

APA ELECTION GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES AND SUPPORTERS

Based on Those Approved as Amended by the Board of Trustees in March 2026

A. Overview

The intent of the guidelines is to encourage fair and open campaigning by APA members on a level playing field by:

- 1) specifying permitted and prohibited election related activities;
- 2) fostering opportunities for candidates to educate their colleagues about the issues;
- 3) informing voters about candidate experiences and views;
- 4) keeping costs down;
- 5) ensuring collaboration on appropriate campaign activities by opponents; and
- 6) maintaining dignified and courteous conduct appropriate to the image of a profession.

Campaigning, as allowed and specified in this document, is not permitted until after the final slate of candidates has been announced to the membership. Members should withhold commitments of their final support or votes until after all candidates are known. Members soliciting letters of nomination or circulating petitions to be nominated **may not use the nomination process for campaign/electioneering purposes beyond asking for nomination letters or signatures on petitions.** Use of APA/DB resources is not permitted, except where expressly stated in this document.

Each Candidate:

- 1) Receives a copy of these guidelines and a statement to sign, certifying that they have read the guidelines;
- 2) Promises to abide by the guidelines;
- 3) Will immediately report any deviations (including deviations by supporters) of which they become aware to the Elections Committee through the group e-mail list created for the Elections Committee and Candidate (Group Election List); and
- 4) Will notify and correct any supporter who plans to or does deviate from these guidelines.

Candidates are to inform members they ask for support about the guidelines by sending a copy or calling their attention to the guidelines on the APA website.

All APA members are expected to abide by the APA election guidelines in APA elections, including in their capacity as officers and members of other organizations. APA requests that other organizations adhere to the intent of the campaign guidelines and provide fair and equitable coverage of opposing candidates.

When candidates or their supporters are unclear about whether an intended campaign action is permitted or they wish to do something not expressly permitted by these guidelines, they should seek guidance from the Elections Committee by e-mailing the Group Election List before taking action. The Elections Committee will consider candidate input from the Group Election List and respond to the Group Election List with a ruling concerning the proper interpretation of the guidelines.

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The Elections Committee investigates any potential violation by a candidate or supporter of which it becomes aware, and reports violations to the Board of Trustees. The procedures used by the Elections Committee to investigate and report campaign violations will be sent to candidates with these Election Guidelines.

B. Campaigning

Campaigning is defined as any attempt to influence a potential voter's vote. Campaigning includes mentioning one's candidacy or making any statement that might be interpreted as a position statement reflecting what actions the candidate would take if elected. It does not include appearances made as part of one's normal work activities, and individual communication through any medium (email, mail, phone call) by a candidate. Mass emails (one email to more than one recipient) are discouraged. If a Candidate wishes to send a mass email, they may not purchase lists or use lists provided by other sources for campaign purposes, unless the candidate shares the list with their opponent. If the list is compiled individually by a Candidate from their own personal contact list, they are encouraged to share it, but not required to do so. **Permitted campaign activities are specified in this document.**

Approved APA-Organized Campaign Activities are as Follows:

- APA Election Guide to Candidates, published electronically during campaign period;
- Psychiatric News December Election Issue;
- APA Election Website (psychiatry.org/election); and
- Any other activities reviewed and approved by the APA Elections Committee.
- APA will post candidate messages on a monthly basis to the APA Component Communities.

1. General

- Candidates are to state their own positions on issues and their own plans for the Association directly and positively.
- Candidates **and** supporters may not make personal attacks against other candidates.
- The APA National Nominating, Elections and Tellers Committees, as well as the Board of Trustees, are not permitted to participate in campaigning, and endorse/support a candidacy. This includes activities such as "liking" election posts on social media platforms or otherwise engaging in election discussion about candidates.

2. Resources

- Candidates and supporters may communicate with each other and coordinate campaign activities. Supporters must abide by these guidelines. However, formal campaign committees (entities that can make statements or take other actions on behalf of the candidate) are not allowed and candidates may not enter into agreements to campaign together. Merely endorsing a candidate is not a violation of the guidelines if there is no prior commitment or agreement in campaigning together.
- Use of APA, Area Council/State Association, or District Branch resources or personnel is prohibited, except to support the election process, including communication of candidate statement to members, provided that the organization shares the statement of both candidates at the same time.

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- APA, Area Council/State Association, or District Branch funds, services, stationery, or staff may not be used to endorse, support, or promote any candidate; however, District Branch funds – not APA, Area Council or State Association funds – may be used to support the expenses of candidates invited to the branch meeting for election purposes, if both candidates receive the same support. District Branches can host election related meetings if equal opportunities are made available and both candidates agree to the format.
- Permitted APA resources are the APA Election Website (psychiatry.org/election) and platform used for campaigning and APA election publications.
- Use of personal assistants, aides, hired individuals, or other people who are paid by the candidate or their employer to assist in campaigning is not permitted. Unpaid friends and family may campaign for a candidate but must comply with these guidelines.

3. Campaign Communications

Permitted forms of campaigning include the following; **all others are prohibited**. No more than \$500 may be spent on campaigning unless the opposing parties agree upon a different total maximum amount of money that can be spent and stay within those limits. Candidates may **NOT** use paid or unpaid social networking sites, blogs, and personal homepages for campaign purposes.

a. Electronic Messages

There are no limits on the number of campaign messages sent electronically, such as by individual email, informal group chat, and text. However, candidates and supporters are advised to use restraint with electronic messages of all kinds, as these are often ill received by voters, especially if voters perceive that they are being spammed. Campaign E-mail messages must have “APA Campaigning” in the subject line as a courtesy so that recipients may sort out campaign E-mail messages if preferred. Obtaining E-mail addresses is the responsibility of the candidates and their supporters; they are not to be provided by APA, Area Councils/State Associations, or District Branches. Email lists may not be purchased or acquired from another organization or company unless the purchased lists are shared with your opponent promptly upon list acquisition and remain within the agreed budget.

b. Listservs

Candidates may create their own listserv (group email list) to facilitate communication with, and among their supporters who have opted in to group emails.

Candidates may not use Listservs of other psychiatric organizations or knowingly permit another person to do so. If without Candidate’s knowledge or consent, a member of another organization posts a campaign message on the organization’s listserv, the Candidate will promptly inform their opponent and ask their opponent to craft a campaign message that Candidate can share on the same Listserv with the following message:

The message posted about my campaign on [Date] was without my knowledge and violated APA’s guidelines for elections. My opponent in this campaign is [name] and shares the message below with you about their campaign. We both appreciate being considered for your vote in the APA election. Cast your vote by [date – voting deadline]

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ADD OPPONENTS MESSAGE

c. Candidate Signatures

Candidates may include a single line of text in their signatures to promote their campaign with a hyperlink to their APA candidate webpage when sending electronic messages.

Candidates must follow the template below:

Candidate Name, Degree(s) for APA BOT Position

Ex. Jane Doe, MD for APA President-Elect

d. APA Website

APA will include information on all candidates (the photos, biographies, and statements provided for the ballot booklet, and links to candidate homepages, if permitted (see below), and on the election itself (campaign guidelines, ballot mailing and return dates, etc.) on its website. This election information can be accessed through the election logo and linked to other information as appropriate.

e. Phone

Campaign-related phone calls (including calls made through services such as Skype) may be made from candidates/supporters to individual APA members. Use of automatic calling services (robocalls) or hiring personnel to make such calls is prohibited.

f. Letters and Handouts

There are no restrictions on the number of campaign letters, postcards, handouts, and other printed material, but they must be within the agreed upon spending limits.

g. Private Discussion

Private election-related communication with colleagues is permitted and not monitored by the Election Committee. If a third-party reports to the Election Committee about an interaction/communication that may be an election violation, the Election Committee will review to determine whether a violation has occurred.

h. District Branch/State Association Campaigning: Newsletters

District Branch or State Association newsletters may announce as news items, without endorsement, two types of announcements provided opposing candidates have equal opportunity to use this medium:

- 1) A news item that requires equal representation of all candidates for an APA office, and/or;
- 2) A limited 150-words per candidate news item describing the candidacy for an APA office of local member(s) affiliated with that District Branch or State Association.

Editorial endorsement of candidates is prohibited, as are letters to the Editor in support of (or opposition to) candidates. Newsletters may print other statements or materials by or

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about a candidate only if they give equal opportunity to opposing candidates. Newsletters may not be distributed beyond the usual newsletter distribution.

i. Mutual Campaign Presentations

A mutual campaign presentation is defined as an event where all candidates for an APA office appear together to acquaint voters with the candidates and/or to discuss campaign issues. Candidates may appear through electronic media or in person if both candidates are able to attend and agree to go at their own expense and remain within the agreed upon budget for the campaign.

- If all candidates have been given equal opportunity to attend and one cannot attend, the other candidate(s) may present if the absent candidate is given the opportunity to present a pre-recorded message.
- Endorsement or favoritism of any candidate is prohibited.

j. Introduction at Professional Presentations

A candidate's candidacy may be mentioned when the candidate is introduced for the purpose of giving a professional presentation, provided that the candidate is not endorsed.

There are no restrictions on professional presentations, defined as events where no campaigning occurs, and a candidate participates in the dissemination of information through any medium. Running for office should not inhibit or prohibit candidates from conducting their usual professional business.

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ADDITIONAL ELECTION ACTIVITY

It is a violation of the APA Election Guidelines for candidates to participate in webcasts or panel discussions, issue press releases, respond to surveys and petitions, or allow publication of interviews relating to the election. Candidates should not be pressured to respond to or share opinions on unauthorized election activities.

Push polling, a tactic in which a person or organization attempts to manipulate or alter prospective voters' views under the guise of conducting an opinion poll, is not permitted.

Contacting candidates to request money in return for help in the election and threatening to act against the candidate if they do not respond to a request is prohibited and unacceptable. Any attempts to coerce or intimidate candidates should be reported immediately to the Elections Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES

By accepting a candidacy, a candidate agrees to follow the APA Election Guidelines.

If the Elections Committee determines that a candidate or their supporter engages in election activity in violation of the rules, refuses to comply with corrective actions determined by the Elections Committee, or if the Elections Committee determines that the candidate or their supporters' conduct is intentional (as evidenced by e.g. repeated violations, becoming aware of such violations and not taking action, etc.), the Committee will take appropriate action to address the violation with the candidate or supporter, up to and including public reporting of the violation, limiting campaign activities for the candidate, disqualification of the candidate with board approval or other appropriate action(s), as determined by the Elections Committee. Candidates or supporters that violate the guidelines must comply with the Committee's request for corrective action(s) within 72 hours of being informed of the violation.

Any candidates or supporters that are unclear about whether a campaign activity is permitted should seek guidance from the Elections Committee by e-mailing the Election Office at elections@psych.org.

The Elections Committee is charged with enforcing the APA Election Guidelines which have been set forth in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. This document outlines the principles that will guide enforcement of the Guidelines.

In considering appropriate enforcement of the Guidelines, the Elections Committee will be guided by the following goals:

- To sustain the high professional reputation of the APA;
- To maintain the integrity and goals of the Guidelines;
- To be fair to all candidates;
- To not reward candidates who violate the Policy; and
- To ensure enforcement of action is appropriate to the violation.

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ELECTION PRINCIPLES

The EQUITY OF ACCESS AND ECONOMIC PRINCIPLE:

The electorate and the candidates should enjoy optimum access to each other, to meet or communicate without unnecessary encumbrances. (This will address questions on the issue of free speech, of method of communications, i.e., postal, electronic, printed, etc.)

The FAIRNESS PRINCIPLE: (ensuring equity)

Every qualified member should have equal opportunity to run for leadership positions in the APA and to address the APA's voting members. (This addresses the problem of the power and privilege of incumbents, which pose handicaps to challengers or outsiders. Equal opportunity addresses the issue of finance-and expense issues.)

The COLLEGIALLY PRINCIPLE:

An atmosphere of collegiality should be promoted among candidates and among members, fostering the fellowship spirit, a more open communication and exercise of professionalism that would ensure focus on issues and fair play. Candidates who do not adhere to this principle, as determined by the Elections Committee, may be referred to the Board for removal from candidacy or to have their votes nullified.

The CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLE:

Competing candidates should be involved in interpreting rules that affect their campaign to arrive at a common understanding of the said rules, and agreement on what they want to do and how much they want to spend to interact with the electorate.

The MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLE:

The election process should arouse members' interest in and knowledge of APA affairs and foster optimum ballot returns. Well-informed members will likely be involved voters.

The ECONOMIC PRINCIPLE:

The candidates and the APA should collaborate to find and utilize the most economic means of conducting the election campaign in terms of time and money.