



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

# **ELECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**ADOPTED JUNE 2011**

**AMENDED JUNE 2014**

**AMENDED JUNE 2019**

**AMENDED OCTOBER 2021**

**AMENDED DECEMBER 2021**

**AMENDED APRIL 2022**

**AMENDED MAY 2023**

## PURPOSE

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. These policies and procedures supplement Article 7 of the APA California Bylaws.

The purpose of these Policies and Procedures 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. These policies and procedures are also designed to provide a process that encourages all members who have an interest in 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*, as adopted in the Strategic Plan, a diverse pool of candidates that have been historically underrepresented on the Board will be actively sought. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed discussion of the philosophies and goals guiding the elections process.

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 by the Nominating Committee will have the option of seeking office as petition candidates.

## **1.0—ELECTIONS**

### **1.1 – Use of Either Chapter-Run Elections or the APA National Consolidated Election System.**

The Chapter may either conduct its own elections or 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 also use either the Chapter or the consolidated election system if they so choose. *(Amended April 1, 2022)*

### **1.2—Nominating Committee and Candidate Qualifications.**

A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the APA California Chapter President by June 1st of each year. The APA California President-Elect or Past-President shall serve as the Nominating Committee Chair and will identify and recruit up to eight (8) additional members to be appointed by the President. The Chair 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 and represent a broader spectrum of APA California members. The Committee shall include at least one member who has not previously served as a statewide officer on the Chapter Board. The President's appointments to the Nominating Committee will be confirmed by a vote of the Executive Board before the committee is convened.

The key purpose of the Nominating Committee is to recruit and nominate candidates with demonstrated leadership qualities, 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 keep all discussions and information confidential. Names of potential candidates reviewed by the Nominating Committee will not be released to the APA California Chapter Board unless they are slated to run for an office. Candidate Statements will be released along with the list of slated candidates.

**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 at least one qualified nominee for each office.
- Review the background, leadership capabilities and position statements of potential candidates relative to the roles and responsibilities of open positions.
- Where necessary, fact-check the slated 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; and
- Meet as necessary to review candidates and select the recommended slate for submittal to the Board for approval.

#### 1.2.2—Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee Chair

The Committee Chair shall perform the following duties:

- Establish a schedule for the Nominating Committee's work and for the elections, and report it to the Board at the spring Board meeting.
- Coordinate with the President to recruit Nominating Committee members and prepare for their appointment and confirmation.
- Convene the Nominating Committee and direct its work, as needed.
- Communicate with potential candidates and notify in writing any nominee that is not slated.
- Coordinate and staff Leadership Development and Recruitment event(s) which could consist of virtual, local, or conference events at the discretion of the Nominating Committee. These events will inform members about future service and leadership opportunities within the Chapter.
- Coordinate and staff an optional candidate forum that will introduce the current slate of candidates to members, at the discretion of the Nominating Committee.
- Coordinate with the President and Vice President for Public Information to provide information about recruitment and elections for distribution to members, including job descriptions, time commitment and qualities required to serve in the position.
- Coordinate with the President and staff to establish a portal for online voting (if not participating in National's consolidated election); to share candidate and voting information with members; and to announce election results to candidates, the Board, and members.

#### 1.2.3 – 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; and (2) agree in writing to abide by these policies and serve dutifully if elected (See Appendix 2), 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. A sitting Chapter President 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. A member who

was appointed to an elected Board position to fill the unused portion of a previously elected Board member that resigned still may serve for up to two full elected terms. (Updated 6/15/2019)

#### **1.2.4—Biographical Background, Resume and Position Statements**

- All potential candidates who desire to be considered for nomination shall submit to the Nominating Committee Chair a Interest & Eligibility Form (Appendix 3), Resume, and Position Statement of no more than 600 words.
- Potential candidates shall also participate in a scheduled interview with the committee.
- The slated candidates shall submit to the Nominating Committee Chair a Background and Position Statement prepared in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix 4.
- The submission of a photo will be optional after a candidate has been slated. The photo shall be portrait-style, showing the candidates' head/shoulders, and no more than five years old.
- Slated candidates may update their submitted position statement by a deadline to be set by the Committee Chair.
- APA California will post slated Candidates' Background and Position Statements and optional photographs on the Chapter website during the election period.

#### **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—Distribution of Elections Policies & Procedures and Candidate Training**

The Chair will distribute the elections policies, procedures and schedule to all slated candidates via email. The Chair also has the option to host a training and require that slated candidates attend. The purpose of the training is to ensure that candidates understand the election policies, including the prohibition against campaigning by candidates, as well as election schedules and procedures

##### **1.3.2—Schedule**

See Appendix 5, *Typical Election Schedule*. Specific deadlines are according to the election schedule established by APA California each year. The Chapter's election calendar begins with the appointment of a Nominating Committee by June 1 of each calendar year. If the Chapter does not participate in National's consolidated elections:

- The season shall culminate in an election to commence at the Chapter Conference.
- Voting shall be open to members for a period of not less than 7 calendar days.
- Results shall be announced to candidates and the Board within 7 calendar days of the end of voting, and to all members within 30 calendar days.

**1.3.3—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.

##### **1.3.4—Campaigning**

- All forms of promoting one's own candidacy are prohibited, except for participation in a candidate forum, if held by the Chapter. Participation in the forum is optional.
- 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 post Candidates' Background/Experience and Position Statements and optional photographs on the Chapter 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 and/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.

### **1.3.5 – Onboarding of Elected Candidates and Transition of Outgoing Board Members**

Elected candidates shall be offered sufficient onboarding, orientation, and transition opportunities to equip them to take on their positions beginning January 1 of the following year. This includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- No later than November 1 of each year, outgoing elected officers will invite their successors to a transition meeting at which they will review the role and its current obligations and initiatives.
- Elected candidates will be invited to attend the November Executive Committee meeting and December meeting of the Board.
- No later than December 15 of each year, the Executive Director will offer onboarding at which they will review overall Board procedures, meetings, resources, and fiduciary responsibilities. Elected candidates are required to attend or view this session.
- No later than December 31 of each year, outgoing elected officers will provide complete working files in the format and location requested by the President, and provide their successors with information about the content and organization.

### **1.4—Enforcement**

The Chair 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 the 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 officially censure a member for 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 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 and Position Statements for consideration by the Nominating Committee, and who were not slated as nominated candidates for office, may become petition candidates.

**2.2 - Process.** Petition candidates may be nominated by a 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 these Policies and Procedures. Candidates shall submit their petitions to the Nominating Committee Chair within 30 days of the announcement of nominated candidates slated by the Nominating Committee.

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

### **3.0— OTHER ISSUES**

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

**3.1.1** - 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.

**3.1.2** - 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.

**3.1.3** - 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.

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

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

**3.2.1** - 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.

**3.2.2** - 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 Election Season. 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.

**3.2.3** - 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.

**3.2.4** - During the entire Election Season, publishing articles that are intended primarily to garner publicity for a candidate shall be avoided.

**3.2 - Monitoring and Reporting.** Staff and the Committee Chair shall report any election-related problems to the Chapter Board upon conclusion of an election.

**APPENDICES:**

1. Philosophy and Goals of the Election Process
2. Candidate Agreement to Abide & Serve
3. Interest & Eligibility Form
4. Guidelines for Statements
5. Typical Elections Schedule

## **Appendix 1:**

### **PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF THE ELECTIONS PROCESS**

Given accurate and complete information, members of APA California will make intelligent and reasonable election choices. Elections Policies & Procedures should be as specific as possible; should be adopted by the Board; and should be routinely reviewed and updated to implement the goals below.

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 Association.
  - a. Some continuity.
  - b. 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:
  - a. Sections
  - b. Students
  - c. Elected officials
  - d. Planning commissioners
  - e. Academics
  - f. Consultants
  - g. Governmental planners
  - h. Private planners
  - i. Women
  - j. People of color
  - k. Other underrepresented groups
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 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 specific, Board adopted policies covering a wide variety of situations.
10. To minimize administrative and financial burdens of the election process on APA California.
11. To encourage member participation in the nominating process.
12. To encourage members to vote.

13. To maintain a character of campaigning appropriate to the dignity of planning and the Association.

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 campaign policies, 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 the philosophy, policies, and guidelines should together provide for an open, fair, informative, and self-policing elections process.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **CANDIDATE AGREEMENT TO ABIDE & SERVE**

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

**Position Nominated for:** \_\_\_\_\_

I accept the nomination and am committed to running for the position indicated above. I have read and understand the policies and procedures governing the election process and agree to abide by them and any decision of the Nominating Committee.

I have received a satisfactory level of information regarding the duties of this position, and have read the description of the position in the bylaws. If elected, I agree to devote the necessary time and energy to serve in this position, and I understand my commitment to carry out the following responsibilities shared by all Board members:

- Participate in onboarding and orientation activities, and be informed about the Chapter's mission, services, policies, and programs
- Attend Board meetings, as well as committee meetings and special events required to carry out the duties of my position
- Review agendas and supporting materials prior to Board and committee meetings
- Perform fiduciary responsibilities, including review of financial statements and budgets
- Serve on ad hoc committees or task forces as needed
- Inform others about APA and APA California
- Help build APA California's leadership pipeline by discussing your work and future opportunities with potential Board members
- Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies, and other policies outlined in the bylaws
- Refrain from making requests of staff or contractors outside their defined scopes of work

I acknowledge that under well-established principles of nonprofit corporation law, nonprofit board members must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out their responsibilities to the organization. These standards are usually described as follows:

- **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 that 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 and agree to perform the responsibilities and duties described above.

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**Candidate Signature**

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**Date**

**Appendix 3:**  
**INTEREST & ELIGIBILITY FORM**

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

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

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APA Membership ID Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Start Date (Month/Year):** \_\_\_\_\_

**AICP Member?** \_\_\_\_\_

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

All APA California members are welcome to submit their names to the Nominating Committee as potential candidates. To be nominated, members must meet all qualifications stated in the APA California Bylaws as required for a position, and be selected by the Nominating Committee. Those not selected by the Nominating Committee may pursue candidacy through petition as described in the the Elections Policies

**Position**

**Interest**

[LIST OF POSITIONS OFFERED THAT YEAR]

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4:**

### **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND POSITION STATEMENT**

The following guidelines for background information and position statements will help ensure that information about each candidate is presented consistently to voters.

#### *1.0. Background Information:*

- Organize the information into five categories: professional experience, APA experience, experience related to position roles and responsibilities, community or volunteer involvement, and education
- List information in each category in reverse chronological order (most recent experience first)
- Present information in a bulleted list, rather than in full sentences
- Background information shall be no more than one page, single-spaced, 12-point font.

#### *2.0. Position Statements:*

- Focus on issues that impact the organization, its future, and the services it provides to members and the profession
- Focus on your qualifications, leadership, and skills specific to the position for which you are running
- Ensure that all stated facts can be independently verified, if needed
- Use full sentences or a bulleted list, as appropriate
- Position statements shall be no more than 600 words.

#### *3.0 Submission Requirements:*

- Submit your biographical background/position statement in MS Word or similar format
- Submit without any formatting such as bold face, italics, underlines or bullets. The formatting will be made uniform from statement to statement.
- Proofread your statement. Spelling, grammatical errors or typos contained in the statements will not be corrected.

## **Appendix 5:**

### **TYPICAL RECRUITMENT & ELECTION SCHEDULE**

#### **February-March**

- Elections Policies & Procedures are reviewed and updated as needed

#### **April-May**

- Members of the Nominating Committee are appointed and confirmed by June 1
- Call for Nominations materials are prepared

#### **June-July**

- Call for Nominations is released and election information is circulated
- Nominating Committee seeks and recommends potential candidates

#### **August**

- Deadline for potential candidates to submit applications
- Candidate interviews are conducted
- Nominations sent to the APA California Board for approval

#### **September-October**

- Announcement of election date and voting period
  - Voting shall be open to members for a period of not less than 7 calendar days.
- Candidate forum is held at the APA California conference
- Voting conducted online
- Election results verified and announced
  - Results shall be announced to candidates and the Board within 7 calendar days of the end of voting, and to all members within 30 calendar days.

#### **December**

- New member orientation is conducted
- New members are invited to the year's final Board meeting

#### **January**

- Successful candidates begin term of office
- Annual Board retreat is held