Chair’s main role?

Question 2: When in doubt about Brown Act, conflict of interest, or process, what should you do?

Question 3: What is one of the best ways to prepare before a meeting?

Question 4: True or false: Co-Chairs must have all the answers.

Thank you for your leadership, commitment, and service.

The work moves because people are willing to lead with care, clarity, and accountability.

Questions + next steps

"A leader's job is not to do the work for others, it's to help others figure out how to do it themselves, to get things done, and to succeed beyond what they thought possible". - Simon Sinek