



CHAPTER FORMATION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER FORMATION

Thank you for requesting information on forming a chapter of the [Association of Legal Administrators \(ALA\)](#). To get started please take the following steps:

1. Determine the level of interest among legal management professionals in your geographic location. This usually begins with exploratory conversations with fellow ALA members in your area and concludes with an informal interest meeting. A sample agenda for this meeting is included in this document.
2. Contact chapters@alanet.org to notify ALA Headquarters staff of your interest in forming a chapter. Staff will discuss details of the process with you, including:
 - The requisite minimum of 20 members to form a chapter
 - Geographic limitations, if any
 - Chapter Performance Objectives
 - Chapter bylaws
 - Chapter name

If after the initial interest meeting and discussion with ALA staff, you would like to proceed with forming an ALA chapter, the following documents will need to be prepared and submitted to chapters@alanet.org for review:

1. Proposed Bylaws: [ALA's Model Chapter Bylaws](#) should be used as a guide when preparing your proposed chapter bylaws. Keep in mind that text highlighted in green within the template must appear in the chapter bylaws while the text highlighted in yellow within the template indicates areas where the chapter has flexibility.
2. Charter Application: The Application for Chapter Recognition found later in this document should include the signatures, employer names, mailing addresses, and email addresses of individuals who wish to belong to the chapter. These individuals must either be current members of ALA or their membership application and dues payment must be submitted along with the Application for Chapter Recognition. *A minimum of twenty (20) members is required for a charter application to be considered.*

Headquarters staff will ensure the submitted documents meet guidelines established by ALA's legal counsel. Once the guidelines have been met, your request to establish an ALA chapter will be placed on the next ALA Board of Directors' agenda. If the board needs additional information, the board will reach out to the point of contact for the chapter. Once a decision has been made, the members on the charter application will be notified.

ALA Headquarters staff and the Board of Directors are available to assist at any point throughout the process.

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THIS IS ALA

Starting with just 25 members in 1971, the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) now has over 8,500 members worldwide. ALA was formed to provide support to those professionals involved in the operational management of law firms, corporate legal departments and government legal agencies. These individuals direct important areas of law office management, including human resources, finance, technology, facilities and marketing.

ALA chapters provide local educational activities, resources and networking opportunities. ALA has 82 chapters in 44 states, the District of Columbia, Mexico and two Canadian provinces. The Cyber Chapter has no geographic base.

Vision and Mission Statement

As the role of law firm business leaders has grown, evolved and become more complex, so must the Association that represents them. To meet the challenges of this transformed legal industry, ALA has adopted a vision statement for the organization:

Creating excellence. Driving innovation. Empowering leaders in law.

Mission Statement:

ALA is the catalyst for growth by providing:

- *Diverse educational experiences*
- *Engaged peer communities*
- *Strategic solutions*
- *Dynamic resources*
- *Trusted networks*

Strategic Direction

To guide the organization forward, the Board has adopted the following focus areas as part of the strategic direction:

1. **Member Experience:** Create meaningful, accessible and personalized member experiences.
2. **Education & Professional Development:** Deliver timely and pertinent educational resources and growth opportunities.
3. **Impact:** Elevate the visibility and influence of the Association and our members.
4. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility:** Continually advance a welcoming and supportive culture in which everyone belongs and has a voice.
5. **Innovation:** Lead the ecosystem toward a future defined by notable advancements and change.

Additional information regarding [ALA's Strategic Direction is available on the website.](#)

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Membership in the international Association is a mandatory prerequisite to membership within any ALA chapter. Members are required to maintain membership in good standing within the international Association in order to remain eligible for chapter membership.



Members may be the following:

- Any individual who demonstrates an interest in legal administration and the management of legal organizations, including legal professionals employed in a private law firm, legal service clinic, corporate legal department, university legal department, governmental legal agency, court system, charitable legal agency or any other organization engaged in the legal industry.
- Shares interest in and supports the purposes of the Association.
- Is not affiliated with a business partner or a business partner eligible entity.

Chapter leaders are encouraged to actively recruit and welcome all eligible professionals employed in legal management roles, including:

- Overall Management
- Financial Management
- Operations Management
- Technology Management
- Human Resources Management
- Legal Project Management
- Legal Marketing Management
- Legal Pricing Specialists
- Legal Process Management
- Corporate Law Department Management
- Government Legal Services Management
- Education Law Department Management
- Nonprofit Legal Service Organization Management
- Bar Association Management
- Law Department Management of Nonprofit Organizations
- Retired Legal Management Professionals
- Students

Chapter leaders should familiarize themselves with the criteria as outlined in ALA's bylaws. Contact membership@alanet.org with any questions pertaining to membership eligibility.

APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR ALA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

To ensure consistency and uniformity in eligibility determinations, the following procedures apply:

1. All prospective members shall be instructed by ALA and its chapters to [join online](#) — the secure, preferred method to join.
2. If an ALA application is sent to the chapter instead of ALA, the chapter will immediately forward the application and dues payment to ALA, selecting the appropriate address as outlined on the current application form.
3. [ALA's Membership Department](#) processes all membership applications. Eligibility questions

are referred to and resolved by the Executive Director, who may consult with other members of ALA headquarters staff. Chapter leaders may be contacted if additional information is deemed necessary.

4. Once a chapter leader is notified that an individual has been approved for membership, the new member may then be invited to join a chapter. Pursuant to ALA's and all chapters' by-laws:
 - a. Chapter membership may not be granted before ALA membership has been approved.
 - b. All members approved by ALA are eligible (but not required) to join a chapter.
5. New members are listed as Independent until ALA's Membership Department has received authorization from the Chapter President (or designee) to assign them to the chapter. Authorizations may be sent by email to membership@alanet.org with 'Add to Chapter Roster' in the subject line or by calling membership staff at +1-847-267-1585.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRICING OPTION

In addition to the traditional Individual member, organizational pricing is an optional dues model that's based on the total number of attorneys across an entire organization, including all office locations in any country. It delivers better value for organizations of all sizes and offers the ability to extend ALA membership to all legal management professionals who can benefit from ALA's resources, without any additional dues payment required.

Individual members under the Organizational Pricing option retain all the same benefits of ALA membership. Chapter rosters denote Individual (Regular) members as RM and Organizational Pricing participants as GM in the category field.

The enrollment window for current ALA members to participate in Organizational Pricing is open from August 1–September 30 each year. Organizations with no current ALA membership representation may enroll throughout the membership term.

More information on Organizational Pricing is available on the ALA website. Contact membership@alanet.org with additional questions.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING MEMBERS

Finding and Recruiting New Members

- Use business directories to search for legal management professionals by management function area and/or managing partners.
- Once a chapter is formed, the chapter will have a roster and prospects link available through the ALA website. Prospects are members in your area who have yet to join a chapter.
- Create a digital, print-friendly chapter brochure that explains the benefits of belonging to a local chapter. Provide a prospective member kit that contains the following and may be transmitted by email, mail or in person:
 - A cover letter explaining the benefits of membership
 - Application link
 - Links to the chapter's website and/or social media
- Develop enticing campaign offers on chapter dues, products and/or services.
- Conduct periodic membership campaigns (such as member-get-a-member, extended term,

business partner incentives, contests, prizes).

- Get the ALA name and chapter name out as much as possible using public relations strategies and tactics, such as media relations, events and speaking engagements.
- Promote meetings/events on social media. LinkedIn is the most popular platform for ALA.
- Offer a free lunch or invite prospective members to a chapter meeting.
- Invite prospective members to a webinar and be sure to provide them with member information.
- Seek assistance from successful chapters, the Chapter Connections Committee or contact [ALA Headquarters](#).
- Work with business partners to reach their non-member customers who qualify for membership.
- Host Managing Partner breakfasts/luncheons/dinners.
- Offer business partners' seminars.
- Comment on industry social media posts, such as @attnyatwork and @PinHawkHappens, with #ALABuzz
- Comment on and/or retweet posts from Association of Legal Administrators (ALA).
- Optimize search results by including links to [alanet.org](#) and other partners and encourage partners to link to the chapter website.
- *Please note: nonmember attendance at a meeting is prohibited unless the intention is to promote membership, in which case it should be allowed on a limited basis.*

Using the Phone

The phone can be a very useful tool in building membership in your chapter. However, if misused, it can have a negative impact on your efforts and do more harm than good. The best results are achieved by communicating first through other means and setting an appointment to connect by phone. Make sure the call has a purpose!

Helpful tips for phone use:

- Have auditions among the chapter members to determine who does an effective job and who enjoys using the phone in talking to prospective members.
- Use only qualified members who are knowledgeable about ALA and the profession for phone communications.
- Establish early in the conversation if the timing of the call is convenient. If necessary, call back later or have the prospect call you when it is more convenient.
- End the conversation with a call to action, such as a commitment to attend the next chapter event.
- Remove negative responders from your prospect list.

Follow-Through

- Once a prospective member has been identified, you should not assume the prospect will initiate further contact.
- Assign a “mentor” to greet and welcome the prospective member and have the mentor follow up with the prospective member before the next chapter meeting.
- Acknowledge receipt of a prospective member’s application. This can be via a phone call, letter, postcard or email.
- Develop a new member onboarding program to introduce the new member to everything your chapter offers. Contact membership@alanet.org for more information.

Contests

One of the best ways to build chapter membership is to get as many current members involved in

the membership building process as possible. Contests such as “Be a Member — Get a Member” campaigns work well for chapters. However, you should not assume that everyone wants to take part in the recruitment effort. Not everyone is (or wants to be) a good salesperson.

Suppliers who benefit from growth in your chapter are often willing and able to offer prize packages such as trips, equipment or supplies to be used as incentives.

Trade Shows or Meetings

Another effective way to attract and talk to prospective members is at a local trade show, such as through the American Bar Association, a chapter meeting or some similar gathering. Even if you don’t sign up a prospect at a trade show exhibit, you have the opportunity of getting names and addresses so that you can follow up with direct mail efforts or telephone contacts.

Promotional digital materials that describe the legal management profession and ALA may be available for use by chapters. Contact the [ALA Marketing team](#) for assistance.

Chapters should budget for their own merchandise for giveaways.

Membership Engagement

One of the challenges that chapters face is engagement. To be effective, chapters should utilize the skills and talents of new and willing members. This will reduce burnout and any perceived sense that the chapter is governed by a select few.

Suggestions for member engagement include:

- Ask a member for specific assistance. Small opportunities, like serving as a greeter or helping at the registration desk for an event, or searching for community service opportunities, are great ways to get a new member engaged. Follow up when someone expresses an interest in becoming more actively involved.
- Encourage committee chairs to recruit members to their committees.
- Keep experienced administrators involved by including them as speakers for some of your programs, utilizing them as mentors or asking them to oversee a project.

New Member Orientation

Whether new members become active members depends, in part, on the effectiveness of their orientation into the chapter. New member onboarding programs should include some combination of the following:

- Personally invite new members to the first meeting, then make a point of meeting them.
- List new members in the chapter’s newsletter or announce them in the chapter’s online community.
- Introduce new members at the first meeting.
- Assign an experienced member to each new member.
- Involve new members in chapter projects and committees.
- Conduct periodic new member orientation sessions. The format for your program might include one-hour lunch or evening sessions and cover an overview of ALA, as well as answers to the following questions:
 - How does the chapter function?
 - Who are the chapter’s officers?
 - What activities are planned for the coming year?

- Create a resource for members who are new to ALA and/or new to the profession that might include:
 - Chapter membership directory
 - List of officers and committee chairs
 - Chapter bylaws
 - Chapter calendar of events
 - Articles on law office management

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR CHAPTERS

Every ALA chapter is held to a set of standards established by the ALA Board of Directors. These [Chapter Performance Objectives](#) promote effective chapter management by encouraging chapters to meet the professional development needs of their members and adhere to essential financial and legal responsibilities.

The objectives encourage chapters to plan effectively and set annual goals that support [ALA's Strategic Direction](#), develop collaborative efforts to strengthen the flow of information through all levels of the Association and promote unity throughout the Association.

Every chapter is required to attest to its compliance with these objectives as part of the chapter compliance initiative that occurs annually (usually in July).

CHAPTER SERVICES & ASSISTANCE

In order to provide local educational activities and peer networking opportunities, ALA's members are organized into chapters. ALA has chapters in nearly every state of the United States, the Canada and Mexico.

To assist its chapters, ALA offers:

♦ **Seed Money**

NOTE: Chapter funds may not be commingled with employer or personal funds.

A new chapter *may* receive a \$400 (U.S. Funds) donation (commonly referred to as “seed money”) once the chapter has established a chapter bank account. Some banks require a taxpayer ID number before opening an account. Chapters within the United States of America must secure their own tax ID, which can be obtained directly from the IRS. (You should contact your local IRS office or visit the IRS website to download the most current version of this form.) Chapters outside of the United States must contact the government agency in their country for specific guidance on tax and formation requirements.

♦ **Volunteer Handbook**

The [Volunteer Handbook](#) is a valuable resource for all volunteers, including chapter leaders. It is intended to be viewed in its electronic form for ease of access to the many links to additional resources that are available throughout the document. The table of contents within the document contains links to the corresponding text, making navigating this resource simple. ALA grants its chapter leaders permission to copy or reproduce the contents of this guide for use within the chapter.

♦ **Chapter Leadership Training**

Each year, ALA hosts its Chapter Leadership Institute (CLI), a leadership and training program designed for current, incoming and future chapter leaders. Chapters are strongly encouraged to

send at least one officer representative to CLI — ideally, the person who is serving as President-Elect at the time of the event. Other chapter leaders are welcome to attend at the chapter's discretion. CLI sessions focus on a wide array of chapter management issues such as:

- Succession planning for chapter leaders
- Designing high-quality education programs and business partner programs
- Membership recruitment, retention and engagement
- Special events (managing partners' dinners; business partner seminars; chapter retreats)

ALA also hosts Essentials of Chapter Leadership (ECL), a virtual training event held in the first quarter of the year. This event is intended to provide incoming chapter leaders with basic instruction on chapter management, as well as information on the importance of adhering to essential financial and legal responsibilities. One registration fee for the chapter allows unlimited members of the chapter to attend.

Chapter leadership events are designed to be motivational and informative, and they provide unique opportunities for chapter leaders to share ideas and solutions and to learn important chapter management details. Chapters are strongly encouraged to participate in these workshops.

Funding assistance is available for chapters to attend both of these events. Questions regarding chapter leader training should be directed to chapters@alanet.org.

◆ **Program Ideas**

At the first chapter meeting, it may be helpful to present an educational program as well as an introduction to ALA. The Chapter Connections Committee is available to help you with this meeting and, if desired, a representative of the ALA Board will also attend the meeting.

◆ **Newsletter Article Library**

Content in [Legal Management](#) is available for reprint in your newsletters. However, there are a few rules to follow:

- Please always include the following attribution with the article: "Copyright ©2025 [whatever the year it was published] Association of Legal Administrators. All Rights Reserved. alanet.org."
- No editing or changing of copy is allowed. The article must also be published in its entirety.
- If there is a byline, it must be printed with the article. This includes any biographical information that may appear at the end of the article.
- As a matter of courtesy, send a copy of the reprint in your newsletter to the publication in which it was originally printed.

Questions? Email publications@alanet.org.

◆ **Just the Facts**

[Just the Facts](#) is a monthly electronic communication that provides chapter leaders with important information relevant to their duties. Information in the publication can be distributed to members through chapter newsletters or at chapter functions and can also be found on the ALA website. *Just the Facts* is also sent to ALA's Board of Directors and Chapter Connections Committee.

◆ **Headquarters Staff Services**

[ALA's professional staff](#), under the supervision of the Executive Director, is available to assist you.

Each staff member is a specialist assigned to one or more areas of responsibility. If you don't know which individual to contact, you may call ALA's main line at +1-847-267-1252 for assistance in directing your call.

Additional benefits include:

- ◆ General liability and professional liability insurance offered at no charge to the chapter.
- ◆ Reduced rates on fidelity bond insurance (insurance for chapter's treasury).
- ◆ Reduced rates on Directors and Officers Insurance (insurance for the chapter's Board members).
- ◆ Assistance with questions pertaining to insurance policies or broker service issues.
- ◆ If needed, access to ALA's legal counsel for matters related to bylaws and Compensation & Benefits Survey.
- ◆ Peer recognition through the ALA Awards Program.
- ◆ Access to demographic reports and profiles.
- ◆ Assistance with bar relations and business partner activities.
- ◆ Leadership support from professional ALA staff, Board and Chapter Connections Committee.
- ◆ Membership recruiting materials and campaign support.
- ◆ Free monthly education sessions for all chapter leaders, highlighting best practices in effective chapter leadership.
- ◆ Guidance in securing CLE/CPE/CLM credit for educational events.
- ◆ Dedicated Online Communities for networking.
- ◆ Membership reports and statistics.
- ◆ Recommendations for speakers, topics, programs, products and services through the chapter education database and the Chapter Leader Online Community.
- ◆ Ability to meet and sponsor events under the ALA name.
- ◆ Use of ALA logo and trademark and an official chapter logo.

NOTE: Benefits and services listed above are available to all U.S.-based chapters. Certain limitations may apply to chapters outside the United States. Contact [ALA Headquarters](#) for more details.

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR INITIAL ALA CHAPTER MEETING

Place: Most ALA chapters meet monthly for lunch or dinner at a local restaurant, hotel or law firm conference room.

Items for Discussion or to Accomplish:

1. Explanation of services and advantages of being an ALA chapter
2. Discussion of Chapter Performance Objectives
3. Selection of temporary officers or steering committee
4. Signing of charter application by ALA charter members
5. Discussion of agenda topics for future meetings
6. Open discussion/question-answer period
7. ALA Update Presentation

APPLICATION FOR CHAPTER RECOGNITION

**TO: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS**

The following individuals petition the Board of Directors of the Association of Legal Administrators to recognize the below named organization as a chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators and certify that each of them is a member or has applied to be a member of the Association of Legal Administrators. The name of this chapter shall be:

A copy of the Bylaws of the proposed chapter is appended.

Signed this XXX day of _____, _____.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NAME **EMPLOYER AND ADDRESS**