

Membership Guidelines

Terminology

Members, Applicants, and Guests

Everyone attending a Connections meeting will be identified as being a member, an applicant, or a guest.

Members are those who have been accepted as such by the Connections executive (according to the process described elsewhere) and who maintain their membership in good standing in accordance with the policies of the Connections group and Chamber executive. Members are expected to attend the bi-weekly breakfast meetings regularly.

An **applicant** is a person who has applied to become a member of Connections by submitting a completed application form to the Membership Director. Interested parties are not considered as applicants until they have submitted a formal written application. Applicants are required to attend one breakfast meetings, preferably in succession before their application will be considered.

A **guest** is a person who has been invited by a member to attend a specific Connections event (e.g., a breakfast meeting on a certain date). Members are encouraged to invite guests from time to time to introduce prospective applicants to the concept and benefits of Connections, and to introduce fellow members to prospective contacts. Normally, guests are invited for two visits only. After two visits the guest must apply and be accepted for membership before being allowed to attend any further meetings. From time to time, at the discretion of the executive, individuals may be invited to attend specific events as a "guest of the Chair" (e.g., guest speakers, walk-ins, etc., from outside the membership).

An **alternate member** is someone who has been appointed by the member to represent his/her own business and its interests in the member's absence.

A **prospective member** is either an interested individual who is considering joining the Connections group, or an individual who has been identified by a member as a suitable candidate for membership, but who has not yet submitted a completed application to the Membership Director. Every guest will be treated as a prospective member.

Categories

Upon application to Connections, each prospective member selects a membership category. Categories will be allowed to evolve to reflect the specific business interests of applicants and members, without unduly infringing on the established position of any existing member.

Membership Director

The Membership Director is a specific position within the executive committee responsible for managing the application process described below. From time to time, the duties of the Membership Director will be executed by a duly appointed designate.

Comment Period

The comment period allows members a duration of time in which to submit comments on an active application to the Membership Director.

Application Process

1. Applications for Chamber of Commerce and Connections will be available at each Connections meeting.
2. Prospective member attends 1 mandatory meeting (no cost as 1st time visitor).
3. Prospective member must ensure they are a member in good standing with the Chamber of Commerce.
4. If the Prospective Member states their intention to join & the desired Category (but has not yet submitted an application), the Membership Director will announce at the Connections meeting that we have a stated intention to join Connections in a specific category. Any concerns/issues should be directed immediately after the meeting to the Membership Director or an Executive Committee Member.
5. Prospective member submits Connections Application (email or completed form) to Membership Director confirming the Category they want to join under.
6. Upon receipt of the Application, the Membership Director will:
 - a. Announce at the next Connections meeting that we have a pending application for a specific category by the Applicant. Any concerns/issues should be directed to Membership Director or an Executive Committee Member within 7 days of the announcement.
 - b. Circulate an E-mail to membership providing details of the Applicant & the Category they are applying for. Replies with concerns/issues will be required within 7 days of publication of e-mail.
7. Prospective member/Applicant may attend meetings while their application is under review (cost \$15 per meeting/visit, paid at the meeting to Chamber of Commerce Liaison person (currently **Whitney Eames**))
8. If there are no objections raised within 7 days of the application Announcement/email, the applicant will be invited to attend the next meeting to be formally welcomed in as a member.
 - a. A confirmation e-mail will be sent to the membership to ensure all members are aware of the new member.
 - b. The application (email or form) will be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce Liaison person (currently **Whitney Eames**) for processing and billing.
9. Upon the deferral of an applicant, the Membership Director will;
 - a. notify the applicant of the membership's decision, with reasons, and notify the prospective member that his or her name will be placed on a waiting list of prospective members,
 - b. notify the Chamber of Commerce liaison person of the non-acceptance of the applicant, and request the Chamber to add the applicant's name to a waiting list of prospective members for future consideration as circumstances allow, and
 - c. notify the general membership of the status of the application at the next regular meeting.
10. On a continuous and ongoing basis, the Membership Director will monitor the waiting list of prospective members, and notify the executive of potential candidates for membership as openings occur from time to time.

11. With direction from the executive, the Membership Director will contact selected prospective members (e.g., from the waiting list, or any other appropriate source), and invite prospective members to submit (or resubmit) an application form.

Membership Fees

A one-time Initiation Fee of \$35 is required upon joining for administration set up costs. Connections fee is \$120 paid quarterly. The fee includes breakfast and charges associated with administering the program. Special events are billed separately. Fees are invoiced quarterly.

If a member is in arrears more than 60 days, membership is discontinued until the account is brought up to date. This also means that the member's category becomes open and is available for a prospective member. Should someone apply for membership in this particular category, the normal process will be followed and if the prospective member is accepted, the member in arrears will have their membership discontinued.

Benefits of Membership in the Connections Networking Group

Regularly networking with fellow business people provides opportunities to:

1. market your business to fellow members (direct sales).
2. market your business through fellow members (referrals).
3. meet prospective suppliers.
4. learn successful business practices from fellow business people.
5. develop and practice business skills such as communication, marketing, and inter-personal relationships in a collegial environment.
6. build long-term business relationships based on familiarity and shared experiences.

Adopted by the Connections Membership July 11, 2013

Norm Grey, Chair