

# Accessibility Professionals Association (APA)

## Chapter Policy

The Accessibility Professionals Association (APA) began as a Texas organization of accessibility professionals that included members from outside of the state. As APA evolved into a national organization, chapters were developed to meet territory-specific needs of members while maintaining APA as the parent organization. This plan ensures that chapters serve the needs of their members and that the current and subsequent APA Board of Directors shall continue to serve as the parent Board of Directors, elected by the membership as currently defined, and shall continue to be based in Austin, Texas, as headquarters.

Chapters exist to meet the needs of members across the country. Chapter member benefits may include, but are not limited to, networking events, continuing education events, chapter-specific discounts, and forum(s) to discuss territory-specific issues.

The built environment impacts the health, safety, and welfare of millions of people every day. Ensuring that those involved at all levels of APA represent a diversity of thought, values, and perspectives improves our organization's ability to meet the needs of the industry and society. This is a core principle and enables an even more vibrant and innovative organization.

### 1. Overview

- a. The "national organization" shall refer to the Accessibility Professionals Association, also known as "APA," which shall be the entity established in Texas

and which is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Chapters, as a part of APA, shall adhere to the APA bylaws, promote the APA Code of Ethics, and conduct their activities with the benefits and responsibilities inherent with nonprofit status.

- b. "Territory" shall refer to the physical or other boundaries established by the national organization for a chapter, whether by state, regions within a state, combinations of states, or other designation.
- c. "Chapter" shall refer to the entity recognized and authorized by APA to operate in a designated territory.
- d. "Home chapter" shall refer to the chapter that is included in the APA annual membership fee and selected by the APA member.
- e. The APA Board of Directors shall be responsible for establishing, supporting, and dissolving chapters.
- f. This policy on chapters will be reviewed periodically and may be modified by the APA Board of Directors in consultation with chapter leadership.

## **2. Chapter governance**

- a. Chapter responsibilities:
  - i. Maintain chapter leadership consisting of at least five (5) members, including a president, president-elect, education chairperson, and two members at large; the past president shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member for the year following the end of their term. Tenure, qualifications, and elections shall be consistent with the APA bylaws governing board members.

- ii. Determine how the chapter responsibilities will be met and define other chapter leadership roles as needed.
  - iii. Participate in providing nominations for open positions in chapter leadership, educating nominees about the roles, and securing nominees' consent before appearing on the ballot.
  - iv. Develop chapter committees as needed.
  - v. Attend APA Board of Directors regular meetings to represent the chapter; if the chapter president cannot attend, they will designate an alternate.
  - vi. Inform APA staff via email when chapter items need to be placed on the APA Board of Directors meeting agenda.
  - vii. Represent chapter education, conference, and other needs by participating in APA committee meetings as needed.
  - viii. Hold chapter leadership meetings quarterly at a minimum.
  - ix. Invite APA staff to chapter functions and leadership meetings.
  - x. Collaborate with APA staff to prepare meeting agendas at least one week prior to each meeting.
- b. APA responsibilities:
- i. Designate an APA Board member to serve as liaison for each chapter.
  - ii. Designate a staff member to attend chapter functions and leadership meetings.
  - iii. Host all virtual chapter leadership and membership meetings on APA's videoconferencing platform (e.g., Zoom).
  - iv. Ensure that meeting agendas and minutes are prepared, distributed, and posted.

- v. Invite chapter presidents to all APA Board of Directors regular meetings.
- vi. Provide an online method of nominating and electing chapter leadership.

### **3. Chapter membership**

- a. Membership in APA shall be a condition of chapter membership.
- b. APA members shall be able to designate a home chapter at no additional charge to their APA membership dues.
- c. APA members may join as many additional chapters as desired by paying an additional fee, to be determined by the APA Board.
- d. Once a member's national membership expires, their chapter membership also expires.
- e. Chapter leaders will recruit new members and help to retain members.

### **4. Meetings and continuing education**

- a. Chapter responsibilities:
  - i. At least twice per year, offer continuing education (CE) specific to chapter-member needs:
    - 1. Propose CE events, which includes choosing dates, length of presentations, topics, and presenters.
      - a. Chapter-based CE may not be offered between November 1 and January 31 so as to not interfere with the National Conference.
    - 2. Submit CE proposals per the process outlined by APA at least three months before any proposed dates.

3. Understand that all chapter-developed CE is subject to approval from the APA Education & Events Committee.
  4. Understand that any CE offered by chapters shall be made available to APA for use in other venues, with appropriate credit given to the chapter.
- ii. Plan at least two no-fee chapter meetings a year open to all chapter members to inform chapter members of events and opportunities as well as gather input. These are in addition to any chapter meeting that may be held at the National Conference.
  - iii. Host at least one networking event a year, which may coincide with a chapter meeting. This event can be virtual (e.g., speed mentoring Zoom event or tech talk roundtable) or in person (e.g., pre-arranged dinner at the National Conference or get-together in a metro area).
- b. APA responsibilities:
- i. Develop and maintain a process for chapters to submit proposed CE programs.
  - ii. Schedule CE, in collaboration with the chapter.
  - iii. Coordinate with CE presenters.
  - iv. Advertise events on the APA website, on social media, and through marketing emails.
  - v. Collect fees and registrations for CE events.
  - vi. Obtain CE approvals from partner organizations, such as APAC, AIA, and ICC, as needed.

- vii. Provide staff-supported webinar hosting on APA-provided platform (e.g., Zoom or other video conferencing).
- viii. Maintain CE attendance records and report attendance to appropriate agencies.
- ix. Issue CE certificates.
- x. Distribute a post-course survey, analyze results, and share results with the chapter, APA Education & Events Committee, and the presenter.
- xi. Have discretion, in collaboration with the chapter, to cancel events with fewer than 20 registrants.

## **5. Financials**

### **a. Chapter responsibilities:**

- i. Abide by the APA Financial Policy.
- ii. Use any funds budgeted to the chapter, as needed, to support the mission of the chapter and APA.
  - 1. Chapters will submit an annual budget request by October 1 of the current year for the following year

### **b. APA responsibilities:**

- i. Budget an amount in the APA annual budget for each chapter.
- ii. Set any dues, fees, and discounts.
- iii. Collect dues, fees, donations, and sponsorships.
- iv. Make payments and reimbursements.
- v. Provide bookkeeping.
- vi. Provide a chapter budget report annually.

## 6. Communications

a. Chapter responsibilities:

- i. Provide all chapter communications that are intended for members and/or the public to APA staff for distribution through APA.
- ii. Respond to requests from APA staff for chapter updates to be included in the APA newsletter.
- iii. Provide material for the chapter page on the APA website when requested by APA staff.
- iv. Work with APA staff to provide a list of chapter accomplishments to be included in the APA annual report.
- v. Work with APA staff to develop chapter goals by October 1 for the following year, in keeping with the APA Strategic Plan.

b. APA responsibilities:

- i. Email APA Board meeting minutes to chapter presidents.
- ii. Distribute chapter communications in a timely manner and in keeping with APA guidelines. If meaningful edits are required, the edited version must be approved by the chapter leadership prior to distribution.
- iii. Maintain a section for each chapter on the APA website which will include chapter-specific news and training as well as a roster of chapter leadership.
- iv. Provide access to a membership list and member contact information (to be used for official purposes only).