

Types of PTA Membership

Affiliation with State and National PTA

The members of National PTA and Washington State PTA are the local PTAs who are affiliated with these organizations. Individuals join their local PTA unit, not state and national directly – this is why they must pay full fees to each PTA unit they join. The local PTA sends service fees on to the state and national organizations reflecting the number of members they have enrolled. The services of state and national PTA are provided to the PTA units, rather than directly to individual members. PTAs with higher membership numbers are helping to support the services delivered to PTAs in high poverty and remote areas of the state. This support from neighbor to neighbor is vital to our ability to reach out to more needy communities.

Honorary Life Membership

This is a special way to recognize someone in your community who has shown consistent and exemplary service to children, families or your PTA. The Honorary Life Membership is available from both National PTA and Washington State PTA. Recipients are given a pin and certificate, but the membership is truly “honorary” – they do not receive the privileges of voice or vote in any PTA proceedings. Proceeds from the sale of National PTA Honorary Life Memberships go to the NPTA Endowment Fund. Sales of Washington State PTA Honorary Life Memberships benefit the WSPTA Scholarship Foundation.

Local PTA Membership Options

Many PTAs set up special categories of membership in order to attract members from targeted groups. For each of these memberships the PTA passes on the full state and national fees that are due. Any discounts are taken from the local portion of the membership fee. Any of these membership options would need to be included in the PTA standing rules.

- **Family (or couple):** This generally covers two memberships for any two people who consider themselves in the same family. It may be best to allow them to define what two people it covers – divorced parents, step-parents, unmarried partners, one parent and one student, grandparents, etc. It is important to make it clear that although this may be called a family membership, it covers two people, not an entire family.
- **Student:** Some PTAs or PTSAs offer a discounted rate for student members.
- **Teacher/Staff:** If you are targeting staff members, you may want to offer a discounted rate for them. Even a small amount is a nice gesture to encourage their participation.
- **Low-Income:** Some PTAs offer a low-income discount. Members should self identify for this level – don't ask for documentation of their income level, as this may discourage members from taking advantage of this option.
- **“Supporting” Members:** You may want to offer one or more level to encourage donations above and beyond regular membership fees. If your PTA is a 501(c) 3 organization, the amount over your regular membership fee is tax deductible. Come up with levels with catchy names relating to your school mascot or theme and offer some special gifts or acknowledgement for participants.

- Early Bird: Some PTAs have offered a discount for those joining before a certain date. This has been highly successful – it creates a sense of urgency to join right away. Scholarships for Memberships

A PTA cannot pay for memberships from their general fund. This is considered a private benefit to members and would jeopardize the PTA's status as a non-profit organization. Some PTAs do ask members or businesses to sponsor potential members who cannot afford to purchase their own membership. The names of those requesting this sponsorship should remain confidential.