

Chapter Elections Guidance

The NCMA National Bylaws provides policy for the conduct of chapter elections. However, chapters are given maximum latitude for determining their own leadership using methods most appropriate for their chapter.

Association Policy 1-2, NCMA NATIONAL BYLAWS, ARTICLE VIII - CHAPTER OFFICERS, ASSETS, ACTIVITIES, AND STATEMENTS states “each chapter shall elect officers consisting of at a minimum a President, Vice President(s), Secretary, and Treasurer, each of whom shall serve from the date of their election until the end of the Association's current program year. Each chapter officer shall be nominated and elected initially and for each year thereafter by majority vote of chapter members voting, or by other procedures as established in the Chapter’s Bylaws. Chapter Bylaws may permit the election of officers other than those listed above. Chapter Bylaws may permit officer terms of greater than one year, provided that the length of such terms is clearly stated. Chapter Bylaws may also permit certain offices to be filled by succession rather than by election provided that such procedures are clearly stated.”

Chapters should follow these rules if they do not have bylaws stipulating otherwise:

- Chapters must have at least a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. These are known as ‘chapter officers’.
- Terms should be for one year.
- Chapter officers should be elected by majority vote of the members voting.
- Chapter officers must be current NCMA members

However, chapters may establish bylaws that significantly change election procedure, including:

- Chapters may elect officers in addition to the four identified above.
- Terms may be for more than one year.
- Chapter officers may fill certain offices by succession, rather than by election.
- Chapter officers may be nominated and elected by other procedures as established in the Chapter’s Bylaws.

Chapter Officers. Chapters do not need to elect every volunteer position. For example, membership chair, programs chair, newsletter editor, and webmaster can all be appointed positions. There are no limits to the number and types of appointed positions. However, if the title includes president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer, this indicates the position is an officer and must be elected. The distinction between officer and non-officer is essentially legal, in that chapter officers are the parties with fiduciary responsibility (and liability) for the chapter’s operations.

Terms. It is common practice for volunteers to hold officer positions for a number of years (i.e. president for life). However, unless the chapter bylaws stipulate otherwise, officers must be elected by chapter members each year. Appointed positions can be for any term.

Succession. It is common for chapters to create president-elect positions, who succeed to the position of president upon completion of the president’s term. Chapters also commonly use past

chapter president that is useful in retaining the president's expertise as an officer beyond their term as president. But these succession plans must be stipulated in the chapter's bylaws.

Election. It is common for chapters to publicize officer nominees in the chapter newsletter and website in the months before the election, detailing their credentials or resume. Chapters then conduct a general membership meeting (usually in April), where those members present vote by hand or voice ballot. A quorum is not necessary. (i.e. a majority of eligible chapter members need not be present to elect officers). Some chapters use email voting or web-based voting recording, to get the most votes as possible.

Timing. Chapters should start their elections process in March, by nominating candidates and publicizing the nominees. Elections should be completed by April 30th, with notification sent of all chapter leaders (elected and appointed) to the national office by May 1st. Leaders should spend the May and June transferring records, training their successors, and developing plans for the subsequent year. Leaders assume office at the start of NCMA's program year on July 1. Chapter officer rosters are due to the national office no later than August 31 each year as an attachment to your Chapter Annual Report.

Notifying the national office of your changes to your chapter leadership roster is essential to enable effective communication. For example, notices of leadership training opportunities (i.e. Leadership Summit and Mid-Year Leadership Conference), monthly ChaptersConnect! Leadership e-newsletters, and notices of other important NCMA business (i.e. national policy changes, national board activities, and chapter president forums) are sent by email to all volunteers listed in NCMA's master database.

Financial incentive. Association Policy 5-7, Chapter Policies states "To be eligible to receive rebates, chapters must have current Chapter Annual Reports, which includes financial reports, financial audits, and officer rosters, on file at NCMA." Annual Reports are due to the national office by August 31 each year.

As a practical matter, chapters sometimes are led by volunteers who have not been elected. This may be the case in struggling chapters, who haven't held a membership meeting in some time. However, the chapter's leaders should make it a priority to conduct membership meetings, and institute elections as soon as it is practicable.

If you have any questions regarding chapter elections, chapter leadership rosters, or chapter bylaws, please contact Chapter Relations Manager, Mary Beth Lech at 800-344-8096 x419 or mlech@ncmahq.org.