

2022 ACYOA Bylaws **Implementation Guidebook**

[Reference Page](#) (p. 3-4)

[Implementing the ACYOA Stewardship Program](#) (p. 5-6)

[How to Form a Regional ACYOA Chapter](#) (p. 7-9)

[How to Form an ACYOA Campus Group](#) (p. 10-13)

Background On Newly Passed 2022 ACYOA Bylaws Revisions

During the 2019 ACYOA General Assembly in Milwaukee, WI, discussions were had by the ACYOA Central Council and ACYOA chapter leadership on ways in which they could create opportunities for more young adults to participate in the organization, and better suit the needs and lifestyles of its membership. The ACYOA Bylaws Committee was then established to make revisions to the 2011 Bylaws, led by Chair Talin A. Hitik Esq., former ACYOA Central Council member. The Committee, comprised of ACYOA alumni spanning generations, proposed three substantial revisions and new pillars to the Bylaws: transitioning of ACYOA membership system to a stewardship program, regional chapter creation, and campus group creation. These measures were accepted as part of the revised [ACYOA Bylaws](#) officially passed at the 2023 ACYOA General Assembly in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, first proposed and passed at 2022 ACYOA General Assembly in Dallas, Texas.

Purpose Of 2022 ACYOA Bylaws Guidebook

This guidebook was created to break down the three new main pillars added to the ACYOA Bylaws, and how to seamlessly implement them into your current or future ACYOA Seniors and Juniors chapters. For questions, please email the ACYOA Central Council at acyoacc@gmail.com.

**Drafted & Submitted by the Bylaws Guidelines Committee on 4/15/23
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Reference Page

(In order of appearance)

Membership Dues: A set amount of money required to be a member of the Parish and/or ACYOA chapter. This is historically how the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the ACYOA raised funds.

Stewardship Program: A Christian-based system where participants become members of the ACYOA through financial donation, regardless of dollar amount. In addition to donations, also known as “treasure,” stewardship to the ACYOA includes “Time” and “Talent” contributions:

- Time: Attending Badarak, volunteering, serving on a committee, or participating/organizing events are all examples of commitments of Time.
- Talent: Share your God-given Talent. God has Blessed us all with one or more Talents. Sing in the Choir, serve on the Altar, help organize events, run for office or serve on a board. Any Talent God has blessed you with, bring Glory to God by sharing it with the ACYOA.
- Treasure: This is a financial donation of no specific amount offered to the ACYOA, and your local chapter should they choose to implement stewardship. You become a member of the ACYOA regardless of the amount.

Steward: An ACYOA member who takes part in the ACYOA Stewardship Program of.

Steward-at-Large: An ACYOA member who takes part in the stewardship program, but does not belong to a specific chapter.

Member: Once a steward of the ACYOA, a person becomes a member of the ACYOA.

- **The terms Steward and Member are interchangeable.**
- All ACYOA members can join whichever parish chapter is closest to them.
 - As a steward of the ACYOA, members can only be officially registered as a member to one ACYOA chapter
 - If a steward moves (temporarily), they can choose to join a new chapter as an official member to that chapter (disaffiliating from their previous chapter), or solely be a participant of a new chapter (not changing their official chapter affiliation).
 - Stewards have General Assembly voting rights on behalf of — and chapter voting rights for — only one ACYOA chapter each year.

Home Parish: The parish that one actively participates at.

Regional Chapter: A group of members from multiple parishes that come together to form one chapter, associated with a chosen Home Parish.

Home Parish of the Regional Chapter: The primary parish for a regional chapter. The pastor of the Home Parish is the President of the Regional Chapter.

Satellite Parish: The parishes who have members affiliated with a Regional Chapter, but are not the Home Parish of that Regional Chapter.

Campus Group: A group of college/university students connected to an Affiliated Parish ACYOA Chapter and participates remotely; the Campus Group is one and the same as the Affiliated Chapter, separated by location.

Affiliated ACYOA Chapter: The parish chapter that a Campus Group is connected to.

Campus Group Member: You are an ACYOA member of the Affiliated Chapter. You have voting rights and can hold an executive board position at the Affiliated Chapter.

Campus Group Participant: You participate in the Campus Group and are involved, while remaining a member of your Home Parish. You cannot vote or hold an executive board position for the Affiliated Chapter, but rather retain voting rights and board positions of your original Home Chapter.

Implementing the Stewardship Program

Mark 12:41–44 - The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America has been successful at increasing financial giving through the Dues to Stewardship Pilot Program that began January 1, 2020. The goal of the Dues to Stewardship Pilot Program was to move from a secular membership dues-paying system to a Christian-based stewardship system, focusing on time, talent, and treasure. The pilot program started with a select group of parishes, and because of the positive feedback, they have now opened this program to any parish interested. The Diocese is currently writing a proposal to amend the bylaws to reflect this program. To parallel the Diocese, the ACYOA Central Council, with the support of the ACYOA General Assembly Delegates in 2022 and 2023, has decided to adopt the same type of stewardship program for its members.

To be a voting, active member of the ACYOA, members shall participate in the ACYOA Stewardship Program. Through the program, members are to give from their hearts. Regardless of dollar amount, it is the choice of each individual. Once one participates in the ACYOA Stewardship Program, they are a member of the ACYOA.

[Read here to learn more about "What is a Stewardship"](#)

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Steps for an Active ACYOA Chapter to Implement the Stewardship Program

- Hold an annual membership meeting to discuss the following:
 - Reinforce that the ACYOA Stewardship Program requires stewardship to the Central Council, not to each chapter.
 - Chapters have the discretion to conduct a chapter collection separate from the stewardship to the Central Council. Chapters may choose to stick with set membership dues, or complete a second chapter stewardship collection.
 - Chapters are allowed to collect their own funds by dues or stewardship. In either model, chapters must instruct members to keep this separate from their stewardship donation to the Central Council by specifying the amount of funds for each allocation.
 - Stewards will pledge/give stewardship to their chapter to collect.
 - Suggestion: Check if your parish transitioned to the Stewardship Program and use a similar collection structure.
 - Each ACYOA chapter's Treasurer keeps track of stewardship amounts privately.
 - Stewardship shall be sent to the Central Council as part of the Annual ACYOA Chapter Report completed by each active chapter before General Assembly. Chapters will be asked to include the list of steward names and the total amount of stewardship collected (not each individual's contributions).
 - Stewardship is collected in the fiscal year Jan 1-Dec 31 and submitted by the following General Assembly.
 - Example: General Assembly is May 27, 2023 - Stewardship needs to be submitted to the Central Council by April 27, 2023. Collection Date range is Fiscal Year 2022 (Jan 1, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022).
 - Suggestion - Stewardship is a commitment between you and God. All we are and all we have are gifts from God, and Stewardship is your heartfelt commitment to give back to the Church from the gifts God has blessed you with. Stewardship includes your Time, Talent and Treasure. Find ways in which the members of your ACYOA can give their time and talents.

ACYOA Members-at-Large Participating in Stewardship Program

- Members-at-Large, also known as Stewards-at-Large will participate in the ACYOA Stewardship Program by sending stewardship directly to the Central Council.

How to Form a Regional Chapter

Reasons for a Regional Chapter:

- Allows multiple ACYOA chapters (either established or aspiring) located within a close proximity to each other to combine resources, grow friendships and networks, broaden the reach and impact of the ACYOA and its programming in the Armenian diaspora, and much more.
- Reduces the responsibilities of ACYOA chapters with smaller memberships and budgets. Rather than having two, three or four smaller chapters with most members needed to be on executive boards and coordinating activities, Regional Chapters combine leadership into one executive board. This provides opportunities for increased participation among general members and removes a barrier to entry to the ACYOA and Church life.
- When a part of the Regional Chapter, an individual still belongs to their Home Parish life, but would like to connect with other youth through a Regional Chapter. "I am still part of my parish. I am just connecting with youth through the Regional Chapter."

How to Form a Regional Chapter:

- Eight or more eligible persons are required to create a Regional Chapter.
 - To be an eligible person, one must be a steward of the ACYOA, either a steward-at-large or a steward of an existing chapter.
- Eligible persons will then need to vote to convert to or create a Regional Chapter.
 - Before the vote takes place, it is recommended all members, the Pastor (or Parish Council Chair if no Pastor assigned to the parish), and the Parish Council of each pre-existing chapter communally decide that they want to merge with others to make a Regional Chapter before commencing with the vote to move to a Regional Chapter.
 - If the majority of the executive board and members vote to merge, but the Pastor and/or Parish Council Chair do not agree, speak to the ACYOA Central Council Chair to share the situation and ask for help proceeding. Collectively determine the root cause of the disagreement and find a solution.
 - Conduct a three-fourths vote of all current eligible members interested.
 - Collect a quorum of all current eligible members and cast votes.
 - We recommend all current eligible members cast a vote when possible.
 - All Parishes/Chapters desiring to connect need to be accounted for in the vote in order to dissolve individual Chapters and create a Regional Chapter.
- Once the three-fourths vote is passed, continue to the application process.
- Complete the application provided - "[Regional Chapter Formation Application](#)"
 - On the application, provide the following information:
 - Intended combining parishes (established chapters or parishes that have youth but no established chapters)
 - Did each Chapter, Parish Pastor, and the Parish Council Chair agree to this application? (*Signature of Pastor, Parish Council Chair, and one member on behalf*)
 - Demographic information of those who voted in the three-fourths vote - name and parish (or members-at-large)
 - Each parish intending to merge must provide a written reason to regionalize
 - Results of the three-fourths vote - percentages of those who voted for, against, and abstained
- Submit the application to the Primate and the Central Council Chair for tentative approval.
- Once approved, the Central Council shall work with the applicants to select a Home Parish, with the approval of the Pastor and the Parish Council.
 - Considerations during the selection of a Home Parish:
 - Activeness of the Home Parish (eg: active youth involvement - Juniors, Sunday School, etc.)
 - Availability of the Pastor (past experiences with the Pastors of the parishes considered)
 - Geographic centrality of the proposed Parish (Location being the higher proportion of members potentially or located centralized to majority of members)

- The Home Parish must be approved by a three-fourths majority vote of all Regional Chapter applicants.
- Once the Home Parish has been voted on and approved, the President of the Regional Chapter shall be the Pastor of the Home Parish. In the absence of a Pastor, the Home Parish Council Chair shall act as the President of the Regional Chapter.
 - The President of the Regional Chapter is responsible for offering guidance and support to the members,
- Create the name and obtain approval from the Central Council.
 - The name will be “__Name of affiliated region area__ Regional ACYOA Chapter”
 - Example: Chicagoland Regional ACYOA Chapter or Northern NJ Regional ACYOA Chapter

Satellite Parish Relations Suggestions:

- Satellite Parishes are the Parishes who are a part of the Regional Chapter, while not being the Home Parish. We recommend that Regional Chapters engage with the Home and Satellite Parishes. See recommendations below on how to share the ACYOA Senior youth involvement.
 - Vary the location of meetings
 - Hold events for the different communities
 - Alternate church locations for community events to help connect regional communities together
 - Attend Divine Liturgy (Badarak) at various parishes that are represented by the Chapter
 - Host fundraisers, coffee hours, feast days, etc. at the different parishes

How to Close Pre-Existing Chapters:

- Upon the formation of a Regional Chapter, all previously-existing Parish Chapters that comprise the new Regional Chapter shall automatically dissolve.
- The assets, records, and property of the dissolved Parish Chapters shall be turned over to the Parish Council of the local Parish.
- The new Regional Chapter may appeal to each local Parish Council of its new members to have the assets, records, and property of satellite parishes turned over to the Regional Chapter.
 - As the ACYOA bank account is owned by the Parish Council, the Parish Council can choose to close or leave the account open. If the account is closed, assets may be transferred to the Parish Council’s account or to the Regional Chapter’s account at the discretion of the Parish Council.

How to Form an Executive Board for a Regional Chapter:

- At a minimum, there are three executive board roles to be filled: Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary
 - This board shall make every effort possible to achieve an equitable representation of all chapters/parishes that make up the Regional Chapter.
 - Refer to the Bylaws for voting procedures.
- If more board positions are desired, more positions can be added, such that the sum total of positions is odd (5, 7, 9, etc.). *(There are suggested positions in the [ACYOA Handbook](#))*

Assets/Records/Property of Regional Chapter:

- The Regional Chapter will create a bank account. Consult with the Parish Council to open the account.
 - The ACYOA account should have the following signers: Treasurer, Chair, and a Parish Council representative (Treasurer)
- As stated in the Bylaws, at least 10% of the annual net proceeds of the Regional Chapter shall be contributed to the Home Parish.
- Suggestion: Contribute some additional amount to the Satellite Parishes to continue supporting all churches involved (with the amount up to discretion of the Regional Chapter). Regional Chapters are encouraged, whenever possible, to distribute additional proceeds to all individual Parishes of its members.

General Assembly:

- The Regional Chapter shall make every reasonable effort to achieve an equitable distribution of delegates from the individual Parishes of the Regional Chapter's members.
- ACYOA members who belong to the Regional Chapter, but different individual Parishes, may be elected to the Central Council in the same year.
 - Their name on the ballot would be written as follows: "Name - Parish Church - Regional Chapter name"

Moving Home Parishes:

- In the event that a Regional Chapter has a need to disaffiliate from its Home Parish and affiliate with another nearby parish as its Home Parish, the Regional Chapter Executive Committee shall notify the Central Council Chair in a formal email.
 - It is strongly suggested that a vote from all members of a Regional Chapter takes place, showing the desire from the majority to have a Home Parish change.
- The Primate and the Central Council Chair shall work with the Regional Chapter to find a resolution.
 - The Primate and the Central Council Chair will determine the cause for the request. The decision will be up to the discretion of the Primate and the Central Council Chair.

How to Dissolve a Regional Chapter:

- A formal letter is to be written to the Primate and the Central Council Chair stating the desire to dissolve the Regional Chapter.
 - Follow protocols for the dissolution of an ACYOA Chapter in the [Bylaws](#).
- Upon the dissolution of a Regional Chapter, the assets, records and all property thereof shall be turned over and shall belong to the Parish Council of the Home Parish.
- It is encouraged, whenever possible, to distribute all property of the dissolved Regional Chapter amongst the satellite parishes in an equitable manner
 - Prior to dissolution, it is recommended the executive board determine their current assets/records/properties. The executive board can present this record along with recommendations on how to distribute the assets/records/properties to assist the Parish Council in an equitable distribution.

Regional Chapter Formation Application

Complete the following table with the parishes intending to merge for the desired Regional Chapter, along with the requested information below the table. Please submit the application, along with any questions, to acyoacc@gmail.com:

Intended Combining Parish Name	Did the Pastor, Parish Council, and Chapter of this intended combining parish agree to this application?
	Circle: Yes or No (If yes, provide signatures below) Pastor: _____ Parish Council Chair: _____ Chapter Chair: _____
	Circle: Yes or No (If yes, provide signatures below) Pastor: _____ Parish Council Chair: _____ Chapter Chair: _____
	Circle: Yes or No (If yes, provide signatures below) Pastor: _____ Parish Council Chair: _____ Chapter Chair: _____
<p align="center"><i>If more parishes are combining, make additional copies of this table and add their information.</i></p>	

Each parish intending to merge must provide a written reason to regionalize.

Provide the following information of the members present for the three-fourths vote:

- Total number of eligible voting members present for the vote (*at least 8*)
- Provide a list of demographic information of those who voted in the three-fourths vote
 - Names and Parishes (or members-at-large)
 - **Name, Phone Number, Email**
- Results of the three-fourths vote - percentages of those who voted for, against, and abstained

How to Form a Campus Group

● **Reasons for a Campus Group**

- Surveys collected from past ACYOA Chapter Reports showed that ACYOA Seniors engagement with college-aged members was low. It was evident that many ACYOA Juniors became less involved in the Church, their parish community and greater-Armenian community during college years, with only some returning to church life and the ACYOA Seniors post-college.
- The Bylaws Committee wanted to establish an infrastructure in the bylaws to allow for greater engagement with college students and to promote ACYOA involvement.
- A Campus Group is part of a Parish Chapter and works remotely from said affiliated chapter; they are one and the same, separated by location.

● **Who is part of a Campus Group:**

- Five or more eligible persons are required to create a Campus Group of an existing chapter.
 - Eligible persons can be:
 - Pre-existing members of the desired-affiliated ACYOA Chapter
 - ACYOA members who are college students and will become members of the desired-affiliated ACYOA Chapter
 - To be an eligible person, you need to be a steward of the ACYOA, either a steward-at-large or a steward of an existing Chapter.
- Membership vs. General Participation in a Campus Group Clarification:
 - Campus Group Member: An ACYOA member to the Affiliated Chapter. Members are a steward, have voting rights, and can hold an executive board position at the Affiliated Chapter.
 - Campus Group Participant: A general participant in the Campus Group. They are involved in the Campus Group, while still staying a member of their Home Chapter. Participants cannot vote or hold an executive board position for the Affiliated Chapter, but rather retain voting rights and board positions of their original Home Chapter.
- Membership of a Campus Group ends after the General Assembly (end of May). A member can then choose to renew or change their ACYOA Chapter membership for the following year.

● **Campus Group Chapter Application Process**

- Five or more eligible persons vote, by a three-fourths vote majority, to determine the ACYOA chapter they wish to affiliate with.
 - Consider the activity level of the chapter in the area, the geographical location compared to the campus, if chapter members are already at the campus to help with chapter communication, etc.
 - Should the makeup of the students change, the Campus Group has the ability to change their chapter affiliation by following this process again.
 - A suggested practice - At the beginning of each year, the Affiliated Chapter should reach out to the Campus Group membership to confirm continued partnership in the new school year, or if change is needed due to a different makeup in the student body.
- Once the three-fourths vote is passed, continue to the [Campus Group Formation Application](#),
 - College/University
 - Demographic information of those who voted in the three-fourths vote. This includes name, year in school, their home parish/chapter (or steward-at-large)
 - Results of the three-fourths vote - percentages of those who voted for, against, and abstained
 - Desired reason to create a Campus Group and why they think this chapter affiliation is best
- Submit the completed application via email to the ACYOA Seniors Chapter Chair of the desired-Affiliated Chapter.

- The Chapter Executive Committee must obtain approval from their Pastor (or Parish Council Chair if no assigned Parish Pastor) and the ACYOA Central Council for the official formation of a Campus Group under their Chapter.
 - Once approved, the Campus Group is a part of the Affiliated Chapter.
 - The name of the Campus Group shall be “[University/College Name] Campus Group of [Affiliated Chapter Name]”
- **Once the Campus Group is Established**
 - Members of a Campus Group are members of the Affiliated Chapter and shall enjoy all privileges and obligations of membership of that Chapter, including the right to vote and hold office.
 - This means Campus Group members are no longer part of their original Home Chapter (if different). They are to pay stewardship to the Affiliated Chapter.
 - If a person wants to remain a member of their Home Chapter, they can be a participant of the Campus Group, but they cannot hold office or vote in the Affiliated Chapter.
- **Role of Campus Group in Affiliated Chapter**
 - Campus Group members can vote, hold office, request money, and take part in Affiliated Chapter meetings.
 - Campus Groups do not need to be a registered student organization at the college/university, but they can be if desired and the school allows it. (Some colleges/universities may not allow registration of a religious student organization).
- **Affiliated Chapter Roles and Responsibilities**
 - Check-in with the Campus Group at the beginning of each school year to confirm continued partnership in the new school year, or if change is needed due to a different makeup in the student body.
 - Affiliated Chapter should have a plan on how they will support the Campus Group: How will they connect with the Campus Group and make them feel part of the Chapter? How will they assist the Campus Group financially?
- **General Assembly**
 - Only one person from any Chapter, including its Campus Groups, may be elected to the Central Council in any given year. Campus Group members are members of the Affiliated Chapter. This means that a Campus Group member and an Affiliated Chapter member cannot be elected to the Central Council at the same time.
- **Funds and Assets**
 - The funds and assets of a Campus Group shall be one and the same as its Affiliated Chapter.
 - Campus Groups shall not hold separate funds, assets, or bank accounts.
 - Affiliated Chapters should have a plan on how they will support a Campus Group financially.
 - Campus Group members shall have the same rights and obligations regarding Chapter funds as all other Chapter members.
 - Campus Groups can ask for funds for events on campus.
 - Any funds raised go to the Affiliated Chapter account.

Campus Group Formation Application

Send to - ACYOA Seniors Chair of the desired-Affiliated Chapter: _____

College/University: _____

Provide the reason this collected group would like to form a Campus Group and why affiliating with this desired chapter is best.

Provide the following information of the three-fourths vote:

- Total number of eligible voting members present for the vote (*at least 5*)
- Provide a list of demographic information of those who participated in the three-fourths vote
 - Name
 - Year in school
 - Chapter previously a member/steward of (or if a steward-at-large)
- Results of the three-fourths vote - percentages of those who voted for, against, and abstained