VI.   Chartered Branch Operations

On January 1, a newly chartered branch joins existing chartered branches in conducting the full scope of branch operations. This section of the Manual is geared to help branches deliver consistent performance. It identifies and classifies key operating activities into the categories below, indicates whether the activity is an operating requirement, a legal/regulatory requirement or mostly helpful, and provides guidance.

Branch Administration	Programs	Communications & Marketing
Branch Officer Development	Succession Planning	Finance

A.   Branch Administration

Strong branch administration and leadership will grow and sustain a branch.

1. Branch Governance: The elected officers required by ASALH manage the branch. The branch is governed by elected officers, who are accountable for meeting expected governance and management standards discussed throughout this Manual and as may be added by ASALH. A minimum of five (5) elected officers are required. A Parliamentarian is also required, but this position is appointed by the Branch President. Additional officers may be elected but positions beyond the five stipulated by ASALH must be approved by the VPM and identified in the constitution and bylaws. Refer to the Model Constitution and Bylaws (Appendix 3) for more information.

2. Officer Installation Ceremony: This is an optional activity that can build pride. A branch may choose to hold a formal installation ceremony to thank out-going officers and to welcome new officers. The ceremony is best scheduled for the January meeting when outgoing officers would swear-in the in-coming officers. Guidance on holding an installation ceremony can be found on the website at https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SAMPLE-INSTALLATION-OF-OFFICERS-CEREMONY-officer-descriptions-included.pdf

3. <u>Scheduling Conflicts:</u> <u>Branches are expected to observe the ASALH calendar.</u> Page 8 of this Manual shows the ASALH Calendar of Events and Activities. Branches must avoid scheduling meetings or other events that would conflict with this calendar or any other activity announced by ASALH. If a branch proposes a program that conflicts with the ASALH schedule, ASALH has the right to ask the Branch President to reschedule the activity.

4. <u>Privacy:</u> <u>Branches must comply with privacy laws and make the issue of privacy a priority.</u> Members should expect to have their privacy rights respected. Branches must ensure that the information of members is not passed on to a third party without members' consent unless it is required by law. The branch is responsible for securing members' personal information and using it only for the purpose it was provided.

5. <u>Branch Membership Meetings:</u> <u>These are activities required by ASALH.</u>
a. *Meetings for branch members are convened by the VPM as follows:*
   - Four (4) general meetings during the year with the remainder focused on specific issues or stakeholder groups, such as, branch presidents.
   - Time is 8:00 – 9:00 pm; agendas are emailed and posted on the website.
   - At least one member of each organizing and chartered branch is required to attend the general meetings.
   - Invitees to special issue/stakeholder meetings must make every effort to attend.
   - Any member may attend any scheduled meeting, with the understanding that the special issue/stakeholder meetings are highly focused.
   - Attendees have the responsibility to disseminate the information discussed, as needed.
b. *Branch meetings are convened by elected branch officers as follows:*
   - A minimum of four (4) membership meetings per year.
   - Annual meeting, preferably in the fall, to elect new officers, approve budget and conduct other business.
   - Meetings convened either in person or virtually.
   - Only active members of the branch can vote on motions.
   - Meetings are open to all members. Members may attend branch committee meetings as observers.
   - Meeting proceedings must be recorded[11].
   - Records of meetings must be retained indefinitely.

---

[11]Sample minutes are located on the website at: https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Meeting-Minutes-Sample.pdf

6. Change in Circumstance: This is an administrative process to update records. Branches are required to promptly report any change in status.

    a. An established branch that wants to change its defined geographic area of service must submit a request for approval to the VPM. If approved by the MC, it proceeds to the EC for final approval before the physical location can be redefined.

    b. Branches must submit the names of all officers by January 1 each year and any officer changes within 15 days of the change using this form: https://asalh.org/members/branch-directory/branch-officers-and-officers-changes/. In addition the photo of a new president must be submitted at https://asalh.org/members/branch-president-photo-submission/

    c. A change of branch address must be filed with the ED as soon as it is known and with the appropriate federal and state agency relative to a 501(c) 3 designation or EIN registration.

7. Branch Annual Reports: The reports are required for annual planning and tax filings.

Each branch must submit the following annual reports on the due dates shown.

Table 7: Branch Annual Report Due Dates

Report Required	What's In It	Due Date	How to Submit
Annual Financial Report	Typical financial statement by revenue and expense categories for the year just ended.	March 31	Link

Data from programmatic reports are used to assess the overall health of ASALH, plan, make budgetary decisions and fundraise. Relative to fundraising, these data are combined with ASALH National's data to support the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) application, which drives the report's March 31 due date. CFC is a workplace philanthropic program that provides federal employees the opportunity to support various causes.

Data from financial reports are combined with data of ASALH National to file a consolidated 990 Tax Return. The 990 filing is required under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code for 501 (c) 3 organizations. Given the purpose of the reports, it is important that branches submit documents that are complete, accurate and timely to enhance fundraising opportunity and avoid tax penalty.

As the official representative of the branch, the President is accountable for accurate and timely submissions. The President may work directly with other officers to satisfy the requirement.

8. Membership Level: <u>ASALH requires that chartered branches maintain a minimum of 15 members including at least one institutional member to be considered in good standing.</u>

ASALH has established a minimum membership level of 15 for chartered branches based on the responsibilities that a branch must carry out and the experience with branches that have fewer members. Generally, with fewer members, a branch struggles to field candidates for elections and fill other volunteer roles, obtain a quorum for meetings, and support branch programs. Fewer members translate to fewer resources and less can be accomplished.

ASALH employs a tiered membership model at both the national and branch level. This requires an institutional member as one of the 15 branch members. is a common and increasingly popular membership model.   benefits an entire organization as opposed to an individual. This model is increasingly more common among associations for its potential to expose the branch to a broader market segment, diversify the approach to decision-making, create a meaningful partnership in research, and provide financial contributions.

9. Lift Every Voice and Sing: <u>This song is required for official branch events.</u> This song, known as the "Black national anthem" was adopted by the Executive Council for all official events held by the ASALH collective. Branches are expected to incorporate it into their programs; however, it is currently not a compliance requirement.

10. ASALH Publications: <u>Branches are expected to support works published by ASALH.</u> Branches may review the publications available for sale and their descriptions at https://asalh.org/document-category/publications/. A discount is offered on books and posters purchased in bulk. The discount varies by publication and a bulk purchase consists of 10 or more of the same item.

In addition, a discount is also offered on the ASALH store for merchandise purchased in bulk.

11. Website: An essential and recommended asset.

A website is effectively the gateway into an organization and today it is the most important administrative asset for sharing information. Through the website, a branch can communicate with members and help promote its programs and events to the general public.

Each branch is encouraged to launch its own website. Many small organizations create their websites on the Facebook (now Meta) platform. This is a no-cost option but has a downside in that not everyone subscribes to Facebook. There are many online articles that show how to create a Facebook site should a branch decide to pursue this option. Outside of Facebook, website creation is a very technical undertaking and branches should choose an experienced and well-respected web designer to work with.

Website architecture is constantly evolving but for now, the general parameters recommended for a branch website are:

- Present the branch logo appropriate to the branch status as discussed on page 35.
- Keep it simple and easy to use.
- Keep content and design current to be useful and not detract from the ASALH brand.
- Provide an email address that is tied to the branch instead of a personal email, to reduce exposure to scams.
- Designate someone to monitor the email account for messages and provide follow-up.
- Include at a minimum, the following headers with appropriate content.

Table 8: Website Content

Home	ASALH	About Us (Branch)	Events	Membership	Programs
Dynamic Landing Page	Describe the National Organization About ASALH ASALH site	Mission Vision History Elected Officers Constitution & Bylaws Contact	Calendar Branch, national, and partner events	Benefits Promote membership Join/renew ASALH member Join/renew Branch member Members Only Section	Programs

For branches with insufficient resources to create and maintain a website, ASALH offers support by way of a dedicated page hosted on its website. The template for a branch page is as follows:

- About Us (branch history; elected officers; constitution & bylaws and contact)
- Calendar (Events, description of events, and how to attend)
- Branch Membership (Benefits, Join)

Branches that need to have their websites hosted by ASALH must submit a request along with the content listed for the branch page template to: VPM at _____. It is the responsibility of the branch to keep the website current by providing updates to the VPM.

ASALH commits to exploring a single solution software provider that would optimally allow individual branches to opt into the system through a subscription. This system provide integrated content management, such as, website, membership, and event registration database.

12. Toolkits: These are resources for branches.
ASALH provides information in the form of toolkits to support different areas of branch development. Toolkits are currently available in the areas identified below:

Table 9: Toolkits

Annual Meeting and Conference media	https://asalh.org/conference/media-toolkit/
Branch History	Appendix 7 provides a template for writing branch history
Black History Festival	https://asalh.org/festival/media-toolkit/
Planning Branch Events	https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Guide-for-Planning-Branch-Events...Committee-Functions-update.pdf
Media Toolkit	https://asalh.org/brand/
Membership Recruitment: • Institutional member recruitment • Churches rejoin	https://asalh.org/branch-members-call/
Study guide for the Book "The Mis-Education of the Negro" by Carter G. Woodson	https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/final-woodson-mis-education-study-guide-2008.pdf

13. Branch Privileges: This describes benefits to Branches.

As advocates for ASALH in their communities, branches enjoy a few privileges:

- Full privileges to serve as ASALH's local representatives.
- A complimentary print copy of the Journal for branch members.
- Access to scholars from the Speakers Bureau for branch events at no charge.
- Access to ASALH National for advice and support.
- Access to ASALH programs that can be used to engage and recognize members with certificates, such as, *The Black Family* at https://asalh.org/family-history/
- Use of ASALH's name and logo as an affiliate, for official branch activities.
- Use of branch membership list, for official branch business.
- Complimentary listing of branch activities on ASALH's website.

14. Death Notices: To provide expressions of sympathy.

Condolences are issued through the Office of Executive Director on the passing of members, family members of members, or close personal or professional individuals of the branch. Upon notification and if contact information is provided, ASALH will send expressions of sympathy to the next of kin. For deceased persons in any of the categories above, please submit the remembrance form: https://asalh.org/members/asalh-member-remembrance/

15. Information Request: This relates to member services and external relations.

To contact ASALH about specific items, such as, promoting your book on the website, requesting a news/information posting on the website, or for general inquiries, please submit the information request form: https://asalh.org/contact-us/

16. Records Management: This is to preserve records for legal and historical purpose. Branches must implement a records management system, which is the administration of records from their creation to disposal. Valuable records must be maintained in an orderly manner and for a prescribed period to have them readily accessible for business operations and to comply with regulatory and ASALH requirements. The benefits of records management include easy retrieval, preservation of knowledge, and elimination of non-essential records and clutter.

    a. Records Identification - Branches should develop rules to identify and track records to ensure that the right document is stored. For instance, frequently generated official documents such as minutes, committee reports, orientation documents and forms can be tracked for version

control. Often used controls include clear titles indicating the stage of the document, such as, draft 2 or final draft, date, authorization status, and original or copy.

The records placed in the records management system must have certain properties:
i. Authentic (it is what it says it is).
ii. Reliable (full and accurate representation of whatever it attests to).
iii. Integrity (complete and unaltered).
iv. Be of value from research, administrative, legal and fiscal perspective.
The records themselves can be either in paper or electronic format. Electronic records include document files, databases, spreadsheets, emails, and internet documents (website).

b. Records Storage: The storage system may be manual, such as, filing cabinets, electronic or a combination of both. Each branch should decide on a storage system that suits its circumstances and resources (space availability or computers). The system should be secure, functional, accurate, reliable and user-friendly.

The way in which records are stored, whether in paper or electronic format, may depend on:
i. the purpose, ii. the type, iii. How long the records must be kept, and iv. Access needs.

Records must be stored at a designated place, with the Secretary having custody of all non-financial records and the Treasurer for all financial records. If these Officers do not personally have sufficient or appropriate space, records can be stored elsewhere or with a commercial storage company for a fee. The custodian of paper and electronic records should be the same. Electronic records must be backed up on a hard drive and/or stored in the cloud.

c. Records Retention - Each record or document that the branch receives or transmits has a lifecycle. A retention schedule is the best way to ensure that records of value are maintained. Some records must be retained permanently either for historical value or by government regulations. A retention schedule is shown as Appendix 6.

d. Records Disposal: Records may be destroyed after their retention period has expired per the retention schedule. No records should be destroyed without the authorization of designated custodian. Some libraries, university related or public, may value branch records pertaining to the social history of the region. The branch may consider an arrangement to have the library permanently store some of their records.

B.   Programs

Branches execute a combination of national and local programs.

1. National Programming: Branches are required to fully execute National Programs. ASALH has three (3) national programs to promote its vision and mission through events that celebrate historical milestones and bring awareness to the role of African Americans in the American experience. Each branch must hold a public event to recognize these three programs:

a. Black History Month (BHM) every February, which may be held in conjunction with ASALH 's BHM Virtual Festival. (The branch can purchase the annual BHM theme materials for this event).
b. Founders 'Day every September, on or around the official founding on September 9).
c. Woodson's birthday every December on or around the official birthdate of December 19

As an incentive, all branches that submit Carter G. Woodson birthday events by October 15 will receive a complimentary kit with posters and bulletin.

2. Speakers Bureau: This is a resource for branches.
ASALH provides branches access to the Speakers Bureau as a resource for events, programs and meetings. Speakers are provided free of charge and the speakers list is kept up-to-date. For more information or to request a speaker, visit https://asalh.org/speakers-bureau/

3. Other Branch Programs: -These are suggested activities to support branch needs.
Each branch has flexibility to conduct branch business, including organized activities outside of the three national programs, provided they conform to ASALH's mission. The purpose of the activity can run the gamut from raising funds to engaging members. The type of event can vary from literary to purely social, recurring or one-offs, or held in partnership with ASALH, other branches or local institutions. A guide for planning events is located at https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Guide-for-Planning-Branch-Events...Committee-Functions-update.pdf

Table 10: Suggested Programs

Hold a branch aniversary	Hold a local program and secure a speaker from ASALH Speakers' Bureau (Encourage others to use the Speakers' Bureau.).	Organize group attendance to Annual Conference
Organize trips to local Black history sites.	Conduct a student bowl on African American History with a local school/college.	Sell books published by ASALH Press (branch buys books in bulk at a discount).
Conduct author book talks/signings.	Conduct a local reading of Carter G. Woodson's manuscript *Appeal*	Conduct Woodson Franklin Talks
Conduct a reading of The Mis-Education of the Negro using the official study guide at https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/final-woodson-mis-education-study-guide-2008.pdf		
Interview veterans for the Veteran's History project, co-sponsored by *The Library of Congress*. (Inquire at Headquarters about additional veteran's collaborative programs)	Conduct a Veteran's Day project that includes the Veteran's History Project and/or programs with your local veteran's organizations	
Form partnerships with local organizations including libraries, colleges, churches, etc. for the above events or other initiatives		
An additional resource for programs is: https://asalh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SUGGESTED-PROJECTS-AND-FUNDRAISERS-FOR-ASALH-BRANCHES.pdf		

C.   Communications and Marketing

ASALH provides a platform for members/branches to keep current with the latest news from other members and branches, publicize their own news, and post and seek jobs.

1. **Publicity for Branch Activities and Member News:** This is one way that ASALH supports branches and execute a dues benefit for members.

   Branches and members can promote their news and activities without charge on the ASALH website by submitting the applicable form below:

To publicize important **branch events**—
https://asalh.org/members/branch-informer/#events

To publicize important **branch news**, submit this form—
https://asalh.org/branch-news-submit-form/

To publicize important **member news**, submit this form—
https://asalh.org/members/current-member-news-submission/

For **member event**, submit—
https://asalh.org/members/current-member-event-submission/

For **member books** with links to purchase them, submit—
https://asalh.org/submit-to-the-members-bookshelf/

To list **jobs** and see job openings—
https://asalh.org/category/job-board/

2. **Social Media:** A recommended tool to promote the branch.
Social media is a digital tool that many organizations use as an efficient way to reach and retain their audience. Prominent social media brands include such companies as Meta-Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn, and there are others.

Figure 4: Logos of popular social networking platforms

Growing a following on social media can take time and a consistent presence is required to engage and grow a base of supporters. As a tool, social media has developed broad acceptance and Meta (Facebook) is wildly popular among all demographic groups. Social media is the platform most attractive to the younger population at this time.

Organizations of all types and sizes recognize that social media is critical to reaching customers and particularly the younger demographic. They will say that their business success depends on and it has the potential to be a transformative tool for branches as well. Cost/ benefit analyses show that the cost of investing in social media platforms outweigh the cost of the investment. Moreover, the cost of social media is lower than the cost of other media.

The benefits of a social media presence most mentioned include:

40

i. Establishes and increases brand awareness.

ii. Elevates visibility of the brand, giving greater impact to its advertising/marketing efforts.

iii. Provides for immediate delivery of messages (through push communication) for promoting events and community engagement.

iv. Reaches a broad and diverse audience to attract potential customers.

v. Provides multiple communication channels for supporters to experience community that include immediate engagement, communication exchanges, live interactions, and networking.

Each branch will need to decide whether social media would make a compelling change in the direction of the branch relative to branding, member recruitment and program attendance. The branch would then have to invest in social media expertise to develop and implement a strategy tailored to its needs. This strategy would include goals to be achieved, content to post, calendar for posting, what to post, who will post, assessment of performance against goals and when to adjust goals.

Once implemented, the branch can stay connected and share the conversations that are top-of-mind for ASALH by following its tweets at https://twitter.com/asalh and reposting them.

3. **Recruit new members to maintain and grow membership:** This is a required marketing activity to achieve the stated outcome.

As a membership organization, membership growth is fundamental to sustainability and ASALH could not exist into the future without replacing the members it loses each year. And to increase its presence and impact, it must grow. Membership growth is a measuring stick of the organization's ongoing health and in Dr. Woodson's structuring of ASALH he made branches key to its long-term existence. Membership including recruitment is discussed more fully in section X.

A sample recruitment letter is shown at https://asalh.org/branch-members-call/

4. **Membership Renewal.** Branches are required to implement a renewal campaign as a way to retain members.

Each year ASALH National runs a membership renewal campaign jointly with branches during the period of October 1 - December 31 to create synergy among the organizations with the expectation that this will strengthen the outreach. Notwithstanding this renewal drive, branches are expected to recruit members throughout the year. A sample membership renewal letter is shown at https://asalh.org/branch-members-call/

5. **Marketing Plans.** A resource to support activities.

Marketing is a tool used to promote and sell products, services and ideas. The intent is to capture the attention of the targeted audience with a compelling narrative or advertisement that persuades them to take the intended action, such as, attend an event or make a purchase. To be effective, in the intended action must be performed in a specific and simple way, for example, click here.

Almost anything can be marketed, and any size organization can engage in marketing, but product and brand recognition are important factors in determining marketing success. Every major undertaking in an organization including marketing should be shaped by a strategy, which has many decision points. The strategy helps to clarify where you are, where you want to go and how to get there. A streamlined architecture of a marketing strategy may look as follows:

Table 11: Marketing Strategy for an Event

| Describe the event including the purpose.

Ensure that no other major event is scheduled that would compete with the program. | Event Name:
Event Date:
Event Times:
Event Venue/s:
Event Details: | Founder's Day Recognition

Saturday, September 10, 20—

4:00 PM

Town X Library, Room C

A Debate on the relevancy of Black History Month by the members of the Town X Debate Team. |
|---|---|---|
| Rationale for Marketing | To get as many out to hear discussion on a subject that is very relevant to our entire community. | |
| Key Event Marketing Goals | Outline the key goals of the plan. Include specific goals with actual targets. Examples: Attract at least 60 people to the event from within the community. Achieve at least 50% return attendees from the prior year. Generate greater attendance from institutional member through employees and customers. Increase attendance of members by 20% over the previous year (from 20 to 24). Target participation of members by contacting each member at least times. Increase the number of new people attending the event. Focus on a new demographic, such as, community college students who are not engaged with the branch. | |

Table 11: Marketing Strategy for an Event *(cont.)*

Audience	Define audience in specific detail, for instance, the main group of people to attract and the second group of people to attract, age, gender, where they are from, what they like, what they read/listen to, watch/engage with, etc. A vague audience will require more resources and it will be difficult to reach everybody. Examples: • Primary target audience: Active, potential, and lapsed members • Secondary target audience: College students who have not attended a branch.
Audience	Define audience in specific detail, for instance, the main group of people to attract and the second group of people to attract, age, gender, where they are from, what they like, what they read/listen to, watch/engage with, etc. A vague audience will require more resources and it will be difficult to reach everybody. Examples: • Primary target audience: Active, potential, and lapsed members • Secondary target audience: College students who have not attended a branch.

Key Message	Determine event branding and key message(s) that will be consistently used across the marketing campaign. The message can be informational or motivational (why people should attend). It must be succinct, relevant and engaging to the audience.
	
	• Brand Examples:
	   ◦ The ASALH Town X Branch logo will be used in the promotional campaign:
	   ◦ The "tag-line" will be "If we don't tell them, the world will never know!"
	   ◦ The following images will be used to promote our event: (e.g., Dr. Woodson's photo)
	• Key Message Examples:
	   ◦ Date and venue
	   ◦ Specific messages - e.g., "Dr. Woodson's Legacy as Seen by Young Leaders"
	   ◦ Event will be dynamic and thought provoking for a diverse audience.
	   ◦ Stay for Q & A and light refreshments at the end of the debate.

Table 11: Marketing Strategy for an Event *(cont.)*

Marketing Support and Partnerships	Outline marketing support (e.g. organizations to contact) and any marketing or media partners. Examples may include Town X Library, Publix Supermarket, WXY FM Radio, Town X University, website designers, social media experts, printing suppliers, etc.
Key Stakeholder - Communication Plan	Identify key stakeholders (those impacted or likely to impact the event). Identify how, what, when and who will communicate with them. For example: Stakeholder: Sponsors What: Approval for use of their logo Message: Keep them up-to-date with event progress How: Email When: Every other Friday Who: Vice President

Marketing Activities	There are several marketing tools available, and branches will have different options depending on their size and resources.
	
	Marketing Tools
	Word of mouth
	Email
	
	Publicity
	Radio Public Service
	    Announcement
	Social media
	
	Plan
	Sustained 2-month presence on
	    social media
	
	Online
	Calendar of Events Listings
	
	Marketing Materials
	Flyers, Posters
	
	Plan
	One-time distribution of flyers on
	    the college campus and at
	    community center.

Table 11: Marketing Strategy for an Event *(cont.)*

Budget	Do you have money to support this marketing and how much? Identify all income and expenses associated with the marketing plan, including cash and in-kind contributions. <table><tr><td>Income</td><td>Expenses</td></tr><tr><td>Marketing Budget</td><td>Marketing Budget:</td></tr><tr><td>Direct sponsorship by Target - $1,000</td><td>Design of Flyers by Town Designers - $500</td></tr><tr><td>In-kind sponsorship from Publix - $500</td><td>Printing by Town Printing - $250</td></tr><tr><td>In-kind sponsorship from WXY FM - $500</td><td>Refreshments by Publix - $500 Advertising by WXY FM - $500</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Total: $1,750</td></tr><tr><td>Total: $2,000</td><td>Amount raised: $250</td></tr></table>
Success	Attendance was 75 and increased 50% year-over-year, 30% of attendees were college students.
Evaluate	Review and adjust for the next marketing plan.

6. **Use of Logo:** Proper use of the logo is required.

Uniform use of ASALH's name and logo is essential for creating a global recognizable identity and to appropriately reference branches and their activities.

Branch specific logos have been created consistent with ASALH's naming convention for branches. These affiliate logos shall be deployed consistent with the following guidelines to ensure that the logo will always be visible, look attractive and used as intended:

- Identify the branch with the logo appropriate to its stage of development.
  - Organizing Branches should use the "Organizing XYZ Branch" logo.
  - Chartered Branches should use the "XYZ Branch" logo.
- The recommended placement of the logo on the branch website for the greatest prominence is in the top half of the page.
- These marks must not be altered, other than to increase or decrease the size, proportionally.
- The logo may **not** be placed on stationery or business cards for political, commercial or personal use.
- The logo may not be used in a derogatory manner.
- The logo may not be combined with any other object(s).

- Only the designated branch logo may be used on communications material, websites and promotional items.
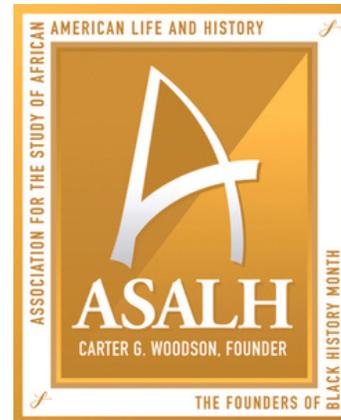- Electronic artwork is available for the Secretary, who shall monitor its use: https://asalh.org/members/branch-media-toolkit/

Figure 5: Example Use of ASALH Logo

ASALH Organizing XYZ Branch
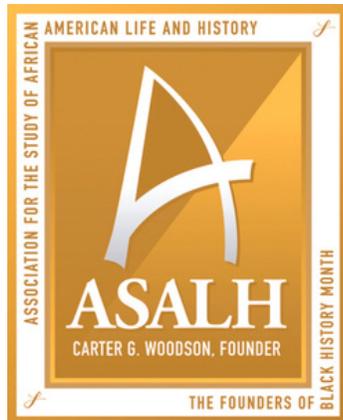
ASALH XYZ Branch

D.   Succession Planning

Succession planning: Branches are encouraged to engage in succession planning, the process to identify and develop candidates for officer and other volunteer leadership roles in the branch.

Succession planning is an effective way to grow and sustain the branch. It is perpetual because elections are ongoing. As one cycle culminates with the election of officers, the next cycle begins for identifying new candidates. With their direct experience in elective roles, branch officers are expected to take an active part in identifying and developing potential candidates.

Key elements of the process are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 6: Succession Plan Continuum

Identify Key Positions for Succession	Identify Key Skills Required	Identify Key Skills Required	Recruit potential volunteers	Provide training and orientation to volunteers
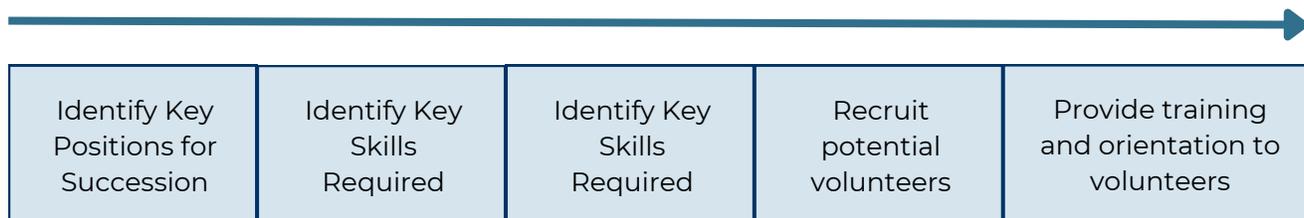
1. Identify positions - Identify the position first and then the individual(s) who would best fit that role. The objective is to identify potential candidates for key roles in advance to create a pipeline for when vacancies occur.
2. Identify skills - Use position descriptions in the Model Constitution and Bylaws to pinpoint the skills, experience and knowledge required for the key position(s). These skills may include leadership, detail focused, and problem solving.
3. Identify potential volunteers - These are individuals who have the skills, experience and knowledge to be a great addition for the role. Diversity and Inclusion are objectives in identifying candidates.
4. Recruitment - It is not always known what experiences or involvement will move a member to seek or agree to volunteer, so branch officers must use different tactics to encourage interest:
   a. Publicize volunteer opportunities so members know how they can contribute.
   b. Be flexible with scheduling, someone may not be available to welcome attendees but available for closing out the event, or two people may have to share an assignment.
   c. Directly ask and encourage specific members to help in areas where they have an interest or experience.
   d. Get to know members and encourage them to volunteer for leadership roles.
   e. Create short-term assignments, such as ad hoc committee work, for those not able to commit to long-term assignments or are incremental in their involvement.
5. Onboarding - Once great volunteers are identified, the branch must invest in them by providing a robust orientation accompanied by documentation on key branch operations.
6. Branch Peer to Peer Tips - Branches that have implemented a successful process are encouraged to broadly share their strategies with other branches.

E.   Branch Officer Development

Officer Training: Branch officers are required to attend scheduled development training.

ASALH offers leadership development training opportunities and resources for branch officers. Additional training can be expected, especially in technology. Current training includes:

Table 12: Branch Office Development

Branch workshop	A branch workshop is conducted at the Annual Conference each year, which branch representatives, not exclusively branch officers, must attend. The workshop is structured to provide the training needed to help branches perform better. The Conference also offers the opportunity for peer networking where attendees can get new ideas to take back to their communities.
Single Issue Workshop	As needed, ASALH will conduct workshops focused on a single issue, especially when it becomes evident that several branches have questions on an issue and are unsure of how to proceed. An example of this may be a workshop conducted by ASALH National's Treasurer on how to complete the Annual Financial Report.
Branch Officer Orientation	The VPM conducts a new officers orientation annually to provide an overview of ASALH, train officers about the goals and responsibilities of their positions as well as answer any questions that they have.
Branch Officer Onboarding	Per the constitution and bylaws, each branch is required to conduct an orientation to effect a smooth transfer of duties and knowledge at the branch level. Outgoing officers must conduct the orientation for new officers prior to January 1. This onboarding allows for continuity of branch operations with minimal disruption. A suggested orientation agenda is shown in the Model Constitution and Bylaws.
Branch Officer Officer Training	Beyond the orientation for branch officers, training will be offered at least once a year for this group. Continuous training is needed to reinforce prior training and increase the knowledge base of officers as they gain experience in their roles.
Monthly Branch Member Meetings	The VPM has purposed some of the monthly meetings for special focus or stakeholder training, such as, for vice presidents.
ASALH TV Offerings	Branch officers can at any time avail themselves of video trainings housed on ASALH TV, such as, a workshop on Financial Literacy. In addition, the general YouTube site has a wealth of training information on almost every topic.
Other	ASALH commits to providing training in areas that will help branch performance, using various methods including ASALH TV.

F. Finance

A strong financial management foundation and record-keeping system is key to branch stability and success. There are several inexpensive small business accounting software available today that branches may want to consider using.

1. **Employer Identification Number:** <u>This is a requirement to be a branch in good standing.</u> Each branch must apply for its own state employer identification number (EIN) within 10 days of chartering. This nine-digit number is used for filing income and payroll tax returns. Banks and financial institutions require this number to set up an account for your branch. See Appendix 5.

2. **Branch Bank Account:** <u>This is a requirement to be a branch in good standing.</u> A checking account, preferably interest bearing, must be established in the name of the branch within 15 days of receiving an EIN. The branch must use its own EIN (not an individual's SSN) to establish an account. The branch president and treasurer are the authorized signers. Both signatures are required for payments of $2,500.00 or more.

Below are best practices for maintaining a branch checking account:
   a. Never place the branch's money in any officer's personal checking account. This would constitute co-mingling of funds and could result in tax problems for the officer.
   b. A good control over cash disbursements is to require two signatures on every check or perhaps on checks over a certain pre-determined dollar amount, as indicated above.
   c. Check signers should not be responsible for reconciling the checkbook.
   d. For well-funded branches, determine if excess cash should be invested in safe investments (savings account, money market account, or certificate of deposit (CD)) if those instruments pay a higher interest than the checking account.

3. Cash Management: This provides best practice for branch cash management.
   a. *Cash Journals* - The branch will maintain two cash journals:
      - Cash Receipts Journal used to summarize all cash receipts.
      - Cash Disbursements Journal used to summarize all cash disbursements. These journals are used for both the cash and accrual method of accounting. Even small organizations have now automated this journal entry process with software, such as, *QuickBooks* or similar programs. For branches with a total of 50 or fewer transactions per year, a checkbook is sufficient.
   b. Internal controls over cash transactions.
      Internal controls are procedures adopted within an organization to safeguard its assets and check the accuracy and reliability of its accounting data. Strong internal controls can help minimize the possibility of misappropriation of assets or misstatement of accounts while increasing the likelihood of early detection if they do occur.

Basic internal cash management and accounting controls are reflected below:

i. Checks should be restrictively endorsed. Spell out the full name of the branch (not an acronym), write the branch's bank account number, write the restrictive endorsement "For Deposit Only".

ii. Deposit check/cash as soon as possible after receipt. Make a copy of the check, once the deposit is made, attach the stamped deposit slip to a copy of the check. Make a note about the purpose of the monies and then attach the stamped receipt.

iii. Promptly record these transactions in the cash receipt journal. This step helps to detect errors made by either the branch or bank and keeps financial records current.

iv. Documentation supporting the deposit must be maintained on file for audit and legal purposes in compliance with the records management requirement.

v. Invoices must be approved with a signature by the President before a check is issued.

vi. Checks should always be written to a specific payee.

vii. Supporting documentation, such as, invoices or letters, should be attached to a copy of every check, then filed after issuance of the check. Mark or stamp all invoices "PAID" to avoid duplicate payment.

viii. Payments should be made by check, electronically, or in cash (exception is organizing branch who should use cashier's check or money order) to decrease the likelihood of misappropriation and to provide an audit trail.

ix. The treasurer of the branch should review the canceled checks and entries on the bank statement and investigate any suspicious payments.

x. The treasurer shall ensure that bank statements are reconciled against journals or checkbooks on a monthly basis. A timely reconciliation alerts the branch of any differences between its records and the cash transactions processed by its bank. Any discrepancies should be investigated immediately.

xi. Internal controls are strengthened if the budget and finance committee reviews the monthly cash reconciliation to ensure that the transactions were authorized.

4. **Fundraising:** This is an essential and encouraged activity.

Most nonprofit organizations must actively raise funds to support their needs. Fundraising will differ across branches depending on factors, such as, local interests and the type of strategy the branch can plan and execute. Options for fundraising generally available to community organizations include:

    a. Ticket sales. This includes the sale of tickets for entry to an event, for food, or for an auction. Check with your state and local jurisdiction to determine if there is any special licensing or authorization needed for ticket sales.

    b. Sponsorships. Many national and local companies sponsor activities aligned with their brand as a way to market products while doing good. In exchange, the sponsor's name is prominently displayed at the event (program, website, apparel, and giveaways). Sponsorship amounts will depend on the company's sponsorship budget, the expected return on brand recognition and sales, and its social objectives.

    The process to obtain a sponsorship is straightforward. Branches must research a potential sponsor's reputation, interest, and past sponsorships to know if it is a good fit. Then tailor the branch's ask to the company's interest to increase the chance for a favorable response. Another reason to research the company is that the right sponsor from a respected brand may help to increase ASALH's recognition. At the same time, a perceived conflict between ASALH's values and a sponsor's brand could detract from the organization's image and lessen public support.

    The branch will want to:
    ii. Request funding at least six (6) months in advance as sponsorship budgets are allocated very early in the company's business year. Sponsors also tend to support the same event from year-to-year, so getting locked in with a sponsor should be an objective.

    iii. Send a thank-you to the company for the sponsorship immediately after it is received. The branch can also send a follow-up acknowledgement with an update on the funded activity after it has occurred.

iv. Ensure that sponsors or outside speakers who participate in branch activities do not promote political agendas.

A sample sponsorship request letter is shown as **Appendix 8.**

d. Contributions. These are charitable donations and they are secured in a way similar to sponsorship.

A sample contribution request letter is shown as **Appendix 9.**

e. Grants. Foundations and government-related organizations fund projects they support with grants. A branch is more likely to receive grants from local organizations because of its size and community-based outreach.   However, funding opportunities for community-based organizations can improve in certain social climates.

Grants must be applied for with an application that leaves a strong impression as the awards process is typically competitive. Usually, the award is tied to a specific cause, evaluated on outcomes, and has a defined deliverable and timeline.

The internet offers a great deal of data on grants and a resource for comprehensive and current information is https://www.grantwatch.com/ Like sponsorships, it is incumbent upon the branch to research grantors and grant requirements to decide where the opportunities are.

When successful in obtaining a grant, it is critical that the branch complies with all stated requirements to retain eligibility to apply for grants in the future.

ASALH advises that a branch should obtain a 501 (c) 3 designation if it intends to seek grants as a revenue source on a recurring basis. ASALH grants only limited pre-approved use of its 501 (c) 3 identification as discussed in sub-section 6 below.

f. Other: There are other limited opportunities available to branches to raise funds.

i. Amazon Smile https://org.amazon.com/ is a micro-donation program that allows its customers to register a charity, to which Amazon will donate funds based on the purchase activity of that customer (and all other customers who register that charity).

ii. Several other micro-donation sites exist that branches can explore. These platforms generally leverage mobile technology, the trend now in nonprofit fundraising.

iii. Endowment giving can be explored, and although not out of the question, it is generally not available to small community organizations. Endowments are almost exclusively the province of large, perpetual institutions like universities, hospitals, foundations, museums and even churches, which leverage their size, inherent and enduring influential role in society to build these funds.

One thing to note is that endowments are designed to fund institutions into the future, not in the short-term. They are typically created with donor restrictions that do not allow the funds to be used to solve current operating needs. That is why, unfortunately, institutions with millions in endowment dollars are forced to lay off employees because they are short on current funds.

5. **Safeguarding 501 (c) (3) Tax Exemption:** This is background information to build awareness of what is required for ASALH to maintain its tax status.

ASALH is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit professional organization that receives a federal tax exemption. As such, it must obey certain rules established by the IRS to retain its tax-exempt status. As affiliates, each branch must also comply with these rules:

a. Form 990 Tax Return
ASALH must file a Form 990 tax return each year. Information for the tax filing comes partly from the annual reports submitted by branches. This underscores the importance of filing complete, accurate and timely annual financial reports. Similarly, by regulation, branches must maintain these records indefinitely. Failure to comply with these requirements jeopardizes ASALH's tax-exempt status.

b. Non-Allowed Activities
   Branches need to be aware of activities that 501(c) (3) organizations cannot engage in to guard against unknowingly becoming involved with them.

   Branches may not:
   i. Engage in political campaign activity to financially support or endorse any political candidates verbally or in writing. They may not oppose candidates either. This rule applies to candidates at every level: local, state and federal.
   ii. Engage in lobbying activities to urge members to support or oppose legislation.
   iii. Permit personal benefit from its income or assets to insiders, such as, officers and members.
   iv. Allow individuals or other organizations to have private benefit from donations, or for uses that are not aligned with the purpose of ASALH's mission.
   v. Generate Unrelated Business Income, in other words, too much income from a purpose that is unrelated to that of ASALH.

6. **Use of ASALH's 501 (c) (3) Identification:** This is the policy on use.

Upon prior written prior approval, branches may use ASALH's Tax ID.

   a. Criteria and Process to request use of ASALH's Identification:
      i. A branch may request use, provided the annual reporting requirement is met. However, the granting of such request is at the sole discretion of ASALH National and a branch's commitment to an activity or vendor does not obligate ASALH National to grant use.

      ii. Submit request with details as early as possible but no less than 14 days in advance of the activity to the Executive Director at scyrus@asalh.org and indicate:
         • Date of Activity
         • Type of Activity
         • Purpose of Activity
         • Vendor Name, Address, Tax ID, Contact Person and Phone No.
         • Prior experience with vendor
         • Transaction Amount

b. Branch 501 (c) 3:

A branch interested in recurring grant funding or large-scale fundraising activities should apply to have its own tax-exemption because ASALH does not have the capacity to oversee grants for potentially multiple branches. The accountability and tax liability attached to tax-exemption requires that ASALH exercise complete control over the use of its ID, which means that it needs to approve every transaction on a grant.

When a chartered branch decides to pursue its own tax exemption, the necessary language should be included in the constitution and bylaws. An organizing branch may not apply for 501 (c) 3 designation because it has a provisional status.

Registration is the sole responsibility of the branch. However, ASALH's Executive Director can provide guidance. See Appendix 5 for additional information.

7. **Annual Contribution:** This is a required branch donation.

ASALH's work is only possible through the generosity of those who believe in Dr. Woodson's vision to research, preserve and promote Black heritage. It has been a practice of branches to make an annual donation to the National Organization. Today, a donation is required from all chartered branches. The expectation is that each branch will make a suggested minimum $600 annual monetary contribution directly from the branch's funds, to be received by ASALH no later than August 31 each year.

8. **Support for Annual Conference and Meeting Attendance:** Branches are required to send representatives.

Branches are expected to provide financial support for required representation at the Annual Meeting and Conference:

i. For a branch going through the chartering process, it must send at least the president or another elected officer and the historian for the chartering ceremony.

ii. For at least one (1) representative every three (3) years for training, enrichment and peer networking.

9. **Reimbursement of Dues:** This is an administrative process to transfer funds.

In cases where a member inadvertently pays its branch dues to the National office, that office shall forward to the branch the amount collected, within 15 days of the discovery or notification by the branch.

In cases where a member inadvertently pays its National dues to the branch, that branch shall forward to ASALH National the amount collected, within 15 days of the discovery or notification by the National Office.

10. **Tax Filings:** This is a legal requirement.

       a. 1099-MISC - A branch must file Form 1099-MISC for each person, other than corporations, to whom it has paid at least $600 during the calendar year for any of the following:
       i. Services that were not performed as an employee (such as, independent contractor, speaker)
       ii. Prizes and awards
       iii. Rents or royalties

       b. Form 990EZ - Short Form Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. This is the form used if gross receipts are normally more than $25,000 but less than $100,000 and total assets at the end of the year are less than $250,000. A Form 990 can be filed in lieu of this return.

11. **Investments:** This is an optional activity to create income for branches with unused cash.

Branches that realize annual income in excess of expenses on a consistent basis may want to invest the excess funds (funds not currently required for current operating expenses). Each branch must evaluate its own financial situation and cash flow needs when making investment decisions.

To guide the investment of excess funds, an investment policy should be established and approved by members.

Each type of investment takes on a different degree of risk and cost. Typically, the greater the opportunity for asset appreciation and income, the greater the risk associated with an investment. Among the safest investments, for example:

a. U.S. Treasury Bills and Notes are backed in full by the United States Government and are virtually risk free.
b. CDs have relatively low risk, but currently pay almost no interest.
c. Mutual funds and corporate stocks and bonds are other types of investment vehicles but are less conservative and have greater risk.

Note that the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insures only $100,000 per financial institution, not per account. A branch should avoid investing more than $100,000 in any one institution.

Excess funds whether deposited in a checking account or invested are maintained for various reasons by nonprofits. These are sometimes called rainy day funds and organizations use this money to withstand a recession, loss of members or other unexpected financial loss. The goal is to build a rainy-day fund equal to 50% - 100% of the expense budget.

12. **Auditing.** This is a best practice.

As a matter of sound business practice, a periodic accounting audit of the branch is recommended. Please check with a local CPA regarding state requirements and the frequency of auditing for your specific branch.