



# LOCAL CHAPTER OFFICER'S GUIDE



# CONTENTS

Congratulations .....	4
AMS Local Chapters .....	5
Administration .....	6
Outreach .....	16
Awards.....	22
LCAC Regions.....	23

## CONGRATULATIONS

You've opened the door to learning from an international community, sharing and communicating science with all ages, and inspiring your own community by starting a local chapter of the American Meteorological Society.

As a new AMS Local Chapter Officer, you have a busy but deeply rewarding experience ahead. This quick-start guide has been designed to get you off and running. More in-depth information is also available on our website, as the links throughout this document indicate.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to discuss local chapter issues, contact your designated representative on the [Local Chapter Affairs Committee](#) or email the National Society at [amschaps@ametsoc.org](mailto:amschaps@ametsoc.org).

## LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THE AMS

By starting a local chapter of the AMS, you have become part of a vibrant, thriving community of over 130 chapters. Each one of these chapters serves a unique purpose in connecting the messages and mission of the national AMS with local context and concerns.

Local chapters of the Society are autonomous organizations that create opportunities for communicating science and serving society among a wide variety of audiences, geographies, and needs. Local chapters provide a bridge for reaching the community to serve the goals of National AMS while offering a practical way to interact with others in the profession.

# ADMINISTRATION

The National AMS and individual local chapters are legally separate entities and because of this, the form and procedures of chapter administration are always determined by the local chapter officers and members. National AMS does not dictate how chapters should function, what activities they should carry out, or how they should administer themselves.

However, the Society strives to support all local chapters to the best of its ability and recognizes the important work that local chapters do in advancing the mission of the American Meteorological Society. National AMS and the Local Chapter Affairs Committee are able to provide advice and assistance on programming, reporting, elections, and other chapter functions.

The Society maintains some benefits specifically for chapters, and, in return, requires some minimal reporting. More detailed information can be found in the following pages and on the website at <https://ametsoc.org>.

## CONNECTING TO AMS HEADQUARTERS

If you are having trouble updating your chapter directory listing or need administrative help, reach out to [amschaps@ametsoc.org](mailto:amschaps@ametsoc.org). If you need advice on chapter growth or regional connections, then [contact a member](#) of the LCAC directly or reach out to [amschaps@ametsoc.org](mailto:amschaps@ametsoc.org).

Local chapters are represented to the national society by the Local Chapter Affairs Committee or LCAC. The LCAC communicates with local chapters by designating chapter regions that are then appointed to individual committee members. You can read more about the [current members of the LCAC](#) on the AMS website.

In addition to the LCAC, there is a designated Local Chapter contact at the National AMS. This role is responsible for assisting local chapter officers with updating their directory entries, offering mailings for local chapters, communicating newsletters, performing administrative tasks, assisting the LCAC and sharing all pertinent AMS news and updates with local chapters.

## NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

In an effort to be more inclusive and provide member benefits to more income levels, the national Society has introduced tiered membership dues for full Members. The dues payments are now based on annual income level rather than a flat fee. This allows more people to enjoy the full AMS membership benefits that complement local chapter membership.

The chapter president/chairperson is required to be a member (Full, Associate or Student Member) of the Society. Although all chapter members are encouraged to become members of the Society, it is not a requirement for anyone besides the president/chairperson. Chapters may also elect to subsidize the president's/chairperson's membership dues when they are elected so it is not a barrier to running for office.

The reason for the membership requirement is to ensure that all mailings and pertinent information are sent to the correct contact information. For more information, and to see the full dues structure [visit the website](#).



## CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

For more ideas on attracting and retaining members, you can review the outreach guide that has been crowdsourced from past chapter activities.

Recruiting and retaining members for a local chapter takes a lot of effort. Some local chapters have a large amount of interest in their areas, while others have a smaller but fiercely committed group. The “right size” of a chapter depends on the activities that you’re doing, local interest, and the chapter’s ability to sustain energy and elect officers.

When in doubt, reach out to other nearby chapters, the LCAC, or AMS headquarters for advice. Other partners to think about engaging with for attracting members are the local National Weather Service, broadcast meteorologists, schools, and groups such as the Rotary Club, 4-H, Medical Reserve Corps, Scouts of America, ham radio clubs, etc. Ask these groups if you can do a presentation about your chapter at one of their events.

## CHAPTER DESIGNATIONS

Chapters are designated as Regular, Student, or Pre-College. Each chapter type has the same benefits and reporting requirements, but slightly different National membership ties.

### **Regular Chapters**

Regular Chapters vary in their chapter membership. Some are strictly for current and former professional members of the National Society. Others include more members of the general public. Only the chapter president is required to hold National membership.

### **Student Chapters**

Student chapters are located at a university or college, and may be focused around one department or include several. These chapters are both undergraduate only or a mixture of graduate and undergraduate students. One faculty advisor and the chapter president are required to be National AMS members.

### **Pre-College Chapters**

Pre-College Chapters are created and run by K–12 students. They can be attached to a school or run independently. All Pre-College Chapters must have an adult advisor that is an AMS member.

## CHAPTER BENEFITS

Local Chapters are encouraged to develop their relationship with National AMS through reporting activities in the Chapter Channel of *BAMS* and the Local Chapter Newsletter, by nominating their chapter for a Chapter of the Year Award, and contacting the Local Chapter Liaison at AMS National Headquarters with requests for support, ideas for webinars, etc.

More specific benefits include the following:

- o A 25% discount on retail items (ties, scarves, tie tacs, mugs, T-shirts, and umbrellas) that will be used as gifts/awards. Orders may be placed via the AMS Bookstore (<https://store.ametsoc.org/>) using discount code **AMSCHAPTER**
- o Access to an exclusive listing of summer internships for students in the atmospheric and related sciences: <https://internboard.ametsoc.org/>
- o Assistance creating and delivering a digital outreach mailing targeted to active National AMS members residing in the chapter area.
- o A chapter mailing sponsored by AMS to be sent to National AMS members residing in the chapter area.
- o Digital letterhead with the Chapter's name and the AMS Local Chapter Seal. Chapters may not design their own letterhead.

## CHAPTER STRUCTURE

It is up to the discretion of the chapter to decide on dues, bank accounts, and membership renewals as well as the titles and tenure of the elected officers.

The exact structure of Local Chapters varies somewhat from location to location. The biggest difference usually appears in the number of officers and committees that each chapter has.

In order to decide what structure the chapter will take, officers and members should take some time to discuss goals at the initial meeting, as well as specify objectives for the chapter. The chair can then appoint an ad hoc committee to prepare the chapter's constitution. (Sample constitutions from other local chapters are available from National AMS and may be obtained by emailing [amschaps@ametsoc.org](mailto:amschaps@ametsoc.org).)

All chapters are required to send a copy of their constitution to the National AMS at [amschaps@ametsoc.org](mailto:amschaps@ametsoc.org).

## CHAPTER RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Required documentation from the chapter includes:**

- Chapter Petition (to open the Chapter)
- Chapter Constitution (submitted in 1st year)
- Election Results (must be submitted annually through [updates to the Chapter Directory](#))
- Notice of Termination (stating reasons for chapter termination)

### **Desired documentation from the chapter includes:**

- News and updates on chapter activities for the Local Chapter Newsletter (submitted quarterly in January, March, July, and October) and *BAMS* (by the 15th of the month)
- Chapter of the Year nominations (submitted annually by May 1)
- Poster competition submissions (submitted annually)

The reporting requirements are kept fairly minimal as Local Chapters are recognized as autonomous entities. These reports are, however, considered in the Chapter of the Year award judging.

If a chapter has not submitted election results for two years, they will be considered inactive and removed from the directory.

## FINANCES

Chapters are expected to be financially self-sufficient and encouraged to set their own budget and fundraising goals. For fundraising as a local chapter, see the guide that has been developed from past local chapter experiences.

So that Local Chapters can preserve their autonomous nature and are not answerable to the National AMS for dues, programming requirements, or membership requirements, the National Society has no financial relationship with Local Chapters, therefore, the tax exempt status of the AMS doesn't extend to local chapters and vice versa.

Chapter membership dues or other funds are usually necessary in order for the chapter to conduct the social events and outreach needed to sustain membership and interest. Exactly what the budget is and how the money is raised and handled is up to the chapter, and no payment is made to the Society.

Local chapters are encouraged to assess their own insurance needs and to pursue their own tax-exempt status as necessary.

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

As long as the president is a member of the national Society, Local Chapters can choose to elect whatever other officers work best for their chapter size and structure.

The standard officer structure for a small chapter is President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer.

Larger chapters may have Co-Presidents and Co-Vice Presidents each with special areas of responsibility.

In addition, there may be separate offices for Secretary and Treasurer. The office of Secretary may be split to include a Corresponding and a Recording Secretary with special areas of responsibility. Other offices may include Social Chair, Outreach Chair, etc.

Student chapters and Pre-College chapters must also have a faculty or adult advisor for their chapters.

## CHAPTER COMMITTEES

When organizing a chapter, officers and/or members may wish to form committees with special areas of responsibility. The following is a list of potential committees and their duties (this is by no means exhaustive or prescriptive, just food for thought).

- o Planning Committee: To help establish longterm goals and trajectory for the chapter
- o Social Committee: To provide for/arrange dinners and social events, meeting refreshments, etc.
- o Outreach Committee: To provide content for website and social media channels as well as connect with other local groups and scientists as appropriate
- o Science/Education Committee: To judge science fairs, serve as mentors at local schools, etc.
- o Program Committee: To plan, execute, or otherwise help with the periodic meeting programs



## USING THE AMS LOGO

Since the majority of local chapters now have links from the AMS website to their own individual web pages, the AMS has created a chapter logo that is unique to the Society's seal. This logo may be found on the Local Chapters page on the AMS website. Chapters are requested to download that image and use it on their own sites in lieu of the Society's seal.

The seal of the American Meteorological Society has been a respected and recognized trademark since 1919; therefore its use is prohibited except as authorized by Society Headquarters.

It is the policy of the Society that the AMS Seal only be used for scientific purposes. Although the Seal may not appear on T-shirts or other items produced by the local chapter, the display of the chapter name is acceptable. Additionally, the chapter name may appear on banners hung at chapter meetings.

# OUTREACH

Outreach is an important function of local AMS chapters, both to recruit members and serve the AMS mission by connecting people to science.

Historically, chapters located at or near a planned national meeting of the Society have been invited to assist in the local arrangements for the meeting. Local chapters have also partnered with local K–12 schools to serve as science fair judges or to take part in education initiatives. For more information on science fair outreach, [visit the AMS website](#).

In addition to promoting science in education, local chapters create important interdisciplinary connections that help demonstrate the importance of science for all different types of audiences. Building relationships with other organizations such as the American Geophysical Union, National Weather Service, etc. helps to create meeting content for local chapters, build relationships, and create exciting ideas.

## MEETINGS

The most active chapters maintain a mix of social events such as potluck dinners with educational offerings and field trips to local weather service offices or other science-related journeys. These range from large to small and formal to informal events depending on the culture of the chapter and the resources of the surrounding area.

Organizing fun and interesting meetings is one of the most important things a local chapter can do. The most successful local chapters have an Outreach or Social Chair or Committee that is focused on organizing events and advertising them to local members and/or the general public.

For those chapters that are rural or have limited science offerings, it is worth investigating [webinar recordings](#) on the National AMS website or other virtual options available from AMS headquarters as well as the Skype a Scientist project. This way, gatherings can be held with less effort while still being content rich.

## VOLUNTEERING

AMS members and local chapter members have a large impact on the general public through volunteerism. The types of volunteer projects may vary, but providing services to your community is a way to polish the skills of chapter members, network for new members, and promote the value of science in service to society.

Volunteering is an important way that Local Chapters participate in their communities. The focus and size of volunteer efforts varies from chapter to chapter. Some chapters do locally focused volunteering such as stream cleanup or raise money for a specific cause. Others participate in citizen science efforts and contribute data to national and international programs. These efforts are important for chapter of the year awards as well as for building membership and keeping chapters thriving.

## WEBSITE

Chapters that are successful with their websites update them regularly and use them to introduce people to their chapter, display an events calendar, and post meeting minutes, competition results and dues reminders.

Building and maintaining a website is great for advertising your chapter to the general public, but be realistic about the amount of time, skills, and organization that exists within your chapter. It may be easier to stick to a Facebook page, Twitter, or Instagram account. Ask your members what they think and where they would get the most use.

Chapter officers can include links to social media and webpages in their chapter entry for the online directory on the AMS website. For more information on updating your chapter entry in the directory, see the guide on the AMS website.

Many chapters host their websites with free versions of Wix or Wordpress, through server space at an academic institution, or through another option offered by their employer. Others use dues to fund web hosting. The AMS also offers disk space to local chapters to host a website. Find out more by contacting National AMS or visiting the [Local Chapters page](#).

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Chapters use social media to publicize meetings and other events to both chapter members and the general public as appropriate. Chapters have used Twitter feeds to provide daily forecasts in their area, Facebook to promote lecture series and gather attendance counts for field trips, Instagram to display cloud observations and local weather phenomena, and YouTube to upload videos of forecasts, discussions on internships, and other training materials.

Many chapters have chosen to create a web presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube. This can be in addition to or as a substitution for a website. Social media allows chapters to post and share content easily even if they don't have the time or knowledge needed to maintain a website.

Because the AMS promotes a diverse and inclusive environment, the society encourages chapter members to represent their chapters truthfully and maintain a respectful environment on social media.

## WEBINARS

The Local Chapter Affairs Committee creates regular webinars on topics of interest to Local Chapters. Local Chapters may also suggest their own webinars or record and share meetings that they think may be of interest to the wider AMS community.

For those chapters that would like to work on recording a webinar, begin by contacting a member of the Local Chapter Affairs Committee to help with scheduling and logistics.

Past chapters have recorded meetings on the historical impact of weather,

## AWARDS

Each year the Society recognizes outstanding chapters by awarding a Chapter of the Year and Student Chapter of the Year. The deadline for applications is **May 1st**.

Applications are reviewed by the Local Chapter Affairs Committee and their recommendations are forwarded to the AMS Council through the Awards Oversight Committee. The Council will make the final award selections at its fall meeting, as it does with all other Society awards. Award winning chapters will be notified by late October and will be presented the award at the following Annual Meeting at the Local Chapter Breakfast.

The other awards are for the quality of poster work that is displayed at the Annual Meeting. Local chapters compete to create visually pleasing, information rich posters. These submissions are usually due to national headquarters in **mid-October**.

All awards are judged and granted by the Local Chapter Affairs Committee. For more information, visit the [awards section](#) of the AMS website.





## LOCAL CHAPTER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REGIONS

In order to increase communications between the LCAC and Local Chapters, the LCAC has appointed a contact on the committee for each of the nine regions listed here. You should expect to hear from your LCAC contact a few times per year.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>#1</b> Washington, Oregon, California,<br>Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii               | <b>#5</b> Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio                                  |
| <b>#2</b> Utah, Colorado, North Dakota,<br>South Dakota, Nebraska                  | <b>#6</b> Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico                                      |
| <b>#3</b> Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas,<br>Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi             | <b>#7</b> Tennessee, Georgia, South<br>Carolina, North Carolina              |
| <b>#4</b> Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa,<br>Missouri, Illinois                        | <b>#8</b> New Hampshire, Vermont,<br>Massachusetts, Connecticut,<br>New York |
| <b>#9</b> New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington DC,<br>Delaware, Virginia, Maryland |  |

