

## What is TAA?

The Texas Afterschool Association (TAA) is Texas's statewide organization dedicated to systematically enhancing the workforce and professional development of school-age workers at all levels.

Our membership includes practitioners, policy makers, and administrators representing all public, private, and community-based sectors of afterschool and out-of-school time programs. As the leading voice of the afterschool profession in Texas, we are dedicated to the development, education, and care of children and youth during their out-of-school hours.

At TAA, we work to support and advance afterschool programs and providers throughout Texas. We offer training, resources, advocacy, and information to help you in your vital work with kids.

TAA is one of 35 state affiliates of the National AfterSchool Association (NAA, formerly NSACA).

## Contact Information

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## Aligning with State Strategic Directions

We believe that it is essential for the local chapters to align with TAA's state strategic directions. Your chapter mentor will work closely with you to explore how your chapter can be a part of this movement. Examples of how your local chapter can support these initiatives are given below.

### Strategic Direction 1: Increased Public Support for Afterschool Programs in Texas

- Use TAA and Afterschool Alliance materials, such as public service announcements, press releases, and talking points, to raise public awareness of afterschool.
- Form a local advocacy committee and develop a relationship with your local and state policymakers
- Plan public events, such as Breakfast of Champions and *Lights On Afterschool!*

### Strategic Direction 2: Fostering Statewide, Regional and Local Partnerships

- Use TAA materials and resources to increase chapter membership.
- Develop partnerships with aligned organizations and groups.
- Foster collaborative opportunities for local providers.

### Strategic Direction 3: Ensuring Afterschool Programs in Texas are of the Highest Quality

- Disseminate information about local training opportunities
- Develop a professional development committee to foster afterschool-specific professional development opportunities.
- Provide information about program quality improvement tools.



## Starting a Local Chapter



## Why Start Local Chapter?

Starting a local chapter of the Texas Afterschool Association (TAA) could be the most important thing you can do to further your advocacy efforts in afterschool. Local chapters have proven to be a very effective way of promoting the growth of TAA and the afterschool profession. Chapter development is important because there is strength in numbers. A larger organization carries more clout (for example, in discussions with policymakers) and also offers increased credibility to the members of the organization on a national, state, and local level.

### Networking With Peers

One of the greatest resources for professional and personal development is to meet with peers in the same field. You gain new information on best practices, access to the experiences and knowledge of others, and the chance to broaden your insights. Chapter formation increases quality of training for all members, and saves money because of shared resources.

### Professional Development

Your chapter meetings and activities allow you to make professional contacts with peers and others in the area. Chapters bring continuing education opportunities closer to home and provide a bridge between local, state and national activities.

### TAA Support

As a TAA chapter, your network is linked to an even larger network of afterschool professionals.

## Benefits of Forming a Local Chapter

- Sharing of resources: TAA will share 20% of TAA membership dues collected in your chapter area with your local chapter.
- An organizational structure: We will provide you with bylaws and guidelines by which to run your organization.
- Credibility of association with TAA and the National Afterschool Association: As TAA gains name recognition and we continue to grow, your chapter will gain credibility by its association with the state and national organization.
- Technical Assistance and Chapter Mentor: We can provide you with ideas, tools, and advice based on national and state resources, as well as best practices from existing local chapters. We also will provide a chapter mentor to help with any organizational questions.
- Free TAA E-Newsletter: The TAA Newsletter, published electronically quarterly, is a newsletter that is sent to all TAA members. It highlights chapter leadership and programs in each issue.
- TAA Web Site: Information about each chapter is maintained on the TAA web site.

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## Getting Started

The most central activity for a local chapter is the chapter meeting. Chapter meetings and all that they can offer are the most tangible benefits of membership, and they are also the most important way of adding new members to the chapter. TAA can help with organizing a discovery meeting where you and other interested professionals can ask questions and review the chapter organization.

Next, you'll need to follow these steps:

- Identify members for your chapter steering committee
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Afterschool Association
- Designate one member to act as TAA board member and communication liaison with TAA
- Decide if your organization will apply for 501(c)(3) status

### Growing the Chapter and Increasing Visibility

Once you've completed the first steps to becoming a TAA chapter, your next set of initiatives involves recruiting members and increasing visibility in your local area. Your chapter mentor will help with tools and ideas for growing your chapter membership and raising public awareness about the issue of afterschool.

*As a chapter of TAA, The Central Texas Afterschool Association (CTAN) has been a leader in educating our community on afterschool issues. The goals of CTAN mirror the goals of TAA. We have been successful at increasing overall program quality in our community by pooling our resources to provide training and professional development. Policy makers, city and county planners, and community leaders look to CTAN to keep them informed about best practices and areas of need. CTAN has successfully raised awareness in our community for the need for high quality, affordable, and accessible afterschool programs. The support we receive from TAA helps us accomplish our goals.*

~ Shirlene Justice, Austin, Texas