

# TASFAA LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

*APPROVED/ADOPTED BY TASFAA EXECUTIVE BOARD ON 6/17/2004*

## NEW (REVISED) TASFAA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tennessee Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) is to develop and maintain an organizational structure that promotes professional preparation and growth, collaboration, effectiveness, and mutual support of its diverse body of members as they strive to serve the needs of students, families, institutions, and other constituencies in providing financial assistance to help meet post-secondary educational expenses.

## PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF TASFAA

1. To promote and establish the highest standards of excellence, ethics, efficiency, and economy in all matters pertaining to student financial aid administration undertaken by its members.
2. To promote the study, evaluation, analysis, and dissemination of the most effective and efficient policies, procedures, and practices related to student financial aid administration and the delivery of financial aid to students and parents.
3. To encourage the professional development and growth of persons engaged in all aspects of student financial aid administration.
4. To provide members of the association, in a timely manner, relevant and accurate information to help ensure their effective and responsible administration of student financial aid programs.
5. To effectively serve the interests and needs of students and parents, as well as agencies and other providers of student financial aid, through the responsible dissemination of information regarding aid programs and through the timely planning of relevant initiatives.
6. To provide a focus and a forum for the expression of views on matters pertaining to the development, funding, and administrative aspects of student financial aid programs as well as other matters of importance to members of the Association.
7. To provide an organizational structure built on mutual respect and support within the student financial aid community that effectively promotes fiscal responsibility, integrity, and sound leadership practices among all members of the Association.

**REFERENCE NOTE:** The following goals referred to in this document are intended to be associated with certain organizational or function areas of focus and responsibility within TASFAA. Those areas are identified in accordance with the following nomenclature:

AGS = Administrative and Governance Structure  
MRC = Membership and Relationships with Relevant Constituencies  
COM = Communications (Internal and External)  
PDT = Professional Development and Training  
FIN = Finances and Fiscal Issues  
LAI = Legislative Advocacy and Initiatives  
HRA = Historical Records and Archives  
LEG = Legal Obligations and Requirements

**Goal #1 (AGS):** Review and evaluate the association's by-laws, mission statement, purposes, and goals on a regular basis (at least annually), to remain cognizant of and evaluate their applicability to how the Association conducts its business.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. The President of TASFAA will charge each member of the Executive Board and encourage the entire Association membership to review all of these items in order to determine their continued relevance and applicability to the business structure and operational aspects of the Association, and to then make recommendations for additions and changes.
2. Whenever a specific item is considered for action to be undertaken by the Executive Board on behalf of the Association, that item and action should be evaluated within the context of which aspect(s) of the Association's governance structure is/are being met by taking such action.

**Goal #2 (AGS):** Ensure that the terms of office for elected officers and appointed committee chairs are of sufficient length to maintain continuity of administrative structure for the Association, and that they support ongoing leadership initiatives while also providing for new leadership opportunities.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Review the length of the terms of office as well as the role of the elected officers and appointed committee chairs on a regular basis (a minimum of once every three years) to determine if those aspects of the Association's governance and administrative structure meet the needs of the organization.
2. Solicit input from each member of the Association to gain an understanding of his/her satisfaction with the Executive Board structure, terms of office, assignment of duties and responsibilities within positions, etc.
3. Ask each member of the Executive Board to evaluate his/her responsibilities as a member of the Board on the basis of the workload and commitment to TASFAA that is required by serving in his/her TASFAA capacity, in order to determine if such Board participation remains reasonable and acceptable for that position and is within acceptable limits at the board member's employing institution/organization.

**Goal #3 (AGS):** Ensure that committees are of sufficient size and number, and that the membership on committees is representative of the diversity within TASFAA's overall membership, while striving to accomplish the stated goals of the Association and to help develop future leadership while being fiscally responsible in any action taken.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Select and appoint committee members, to the extent possible, who represent the geographical, racial, gender, and institutional/organizational diversity of the Association.

2. Encourage and do everything possible to ensure that committee member appointments include an appropriate mix of new and returning/veteran members of the Association to ensure continuity of committee business while also providing the opportunity for development of potential future leaders in the Association.
3. Ensure that committee meetings are held at such times and locations so as to help keep travel and lodging costs to a reasonable minimum.
4. Require that each committee will provide regular written reports to the Executive Board whenever the Board meets throughout the year, as well as a complete written report at the end of the year that summarizes all of the committee's activities for that year.

**Goal #4 (AGS):** Ensure that all committees are established and members appointed with the intention of addressing the mission, purposes/functions, and goals of the Association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Assess the purpose and need for each committee before establishing the committee, appointing its chair, and providing for the selection of committee members.
2. Select an appropriate mix of returning and new committee chairs and committee members in order to achieve continuity of business as well as providing for the development of future leaders in the Association.
3. Once created and constituted, ask that each committee establish and share with the Association its own goals and strategies for accomplishing its work.
4. Develop an ongoing review process that objectively helps to evaluate and assess the committee structure in general as well as each committee's individual function and performance.

**Goal #5 (AGS):** Ensure that the Association's policies and procedures are accurate and complete, and also ensure that an established process exists for reviewing, evaluating, and revising the policies and procedures of the Association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Create a TASFAA policies and procedures review process that includes Executive Board and committee input, with the Board having final approval of the process. The review process should be done to ensure that any policies and procedures further the stated mission and purposes/functions of the association.
2. Regularly review all policies and procedures to ensure their current relevance and accuracy, and that they reflect desired practice.
3. If and when appropriate, disseminate all policies and procedures to the membership and provide notices when changes are approved.

4. Make use of available materials and information from other state, regional, and national associations in developing these processes for TASFAA.

**Goal #6 (AGS):** Establish and cultivate relationships and alliances with various sectors and organizations considered to be part of the “financial aid community.”

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop and cultivate new relationships with organizations that are involved in enrollment services, student affairs, and other relevant higher education issues. Promote opportunities for exchange and interaction with these organizations/entities.
2. Serve as a helpful link or connection between our Association and other state associations, SASFAA, NASFAA, etc.
3. Work with all sectors of our own state’s financial aid community to ensure representation and participation in our Association’s programs and activities, and to address all TASFAA members’ needs and interests as fairly and equitably as possible.

**Goal #7 (AGS & COM):** Provide support and assistance to educational institutions (including elementary, middle, and secondary schools), government agencies, foundations, and organizations in promoting and/or developing effective programs of student financial assistance, and in promoting awareness about planning for postsecondary educational opportunities.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Consider the development of and help to identify and/or disseminate available financial planning materials dealing with postsecondary education. [NOTE: This is also listed under Goal #13.]
2. Evaluate all current programs and offerings made available by TASFAA to identify their effectiveness and make decisions about their continuation, and identify other/new programs that might be made available to the membership.
3. Keep the Association’s membership educated and informed about various programs and activities offered, provide help and training in possible development of local programs, and help to promote publicity about any such programs/activities.
4. Develop a strategy/structure for disseminating materials and information to the membership addressing such areas/topics as regulations, business practices, program funding, and other items deemed to be of interest and benefit to the Association’s members.

**Goal #8 (MRC):** Ensure that TASFAA membership is offered to all eligible financial aid professionals in Tennessee and any other areas/locations where such a membership relationship is deemed appropriate by the Executive Board.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop a membership brochure and/or other sources of information (such as our website) detailing TASFAA membership benefits (for example, professional development, training opportunities, etc.)
2. Do a separate mailing that provides relevant membership information and that would be accomplished in addition to any annual conference mailings that also include membership information.
3. Use the Department of Education Title IV School Code Directory to help identify potential individuals or schools for membership/conference mailings in addition to using past and present TASFAA membership information.
4. Evaluate the possibility of including Business Offices, Registrars, etc. in membership mailings.
5. Include other agencies that are involved in the administration of federal financial aid programs (for example, TRIO programs, Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, WIA programs, etc.) when attempting to identify individuals/schools for our membership mailing.
6. Be aggressive in keeping the TASFAA membership database current and “clean” – including a way or a system to identify past members that are no longer in financial aid.
7. Ensure that our Honorary Lifetime Members are included in all mailings and messages sent via the TASFAA list serve.

**Goal #9 (MRC):** To increase the strength of TASFAA through increasing the Association’s membership.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Provide District Chairs (Representatives-at-Large) with an accurate map of TN showing current member schools and those non-member schools where contact could be made within each district.
2. Evaluate adding a member to the membership committee and/or initiating a structure for the purpose of making calls on non-member schools and/or organizations in order to extend TASFAA membership invitations to personnel at those locations.
3. Evaluate the possibility of offering a free one-year membership or a reduced membership rate to new members joining TASFAA for the first time.
4. Evaluate the possibility of providing possible incentives to districts and/or individuals to recruit new members.
5. Evaluate the possibility of waiving membership dues for all active members who have been a member of the association for a certain number of years (for example, 20 or 25 years or more) as a reward for those who have achieved this milestone -- perhaps waiving the fee would permit another individual from that office or organization to join the association.

**Goal #10 (MRC):** Provide quality services to, and that meet the needs of, the Association's members.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Evaluate the current membership structure (individual membership as opposed to institutional membership) at least once every three years to determine if it best serves the needs of the Association and its members.
2. Determine if training and other activities (such as district meetings) offered to members are in the best interest of the association, and if such offerings should be extended to identified non-members.
3. Evaluate and determine appropriate measures to ensure/increase the value of TASFAA membership.
4. Review the district structure of TASFAA to determine if members are located geographically in the district that is most practical for them, and provide options for those members who might desire to become part of another district based on geographical or other possible considerations.

**GOAL #11 (MRC):** Recognize members for their service to and leadership in the Association, and work to make known the accomplishments of the Association and its members through newspapers, magazines, list serve information, and various other forms of media or information-sharing options.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Evaluate the Association's system of recognition to determine its adequacy with regard to the various awards and ways of focusing on an individual's accomplishments as well as the process for identifying and selecting recipients for those Association awards.
2. Review our current methods of gathering and disseminating newsworthy information about individual TASFAA members as well as the organization as a whole.
3. If it is determined that it is appropriate to do so, take steps to provide information to the news media and to institutions regarding the accomplishments of individuals who are members of TASFAA as well as the organization as a whole.

**Goal #12 (COM):** Ensure that all available and relevant information is disseminated to membership in a timely manner.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Assure that links to regional and national conference websites are made known and are accessible through the TASFAA-TN website as soon as they are identified.
2. Review other state websites for enhancement ideas.

3. As e-mails go out on the list serve, update any relevant information on the related section of the TASFAA website. Example: district meeting dates.
4. Assure that the website is updated with a current listing of Executive Board and Committee Chairs along with the members of all the committees.
5. Set limits on the time that a page is referenced or given consideration, and eliminate links to that page after that time has elapsed.
6. Develop and promulgate a procedure for reviewing and monitoring all list serve communications to ensure that they are relevant and within the allowed/accepted uses identified for the list serve.

**Goal #13 (COM):** Maximize the availability of financial aid information to families/students, and help educate the public of the state of Tennessee about financial aid through available communication options.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop a series of financial aid presentations at a central high school or two in each county of the state, being sensitive to what post-secondary institutions are already doing and then targeting those counties where there is not adequate representation.
2. Send articles on a regular basis (or a pre-determined timeline) to all Tennessee newspapers promoting financial aid activities throughout the year – these might be submitted by the membership to a screening committee for publication selection. During Financial Aid Awareness month, these might be weekly submittals.
3. During Financial Aid Awareness month, TASFAA should consider sponsoring district college fairs.
4. Consider the development of and help to identify and/or disseminate available financial planning materials dealing with postsecondary education. [NOTE: This is also listed under Goal #7.]

**Goal #14 (PDT):** Assess the knowledge base of the Association members to identify their training needs, and take steps to address any areas where training might be needed.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Identify tools for assessing the knowledge base of the membership (what they know).
2. Identify core competencies necessary and pertinent to financial aid administrators (what they should know).
3. Provide training as appropriate in those identified areas where the membership core competency might be found lacking.

**Goal #15 (PDT):** To provide training on research methods and interpretation of data.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Identify those within TASFAA with competent research, analysis, and reporting abilities.
2. Provide general training on statistical methods and concepts.
3. Provide information on current available data sources such as NCES, NPSAS, etc.
4. Provide general training on basics of statistical software such as SPSS, SAS, or the like.
5. Provide insight into taking institutional data and analyzing it to provide useful planning and predictive information.

**Goal #16 (PDT):** To provide/share common expertise on commonly used software (particularly integrated financial aid software.)

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Identify the common software packages used by financial aid offices (i.e., SCT Banner, Datatel, PeopleSoft, PowerFaid, etc.)
2. Identify “experienced users” within the financial aid offices that could provide insight into data extraction, communication flow, etc. that exist within those commonly used software products.

**Goal #17 (PDT):** To expand the mentoring program and provide for training opportunities with a focus on District-level initiatives.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Identify “seasoned” financial aid professionals from 2-year, 4-year public, 4-year private, and any other applicable category of institutions who would be willing to be the “ask the expert” contact for new aid professionals or those new to TASFAA.
2. Design comprehensive training and informational activities at the district level for members and prospective members to help promote the mission, purposes, and activities of the Association.

**Goal #18 (PDT):** To provide opportunities for training and professional growth appropriate to the Association members’ level of experience and position with the financial aid office.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop a method to assess and monitor training needs for all members.
2. Utilize such assessment details and information when planning conference program and district level training opportunities.

3. Determine the effectiveness of training offered through consistent evaluation and follow-up.

**Goal #19 (PDT):** To enhance growth and participation within the Association for new and less active members.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop and implement a regular and ongoing mentoring program to increase new members' knowledge base regarding the Association goals and to encourage interaction between new and current members.
2. Search for ways to provide opportunities and encouragement for less active members to become involved in committees and conference activities.
3. Develop an accepted standard for committee training and chair rotation that incorporates new and less active members, utilizing the annual TASFAA Transition Meeting if/as appropriate to help accomplish this initiative.

**Goal #20 (PDT):** Expand membership development and outreach initiatives that might be coordinated and sponsored by TASFAA.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Review activities from other regional/state/national associations to determine worthwhile activities that could be adapted by TASFAA.
2. Establish well-defined goals and subject content for membership development and outreach programs undertaken.
3. Identify potential sources of funding, such as foundations, to financially support membership development and outreach activities.

**Goal #21 (PDT):** To provide professional development activities for "experienced/veteran" FAA's.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Evaluate the development of a structure to encourage FAA's from one institution to visit other institutions to observe and learn about that institution's practices.
2. Provide for more casual discussion groups or interaction at conferences for those FAA's with greater levels of experience.

**Goal #22 (PDT):** Provide for the continued professional development of the TASFAA membership.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Increase the number of workshops around the state in an attempt to reach financial aid staff traditionally unable to attend such workshops.
2. Survey the Association members to identify areas in which they would like additional training.
3. Establish sites for training in all districts so as to minimize barriers to attendance.
4. Maximize the use of the aid professionals and resources that are available within TASFAA to provide the training.
5. Regularly assess and evaluate conference program sessions to determine whether they provide sufficient content and detail to satisfactorily meet the needs of the conference attendees.

**Goal #23 (PDT & FIN):** Encourage new aid professionals to become involved in leadership positions in the association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Evaluate the possibility of providing assistance -- financial and other -- to allow new financial aid professionals to attend a regional or national conference.
2. Evaluate the possible development of an award for an outstanding new professional in the Association.

**Goal #24 (FIN):** To protect, improve, and ensure the financial health and stability of the Association.

Strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Establish and annually evaluate the fee structure for conferences and membership dues, and determine the appropriateness of other relevant association expenditures to ensure that they are commensurate with services, costs, and potential liabilities.
2. Maximize, within reason, the use of sponsorship support/funds plus all other resources that the Association has available for its use annually.
3. Maintain a budgetary strategy to accumulate and provide a reserve to support all customary Association activities for one year plus the funds required to meet all future contractual obligations that have been negotiated and that generally exist at any one point in time (primarily, future conference contracts that have been signed).
4. Develop and implement an investment strategy to take advantage of the investment return on funds held in reserve (those funds not currently needed to cover operational expenses).
5. Ensure that the Executive Board, committee chairs, and committee members are familiar with and comply with policies and procedures that affect reimbursement, budgeting, authorization, contracts, and other aspects of the Association's business that impact its budget and operating costs.

6. Develop parameters for establishing the Association's annual operating budget to ensure that it is always balanced and ensures fiscal responsibility.
7. Evaluate fund development and utilization regularly to ensure proper stewardship of all the Association's finances.
8. Scrutinize and negotiate conference/hotel contracts to minimize the Association's expense and future liabilities as much as is reasonably possible.
9. Conduct regular and comprehensive reviews of the Association's financial records as often as deemed appropriate to ensure the solvency of the Association plus the financial integrity and security of the Association's funds.
10. Establish an internal operational structure of administrative "checks and balances" to ensure fiscal integrity and security of all Association funds.

**Goal #25 (FIN):** Explore additional financial resources that might be available to the association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Obtain information regarding sponsorship from other regional/state/national associations.
2. Review and identify various business needs of financial aid offices, and then contact companies that could service these needs to inquire as to their interest in exhibiting at conferences.
3. Explore possible funding opportunities (such as grants) that might be available from various sources (such as foundations).
4. Evaluate and determine the feasibility of developing a brochure designed primarily to acquaint foundations and new/potential sponsors with TASFAA and its activities, to be used when soliciting funds or sponsorship from those potential donors.

**Goal #26 (FIN):** Develop and maintain consistent travel policies and procedures pertinent to Executive Board meetings, membership travel, and all other aspects of members' expenses incurred while conducting business on behalf of the Association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Define, in writing, which expenses are covered and any relevant limits of such coverage for Association travel and other activities.
2. Identify and develop travel and other expense policies that need to be defined, commit these policies to writing, and communicate them to the membership.

**Goal #27 (FIN):** Establish a budgetary process that includes a provision for dealing with technology and equipment needs plus any other tangible assets of the Association.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Establish and promulgate guidelines for the purchase, maintenance, and disposition of the Association's tangible assets, to include a purchase or requisition process that will assist in estimating costs and planning for the purchase of as well as the disposition of old, broken, or out-dated assets of the Association.
2. Develop procedures for officers and committee chairs to follow in submitting requests for budgetary changes or allocations associated with the need to purchase such equipment or other property/assets.
3. Develop a procedure and pertinent forms to assist the Association in maintaining an inventory of its tangible assets plus monitoring the usage and storage/accountability of those assets.

**Goal #28 (LAI):** Establish and develop solid working relationships with each of the state's federal level and state level legislators.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Establish regular correspondence with each legislator, informing him/her of the association's position on issues related to financial aid.
2. Consider establishing a series of financial aid nights in each legislative district under his/her name.

**Goal #29 (HRA):** Create a "living history" of TASFAA.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Make use of our historical documents.
2. Develop a written and pictorial history of the development/growth of TASFAA as an organization. Include both longtime and new members' memories/stories in this history.
3. Have the "living history" available for members at conferences, on our website, and possibly in other venues and Association publications.

**Goal #30 (FIN & LEG):** Ensure that TASFAA's investment strategy is developed and implemented in order to assure financial stability for the Association as well as to maintain our non-profit, tax-exempt status.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Develop and implement an official TASFAA policy to provide an investment and cash management strategy for the Association.

2. Review and monitor the Association's financial operations through multiple officers reviewing the Treasurer's records, bank statements, and other periodic reviews of the Association's financial records/books.
3. Ensure that all appropriate financial reports or statements are submitted in accordance with IRS and any other applicable federal or state requirements.
4. Monitor cash accounts and maintain reserves and investments at a level to allow for conducting the business of the Association while ensuring a reasonable and safe return on funds held in reserve (on investment).

**Goal #31 (FIN & LEG):** Ensure TASFAA's financial stability and security by providing liability and fidelity coverage for TASFAA officers as appropriate.

**Strategies to achieve this goal:**

1. Provide fidelity bond coverage for the President, Treasurer, and any other appropriate TASFAA officers in an amount determined by the Executive Board as being sufficient to fully protect the assets of the organization.
2. Provide liability insurance for TASFAA as an organization/entity and/or its officers in order to protect the association from possible losses due to personal suit for injuries or other legal remedies/actions that might be filed or undertaken against the Association and/or its officers.

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