



Discussion Guide

Conscious Inclusion Considerations for Association Governance

The following document is designed to provide key considerations for association governance as it relates to conscious inclusion. By addressing these questions, tracking these measures of success, and implementing the recommended action plan association leaders can make significant strides in conscious inclusion at their association. The emphasis should be on *inclusion* and engagement with stakeholders who bring a broad range of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives, and no stakeholders should be excluded from participation, opportunities, or benefits based on demographic characteristics.

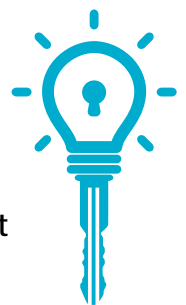
Governance

ASAE defines governance as the process of providing direction and vision to an association. Good governance ensures that an association is on track to achieve its goals.

To be consciously inclusive in governance is to work to ensure effective leadership, representation, and decision-making processes that reflect the diversity of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds of the association's membership and stakeholders.

Key Questions for Leaders

- How can we ensure our leadership selection, engagement, and advancement processes are transparent, fair, and consciously inclusive?
 - How might we communicate the impact of these efforts to membership?
- Do we have a clear understanding of the experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, and priorities of those represented by our organization? Does our board of directors represent those aspects of those who we serve?
 - Does our board possess the diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and skill sets necessary to make well-rounded decisions?





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- How have our stakeholders been affected by recent legal or political developments? What is our role in providing support or guidance?
- What personal practices and behaviors should governance leaders develop to support conscious inclusion and avoid exclusionary practices?
- How might we as leaders hold ourselves and each other accountable for inclusive behaviors and decision-making?
- Is our pathway to leadership clear and transparent to all members?
- How are we actively supporting and mentoring all candidates through those pathways?
 - How are we supporting pathways to leadership? (e.g. Are we providing education directly linked to volunteer leadership competencies? Expanding networks to ensure broad impact of leadership application marketing campaigns? Etc.)
- Are there bylaws provisions, policies, or procedures that might hinder inclusion? What specific steps can we take to mitigate or remove barriers from all our stakeholders being represented?
- What is our regular cadence for measuring success at various levels?
- How might we ensure we have the necessary resources to regularly measure success?

Measures of Success

- Improved transparency in leadership pathways (survey).
- Broad representation of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds in board composition and leadership positions (align with populations served among stakeholders).
- Higher engagement from all groups in governance processes.
- Regular review and update of bylaws and policies to promote conscious inclusion.
- Retention and engagement rates of leaders over time (not just who stays but also who thrives and increasingly adds value).
- Open feedback channel from all members (including underrepresented members) on governance inclusion.



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Other Considerations

- Professional societies may want to ask the question, “How do we proactively collaborate with affinity groups in our field?”
- What kind of information do we collect about our stakeholder groups that might help us to understand differences in backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and priorities of those we serve?

Action Plan

- Talk to your legal team when determining your association’s strategy.
- Talk to your board chair to discuss how you might best have this conversation at the board level.
- Survey members, volunteer leaders and affinity groups on level of transparency in governance processes (recruitment and retention).
- Conduct gap analysis of governance impact and success measurements (e.g. What do we measure now? What should we measure to provide clarity into our success?).