British Columbia/Yukon Command

Probationary Management Manual

For Branches & Probationary Managers

Purpose of Probationary Management

Legion branches play a vital role in supporting veterans, their families, promoting remembrance, and to serve communities. To operate effectively, branches must meet key performance standards in governance & compliance, financial accountability, and engagement/communication.

When a branch struggles to meet these standards, Probationary Management oversight provides support and guidance to help get back on track. This process gives the branch an opportunity to address issues with structured oversight and accountability.

This manual should be read in conjunction with the BC/Yukon Command Performance Standards Policy, which outlines the performance standard requirements for all Legion branches within British Columbia and Yukon.

Roles & Responsibilities

A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities is essential for a branch's success under Probationary Management. This section outlines the expectations for each role to ensure a structured and coordinated approach.

Branch Executive

- Review and understand the issues identified.
- Work collaboratively with the Probationary Manager to address these challenges.
- Ensure timely submission of required documents, including monthly financials and general/executive meeting minutes (within two weeks of each meeting).
- Implement corrective actions as directed.
- Keep members informed with regular status updates at general meetings.

Zone Commander

- Help identify challenges the branch is facing.
- Conduct an initial assessment of branch issues (if needed).
- Support the Probationary Manager in resolving issues.

Probationary Manager

- Establish communication with the branch executive at the start of the probationary management period.
- Assess the branch's challenges and areas for improvement.
- Assist in the development of a corrective action plan in collaboration with the Branch Advisory Committee and Branch Operations Advisor.
- Provide support and guidance to the branch executive.

- Monitor financial reporting and governance compliance.
- Consult the Branch Advisory Committee and Branch Operations Advisor as needed.
- Submit regular progress reports to BC/Yukon Command.

Branch Operations Advisor(s)

- Serves as a resource for the branch executives, Zone Commanders, Probationary Managers and BC/Yukon Command in addressing branch operational challenges.
- Provide guidance and support on branch financial management and operations. Assist with implementing best practices and long term strategies for sustainable operations.

Branch Advisory Committee/BC Yukon Command

- BC/Yukon Command President appoints the Probationary Manager.
- Issues official branch notification letters and updates to the branch.
- Review Probationary Manager reports and any other documents to determine whether the branch will remain or be removed from oversight.
- Ensure the Probationary Manager has the necessary resources and support.

Probationary Management Overview

Step 1: Identifying Branch Issues

- The Branch Advisory Committee and Zone Commander conduct a thorough review of the branch to identify areas where performance standards are not being met.
- Common issues that may be identified include:
    - Financial mismanagement
    - Non-compliance with Legion by-laws or policies.
    - Governance concerns.
    - Lack of engagement or operational capacity.
    - Executive conflicts or infighting.

Step 2: Appointment of a Probationary Manager

- If the review determines that probationary management is necessary, the Branch Advisory Committee places the branch under Probationary Management oversight, as outlined in the Performance Standards Policy.
- BC/Yukon Command President will appoint a Probationary Manager.
- The Probationary Manager reviews the branch's reports and familiarizes themselves with the challenges faced by the branch.
- The primary role of the Probationary Manager is to guide the branch in addressing and correcting the identified issues.

Step 3: Notification to the Branch

- BC/Yukon Command sends an official letter to the branch and its executive, notifying them of the probationary management process.
- The letter includes:
    - Reasons for the probationary management and the specific issues to be addressed, with an approximate timeframe of the oversight.
    - The name of the appointed Probationary Manager.
    - Clear expectations for financial and operational reporting.

Step 4: Initial Meetings & Develop a Plan to Address Performance Standards

- The Probationary Manager reaches out to the branch executive to introduce themselves, establish rapport, and schedule meetings.
- During these meetings, the Probationary Manager and the executive will collaborate to create a plan for addressing the identified issues.

Step 5: Ongoing Monitoring & Continued Support

- The branch is required to submit monthly financials and general/executive meeting minutes (within two weeks of the meeting) to both the Probationary Manager and BC/Yukon Command.
- The Probationary Manager works directly with the executive to implement improvements and provide guidance along the way. Collaborates with the Branch Operations Advisor with any further training, specific to branch operations.
- Regular status updates are provided by the Probationary Manager to BC/Yukon Command.

Step 6: Evaluation & Decision

- After the specified period, the Probationary Manager provides a final assessment of the branch's progress and provides a detailed report.
- Based on this assessment, the Probationary Manager submits a recommendation to the Branch Advisory Committee regarding whether oversight should continue.
- The Branch Advisory Committee decides next steps, including:
    - If the branch meets has met the required performance standards, probationary management oversight will either be removed, or moved to a lower level of oversight (e.g. flagging).
    - If branch still requires additional support, the probationary management period is extended.
    - If there has been no improvement and the branch executive is unwilling to cooperate, the branch may be escalated to trusteeship (Level 1 or Level 2).

Expectations for Branches Under Probationary Management

When a branch is placed under probationary management, it is required to notify their members of the situation, providing a clear explanation of the reasons for the oversight and corrective actions being taken. The branch must ensure full compliance with all Legion governance, by-laws, and policies. The branch executive will work closely with the Probationary Manager to address and remedy the issues identified. Monthly financial reports and general/executive meeting minutes must be submitted to both Probationary Manager and BC/Yukon Command within a timely manner (e.g. two weeks of meeting occurrence).

Failure to comply with the probationary management requirements or continued significant mismanagement or internal conflict preventing the branch from functioning, may result in escalation to trusteeship.

Branch Financial Responsibility

Branches are expected to meet performance standards. If a branch is placed under probationary management due to non-compliance or operational issues, it is responsible for covering the costs associated with the oversight process. This includes the Probationary Manager's travel expenses (e.g. mileage), and any other administrative fees associated with the oversight process. The financial responsibility reinforces the importance of meeting performance standards and encourages branches to address issues proactively to ensure long term stability and effective operations.

Guidelines for Probationary Managers

Upon appointment, the Probationary Manager should review the branch's operations and financial status to identify challenges. After the branch notification letter is sent out, they must reach out to the branch executive to introduce themselves and begin developing a plan to address the identified issues.

The Probationary Manager provides ongoing support and guidance to the branch executive, as required, helping them implement improvements to their performance standards. They are responsible for keeping notes on any relevant interactions, decisions, and actions taken throughout the oversight process. Collaboration with the Branch Operations Advisor is encouraged to navigate any operational challenges.

Regular progress updates should be provided to BC/Yukon Command, and at the end of the designated period, the Probationary Manager will submit a final report to the Branch Advisory Committee with recommendations and feedback.

Questions

Contact BC/Yukon Command if you have any questions related to probationary management or the Performance Standards Policy oversight process.

BC/Yukon Command
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