

# Survey seeks qualities of effective directors of missions

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MCDONOUGH, Ga. (BP)—Opinions of leaders in all areas of Southern Baptist life are solicited in an online survey studying the qualities of effective leadership by associational directors of missions.

## Study group seeks input

The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders appointed a study group to conduct the survey to help provide a uniform job title and description for the director of missions position.

The group will submit its report to the conference of associational leaders in June 2018 in advance of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Dallas.

Richard Wheeler, lead missional strategist for the Jacksonville Baptist Association in Jacksonville, Fla., chairs the 12-member study group composed of associational, denominational and congregational leaders.

"We have a specific assignment from the SBCAL to bring recommendations on a proposed title and general qualities of an associational leader," Wheeler explained. "We are not seeking to mandate or prescribe anything, but merely to describe qualities of effective associational leadership where it has been identified around the country."

Duties and titles vary across the nation, but sufficient commonalities exist among associational leaders to warrant the study group's goals, Wheeler

said.

“Realizing that local church networking in a city or region will look dramatically different depending on the context, we believe there are some common characteristics that will describe how the leader serves that (are) beneficial to the churches and their shared mission,” Wheeler said. “Our hope is that emphasizing healthy church partnerships at the local level will benefit all of the ways we seek to partner together within the SBC family.”

## **‘Profile of associational effectiveness’**

The study is part of the conference of associational leaders to serve missional leadership needs across the SBC, Ray Gentry, executive of the conference, said when the study group was formed in June.

“We feel like it’s time for a new name for the new century and the new demands upon us and the new opportunities before us,” Gentry said. “In addition, a profile of associational effectiveness with competencies ... is even a bigger enchilada than the title.

“There really is no commonly accepted job description for a DOM, and so we want to come up with a profile with competencies for search committees and for purposes of coaching and helping new DOMs. We feel like that’s going to be very, very important and very helpful to raise the credibility, and the profile and the effectiveness of DOMs.”

Nearly 250 Southern Baptists already have responded to the survey, and Wheeler said many more responses are needed.

“It is important that we not only hear from current associational leadership but also from pastors, staff and lay leaders of churches as their engagement and leadership in their local association is vital,” Wheeler said.

With the direction of state convention leaders and SBCAL regional

consultants, the study group also is interviewing associations of various sizes around the country to determine best practices, qualities and characteristics of associational leaders, Wheeler said.

The survey is available [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SBCALStudy) through Dec. 31. (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SBCALStudy>)