



PFLAG Chapter Membership Management Guidelines

PFLAG membership is at the heart of building a sense of community within your chapter and can serve as an integral fundraising avenue to ensure your chapter's sustainability. Here are some guidelines for creating a membership structure and planning a process that works for both your board and your members.

What are the basics of a PFLAG chapter membership structure?

PFLAG—which encompasses PFLAG National and all of its chapters—is a membership organization. Chapters are required to offer memberships, as they are essential for supporting the organization's mission and all of the activities around our three pillars of work: Support, Education, and Advocacy. Chapter memberships offer individuals benefits, services, and opportunities to engage with the PFLAG community, as well as with PFLAG National. All PFLAG chapter memberships remain active from October 1 through September 30, which aligns with PFLAG's fiscal year.

PFLAG chapter membership dues are set by each individual chapter and are usually processed annually. When planning what amount you'd like to set, keep in mind that each chapter is obligated to submit a minimum annual payment of \$15 per household to PFLAG National, to be paid between Oct 1 and Feb 15. This payment also ensures that each member of your chapter is also a member of PFLAG National.

PFLAG chapter leaders are welcome to create a dues structure that works best for their local community. Chapters may set their own membership levels with different prices for each level depending on the needs of folks in their communities. Some common levels include "household", "individual", "student" and name-your-price levels where members can pay a higher fee if they wish to contribute more to the chapter. Regardless of what level you set locally, all dues submitted to PFLAG National are done by household.

What kind of benefits can PFLAG chapter members receive?

PFLAG chapter memberships provide opportunities for connection and peer support from parents and caregivers, family members, LGBTQ+ people, and allies in your community, while also providing avenues for meaningful community engagement.

Once someone becomes a member of your chapter, and they are in "good standing" as outlined in your bylaws, they will be eligible to vote. Chapter members vote for incoming board members at duly called elections and on any chapter changes that would directly affect them; general chapter matters do not need a member vote.

PFLAG chapters have the flexibility to offer tangible additional benefits to their members, too. These may include discounted event tickets, exclusive members-only gatherings, local business discounts, complimentary items, or a token of appreciation upon securing a new membership.

Chapter membership includes membership to PFLAG National, with all dues paid to PFLAG National contributing to these memberships. PFLAG National recognizes all members within a household as dues-paying members.

To help your chapter leadership determine membership benefits, take a look at this [Membership Benefits Brainstorm](#). Consider including membership information and benefits on your chapter's website and social media channels, as that's where potential members will most likely encounter your chapter first!

What should my chapter's onboarding process look like for new members?

While it is up to each PFLAG chapter to decide how they'd like to welcome new members (ie. swag, publications, certificates, invitations to members-only gatherings, etc.), we encourage each chapter to include the following in their member onboarding process:

1. An official welcome email and/or flyer that includes the membership dues structure, any benefits of their membership, your chapter's support meeting times, and information about the PFLAG National Member Portal. The Member Portal serves as a valuable tool allowing members to track their membership, acting as a digital membership card that displays start/end dates and chapter-specific information.
2. A method for alerting members once their information has been added to the Member Portal by chapter leadership. Check out our [Member Portal User Guide](#) for how to set up new member accounts and information to share with new members on how to activate their accounts.

What happens if someone joins my chapter mid-year?

When new chapter members join outside of regular membership drives or mid-year, it's important for chapter leaders to effectively communicate with them and establish a plan to manage their memberships until they can align with the normal fiscal year renewal schedule.

Chapter leaders should:

- Develop a clear procedure for managing their memberships after the standard renewal window, documenting this process in the chapter's governance document.
- Inform new members about the PFLAG fiscal year and membership calendar, which runs from October 1 to September 30 each year.
- Extend a new membership to end on September 30 of the following year so it will align with the fiscal year going forward.
 - ex. If someone joins in July 2024, extend their membership to end in September 2025 and do not make them renew in Oct 2024.

How should my chapter collect membership dues?

While each PFLAG chapter has the flexibility to determine its preferred method for collecting membership dues, leveraging digital payment options can offer advantages, such as ease of donations and the ability to sign people up for membership at in-person events. However, it's important to note that digital payment methods may entail fees imposed by the payment processor. The acceptance of dues through cash or check payments is permissible, provided the chapter maintains thorough records.

Platforms like [PayPal](#), [Square](#), [Cash App](#), and [Venmo](#) enable easy contributions from both members and donors, with features such as auto-renewal for seamless payments.

Additionally, [Mightycause](#) is an online fundraising tool for small nonprofits. They offer strategic donor engagement for websites, as well as donation management support specific to your fee structure.

Regardless of the chosen collection method, chapters must maintain comprehensive records of all donations and dues received, and issue Donation Thank You letters to donors and members. These letters, distributed via email or physical mail, should specify the amount paid, membership duration (if applicable), and offer a brief overview of the chapter's activities, including upcoming events and support meetings.

These confirmation letters fulfill dual purposes for tax considerations, as memberships are categorized as tax-exempt donations. [A template for the Donation Thank You letter can be accessed in the Member Portal.](#)

How should my chapter manage memberships?

Chapters are advised to maintain their own membership list outside of the Member Portal. This list can be used when entering information into the Member Portal and allows for more detailed record keeping. Chapters should also decide who on their board will maintain and update this list, as well as how they will collect membership information (membership application forms, PayPal, paper forms, etc.).

Below are some best practices on managing your memberships:

- Maintain a detailed membership list, including start and end dates and payment amounts, for reference when inputting member information into the Member Portal.
- Inform new members who join in August and September that their membership with PFLAG National remains active through the end of September of the following year.
- Promptly add new members who join in August or September to the Member Portal, with the system automatically setting the start date to October 1 for all new September memberships.
- In September each year, the chapter board should review the list of active members to identify those needing renewal in October.
- Contact your regional Chapter Engagement staffer if adjustments to start/end dates are needed for irregular membership dates (e.g., changing the end date to September 30, 2024, if the member joined in July 2023).