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SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATIONAL LEADERS (SBCAL)

Associational Mission Strategist Search Committee Guidelines

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Contents

Introduction	3
Phase One: Setup	4
Phase Two: Study	9
Phase Three: Search	12
Phase Four: Select	18
Phase Five: Support	20
Appendix 1 Sample Covenant with Interim Associational Mission Strategist	22
Appendix 2 Associational Effectiveness Assessment	23
Appendix 3 Associational Mission Strategist Survey	26
Appendix 4 Random Interviews with Associational Leaders	27
Appendix 5 Associational Mission Strategist Proficiencies	28
Appendix 6 Sample AMS Job Descriptions	31
Appendix 7 SBCAL Compensation Study Results	37
Appendix 8 Sample Reference Release Form	39
Appendix 9 Suggested Questions for Reference Checks	40

Appendix 10	
Associational Information Packet	41
Appendix 11	
Legal & Credit Information Release	42
Appendix 12	
Potential Questions for Initial Interview	43
Appendix 13	
Potential Questions for Subsequent Interviews with Top Candidate	44

Associational Mission Strategist Search Committee Guidelines are an adaptation and update of NAMB's *LeaderSearch* Process by the SBCAL Vision Team, April 2019

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Introduction

Of the approximately 1,100 associations across our nation, an average of 10 percent are without an Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) at any given time. The selection of an AMS is a vitally important decision for the association. In many ways, the person selected as AMS will be the primary individual who leads in charting the future of the association. Therefore, the selection process should be approached prayerfully and carefully.

This guide is designed to help associations through the spiritual process of discovering the AMS that God has chosen for them at this critical time. It offers a systematic, thoughtful process that associations can use to guide their thoughts and actions in their search for a new AMS.

The basic outline for the search process described in the pages that follow contains five phases:

- Phase 1: Setup
- Phase 2: Study
- Phase 3: Search
- Phase 4: Select
- Phase 5: Support

Associations in differing contexts will approach the AMS search process with differing perspectives. Therefore, each association is encouraged to take the suggestions offered here and apply them in their specific context. However, it is hoped that all associations can benefit from the experience and suggestions presented on the following pages.

PHASE ONE

Setup

Overview:

During the Setup phase, associations will need to take the necessary steps to prepare both for the interim period as well as the search process. The tasks to be completed during this phase include:

- (1) Determine ongoing tasks and activities to be accomplished during interim period.
- (2) Determine the type of leadership needed during the interim.
- (3) Make some choices regarding the association's future.
- (4) Select an AMS Search Team.
- (5) Elect officers for the AMS Search Team.
- (6) Agree on principles to guide the Search Team's work.

Checklist:

The following steps are suggested to complete the tasks in the Setup phase.

1. Determine the ongoing tasks to be accomplished during the interim period.

Every association has a cycle of operation that must be fulfilled throughout the interim period. Associational leaders can look at the previous year's calendar to determine the specific tasks, and the person(s) responsible for each task. Some general suggestions include:

- Conduct associational meetings (annual, semi-annual, and/or executive committee)
- Maintain ongoing communication between the association and churches.
- Develop and oversee the associational ministry budget.
- Oversee the associational property and equipment.
- Assign leadership responsibilities for any regularly scheduled ministry events.
- Ensure a strong fellowship among the association's local churches and ministers.
- Maintain open, regular contact with state convention and/or NAMB leaders, particularly if the association depends on these organizations for financial support for the AMS.

2. Determine the type of leadership needed during the interim.

Associations need to make an intentional decision about the type of leadership needed during the interim period. Several leadership options to be considered for the associational interim period include:

Administrative Transition Team

An Administrative Transition Team acts as the AMS through individuals taking responsibility for the various tasks to be accomplished during the interim period. A team of five or six people is adequate for most associations. These individuals could be elected, employed or a combination of the two. This is a good choice when the association is not in a stressful situation.

Interim Associational Mission Strategist from Within the Association

A retired local pastor or available layperson with the proper skills and adequate time could serve as the association's interim AMS. Usually, this person will lead the association to maintain the "status quo" without making any dramatic changes in the association's course. This is a good choice when the association enjoys a positive, cooperative relationship among its member churches and is effectively fulfilling its mission.

Interim Associational Mission Strategist from Outside the Association

Due to the fact he has limited knowledge about the association, an interim AMS from the outside can lead the association to take a fresh look at itself and its mission and accomplish needed tasks. Many people are trained specifically for this task. This is a good choice if the association is in a stressful situation or if the former AMS served a long time.

Existing Associational Staff Person

Some associations have a ministerial staff person who could serve effectively as the interim AMS. Other (usually smaller) associations may have little business to handle. In these associations, a secretary could possibly handle ongoing administrative tasks, with other tasks being put "on hold" during the interim period. If a staff person is selected, that individual's regular duties may need to be modified or reassigned to provide the time needed for the additional responsibilities. Additional compensation may need to be considered as well.

Moderator

Some associations have a moderator who could serve effectively as the interim AMS. This works particularly well in associations that have employed a bi-vocational AMS.

Intentional Interim Associational Mission Strategist

The intentional interim AMS is usually from outside the association and agrees to serve in this position for a specific period of time. This individual moves to the association, works as a full-time AMS, and is paid the same salary as the former AMS, plus housing and travel. Some, mostly retired, AMSs have attended pastoral interim training and would be good choices as an intentional interim AMS. Your state convention may provide a few suggestions for this individual.

No Interim Associational Mission Strategist

Some associations with large staffs or active moderators discover that they can "survive" for a season without an AMS. Associational leaders need to closely examine the tasks to be accomplished during the interim period before selecting this option.

Former Associational Mission Strategist

A few associations have contracted with their former AMS to serve in an interim capacity. This is usually not a good choice because it does not allow for a necessary time of transition and may inhibit objectivity in determining associational direction for the future.

If the leadership option selected involves the employment of an individual, then the association and individual employed should consider entering into a covenantal agreement. The covenant should describe:

- The desired hours to be worked per week
- The anticipated duration of the interim
- A list of responsibilities
- An outline of relationships and procedures for accountability
- The compensation to be provided to the employee

It is generally understood that the interim AMS is not to be considered as the permanent AMS. If so desired, this understanding can be written into the covenant. A sample covenant is included in Appendix 1 on page 22.

After the type of leadership is determined, the association's personnel committee or other designated group should be given responsibility for selecting an individual to serve in that capacity.

□ 3. Make some choices regarding the association's future.

An associational interim period is an excellent opportunity for associational leaders to take a "long look" at the association and make some decisions about its future. These decisions may be difficult; at the same time, they may be invigorating.

During the interim period, associational leaders can answer the question, "At this time, is this association a good steward of God's resources?" In seeking to answer that question, the association may choose to employ a trained intentional interim AMS or seek assistance from the state convention. As associational leaders consider the association's future, there are several options:

1. Continue as an association. Grow and expand the association and/or its ministries.
2. Merge the association with another association.
3. Dissolve the association and encourage member congregations to join surrounding associations that can serve them more effectively and efficiently. If the association chooses to continue functioning, then the intentional interim AMS can help associational leaders determine if they should employ a full-time or part-time AMS.

If associational leaders do not choose to continue the work of the association, there is no further need to continue a search for a new AMS. At that point, the state convention should be consulted to determine the proper steps to merge or dissolve the association.

□ 4. Select an AMS Search Team.

If the decision is made to continue as an association, a Search Team should be selected to search for a new Associational Mission Strategist. The selection of a Search Team should be a prayerful decision. As the task of selecting a Search Team begins, the local association's guiding documents should be researched, understood and followed. If the guiding documents do not give direction to Search Team selection, then the moderator should design a process for selecting the team and have that process approved by the association's governing bodies. Then, the same governing bodies should approve the actual makeup of the AMS Search Team.

The size of the Search Team is an associational decision, but five to seven persons is recommended. When seeking to establish an AMS Search Team, look for individuals who possess a high level of spiritual maturity. Among those who fit this description, consider the following suggestions:

- Make every effort to ensure balance and diversity on the team. Include members from churches of varying sizes, as well as both men and women and older and younger adults. If applicable in your context, work to ensure ethnic and racial diversity as well.
- Be sure all team members will be able to give the necessary time to the task and are knowledgeable about, involved in and committed to the association.
- Look for skills in decision making and collaboration.
- Include at least one personnel professional. Such a professional would have knowledge and expertise regarding state legal ramifications in the area of hiring.
- Include both past and future leaders in the association.
- If necessary, consult local pastors for assistance in identifying individuals who fit these descriptions.

□ 5. Elect officers for the AMS Search Team.

While situations vary, most Search Teams should elect at least two officers. First, the chairperson will be responsible for convening meetings and keeping the team focused and moving forward. Second, the secretary will be responsible for keeping detailed minutes of each meeting and, as the process continues, corresponding with candidates for the position. Some teams elect others to fulfill specific tasks, such as a vice chairperson to provide leadership in the chairperson's absence, an individual to spearhead communication with the churches, another individual to lead in prayer and devotional time for the team and a person to collect and file resumés. Each team can organize itself in the way that seems appropriate for its situation.

□ 6. Agree on principles to guide the Search Team's work.

As the Search Team begins its work, it should strive to reach consensus on how the team will function. Consider these suggested guiding principles:

Be humble.

- Leave all personal agendas at home.
- When in doubt, seek outside training or assistance.
- Be fair, be informative and respond faithfully to all candidates being considered.

Be prayerful.

- Spend significant time in prayer and Bible study. Pray together and pray for one another.
- Solicit prayer from the churches within the association.

Be patient.

- Take the time necessary to do the task entrusted to the team. Don't be in such a hurry that you miss appointments with God.

Be intentional.

- Agree to a systematic approach. Decide on a process and adhere to that process in spite of whatever circumstances may occur.
- Develop a communication strategy to share progress with the association at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.). Due to the sensitive nature of the search process, the Search Team should decide at the end of each meeting what can be shared publicly. Names of candidates should not be made public until the Select phase.
- Agree that each resumé will be considered, but no one will be considered without a resumé.
- Agree to confidentiality. This is a must during the process. Search Team members are being trusted with the lives and ministries of people.
- Secure an expense account for the team's work.

Be thorough.

- Keep good minutes of proceedings.
- Know the limits on salary and benefits to be offered.
- Make sure to have a deep understanding of the association's strengths and challenges.
- Commit to multiple interviews to gain an accurate understanding of a candidate's beliefs, ministry practices, family relationships, etc. Don't back down from asking difficult questions during interviews.
- Don't ignore red flags, but rather fully explore them with the candidate.
- Don't simply rely on references listed on the resumé, but conduct secondary reference checks as well.

PHASE TWO Study

Overview:

Now that the preliminary setup tasks are complete, the process moves on to the Study phase. In this phase, the Search Team gathers all information needed to assist them in their work. The tasks to be completed during this phase include:

- (1) Evaluate the association's current effectiveness and determine how to lead it to greater effectiveness.
- (2) Develop an AMS profile.
- (3) Determine capabilities of compensation package.
- (4) Develop an associational profile to be shared with candidates.

Checklist:

The following steps are suggested to complete the tasks in the Study phase.

1. Evaluate the association's current effectiveness and determine how to lead it to greater effectiveness.

A part of determining the association's future is to understand the current reality of its present effectiveness within its geographic area and within its churches. Measuring associational effectiveness, while not easy, is profitable.

At one time during the history of the Southern Baptist Convention, associations were considered to be only channels through which the Convention touched the churches. Yet, in the early 1960s, associations started becoming strong local organizations that developed their own personalities within their geographic areas. Today, associations are local missional networks of churches. Baptist associations exist to assist their churches in advancing the Gospel through community impact, church planting, church strengthening, and leadership development.

Associational leaders who are attempting to evaluate an association's effectiveness can begin by studying the association's vision (where it perceives God wants it to go), the association's mission (why the association exists), and the perceived value that the association provides to its member churches. Appendix 2 on pages 23-25 provides a sample instrument that can be used by the Search Team and other associational leaders to assess the association's current effectiveness.

□ 2. Develop an Associational Mission Strategist profile.

The development of an AMS profile as well as an associational profile are important actions for the team to take in preparation for looking at individuals as a potential AMS. An important element in developing both the AMS profile and the associational profile is soliciting input from people within the association. Surveys are provided for gathering such input. The state convention is also an excellent source of input, especially the office of the state AMS or the appropriate office that relates to Associations and Associational Mission Strategists.

An AMS profile is a helpful tool as the Search Team begins to look at resumés and individual candidates. It can help the team make informed decisions about the type of person they are seeking as the AMS. The Search Team should understand and agree that the profile developed should have some degree of flexibility. The intent of the profile takes precedence over the specific criteria developed in the profile.

Use these resources in developing an AMS profile:

- Results from AMS survey (see Appendix 3 on p. 26).
- Results from random interviews with significant leaders in the association (see Appendix 4 on p. 27).
- AMS Proficiencies identified in SBCAL Study Team Report (see Appendix 5 on pp. 28-30).
- Evaluation of current AMS job description and possible revised job description and/or performance agreement (see Appendix 6 on pp. 31-36 for samples.)

□ 3. Determine capabilities of compensation package.

The Search Team should calculate a fair compensation package before the search begins to determine if the association can support a full-time or part-time AMS. The state convention may be consulted to determine comparable compensation packages of other associations of similar size and budget. In addition, the SBCAL conducted a compensation study which can be consulted as well. (See Appendix 7 on pages 37-38.) In addition to salary and a housing allowance, the Search Team must determine if any of the following benefits will be provided for the AMS:

- Health insurance (medical, dental, vision, etc.)
- Life insurance
- Disability
- Retirement contributions
- Parsonage and utilities
- Other benefits

□ 4. Develop an associational profile to be shared with candidates.

The associational profile provides an objective look at the association and is a helpful profile to share with candidates being considered for the position. It allows candidates to have a true understanding of the association, as well as the challenges and opportunities that might await them as AMS.

Use these resources in developing an associational profile:

- Five-year Associational Church Profile that provides critical numerical measures of associational performance (often available at your state convention).
- Updated job description.
- Current associational staff, along with their specific job descriptions.
- Current budget and financial reports.
- Current mission/vision statement for the association.
- Area/county/city profile (available from local chambers of commerce).
- Associational guiding documents.
- Results from associational survey (see Appendix 2 on page 23-25).
- Compilation of associational information gathered by associational leaders at beginning of interim period and prior to formation of Search Team.
- Recent newsletters and other associational communications.
- Previous year's calendar of associational meetings and events.

PHASE THREE

Search

Overview:

Now that the Search Team has a better understanding of what characteristics are needed in the next AMS, it is time to conduct the search. In this phase, the Search Team will collect and review resumes and eventually narrow the list of candidates to one. The tasks that will need to be completed during this phase include:

1. Prepare a concise advertisement to be used to solicit resumés.
2. Collect and review resumés.
3. Make initial contact with candidates who fit the AMS profile.
4. Select the top five candidates to pursue further.
5. Contact the references provided by the top five candidates.
6. Make a second contact with the top five candidates.
7. Gather secondary references on the top five candidates.
8. Select and prioritize the top three candidates.
9. Conduct background, credit and legal checks on top three candidates.
10. Conduct initial interview with each of remaining candidates.
11. Prioritize remaining candidates and conduct in-person interview with top candidate.
12. Arrange on-site visit for top candidate and his spouse.

Checklist:

The following steps are suggested to complete the tasks in the Search phase.

1. Prepare a concise advertisement to be used to solicit resumés.

More than likely, the Search Team will begin receiving resumés immediately following the resignation or retirement of the former AMS. One or more resumés may come from within the association. In addition to these, the Search Team should request resumés formally through a variety of sources, such as associational leaders at the state convention, seminaries, and friends of the association. The Search Team should also determine the different methods for receiving resumés (email, regular mail, etc.). If email submissions are an option, consider setting up a new email address specifically designated to receive resumes.

The Search Team may also choose to publicly advertise the opening through the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders (SBCAL) newsletter (subscribe at www.sbcal.org), SBC.net, state Baptist newspapers, or other online ministry job sites. Such advertisements should include the following:

- Job status (full-time or part-time)

- Concise summary of AMS profile
- Concise summary of associational profile
- Instructions on how to submit a resumé
- Deadline to receive resúmes
- Salary range (optional)

□ 2. Collect and review resúmes.

Public notice should be given that resúmes must be received by a specific deadline. As resúmes are received, they should be placed in a holding file, without immediate review. When the deadline arrives, the review process begins. All resúmes received after this deadline should be placed in a separate file for later review if needed.

A copy of each resumé received should be given to each Search Team member. Depending on the Holy Spirit for guidance and using the associational and AMS profiles developed earlier, each Search Team member should place resúmes in one of three categories:

1. Fits the association's AMS profile.
2. Somewhat fits the association's AMS profile.
3. Does not fit the association's AMS profile.

After individual team members have prioritized the resúmes, the team can come together as a whole and prioritize them. The group of candidates in the first category, those with resúmes fitting the association's AMS profile, will be the group that the team contacts for follow up.

□ 3. Make initial contact with candidates who fit the AMS profile.

The Search Team should contact each candidate whose resumé fits the AMS profile. In this initial contact:

- Briefly tell the reason for the contact.
- Describe the association, its potential, reason for seeking a new AMS, challenges facing the association and so forth.
- Determine their availability and willingness to be considered.
- Obtain from them a list of references of those who may be contacted.
- Notify them of the next steps in the process.
- Give a recommended deadline for candidates to respond.
- Consider asking candidates to sign and return a Reference Release Form (see Appendix 7 on p. 33).

4. Select the top five candidates for the Search Team to pursue further.

After the deadline for responses from the initial contact has passed, the Search Team should be able to reach a decision on the top five candidates. To do so, each team member ranks their top five choices, using a “point” system. Each team member gives five points to their first candidate; four points to their second candidate; three points to their third candidate; two points to their fourth candidate; and one point to their fifth candidate. After each team member has done this, they come together as a group and share their rankings. The combined rankings of each Search Team member will determine the top five candidates.

However, the Search Team should allow for a dynamic process since other resumés may come in after the process has begun. If there is unanimous conviction that such resumés should receive priority status, then proceed as with other priority candidates.

5. Contact the references provided by the top five candidates.

The Search Team should contact each person listed as a reference by the top five candidates. They should do each of the following during this reference contact:

- Describe the type of person the association is seeking for an AMS, based on the profile.
- Ask for an honest assessment of the candidates’ “fit” to that profile. See Appendix 9 on page 40 for a suggested list of questions.
- Promise and practice confidentiality.
- Ask for the names, telephone numbers or addresses of one or two other people who know the candidate and could possibly provide a reference.

6. Make a second contact with the top five candidates.

After developing the list of top five candidates, the Search Team should contact each of them. When they do so, they should ask each candidate to pray with the team about the search process. Inform the candidates that the team is going to proceed in gathering information from references. Allow candidates to approve, in writing, all secondary reference names gathered since contacting certain references could adversely affect the candidates’ present ministries.

7. Gather secondary references on the top five candidates.

Information from secondary references can be done either by phone or letter. If the reference check is done by phone, be sure to give your name and the name of the association, your position on the team, the reason for your call and the name of the person being considered.

Ask if it is a convenient time to talk. If the person does not have time to talk, set up an appointment to call him or her back.

Make sure all team members collecting information from references are using the same set of questions. This ensures a “level playing field” when comparing responses from references. Again, see Appendix 9 on page 40 for suggested questions. Other questions can be added to these as appropriate and necessary. Consider mailing this list of questions to references prior to the telephone reference check.

Again, ask these references for the names, telephone numbers, or addresses of one or two other people who know the candidate and could possibly provide a reference. After “clearing” these names with the candidate in writing, contact them with the same set of questions. A thorough check of references should help provide an accurate understanding of the candidate. The Search Team should set a deadline for having all the reference checks completed on the top five candidates. After the reference checks are completed, they should be photocopied and given to each team member for review. Although churches cannot receive information about individual candidates, they should be asked to pray for the team at this critical time.

□ 8. Select and prioritize the top three candidates for the Search Team to pursue further.

Based upon the references received, the Search Team should be able to narrow its list of top candidates to no more than three. Usually through honest team discussion, these choices can be made. However, it may be necessary to use a “point” system as mentioned earlier.

After the top three candidates have been selected, the Search Team should contact all the top five candidates. Those who are no longer being considered should be notified of their status with the team. Then they can continue their present ministries without wondering about a future move. Those who are being considered should be mailed a packet of information about the association, including the associational profile (see Appendix 10 on p. 41). The candidate will need as much information about the association as possible in order to make an informed and prayerful decision.

As the Search Team proceeds to gather information on these candidates, it may be helpful to administer a “personality test” to each of the top three candidates. Gift surveys, Myers Briggs, DISC and SSP are examples of the types of tests available. Many of these (and other) instruments/processes are available through church members, state conventions and NAMB. The purpose of using these instruments is to gain a thorough understanding of your candidate’s ability to meet the associational needs identified.

9. Conduct background, legal and credit checks on the remaining candidates.

Request written permission from each of the remaining candidates to conduct background legal and credit checks (see Appendix 11 on p. 42). This is a good time to remind Search Team members of the critical need for confidentiality.

10. Conduct an initial interview with each of the remaining candidates.

While the Search Team has learned a great deal about each of the remaining candidates by this point, nothing can replace a personal conversation. Therefore, the Search Team should initiate an interview with each of the three remaining candidates. These interviews can be in person, by phone, or by video chat. The purpose of the initial interview is simply to get to know each candidate and begin to seek God's direction regarding which candidate the Search Team should pursue further. Consider using the potential interview questions in Appendix 12 on page 43 during the initial interview.

11. Prioritize the remaining candidates and conduct an in-person interview with the top candidate.

After the initial round of interviews, the Search Team should prayerfully determine the top candidate, and schedule a second interview. If the Search Team is not yet confident in the selection of their top candidate, it would be appropriate for another round of interviews with the top two candidates.

However, once the top candidate has been clearly identified, the Search Team should arrange for a second interview with the candidate and spouse (if applicable). This interview should either be in person or by video. Interview questions are designed to assist you in knowing the person, the quality of his leadership, his ability to communicate and his style of ministry. Team members should assess not only what is said but also what is unsaid. Body language is an important factor. See Appendix 13 on pages 44-45 for guidance on potential questions and how they could be phrased.

If this second interview leads the team to determine that the candidate is not the right person for the job, then clearly notify the candidate that you do not feel led to pursue the process further. Proceed to candidate number two. Follow the same process with all your candidates as necessary.

□ 12. Arrange an on-site visit for the top candidate and his spouse.

If the second interview with the top candidate goes well, the Search Team should arrange an on-site visit to the associational region for the top candidate and his spouse. The association should prearrange hotel accommodations and determine how meals and other miscellaneous expenses will be handled. Travel can be handled either by reimbursement or prepayment. If lodging and meals become necessary while traveling, the team should reimburse the candidate.

During the visit, the Search Team should conduct a final round of interviews, involving questions geared more specifically to the association. Refer again to Appendix 13 on pages 44-45 for sample interview questions. At this time, it is appropriate to share the salary package with the candidate as well. Be willing to make reasonable negotiations based upon the specific needs of the candidate and his family.

In addition, the Search Team should provide a tour of the community and any association-owned or leased properties. This visit is also a good opportunity for all associational staff to meet the prospective candidate. If appropriate, associational and state staff personnel (in states where they assist in supervision) may be invited to introduce themselves and their associational ministries briefly to the candidate.

PHASE FOUR

Select

Overview:

Now that the Search Team is confident they have identified their next Associational Mission Strategist, it is time to work out the details to confirm the candidate's selection. In this phase, the Search Team will complete the following tasks:

- (1) Work out the details to extend a call to the association's new AMS.
- (2) Hold a special called business meeting to vote on calling the new AMS.

Checklist:

The following steps are suggested to complete the tasks in the Select phase.

1. Work out the details to extend a call to the association's new AMS.

After completing positive reference checks and interviews and establishing that both parties are ready to proceed, then details of a call to the candidate need to be agreed upon. Your association's guiding documents may provide direction in this area. If not, use the following guidelines to prepare for calling the association's new AMS.

- Agree, in writing, on the salary package and benefits.
- Agree, in writing, on details of the call, including allowable expenses for moving, date for reporting to the association and timetable for settling in to the new field.
- Arrange for conferences with the associational missions group of the state convention to discuss and agree on partnership negotiations and approvals.
- Set a date for the candidate and his family, if applicable, to come to the association for presentation and approval.
- Review the association's guiding documents for election procedures.
- Make plans to present the candidate in an open forum for questions and answers, allowing church members to meet him and his family.
- Make plans to schedule a special called meeting of the association to vote on calling a new AMS.
- Publicize the meeting on social media, in the associational newsletter and local church newsletters.
- Prepare a published introduction of the candidate. Include brief biographical data, family information and other information as appropriate. Mail this introduction to all church members in the association.

□ 2. Hold a special called business meeting to vote on calling the association's new AMS.

As the association comes together to consider and vote on the Search Team's recommendation, details should be attended to with care. The candidate and his spouse should be present. Your association's guiding documents may provide assistance in this area. If not, use the following guidelines to conduct the business of calling the association's new AMS.

- Introduce the candidate and his spouse to the body assembled, perhaps allowing the candidate to share a word of Christian testimony.
- Present a printed recommendation, including the details, conditions and financial support of the call.
- Give the team chairperson a chance to validate why the team has been led to this candidate and highlight the candidate's skills and gifts that make him a good "match" for the association.
- Excuse the candidate while the vote is taken.
- If the vote to call the candidate is favorable, the candidate should be notified and his response sought. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His leadership and commitment to the new task. Set a date and time for an official installation.
- If either party should fail to reach a positive agreement, the Search Team should evaluate and analyze any problem areas and openly receive feedback for future use. The team must then commit itself to resume the search process.

PHASE FIVE

Support

Overview:

Now that the new AMS has been called, the Search Team may assume that the work is complete. However, there will be a transition period in which the new AMS will need support from the Search Team and other associational leaders as he gets adjusted to his new role and surroundings. In this final phase, some of the following tasks will need to be completed:

- (1) Assist the new AMS and his family during the actual move (if applicable).
- (2) Provide orientation to community for new AMS and his family.
- (3) Send out press releases to announce new AMS.
- (4) Conduct an installation service for new AMS.
- (5) Provide training opportunities for new AMS.
- (6) Provide ongoing support, encouragement and accountability for new AMS.

Checklist:

The following steps are suggested to complete the tasks in the Support phase.

1. Assist the new AMS and his family during the actual move (if applicable).

Moving can be a stressful time. Although the administrative specifics of the move were discussed in the Select Phase, it is certainly appropriate to provide meals for the new AMS and his family during the initial days of the move. Consider establishing a meal schedule for the first week to relieve the burden from the new AMS and his family. If the AMS has young children, consider providing childcare during the actual move-in day.

2. Provide orientation to community for new AMS and his family.

The AMS and his family should also be assisted in learning about the community. Consider providing information to assist the family regarding:

- Enrollment of children in local schools
- List of local utility providers and contact information
- List of local medical professionals and urgent care clinics
- Potential employment opportunities for the AMS's wife (if desired)
- Any other requested information

3. Send out press releases to announce new AMS.

The Search Team should send press releases related to the new AMS to the local newspapers, state Baptist paper, and the associational newsletter. The moderator should encourage pastors to have him come early as a guest to the local churches. This will assist in getting his name and ministry before the churches of the association.

4. Conduct an installation service for new AMS.

The Search Team should plan a special service of installation and commitment for the new AMS. All local pastors, church leaders, state convention leaders, community leaders, neighboring associational mission strategists, and other guests should receive a printed invitation to this service. It should be a celebratory service for what God has done and will continue to do through the association of churches, as well as for whom God has called to be the association's new leader.

5. Provide training opportunities for new AMS.

The association and/or Search Team should encourage the new AMS to take advantage of as many training opportunities as possible during his first twelve months in his new role. The state convention should be proactive in providing counsel and orientation, establishing and developing relationships with other AMSs and giving guidance in field service, particularly during the first year of tenure. In addition, the new AMS should be encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities provided by SBCAL and NAMB as well.

6. Provide ongoing support, encouragement, and accountability for new AMS.

Often it is practical for the Search Team to serve in an advisory capacity with the candidate for the first six to 12 months. The team should assist the AMS in making the move to ensure that there is a smooth transition of responsibilities and authority, enable him to become established in his work and community, assist him in understanding relationships and ensure that all previously made commitments are kept.

The Search Team should also ensure that a process of annual evaluation is established for the AMS. While it is not the Search Team's responsibility to conduct the evaluation, a process for doing so should be in place. One method for enabling a good transition is quarterly meetings with the new AMS. Once the process of selection is over, many teams simply dissolve. But as the first contact with the new AMS, the Search Team's continued assistance would be extremely valuable.

Appendix 1

Sample Covenant with Interim Associational Mission Strategist

This covenant is an agreement between the interim associational mission strategist (AMS) and the associational leaders. Based upon the association's guiding documents, it may need to be signed by the associational Personnel Committee chairperson and/or the associational moderator, as well as the interim AMS.

Anticipated hours worked per week by interim AMS:

Total salary package, including benefits, for interim AMS:

Anticipated duration of the interim service (beginning and ending dates):

Responsibilities of the interim AMS:

Key relationships for the interim AMS:

Procedures for accountability for the interim AMS:

I, _____, fully understand and am in full agreement that, as long as I serve as interim AMS, I will not be considered for the position of permanent AMS for _____ Baptist Association.

Signed and Dated: _____
(Interim associational mission strategist)

Signed and Dated: _____
(Associational Personnel Committee chairperson and/or associational moderator)

Appendix 2

Associational Effectiveness Assessment

Use the following assessment as a guide to developing your own questionnaire about your association. Responses to this questionnaire can be shared with prospective associational mission strategists (AMS). Distribute this survey to all associational leaders. Also, distribute this survey to as many church members throughout the association as possible. A widespread representation of churches responding to the survey will ensure a more accurate picture of the association.

In an effort to describe our association to prospective AMSs, the Search Team is requesting your input on this survey. We ask for your honest assessments of where our association is and where it should be going. All responses are anonymous. Thank you in advance for your participation in the AMS search. Please return all completed surveys by (date) to (name/address) or (fax number).

1. What is your age?
 18 to 29 30 to 39 40 to 49 50 to 59 60 to 69 70 or older

2. What is your primary ministry responsibility?
 Senior Pastor Church Staff Member Church Planter
 Deacon Laymember Other

3. How much is YOUR CHURCH involved in the work of the association?
 Extremely involved
 Very involved
 Moderately involved
 Slightly involved
 Not at all involved

4. How much are you PERSONALLY involved in the work of the association?
 Extremely involved
 Very involved
 Moderately involved
 Slightly involved
 Not at all involved

5. In what ways has the association effectively served you or your church in the past 3 years? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Trip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning/Training/Opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Relief | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor Search |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship/Networking | <input type="checkbox"/> Training/Consultations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Development/Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship Resources/Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Evangelism Training and/or Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Ministries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

6. At this time, what is the ONE thing that most excites you about the association?

7. At this time, what is the ONE thing that most frustrates you about the association?

8. The association is a strategic partner in helping your church to fulfill the Great Commission.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Your church would be negatively affected if the association did not exist.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. In your opinion, financially supporting the association is a good kingdom investment of your church's financial resources.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. What would motivate you or your church to increase your church's financial contributions to the association?

12. What do you believe are the major strengths of the association?

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)

13. What are the three most critical needs that the association must address in the near future?

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

14. What new ministry projects or general changes need to occur in the next five years?

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)

Appendix 3

Associational Missions Strategist Survey

1. What age person do you believe will be needed to lead our association to its future?
 Age should not be a factor
 35 and under 46-55
 36-45 56-up

2. How desirable and significant is pastoral/staff experience to serve as our AMS?
 Very desirable Not necessary

3. What formal academic theological training is necessary?
 None
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Doctoral degree

4. What proficiencies are most important for our new AMS to demonstrate?
 (Rank on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 being highly desirable, 1 being unnecessary)

Foundational Proficiencies

Called to associational leadership	5	4	3	2	1
Person of godly character	5	4	3	2	1
Spiritually mature	5	4	3	2	1
Committed to learning	5	4	3	2	1
A leader of leaders	5	4	3	2	1
Trustworthy	5	4	3	2	1

Relational Proficiencies

Emotionally intelligent	5	4	3	2	1
Active listener	5	4	3	2	1
Supportive coach	5	4	3	2	1
Authentically vulnerable	5	4	3	2	1
Vocal encourager	5	4	3	2	1

Strategic Proficiencies

Vision caster	5	4	3	2	1
Strategist	5	4	3	2	1
Consultant	5	4	3	2	1
Leadership developer	5	4	3	2	1
One with contextual understanding	5	4	3	2	1
Good communicator	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix 4

Random Interviews with Associational Leaders

As a part of its information gathering on the type of AMS needed for the association, Search Team members should conduct random interviews with associational leaders. Those interviewed should represent a cross section of the association and should be assured of confidentiality. The interviews may be conducted by phone or in a face-to-face meeting. Team members should ask the questions and record the respondent's answers accurately. Use the following questions as a guide in conducting these interviews.

1. How would you describe our association to someone who is unfamiliar with it?

2. Why did you become involved in the association?

3. What are the particular strengths/weaknesses of our association today?

4. How can a new associational mission strategist be expected to enhance those strengths and address those weaknesses?

5. What do you believe is the most pressing need in our association: vision for the future, a plan and the ability to accomplish tasks or a need to enhance fellowship among the member congregations?

6. Are there some areas in which our association seems to have limitations that are difficult to overcome?

7. What is your dream for the association?

8. How can a new associational mission strategist be instrumental in bringing that dream to reality?

9. Describe the ideal associational mission strategist for our association.

Appendix 5

AMS Proficiencies (SBCAL)

Foundational Proficiencies

Called to Associational Leadership

Leading an association is fundamentally different than leading a church or other ministry, but it requires no less a calling to a specific position. Leading a collaborative system requires someone desiring to build coalitions and rely on sometimes diffused leadership systems, rather than employing more directive leadership styles at times.

Person of Character

The Bible is clear - leaders are held to a higher standard, therefore, the heart of associational leaders must be set on Christ in order that their behavior might be above reproach.

Spiritually Mature

It should go without mention that Christian leaders must be followers of Christ. But associational leaders must sometimes serve in emotionally charged environments where spiritual matters can be confused with personal preferences, and it takes considerable discernment and wisdom to assist churches in particularly trying times.

Commitment to Learning

Leading requires learning, and continuing in leadership means continuing to learn. Associational leaders should have a lifelong combination of formal and informal education combined with the passion of a seeker and an explorer.

A Leader of Leaders

From the basic functions of a manager to the entrepreneurial skills of non-profit leaders such as donor cultivation and team building, associational leaders need an array of leadership tools at their disposal.

Trustworthy

For associational leaders to be most effective, churches must trust them. There will be times when the church must be vulnerable and expose their weaknesses, but they will not do that if they suspect such vulnerability might be taken advantage of, or that the associational leader is not trustworthy. As patients with a doctor, the patients trust a doctor to do no harm based on trust.

Relational Proficiencies

Emotionally Intelligent (EQ)

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and in others, the ability to use this awareness to manage one's behavior and relationships, and understand the effect one's emotions have on others.

Active Listener

Associational leaders are sometimes the only safe place available to pastors, but the ability to listen will play out in environments beyond counseling settings. Pastors often have no sounding board for ideas or out-of-the-box strategies, and active listening from associational leaders can often be a welcome source of help.

Supportive Coach

This item was the highest rated competency response from the current research. Coaching can take many forms ranging across the prescriptive to the non-prescriptive spectrum, and associational leaders must be ready to walk alongside their churches in whatever supportive role is best for the needs of the church at the time.

Authentically Vulnerable

This proficiency is distinctive from trustworthiness in that it speaks to the relatable quality underlying the interactions an associational leader must have with their churches. There is a notable difference between an arrogant surgeon who is precise with a scalpel and a peer counselor who strikes a familial tone as they approach holistic healing, even though health is the end result for both practitioners.

Vocal Encourager

If a primary role of associational leadership is to foster and inspire collaborative expressions of the Great Commission, those same leaders must encourage churches as they adopt the charge put before them. In different seasons associational leaders will offer that encouragement from the bleachers as a bystander, at other times from the roadside as a coach, and at still other times as a co-laborer running alongside. Encouragement is a key facet of many leadership models, but none where it is more important than associational leadership.

Strategic Proficiencies

Vision Caster

Perhaps no skill is as necessary in the current age of associational life as the ability to cast a vision for truly cooperative work. Vision casting can be both motivational and instructive, and in an environment crowded with single-purpose and multi-purpose networks all vying for precious seconds of space to cast vision, it is vital for effective associations.

Strategist

The power of helping churches imagine a preferable future is greatly diminished if one cannot also help them construct a path towards that preferred future. Relying on a blend of time-tested successful models and new thinking with promise, associational leaders will be called upon to help churches intentionally engage their context.

Consultant

Considered by some a toolbox within a toolbox, consulting is a prescriptive approach of assisting churches using formalized assessments and strategies toward predetermined outcomes where success is based on defined metrics. Given that consulting specialties abound, it is incumbent on the leader within their context to determine the best methods in which to pursue training.

Leadership Multiplier (or Developer)

A key facet of biblical and secular leadership development is to train others, and yet there are few intentional efforts to train up future associational leaders. Associations should not have to bear this burden alone, but until a systemic solution is developed to assist them, local leaders must own the sole responsibility of being a “Paul” to the “Timothy” or “Titus” in their midst.

One with Contextual Understanding

There was a time in SBC life when associational leaders were the undisputed experts on their entire context, not merely the churches within their region. If churches are going to be inspired to a collective expression of the gospel, associational leaders must have the pulse of the community and intentionally devote time to the macro-level view of a context that local church leaders often cannot afford to take. This requires much time be given to conversation with leaders within a variety of domains in their community such as education, public service, first responders and marketplace leaders.

Good Communicator

Several of the proficiencies in this report depend on a leader’s ability to communicate clearly and in a compelling fashion. Beyond the end goal of communication, associational leaders will need to be adept at many different methods and platforms of communication to ensure the widest possible coverage of their intended message across generational differences and communicative preferences of their churches.

Appendix 6

Sample AMS Job Descriptions

Sample Job Description for AMS in Metropolitan Area

Roles

The AMS is responsible for helping *healthy leaders lead healthy churches to get on board with God's mission through the Sample Baptist Association (hereinafter known as "SBA")*. This includes primary focus and strategic development in the following three areas:

1. **Developing Healthy Pastors.** The AMS will pursue SBA pastors (as they are willing) and offer coaching, mentoring, and leadership development in these four areas: personally, spiritually, relationally, and missionally.
2. **Developing Healthy Churches.** The AMS will assist and equip pastors in assessing and improving the overall health of their churches.
3. **Leading in Missional Engagement.** The AMS will assist and equip pastors to take the next step in missional engagement with their communities and suited to the strengths of the congregation and the needs of the context.

Responsibilities

1. **Provide missionary leadership.** Lead the entire association of churches to develop a mission strategy for SBA with particular emphasis on church planting. The AMS will help SBA churches maintain a missions perspective; instigate or start new work; establish points of witness; involve all program organizations in missions work; interpret to SBA the needs of people in the SBA's territory for evangelism, ministry, or missions attention; lead in enlisting, placing, training, and supervising volunteers in missions, and in developing missions strategy for SBA.
2. **Provide tools and metrics to gauge health for pastors and churches.** The AMS will research and provide tools to help pastors assess the health of their own lives and the health of their congregations.
3. **Work with SEND City.** The DML will be a strategic partner with the Send City Missionary (SCM) and Church Planting Catalyst (CPC) to ensure healthy church planters leading healthy church plants to fulfill God's mission through SBA. Once new churches are planted, the role of SCM and CPC diminish and the AMS becomes more prominent. The AMS will help the church planter navigate these changes with ongoing mission help, strategy, and leadership development.
4. **Work with pastors.** Help coach and mentor SBA pastors and church planters to greater spiritual, personal, relational, and missional health. Additionally, the AMS will assist in

church/pastor conflicts, confer with pastors wanting to move or considering a move, orient new pastors in SBA, develop pastoral support systems, provide growth opportunities for pastors.

5. **Work with churches.** Help churches to develop a commitment to church planting and missional involvement in their communities; work with pastor search committees; and be a resource to churches. After the first year of initial visits to SBA churches, the AMS should devote no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of his Sundays to visit SBA churches for ceremonial or functional visits, or for pulpit supply.
6. **Strengthen relationships among churches.** Encourage SBA to be a family of healthy churches or a network through which churches mutually give and receive assistance, foster fellowship and mutual commitments among churches of SBA, lead churches to develop a sufficient degree of unity in faith and practice to enhance their fellowship and working together; and create an environment in which healthy churches want to be on mission together.
7. **Work with the association's organizational leaders.** Lead SBA to organize appropriately to carry out objectives of SBA; work with various committees and officers of SBA; and work with SBA Associational Leadership Team and program organizational leaders to develop a leadership team. The AMS will oversee the annual SBA meetings to ensure excellence and to promote SBA's mission.
8. **Maintain denominational and other external relationships.** Relate as appropriate to other associations, state conventions, Southern Baptist Conventions, other Baptist bodies and other denominations or religious bodies; business, social, educational and welfare agencies; and city, county, state and national governments. Interpret the denomination to churches and churches to the denomination.
9. **Provide general leadership and administration.** Give general leadership in all aspects of SBA life; establish priorities for allocating time, money and other resources; administer processes such as planning, organizing, communicating, training, and evaluating.
10. **Manage the office, business affairs and supervise staff.** This includes office management, oversee and improve all associational communications, staff supervision, financial management, property management, legal affairs, purchasing, and serving as a general resource person for denominational information.

Qualifications

1. A born-again believer in Jesus Christ.
2. A person with proven leadership ability; and with executive qualities sufficient for the direction of the Association and the ability to assist in the budget programs and personnel management.

3. Degrees from college and a seminary affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention are preferred; other postgraduate study desirable.
4. Experience which demonstrates leadership and executive qualities sufficient for the direction of the varied programs and staff of SBA.
5. Proven ability in simple business administration procedures.
6. Skills in coaching individuals and groups.
7. Loyal to, and have a working familiarity with, the program of the Southern Baptist Convention and the State Convention agencies.
8. Be a member of, and loyal to, a member church of SBA.

Election

The Associational Mission Strategist shall be called by SBA upon the recommendation of the Search Team.

Relationships

1. Responsible to the Administrative Leadership Team to whom he shall report at regular meeting times.
2. Administer all policies and instructions of SBA.
3. Coordinate the work of the SBA staff, teams, and others who participate in SBA programs.
4. Provide for supervision of all employees of SBA in their assigned duties.
5. Conduct SBA staff meetings as required.
6. Conduct appropriate meetings of all office personnel for planning, coordination, and devotion.
7. Serve as *ex officio* member of all teams.
8. Inform the Administrative Leadership Team in advance of all absences from the regular work schedule.
9. Because of the important, time-consuming responsibilities of this position, interim work in any church is not permitted.
10. Pulpit supply in churches on Sunday is expected, but not to exceed more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of total Sundays in any particular year. The remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Sundays the AMS will be free to participate in church life at his home church within SBA.

Sample Job Description for AMS in Small Town/Rural Area

I. Position Assignment

- a. Title:
 - i. Associational Mission Strategist (further referred to as the AMS)
- b. Election:
 - i. The AMS shall be employed by the Association only after recommendation by the Personnel Committee (and approval by the Executive Board).
- c. Duration:
 - i. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time. If, at any time, the Association or AMS wishes to terminate this agreement, a thirty (30) day notice shall be given by the AMS, and sixty (60) day notice by the Association.

II. Personnel Policies Related to AMS

- a. Financial Compensation:
 - i. The financial agreement shall be as agreed upon by the last annual session of the Association, or as modified by the Executive Board.
 - ii. All money received by the AMS for supply work from pastors and churches within the Association, all money received for his services in conducting funerals and weddings, and all personal gifts shall be kept by the AMS.
- b. Vacation:
 - i. The AMS shall be granted a vacation each year with pay; two (2) weeks the first five (5) years, one (1) additional day for each year's service beyond five (5) years, with total not to exceed four (4) weeks vacation.
 - ii. Vacation periods are to be taken at times agreed upon by the AMS and the Personnel Committee for any vacation time exceeding one (1) day.
- c. Supply Policy:
 - i. The AMS shall be permitted to serve as interim pastor of any member church within the Association for a period up to three (3) months whenever a pastoral vacancy occurs. The Personnel Committee may approve extensions to the initial three (3) months on a case by case basis.
 - ii. Unless he is serving as interim pastor, the AMS shall not supply in any one church within the Association more than four (4) times in one (1) year without the approval of the Personnel Committee or the Executive Board.
- d. Outside Activities:
 - i. The AMS shall be permitted to participate in two (2) revivals and/or Missions Conferences each year outside of the Association.
 - ii. He shall be permitted to participate in other activities outside the Association as approved by the Personnel Committee or the Executive Board.
- e. Accountability:
 - i. The AMS shall work under the direction of the Executive Board of the Association and the Personnel Committee. The Executive Board will be the

final authority in all matters pertaining to the AMS or the Personnel Committee.

- ii. The AMS shall provide a written report to the Association at the fall semi-annual meeting.

III. Responsibilities

- a. Minister to Churches and Church Leaders
 - i. Unless serving as an Interim Pastor, the AMS shall visit each member church at least once per calendar year during regular scheduled services.
 - ii. Be available to come alongside Association Pastors and their families to assist them in times of crisis as well as to be an encourager to our pastors and their families.
 - iii. Serve as a consultant for church committees, churches without pastors, pastor search committees and other church needs as requested.
- b. Mission / Ministry Strategist
 - i. Cooperate with the Church Mobilization Team in supervising, planning, and directing the work of the Association Missions program.
 - ii. Serve as a consultant to churches who desire help in developing mission / ministry strategies.
 - iii. Interpret to the churches the needs of persons in areas of the Association for evangelism, ministry, and missions attention.
- c. Church Planting Catalyst
 - i. Work directly with individual churches to assist and reinforce their efforts in church planting.
 - ii. Consult and advise the Church Planting Team as needed.
 - iii. Develop a comprehensive strategy for the successful planting of new churches within the geographic region.
- d. General Leader
 - i. Work to strengthen relationships among churches, encouraging congregations to become a family of churches.
 - ii. Provide office management, supervising all staff and volunteers of the Association.
 - iii. Serve as the general contact person for the Association.
- e. Denominational Liaison
 - i. Support and promote the programs / ministries of the Association, the State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

IV. Qualifications

- a. Spiritual Qualifications
 - i. Must meet the biblical qualifications of a gospel minister as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

b. Other Qualifications

- i. Hold to the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as his statement of faith.
- ii. Be a man called of God and fully committed to denominational service.
- iii. Possess experience and/or educational qualifications such that he will be able to effectively carry out his duties as AMS.

Appendix 7

SBCAL Compensation Study Results (2017)

In 2017, the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders conducted a compensation study of associational mission strategists across the Southern Baptist Convention, with 175 AMSs participating in the study. The results that follow can be used as a resource as the Search Team seeks to develop a compensation package for your next AMS.

Summary of Results:

- 83% of respondents indicated that they served as a full-time AMS.
- Of those who serve part-time:
 - Approximately 60% also serve in another ministry vocation.
 - Approximately 25% also serve as a Senior Pastor.
 - Approximately 15% also work in a secular vocation.
- 88% of respondents were at least 50 years old.
- 80% of respondents had earned at least a Master’s degree.

Annual Gross Salary (Including Housing, Before Taxes)

Annual Gross Salary Range	% of Full-Time AMSs	% of Part-Time AMSs
Under \$10,000	0.0%	10.7%
\$10,000-\$19,999	0.0%	7.1%
\$20,000-\$29,999	5.1%	35.7%
\$30,000-\$39,999	5.1%	21.4%
\$40,000-\$49,999	15.2%	21.4%
\$50,000-\$59,999	10.8%	0.0%
\$60,000-\$69,999	29.9%	3.6%
\$70,000-\$79,999	18.8%	0.0%
\$80,000-\$89,999	10.1%	0.0%
\$90,000-\$99,999	5.8%	0.0%
Over \$100,000	0.0%	0.0%

Benefits Provided By Association

Benefit	% of Full-Time AMSs	% of Part-Time AMSs
Health Insurance	65.9%	25.0%
Retirement	81.9%	53.6%
Life Insurance	51.5%	14.3%
Disability Insurance	43.5%	7.1%
Paid Vacation	94.2%	67.9%
Paid Sick Leave	77.5%	42.9%
None of the Above	1.5%	7.1%

Average Salary Range By Number of Churches in Association

Association Size	Salary Range
Less than 20	\$20,000-\$29,999
20-39	\$40,000-\$49,999
40-69	\$60,000-\$69,999
70-89	\$70,000-\$79,999
90+	\$70,000-\$79,999

Average Salary Range By Associational Annual Budget

Annual Budget	Salary Range
Under \$30,000	\$10,000-\$19,999
\$30,000-\$49,999	\$20,000-\$29,999
\$50,000-\$74,999	\$20,000-\$29,999
\$75,000-\$99,999	\$30,000-\$39,999
\$100,000-\$149,999	\$50,000-\$59,999
\$150,000-\$199,999	\$60,000-\$69,999
\$200,000-\$299,999	\$70,000-\$79,999
\$300,000-\$499,999	\$80,000-\$89,999
\$500,000+	\$90,000-\$99,999

Appendix 8

Sample Reference Release Form

It is imperative for the AMS Search Team to have written permission from any individual on whom references are being collected. The following form can be used to secure such permission.

I hereby authorize _____ Baptist Association to verify all information contained in my application or other written communications, including all former churches in which I have served as a pastor or other staff member, been a member or been ordained.

I recognize that this verification process will include contacts with former church offices, members, pastoral colleagues, association and state convention personnel, as well as other business and professional references.

I further authorize that any personnel at former places of employment, churches or references may disclose any and all information regarding my work history, personal characteristics, salary, work habits or other areas of importance to this organization.

Furthermore, I waive the right to take legal action against the aforementioned churches, their members and officers or references for releasing such requested information.

I understand this authorization form and agree to the release and verification of the aforementioned information.

Candidate's signature: _____ Date: _____

This document is for **reference purposes only**, and is not a substitute for professional legal assistance.

Appendix 9

Suggested Questions for Reference Checks

In talking with references about potential candidates, assure them that all their comments will be held in strictest confidence. Ask them for an honest assessment of whether they believe the candidate would be an appropriate “match” for the association. Use these questions as guidelines only. Develop your own set of questions relative to your association and its leadership needs.

1. How long have you known the candidate?
2. How would you characterize your relationship with the candidate? Is he a personal friend, professional acquaintance, former student, et cetera?
3. Please describe the candidate’s leadership style.
4. Do you think the candidate has the appropriate gifts and/or personality for associational ministry? Why?
5. How do you think the candidate’s ministry experience up to now would prepare him for associational ministry?
6. What denominational experience or involvement beyond the local church does the candidate have that would be good preparation for associational ministry?
7. Would there be any reservations or concerns you would have about calling the candidate to be associational mission strategist? Please be specific.
8. How would you rate the candidate in terms of his being able to cast a vision before the people and earn widespread support of, and involvement in, bringing that vision to reality?
9. How does the candidate’s family “fit” into his ministry?

Appendix 10

Associational Information Packet

After the AMS Search Team has narrowed the focus of its search to two or three candidates, each candidate should be sent a packet of information about the association. Use the following list as suggestions for items to include in the packet:

- Associational profile developed by AMS Search Team
- Associational vision and mission statements
- Associational guiding documents
- Recent budget report(s)
- Current associational budget
- Informational packet from local chamber of commerce
- Brochures on local historical places of note
- Most recent associational annual report
- Strategy plans of the association
- Current AMS job description
- AMS profile developed by the Search Team
- Photograph of associational resource center
- Associational map showing church locations
- Associational history

Appendix 11

Legal and Credit Information Release

It is imperative for the AMS Search Team to have written permission from any individual on whom legal and credit information is being collected. The following form can be used to secure such permission. It is often wise to obtain such information not only on candidates but also on their spouses. Separate release forms should be used for each individual. In some states this form may need to be notarized.

I hereby authorize _____ Baptist Association to check my credit and legal history with all appropriate sources. Such information may be obtained for the years of _____ to the present.

Candidate's name: _____

Other names that the candidate has used, if appropriate: _____

Candidate's driver's license number: _____ State: _____

Candidate's Social Security number: _____

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 12

Potential Questions for Initial Interview

In the initial interview with each of the top two or three candidates, the Search Team will want to ask questions that seek to gather or confirm information. Use the following questions as your team seeks to develop a list of questions for this initial interview.

1. Please share with us your conversion and call to the ministry.
2. Please share with us your sense of calling to associational ministry.
3. What personal strengths do you possess that you think might be appropriate for the role of associational mission strategist?
4. What kinds of involvement do you currently have in your association?
5. What are your beliefs about Scripture—its authority and relevance for life today?
6. Where does your family fit into your decisions about, and involvement in, the ministry?
7. What are your beliefs concerning the basic doctrines outlined in “The Baptist Faith and Message?”
8. Who are your closest friends and relationships?

Appendix 13

Potential Questions for Subsequent Interviews with the Top Candidate

1. Describe experiences in your spiritual journey that have impressed you with a mission calling. How did you respond to these experiences?
2. Describe an experience in which you became totally dependent on God's provision for you and your future.
3. Share an occasion in which you faced a conflict with a valued person and how you resolved it.
4. What has been the highlight of your ministry so far? Why?
5. Because you will be working with a variety of churches, describe an experience that accomplished kingdom work and in which you served as a leader in a local church.
6. Describe an experience in which you had a vision, shared this vision, and it became a reality.
7. Describe a situation in which there was diversity of thinking. How did you help bring about unity and action in this situation?
8. When was the last time you created an opportunity out of an obstacle? How did you create that opportunity?
9. Describe an unpleasant task that you completed. Why was it unpleasant? How did you handle it?
10. How wide is your circle of friends? About what percentage of these friendships did you initiate?
11. Describe a situation in which someone you were leading to accept a ministry failed to complete the task. Were there errors in your judgment? What did you learn from the experience?
12. Describe a time in which your ministry made extraordinary demands on you. How did you handle the multiple demands?
13. What convictions do you and your spouse share regarding your mutual roles in ministry? How did you arrive at these convictions?
14. (If the candidate is a pastor) How have you motivated your congregation to commit to growth goals? How did you lead your church to achieve these goals?

15. How have you developed accountability in your personal life and ministry setting?
16. Describe a new church start that you were involved in.
17. Share about a mission trip that you took part in.
18. What do you see as the role of the AMS in this association?
19. We have many volunteers in this association. How do you relate to men and women in positions of ministry?
20. This association has a paid staff. How would you work with a paid staff to accomplish the ministry of the association?
21. Tell us your experience in and/or your vision for keeping an association focused on accomplishing its mission through strategic planning.
22. How would you support the congregations in this association to be Great Commission congregations?
23. This association is composed of people with varying theological beliefs. How would you relate to all the people in the association?

