



Best Practices for Commissioner Recruiting

The success of a redistricting commission will depend in large part on the quality of the commissioners serving on that body. However, appointing strong commissioners requires, first, recruiting strong applicants to serve on the commission. The news media, statewide and local organizations, and neighborhood groups can assist the jurisdiction in the redistricting process. This brief identifies a few successful strategies for commissioner recruitment, as well as a checklist of organizations/groups that a jurisdiction may want to approach for help.

Sample outreach plans and recruitment materials can be accessed at:

www.localredistricting.org/research.

Statewide, California Common Cause is assisting local jurisdictions with Commission recruiting.

Please contact Kiyana Asemanfar (kasemanfar@commoncause.org) for assistance.

#1 Develop a Recruitment Plan:

Commissioner recruitment should begin with a written plan for how to recruit a large and diverse pool. This plan should include both broad and narrow strategies. Broad strategies are intended to reach as wide a number of people as possible, e.g. through news press releases, utility bill inserts, posters up in city buildings, city billboards, and emails to residents who sign up for city updates. Narrow strategies are intended to reach particular groups, for example groups that might be especially interested in serving, like members of the local League of Women Voters or attorneys with the County Bar Association, or groups representing demographics that might otherwise be underrepresented, e.g. members of the local NAACP chapter. If possible, solicit feedback from local community organizations on the plan before finalizing it. The plan should budget for materials, advertising, and community outreach, including for webinars and neighborhood meetings outside normal business hours.

#2 Create an Advisory Board:

Before the application process begins, it is useful to create an advisory board that includes diverse representatives of prominent organizations. The purpose of the board is to help develop, vet, and implement the recruitment plan. Board representatives should also be urged to take a leading role in recruiting from their communities. Ideally, the board should meet regularly, but especially during the recruitment process. During recruiting, if certain demographic communities are underrepresented, the board could be asked to assist with recruitment and strategize other ways of reaching that community.

#3 Track Demographic Information and Provide Weekly Updates:

The application process should (A) require commission applicants to indicate, at minimum, their race and gender and (B) ask applicants how they heard about the commission. The jurisdiction should post online weekly updates of the number of applicants and their demographics. Where certain groups are underrepresented, this can help the jurisdiction fine-tune its recruitment strategy, and also spur community leaders from those communities to assist with recruiting. Real-time tracking of the source of applicants can also help adjust recruiting strategies as needed before the application period closes.

#4 Provide a Community Toolkit:

Community groups are much more likely to assist in commissioner recruiting if the jurisdiction can provide them with materials and suggested messaging to get the word out. This may include physical materials like flyers, posters, stickers, and buttons and also sample recruitment pitches like emails, tweets, linkable video, and Instagram posts.

#5 Leverage Existing Ways Government Interacts with Residents:

Survey the existing ways that the jurisdiction comes into contact with residents and see if commissioner recruiting can be included in that existing communication pathway. Examples include: pitch included in regular city/county email or physical newsletters; councilmember/supervisor constituent emails; bill inserts; flyers and posters in government buildings, including libraries, or on public transit; notify recent applicants to other jurisdiction commissions; PSAs on public access television; donated space on electronic billboards; prominent notice on jurisdiction website homepage; posts using jurisdiction's social media; and oral reminders at end of council/board meetings.

#6 Reach out to a broad and diverse group of statewide and local groups/ organizations to help get the word out. E.g.:

- News Media:** e.g. Daily newspapers, alternative weekly/monthlies, TV news, radio news, popular city/county news blogs, and especially language minority press
- State Auditor:** the State Auditor recruited 20,000 applicants to the California State Redistricting Commission for 2020. The Auditor has been willing to email state applicants about local redistricting commission opportunities in their area. Contact Kiyana Asemanfar (kasemanfar@commoncause.org) with Common Cause for assistance setting this up.
- County Complete Count Committee:** These committees, responsible for helping ensure an accurate census count, are often composed of diverse community organizations that would have an interest in redistricting as well.
- Neighborhood Associations:** including presenting at association meetings, posting to neighborhood facebook pages/nextdoor, sending emails to their listservs, and social media posts.
- Academic Institutions:** e.g. the faculty at Political Science departments of Universities, Colleges, and Community Colleges; Law Schools; Lifelong Learning programs
- Legal Associations:** e.g. County Bar Association, other legal associations including minority bar associations
- Nonpartisan Good Government Organizations:** e.g. CA Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Represent.Us
- Local Chapters of Civil Rights Organizations:** e.g. LULAC, Urban League, NAACP, ACLU's People Power
- Civic Organizations or Local Booster Clubs:** e.g. Rotary Club, Lions Club
- Chambers of Commerce:** including neighborhood and minority chambers of commerce
- County Labor Council**
- Retired Judges/Civil Grand Jury Alumni:** contact the county superior court and it may be willing to pass on recruitment information to these groups.