

MEMBERSHIP



Maryland
PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

Maryland PTA, Inc.
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Message to the Chair

Thank you for accepting this important position in your PTA!

As the chair you are charged with an important and rewarding responsibility. The opportunities for involvement that PTA membership provides are of great importance. The success of membership enrollment lies with an effective, ongoing membership campaign. The membership campaign is an organized plan that provides programs and services to meet the needs of the membership and encourages people to become members. Remember, membership recruitment is an ongoing, year round activity. When parents and school staff interact positively and regularly, their enthusiasm and interest is transmitted to students.

This membership book is designed to help the membership chair to do their job more effectively. It covers the general job description and basic information on getting started. As membership chair you should be familiar with the following:

1. National PTA Membership Quick Reference Guide
2. Maryland PTA Membership Booklet
3. Local PTA bylaws

The first of these documents is part of the Official National PTA Back-to-School kit and can be found online at www.pta.org. The second two documents should be available from the PTA president and may be online as well. If you need assistance with these please contact the Maryland PTA office at office@mdpta.org or 301- 410-760-6221.

Advantages of PTA

1. PTA is a network of parent-teacher associations in all the states with national offices in Alexandria, Virginia.
2. PTA addresses the needs of all children in the local community, state and nation.
3. PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer advocacy association working exclusively for children on the national, state and local levels.
4. PTA, as a nonprofit organization, allows its members greater financial independence including control of all funds raised.
5. PTA offers stability and structure through the use of required bylaws.
6. PTA units in Maryland automatically come under a blanket 501© (3) federal tax exemption.
7. PTA offers training for its members through annual workshops, conferences and conventions.
8. Maryland PTA and National PTA provide all units abundant, up-to-date material on issues related to children, family, education and legislation.
9. PTA offers all units low-cost liability and bonding insurance.
10. PTA has representatives serving on important statewide committees that influence state policy.
11. PTA works in coalitions with state and local agencies, state and local school boards, other nonprofit organizations and concerned individuals to inform the public on issues and to influence policy makers on the needs of children.
12. PTA represents nearly 170,000 parents and teachers in Maryland, and over 4 million parents and teachers nationally.

Duties of the Membership Chair

The duties of the membership chair and the committee are to build an informed, active membership that supports the mission, purpose, policies and programs of the PTA; to develop a membership recruitment and retention plan that emphasizes a year –round effort to involve new members; and to create well-thought-out plans early and carry them out with enthusiasm and imagination throughout the year.

1. Develop a plan of work to include:
 - A theme for your membership year
 - A procedure for collecting, counting and depositing membership dues.
 - A membership campaign
 - Membership Incentives
2. Set a membership goal.
3. Attend scheduled meetings and provide an accurate report of membership
4. Recruit committee members.
5. Distribute membership cards. Membership card must be given to every member so that they can partake of the many benefits of membership.
6. Encourage activation of membership cards.
7. Work with the Council and State membership chairs to reach goals.
8. Attend leadership and membership training.
9. Maintain accurate membership records and have the list available at every meeting.
10. Work with the treasurer to ensure that dues collected are reported and paid to Maryland PTA each month.
11. Provide information to members on the benefits of joining PTA.
12. Review Maryland PTA and National PTA membership awards information.

Membership Facts

Each individual, upon payment of dues, joins the local PTA, Maryland PTA, and National PTA. The local PTA sets its own dues portion as approved by its board of directors. **\$3.75** per member is mailed to the Maryland PTA office. **\$1.50** is the state portion and remains in Maryland. The state forwards the remaining **\$2.25** to National PTA.

Membership Cards

Maryland PTA is challenging each local unit to increase their membership by ten (10) new members over last year. If all PTA's throughout Maryland increased by only 10 we will have over 9,000 additional voices to assist us as we advocate for all children.

Membership cards will be issued once your 2014-2015 officer contact information is received in the office. Your unit will be issued membership cards based on last year's membership.

Important Information:

1. Each person enrolled in PTA must have his own individual card. A PTA membership card should **NEVER** be issued with more than one name, such as Mr. and Mrs. or issued to the (insert name) Family.
2. Membership card must be activated by phone or online.
3. One card one vote.
4. Membership is required to participate in the business of your PTA. Non members are not allowed to vote or take part in the business of PTA.
5. Membership in one local PTA does not constitute privileges in any other local.
6. All members of your board of directors must be PTA members, including the principal (see bylaws).
7. A current membership card is required to attend as a voting delegate at Maryland PTA and National PTA annual convention.
8. Membership in a PTA is required for the privilege of voting, and holding office in that local and in Maryland PTA and National PTA.
- 9. Dues are to be submitted monthly!!**
10. All damaged or invalid cards must be returned to the Maryland PTA office. They can be mailed in with the monthly statement.
11. **Your local unit will be charged a fee for all unused** membership cards not returned to the Maryland PTA by June 30.
12. Membership in PTA shall be open, without discrimination, to anyone who believes in and supports the mission and purposes of National PTA.

Maryland PTA cannot issue a refund for membership overpayment!

Although National PTA and Maryland PTA do not recommend the practice of Family Memberships, the final decision to offer Family Memberships originates at the local level. Therefore, to assist those locals offering Family Memberships we are providing the following guidelines:

Family Membership Guidelines

If your local PTA is offering family membership, please make a note of the following guidelines:

1. You must specify the exact number of individuals that are included in the family membership.
2. You must specify the names, and should collect contact information, of individuals who have been issued membership under the family membership.
3. You must issue separate membership cards to each individual who has been issued membership under a family membership and pay the required dues for each member, not each family.
4. Please make sure that the family membership fee you charge, at the minimum, covers the dues payment your local PTA will have to pay the council (where applicable), state and

national PTA to cover the cost of each individual membership issued under a family membership.

5. Remember that membership cards are not transferable, even to other family members, and can be used only by those individuals who have been issued the membership card.
6. "Families" cannot vote. 1 member = 1 card = 1 vote

Complete the following on each card:

1. National PTA ID number for each card (number is listed on mailing label for this mailing)
2. Members name
3. Local unit name

Note: While there is no expiration date listed on the card, the expiration date for all cards no matter when sold will be 9/30/15.

For additional membership cards:

1. Use the membership order form located in the forms section of the website, www.mdpta.org
2. Order form can be included with monthly statements, faxed or e-mailed to office@mdpta.org
3. Make sure that any request includes the unit name, county and unit ID number.
4. No additional cards will be issued until your unit has paid for at least 75% of the cards that were originally issued.
- 5.

Membership Dues Collection

- Contact the school principal to work out the process for the collection of membership payments.
- Check into school procedures regarding specific distribution and collection of membership materials.
- Collect membership payments promptly.
- The membership chairman and at least one other PTA member should count the money received.
- The amount of money for each payment should be counted and noted.
- Fill out verification form for all monies received. See Cash Encounters.
- Take money to the treasurer to be deposited in the **PTA's** bank account as soon as possible.
- Request a dated receipt to be retained for your files.
- **The portion of each member's dues that is collected that belongs to the National PTA and the Maryland PTA must be forwarded through the proper channels at the completion of the enrollment month and monthly thereafter. PTA Council dues should be paid separately to the council as directed.**

Membership Themes

The membership committee and the president work together to develop a membership theme. The president may request the membership committee to utilize a theme of his/her choice. In choosing your theme, consider how it will appeal to everyone that you're trying to reach.

Consider how you will utilize the theme in your year-round efforts to enroll new members. Choose a theme for your local that will reflect your message and give instant identity to your campaign. The theme should be creative and fun for kids. It needs to attract attention, create interest and make people want to join PTA. NOTE: Do not use any copyrighted figures, characters, or materials in your membership campaigns unless you have obtained the written permission of the entity holding the copyright.

As you plan your membership campaign this year, feel free to use our statewide theme. Using visuals in your membership campaign, remind your parents of your membership goals and provide information as to where your unit currently is in achieving those goals. Below are some examples of visuals that you can use to create your membership campaign:

- Create a “Safe” representing your PTA Unit and a Skeleton Key Ring
- Use objects to represent your members as they join such as different colored keys
- Each item listed above can be used to promote healthy competition between teachers and grade levels, or perhaps to define who your members are such as parents, students, staff, community partners, etc. (Blue keys ~ 1st grade, Red keys ~ 2nd grade, etc)
- Display your PTA Safe and Keys at each of your PTA meetings and functions and add to it as often as you can!

Remember - Campaigns should be FUN for everyone! Don't forget to include your students, parents and staff!

Membership Campaign

The success of membership enrollment lies with an effective, ongoing membership campaign. The membership campaign is an organized plan that provides programs and services to meet the needs of its membership and encourages people to become members. Remember, membership recruitment is an ongoing, year-round activity.

How To Run A Successful Membership Campaign

1. Form a membership committee with people who are positive and enthusiastic.
2. Begin early in planning the membership campaign. (July)
3. Establish projects and programs that are meaningful and keep people interested and involved.
4. Promote membership through social media and traditional media (television, radio and print) using the predominant languages of your school community.
5. Encourage PTA volunteers to be at all PTA functions.
6. Establish membership tables at all PTA functions and other school activities where possible.
7. Acquaint members and the public with the benefits and advantages of membership in PTA.
8. Inform members of how the dues are used at the local, state and National level.
9. Use publications and materials from the National and state PTA in developing parent/family involvement programs.

10. Be consistent with your message and make sure it reflects the mission and purpose of the PTA.
11. Evaluate membership efforts throughout the year with a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the year.

Ways To Spark Your Membership Campaign

1. Hold grade level meetings or orientation for parents and students going to a single grade, middle school or high school and ask parents to join.
2. Hold a “New Parent Coffee” for parents of kindergarten and new students to deal with first day trauma and provide the opportunity for parents to join PTA.
3. Have room representatives/class parents promote membership. Prepare kits for class meetings for parents to distribute. These kits should contain the program for the year, the PTA directory, and membership forms, and be available in the predominant languages of your school community.
4. Challenging a neighboring PTA local. The local who achieves the larger percentage increase will receive a special treat from the other local.
5. Provide membership discount incentives when charging a fee for programs, conferences, entertainment events; offer discounted prices to all PTA members.
6. Have students bring biological or “adopted” grandparents to school for lunch, a program, or a tour of the building on a “Grandparents Day.” Enroll grandparents.
7. Ask local businesses to become a “friend of PTA” by offering discounts to card-carrying PTA members.
8. Give a certificate or plaque to the business establishment that made the largest contribution to the PTA; alert the media.
9. Hold a Business Leaders Day and invite those businesses that have supported PTA to come to school for a tour and special recognition.
10. Ask service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, Chamber of Commerce) to invite a representative of PTA to speak about the services of PTA.
11. Send a special letter of invitation to join PTA after getting the names and addresses of new parents.
12. Keep a letter of welcome, PTA materials, and an invitation to join in the school office when a new family comes to register their children. Include a phone number of a current officer and/or the Membership Chair.
13. Keep membership materials on your PTA’s website year round.
14. Set up a bulletin board in your school with names of all members written on various shapes and pinned to the board, or put colored leaves on a PTA tree: each class can have a branch. Utilize your Theme.
15. Invite your elected officials to join your PTA.

Build PTA Membership

Throughout the entire year, invite individuals to join PTA. Membership promotion is a year-round activity. Help all members feel a part of the PTA while encouraging them to remain loyal to their culture and heritage. Look at your PTA’s programs, policies, and projects. Do they meet the needs of all cultural and socioeconomic groups, single-parent families, dual income

households, males as well as well as females? Are they sensitive to the circumstances and needs of all parents and others who are concerned about the future of children or interested in being active in PTA? Remember that one program cannot meet all needs, but you can have several programs to cover many needs.

Six Steps To Creative Membership

Step One -- Identify - Identify any groups in your community missing from your active membership. Work with the principal; identify the make - up of your school community. Who is involved in PTA activities and who is not? The people who are not involved are the ones at which to aim your outreach efforts. Look for some common threads that make them identifiable as a group or collection of groups. This might include, but not necessarily be limited to, ethnic or cultural differences.

Step Two -- Approach - Find out more about what keeps these groups from becoming involved and create a plan to overcome those barriers. Find an effective way to communicate with your members. They won't come to your meetings if they are not asked. (But there may be more to it.) How they are asked and who asks them may make a big difference? It may take a little work, but it will be worth it.

Step Three -- Reach Out - Getting people to attend a meeting is an important first step in getting involved. Increasing the attendance at meetings should be one of your goals. Determine what may be preventing people from coming. Change what you can to remove those barriers. You must be sensitive to the needs of new members while respecting the needs of the people who are already involved and regularly attending PTA meetings.

Step Four -- Retain - If people enjoy themselves at a meeting they will be more likely to come again. To enjoy themselves, they must feel welcomed and accepted by the others there, and interested in what is being presented at the meeting. The PTA meeting must be important and meaningful to the membership. People live busy lives and will not waste time coming to a meeting that does not meet their needs.

Step Five -- Dissolve the "Them" Attitude - Sometimes when people are asked to serve on a PTA board, they say no because of the way they have been treated at meetings or because they don't feel like they are part of the "in-crowd". They feel closed out. Ask them to serve on a committee or board. Because they will know members of the PTA board from the meeting, they will feel more comfortable in agreeing to serve.

Step Six -- Check Your Success - Evaluate what you've done and what still needs to be done to include everyone in the community. Evaluate your PTA's programs and policies. Are they sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the school community you serve?

Levels of Membership

Some parents will avoid joining the PTA because they do not have the time to volunteer and may not feel that they can join. Remind parents that the PTA needs all parents to join. Once you understand the different levels of membership, you can design a campaign to target each level.

Level 1– This parent may not be able to volunteer in school but may be available to work on some projects from home. They may be willing to make calls or design flyers. They will not be the ones who will seek to be a chair of a committee or even work on a committee. They may participate in a fundraiser and attend at least one PTA event.

Level 2– This parent is more likely to volunteer for field trips and special events. They are willing to serve on a committee but not the chair of the committee. They will usually volunteer for one or two PTA events. They will participate in most of the fundraisers and will attend the events.

Level 3– This is your very active parent. They volunteer frequently in school. They will serve as committee chairs for at least one program and will volunteer to assist in most of the PTA events. They will participate in the fundraisers and will attend all of the events. These members are also potential candidates for officer positions in your PTA.

Attract New Members

As a PTA leader, you believe in the PTA and would like to see membership increase. But what can you do? First, recognize that there are many people in your community who are important human resources. Know who these individuals are. They may be parents, teachers, teenage mothers and fathers, couples without children, grandparents, senior citizens, community leaders, business people, school board members, or students. Remember, everybody can be a PTA member!!

How Can You Recruit New Members? Ask Yourself These Questions:

1. What are the benefits and services available at the local, state, and national levels?
2. What do prospective members want to know about our PTA?
3. How can our PTA best provide that information?
4. Do our PTA materials reflect the cultural, economic, and social backgrounds of the community groups we are trying to reach?
5. What are our strengths, and how can we build on them?
6. What are our weaknesses, and how can we overcome them?
7. What other PTA programs and activities are our neighboring PTAs doing that attract new members?
8. What barriers exist in the PTA's programs and practices that might discourage someone from joining?

Then Ask!

1. Personal invitation works the best.
2. Provide a list of the benefits not only from National but list the benefits of becoming a member of your local unit.
3. All board members need to be working to increase membership.
4. Don't just send home a flyer, post information around the school, use the school notification system, have a membership table at every PTA and school event.
5. Let the parents know why you believe that belonging to your PTA can benefit all the students in your school.
6. Place an announcement in your local paper in the community sections.
7. Provide information on the goals for the PTA as well as a list of accomplishments from the past year.
8. According to a survey conducted by National PTA, the number one reason people don't join PTA is because they are not ASKED by someone to join the PTA.

Don't Take "No..."

When a potential member is reluctant to join, use these responses in an honest, friendly spirit to convince someone to say, "Yes".

PTA is for elementary schools. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your job as a parent is far from over; in fact, it is possibly more critical now than ever. You need to be involved with all phases of your secondary student's life. Involvement in PTA is a natural link.

My teenager does not want me involved in his school. As adults, we do not ask our child's permission to join other groups; why would we seek permission to join PTA? By your continued support of your local school, you provide a role model of a concerned citizen.

Your organization doesn't really do anything. I can't speak about past efforts, but let me bring you up-to-date on what our PTA is currently doing. To continue our accomplishments, we need time, funds, and good will from people like you.

I don't agree with everything PTA does. The only way to avoid disagreement would be to adopt a "do nothing policy". You wouldn't want that kind of group. When you understand the total picture and work of our PTA, you may reconsider. As a PTA member, you could influence changes in the organization.

I can't help now. Maybe later. Unfortunately our children can't wait. Problems exist now, and they will become worse if we wait for a perfect time to become involved. Many volunteer opportunities only involve a small amount of time.

I have no time for PTA. It is not just your time we need. If you are not able to support the PTA with your time, would you consider giving your financial support by joining? The act of joining lets your child know you think what happens at school is important.

But I don't have children in school. You do not have to be a parent to belong to PTA. Anyone who cares about children can join. As supporters of education, we have a voice in the decision making process of the schools. You can have that voice through PTA. Every child needs you!

I can't join another organization. I belong to too many already. I understand. There are so many good organizations that we can join, and we all have to make choices. I think PTA is very special. Let me tell you what we are doing. Many organizations fight problems after they have happened. PTA works to prevent problems. We really need good people like you.

How can one person make a difference?

Never underestimate your impact. If only one student is helped or one parent receives valuable information on parenting, or you challenge one legislator to put children and youth first, you have been a success.

Additional Ideas To Increase Membership

1. Contact new families as they move into your community and school. A personal contact is the best.
2. A letter of welcome, PTA materials and an invitation to join could be in the principal's office for distribution when new families come to register their children.
3. If you have an open house, place a table manned by a member of the committee, or a parent with a child in that classroom, at each classroom door.
4. In addition to having someone behind the membership table, have an informed, enthusiastic member greeting your parents.
5. Give children stick-on buttons that read, "My mom/dad is a PTA member."
6. Prepare a roster of members with special skills. Ask them to help enrich the program by use of their special services, such as interpreting for non-English speaking families.
7. Ask members to take part in vocational guidance clinics, forums, and panels for and with young people.
8. Assume that members are willing to serve as officers of your PTA and suggest that nominating committees give adequate attention to seeking out men who display interest in or a talent for PTA work.
9. You might try a "Meet My Dad" night, "Dads and Donuts" or "Muffins with Mom" for breakfast or IMom programs.
10. On the first day of school, place a flower or small plant and an invitation to join PTA on each teacher's desk. Don't forget other staff members, too.
11. Have your principal challenge another similarly-sized school to a membership increase.
12. Set up booths at sporting and music events, as well as other community activities.
13. Distribute your PTA newsletter to all residents in the school area.
14. Contact former graduates of your school and ask them for their continued support.
15. Visit senior citizens' centers in your community. Tell them about today's PTA and welcome their membership. Invite them to help you in your work. There are many and varied activities in which they can participate.
16. Establish a grand-person program. Retired people can share their skills, such as woodworking, weaving, crocheting, etc., through a series of classes.

Membership Benefits

Numerous benefits are available to dues-paying units and members. All PTA Member units have access to:

1. **Our Children Magazine**, PTA's flagship publication with parenting articles by experts on children's health, education, and well-being; and information on advocacy efforts; the latest news that affects children and youth.
2. **Professionally designed public service announcements (PSAs)** to aid in membership recruitment.
3. **National PTA Annual Convention** registration information.
4. **An Official Kit of the PTA** containing recruitment ideas and other materials to get the year started.
5. **Teacher Appreciation Week** ideas.
6. **Take Your Family to School Week** ideas.
7. **Select resources** developed in collaboration with National PTA.
8. **National PTA's Membership Achievement Program.**
9. **Numerous resources** on parent involvement programs, fundraising, working collaboratively, and much more.
10. **Discounts** and special offers from a host of PTA sponsors and community partners
11. **Great Ideas Bank**...www.pta.org
12. **National PTA grants and awards.**
13. **The Reflections arts program.**

Individual members have access to a number of exclusive benefits too, including:

1. **Online parenting resources**, including select articles from Our Children magazine.
2. **E-newsletters** on parenting and legislative issues.
3. **Exclusive National PTA member benefits.**
4. **Leadership training** opportunities in-person and online.
5. **Discounted member rate** for PTA's annual national convention, magazine subscriptions, and more.

The Member-to-Member Network, connecting you to Congress when help is needed on issues important to children, schools, and families.

Membership Awards

Maryland PTA provides the opportunity for all local units to receive membership awards. **In order to be eligible to receive one of these awards, your unit must meet the Standards of Affiliation, by March 31, 2015. A unit is considered to have met the Standards of Affiliation in accordance with local unit bylaws, #Article IV, Section 1.**

1. Adheres to the purpose and basic policies of the PTA;
2. Remits the National and State dues to the Maryland PTA office by the dates designated;
3. Has bylaws approved every three (3) years according to the procedures of Maryland PTA;
4. Has a minimum of twenty-five (25) members;
5. Submits the name and address of the local president to the Maryland PTA office within two (2) weeks of election;
6. Remits liability, bonding and directors and officers insurance premiums by the date designated;
7. Have an EIN (Employer Identification Number) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on file with Maryland PTA;
8. Maintains its status as a corporation, have as required by Maryland Non Profit law, at a minimum, a president, secretary and treasurer;
9. Files the appropriate tax forms, by the required date, with the IRS and submits a copy to Maryland PTA office within thirty (30) days of filing.
10. Each local PTA shall submit a copy of its annual financial review to Maryland PTA within one hundred twenty (120) days following the end of the locals fiscal year.
11. Files all appropriate state forms with the appropriate state authorities by the required date and submit a copy to the Maryland PTA office within 30 days of filing.

All membership awards will be calculated from July 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015. Growth will be determined based on membership reported by March 31, 2015 as computed by Maryland PTA. Membership Awards will be given out during the Annual Convention in July 2015 to PTAs who have met the Standards of Affiliation and have:

- the largest percentage membership increase over the previous year, in the county/city.
- the largest total membership increase over the previous year in the state.
- the largest percentage membership increase over the previous year in the state.

A membership award will be given to the council PTA, who has met the Standards of Affiliation and has:

- the largest percentage membership increase over the previous year in the state.

Recognition on the Maryland PTA website and in the 2015 Convention program will be given to the PTAs that have met the Standards of Affiliation and have increased their membership by 25%, 50%, 75%, 100% and by 100 members or more. Special recognition will be given to delegates attending the 2015 convention from PTAs that have increased by 100 or more members in the 100th year of Maryland PTA.

Remember, people like to join organizations that make a difference in the live of others, are educational and beneficial to the community, allow them to network with successful people, and provide opportunities to have fun. When promoting PTA, highlight that members will be able to mix with diverse individuals through local PTA activities. Emphasize once again that the number-one benefit of PTA membership is the ability to help children, which should be reason enough to join.

Have fun!!!