

Workshop Exercise

Assessing Your Association

This assessment exercise is a product of the Coalition of Election Association Leaders (CEAL), a network that serves state associations for election officials by supporting their professionalization and governance, strengthening association maturity, and creating sustainable associations for election officials. The assessment allows you to practically evaluate your association's maturity, effectiveness, and areas for growth. This assessment is designed to be self-administered, or CEAL can assist you in facilitating your organization's assessment.

This assessment can be used independently or with the **Association Maturation Guidebook: A Self-Assessment Guide to the Evolution of Election Associations**, found in Appendix II. Additionally, the guidebook has evaluative assessment tools to help leaders in their association better understand the type of association they are and gain insight into the association landscape for potential growth.

For additional information, please email CEAL@electioncenter.org.



Coalition of Election
Association Leaders

A PROJECT OF ELECTION CENTER

Association Strategic Assessment

The following checklist may be completed by the association board or executive director for a self-assessment, or by a third-party for a facilitated assessment. Each question on the list is phrased to be answered with a “yes” (Y), “in-progress” (IP), or “no” (N) answer. It is a deeper dive into your organization for strategic planning, and long-term or short-term goal setting. For support, contact the Coalition of Election Association Leaders.

Governance		
Strategic Planning		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association utilize strategic planning in its board governance and planning process?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a vision and mission statement for the organization? How often do you review it? Every year, every 3 years, every 5 years?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you include members in this process?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you set goals and objectives for the association? How often? Who facilitates that process for the board?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a process that reviews the goals and objectives or progress reports? Quarterly? Annually?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Would you find strategic planning beneficial?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to training?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to discounted events?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to communications?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to lobbying and advocacy support?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to legal support?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to networking?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to vendors and service providers?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your members have access to other benefits like those described above? Describe.	
Bylaws Review		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Have you adopted bylaws for the association?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address formation and incorporation? What type and why?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address the organizational structure of the board?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address the duties of the board, secretary, and treasurer?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association have an executive director? Do your bylaws address the role and responsibilities of the executive director or other leadership positions (i.e. committee chairs)?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address dues, revenues, and prohibitions (financial, gifts)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address membership qualifications?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address official meetings and define the time, frequency, and method?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address elections and voting rights?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address how your bylaws are amended? Resolutions, minutes, records?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address ethics or a code of conduct?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address establishing committees—standing, ad hoc, membership?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address types of standing committees? For example, bylaws/resolutions, education/certification, legislative, finance/audit, ethics, conference? Describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do the bylaws address termination of membership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a process that periodically reviews the bylaws?	
Formation Review		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is your association formed as a nonprofit, informal, etc.? What type?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you know your state's requirements for formation and filing? What are they?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have articles of incorporation?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are your state filings compliant and up to date?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association utilize legal counsel?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your type of association allow for tax-exempt status? What are the filing requirements?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you need to apply for nonprofit exemption with the IRS? Is your association compliant/up to date?	
<p>Leadership and Board Relations</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are you a board member, association member, contractor, or staff? If you could describe your board in one word, what would it be?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does the structure of your board serve the members of your association? Please describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you feel the board represents or reflects the makeup of your current membership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your board face challenges? What is the biggest challenge facing your board? If you could improve something about the board, what would it be?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have difficulty recruiting effective leadership positions?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have board orientations/onboarding?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your membership know who your board is and what they do?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are you experiencing turnover or succession planning challenges?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a performance review process? If applicable, how would you describe the overall relationship or effectiveness of the executive director, lobbyist, attorney, and other staff positions?	
Operational Policies		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Have you written operational policies and procedures?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include legislative issues?	

Association Strategic Assessment Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include financial/audit issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include conflict of interest issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include records and retention issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include ethics issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include education and training, scholarships issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include conference issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do they include board election issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	If not, do any of these policies sound interesting or beneficial? What would you prioritize first?	

Association Strategic Assessment Checklist

Membership		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is membership defined in your association? Who are your members? How is membership defined? Member, associates, levels?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have an updated membership list? Who maintains the membership list?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have membership voting rights? What are they? (Bylaws, Budget, Legislative?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you see an advantage or opportunity to expand membership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you use any specific tools to manage membership lists/databases?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you provide member orientation or welcome materials?	

Financial		
Taxes		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Who is responsible for the association's financial management and accounting? (Treasurer, accountant, executive director, combination?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you file taxes? What federal and state tax filings are you required to file?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have an accountant? If not, who prepares and files your taxes?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are the tax filings compliant, current, and up to date?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your tax status as a nonprofit require a conflict-of-interest policy?	
Financial		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is one source of your revenue from dues? Type, levels?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is one source of your revenue from conference registrations?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is one source of your revenue from sponsorships?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is one source of your revenue from gifts or grants?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is one source of your revenue from charitable donations?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is there a process for financial controls for your association? Bank card access, expense policy, limitations on expenditures.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association maintain bank accounts? Who is authorized to access the account?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have an accounting system? What type of accounting system do you use? Manual (paper/spreadsheet based), or online (Quickbooks, Sage)?	

Association Strategic Assessment Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Do you have someone managing day-to-day accounts, payables, and receivables? Who manages them? Are your books cash or accrual basis?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Do you have investments? Who manages them?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Is someone authorized to review, approve, and sign contracts for the association? Who is it?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Does someone manage contractors? If so, who?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Do you have employees? Do you have an HR/labor law review or structure in place for employees?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Does someone produce financial and accounting reports for the board and the membership? If so, who? How often?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Does your association conduct financial audits? How often? Independent or within the organization?</p>	

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Budget and Financial Report Review		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Does your association have a budget process? Please describe. Who approves the budget (board or membership)? Who develops the association’s annual budget? Is it the calendar or fiscal year?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Is your budget balanced? (Do you have to support your operations with savings?)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Does your association have a fund balance policy or savings/ contingency account?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Do you have fixed or reserved accounts/ investments?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Is the budget aligned with your strategic goals and objectives? (formally, informally?)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Do you provide a budget for your regions, if applicable?</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>Is it easy to produce up-to-date reports?</p>	

Operational		
Personnel		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your board receive compensation?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association contract or employ staff? Please describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have legal counsel? For what purpose?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have an accountant? AP/AR, taxes, or both?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have administrative support? Executive director, conference planning, communications/public relations?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a lobbyist?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	If you are all volunteer, describe how volunteers support your organization.	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a board? Committees? Member/admin support?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have challenges in recruiting for the board or committees?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does the volunteer model meet your goals for the organization? How or how not?	
Meetings, Training, and Education		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you provide training and education for your members? Please describe. (Frequency, vendors, joint with state official, attendance?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association's education program qualify for continuing education in your state (if applicable)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have conferences? How frequently?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have regular member meetings separate from conferences (annual, regional, etc.)? Describe.	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is there an election official certification available for your members? Describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your conference require funds, break even, or make a profit?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do your committees meet regularly?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is there a designated person who plans and sets your conference agenda? Who is it? Is it challenging to create and produce content?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have challenges in planning and implementing a conference?	
<p>Advocacy and Legislation</p>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a legislative committee?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are the members of the legislative committee representative of the association's membership? Who are the members of the legislative committee?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your legislative committee meet regularly? When and how do they meet? What do they do? (Review legislation, collect data, take positions?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a lobbyist?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a legislative agenda that gets set and approved? How often? Do you have a written policy to set and approve your legislative agenda? Describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you take positions on legislation? Is it the board? Full membership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is there a policy to determine when to take a position or how? (Simple majority, supermajority, vote by regions, size, each member?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Does your association have a role in the state legislature? How do you interact with the body? Committees of reference? Individually?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is there a point person who speaks for the association on legislative issues?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you provide data or fiscal analysis for the legislature? Describe.	
Communication		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have internal communication resources to correspond with membership? Describe.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have external communication tools or resources for the association? These could include a website, social media presence, and PR/comms support.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have collaboration tools to facilitate membership communication? (Zoom, membership hub application, listserve?)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a policy to communicate with stakeholders, such as legislators and the media, as an organization? Describe.	
Ethics		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Has your organization discussed ethical challenges or concerns?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have ethics bylaws, standards, code of conduct or policies adopted?	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have a process or procedure to address violations of ethics?	
Change Management		
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Is your profession in your state experiencing notable change resulting from turnover?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are your board and leadership positions experiencing unhealthy turnover?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Are your members and board members change-seekers and change-adaptors?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> IP <input type="checkbox"/> N	Do you have processes to facilitate member onboarding, training, or orientation for members?	