



American Society of Highway Engineers

## **BEST PRACTICES MANUAL – MEMBERSHIP**

Developed by the ASHE Membership Committee

First Edition

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## Best Practices Membership-Current-New-Future

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the ASHE Membership Committee is to aid Sections, Regions and National with anything related to membership in the ASHE Organization. There is a great emphasis placed on recruiting new members, keeping current members and how to continue to grow into the future. This manual is a tool to provide Sections, Regions, and National with the means and methods to reach these goals. Many of these best practices are currently in place within the various sections and have been met with high levels of success.

## 2. Membership Goals

The continued growth of the ASHE membership is critical to the success of the organization. This growth can happen in several ways, including the growth of existing sections as well as the addition of new sections. The following are potential strategies that may be utilized to help retention of existing members and to add new members:

- Hold “members only” events. This could include technical sessions to get PDH credits or meetings where certain high value speakers are presenting. Encourage non-members to become a member to attend these events. Provide membership applications at the entrance to the meeting room. If meeting is held virtually, send the membership application or link to the website to the perspective member prior to attending the meeting.
- Simplify the process of registering and signing in members during dinner meetings. This could include electronic check-in, electronic payments, preparing name tags in advance of events and using re-useable name tags that are collected at the end of each event. Consider using PayPal or other comparable sites to have members register and pay in advance of the event.
- Hold younger member forum events to encourage younger member attendance. This could include meetings at local restaurants, bars etc. either prior to the regularly scheduled dinner meeting or on a separate day. Where possible, consider aligning these events with ASCE (YMF) or other societies.
- Hold Joint Events with other Sections or other Societies (i.e., ASCE, NSPE, WTS, Contractors Associations, etc.). During these events, encourage the non-members to consider joining the Section.
- Identify potential speakers during the summer prior to the start of the season. Try to set dates as early as possible so members know what is coming up in advance, send out “save the date” emails as early as possible.

- Minimize the duration of time between events. Hold events on a regular basis (i.e., second Wednesday of every month) so it becomes engrained as the norm for the membership.

Potential strategies have been discussed on how to attract new members to ASHE:

- Continue and build upon the “Bring a Colleague, Make a Friend” campaign. Reach out directly to private and public sector employees and invite them to attend and join.
- The Membership Committee is collaborating with Public Relations Committee to create marketing brochures that could be sent to the Regions for distribution. Sections or Regions can request marketing brochures that can be sent to agencies, companies, or government offices.
- The National Website does have a place to request membership information. These requests are sent to the Section closest to the potential member for follow-up. A quick response from the Section will help attract a new member.

Potential strategies have been discussed on how to create future growth:

- If a membership request is not near any existing Section, we send information for the closest Section to the potential new member. That information is then sent to the New Sections Committee to reach out and see if there is enough interest to start a New Section.
- If there is considerable interest from a specific location where a section does not currently existing, reach out to the National Board or Regional Representatives about starting a new section in this area.

### 3. Public Sector

ASHE National would like to increase the number of government members. Potential strategies have been discussed on increasing Public Sector participation:

- Work with the PR Committee to create marketing brochures to target various DOT District Leaderships. The Regions can then distribute them to DOT District Leaderships.
- National, Regional and Section Leadership to setup meetings with District DOT Leadership to discuss benefits of ASHE. Include National Board members during the meetings with DOT leadership.

- Membership drives where initiation fees are reduced or eliminated for DOT staff. This is not a one size fits all, please make sure that this is not a violation of local state requirements with respect to receiving gifts.
- Consider blanket membership enrollment for all state employees. For example, the DOT can purchase a number of memberships at a reduced rate then disperse them to their staff (statewide).
- It was noted in many states, the dinner meetings are not near the DOT offices. Consider moving some or all dinner meetings closer to DOT offices to reduce travel time. Consultants will follow along if DOT staff are there.
- Many DOT staff end their day well before dinner meetings. Consider changing to breakfast or lunch meetings to align closer with DOT staff schedules.
- Encourage and invite DOT staff to be on Section Board of Directors. Set aside a Board Position specifically for DOT staff.
- Reach out to the local DOT office to see if they would be willing to host an event. This can be a “lunch and learn” where CEUs or PDHs are provided.

#### 4. Private Sector

Potential strategies for increasing membership from Private Sector with an emphasis on contractor participation.

- Allow contractors to showcase their projects. This could be during dinner meetings/technical sessions or through field walks. Invite local college students or younger members to attend field walks. This could be a collaboration with the Student Chapter Committee.
- Have consultants discuss projects that are still in the design development stage so the contractors can get information on upcoming projects. May need approval from clients or DOT.
- Encourage contractors and design consultants to meet in areas where design/build projects are common.
- Consider blanket membership enrollment for all firms. For example, the firm can purchase a number of memberships at a reduced rate then disperse them to their staff. Set a minimum of 10, 15 or 25 memberships.

## 5. Section Health Check

Potential strategies for National or Regions to identify Sections that may be struggling, need help or growing.

- The assessment tracker is a tool that the National Secretary uses to track assessments and membership decline or growth. If Sections are not adding members or dropping members at the time of assessment it may be an indicator that the Section is struggling.
- If the Section is struggling or just not responding to any requests, a member of the National Board will personally visit or set up a video meeting to start a conversation on what kind of help is necessary and make a plan to follow through.
- Communication is key, most problems are solved simply by talking to one another. Brainstorming with Sections and Regions could help struggling Sections to succeed. This may be as simple as setting up a conference call and inviting growing sections and struggling sections to brainstorm ideas and best practices.

## 6. National and Regional Involvement

Potential strategies that would require National or Regional involvement to help increase ASHE's overall membership and Section success.

- Offer training sessions so Section leadership is strong, and they are aware of best practices. Identify if leadership is an issue and find ways to help.
- Continue Coffee and Cocktails with the President initiative to open the doors of communication in a fun, non-threatening environment.