

Conscious Inclusion Considerations for Association Membership

The following document is designed to provide key considerations for associations seeking to be more consciously inclusive in membership. By addressing these questions, tracking these measures of success, and implementing the recommended action plan association leaders can make significant strides in implementing conscious inclusion at their association. The emphasis should be on *inclusion* and engagement with stakeholders who bring a broad range of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives, and no stakeholders should be excluded from participation, opportunities, or benefits based on demographic characteristics.

Membership

Associations should have a core focus to ensure that the association's membership reflects the diversity of the field it represents and that all members feel valued and included.

Key Questions for Leaders

- How might we ensure our organization truly represents the population in which our mission says we serve?
- What are barriers to membership in our organization? Are these barriers greater for certain groups, and, if so, why?
- Are there places within the membership lifecycle (recruitment to retention) where improvements might lead to a more welcoming and inclusive process?

Key Considerations for 2025

- Continue to focus your messaging on the association's mission and the value the organization brings to all members.
- Work with your board and executive committee to determine if you would like to issue a membership statement based on issues that may impact the association.
- Determine the impact of recent changes on your membership and consider ways to support renewals (i.e., demonstrating value proposition, extend grace period, extend the renewal cycle, etc.).





Discussion Guide

- Do we have the necessary data to ensure a data-informed process?
- What aspects of diversity are particularly meaningful or important specifically for our organization?
- How are we measuring our progress in advancing and supporting opportunities for all we serve?
- Are our programs inclusive of all stakeholders in our membership?
- How do we help existing members understand the overall breadth of our membership?
- Are we actively collecting input from a broad range of stakeholders in our membership? Do we know which stakeholders are least likely to be represented or served by our membership programs?
- How can we ensure our membership award program structure, consideration of prospective nominees, engagement, and advancement processes are fair, consciously inclusive, and lead to broad representation of awardees without race-based selection criteria?
- How can we ensure our author selection, engagement, and advancement processes are fair, consciously inclusive, and lead to broad representation of authors without race-based selection criteria?

Measures of Success

- Increased diversity in membership backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.
- Higher retention rates across all member segments.
- Improved sense of belonging among members (measured through surveys).
- Increased participation from a broad range of groups in association activities.

Action Plan

- Talk to your legal team when determining your association's strategy.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of the data your association currently collects. Do we assure members that any demographic data collected will be used only in aggregated, de-identified ways?
 - Determine targets for growth and engagement in your identified areas.
- Review your strategic priorities to see how to incorporate increased engagement and growth within your major key initiatives.
 - Are there areas in your recruitment or retention strategy where you can focus on your target areas?



Discussion Guide

- Review your onboarding process to ensure that the process is inclusive and welcoming for everyone.
- Ensure clear instructions on ways possible ways for members to volunteer.
- Communicate to the membership the commitment to conscious inclusion and the action steps you are taking to achieve your desired results.