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Chapter Affiliation Guide

ACRP CHAPTER SERVICES
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ACRP Chapter Affiliation Guide

Guide to Starting a new ACRP chapter in your area

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The ACRP Chapter Affiliation Guide has been developed to assist you and your peers in establishing an ACRP chapter in your area.

This kit contains outlines and checklists that will guide you through the successful formation of a local chapter. Additionally, ACRP global staff are available to assist you at any time. If you should have any questions regarding any material throughout this manual, please contact ACRP's Chapter Services Team at 703.253.6276 or email chapters@acrpnet.org.



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Message from ACRP Chapter Services Team

Thank you for your interest in starting a local chapter of the Association of Clinical Research Professionals in your area. The benefits of establishing and being a part of a local chapter are significant and can lead to substantial personal rewards as well as opportunities to energize your career.

ACRP relies on its local chapters as valuable sources of information on local issues affecting clinical researchers. Chapters also serve as a vital networking avenue for local ACRP members.

By expressing your interest in starting a chapter, you have already taken the first step in the short process. You can be assured you have a reliable partner in ACRP, and we are dedicated to seeing you succeed.

ACRP staff have compiled the information contained in this guide. In it, you will find practical information along with some indications of what you can expect. The information in this guide is not meant to be a strict blueprint for your chapter. Instead, you are welcome to introduce your personal touch to key components that will define the spirit of your chapter. Additionally, you can always call upon your Chapter Relations Manager to assist with any aspects of establishing your new chapter.

We look forward to working with you to make your local ACRP chapter a success!

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About ACRP

Founded in 1976, ACRP is a Washington, DC-based non-profit organization with nearly 13,000 members who work in clinical research in more than 70 countries. ACRP supports clinical research professionals through membership, training and development, and certification.

*ACRP's **VISION** is that clinical research is performed ethically, responsibly, and professionally everywhere in the world.*

*ACRP's **MISSION** is to promote excellence in clinical research.*

VOICE

ACRP is the leading organization championing the interests and perspectives of clinical research professionals. ACRP plays an active role in public discourse of clinical research and in raising awareness of the issues important to clinical research professionals.

COMMUNITY

ACRP is building community in the clinical research profession. ACRP brings together an international network of clinical research professionals by fostering the exchange of ideas and creating avenues for global and local networking.

GROWTH

ACRP is committed to the continuous professional growth and development of clinical research professionals. ACRP strives to be the primary source for tools and resources supporting clinical research professionals.

What is a Local Chapter?

A chapter of ACRP is an independently functioning unit of the Association which is independently incorporated, with privileges and responsibilities determined by the Association Board of Trustees (ABoT) and set forth in the Association's Constitution and Bylaws. A group may represent itself as a Chapter of ACRP only after it has the express approval of ACRP in the form of a Chapter Charter.

The primary role of a Chapter is to provide an effective means for:

- Professional interaction with colleagues;
- Advanced continuing education; and
- Discussion of professional issues.

In addition, a Chapter can:

- Increase the opportunity for member participation in ACRP activities;
- Provide a readily accessible mechanism for regional program development;



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- Provide a network to rapidly gain member feedback on issues of concern to ACRP;
- Provide a locally effective ACRP membership recruitment mechanism; and
- Provide improved access to ACRP resources, including certification and continuing education credits.

Where Can a New Chapter be formed?

A new chapter may be established anywhere in the United States providing its boundaries do not reach across an already established chapter.

Why Form a Local ACRP Chapter?

The question most often asked when considering the establishment of a Chapter is “What are the benefits of being a Chapter?” ACRP offers its members a wide variety of benefits, which can be enhanced through Chapter affiliation.

Some of the most significant benefits include:

- **Strength in numbers:** A new Chapter will be the local arm of a dynamic global organization linked in purpose and practice with over 60+ other Chapters worldwide.
- **Professional advancement:** ACRP offers its members educational opportunities and certification programs. A Chapter serves as a conduit for all this information, and as a catalyst for education and networking opportunities on the local level.
- **Personal advancement within ACRP:** The Association is led by volunteers who are full-time working professionals. These leaders began their service to ACRP by volunteering for committees and Chapters. ACRP has many elective and appointed positions available to individuals wishing to develop their management skills and make a contribution to their profession.
- **Professional support:** Networking with individuals on the local, national, and international levels promotes new ideas, best practices and creative solutions to common problems.

A Chapter is an extension of the Association. Therefore its leaders should be aware of, and act in accordance with, the mission of the Association and the Leadership Code of Conduct. Current ACRP membership is a prerequisite for membership in a Chapter.

There are more than 60 ACRP chapters and the number continues to grow. Each chapter establishes its own bylaws. Chapter bylaws must not conflict with the intent of the bylaws of ACRP.



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ACRP Chapter Affiliation Requirements & Expectations

ACRP depends upon each of its affiliates to operate in a professional manner; effectively manage its finances; maintain affiliation standards; communicate with members, the community and ACRP, and promote ACRP. The Chapter Affiliation Standards & Expectations (CASE) are a set of performance guidelines designed to help chapters deliver consistent benefits to members. CASE is designed to ensure a stronger synergy between ACRP and chapters. In addition to outlining requirements to measure chapter alignment and engagement with ACRP, CASE focuses on outcomes from chapter-initiatives.

In order to maintain chapter affiliation with ACRP, your chapter must meet the following requirements annually:

- 1. The chapter ensures all chapter members are both global and chapter members.** The chapter may not have chapter members who are not members of ACRP global.
- 2. The chapter maintains a minimum of 25 members throughout the year. (10 members for OUS chapters)** Active members shall consist of individuals interested in the goals and objectives of ACRP and who are current in paying their ACRP membership dues. Only members of ACRP may be chapter members, although non-members may attend chapter meetings.
- 3. The chapter provides at least two (2) professional development activities per year for members.** ACRP suggests meeting every two to three months; this frequency of meetings builds the morale of the group and creates a more active and motivated membership.
- 4. The Chapter Chair attends every Chapter Chairs teleconference or designates another representative to attend.**
- 5. The chapter maintains a current website with up-to-date information.** Chapter websites are housed within the ACRP Online Community. Each chapter may designate up to three (3) administrators to update the chapter's webpage.
- 6. The chapter complies with federal and state reporting requirements.**

All chapters are required to submit a CASE survey on or before January 31, annually. For more information about CASE visit the Chapter Resources Center at www.acrnet.org/CRC.



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Establishing a Local Chapter

When you begin organizing a local chapter it is no different than setting up a business. It requires three things:

Planning – Organization – Commitment

This step-by-step guide below will walk you through the process to ensure that your chapter is formed successfully.

Getting Started

Before beginning with the formation of a Chapter, you need to ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there sufficient potential members in the area to warrant creation of a Chapter?
- Is there sufficient interest in a local ACRP Chapter to sustain its activities?

If you have determined that the answer to both of these questions is “Yes,” use the following checklist to assist you in the formation of the Chapter and the preparation of the Chapter application:

Step One

1. **Do an Analysis of your Market.** Is there a group of clinical research professionals in your area interested in forming an association? Are there already well established associations in your area serving clinical research professional? Could an ACRP chapter offer more or complimentary services?

Step Two

1. **Review the ACRP Chapter Affiliation Guide.** This guide contains all of the information, sample documents and forms needed to ensure a smooth affiliation process.
2. **Form a Steering Committee.** The Steering Committee (at least 3-5 active ACRP members) lays the foundation for the chapter, establishing its mission, goals, objectives and organizational plan. This Steering Committee should be a group of clinical research professionals who are committed to the cause. For this meeting you will need an agenda and meeting place.
3. **Establish a Mission, Goals and Objectives.** Ask the question “What do we want to do?” The answer to this question defines the chapter’s mission and goals. These goals will be your guide when making important structural decisions concerning the chapter.
4. **Chapter Territory.** Your chapter’s territory is determined by location and should encompasses one or more counties within the area. Determine an area that will contain a viable number of



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ACRP members. Do not over extend your territory. It is better to have a territory that is manageable than one in which your members are unreachable.

5. **Organize the First Informational Meeting.** ACRP can provide you with a list of ACRP members in your area to contact. See the guide to [Planning Your First Informational Meeting](#).
6. **Nominate Officers.** During the organizational phase of a new chapter; chapter officers and directors may volunteer and are often named by consensus. Some groups, however, use a nominations committee to recommend one or more candidates for each position, and the membership then ratifies the recommendation (if one individual is recommended) or conducts an election. A chapter president and other officers should be elected prior to incorporation. Procedures for future elections will be set forth in the chapter's bylaws.

Chapter officers generally should include a President/Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as a President-Elect and Immediate Past President, if desired. The requirements pertaining to which officers are required, the minimum number of directors required, and related issues are set forth in the nonprofit corporation law of the state in which the Chapter is incorporated. Generally, however, such laws provide nonprofit corporations with great latitude in determining its governance structure, provided such determinations are set forth in its Bylaws.

7. **Select A Chapter Name.** Include ACRP and some mention of your geographic location in your chapter name. (I.e. ACRP New York Metropolitan Chapter) Your chapter name must be approved by ACRP global headquarters. *Do not file for incorporation or apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) until you have received written confirmation that your proposed name has been approved.*
8. **Establish a Mailing Address.** While a steering committee member's office can serve as a temporary mailing address for the chapter; ACRP recommends obtaining a P.O. Box for all chapter-related correspondence. An email account should also be created to manage interactions with members.
9. **Secure Initial Funds.** Funding may be needed to establish a bank account and filing fees for incorporation. Study sites, clinics, sponsors, and CROs interested in the professional development of clinical research professionals may be interested in helping defray some of these costs. Also, request an advance deposit from all steering committee members for organizing expenses. This advance should be deducted from their initial dues; membership dues you receive once becoming a Chapter will help you recoup these initial costs. Click here for a [Sample Pledge Form](#).
10. **Determine the Chapter Dues.** Dues are necessary for the chapter to operate. Local ACRP chapters establish their own dues structure. Average chapter members' dues are \$20 - \$45



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annually. Only members of ACRP may be chapter members, although non-members may attend chapter meetings.

- 11. Prepare Chapter Bylaws.** The Bylaws set forth the chapter name, rules of operation, membership eligibility, meetings, officer elections and voting rights.
- 12. Prepare Chapter Articles of Incorporation.** Articles of Incorporation area a set of formal documents filed with a government body to legally document the creation of a corporation. Articles of incorporation must contain pertinent information such as the chapter's name, street address, agent for service of process, and the amount and type of stock to be issued.
- 13. File for incorporation of the Chapter.** Once the Chapter name has been approved and you have elected officers each Chapter is required to become incorporated within its respective state. Incorporating each Chapter individually will provide protection from liability to individual Chapter members and leaders as well as to ACRP. To determine how to file for incorporation in your state, call the Office of the Secretary of State in your state capital or go online to your state's Department of State website.
- 14. Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN).** This is a simple online process that can be done through the IRS website here: <https://sa2.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>. An EIN is required even if your Chapter will have no employees, and is required for inclusion in the IRS Group Tax Exemption Ruling for federal tax purposes. In addition, an EIN may be required when you are ready to establish a Chapter checking account.
- 15. Open a Chapter Bank Account.** Designate a treasurer to open a bank account to record receipts and disbursements. ACRP collects all membership dues and most meeting revenue for chapters. An active bank account is necessary so your chapter is able to receive direct deposit payments from ACRP global.
- 16. Establish a Prospect List.** Gather the names, addresses and telephone numbers of prospective members from your steering committee members. ACRP can also assist you with identifying current global members and non-members.



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General Chapter Operations

Recruitment

Each chapter shall have an ongoing membership recruitment effort actively identifying potential members. A successful membership committee usually is comprised of representatives from the largest clinical sites, CROs, and sponsors in your area. ACRP collects both global and chapter membership. This ensures only members of ACRP are permitted to join your Chapter and be eligible to hold chapter office and committee posts. Individuals who are not ACRP members may attend meetings as guests of the chapter.

Reports

The Chapter shall submit an annual Chapter Affiliation Standards & Expectations (CASE) report to ACRP global headquarters by January 31 of each year and include all supporting documentation. CASE are a set of performance guidelines designed to help chapters deliver consistent benefits to members. This report shall include information on the past year's activities of the chapter and plans for the future year.

Dues

Each individual chapter, with the approval of its members, should collect annual membership dues from chapter members, generally \$20-\$45 annually. The decision of chapter dues is at the discretion of the chapters, but must be consistent with the Chapter's nonprofit and tax-exempt status (see Taxes below).

Chapters' dues will be collected by ACRP global headquarters on the chapter's behalf. ACRP invoices members for ACRP dues and chapter dues at the same time. ACRP will automatically deposit an amount for chapter dues received each quarter. For more information on this program, please contact chapters@acrpnet.org.

Use of ACRP Logo

Upon the issuance of the chapter's charter by ACRP, an approved chapter may use the ACRP name, acronym and logo "Association of Clinical Research Professionals" on its literature, stationery and in certain other respects, in accordance with and subject to the terms and conditions of the Affiliation Agreement. ACRP will supply each chapter with a specifically designed Chapter logo by request. As stated in the chapter affiliation agreement, chapters are prohibited from designing their own logos.

Taxes

Tax Filing/Exemption:

Once approved, your Chapter will have to determine how state and federal tax issues are handled. Incorporating as a nonprofit corporation does not automatically confer federal or state tax exemption.

The National Council of Non-Profits website has more information about this here:

<http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/annual-filings>.



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You can also find information about online filing on the IRS website here: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/e-file-for-Charities-and-Non-Profits>.

State Tax Exemption:

Please contact your state incorporation body to determine how your Chapter may file for state tax exemption.

If exempt from federal income tax, associations will also ordinarily be exempt from state corporate income, gross receipts, or franchise taxes. In some jurisdictions, such as the District of Columbia, a separate application for exemption must be filed.

Federal Tax Exemption:

Each Chapter is automatically covered under ACRP's group exemption status, provided their annual gross receipts total less than \$50,000. (See Group Exemption section below for more information.)

Chapters are also required to submit an annual return, the Form 990-N, also called the e-Postcard. The e-Postcard requires small organizations to provide a legal name and mailing address, any other names used, a Web address, the name and address of a principal officer, and a statement confirming the organization's annual gross receipts are \$50,000 or less. The return must be completed electronically via the IRS website here: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/e-file-for-Charities-and-Non-Profits>.

An exemption from income tax does not extend to income from regularly conducted commercial activities that are not related to an association's exempt purposes. The sale of advertising in a newsletter, for example, is considered an unrelated trade or business and is subject to Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT). An association with at least \$1,000 in gross income from any unrelated trade or business must file IRS Form 990-T.

Regular meetings and seminars, annual conventions and trade shows, and the sale of education books or manuals that assist members to function more effectively contribute to the association's exempt purposes. Income from these activities is tax-exempt.

Some business activities are not taxed because they are not conducted in a commercial manner. These activities include any trade or business in which uncompensated volunteers perform a substantial portion of the work or which involves the sale of donated merchandise.

ACRP Headquarters is not responsible for tax advice. You may need to consult a certified public accountant.

Separate Filings:

Chapters filling for exempt status on their own use Form 1023 (for 501(c)(3) organizations). This form, together with IRS Form 8718 (User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request) and an



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application fee (currently \$150 or \$500 depending on whether annual gross receipts average less or more than \$10,000 in a year), is filed with the IRS “key district” responsible for the state in which the association is headquartered. An authenticated copy of the articles of incorporation and a copy of the bylaws must accompany the application for exemption. The Chapter must also have an Employer Identification Number (EIN).

Eventually the IRS will issue a “determination letter” stating that the chapter is exempt under 501(c)(3) and that, if its annual gross receipts total at least \$50,000, the association must file an annual information return (Form 990). Recognition of exempt status under 501(c)(3) is retroactive to the date of incorporation only if the application is filed within 15 months of the Chapter’s formation. Otherwise, exemption may be effective as of the date the application is filed.

Group Exemption:

ACRP’s group ruling under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code allows your chapter to be included for federal tax exemption, if you so wish. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code applies to groups that are organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, public safety, literary, or educational purposes. These are considered “exempt purposes” and “exempt activities.” Tax-exempt educational organizations must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes. This does not mean such an organization may only engage in activities that do not further its exempt functions. Rather, the organization must be primarily engaged in activities that serve its exempt purposes and only insubstantially engaged in nonexempt activities. In general, if nonexempt activities do not exceed 5 percent of its activities, an association will not be considered in violation of this rule.

To be included in ACRP’s Group Ruling from the IRS for federal tax exemption, your Chapter’s annual gross receipts must total less than \$50,000. ACRP Chapter Services team will contact you if you are not currently included in our Group Ruling.

In order to maintain tax-exempt status, the Chapter must continue to be organized (“organized” requires filing an annual report and documents required in the state of incorporation) and operate for its exempt purposes. Unfortunately no clear standard exists regarding what may result in the revocation of exemption. However, a chapter whose gross revenues from investments and unrelated business activity approach 50 percent of its total gross revenues should review its situation. **Chapters must renew their information with ACRP each year to continue to be included in the group exemption.** Updates regarding renewal information will come directly from the ACRP Chapter Service team.

Incorporation

ACRP strongly urges you to consult an attorney about the tax-exempt status application and the chapter incorporation procedures. The information contained here is provided as general guidelines and does not constitute legal advice.



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An ACRP chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit corporation within the state of its operation. Please retain legal counsel to ensure that your chapter complies with all appropriate regulations and receives all necessary documentation.

Incorporation has several advantages vital to the success of your chapter.

1. Officers and members of an incorporated entity generally are not held personally liable for any damage arising from an act of the corporation.
2. An incorporated chapter has the legal standing to act for all its membership; therefore group programs are easier to sponsor.

Chapters are responsible for maintaining their incorporation status. To continue to function and qualify for tax-exempt status, an organization must remain in good standing in the state of incorporation. Requirements vary by state, but most states require the filing of a brief annual report (e.g., listing the chapter's officers and directors) and the payment of a small fee for the chapter's incorporation to remain in good standing in such state. Check with the Secretary of State's office in your state for these reporting requirements. Chapters need to prepare and file this annual report to avoid inadvertent disqualification.

Chapter Finances

Each chapter shall bear sole and complete responsibility and liability for its financial affairs. On an annual basis, any excess of chapter revenues over expenditures shall remain under the control of the chapter. Each chapter also shall bear sole and complete responsibility for any deficit of chapter revenues over expenditures.

Event Registration

ACRP provides the option for each chapter to provide online registration for their events through the ACRP website and database. The chapter is required to complete a Chapter Event Application in order for ACRP staff to complete the process. Registration money collected on behalf of the chapter will be electronically transferred to the chapter with their quarterly reimbursement. A list of registrants will also be provided to the chapter by request; contact chapters@acrpnet.org.

Continuing Educational Credits

Upon the issuance of the chapter's charter by ACRP, chapters may apply for ACRP continuing education credits for their educational programs. ACRP provides chapter the following continuing educational credits: ACRP, California Board of Registered Nursing (CBRN), and Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). If you apply for nursing contact hours you do not need to apply for ACRP hours because we accept nursing and pharmacy contact hours for recertification. If your state requires nurses to have contact hours the State may not accept ACRP contact hours for licensure so you want to apply for CBRN contact hours.



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ACRP will supply the chapter with the necessary documents to complete a Chapter Event Application and request contact hours. Please contact chapters@acrpnet.org for more details.

Chapter Webpages

All chapters will have a webpage within ACRP's Online Community (<http://community.acrpnet.org>); no external websites will be linked from the ACRP main page. Realizing chapters have varying degrees of activity, each chapter will be able to tailor their webpage to suit their needs. Updates to chapter webpages are the responsibility of the chapter. Each chapter should designate up to three (3) board members administrator access to their chapter webpage. Each administrator must first complete a training session led by the ACRP Chapter Services team.

Submit Your Chapter Affiliation Application Packet

Once you have completed the steps outlined above and fully understand the expectations of becoming an ACRP local chapter, you can put together your Chapter Affiliation Application Packet.

Your application should include the following:

- Completed Petition for Chapter Affiliation
- Signed Chapter Affiliation Agreement
- A list of chapter members with email addresses
 - (must be at least 25 members and all members of ACRP).
- Chapter Board Member Roster of the elected chapter officers
 - Please submit using the template located [here](#).
- Chapter Direct Deposit Agreement Form
 - Submit this information electronically by clicking [here](#).
- A copy of your Certificate of Incorporation issued by your state
- A copy of your proposed Chapter Bylaws
- A copy of your Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- A signed copy of your Chapter's first informational meeting minutes



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Glossary of Terms

Model Chapter Bylaws

Governs chapter activity and may be amended with approval from the CMSA National Office.

Bylaws include:

- Official Chapter Name
- Chapter Purpose
- Officers and Duties
- Number of Directors
- Number and Name of Special Standing Committees

Generally speaking, amendments to chapter bylaws can be more restrictive, but cannot be less restrictive than the global ACRP Bylaws.

Model Affiliation Agreement

A binding business agreement between an ACRP Chapter and the global ACRP Office.

The Affiliate Agreement:

- Describes the chapter's territory
- Outlines the responsibilities of the Chapter
- Outlines the responsibilities of the ACRP Global

This agreement finalizes the relationship between the chapter and the global ACRP Office. Items to review within the agreement include:

- Grant of Charter – Describes the chapter territory.
- Membership – All members of the chapter must also be global members.
- Obligations of the ACRP
- Obligations of the Chapter – Sets forth the chapter's purposes and activities.
- Use of Trademark and Copyrighted Materials
- Separate Entities Indemnification Revocation or Surrender of Charter – Sets forth circumstances under which a chapter's charter may be revoked.

Articles of Incorporation

Chapters must be established as corporations rather than as unincorporated associations at both the national and local levels. The corporate form of organization has the following benefits:

- Gives the chapter the greatest freedom of action, with minimal oversight from state government or courts



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- Ensures the chapter will be recognized as a separate entity
- In the absence of fraud or failure to observe the requirements of corporate existence, insulates the incorporators, directors, officers and members from personal responsibility for liabilities of the corporation (although any individual who participates in wrong doing will be liable), actions or guarantees, for breaches of their fiduciary duty to the corporation, or for negligence in their management.

Tax Identification Number

- The chapter must fill out Form SS-4 for the IRS to receive a federal tax identification number (www.irs.gov).
- The IRS will send a letter confirming your number.
- A copy of this letter must be sent to the global ACRP Office.
- The chapter must have a Tax ID number to set up a checking account.

State Registration Verification

Each chapter is required to register with its own state to do business. To complete this registration, the chapter must be in good standing. For more information on local requirements, contact your Secretary of State's office.

List of Chapter Officers

The chapter must maintain officers and submit officer updates to ACRP Chapter Services any time an officer changes. Contact chapters@acrpnet.org with changes/updates.

- Chapter Officers must be members in good standing with ACRP.
- ACRP membership must remain current entire term of office are critical.