

# ACDA Membership Chair Handbook: A Guide for Best Practices to Build and Maintain Membership

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# Welcome to the Position of Membership Chair!

Please Begin by Watching this Welcome [Video](#)

Thank you for giving your time to serve and grow the ACDA membership in your state! A membership chair has the unique opportunity to create an atmosphere of family within the state. When people feel valued and connected, they will renew their membership. This is a very important position with regard to the life of your chapter, and ACDA is grateful for your commitment and dedication.

In this handbook, you will find descriptions of your responsibilities as a membership chair, along with templates you can use to easily fulfill them. You'll also find tried and true strategies for recruiting, retention, and communication. As this is a living document, we welcome contributions of ideas, best practices, and templates from past and current membership chairs! If you would like to contribute, please contact one of the collaborators.

If you are a new chair, please start with Level 1 tasks. If you are an experienced chair, Level 1 should already be your practice; you can grow and support your membership even more through Level 2 and Level 3 tasks.

As a membership chair for KCDA, I have had opportunities to meet many new and eager music educators as they begin their professional careers. My favorite conversations have been with college students or first-year teachers who weren't even aware that ACDA has so much to offer. Every time I review the ACDA site with one of these new members, the more information I find that's helpful to me. Win, win! - Margie Lawrence

Being a membership chair allows me to connect with directors throughout New Hampshire and provides an opportunity to get the choral "pulse" of our state as I check in with and support new and old members. I'm always surprised by the musical connections we all share and it's like a giant choral game of "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon!" - Blake Leister

Remember - you are not alone! Every membership chair is in your support network.

# Level 1: Baseline Best Practices for Membership Chairs

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## Task 1: Welcome Your Community

**New members:** New members receive an email from the ACDA National Office, but that does not give specific information about your state activities. Nothing can replace a welcome from someone in the state. The use of email templates can keep the task from being overwhelming.

**Renewals:** It is a nice gesture to thank someone for their continued support of the organization. This note means more when it comes from the membership chair. It shows that someone is valued and noticed, and it is a great way to build community.

NOTE: It is recommended that both tasks be performed bi-monthly. Set a calendar reminder for the “1st” and the “15th” of each month!

*Examples of email templates [HERE](#)*

## Task 2: Foster Your Community

[Video](#): Membership Management 101

**Directory:** Some states create a directory (view-only) in the password-protected part of the website or other secure sites. Information you might want to include: name, email, institution (if that is available), primary address, phone. This information can help members connect, but because it is vital to protect this information, a directory should only be posted as view-only and in a password-protected area. Members should be given the option of opting out of the directory, or limiting the information.

*Sample directory template [HERE](#)*

**Communication:** In our digital world, email is the main source of communication with your membership. Best practice suggests one person be responsible for general email communications, such as the president or membership chair. In order to aid your membership in finding information with ease, make sure it is always (or as often as possible) the same person on your board who sends emails. Proven email server suggestions - ConstantContact.com, yet-another-mail-merge.com, and MailChimp.com. In addition to email, other forms of social media can help build and foster your community (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). Consider having an account for your chapter. Social media tools can be used to advocate for and promote ACDA and choral music in your state.

**Involvement:** Members who are invested in the organization are more likely to see the value and renew independently. Best practice: identify

## Task 3: Grow Your Community

*Examples of email templates [HERE](#)*

**Bringing back the lapsed members:** Recently lapsed members will often renew with an email reminder from the state membership chair. The longer the lapse, the less likely to regain the member by a simple email. Area/district representatives can help when they know the person directly. Don't give up on them! See the email templates above if you are unsure how to approach your lapsed membership.

**Recruiting new members:** Encourage your regional leadership (area/district representatives) and your current membership to help identify new educators, institutions, community directors, and music in worship directors. Some suggestions that might work in your state:

- Engage current members and recruit new members through ACDA-sponsored district or honor choirs.
- Engage ACDA student members through leadership roles. Potential student roles could include advisory positions on your state board, service on a student board, student-led or student-centered sessions at your state conference, students acting as a “work crew” for conferences or honor choirs, and so on.
- Establish and/or manage a group of members in your state who are tasked with identifying nonmembers in their area and encouraging them to become members and/or attend conferences. This designated group can also “check-in” on the members in their area and push state and national communications.
- Cast as wide a net as possible when advertising your state ACDA conference, and make it a point to reach out to nonmembers personally about joining and attending.

## Task 4: Connect with Peers

The membership chair community is the best resource we have as current chairs.

Please be an active participant in the ACDA Membership Chair Facebook Group. As with many Facebook groups, the more people participate, the stronger the community. [JOIN](#)

Attend quarterly meetings with the other membership chairs in your region and regional membership chair if that position is held. Such on-line meetings support membership growth and address issues within the region.

## Level 2: Engaging with Your Community

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### Be Present at State Events

Working registration for an event is a great way to get to know your membership. The more personal connections you build, the stronger the sense of family within your state membership. Best practice: Recognize new members by giving them a unique name badge, welcoming each one by name at a membership event. This might be at a membership meeting for a conference or retreat, clinic or reading session.

### Social Media

It goes without saying how important social media is today. If your state does not have an official Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram account, those are things to consider. The membership chair does not have to run it, but should certainly be a voice within those platforms. Social media can be used to promote events and to celebrate and engage the membership as a community.

### Supporting Underrepresented Populations

Membership chairs can assist state leadership in engaging members of as many diverse backgrounds as possible, especially within those who are underrepresented in your state membership demographics. The membership chair can help connect Repertoire & Resources chairs with members in each area and assist members in finding state activities that meet their needs.

### Plan Activities for the Membership Drive

Consider ways to encourage new members to join and lapsed members to renew during the national Membership Drive, which is usually held annually each fall. The membership chair community is a great resource for ideas. Contests, competitions between areas, drawings, get-a-friend-to-join - all are possibilities. The goal of the membership drive is to grow and engage your community.

### Enlist Your Community to Contact Lapsed Members

There will always be a long list of lapsed members. The national office provides a lapsed members report containing members from the past three years, and many membership chairs are often surprised when they see the names that are included within those lists. If the membership chair has sent emails with no response, it is advisable to ask current members to help in the matter. It is not uncommon for a lapsed member to renew even after several years of lapsed membership because someone they knew reached out to them.



## Level 3: Maintaining a Healthy Membership Community

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### Providing Content, Support, and Connections

The membership chair has the ability to create an atmosphere of family. When people feel valued and connected, they will renew their membership. In addition to fostering a sense of community, consider innovative, state-appropriate ways to provide unique and relevant content for your membership.

[Video](#): Membership Solutions

### Organize Events for Underrepresented Membership Groups

While membership in each state varies, many states typically have lower membership numbers in the areas of students, music in worship, and elementary school choral directors. Consider them untapped potential members. How can your state chapter serve their needs, too?

### Assist in Advocacy

Advocacy is a growing area of work for ACDA at all levels. Reach out to your state president and ask if there are ways you can help connect members with this work. Following are some resources:

- National ACDA Advocacy Page [Website](#)
- National Association for Music in Education Advocacy Page [Website](#)
- Chorus America Research & Reports Page [Website](#)
- ACDA Advocacy and Collaboration Facebook [Group](#)

Share the national office's social media advocacy posts through your state ACDA social media accounts, as well as your own personal social media accounts. Encourage members to share advocacy posts through their own accounts, too!

### Connect with Related Area Associations and Nonmembers

Following are activities that have been successful with some states:

- ACDA-sponsored luncheon - Consider sponsoring a luncheon at a state event (such as a state NAFME conference) and inviting nonmembers.
- Choral concert at state music conference.
- ACDA exhibit booth at state music educator conferences. ACDA's presence is a great way to meet potential new members, connect with existing members, and support the conference activities of other musical organizations.
- Outreach day at conference - One state offers the final day of the summer conference as an "open access" day. No cost; no membership required. It is promoted on social media and through a curriculum listserv by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Offer a nonmember price to attend an event.
- Coordinate an ACDA-sponsored interest or reading session at your state music educator conference.

# Regional Membership Chairs

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The regional membership chair should already be familiar with best practices and have experience as either a current or past membership chair. The following tasks are suggested to both grow the regional membership and support the state membership chairs in the region.

Task 1: Quarterly virtual meetings with your state chairs to discuss recruitment, trends in membership, plans for retention, and develop strategies to increase membership engagement.

Task 2: Send “welcome” emails to new members and “thank you for renewing” emails to renewing members every two months. This timeframe is based on the 60-day timeline on the dashboard. If you wish to do it more often, just note that you will need to keep track of the names so as not to send a member the same email twice. Note: Even though the state membership chair should do this on a more regular basis, “thank you” and “welcome” emails from the regional membership chair reinforce the recognition of the member and connect them to a larger community. Once every two months is very manageable.

Task 3: Monitor trends in your region to look for increases and decreases in the membership numbers. Be mindful of best practices among your state membership chairs and share them when applicable.

Task 4: Address concerns and questions from state membership chairs.

Task 5: Connect with other regional membership chairs yearly to share tips on growth, discuss membership trends, and adjust tasks in the handbook as needed.



## Resources and Links

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Membership Chair Collective Facebook Group [HERE](#)

State Membership Reports [HERE](#)

National Office Resources for Membership Chairs [HERE](#)

Membership Help Desk: [membership@acda.org](mailto:membership@acda.org)

ACDA National Staff [HERE](#)

### Handbook Collaborators

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### **Index of Membership Handbook Resources & Tutorial Videos:**

Welcome Video [HERE](#) (p. 2)

Membership Management 101 [HERE](#) (p. 3)

Email Templates [HERE](#) (pp. 3, 4)

Managing New and Renewing Members [HERE](#) (p. 3) Directory  
Template [HERE](#) (p. 3)

Sample Service Survey [HERE](#) (p. 3)

Quick Hack for Tracking Lapsed Members [HERE](#) (p. 4)

Membership Challenges/Solutions [HERE](#) (p. 6)

This document was created to meet the needs of the new membership chair and create a clear path of membership growth for the experienced chair. If you have questions please email any of the collaborators or Trina Kopacka using contact information listed above.