

# HANDBOOK FOR STATE PRESIDENTS

PURPOSE | STRUCTURE | RESOURCES | CREATIVITY



# **Handbook for State Presidents**

Purpose, Structure, Resources, Creativity

American Choral Directors Association  
Oklahoma City, OK

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## PURPOSE AND CHALLENGE

*The impact of your presidency is as limitless as your creativity.  
This document need only be a guide and departure point for you,  
not a set of restrictions. Use it to amplify your potential and to  
enhance your ability to serve in the administrative role.*

Congratulations on your election to the office of ACDA state president! The office you hold is a crucial catalyst in ensuring that the work of ACDA continues to provide responsive and sustainable leadership at the state level. We thank you for your continued service to our profession, and we offer our gratitude in helping ACDA continue its work in providing meaningful professional development and inspiration for our members.

This President's Handbook has been assembled to supply you with a broad overview and guide for your next two years as the primary leader of your state organization. To be fully apprised of the workings of ACDA, you should carefully review three extremely informative documents, which explain and govern the inner workings of our organization:

1. [Constitution and Bylaws](#)
2. [Financial Policies and Procedures for State, Region, and National Officers](#)
3. [Repertoire and Resources Committee Procedural Guide](#)

The latest revisions of these documents are found on the ACDA website (<https://acda.org>). You may reach them by navigating to About, then Leadership Tools.

An effort has been made to include other materials appropriate for various types of ACDA state organizations. It is your prerogative to determine procedures, as the needs and culture of each state is unique. You know your membership needs, you know who can get the job done, you know . . . or do you? The next two years can become a phenomenal growth period for ACDA and for you personally, and could be one of the most meaningful experiences of your career.

## ACDA NATIONAL STRUCTURE

American Choral Directors Association is a nonprofit professional organization of more than 13,000 choral directors whose positions embrace all levels of academic, religious, community, professional, and industrial choral involvement. The national office address is P.O. Box 1705, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1705, where Robyn Hilger is the executive director. The executive committee (EC) consists of the association president, vice-president, president-elect, treasurer/secretary, and past president, with the executive director as an ex officio, non-voting member.

The executive committee and the presidents of each of the six geographic regions of ACDA, along with the national repertoire & resources chair, comprise the ACDA National Board. The industry representative and executive director are ex officio, non-voting members of the National Board.

The six geographic regions of ACDA are comprised of states as follows:

<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>Midwestern Region</b>	<b>Northwestern Region</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>Southwestern Region</b>	<b>Western Region</b>
Connecticut	Illinois	Alaska	Alabama	Arkansas	Arizona
Delaware	Indiana	Idaho	Florida	Colorado	California
Maryland/D.C.	Iowa	Montana	Georgia	Kansas	Hawai'i
Maine	Michigan	Oregon	Kentucky	Missouri	Nevada
Massachusetts	Minnesota	Washington	Louisiana	New Mexico	Utah
New Hampshire	Nebraska	Wyoming	Mississippi	Oklahoma	
New Jersey	North Dakota		North Carolina		
New York	Ohio		South Carolina		
Pennsylvania	South Dakota		Tennessee		
Rhode Island	Wisconsin		Virginia		
Vermont			West Virginia		

## **YOUR STATE CHAPTER**

The ACDA Constitution lays out three potential legal structures for state chapters. Most states currently hold the status of “state membership” of the association. Those chapters are directly under the executive and financial umbrella of the national ACDA, without state constitutions or bylaws.

Eight states—California, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin—are Affiliate State Associations. Each Affiliate State has their own constitution and bylaws, and exercises autonomy over state association governance, programs, and activities. Affiliation of associations requires the approval of the EC and the National Board.

### **Who Are We? Membership**

Membership is the lifeblood of ACDA. Membership in ACDA is acquired by joining online at [acda.org](https://acda.org) or sending dues payment with a membership form directly to the national office in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. One Affiliate States (Minnesota) has state dues, approved by the national board, in addition to the amount allotted to states from the dues payments.

Membership types include Active, Associate, Industry, Institutional, International, Retired, Student, and Life.

The membership year is one year from the receipt of dues payment (anniversary). Member benefits, such as subscriptions to ACDA publications, attendance at ACDA events, access to programs, and other goods and services are described on the association’s website (<https://acda.org>) in detail and according to member type.

Current state membership lists, as well as other lists such as new members and recently lapsed members, are available via state dashboards, which are accessed by the state president and those they designate (including membership chair) via a special link and password. There are legal and ethical requirements concerning member data and protection of that data, especially member emails. The latter are described in the policy Protection of Member Data - Emails, which is found under Policy and Procedures Documents (About >> [Leadership Tools](#)). Please ask everyone who has access to the reports to review those guidelines and agree to them.

## **How Are We Structured? Organization of State Associations**

The composition of each state's governance should be patterned, as closely as possible, after that of the Executive Committee and National Board. Likewise, state constitutions and/or bylaws should be written in accordance with the national constitution and bylaws. A statement of purpose and/or philosophy should be an integral part of each state organization.

The organization of state officers, leadership roles, and committees, should similarly follow the model of the ACDA Executive Committee and National Board.

These designations are designed to be flexible, supporting the unique needs of each state chapter. However, state leaders should be mindful of promoting, engaging, and creating leadership roles that will encompass and uplift diversity, connection, collaboration, and mentorship. It is at the state chapter level that most future ACDA leaders get their start. Thus, conscious and intentional attention to identifying new leaders who offer a variety of experiences and perspectives, and engaging them in your chapter activities, for example as R&R chairs and/or in conference committees, provides a positive foundation for both your chapter and for ACDA as a whole.

In addition to modeling state constitutions and/or bylaws in accordance with the national constitution, each state is strongly encouraged to create a statement of purpose/mission, which upholds the national mission statement (The mission of ACDA is to inspire excellence and nurture lifelong involvement in choral music for everyone through education, performance, composition and advocacy), but is also unique to their own community.

### **Required Officers:**

- President
- President-Elect / Vice-President
- Past President
- Treasurer/Secretary

### **Other leadership roles could include the following:**

- Membership Chair
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Chair
- District or Region Chairs
- Newsletter Editor
- Website Administrator



Repertoire and Resources (R&R) roles should mirror the National R & R structure with a minimum of a chair for Youth Choirs, Collegiate Choirs, Lifelong Choirs, and Repertoire Specific. R & R work is one of the best ways to engage people in leadership and grow them for future service to the organization. States should attempt to fill ALL R & R roles, not just the minimum Additional chairs to match the National structure are:

- Children's and Community Youth Choirs
- Junior High/Middle School Choirs
- Senior High School Choirs
- College and University Choirs
- Student Activities
- Community Choirs Music in Worship
- Contemporary Commercial (Show Choir & Contemporary A Cappella)
- World Musics & Cultures Men's Choirs/TTBB
- Vocal Jazz
- Women's Choirs/SSAA

Ad Hoc Chairs (non-voting) might include the following:

- Summer or Fall Conference Chair

## THE ROLE OF PRESIDENT

### Where Have We Been? Preparation

The question persists, "Just what can I do to prepare myself adequately for this term of office?" History has been a valuable guide for as long as humanity has pondered a future. Review and assess the history of your state organization. Specifically, read past minutes of executive committee and board meetings; review past, present, and ongoing projects; and examine the chairperson structure. Above all, read and absorb the national and state constitutions and the national Financial Policies and Procedures (national documents available on the [Leadership Tools](#) page of the ACDA website).

Be systematic about your efforts. For example, review the records of past events (conferences and seminars) and be cognizant of aspects like:

- Locations of events (geographic areas of the state and types of facilities — church, auditorium, gymnasium, etc.)
- Time of year and time of day
- Number of participants and/or registrants
- Conflict with ACDA values (ex. scheduling a conference in a space that has discriminatory policies)
- Nature of the events
- Financial outcome
- Culminating report including suggestions to continue, alter, or terminate the project

Parallels can then be drawn that will aid in decision-making and future plans. Keep similar records of all activities that take place during your term of office. It is encouraged that records be kept electronically in a cloud based storage system.

Knowledge of the state membership list and its various categories of membership is a must. Most states have a designated position for membership chair, though some embed that role into another office, such as district representatives or past president. They should assist you to become familiar with:

- Names and addresses of the state membership
- Geographic distribution (population per district)
- Membership categories based upon national/region/state committee interest identification with possible sub-categories (e.g., music therapy, applied voice, music theatre, bell choir, etc.)
- List of active participants with a strong record of volunteering

## **Where Are We? Assessment**

A productive presidency is rooted in the holistic knowledge of the community you serve. Therefore, it is imperative that the state president be aware of the needs for their respective communities. This is not a one-person task. It is also advisable that the board and committees of new administrators be made up of individuals who will be able to actively assist the president with this holistic knowledge.

If you want to know how the membership feels, go to them and ask. Conduct a needs assessment to identify areas for work. Those can lead to desired activities. Activities become duties, which become people working, which can ensure state ACDA success. Then growth can be unlimited. In this needs assessment, we encourage reflection on both the administrative and artistic needs of the choral community; how the state chapter can support the development of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging that is responsive to your state; and the use and access of technology to maximize access for the state chapter.

The assessment can take many shapes and forms. Devise your own or:

- Seek out representatives from the various categories (see lists on preceding pages) and ask what they want and need. Enlist their ideas and find volunteers to staff the projects. Ensure that your stakeholders represent a diverse array of identities.
- When the executive board is meeting, allow time for buzz sessions. Divide the board into small groups, making sure each group has one facilitator, and ask each to return in a specified time period (20 minutes) with a list of new and varied ideas.
- Email a survey to the membership asking them to list ideas in a ranked order of importance.
- Make a special point to ask ACDA members personally what they want from the organization.
- Conduct a focus group of diverse participants (new, current, and lapsed members)

Not only will you uncover some fruitful ideas, you very likely will be chatting with the potential chair of that new working group.

## **Where Are We Going? Blueprint**

**Activities.** Once the path forward is envisioned based on an awareness of community need, much of the work is contingent on defining the scope and direction of your time in office.

The needs assessment, regardless of its simplicity or sophistication, should be documented and

put into order of priorities. Realistic identification of potential activities and their implementation will provide a workable activity blueprint.

Your state volunteers have all accepted the challenge of your invitation and are ready to go to work.

In an effort to streamline the chapter, each state-level chair should have a chair-elect whose term coincides with the chair's term. The concept provides advantages including the grooming of a knowledgeable chair-to-be and an able assistant. It eliminates the next chair having to reinvent the wheel when dealing with the many facets of that activity. Generally, new candidates for chair will make themselves known from the ranks of the serving committees.

After careful examination for value, ongoing projects may require reorganization, intensification, or phase-out.

New projects can now be presented to the board.

Although the calendar for your first year in office may have been developed during the spring before you took office, you will be responsible for developing next year's calendar. The calendar should include dates, times, and places for board meetings; state projects; managing the next election cycle; national and region conferences, meetings, and functions; and other important choral dates.

**Budget.** The state's budget should be based on all proposed activities which will enhance or advance the musicianship level of the state's membership. The following questions will be helpful:

- What do you plan to do?
- What will the year's activities cost?
- What financial resources are available?

In considering your financial assets, you may include:

1. income anticipated from advertising, conference and workshop activity, district activities, savings, boutique items, grants, contributions
2. a requested allotment based on membership and proposed activity not covered by number 1 above (note: a state should plan on the number of active members x \$21.00 in computing its allotment). The allotment number is calculated on April 1 of each year and then split into four payments at the end of each quarter (September, December, March, June)

These assets are listed as "Receipts" under the appropriate category on the budget form. In

anticipating the cost of carrying out the state's activity, you must separate expenditures into two main areas:

1. General administrative disbursements: newsletter/committee expense, office supplies, email platform, website hosting and maintenance, teleconference platform, postage, phone, duplication, officer travel
2. Conference and meeting disbursements: facility rental, honorariums or expenses for clinicians, program printing, postage, phone, duplication related to conferences, musician's fees, equipment, tuning, and so on

These expenditures are listed in the appropriate disbursement categories on the budget form. Please consult the [\*Financial Policies and Procedures\*](#) for ACDA's standard budget report & request form and an explanation of budget items on the report form.

All persons requesting travel reimbursement should use the Travel Expense Form. All other payments or reimbursements are requested using the Funds Request Form.

These forms are found online on the ACDA website under About >> [Leadership Tools](#).

### **What Do We Do? Action**

You have reached the point where your term of office is ideated,, staffed, and prepared. You are now ready to act.

Let two overarching ideas frame your work in office:

1. The presidency does not fit the calendar confines of a two-year term of office. You have already spent two years in preparation. You will spend an additional two years as past president after your term as president. For the successful maintenance of your state's organizational machinery, plan to remain on duty for all six years.
2. As president, you may delegate only duties, not responsibilities. Your desk is the ultimate central hub for which all organizational information is funneled.

Your duties as president may be categorized under three main areas: executive, presider, and manager.

### **You Are an Executive**

**An executive is a leader.** Your leadership potential is only as good as your ability to surround yourself with a cohesive and diligent team from within your state membership. A leader will at

all times mentor people for future tasks. A leader will at all times cultivate the potential in people who are working. Supreme diplomacy, abundant energy, and an indomitable positive attitude are essential. Encourage and promote pride, professionalism, and class in your leadership force by showing these traits yourself.

**An executive is a communicator.** You must have a workable network for communication among your state leadership team. Whether you use email, telephone, regular oral reports to your board, newsletter articles, periodic written reports, or combinations of those methods, you must continually and consistently communicate.

**An executive is a representative.** Just as you call forth information from your membership by your leadership, you must also be willing to impart information to other states and ACDA leadership. This two-way street of communication is essential for ACDA effectiveness.

You will represent your state at region and national ACDA meetings. Your reporting there must show that you have your finger on the pulse of choral music and programs in your state. Your report on the state-of-the-state will need to include concerns, questions, and suggestions for improving the condition of choral music in your state.

You will also represent your state by preparing an annual report. The report is on-line under Reports at About >> [Leadership Tools](#). This written report should be a complete and accurate accounting of all functions of your state organization. It is prudent to utilize your leadership group in compiling this report. You may wish to call for written reports from committee chairs at the completion of their individual tasks throughout the year. The annual report then becomes a matter of organizing and assembling.

### **You Are a President**

**A president is a provider.** It is the president's responsibility to provide an atmosphere for the efficient functioning of the board. This setting should be complete with conference table set-up, labeled seating, and pleasant surroundings.

The meeting schedule must also be provided by the president. An agenda to the board members should precede each meeting by at least one week. The agenda should include details of time and place, a listing of the order of reports, and detailed explanations of what is expected from such reports.

**A president is a catalyst.** Effective presiding includes the ability to stimulate dialogue. Board members must be made to feel their opinions are needed and welcomed. They must be kept apprised of the framework for discussion and kept on task.

**Presiding is the active manifestation of leadership.** Styles of presiders are as varied as people. Effective presiding need not necessitate aloofness. Rather, it requires the ability continually to rise above the discussion, set a perspective, and provide a direction toward solution and/or culmination.

### **You Are a Manager**

**A manager is a project overseer.** Projects and activities of state organizations cover three vital areas:

1. professional development of directors – workshops, symposia, conferences
2. development of choir members – sponsorship of school or music and worship choral festivals, contests, etc.
3. effective management encompasses all projects and activities of the organization. In management you may be involved in
  - instituting projects
  - peopling projects
  - making progress reports and evaluations
  - conducting projects
  - directly overseeing the chairs

A critical responsibility of the state president as manager is that of arranging for the election of a president-elect and any other officers needed to carry on the activities in your state. The election(s) shall be completed by **February 1 of the year in which the elected officer(s)** will assume their position(s). The president is responsible for appointing a nominating committee, which should include at least two of the chapter's past presidents. Elections must have at least two candidates for each office, or if in an affiliate state, according to their bylaws.

The elections themselves, are generally run on-line by the national office, though states may decide to do them themselves. If the latter option is chosen, the president should share the election result promptly with the national office. More information is found under ACDA Elections on About >> [Leadership Tools](#).

In management, you are always responsible for the project, its culmination, its effect.

## **SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA**

September 1, 202X

To: Members of the Executive Board, (State) Choral Directors Association

Re: Meeting Agenda, September 1, 20xx, (your meeting location) (Provide address and detailed directions to the meeting location)

9:45 AM – Refreshments 10:00 AM – Call to Order

### **Agenda**

1. Preliminary Reports
  - a. Call to Order
  - b. Minutes
  - c. Treasurer's Report — (name of treasurer)
  - d. Membership Report — (name of membership chair)
  - e. Newsletter Report — (name of person giving report)
2. Regular Business
  - a. District Reports (as appropriate to the state)
    - i. Northwest, (name)
    - ii. Southwest, (name)
    - iii. South Central, (name)
    - iv. Central, (name)
    - v. North Central, (name)
    - vi. Northeast, (name)
  - b. Summer Conference Chair Guidelines — (name)
  - c. Publicity — (name)
  - d. Commissioned Composer — (name)
  - e. New Chair Positions — (don't let your minds wander!)
  - f. Historian's Report — (name)
  - g. Nominations — (name)
3. Focus Reports
  - a. 202X Summer Conference Reflections — (name)
    - i. Preliminary Financial Report — (name)
  - b. 202X Fall Conference— (name)
4. New Business
  - a. 202X Summer Conference — Progress Report
  - b. PREP — Progress Report
  - c. Items from the floor (well, you know what I mean!)
5. Old Business
  - a. Review of Bylaws Admendments
  - b. Fundraising Campaign Follow-up
  - c. Membership Renewal Reminder



## RESOURCES

You will find a variety of documents, report forms, and other information useful to you on the ACDA website on the [Leadership Tools page](#) (About >> Leadership Tools).

### ACDA Documents

- [Constitution and Bylaws](#)
- [Financial Policies and Procedures](#)
- [R&R Procedural Guide](#)
- [Region Conference Planning Handbook](#)

### Staying Connected to ACDA Peers

- Names & Contact Info for Chapter Presidents: [Link to Google Sheet](#)
- Facebook Group: [ACDA Leadership - State Presidents/Pres. Elect](#)

### Official ACDA Facebook Pages

- [American Choral Directors Association \(ACDA\)](#)
- [ACDA Collective: A Gathering Place for Repertoire and Resources](#)

### Official ACDA Facebook Groups

National:

- [American Choral Directors Association](#)
- [ACDA Advocacy and Collaboration](#)
- [ACDA Composition Initiatives](#)
- [ACDA Diversity Initiatives](#)
- [ACDA International Activities](#)
- [ACDA Student Chapters](#)
- [ACDA Tenor-Bass Choirs Repertoire & Resources](#)
- [ACDA Student Chapters](#)
- [ACDA R&R Chairs for Student Activities](#)
- [ACDA Children & Youth Choirs Repertoire Forum](#)

Regions Facebook Pages and Groups:

- [ACDA Eastern Region](#)
- [Midwestern Region ACDA](#)
- [ACDA Northwestern Region](#)
- [ACDA Southern Region](#)
- [ACDA: Southwestern Region](#)
- [ACDA Western Region](#)

## Publicizing Your State Events

- Chapter presidents may submit additions to the national website listing (<https://acda.org/conferences/chapter-events/>) [using this online form](#).
- ChoralNet (<https://choralnet.org/>) is ACDA's online social community. By creating a free account, you can submit announcements, events, and other news.
- Notify your region leadership of your events.

## [ACDA Leadership: National Officers and Board, Standing Committee Chairs](#)

### [National Office Staff](#)

## Recommended Publications

- Bombaro, Christine. (2020). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Action: Planning, Leadership, and Programming*. Atlanta, GA: ALA Editions.
- Cabral, A. (2021). *Allies and Advocates: Creating an Inclusive and Equitable Culture*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.
- Krile, J. F. (2006). *The Community Leadership Handbook: Framing Ideas, Building Relationships, and Mobilizing Resources*. St. Paul, Minn.: Fieldstone Alliance..
- Robert, H. M., Robert, S. C., & Robert, H. M. (1970). *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman.
- Sipe, J. W., & Frick, D. M. (2009). *Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership: Practicing the Wisdom of Leading by Serving*. New York: Paulist Press.