



PTA MEMBERSHIP  
Quick-Reference Guide  
2009 - 2010

**PTA**<sup>®</sup>

everychild.one voice.<sup>®</sup>

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## **Welcome**

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The PTA national organization has created this quick-reference guide to help your local PTA unit retain members and attract new ones. It will help you gain a basic understanding of important concepts and familiarize you with resources that are available from the national organization. This guide is not meant to stand alone as the source of all membership information. Throughout this guide you will find links to online resources. We urge you to review the online materials. PTA's national website contains background information, templates, forms, and tips to help you in your membership efforts. This guide supplements—but doesn't replace—the materials you receive from your state PTA.

This guide is available online at [www.pta.org/MembershipQRG](http://www.pta.org/MembershipQRG) for easy sharing of information with all members of your committee and board.

## **The Basics of Membership**

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### **Overview**

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PTA is a membership organization. People join to show support of the work you do locally and the work we do collectively to help children, families, and schools. We rely on our over 5 million members to contribute their time and skills to schools and communities from coast to coast and overseas, where U.S. military families are stationed.

Every individual who joins PTA helps not only his or her own child but every child. Imagine how strong your community could be if every parent, every community member, and every business leader got involved in PTA!

Attracting new members and retaining existing members are among the most important duties of a PTA. A strong membership is essential if PTA is to be a force in decisions involving the welfare and education of children. Your active leadership will help create strong programs in your school community and a strong commitment among your members.



## Relevance

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The work PTA does must be relevant to its community. People will join your PTA if they find value in what you do. Fundraising alone is not enough. A vital, thriving PTA unit

- Knows its community,
- Understands issues that impact children, families, and schools,
- Identifies and provides for the needs of its membership and community,
- Is inclusive of all groups—rural and urban; fathers and mothers; African-American, Latin-American, and Asian-American; elementary and high school; high-income and low-income, etc.,
- Is representative of all kinds of parents, including extended family members and other persons who provide primary care to children, and
- Includes educators and community members as well as parents and caregivers.



## Relevance Tip

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To succeed, the membership committee must find out the local community's concerns about the well-being of its children, stay current with local data and news, interview decision makers, and talk with fellow community members. Focus efforts on these concerns so that your PTA will be a relevant group to join.



## Membership Committees and Chairs, and the Role of the Board

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While a membership chair and the membership committee are charged with developing recruitment and retention strategies, membership is the responsibility of the entire board. Without members, there is no PTA, and without the support of the entire board, membership plans and committees will not succeed. The entire board should play an active role in implementing membership recruitment and retention strategies.



DETAILS

## **Membership Committee**

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To build an ideal membership committee, look to recruit individuals

- Who have experience in marketing, public relations, sales, recruitment or statistics;
- Who are excited about PTA and willing to share their excitement;
- May be past unit officers who know your unit's history and successes; or
- May be new members who are enthusiastic about the work your PTA does.

The goals of the membership committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Create, implement, and assess a membership plan that includes retention strategies as well as action steps that target and attract new members.
- Build an informed and active membership that supports PTA's mission, goals, and programs, and understands the link between PTA at the local, state, and national levels.
- Promote and celebrate PTA successes with members and the greater community.



DETAILS

## **Membership Chair**

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The membership chair is responsible for facilitating the work of the membership committee and ensuring timely, accurate communication with other PTA committees and officers. Membership chairs are often assigned the role of

- Building their committee,
- Collecting and tracking membership dues,
- Distributing membership cards, and
- Providing membership reports.



TIP

### Membership Chair Tip:

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Committees work best when each member knows what he or she must do, has a timeline for the work, has the information they need to do their jobs, and is trained and mentored. Share this membership guide with your entire committee, and encourage them to review the membership materials available on PTA.org. Take advantage of all leadership and membership training opportunities available at [www.pta.org/e-learning](http://www.pta.org/e-learning) and through state and national events.



STEP BY STEP

### Before Your Membership Year Begins

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- Set goals. Challenge yourself. We suggest 2-5% growth in membership as a good target.
- Create a membership plan. Use PTA tools and templates (pages 24-31 of this book) to set a goal, identify potential new member groups, and assess needs.
- Use last year's PTA membership list to send out a renewal appeal to current members. Cite your successes last year, thank them for their support, tell them they played a role in your success, and ask them to join again this year to help you achieve your goals.
- Visit [www.pta.org/marketing](http://www.pta.org/marketing) to find customizable banners, fliers, letters, surveys, posters, brochures, press releases, ads, yard signs, door hangers, and more for developing membership campaign materials that appeal to a broad group of potential current and new members.
- Sign your PTA up for OMDR*plus* ([www.pta.org/omdrplus](http://www.pta.org/omdrplus)) so you can easily manage your membership and communicate with your members.
- Create a marketing campaign to promote your PTA's successes, attract new members, and motivate current members to renew.
  - Visit [www.pta.org/yearround](http://www.pta.org/yearround) and go to pages 20-23 of this book to learn more about creating a marketing plan for your unit.
  - See what special member benefits and programs are available at [www.pta.org/benefits](http://www.pta.org/benefits) so you can better promote the value of PTA.



### As Your Year Begins:

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- Ask your board to develop a consistent message around the value of membership in your unit, as well as talking points all can use in membership recruitment. Identify two or three successes from the previous year, determine two or three goals that can be achieved with more members, and use these as the basis of the message.
- Have the entire board practice using these talking points on each other before they ask others to join.
- Prepare membership forms (in the back of this book) and work with your unit's treasurer to create a good process for the processing of membership dues.
- Create a special appeal to teachers and school staff.

### Take Advantage of Back-to-School Enthusiasm

- If yours is a school-based unit, send membership forms and fliers home with first-day packets and have a membership table at all orientation and back-to-school events.
- Design a visual representation of your growing membership (e.g., an illustration of a tree to which leaves with new-member names can be added, or a jar to which beans, marbles, or ping pong balls can be added) for display in your school or in a public place within your community.
- Ask people to join your PTA—don't wait for them to offer.
- Make it easy for people to join your PTA: have all the sign-up materials close at hand.

### Throughout the Year

- Set up your membership table at every PTA, school, and community event.
- Work with local businesses and other civic groups to promote PTA, partner on projects, and grow membership.
- Make time to welcome or thank PTA event attendees and let them know the event was made possible by PTA members. Ask those who enjoyed the event to join PTA to show their support for your unit.

- Regularly include articles about membership and a clip-out membership form in your newsletter or in community bulletin-boards or websites.
- Publish your current membership count in your newsletter and check it against your goal often.
- Post basic information on your website: PTA contact information, the PTA mission and objectives, PTA background, names of board members, a current list of events and activities, etc. Keep your website current and relevant. Outdated material is a sign that no one is monitoring or maintaining your website.
- Post PTA member benefits (**[www.pta.org/benefits](http://www.pta.org/benefits)**) on your website and promote the benefits of membership.
- Track members who do not rejoin. What is their reason? What can your PTA do to get them back?
- Show members how PTA advocacy at the state and national levels connects to what is happening in your classrooms and community. Use news from PTA Takes Action (**[www.pta.org/advocacy](http://www.pta.org/advocacy)**) to show how membership drives real results.
- Know that how you treat members will make PTA thrive or fail.
- Serve your members. Do not let them leave until their requests for assistance have been addressed; then follow up to make sure members were satisfied with what they received.
- Use the year-round materials (**[www.pta.org/yearround](http://www.pta.org/yearround)**) and the January Membership Campaign tools (**[www.pta.org/january](http://www.pta.org/january)**) available online.



### Types of Membership

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PTA is an individual member organization, which means we are an organization of individuals who voluntarily join to support the work PTA does. Each individual member has rights and a voice in what PTA does. Some PTAs have explored innovative methods to increase membership through a variety of methods. Check with your state PTA to find out more about what other units in your state are doing.

#### **Family Membership:**

One member = one card, one vote. While many units provide family memberships to encourage more people to join, it is important to remember that each person who joins through a family membership is actually an individual member and entitled to all rights and benefits of membership.

If your unit offers a family membership, it must be reflected in your bylaws. Check with your state PTA if you have questions about whether this is an option for your unit or a suggestion for bylaws wording.

The state and national dues portion for each person who joins through a family membership must be forwarded to your state. Your unit should always have an accurate list of members to determine who is eligible to vote at meetings.

Each person who joins through a family membership:

- Provides you their name and contact info, and that information must be reported to state and national to initiate all benefits of membership.
- Pays dues. Your unit may decide to assess a flat fee for the first person who joins, then a reduced fee for your unit's portion of the dues assessment for each individual member.
- Is entitled to all benefits of membership, including the right to vote at your meetings and a membership card.



CONTACT



LINKS

## Contact Us

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Contact your state PTA and PTA national headquarters for support.

### PTA National Headquarters

541 N. Fairbanks Court  
Suite 1300  
Chicago, IL 60611-3396  
Phone: (312) 670-6782  
Toll-Free: (800) 307-4PTA (4782)  
Fax: (312) 670-6783  
E-mail: [info@pta.org](mailto:info@pta.org)  
Website: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

### PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy

1400 L Street N.W.  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20005-9998  
Phone: (202) 289-6790  
Fax: (202) 289-6791  
Hotline: (888) 425-5537  
Website: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)



LINKS

## State Offices

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Find a web directory of all PTA state offices at  
[www.pta.org/localptas/ptalinks.asp?div=State](http://www.pta.org/localptas/ptalinks.asp?div=State)



DID YOU  
KNOW?

## Fact about Asking People to Join PTA

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In a recent PTA survey, 49 percent of respondents said the reason people don't join PTA is that *no one asked them*. The way we ask people to join needs to be personal, powerful, and meaningful.

### Tracking and Retaining Members

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#### Retention Tip

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Surveys show members remain in PTA primarily because they believe their membership helps their child. Educate members about what you do for students, families, and schools in your community.

#### Retention Tip

Don't forget that it takes more effort to recruit a new member than it does to keep an existing one. Let members know they are valued and be sure to invite them to rejoin every year. In addition, returning members are more likely to take on leadership roles.



#### Tracking Member Data

Create and maintain a membership database. This is a crucial tool for your membership recruitment and retention efforts; it will help you keep track of members, dues payments, and mailings (by both postal mail and e-mail).

Use e-mail. E-mail allows you to communicate with members who are not able to attend meetings. Collect e-mail addresses on your membership form (a reproducible form is provided at the back of this book). As new member benefits become available, the PTA national organization will e-mail unit presidents. These messages will be written in a newsletter format that you can use in your PTA newsletter or forward to your members via e-mail.

PTA's *OMDRplus* system will allow your unit to easily and effectively create and maintain your membership database, communicate with your members, and more!

#### **OMDRplus – Online Membership Data Reporting Plus So Much More**

PTAs now have an exclusive, free web-based system, *OMDRplus*, that allows leaders to easily communicate with members, keep track of membership records, offer member benefits, and so much more. *OMDRplus* gives leaders the means to enter data directly into PTA's member database, delivering greater value to both PTA units and their members. Visit [www.pta.org/omdrplus](http://www.pta.org/omdrplus) to learn more and get your PTA registered.

## Diversity and Inclusiveness

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### Overview

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A new member's first impression of PTA is an important one and will often determine whether he or she becomes an active or a passive member. A new member expects to access member services and resources quickly, and to be welcomed into the group as soon as possible.

Accompany new members as they navigate the organization, and make accommodations for language or other perceived barriers.

Make sure that members know what to expect when they attend a meeting or embark on a project.



### Principles of Diversity

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Diversity not only assumes that everyone is different, but also recognizes that those differences add value. Those differences are your community's assets.

Diversity includes different perspectives so the work of the organization can be effective for all.

Leaders have to commit to supporting and encouraging diversity and inclusiveness.



### Increasing Diversity and Inclusiveness Step by Step

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#### Assess Your Unit's Diversity

Unit leaders should ask themselves these questions to assess their approach to diversity:

- Does the diversity of membership in the unit reflect the diversity in the school's population? If not, why not?
- Is that diversity reflected on the board and among committee members?

- Are unit leaders aware of the diversity of talents in the school community? Does the unit find ways to accommodate those talents in its work?
- Does the unit have a method to collect information on the needs of all students? Is there a method of selecting which issues the unit will address that ensures fairness to all?

### **Actions You Can Take**

- Ask underserved populations why they aren't involved in PTA, and then show them how PTA fits their needs. Don't make assumptions about them or their needs. PTA leaders can talk with community leaders of underserved populations to gain a clearer understanding of needs and cultures.
- Look at every person as an individual and not as a member of a group.
- Recognize and celebrate differences; they make us unique.
- Integrate diversity into all aspects of operational and organizational functions. For example, if the group you're trying to recruit is far away from the school, look into holding meetings closer to them. The meetings do not always have to take place at school.
- Discuss barriers to greater diversity and inclusiveness, and then remove the barriers. Don't just say you represent diverse populations—actually include them. For example, if language is keeping members from attending meetings or other functions, work with community leaders to provide translators.

### **Desired Outcomes**

- Develop at least one creative program or event that is inclusive of and attractive to a diverse membership.
- Develop a membership recruitment and retention plan that promotes inclusiveness and diversity. For this plan to be successful, everyone must fully buy into the plan's aims and expectations.
- Create an environment in which every member is welcomed and valued for his or her unique abilities and contributions. Consider the various needs up front to help all families participate in PTA.



## Involving Men in PTA

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Many people, when they hear “parent involvement” and “PTA”, automatically think of mothers. Women are vital to fulfilling PTA’s mission, but male involvement in PTA should not be discounted. A strong, vibrant PTA should be inclusive of all parents—and that means PTAs must find ways to include dads.

PTA has lots of experience talking to men about why they join and lead in PTA. All these resources can be found at

**[www.pta.org/topic\\_male\\_involvement.asp](http://www.pta.org/topic_male_involvement.asp)**

- Father Involvement How-To Guide: designed to help promote male involvement
- 10 Ways to Get Men More Involved in PTA: a checklist of proven methods for increasing male involvement.
- ABCs of Male Involvement: a step-by-step method for encouraging men to join and be involved in their child’s school activities.
- PTA MORE: providing you information about partnering organizations and programs that get men more involved with their children.
- Three for Me: a volunteer management program proven to increase male involvement.
- Other publications and materials to help you strengthen father-child relationships.



## 10 Ways to Involve Men in PTA

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**1. Make the membership pitch relevant to males.** The number one reason men join PTA is “to work to improve the school for the benefit of my child/children.” Therefore, explain how a father’s involvement in PTA:

- Shows added interest in his child’s education and school activities,
- Shows greater support for his child’s teachers and school, and
- Improves relationships between parents and school personnel.

- 2. Use specific messaging and advertising aimed at men.** Be sure to show men's involvement in your PTA in your communications to members and potential members.
- 3. Just ask them.**
- 4. Ask the women in your PTA to invite the men in their children's lives to join PTA.** Moms can (and should) influence dads to join PTA!
- 5. Create more volunteer opportunities and special events for dads.** Events aimed at fathers can raise awareness that other fathers are actively involved. When men see that other men are involved, they are more likely to join.
- 6. Emphasize that becoming a PTA member doesn't necessarily involve a large time commitment.**
- 7. Give it to 'em straight.** Clearly define volunteer roles and expectations.
- 8. Communicate with men the way they want to be reached.** Men want fewer meetings and at more convenient times, and they want meetings to have a clear agenda and be results-oriented. Brief communications tend to make men pay more attention to the message or issue at hand—and more likely to participate.
- 9. Seek male members in the community.** Present the PTA message at local service clubs that have a large male contingent, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions clubs. If men see that other club members support the work of PTA, they might be more likely to join.
- 10. Recognize and celebrate members.** Reinforcing men's contributions, while being mindful of what all members do for PTA, creates a positive atmosphere.



### **Fact about Women's Influence on Men's Participation in PTA**

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A spouse's involvement in PTA seems to be an indicator of whether or not a father will join PTA. In a recent PTA survey, more than 90 percent of the male PTA members surveyed indicated that their

spouses were already members. Many respondents said their wives largely contributed to their own involvement in PTA.

## **Why Different People Join PTA**

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People join PTA for all types of reasons. Single parents may seek a support network, working parents may want a source of info or a voice, non-English speaking individuals may look for opportunities to share their culture, business owners may look for a way to improve public image. In addition to subscribing to the mission of PTA, a PTA/PTSA member looks to PTA to fulfill personal needs. Since PTAs are for everyone, a local unit should support the needs of a wide variety of members—from senior citizens to future parents. When units do this, they provide value to the community and become a relevant group for community members to join.

When recruiting members, it's helpful to emphasize what people can gain by becoming involved. Individuals usually respond positively when they believe an organization understands their primary needs and is working to address them. How does your unit provide for the needs of the different types of people you hope to attract? How do you message your commitment to satisfying the needs of all members? To learn more about why people join and how PTAs can address needs, provide value, and ultimately attract more members, use the Member Profile Worksheet on the following pages. This chart shows some examples of what different types of people may get out of being a PTA member.

**Member Profile Worksheet**

<b>Member Type</b>	<b>Primary Needs</b>	<b>How PTA Addresses Those Needs</b>
Single Parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Support through networking</li> <li><b>2.</b> Input into decisions that affect their children</li> <li><b>3.</b> Parent education programs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Many PTAs offer advice about issues such as the availability of out-of-school programs and the safety of children home alone after school.</li> <li><b>2.</b> PTA addresses school policy issues, such as discipline and bullying prevention programs.</li> <li><b>3.</b> Many PTAs have access to videos on topics such as critical TV-viewing, enhancing children’s self-esteem, raising alcohol- and drug-free children, and school bus safety.</li> </ol>
Working Parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> A voice</li> <li><b>2.</b> Partnership with school administration and other staff</li> <li><b>3.</b> To be part of the solution, not part of the problem</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> PTA represents parents in schools and before lawmakers as it works to make a difference in events, policies, and laws that affect children.</li> <li><b>2.</b> PTA distributes information on a regular basis via newsletters, e-mails, and websites so that members can be informed of and respond to school issues and activities in a timely manner.</li> <li><b>3.</b> PTA offers parents the opportunity to make positive changes in the school and in the community.</li> </ol>
Young Parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Access to parenting programs</li> <li><b>2.</b> An understanding of school policies</li> <li><b>3.</b> Friendships, a support network</li> <li><b>4.</b> To network through technology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> PTA offers parenting training and information that can provide lifelong skills for raising children.</li> <li><b>2.</b> PTA informs parents about education issues.</li> <li><b>3.</b> Local PTA activities, as well as state and national conventions, provide a forum for establishing long-term friendships with people who have common goals.</li> <li><b>4.</b> National, state, and some local PTA websites have valuable resources on parenting and tools for communicating with other members.</li> </ol>

<b>Member Type</b>	<b>Primary Needs</b>	<b>How PTA Addresses Those Needs</b>
Non-English-speaking/ minority parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> An understanding of the school system</li> <li><b>2.</b> Interaction with other parents</li> <li><b>3.</b> Opportunities to share their culture and promote a positive community experience</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> PTA helps parents navigate the school system and empowers them to act.</li> <li><b>2.</b> PTA meetings allow discussion between various groups.</li> <li><b>3.</b> PTA can offer interaction with other families through diversity awareness training and activities that emphasize multiculturalism.</li> </ol>
Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> A sense of belonging</li> <li><b>2.</b> Recognition of creative talents</li> <li><b>3.</b> To practice citizenship</li> <li><b>4.</b> Leadership opportunities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> Students serving on committees feel included, which helps their self-esteem.</li> <li><b>2.</b> Students have the opportunity to participate in PTA's Reflections Program.</li> <li><b>3.</b> PTA provides a forum in which students, parents, school faculty, and the community can come together to share ideas on topics that affect children and education.</li> <li><b>4.</b> PTA empowers students to share information and suggest actions on issues that affect their lives.</li> </ol>
Senior citizens and grandparents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> To feel useful</li> <li><b>2.</b> To mentor younger adults</li> <li><b>3.</b> To connect with youth</li> <li><b>4.</b> Information on school and community events</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.</b> PTA encourages active participation on committees.</li> <li><b>2.</b> PTA invites senior citizens to share their parenting skills and knowledge through parenting workshops.</li> <li><b>3.</b> PTAs and schools welcome the help of senior citizens in the classroom.</li> <li><b>4.</b> PTA disseminates information in a variety of ways to keep members informed.</li> </ol>

## Diversity and Inclusiveness

Member Type	Primary Needs	How PTA Addresses Those Needs
School staff and school board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A voice for promoting their issues</li> <li>2. Community and parent support</li> <li>3. A better understanding of the school community's members</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PTA has a voice in local, state, and national governments on topics such as school funding, school facilities, and teaching standards.</li> <li>2. PTA has programs (such as Building Successful Partnerships) and materials designed to help educators and administrators encourage and generate parent involvement at school.</li> <li>3. PTA is knowledgeable about school and community needs.</li> </ol>
Community groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased visibility and accessibility</li> <li>2. Shared resources</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnering with PTA provides positive advertising and encourages sharing of information.</li> <li>2. PTA provides volunteer crossover and strong legislative advocacy for issues affecting children in the community.</li> </ol>
Businesses, chambers of commerce, and trade associations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive public relations</li> <li>2. Investment in the future</li> <li>3. Staff training</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnering with PTA can help businesses develop a positive image in the community.</li> <li>2. PTA can offer opportunities for businesses to share with others the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to secure a solid future in the workforce for our children.</li> <li>3. PTA gives leadership training to members on a regular basis.</li> </ol>
Mayor and government officials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to parents</li> <li>2. Positive public relations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PTA facilitates access to parents and can provide feedback from an elected official's constituents.</li> <li>2. Partnering with PTA helps create a healthy, nurturing environment for the whole community.</li> </ol>



**Member Profile Worksheet**

Can you think of other types of members? Use the table below to list them and record three or four primary needs they might have. Then identify how PTA can address those needs. These are individuals you can approach to increase your membership and your success in the school and community.

Member Type	Primary Needs	How PTA Addresses Those Needs

## **Marketing Membership**

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### **Overview**

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In your role as membership chair, you may do many things to promote PTA membership, such as attending back-to-school ice cream socials, writing an editorial about parent involvement for a local newspaper, and strategizing how to reach potential members. This section will give you some talking points that define the PTA difference and some ideas on how to market PTA in your community.

### **The PTA Difference**

Given the longevity and universal name recognition of our organization, it's easy to understand how "PTA" is commonly used to describe all parent groups, whether or not they are actually affiliated with PTA. Parents, teachers, and even administrators frequently are confused or even unaware of the differences between PTA and other parent organizations. So what truly differentiates PTA from all other parent groups?

### **Defining the difference**

- PTA is the nation's original parent group in schools. We are the nation's premier resource for parent involvement.
- PTA is a national, grassroots, not-for-profit organization; neither the organization nor its leaders make any profit or receive any financial benefit from PTA activities.
- PTA is composed of over 5 million members in more than 23,000 local units. These units are supported by a national and state system that provides them with information, resources, and training.
- PTA is run by volunteers and led by volunteers, and we are accountable to our members, parents, and schools.
- Members receive the information and training they need to advocate effectively at the local, state, and national levels for funding, programs, and services for their schools.
- PTA is an inclusive organization that is open to all those who care about children and schools.

- Each of the 23,000 local units selects the programs and activities that it will undertake to address the needs of its local school and children. While the PTA national organization creates many successful programs for local units to use, there are no PTA-mandated programs.
- State PTAs and the PTA national organization provide support to help local PTAs succeed.
- Members receive special discounts and promotional offers from PTA National Member Benefits Providers.



### **PTA Programs**

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PTA programs are created with leading expert organizations on topics of importance to our members, at members' request. The programs are user-friendly and are free to PTAs. Each program offers interesting activities, helpful evaluation tools, and tips to involve all key players in a school community. For great tips and resources on how to implement programs in your PTA, read the *PTA Programs Quick-Reference Guide* ([www.pta.org/ProgramsQRG](http://www.pta.org/ProgramsQRG)) or visit PTA.org. No other parent group offers such credible and comprehensive programs to successfully engage families and communities.



### **Strategies to Promote PTA**

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#### **How to Get Started**

As membership chair, you should plan and promote events for parents, students, and the general community where you can showcase your school—as well as encourage attendees to join PTA or renew their membership.

When planning your promotion efforts, be sure to consider all of the following:

- Date of the event being promoted
- Your budget (funds to pay for advertisements, make copies, offer a prize for a raffle, etc.)

- Who your audience is (business leaders, parents of schoolchildren, students, etc.)—Who you want to involve affects how you deliver the message.
- Your goals—This will help you determine if the event has been successful.
- Promotion activities—Include how you intend to let people know about the event or activity (marquee signs, fliers in the backpack express, posters in merchant windows, or paid advertisements in a local newspaper).
- Evaluation—After the event, record final expenses, attendance, and whether the outcome was reached (this measurement allows your PTA to see if the event should be duplicated or modified in years to come).



## **The Marketing Plan**

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A marketing plan includes the following components:

- **Desired outcomes.** Clearly define what should happen if the marketing plan is successful. Establish no more than five desired outcomes. All the desired outcomes should be measurable and should reflect your unit's goals for membership growth and retention.
- **Strategies.** Choose a target audience that your unit can reach, and clearly define the benefits of membership for the target audience. Then identify ways to reach the target audience, and show that the benefits of pursuing these members outweigh the costs.
- **Action plan and budget.** Lay out the project tasks and timelines, as well as the amount of money and volunteer time budgeted for each task.
- **Measurement and evaluation.** Define how success will be measured (e.g., the number of new male members) and establish a way to evaluate the outcomes (e.g., desired number of members recruited below/at/above budget).

## Resources

The PTA Gateway Public Service Announcement (PSA) Campaign, launching for Back-to-School 2009, offers television and radio spots, as well as Web banners, to increase awareness of and membership in PTA. PSAs are messages serving the public interest and run by the media at no charge. The PTA national office will make select placements across the nation, but state, regional, and local follow-up and outreach to television and radio stations in their communities will be essential to the campaign's success. All the materials you need to contact local broadcast media, preview and provide television and radio PSAs (with customized contact information), and track placements are available at [www.pta.org/gatewayPSAs](http://www.pta.org/gatewayPSAs).

The Membership Marketing Templates and Tools include more than 80 reproducible resources such as fliers, posters, brochures, postcards, door hangs, and much more—all of which you can utilize to get the word out about PTA. These resources are available online at [www.pta.org/marketing](http://www.pta.org/marketing).

## Promotion Methods

It is very important to get the word out about your PTA and what a valuable group it is. The methods you use to promote PTA can be formal or informal; they can include phone calls, website banners, PSAs, or e-newsletters. The most important part of your message is the invitation to join PTA.

Listed below are some other potential avenues of promotion.

**Direct marketing** includes PSAs, paid advertisements, special events, messages posted in the community, and direct mail. Examples include:

- Asking grocers to include fliers in their bags on a "Join PTA Day"
- Setting up membership tables at youth sport league events
- Having local merchants display "Join PTA" posters
- Lining neighborhood streets with yard signs (found in the Membership Marketing Templates and Tools)
- Hanging a "Join PTA" banner (also in the Membership Marketing Templates and Tools) at the entrance of the school, library, or other community center.

**Indirect marketing** includes word of mouth, public service activities, and community relations. Examples include:

- Building relationships with influential community leaders (e.g., church leaders, business owners, elected officials) who can influence decisions and help grow the PTA
- Providing a public speaker to an event
- Partnering with another community group for a “Clean the Park Day”
- Organizing a food drive with a local soup kitchen
- Speaking positively about your PTA when out in public



### **Membership Growth Plan Worksheet**

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**Membership Numbers. For questions 1–4:** Compare the current number of members with the previous year’s total to determine whether membership is increasing or decreasing. Then compare the current number of members with the overall number of parents of school-age children in the community to determine the size of the group available for recruitment. Although anyone can join PTA, we’ll initially focus our efforts on parents, because they’re the most likely to join.

1. Number of current members \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the membership growth (+) or loss (-) (in numbers) from the previous year? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of parents in the school \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of students in the school \_\_\_\_\_

**Demographics. For questions 5–7:** Knowing the demographics of potential members can help you define how you’ll approach them when recruiting. Different groups require different approaches.

5. Ethnicity, race, location

The following populations constitute what percentages of your current membership? How do those percentages compare to the percentages in the overall community? Most city or town halls can provide you with the community’s demographic makeup.

<b>Population</b>	<b>Percentage of PTA Membership</b>	<b>Percentage of the Community's Population</b>
Asian		
African American		
Caucasian		
Hispanic		
Native American		
Other Ethnic/Racial Groups		
Urban		
Suburban		
Rural		

6. Average family size

1–2 children \_\_\_\_\_

3–4 children \_\_\_\_\_

5 or more children \_\_\_\_\_

7. Average age range of parents

18–34 \_\_\_\_\_

35–45 \_\_\_\_\_

46–55 \_\_\_\_\_

56–65 \_\_\_\_\_

**Member and School Needs. For questions 8–16:** You know the groups from which you want to recruit and the needs they've identified (see the Sample Membership Survey on page 30). Compare each survey respondent's needs with the overall survey responses, and select those issues that would appeal to the widest group of parents. Then begin your planning. Take into consideration the best meeting locations, best times of day, and any special accommodations necessary (babysitting services, translators, wheelchair accessibility, etc.).

The survey results, as well as conversations with your school principal and other administrators, will give you the kind of information you'll need to schedule the major activities for the year. Once those activities have been identified and assigned to various committees, the volunteers on those committees can begin to plan events, identifying what funds, time, and personnel they'll need.

8. Membership survey

What do your members want? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did they join? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they getting what they expected? \_\_\_\_\_

9. If membership has declined, what factors may have contributed to the decline? \_\_\_\_\_

How many students have graduated from elementary school to middle school or junior high to high school? (Parents are less likely to join a PTA when their children are in high school.)

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Identify competition in the community.

Other general parent groups \_\_\_\_\_

Athletic booster clubs \_\_\_\_\_

Music (band, choir) booster clubs \_\_\_\_\_

11. What membership or programmatic efforts have been run in the past? \_\_\_\_\_

Were they successful in recruiting members? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Based on the population of your community, from which population groups will your unit recruit members?

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13. What kinds of programs would be attractive to parents in these groups? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What kinds of meeting locales would be attractive to parents in these groups? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What kinds of meeting times would be attractive to parents in these groups? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Based on membership survey responses, what are the most common issues facing your school and PTA?

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**Writing Your Plan.** You have at your fingertips all the information you need to identify unit goals and put the plan for achieving them in writing.

Remember, goals should be S.M.A.R.T.: Specific, Measurable, Attainable and Agreeable, Relevant, and Timely. The sample membership growth plan on page 28 will help you see how the areas on this worksheet can be addressed.

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## Sample Membership Growth Plan

<b>Membership Numbers and Demographics XYZ Middle School PTA</b>	
Total school population is 500 students, 900 parents, 30 staff (teachers, administrators) 25% Caucasian 25% African American 25% Hispanic 10% Native American 15% Other	Current PTA membership is 200: 180 parents, 20 staff (teachers, administrators) 40% Caucasian 35% African American 10% Hispanic 5% Native American 10% Other The unit grew the past two years.

Based on the size of the school, current PTA membership, and population breakdown (questions 1–7 on your growth plan worksheet), the unit has set the following membership goal:

**Goal:** To increase membership by 100 by March 31, while addressing member and school needs.

### Member and School Needs

Based on needs identified by members and school and community leaders (questions 8–16 on your growth plan worksheet), the unit will address the following issues:

- Increasing volunteer assistance in the classroom
- Expanding parking-lot capacity for school performances
- Ensuring school safety

**Sample Membership Growth Plan**

The unit has selected two projects for each of the three issues. For each project, the unit has identified which PTA committee will be responsible, when the project will be held, the number of people needed to successfully conduct the project, and what the budget is. Each committee will be responsible for working with the membership committee to promote attendance and volunteer-recruitment. Unit leaders have also met with community leaders of the populations represented at the school, and identified how to approach each group.

Lastly, the unit leaders have put together a calendar that notes unit goals, shows the dates of general membership meetings and parent nights at the school, and indicates project timelines.

**Membership Survey**

(to be distributed to all parents in a school)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this PTA?  Yes  No

Are you a member of other PTAs?  Yes  No

If yes, please name them. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you believe is the purpose of our PTA? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why did you join PTA? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the PTA do well? \_\_\_\_\_

What could the PTA do better? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you recruit a new member?  Yes  No

What are the weak points of our unit? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the biggest challenge you face as a parent? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the biggest challenge our school community faces? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What new unit activity would you most like to see implemented? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What current unit activity would you most like to see ended? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In what areas would you become active if given the opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Overall, I feel the PTA is  Very helpful  Helpful  Not helpful

Meetings and projects are  Very helpful  Helpful  Not helpful

Would you like to see resource materials, such as handouts, videos/DVDs, and brochures, available to PTA members?  Yes  No

Did you ever request assistance or information from the PTA?  Yes  No

If yes, did you receive a prompt response?  Yes  No

Do you believe the PTA has been working on behalf of all children and youth?  Yes  No

If no, what do you think should be addressed that the PTA has failed to address?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Overcoming Obstacles and Presenting PTA to the Public

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### Checklist: Making Presentations to Potential Members

Most objections to joining PTA fall into the areas of time, impact, and perceived value. Use this checklist when preparing for presentations to ensure that you address these key areas.

- **Time.** When parents say they don't have time to join PTA, what they are probably saying is that they don't want to volunteer dozens of hours each week. Explain that PTA appreciates everyone's membership, whether or not the member volunteers, because each member increases PTA's ability to advocate for children.
- **Impact.** Parents want to know if their membership in PTA is going to have a positive impact, if it will benefit their children. You can tell them, "Yes!" Decades' worth of research shows that when parents are involved, students perform better in school. They receive higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance and lower rates of suspension, are more likely to graduate high school, and are more likely to pursue postsecondary education. Children of involved parents also exhibit increased motivation, better self-esteem, less drug and alcohol use, and fewer instances of violent behavior. Those great benefits come from parent involvement, a major focus of PTA.
- **Value.** People like to join organizations that make a difference in the lives 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 for parents is the ability to help their children. For many parents, that is reason enough to join.

Also, explain what members get for their membership dues. In addition to materials and benefits from their local and state PTAs, members receive the following:

- Access to select articles from *Our Children* magazine online (**[www.pta.org/OurChildren](http://www.pta.org/OurChildren)**)
- *The PTA Parent*, an e-newsletter that covers parenting topics (**[www.pta.org/PTAParent](http://www.pta.org/PTAParent)**)
- *PTA Takes Action Update*, a monthly e-newsletter that covers national public policy issues affecting families and public education (**[www.pta.org/advocacy](http://www.pta.org/advocacy)**)
- Exclusive member benefits from the PTA national organization (**[www.pta.org/benefits](http://www.pta.org/benefits)**), including discounts, special offers, and promotions from national companies
- Free e-learning courses on subjects such as conflict resolution and goal setting (**[www.pta.org/e-learning](http://www.pta.org/e-learning)**)
- Discounted member rates for the annual PTA National Convention and on subscriptions to the print version of *Our Children*
- Access to the PTA Takes Action Network, the grassroots advocacy system that connects PTA members with members of Congress



**Frequently Asked Question About the “Ask”**

What can I say to people who object when I ask them to join?

Objection...	You can say...
<p><b>“I don’t have the time!”</b></p>	<p>“It only takes a moment to join. It’s not the amount of time you can contribute that’s most important, but rather your commitment to help PTA make a difference in the lives of children.</p> <p>You don’t have to be a volunteer to be a member. We value their time and strive to use it effectively.” (Give examples of events or projects that might appeal to this person.)</p>
<p><b>“I don’t have any children in school!”</b></p>	<p>“You don’t have to have children in school to belong to PTA. Anyone who cares about children belongs in our organization. It is important that we all have a voice in the decision-making process relating to the laws and regulations that affect children. You can have that voice through PTA. Every child needs you. You will make a difference.”</p>
<p><b>“I don’t agree with a lot of the PTA positions!”</b></p>	<p>“The only way to avoid disagreement would be to adopt a ‘do-nothing’ policy. As a grassroots organization, our policies are determined by a democratic process. We welcome your involvement in this effort. It is through members like you that our direction is determined.”</p>
<p><b>“Your organization doesn’t really do anything!”</b></p>	<p>“I cannot speak for what may have happened in previous years, but let me bring you up-to-date on what we are doing now. (List current activities, programs, accomplishments, etc.)</p> <p>As you see, we are a very active group, doing many things that benefit all our children. On a state and national level, we have been instrumental in many initiatives from which all children have benefited. We have a long history of accomplishments. (Have a list of accomplishments at the state and national levels available for reference.) We need time, funds, and good will from people like you to keep it happening. There is so much for us to do, but we need people like you. Join us and help us do even more.”</p>



## Partnering Ideas for Units

A great way to experience growth in membership and in stature is to hold events with local businesses and organizations. Listed below are a few events hosted by PTAs to boost recruitment efforts.

Event	Business Type
Bike safety rodeo	Insurance companies
Community forum on a local issue	City council
Read-a-thon	Local libraries
Safety: traffic, home, school, playground	Local police and fire departments
Educational fair	Community groups with expertise in dance, crafts, storytelling, and science
Info share	Any local organizations and businesses
Literacy program	Senior citizen groups and local libraries
Public service announcements	Local radio or television stations
Work fair/career day	Area businesses
Discount incentives for members	Area businesses
Health and safety fair	Area health groups
Forum on special needs children	Assistance groups for people with disabilities
Adopt-a-grandparent program	Retirement homes, senior citizen groups
Mentoring programs	Business leader groups, other service organizations
Storytelling	Retirement homes, senior citizen groups
Tutoring program	University/college student organizations



## **Additional PTA Resources**

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PTA marketing brochures can be found at:

**[www.pta.org/brochures](http://www.pta.org/brochures)**

PTA's history, mission, successes can be found at:

**[www.pta.org/history](http://www.pta.org/history)**

PTA's showcase video (which can be shown at meetings, membership events, open houses, and in the community), can be found on the PTA YouTube Channel at:

**[www.youtube.com/nationalpta](http://www.youtube.com/nationalpta)**

The PTA national office, as well as some state offices and individual members, can be found on **[Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)**, **[Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)** and **[Fotki.com](http://Fotki.com)**

PTAs Membership Marketing Templates and Tools (with more than 80 customizable, reproducible fliers, posters, brochures, postcards, and more) can be found at: **[www.pta.org/marketing](http://www.pta.org/marketing)**

The PTA Gateway Public Service Announcement (PSA) Campaign (with TV and radio spots, as well as Web banners) can be found at **[www.pta.org/gatewayPSAs](http://www.pta.org/gatewayPSAs)**







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