

National PTA®

PTA MEMBERSHIP
QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE

**The Official National PTA®
Back to School Kit**



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Welcome

National PTA® 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 association. **In addition to this guide, we encourage you to reference online membership marketing resources at PTA.org.** National PTA's website contains background information, templates, forms, and tips to help you in your membership efforts. This guide supplements—but does not replace—the materials you receive from your state PTA.

The Basics of Membership

Overview

National PTA is a membership association. 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 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

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
- Includes educators and community members as well as parents and caregivers

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; the Role of the Board

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.

Membership Committee

To build an ideal membership committee, look to recruit individuals who:

- Have experience in marketing, public relations, sales, recruitment, or statistics
- Are excited about PTA and willing to share their excitement
- May be past unit officers who know your unit's history and successes
- 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 year round 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.

Membership Chair

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 the membership committee
- Collecting and tracking membership dues
- Distributing membership cards
- Providing membership reports



TIP

Membership Chair Tip

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 PTA.org/e-learning and through state and national events.



STEP BY
STEP

Before Your Membership Year Begins

1. Set goals. Challenge yourself. We suggest 2–5% growth in membership as a good target.
2. Create a membership plan. Use PTA tools and templates (see pages 19–25 of this guide) to set a goal, identify potential new member groups, and assess needs.
3. 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.
4. Visit **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.
5. Sign your PTA up for Just Between Friends (**JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart**) to easily manage your members, communicate with your entire school, create directories, and manage volunteers.
6. Create a marketing campaign to promote your PTA's successes, attract new members, and motivate current members to renew.
 - Review this guide and visit **PTA.org/marketing** to learn more about creating a marketing plan for your unit.
 - See what special member benefits and programs are available at **PTA.org/benefits** so you can better promote the value of PTA.

As Your Year Begins

- 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.
- Copy the membership forms in the back of this book and work with your unit's treasurer to create a procedure 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—do not wait for them to offer.
- Make it easy for people to join your PTA. Be sure to have sign-up materials on hand at all meetings and events.

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 compare it to 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 (**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 (**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 marketing and promotions materials (**PTA.org/marketing**) and the January Membership Campaign tools (**PTA.org/january**) available online.

Types of Membership

Individual Membership

PTA is an individual member association, which means we are an association 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 and/or for suggestions 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

Contact Us

Contact your state PTA and National PTA headquarters for support.

National PTA

1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Toll-Free: (800) 307-4PTA (4782)

E-mail: info@PTA.org

Website: PTA.org

State Offices

Find a web directory of all state PTA offices at PTA.org/States.



LINKS

Additional Support Resources

You can connect with National PTA and other PTA leaders through:

- PTA Great Idea Bank (PTAgreatideabank.org)—Updated regularly with successful ideas used by some local units.
- Facebook ([Facebook.com/ParentTeacherAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/ParentTeacherAssociation))—"Become a fan" of the Parent Teacher Association on Facebook to get updates and connect with other fans.
- Twitter ([Twitter.com/ptaeditor](https://twitter.com/ptaeditor))—Follow @ptaeditor on Twitter for updates on education-related issues and PTA efforts.
- National PTA messages—Hear more from National PTA through the PTA Blog (PTA.org/Blog), PTA Radio (PTA.org/PTAradio) and National PTA's YouTube channel ([YouTube.com/nationalpta](https://www.youtube.com/nationalpta)).
- Fotki (Fotki.com/pta)—See pictures from PTA events nationwide.

Many state and local PTAs, and PTA members, can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Get connected.

Tracking and Retaining Members



TIP

Retention Tips

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

Do not 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.



STEP BY STEP

Tracking Member Data

1. 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).
2. 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 (see the reproducible form at the back of this book). As new member benefits become available, National PTA 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.

Using Just Between Friends, you will be able to keep your membership roles, contact lists, and directories fresh and accurate. The system's communication module enables you to communicate effectively with your entire school.

Just Between Friends

Just Between Friends is the PTA management and communications system. It is offered **free** as a member benefit to local PTAs to strengthen your PTA and simplify the lives of leaders and members. Use Just Between Friends for member management (including membership card printing), communications (e-mails with attachments and automatic reminders), print and online directories, and volunteer management (a module that includes participant management suitable for PTA Reflections and Three For Me). Learn more at (LearnJBF.com). Sign your unit up at (JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart).

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Overview

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

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



STEP BY
STEP

1. Assess Your Unit's Diversity

Ask these questions to assess your unit's 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 diverse 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?

2. Actions You Can Take

- Ask underserved populations why they are not involved in PTA, and then show them how PTA fits their needs. Do not 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 association 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. Do not 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.

3. 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 goals 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

Many people automatically think of mothers when they hear “parent involvement” and “PTA.” 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.

Male involvement resources can be found at [PTA.org/MORE](https://www.pta.org/MORE).

For ideas on how to engage fathers and other male role models refer to:

- 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
- The ABCs of Male Involvement: a step-by-step method for encouraging men to join PTA and be involved in their children’s school activities
- PTA MORE (Men Organized to Raise Engagement) partners: providing you information about organizations and programs that get men more involved with their children



10 Ways to Involve Men in PTA

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
 - 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 does not 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, 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.



DID YOU
KNOW?

Women's Influence on Men's Participation in PTA

A spouse's involvement in PTA seems to be an indicator of whether or not a father will join PTA. In a National 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 People Join PTA

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 is helpful to emphasize what people can gain by becoming involved. Individuals usually respond positively when they believe an association understands their primary needs and is working to address them. How does your unit provide for the needs of 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

Member Type	Primary Needs	How PTA Addresses Those Needs
Single parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support through networking 2. Input into decisions that affect their children 3. Parent education programs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many PTAs offer advice about issues such as the availability of out-of-school programs and the safety of children home alone after school. 2. PTA addresses school policy issues, such as discipline and bullying prevention programs. 3. 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.
Working parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A voice 2. Partnership with school administration and other staff 3. To be part of the solution, not part of the problem 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PTA represents parents in schools and before lawmakers as it works to make a difference in events, policies, and laws that affect children. 2. 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. 3. PTA offers parents the opportunity to make positive changes in the school and in the community.
Young parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to parenting programs 2. An understanding of school policies 3. Friendships, a support network 4. To network through technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PTA offers parenting training and information that can provide lifelong skills for raising children. 2. PTA informs parents about education issues. 3. Local PTA activities, as well as state and national conventions, provide a forum for establishing long-term friendships with people who have common goals. 4. National PTA and many state and local PTAs connect parents and members through online social networking sites.

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

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

Diversity and Inclusiveness

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 community.

Member Type	Primary Needs	How PTA Addresses Those Needs

Marketing Membership

Overview

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 association, 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?

- 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 association; neither the association nor its leaders make any profit or receive any financial benefit from PTA activities.
- PTA has millions of 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 association 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 National PTA creates many successful programs for local units to use, there are no PTA-mandated programs.
- State PTAs and National PTA provide support to help local PTAs succeed.
- Members receive special discounts and promotional offers from PTA National Member Benefits Providers.

PTA Programs

National PTA offers programs to increase family engagement and support the educational success, health, and well-being of all children. Tools and resources, as well as best practices, are available to support you and your PTA in implementing the programs. To learn more about PTA programs and how to implement them, refer to the *PTA Programs Quick-Reference Guide* ([PTA.org/ProgramsQRG](https://pta.org/ProgramsQRG)) or visit [PTA.org/programs](https://pta.org/programs).

Strategies to Promote PTA

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 door prizes, 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, you should record final expenses, attendance, and whether the desired outcomes were reached (this measurement allows your PTA to see if the event should be duplicated or modified in years to come).

The Marketing Plan

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).

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, public service announcements (PSAs), e-newsletters, or social media. 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 (Public Service Announcements or messages from the public interest and run by the media at no charge), 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 at PTA.org/marketing)
- 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 for 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



TOOLS

Membership Growth Plan Worksheet

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 will initially focus our efforts on parents, because they are 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 _____

Marketing Membership

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.

Population	Percentage of PTA Membership	Percentage of the Community's Population
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: Identify the needs of the school community and of the groups from which you want to recruit (see the sample membership survey on page 24). Select which issues to address; 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.).

Survey results, as well as conversations with your school principal and other administrators, will give you the kind of information you will 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? _____
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 prominent issues facing your school community and PTA? _____

Writing Your Plan. You have at your fingertips all the information you need to identify your unit's goals and to write out the plan for achieving them.

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

Sample Membership Growth Plan

Membership Numbers and Demographics XYZ Middle School PTA	
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:

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

The 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 recruit volunteers. 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?

Making Presentations to Potential Members

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

Time

When parents say they do not have time to join PTA, what they are probably saying is that they do not 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 of research shows 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 post-secondary 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 (PTA.org/OurChildren)
- The PTA Parent, an e-newsletter that covers parenting topics (PTA.org/PTAParent)
- PTA Takes Action, which includes both a monthly e-newsletter that covers national public policy issues affecting families and public education, and access to Action Alerts, a grassroots advocacy system that connects PTA members with members of Congress on urgent legislative issues (PTA.org/advocacy)
- Exclusive member benefits from National PTA (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 (PTA.org/e-learning)
- Discounted member rates for the annual National PTA Convention and print subscriptions to the print version of *Our Children Magazine*.



FAQ

Frequently Asked Question About the "Ask"

What to say to people who object when asked to join:

Objection...	You can say...
"I don't have the time!"	<p>"It only takes a moment to join. It is 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 do not have to be a volunteer to be a member. We value their time and strive to use it effectively." <i>(Give examples of events or projects that might appeal to this person.)</i></p>
"I don't have any children in school!"	<p>"You do not have to have children in school to belong to PTA. Anyone who cares about children belongs in our association. 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>
"I don't agree with a lot of the PTA positions!"	<p>"The only way to avoid disagreement would be to adopt a 'do-nothing' policy. As a grassroots association, 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>
"Your organization doesn't really do anything!"	<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." <i>(List current activities, programs, accomplishments, etc.)</i></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." <i>(Have a list of accomplishments at the state and national levels available for reference.)</i> "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 that can 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

PTA marketing brochures can be found at PTA.org/brochures.

PTA's history, mission, and successes can be found at 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 YouTube.com/nationalpta.

PTA's Membership Marketing Templates and Tools (with customizable, reproducible fliers, posters, brochures, postcards, and more) can be found at 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 PTA.org/GatewayPSAs.

PTA Radio, a weekly broadcast of National PTA messages, can be found at PTA.org/PTAradio.



Individual Member Form

Thank you for your interest in joining PTA! Please fill out this form below and return it to the appropriate person at your local PTA (president, membership chair, etc.) along with your dues payment. When PTA gets involved, children benefit. When you get involved with PTA, the child who benefits most is your own.

Mr. Miss. Mrs. Ms. Other _____ Date* _____

First name* _____ Last name* _____ Jr. Sr. II Other _____

Home address _____
Address * _____ Apt/suite/unit _____ City* _____

State* ZIP/PC* _____ Country _____ Home Work Mobile _____
Primary phone number _____ Ext. _____

E-mail address* _____ *Required Field



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Home address _____
Address * _____ Apt/suite/unit _____ City* _____

State* ZIP/PC* _____ Country _____ Home Work Mobile _____
Primary phone number _____ Ext. _____

E-mail address* _____ *Required Field



Forma Individual de Miembro

¡Gracias por su interés en pertenecer a PTA! Por favor llene esta forma y regrésela a la persona apropiada en su PTA local (presidente o encargado de membresía, etc.) junto con el pago de su cuota. Cuando PTA se involucra, los niños se benefician, y los niños que más se benefician son los suyos.

Sr. Sra. Sarita. Other Fecha*

Primer nombre* Último nombre* Jr. Sr. II Other

Este es Domicilio Residencial Domicilio del Trabajo

Dirección* Apto./Suite/Unidad Ciudad*

Estado* Zona Postal/PC* País Casa Trabajo Celular Teléfono primario Ext.

E-mail address* *Información requerida



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PTA MEMBERSHIP
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

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