



School Social Work Association of America

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) Starting a State School Social Work Organization

Q1. How many members do you need to start an organization?

A: The state organization can determine the number of members, however, it is recommended that the state have a least 6-8 people interested in organizing and willing to take a leadership role in the process.

Q2. When does the state affiliate with SSWAA?

A: Any state association consisting of at least 15 members may apply to become a state affiliate of SSWAA.

Q3. How much is charged for state dues? National dues?

A: The individual state membership dues are determined by the state based on budget needs. Regarding National dues, individual members in states that affiliate with SSWAA pay \$95.00 national membership dues rather than \$120.00. There is a \$100.00 annual state affiliate fee for SSWAA.

Q4. What should a sample budget include?

A: At a minimum, the budget should include income and expenses. Some examples of income include: membership dues and conference or workshop fees. Some examples of expenses include: general supplies (i.e. checks & postage), meeting space costs, and mileage for board members to meetings. Contact SSWAA for sample budgets.

Q5. What officers are needed to operate an association?

A: At a minimum, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer are needed to run an Association. These officers comprise the Executive Committee. The President will be the main contact person for the Association. The Secretary is needed to record minutes and distribute those minutes to members. The Treasurer will handle the financial accounts. As the Association grows, some states choose to add the following offices: President-Elect, Vice-President, and Immediate Past President. Also, some boards choose to have regional representatives who represent different regions of the State in addition to board officers.

Please refer to Robert's Rules of Order, the most recent edition, for additional information.

Q6. How long is the process to organize a State Association? What are the first steps?

*A: There is not a set time frame for organizing. The process can vary in length based on a variety of factors. The first steps are to: meet informally with other School Social Workers in your area; assess interest; recruit others that would be willing to help with beginning steps; and review sample organization bylaws and officer structures. Once you have a group of 5-6 School Social Workers willing to work on the process - begin framing bylaws, hold a meeting, and elect officers. Please also consult with your **Secretary of State's** website for additional information that is needed to start a state association in your state. An additional website that may be helpful is: <http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/map/start-up-map.html>*

Q7. What are the main two or three things a state association can offer members?

A: State associations can be vital at supporting the profession by providing networking opportunities, connecting School Social Workers across the state, relaying information on trends in the field, and providing professional development opportunities.

Q8. What are the benefits of having a state organization and affiliate with SSWAA?

A: Having a state organization lends validity to the profession and allows the state organization to collect and distribute information about the profession to key decision makers in the state. Affiliation with SSWAA allows the state association to stay informed about national issues, connect with other state associations and school social workers across the country, gain access to many resources provided by SSWAA, and have a voice on a national level via SSWAA's Government Relations staff.

Q9. Who can be members of a state association?

A: Full members of the state association should be a social worker who meets the following criteria:

- 1. Directly employed by a school district,*
- 2. Faculty in a social work program at a college or university,*
- 3. A student pursuing a degree in a social work program at a college or university,*
or
- 4. Retired school social workers.*

Full members may hold a board office.

States may consider an associate membership level which may include principals, social workers in community agencies, or supporters of school social work. Associate members may not hold a board office.

Q10. How and how often should the association (board officers) meet?

A: The state association's Board and its members should meet based on the decision of the board and/or membership. The board can determine their meeting schedule. This information should be inserted in the Association's bylaws. Board meetings can be face-to-face, or through Skype or conference call. Association meetings, also called general membership meetings, should be in person.

Q11. Will the officers need liability insurance?

A: The state association should have liability insurance in cases where the association owns property and if required during a workshop/conference that is sponsored by the Association.

Also, all officers should practice proper financial procedures. Associations need to consider bond insurance for the Treasurer and in order to protect the Association's finances. Distribution of Association funds should have two signatures.

Q12. Who can we contact if our state has more questions about starting a state organization?

A: Feel free to contact the SSWAA Member at Large for your region or any SSWAA Board Member. Contact information is listed on the SSWAA website.