



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**APA  
CALIFORNIA  
ELECTION POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES**

**ADOPTED JUNE 2011  
AMENDED JUNE 2014  
DRAFT AMENDMENTS JUNE 2019**

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# ELECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

American Planning Association

American Institute of Certified Planners

NOTE: These policies and procedures supplement Article 7 of the APA California Bylaws. (Updated in 2016)

## PREAMBLE

This document describes the election policies and procedures of the American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California), which were initially adopted by the APA Board of Directors on June 1, 2011 and amended June 20, 2014. This policy and procedure was amended again in June 2019 to become consistent with the Chapter's use of APA National's consolidated election process.

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to ensure a dignified, transparent, equitable and professional election process that provides members a diversity of choices, educates them as to the positions of the candidates, and allows them to make informed choices about the future of their organization. This policy and procedure is also designed to provide a process that encourages all members who have an interest and potential for Chapter leadership to consider running for office and to encourage members to become informed about the candidates and vote for those that they believe will provide the appropriate vision and leadership for the Chapter. In keeping with the organization's *Guiding Values* of Inclusion and Diversity, a diverse pool of candidates that have been historically underrepresented on the Board will be actively sought.

A Leadership Development and Recruitment Session shall be held at the annual Chapter Conference (as part of the Conference Program). This session will inform members about service and leadership opportunities within the Chapter organization. Additional information about Chapter offices and the election process may also be shared during individual Section meetings that occur in the fall and winter. As part of the recruitment process, APA California will provide information online about each position, including job descriptions, time commitment and qualities required to serve in the position. Interested members can sign up for future correspondence and updates on opportunities to seek a Chapter or Section leadership position.

Potential candidates and all members actively involved in the election process are encouraged to focus on issues and ideas affecting the future and betterment of the Chapter. Potential candidates who are not slated as nominated candidates will have the option of seeking office as petition candidates.



## 1.0 - ELECTIONS

### 1.1 – Use of APA National Consolidated Election System.

The Chapter will use the consolidated election system provided by APA National for all Chapter-wide elected offices. Affiliated organizations such as the California Planning Foundation and the California Planning Roundtable may use the consolidated election system if they so choose. All logistical matters related to the election, including but not limited to distributing candidate statements and ballots, balloting, and tabulation of votes, shall be handled through the consolidated election system.

If the APA National Consolidated Election System is not available to the Chapter in any given year, the Chapter Board may adopt *ad hoc* election procedures to govern that year's elections. Such *ad hoc* procedures shall be consistent with this policy and procedure document to the maximum extent practicable.

### 1.2—Nominating Committee.

A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the APA California Chapter President by December 31st of each year. This appointment will open a season of Leadership Recruitment and Development. The committee shall consist of the APA California President-Elect or Past-President, who shall serve as the Committee Chair, and up to eight (8) additional members. The President shall solicit Section input for committee members and shall make every effort to ensure a diverse committee representing a mix of ages, ethnicity, geography, and Section representation in order to gain access to a broader spectrum of interested members. The Committee shall include at least one member who has not previously served as a statewide officer on the Chapter Board.

The key purpose of the Nominating Committee is to recruit and nominate candidates with demonstrated leadership qualities, a commitment to ethical principles, an interest in serving the Chapter membership, and a commitment to dedicate the time necessary to fulfill the obligations of the elected office. Committee members will consider all potential candidates with an open mind and will not be unduly influenced by any individual viewpoint in making their selections. The Nominating Committee must also commit to keep all discussions and information confidential. Names submitted to the Nominating Committee will not be released to the APA California Chapter Board unless they have been slated to run for an office. No Candidate Statements will be released until after the list of slated candidates has been provided to APA National, and then only those statements from Candidates that have been slated will be released. The Nominating Committee shall notify in writing any nominee that is not slated. The schedule for the Nominating Committee's work shall comply with all deadlines established by the APA National consolidated elections process.

**1.2.1—Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- Recruit potential candidates from among APA California leaders and members that meet the leadership qualities identified in Section 1.2, above, and in the Chapter Bylaws;
- Invite recommendations for potential candidates from APA California Sections and members;
- Commit to keeping all discussions and potential candidates' names confidential;
- Consider a pool of potential candidates with the objective of slating two qualified nominees for each office, unless only one candidate is qualified or has applied for the position;
- Review the background, leadership capabilities and position statements of potential candidates relative to the roles and responsibilities of the position;
- Where necessary, fact-check the candidates' draft Background and Position Statements with staff assistance. The Nominating Committee shall have the authority to correct any factual errors or inaccuracies in a candidate's position statement. The candidate shall be notified immediately of any such corrections. The candidate cannot further modify the corrected position statement.
- Meet via conference call as necessary to review candidates and select the recommended slate for submittal to the Board; and,

#### **1.2.2 – Candidate Eligibility and Term Limits.**

Candidates shall: (1) be members of APA California for not less than one year at the time of assuming office, if elected, (2) agree in writing to serve if elected, and (3) not be members of the Nominating Committee.

Members of the APA California Board of Directors shall be limited to two consecutive elected terms in any one office, excluding President Elect. An individual may submit their name to the Nominating Committee for consideration for a second term as president. Candidates for President-elect shall have previously served as an elected or appointed member of the Chapter Board.

#### **1.2.4 - Biographical Background and Position Statements.**

All potential candidates desiring to be considered for nomination shall submit a Biographical Background and Position Statement (prepared in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix 1) to the Nominating Committee.

- Candidates may not change their position statement once it has been submitted. Position statements shall be submitted electronically via e-mail.
- Individual Background and Position Statements shall not exceed 600-words.
- Candidates not slated as nominees by the Committee may choose to become nominees by the petition process. Such candidates shall use their Biographical Background and Position Statement originally submitted to the Nominating Committee.

**1.3—Conduct of Elections and Standards of Election Behavior.** The Past-President or President-elect shall oversee compliance with the following standards and policies for conducting the elections:

**1.3.1-Campaigning**

- Endorsements by the APA California Board or any Section Board are prohibited. This does not preclude individual APA California members from personally endorsing or supporting a candidate
- The use of APA California membership lists (including electronic formats) by candidates or members to endorse or express support for a candidate is prohibited
- APA California will set up web page for candidates on the Chapter website. Candidates' Background/Experience and Position Statements and optional photographs will be included on the website
- Inclusion of photographs of the nominee on the web sites is optional and at the discretion of the individual nominees. Details are provided in Policies and Procedures Section 3.2
- The use of mass mailings, e-blasts or any other electronic campaign communication, including social media, on behalf of candidates is prohibited. The purpose of this prohibition is to prohibit campaigning by candidates, or by the current Chapter leadership
- Negative campaigning is prohibited. Potential candidates or members shall not impugn the character, motivation, experience or integrity of other candidates.
- No candidate shall write, or cause to be written, campaign letters or e-mail messages to be published or circulated
- An individual APA California member who endorses a candidate shall not mischaracterize or misrepresent the positions or qualifications of other candidates, or other APA members

**1.3.2—Training Conference Call**

The Past-President or President-Elect has the option to host a training conference call that candidates are required to attend. These elections policies and procedures will be distributed to all candidates via email. The purpose of the training is to ensure that candidates understand the election policies, including the prohibition against campaigning by candidates.

**1.3.3—Schedule**

See Appendix 5, *Typical Election Schedule*. Specific deadlines are determined by the consolidated election schedule established by APA National each year. The key date is the submittal of the slated candidates to APA National, typically the third week of April. The Chapter's election calendar begins with the appointment of a Nominating Committee by the end of each calendar year.

**1.4—Enforcement**

The Past-President or President-Elect shall refer to the Chapter President any alleged violations of these election policies and procedures that are not satisfactorily resolved. The Chapter President may appoint a subcommittee of the Chapter Board to consider possible disciplinary or other action. Such action may include censure, removal of a candidate(s) from the ballot, invalidation of election results or other actions in accordance with the APA California Bylaws.

#### **1.4.1—Investigation of Alleged Violations**

- Any APA California member can file a complaint about an alleged violation(s) of these elections policies and procedures
- Complaints shall be filed in writing with Executive Director of APA California, who shall verify the facts of the complaint and forward the complaint, along with any additional background information developed during fact checking, to the Chapter President within 7 days
- Where the facts verified by the Executive Director do not support the alleged violation, the Chapter President may dismiss the complaint without further action. Alternatively, the Chapter President may appoint a subcommittee of the Chapter Board to conduct further investigation and deliberation
- Where a subcommittee is appointed, the subcommittee shall confer within 5 working days to deliberate or initiate further investigation of the complaint. A final decision of the subcommittee shall be made within two weeks of the initial review of the complaint
- The subcommittee has the authority to take final action on minor infractions of the elections policies and procedures. Recommendations on major infractions, which could result in removal from the election ballot or invalidation of the election results, shall be forwarded to the APA California Board for final action

#### **1.4.2—Potential Disciplinary Action by the Subcommittee**

The Election Committee may officially censure a member for violation of any policy or procedure outlined in these guidelines.

#### **1.4.3—Potential Disciplinary Actions by the APA California Board**

The APA California Board (or the AICP Ethics Officer in the case of a violation of the AICP Code of Ethics) must act to impose any penalty higher than censure by the Subcommittee. Upon referral from the subcommittee, the Chapter Board may take any of the following actions:

- Removal of a candidate from the ballot
- Invalidation of election results
- Filing a complaint with the AICP Ethics Officer. Such complaints may include the candidate and/or any APA California AICP member who violates the provisions of this Policy and Procedure in a manner that also violates the AICP Code of Ethics, with or



without the support or knowledge of the candidate.

## **2.0 - PETITION CANDIDATES**

**2.1 - Eligibility.** Only those persons who have submitted their Background/Position Statements for consideration by the Nominating Committee, and who have not been slated as nominated candidates for office, may become petition candidates.

**2.2 - Process.** Potential petition candidates may be nominated by the petition containing the signatures of at least 32 APA California members, including at least four (4) signatures from each of the eight (8) Sections. APA California will supply forms for signatures by the petitioners. Petition candidates shall be eligible for candidacy pursuant to Section 1.2.2 of this Policy and Procedure. Candidates shall file their petitions with the within 45 days of the announcement of nominated candidates slated by the Nominating Committee.

**2.3 - Certification.** Within one week of submittal deadline, the President-Elect or Past-President shall review the petitions and verify candidate eligibility and that all signatures are valid and upon such finding shall declare the petitioner a petition candidate.

## **3.0 - OTHER ISSUES**

**3.1 - Election Season.** The "election season" is defined as the period between the appointment of the APA California Nominating Committee and the end date for voting for APA California.

**3.2 – Photographs.** Candidates for APA California office (including petition candidates) may submit a portrait photograph of themselves for publication with statements. Submission of photographs for APA California candidates is optional. Photographs must be:

- Head/shoulders portrait type.
- Electronic files, preferably .jpeg
- No more than five years old
- Submitted at the same time as the background/experience and position statement or at the time petition filings are due.

Photographs meeting these requirements will be submitted with the candidate's position statement to APA National and published on the APA California website.

### **3.3 - Partisanship by APA California, Staff or Board**

**3.3.1** - No APA California resources, including those of any Section of APA California, are to be spent or used on behalf of any candidate unless otherwise permitted by these guidelines.

**3.3.2** - No APA California staff or contractor of APA California may participate or contribute to any partisan act regarding APA California candidacy or to suggest to a member that the member consider running for national APA California office.

**3.3.3** - The APA California Board of Directors and appointed members may not endorse or campaign for any candidates in the capacity of their position. Individual Directors may speak on behalf of candidates they support but not in their identity as an APA California Director.

**3.3.4** – Members of the Nominating Committee shall not endorse or campaign for any candidates.

#### **3.4 - Advertising and Articles in APA California Publications**

**3.4.1** - No advertising, paid or unpaid, will be accepted for any candidate by any publication of APA California or its Sections. Letters endorsing or criticizing candidates will not be published in any Chapter or Section publication.

**3.4.2** - No advertising or publicity in the form of special news or feature articles or photographs by or about a candidate or candidate-related event or publication will be knowingly published by APA California or its Sections during the two months preceding the opening of balloting. This prohibition does not apply to published references to a candidate's professional work ongoing APA California or Section activities initiated prior to candidacy or where mention of a candidate is a minor but germane part of a larger article.

**3.4.3** - During the election season, current APA California Chapter Board Members or APA California Section Board Members who are running for APA California Chapter office may report to the membership on APA California business. These reports shall not be used to endorse or criticize any candidate. There are no restrictions on report distribution or publication by any Chapter Board member not running for APA California office.

**3.4.4** - During the entire election season, publishing articles that are intended primarily to garner publicity for a candidate shall be avoided.

**3.5 - Monitoring and Reporting.** Staff and the Election Committee shall note any election-related problems to both the Nominating Committee and the Chapter Board upon conclusion of an election.

#### **APPENDICES:**

1. Guidelines for Writing Background/Experience and Position Statement

2. Eligibility Form
3. Candidate Agreement
4. Commitment to Serve Statement
5. Typical Elections Schedule
6. Philosophy and Goals of the Election Process

## **Appendix 1:**

### **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING BACKGROUND/EXPERIENCE AND POSITION STATEMENT**

The following guidelines for biographical background/position statements will help ensure that statements are given full consideration by the nominating committee. Potential candidates should state their positions and opinions about issues regarding the future of the organization. Any facts that are cited must be verifiable.

#### *1.0. Suggestions for Biographical Background Information:*

- Organize the information into five categories: professional experience, APA California experience, experience specific to position roles and responsibilities, community involvement, and education
- List information in each category in reverse chronological order (most recent experience first)
- Present information in a list, rather than in full sentences, when appropriate

This approach works well for three reasons. A lot of information can be squeezed into relatively few words, leaving more room for the position part of your 600-word-total background/position statement. The format helps voters because it focuses on the highlights of your career. Finally, it provides a place to note prior experience in managing or serving on the board of an organization.

#### *2.0. Suggestions for Position Statements:*

- Focus on issues that impact the future of the organization
- Focus on qualifications that demonstrate your leadership and skills specific to the position
- Verify any and all facts that are stated
- Use bullet statements to consolidate your thoughts in a more concise fashion, when appropriate

#### *3.0 Submission Requirements:*

1. Submit two electronic copies of your biographical background/position statement in MS Word or similar format; one copy without any formatting such as bold face, italics, underlines or bullets, and another copy indicating where you wish such emphases to be placed. The appearance of the emphasis will be made uniform from statement to statement. Your notations will let the editors know where, if at all, you want any emphasis to go.
2. Submit a current digital photograph of yourself if you would like to include a picture on your candidate webpage and official ballot. Details on the photograph are in Policies and Procedures, Section 3.2.
3. Finally, be sure to proofread your statement. Appearance will be uniform among all statements, but spelling, grammatical errors or typos contained in the statements will NOT be corrected.

**Appendix 2:**  
**APA CALIFORNIA ELECTION**  
**ELIGIBILITY FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APA membership number:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Please indicate the position(s) that you are interested in pursuing. If you are interested in more than one position, indicate your preference in priority order, with "1" being highest priority, "2" being second priority, etc.

APA California members from all Sections are welcome to submit their names as potential candidates. Members must meet all qualifications stated in the APA California Bylaws that are required for a position.

Position

Interest

*(as applicable based on even/odd years)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"I am committed to accepting nomination and running for the position(s) indicated above. If elected, I agree to devote the necessary time and energy to serve in this position, including participation, in person, at the orientation for new Board Members and in-person Board meetings.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix 3:**

**CANDIDATE AGREEMENT TO ABIDE**

I acknowledge that I have read and understand all the policies and procedures, appendices, and bylaws governing the Election Process and agree to abide by them and any decision of the Nominating Committee.

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Candidate Signature

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Date

## Appendix 4: Commitment to Serve

If elected to the APA California Board of Directors, I understand my commitment to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events
- Be informed about the Chapter’s mission, services, policies, and programs
- Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings
- Serve on committees or task forces and offer to take on special assignments
- Inform others about APA and APA California
- Suggest possible nominees to the board who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the Chapter
- Keep up-to-date on developments in the planning field
- Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies
- Refrain from making special requests of the staff
- Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization’s financial statements

Under well-established principles of non-profit corporation law, a board member must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out his or her responsibilities to the organization. Several states have statutes adopting some variation of these duties, which would be used in court to determine whether a board member acted improperly. These standards are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of loyalty and the duty of obedience.

**Duty of Care** - The duty of care describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member and is commonly expressed as “the duty of care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances.” This means that a board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the organization.

**Duty of Loyalty** - The duty of loyalty is a standard of faithfulness; a board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the organization. This means the at a board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain but must act in the best interests of the organization.

**Duty of Obedience** - The duty of obedience requires board members to be faithful to the organization’s mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization. A basis for this rule lies in the public’s trust that the organization will manage donated funds to fulfill the organization’s mission.

I understand the responsibilities described in this Commitment to Serve.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 5:**

**APA CALIFORNIA TYPICAL ELECTION SCHEDULE**

1. Nominating Committee Appointed – by December 31
2. Ad Posted on Chapter Web Site; e-blast to members
3. Cal Planner Ad Published
4. Nominations Due with Candidate Statement (typically early April)
5. Nominating Committee Considers Candidates
6. Slated Candidate Statements posted on Website and provided to APA National (typically late April)
7. Petition Candidate Statements due
8. Petition Candidates certified (Typically late June)
9. Election Period Begins (typically early August)
10. Election Period Ends (typically early September)
11. APA National certifies election results
12. Candidates Notified of Results
13. Election Results Announced
14. New Officers Take Office—January 1



## Appendix 6:

### PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF THE APA CALIFORNIA ELECTIONS PROCESS

- Members of the organization are able to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior on the part of their peers
- Given accurate and complete information, members of the organization will make intelligent and reasonable election choices
- Guidelines should be as specific as possible and should be adopted by the Board to minimize the need for situational staff interpretation

The elections process should strive to achieve 13 goals:

1. To offer members a high caliber of candidates from which to choose
2. To offer each office a range of candidates that reflect a diversity of views within the Chapter as well as some continuity and some fresh views
3. To ensure that, *in toto*, candidates are drawn from a broad range of backgrounds and reflect a wide range of member views. These include but are not limited to:
  - Academics
  - Consultants
  - Elected officials
  - Governmental planners
  - Planners of color and other under-represented groups
  - Planning commissioners and citizen planners
  - Private planners
  - Sections
  - Students
  - Women
4. To ensure a process of candidate solicitation and selection that encourages and considers all members interested in running for office and those the nominating committee and other members consider to have potential for national leadership
5. To ensure strong leadership of the organization by requiring proven capabilities by candidates
6. To guarantee equal access to APA California resources by all candidates

7. To provide members with the information to make an informed selection among candidates, at a reasonable cost to the organization
8. To promote equitable campaign procedures that minimize disparities in financial or technological resources among candidates
9. To minimize the need for staff interpretation of guidelines by having, as specific-as-possible, Board-adopted policies covering a wide variety of situations
10. To minimize administrative and financial burdens of the campaign process on APA California
11. To encourage participation in the nominating process
12. To encourage members to vote
13. To maintain a character of campaigning appropriate to the dignity of the planning profession and the Chapter.

Any election-related activities are expected to be consistent with this philosophy. Candidates and members are referred to points 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12 in particular. To implement this philosophy the board has adopted an Elections Policy & Procedure and guidelines for background/experience and position statements. Please attempt to be specific enough to be useful but not so specific as to challenge members to find loopholes. When applied in a mature manner by candidates and members, this philosophy, along with the Policy and Procedure, and guidelines, should together provide for an open, fair, informative, and self-policing elections process.