

Task Force Policies and Procedures

A task force must represent at least one of the following purposes:

- To gather input on specific programs, issues, new initiatives, or overall strategic planning
- To convene an advisory group that would recommend a course of action to either the board or staff
- To consider a narrow subject within a broader topic area
- To focus attention and recommend service for a particular sector of the organic industry
- To accomplish a specified project/task, as needed, using OTA and/or participants volunteer time.

ADVISORY ROLE

Task forces may make recommendations to OTA staff and board on policy issues, association programs and projects, and general association business.

Task forces should try to reach consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the co-chairs may call for a vote, in order to present a majority and minority opinion to OTA.

REQUIREMENTS

A task force must:

- Be time-bound
- Be task-charged
- Be outcome-focused
- Have a minimum of 5 members
- Support activities that are consistent with OTA's organizational mission and strategic objectives
- Have support and approval from the OTA Board of Directors and/or OTA staff

ESTABLISHMENT

The board, or its committees, may convene Task Forces for issues that are within the scope of the board's role.

The staff may convene Task Forces for issues that are within the scope of the staff's role.

Any OTA member may request the formation of a Task Force by submitting a request to the OTA Executive Director detailing the following:

- An explanation of the specific purpose, case, or situation at hand requiring creation of a Task Force
- A proposed timeline and explanation of resources
- Expressed intent of OTA members wanting to participate in the proposed Task Force including an identified volunteer willing to provide initial leadership to the team

The staff, ultimately the OTA Executive Director, would make a determination about whether a Task Force should convene, and assign staff as appropriate. If the matter relates to business of the board, then the board shall make the determination.

RESOURCES AND FUNDING

OTA shall allocate monies annually for the administration and support of Task Forces, so that new and compelling ideas/issues might be addressed. Task Forces will not receive any automatic funding, but may request financial and

other support. Projects proposed by Task Forces that need funding and/or additional staff resources shall be reviewed by the Executive Director quarterly. Funds will be allocated based upon available resources, the need expressed by the group, and the strategic priorities set by the board. A Task Force requesting financial support from OTA must illustrate a compelling need regardless of whether it is a new or an established project. Ultimately the decision for resource allocation rests with the OTA Executive Director. In addition to requesting general OTA funds for implementation, Task Forces may also identify and raise special funding, such as project sponsorship, directly from other OTA members or other available sources. Task Forces may, if needed, have an OTA-sponsored list serve for communication among members.

LEADERSHIP

Task Forces will have two co-chairs (board, staff, or member). At least one of the two leaders must be an OTA board or staff member. The board and/or the Executive Director shall appoint Task Force leaders.

CO-CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Building the Team

- Develop eligibility criteria for Task Force participation.
- Recommend an optimal range for the number of participants that will ensure the efficiency of the group. There is an absolute minimum of five (5) and a suggested minimum of seven (7).
- Recruit and select participants.

2. Managing the Task

- Chart a course of action get to the goals. This of course will vary depending on the complexity of the task, but generally refers to assessing the overall task of the group, setting some intermediary success factors, and establishing a schedule of meetings and communications.
- Develop agendas and facilitate meetings of the task force.
- Ensure that the outcomes of the meeting are recorded and distributed to task force participants.
- Keep the Task Force on-task, and in alignment with OTA's mission and strategic objectives.

3. Minding the Resources

- Identify and raise funds, if needed, including requesting financial support from OTA or other members.
- Monitor the use of resources or any funds allocated to the task force.

4. Communicating Outcomes

- Be accountable to those who convened the task force. Share progress with other interested members.

5. Wrapping-up

- Guide the dissolution of the task force (once key issues are resolved, projects are finished, or resources are depleted). Bring closure to the group and help acknowledge volunteers.

In an existing task force, if a board or member at-large co-chair resigns, then a replacement shall be appointed by the board or the Executive Director (depending on line of accountability), in consultation with the remaining co-chair/leader. If a staff person needs to be replaced, the assignment will be made by the Executive Director.

ELIGIBILITY

All OTA members and staff are eligible to serve on Task Forces. Non- members may, with approval from the OTA Executive Director, serve as advisors; otherwise OTA membership is a prerequisite to Task Force participation. At the time of establishment, the Task Force leaders will develop criteria for participation. Eligibility criteria may, among other

things, include required previous experience, and specific time and/or task commitment moving forward. The criteria will be reviewed by the Executive Director, and/or the staff person responsible for the Task Force's program area if that staff person is not a Task Force leader. Final decision for size and selection of Task Force participants rest with the Task Force leaders. Concerns or complaints about Task Force selection criteria or decisions should be brought to the attention of the OTA Executive Director.

ALIGNMENT

Task Force leaders are responsible to ensure the Task Force doesn't stray from its charge and remains aligned with OTA's mission and strategic objectives.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Task Forces established by the board are accountable to the board. Task Forces established by staff are accountable to the staff. Task Forces established by member request are accountable to either the OTA staff or board depending on the charge of the Task Force. Accountability will be clearly outlined upon establishment. Task Force participants will receive orientation materials clearly explaining responsibilities and expectations.

RECORD KEEPING

At minimum, the record of any task force meeting must include:

- The name of the task force
- The name of the meeting co-chair or facilitator
- The date of the meeting
- The location or form of meeting (in-person, phone, web discussion, etc.)
- Who participated (names & affiliations) and task force members who are absent
- The topics discussed (brief)
- The agreements/decisions made
- Any votes taken

SIZE

At the time of establishment, Task Forces should ideally have at least 7 members, but the allowed minimum is 5 members. Membership may not drop below this at any point. The Task Force leaders will recommend an optimal range for the number of participants that will ensure the efficiency of the group. Suggestions for maximum participation should be adaptable for the ongoing needs of the Task Force.

DISSOLUTION

A Task Force will dissolve once key issues are resolved, projects are finished, or resources are depleted. If a Task Force is straying from its board (or staff) approved GamePlan, operating at a deficit, or in violation of any of OTA's policies and procedures, its status as a Task Force may be revoked. This decision ultimately rests with the Executive Director, or with the Board for a Board-convened Task Force. At the time of Task Force establishment, the proposed timeline must include a dissolution date or clearly detail success factors that will signify dissolution. In the event that projects or initiatives remain incomplete beyond the proposed end date, a request for extension may be made to either the board or the staff depending on the nature of the work. All extension requests must include a modified timeline.