



California Women Lead
 ENGAGE • EMPOWER • ELECT

YOUR GUIDE TO GETTING APPOINTED

Women are a powerhouse in California who bring unique experiences and perspective to boards and commissions they serve on, however we need more women to apply.

California Women Lead is committed to empowering, training and recruiting women to apply for appointments to boards and/or commissions at the state and local level. **CA Women Lead** is about engaging women who do not realize that their experiences and expertise can add value to helping put California back on track - that is why **CA Women Lead** works so hard to share the possibilities about serving on boards and commissions.

The **CA Women Lead** Appointments Project is about action; it is about being part of the solution, not part of the problem. This project provides women, many of whom are frustrated and worried about the direction our state is heading, with a concrete way to be part of the solution.

CA Women Lead is honored and privileged to meet with women from around the state who may be managing full time jobs, volunteering in their community, taking care of their families and who are also looking for opportunities to be involved, however do not know how – that is why we are working so hard to make sure **ALL** women know there are opportunities to serve and bring their unique perspectives to various boards and commissions. The **CA Women Lead** Appointments Project is about enriching the pool of Californians who want to be engaged in public service. For many women serving in appointed positions is a great way to give back.

So I ask for your help. Look at the materials provided to you and take a moment to think about ways you can be involved, because **CA Women Lead** knows you have what it takes to be successful in applying for and getting appointed to a board or commission at the state or local level. We want to help you make it a reality!

Good Luck – we know you won't regret it!

Sincerely,

Rachel Michelin
 Executive Director/CEO



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A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO GETTING A LOCAL APPOINTMENT

Why Seek an Appointment?

California needs the input of both men and women in making policy. Many of the public policy decisions made by state boards and commissions have a significant impact on the lives of women, yet women are underrepresented or nonexistent on many of these decision-making boards.

Have you thought you would like to have a voice in how government makes politics that affect your pocketbook, your health, and your community? Well, you CAN be part of a public board or commission, which makes these policies. State and local governments must regularly make appointments to numerous panels that either make policy or advise officials on what to do.

Serving on a board or commission can be a very satisfying experience, as you will be contributing to your community and your future. By taking the chance to apply for an appointment, you can open a door of wonderful opportunities.

Applicants are interviewed by the City Council's Personnel Committee, which forwards recommendations to the Mayor. The Mayor often has appointment authority, but these appointments must be approved by a majority of the Council.

For the County, the Clerk of the Board can provide you with more information. County applications are reviewed by the Supervisor's administrative assistants, who also interview applications when necessary. Final decisions are made by the Supervisors themselves.

If you are interested in applying for a board of commission, it is important that you present yourself professionally. The following are guidelines designed to assist you with the process.

Review Available Positions

- Determine which position interests you the most and is in your line of experience/expertise. Keep in mind, not all positions require professional experience.
- Find out the application deadline by calling the City Clerk or the Clerk of the Board.

Who to Contact

- Ask the Clerk if the incumbent, if any, is planning to run for another term, and what his/her offs are for re-appointment.
- Ask questions about position duties, key issues, and what kind of time commitment is involved.
- Ask your local representative if they will support and lobby for you.
- If appropriate, ask for a letter of support from other Council members of the board or commission you are interested in, and community leaders.

Prepare for Your Interview

- Become familiar with key issues by reviewing relevant staff reports and commission minutes. Also, attend one or more of the commission meetings.
- Give thought to what you can add to the board compared to other possible applicants.
- Be aware of any "unbalance" in the board or commission that can be used in your favor (i.e. ethnic and gender make-up of the board.)
- Make your presentation concise as interviews can be short (15-30 minutes).

After Your Interview

- Write thank you letters to your interviewers, highlighting your key strengths.
- If applying in the City, send a copy of your thank you letter to the Mayor.

Announcement of the Appointment

- Appointments oftentimes take many months to confirm. If you are not appointed, don't be discouraged. Many people are not appointed their first time, but continued interest and involvement makes them a front-runner for the next appointment.
- If you are appointed, take time to sit down with key city or county staff to get briefed on the major issues and programs.
- Whether you are appointed or not, be sure to thank everyone who helped you during the process.

"Being appointed has given me such pleasure knowing that I am an integral part of my community. I realized now that I do have a voice in the way my area grows."

What Are the Next Steps?

You are interested in serving on a board or commission – now what do you do? There are a number of boards and commissions from which to choose. Each board or commission was created to fulfill a special function, often because of federal, state or local mandates, or to advise the Board of Supervisors or the City Council on a particular subject area.

For a City appointment, you can find out more about available positions by calling the City Clerk's office.





1. I am interested in:

- Child Care Education Safety Human Relations Community Planning
- Arts/Culture Recreation Youth Affirmative Action Mental Health
- Environment Health Care Other: _____

2. I have the following personal skills:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. I have the following professional skills:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. For questions 2 and 3, mark an "X" above the skills you most want to use.

5. I have _____ hours a month to use for community involvement.

6. I can attend meetings Anytime Days only Nights only

7. I am willing to serve 6 – 12 months 2 years 4 years

8. I am comfortable with publicity Yes No Don't know

9. I am comfortable with the "give and take" needed to reach a common recommendation.

Yes No Don't know

10. I feel most successful when I have a "hands on" involvement with a project.

Yes No Don't know

11. I feel frustrated when I don't accomplish my objective.

Yes No Don't know



1. I am interested in the following Boards/Commissions in priority order:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

2. I will prepare my resume by _____ (date).

3. I will identify the person(s) with appointment power for my highest priority by _____ (date).

4. If I don't know the person(s) above, who do I know who does? _____

5. I will discuss my interest in the Board/Commission with a person with appointment information/powers by _____ (date).

6. Before submitting my application, I will do the following:

_____ Attend a meeting	_____ Get letters of recommendation
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. My completed application is due _____ (date) at _____ (place).

8. The appointment date is _____.

9. If I am not appointed, my next step is _____.



How do I apply?

The on-line application is available at http://gov.ca.gov/m_appointments.php. The application is fairly long, and it is suggested that you set aside one hour of time to complete. You cannot save your application as you go, so it should be completed in one sitting, or you may lose the information you typed.

What is the time commitment for an appointed position?

It depends on the appointment you are seeking. Some appointments are full time jobs, others meet once a month, and some meet once a quarter. Boards and Commissions may hold all-day meetings, but some meetings may be by conference call and require less travel. As you proceed through the process, there will be a number of opportunities for you to ask what the time commitment will be, and we encourage you to ASK!! Keep in mind that not only will you have meetings to attend, but there are usually reports or supporting materials you will have to read prior to the meeting. Ask how much time the staff anticipates that will take.

Will I get paid?

Depends. Some boards and commissions are paid very well (those are the harder ones to get!), others are full time (actually more than full time) and are paid as such. Many boards and commissions are paid a per diem (around \$100 per day) and others are not paid at all. Most of your travel costs (if necessary) are covered.

What types of background checks are conducted?

Typically the governor's office will do a background check, LexisNexis search and credit check. When you fill out the application on the governor's website at http://gov.ca.gov/m_appointments.php, you will be asked to sign and fax a release form. That form states:

"I understand that in connection with this application for appointment an extensive investigation of my personal and business background will be conducted. I hereby authorize the release of any and all information pertaining to myself, businesses or educational institutions in which I participated, including information of a confidential or privileged nature in the possession of government or private agencies or individuals. I hereby release all such agencies or individuals who furnish such information from liability for damages, which may result from furnishing the information requested. I am also aware that a consumer credit report may be requested and used in connection with this application for appointment. The source of the report will be a major national credit reporting agency, such as EXPERIAN, TRANSUNION, or EQUIFAX. In the event such a request is made, a copy of the report will be provided to me"

Will I be required to relocate or to travel?

It depends. If you are looking for a top level position as an Agency Secretary or Under Secretary, you will be required to work in Sacramento. If you are looking for a paid position within the administration, you will also work in Sacramento (there are a limited number of positions that are paid appointments that are not in Sacramento). Some paid boards and commissions only require you to come to Sacramento for meetings. Most of the volunteer boards and commissions meet around the state, so travel is required, but you can live in any area in the state.

What disclosures will I have to make?

You will have to fill out a Form 700 through the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). You can visit <http://www.fppc.ca.gov/index.php?id=500> where you can get additional information on what filling out the form requires.

Is there any training I will have to do?

All appointees must complete Ethics Training, which typically is a two-hour training that is done online. In some cases you may be required to also attend sexual harassment training, which is also conducted online.

Do I have to be the same political party as the governor?

No, most Governors strive to have boards and commissions be reflective of the diversity of the state.

What is the process? How long does it take?

Applying for an appointment at the State level can be a long process. There is not a set time as to when you will get appointed and in some cases, you may never get appointed. Typically it can take up to six months to get any feedback from the governor's appointment staff. Once you fill out the application, it will be assigned by issue area to a staff person who will review your qualifications. Once they decide you may be a good fit for a board or commission, they will begin the background check process. If that goes smoothly they will contact you for an interview. The next step is to be interviewed by the agency and department in which you will serve. If all goes well your packet will be presented to the Governor and who will make the final decision.

How long is my term?

Some appointments serve at the pleasure of the governor, which means your appointment can end at anytime. Some appointments must be confirmed by the State Senate. In that case an appointee can serve for 365 days before they are confirmed. If they are not confirmed before then, their service ends. If confirmed, they may be appointed to a specified time - four years, for example, or they may serve at the pleasure of the governor. Appointees may also be reappointed by the Governor after their first term is completed.



Letters Of Recommendation For State Appointments

After you apply for an appointment through the Governor's website at http://gov.ca.gov/m_appointments.php, it is highly recommended that you submit three to four letters of recommendation (each letter should be no longer than two pages in length).

Format

Letters of recommendation usually have three sections. Your letters of recommendation do not have to follow this exact format, but it will help the appointment staff quickly and efficiently read your letters. The first section of the letter introduces the writer who they are, in what capacity they are writing the letter, and explains how and how long they have known the person being recommended. For example, your letter of recommendation could start like this, "I am writing in support of (*your name*)'s application for appointment. I have had the pleasure of knowing (*your name*) for (*amount of time*)."

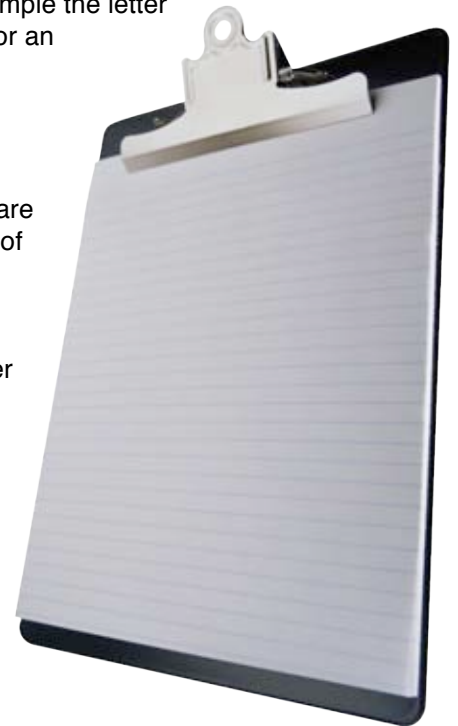
The second section of the letter, typically the largest, explains the characteristics of the person being recommended and highlights her achievements that relate to the appointment being sought. This section may contain specific examples. It is also important for the person making the recommendation to describe his or her experience with the person receiving the recommendation. The third section is usually used to summarize and wrap up the traits of the person receiving the recommendation and to emphasize her good qualities. This section should contain the actual recommendation. For example the letter should say something to the effect of, "I enthusiastically recommend (*your name*) for an appointment."

References

You need references that will confirm to the experiences that would make you a excellent appointee. It is also essential to have a basic understanding of what they are going to say about you and your characteristics. Letters can be from a broad range of people. Some examples of good letter of recommendation come from your state senator, assemblymember, local elected leader, work colleague, nonprofit board member, professor, clergyman, or community leader. It is often recommended to acquire a wide-range of references from different backgrounds. For example, a letter each from your volunteer, work, and political backgrounds would be ideal, because each letter will highlight a different aspect of your life.

Once you have filled out the on-line application at http://gov.ca.gov/m_appointments.php, you can mail your letter of recommendation to:

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Appointments Secretary





10 TIPS FOR WOMEN SEEKING GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

1. Make sure your resume is up to date.

2. Look within your networks for people who can support your appointment and ask them for a letter of recommendation (you only need 3!)

3. Don't be afraid to try an issue area you may not feel comfortable in – you might surprise yourself and find you really like it!

4. Know who your colleagues on the board or commission will be – you will be seeing these people often!

5. Ask yourself if you are comfortable in the public eye. Being appointed is about transparency and you never know when someone might ask a question (or print an article about an issue you are working on).

6. Make sure you have the time to commit to being on the board or commission.

7. Know the power of being a “public member.” Boards and commissions need women who have a good head on their shoulders and can make good decisions – you don't have to be an expert!

8. Be professional with the appointments staff - remember they are dealing with thousands of appointments and applications. A friendly word and A LOT of patience can go a LONG WAY to getting an appointment.

9. Remember there are politics involved with appointments, if your appointment gets caught up in a political “web” realize it has nothing to do with you. Don't take it personally!

10. When women get appointed you never hear “what was I thinking?” Instead, most women agree being appointed is one of the most rewarding ways you can give back to your community and state! And to yourself!

By Rachel Michelin, Executive Director/CEO of CA Women Lead.

Rachel is currently serving her first term as a Governor's appointed member of the Private Security Disciplinary Review Committee – North.