



*The Center for Association Leadership*

# **ASAE SOCIETAL STATEMENT FRAMEWORK**

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This is an internal framework to help ASAE evaluate when and how the organization issues public statements about national and societal issues.

### EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

ASAE staff and leadership should consider the following when evaluating whether it is appropriate and advisable to make a public statement about national and societal issues:

- **Connection to the association management profession:** Issues specific to association management are most appropriate for statements.
- **Applicability to ASAE Board Approved Position Statements or guiding documents:** Issues that explicitly apply to a *specific* [ASAE Board Approved Position Statement](#) or guiding document (e.g. [Strategic Priorities – Destination 2026](#), [Standards of Conduct](#)) are most appropriate for statements; issues must at least generally apply to a policy or guiding document and be consistent with ASAE's Mission Statement for a statement to be appropriate.
- **Business impact:** Statements that would create threats to association business, membership, or brand reputation shall be considered with caution; the impact of inaction also must be considered.
- **National interest:** Issues of national interest are most appropriate for statements from a national association.
- **National trends:** Statements provided by other industry associations (e.g. US Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, SHRM, and US Travel) may influence ASAE's statement strategy.
- **Message clarity:** Association statements should be issued only when there is a clear and concise message, including a specific call to action whenever possible.
- **Leadership and collaboration:** Association statements that demonstrate ASAE's leadership or provide opportunity to collaborate are preferred.

### DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Use the Statement Criteria Scorecard to help evaluate if a statement is appropriate and beneficial.
2. Draft a potential statement according to the Statement Elements.
3. Vet the draft statement by the chief executive officer, Advocacy Council, executive committee, and/or board of directors, as appropriate.

### TIMELINESS

To demonstrate leadership in alignment with the brand, ASAE should issue statements within 24-48 hours of an issue's emergence. However, speed shouldn't compromise strategy. It's most important to get the statement right and vet through appropriate stakeholder groups.



## STATEMENT CRITERIA SCORECARD

The scorecard is a tool to help evaluate whether a statement is appropriate.

# ASAE Societal Statement Framework Scoring

Place "X" next to appropriate declaration within each section	An issue that meets minimum criteria suggests an association statement <i>may</i> be appropriate. Meeting the minimum scoring criteria doesn't mandate a statement. A statement might be appropriate without meeting the criteria. Use this scorecard to frame discussion and decision-making.	
X	Scoring	<b>Connection to association management</b> <i>(Select all declarations that apply)</i>
	3	Is specifically connected to the association management profession
	2	Is connected to the association meetings industry at large
	1	Is connected to the general population (e.g., business or for-profit sectors)
	0	IS <b>NOT</b> connected to the association management profession, meetings industry and/or general population <b>(Mutually Exclusive Response)</b>
	<i>Sum</i>	Subtotal: Score of at least <b>1 required</b>
X	Scoring	<b>Applicability to ASAE policy or guiding documents</b> <i>(Select one declaration)</i>
	3	Explicitly applies to specific ASAE policy, guiding documents, Standards of Conduct, or Board Approved Position Statements and/or the Power of Associations
	1	Generally applies to ASAE policy, guiding documents, Standards of Conduct, or Board Approved Position Statements and/or the Power of Associations
	0	Does <b>NOT</b> apply to ASAE policy, guiding documents, Standards of Conduct, or Board Approved Position Statements and/or the Power of Associations
	<i>Sum</i>	Subtotal: Score of at least <b>1 required</b>
X	Scoring	<b>Statement Reach</b> <i>(Select all that apply)</i>
	1	Is a national issue
	1	Is an opportunity to lead or collaborate externally
	1	Is strongly aligned with ASAE's strategic future - Destination 2026
	<i>Sum</i>	Subtotal: Score of at least <b>1 required</b>
		<b>Total: Score of at least 3 required</b>
X	Scoring	<b>Further Review</b> <i>(Select all that apply)</i>
	1	Is one for which many related industry associations (e.g., US Chamber of Commerce and/or U.S. Travel Association) have made statements <b>(Requires ASAE Executive Review)</b>
	1	Is one for which a planned statement could create a significant risk to the association* <b>(Requires ASAE Board of Directors Review)</b>
	<i>Sum</i>	Subtotal: Score of at least <b>1 requires further review</b>

\*Significant risk to the association is defined as something that would have a measurable impact on ASAE's membership, reputation, or financial stability. In some cases, ASAE's policies might compel action even when there is significant risk. In other cases, lesser risks- such as distraction from current priorities-might be important enough to discourage action.

## POSITION STATEMENT ELEMENTS

Statements should be short, clear, meaningful, and appropriately toned.

Preferably, all statements will:

- Include a specific call to action related to a clearly articulated goal. This helps ensure the statement is strategic and purposeful, rather than empty talk.
- Be as concise as possible (ideally 3 sentences or less), briefly articulating why ASAE is making the statement, with links to applicable ASAE policies or guiding documents and, if relevant, other supporting evidence. If additional commentary is necessary, the concise social-media-friendly core statement should be easily identifiable at the beginning of the larger statement.
- Avoid additional commentary that is unnecessary to achieve the above criteria.
- Avoid emotion-based statements attributed to the association itself (ASAE is “disappointed by” or “saddened by,” etc.). Statements of emotion are better expressed as statements from individual people, such as the president or CEO. The association as an organization or membership body has positions (policies, etc.) but not universal personal emotions.

## OTHER ACTIONS

The following steps should be taken when considering or releasing an association statement:

- **Evaluate the impact on business operations.** Even when a statement poses no serious threat to the association, issuing a statement is often significantly disruptive to routine business operations, distracting from other association messages and increasing member inquiries and feedback (positive and negative) that might merit a response by staff.
- **Consider component and industry association collaboration, consultation, and information.** In the least, ASAE should alert a directly affected allied state or location association or convention and visitor’s bureau (CVB) to a statement before it is issued. ASAE should also consider the perspective of other industry associations (e.g. US Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, SHRM, and US Travel).
- **Clarify roles for managing questions and feedback.** Identify a clear process to collect, review, and respond to questions or feedback.
- **Communicate to Board and staff.** Alert Board and staff when a statement is about to be released, with clear instructions about how to triage or otherwise respond to questions or feedback.

