



ACADEMY OF MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSES

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AMSUN Chapter Leadership Toolkit

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Contents

Introduction.....	2
1: What is a Chapter?.....	3
2: Starting a New AMSN Chapter.....	4
Preparing to Apply.....	4
Next Steps.....	4
Chapter Approval.....	5
Chapter Charter.....	6
3: Operating and Sustaining Your Chapter (Compliance).....	6
EIN.....	5
Bank Account.....	6
Recruiting New Members.....	7
Chapter Assessment and Evaluation.....	9
Sharing Chapter News.....	9
Annual Report Submission.....	9
What Happens if My Chapter is Non-compliant?.....	9
4: Educational Programming.....	9
5: Financial Management of the Chapter.....	10
Chapter Membership Dues.....	9
Financial Facts.....	9
Financial Records.....	9
W9.....	9
Form 990-N.....	9
6: Chapter Dissolution.....	11
Appendix.....	11



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Introduction

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSUN®) chapters are a vital component of AMSUN. Chapters are a way for AMSUN members to connect with each other to share ideas and to raise awareness of the medical-surgical specialty.

Congratulations!

So, you've accepted the position as an officer for your AMSUN chapter! Each year, many dedicated members like you take office and "carry the torch" for AMSUN in your cities across the country and beyond. As you know, in many ways you are the focal point for your chapter – your members look to you, your board looks to you, and we at AMSUN look to you for leadership and communication.

Along with the workload and responsibilities come rewards as well -- and you are not alone or without resources. Serving as a Chapter officer is a great honor, and an opportunity to not only have an impact on AMSUN but also enhance your own leadership skills. This guide will provide you with all the "tools" you need to succeed in this important job.

Let us help you establish an AMSUN chapter – from start to finish! The Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSUN) Chapters are a vital component of AMSUN. Chapters are a way for AMSUN members to connect with each other to share ideas and to raise awareness of the medical-surgical specialty.

Thank you for your commitment to AMSUN and your hard work to help local medical-surgical nurses develop personally and professionally, advocate for the specialty of medical-surgical nursing, and connect with other nurses who share their compassion and commitment.

In this comprehensive Chapter Toolkit, you'll find all the information you need to create, build, and maintain a successful AMSUN Chapter.



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1: What is a Chapter?

A chapter is a local, often geographic, affiliate of a national organization. It upholds the mission and purpose of the parent organization while operating at a local level.

Mission of AMSN

AMSN is a dynamic community of medical-surgical nurses that are committed to quality patient care through professional development, certification, scholarship, and advocacy.

Vision of AMSN

AMSN is the recognized leader in medical-surgical nursing.

When a chapter is formed, its members enter into a partnership with AMSN. As with any relationship, in order for the chapter-national partnership to be successful, certain core values must be respected by both parties.

The core values that are essential to the chapter-National partnership are:

- Loyalty to the mission of AMSN
- Integrity in all actions
- Transparency
- Accountability to the members and to the chapter charter and affiliation agreement
- Ongoing, forthright communication
- Commitment to good governance and chapter management

When these core values are embodied by the chapter and National, chapters are highly successful. These chapters have a strong membership and a pool of future leaders. They are able to establish and achieve goals for each year, often with growth from year-to-year. Processes to maintain their reporting to and good standing with the National Office are in place, and compliance is not a burden for the chapter. They draw upon the resources from National to assist them in their work.



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2: Starting a New AMSUN Chapter

Chapter Initiation Checklist:

- Do you have at least five (5) members?
- Did you verify there are no other chapters within 50 miles? If you need assistance with this, please reach out to National Office staff at amsn@amsn.org.
- Do you have a President, Secretary, and Treasurer (or Secretary-Treasurer) willing to serve for two (2) years?

If yes, you can complete the chapter charter petition [here](#).

Note: You will need to be logged into your AMSUN account to be able to access the petition.

We are delighted you are interested in learning how to start an AMSUN chapter! Chapters are a way for AMSUN members to connect with each other to share ideas and to raise awareness of the medical-surgical nursing specialty.

Remember! Only AMSUN members can start and join AMSUN chapters. This is a requirement outlined in the AMSUN Bylaws and will be monitored and enforced.

Preparing to Apply

Starting a chapter has several steps, and the process will go much more smoothly when you are prepared.

We suggest that your first initial organizational meeting include at least five (5) AMSUN members who are interested and committed to the growth and development of a chapter. Please remember, all chapter members are required to be members of AMSUN National.

You will also be required to verify there are no other AMSUN chapters within 50 miles of your proposed chapter, to prevent AMSUN member confusion and competition with other chapters. Please visit contact the National Office at amsn@amsn.org to verify there are no other chapters in your immediate area.

Once you've confirmed you have at least five (5) interested members and there are no existing AMSUN chapters serving the same area, you will need to choose chapter officers who can serve for a minimum of two (2) years to provide continuity of leadership as you get your chapter started.

Chapter Officer positions include President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Chapters are required to have a President, Secretary, and Treasurer to start. You do not need to have a President-Elect immediately identified, but must identify and elect a President-Elect within the first year of chapter operations. Also, your Secretary and Treasurer role can be the same role, called a Secretary-Treasurer. Chapters may create additional positions to fill needs. See Appendix A for role descriptions for the chapter officers.

Next Steps

Have all your Chapter Officer positions in place? Ready to start your chapter? If yes, you can access the chapter charter petition [here](#). Be sure to have a roster of chapter members with email addresses before submitting your chapter charter petition.

Questions? Email amsn@amsn.org for any assistance you need with starting your chapter.



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Chapter Approval

Once your Chapter Charter Petition is approved, the National Office will assign your chapter a number for AMSN tracking purposes and will send you the following online forms to submit.

1. Chapter Affiliation Agreement
2. AMSN Logo Use Agreement
3. AMSN Leadership Code of Conduct for all chapter officers (annually)
4. AMSN Conflict of Interest Declaration for all chapter officers (annually)

Chapter Charter/Affiliation Agreement

An affiliation agreement defines the relationship between AMSN and its Chapters. It articulates the benefits both parties receive from the relationship as well as the performance obligations both parties agree to abide by as a result of affiliation.

AMSUN Logo Use Agreement

All chapters should **ONLY** be using AMSN's new logo and membership marketing materials. Digital assets for recruiting materials will be provided once your chapter has been approved and you have completed the AMSN logo agreement.

AMSUN's logo and materials provided to chapters cannot be changed in *any* way, including size, formatting, or color. Once complete, you will get access to our logo and begin using it to promote your chapter.

AMSUN Leadership Code of Conduct

All AMSN leaders are required to complete an annual attestation to uphold AMSN's Leadership Code of Conduct. This will be provided to all chapter officers prior to the start of the each new year.

AMSUN Conflict of Interest Disclosure

All AMSN leaders are required to complete an annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure form to inform the AMSN Board of Directors of any real or possible conflict of interest that may impact their ability to serve AMSN in a leadership capacity. This will be provided to all chapter leaders the start of each new year.

Chapter Charter

Once a Chapter has completed the required forms, the National Office will send you your Chapter Charter Letter. The Chapter Charter is the agreement between AMSN and your chapter and demonstrates your chapter's status as an official AMSN chartered chapter. Your Chapter Charter is valid as long as your chapter meets the annual requirements for all chapters.

What is a Chapter Charter?

AMSN grants "charters" to our chapters, which are a form of legal contract under which the chapter has the right to call itself an affiliate of the parent (national) organization, assuming it meets the obligations set forth by AMSN.

3: Operating and Sustaining Your Chapter (Compliance)

There are several requirements for keeping your chapter in good standing:

- ✓ Establishment of an Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- ✓ Establishment of a bank account.
- ✓ Maintain a minimum of five (5) AMSN members. Chapter members **MUST** be AMSN National members. The National Office may conduct audits of membership lists if there is concern that non-members are participating in chapter activities.
- ✓ Have the required chapter leadership, including, at a minimum, a President, President-Elect (after first year of chapter approval, if not present at time of charter), Secretary, and Treasurer (the Secretary and Treasurer can be combined into a Secretary-Treasurer role).
- ✓ Meet quarterly at minimum, including two (2) educational meetings annually.
- ✓ Submit quarterly updates.
- ✓ Participate in a Chapter Annual Assessment & Evaluation Survey.
- ✓ Complete an Annual Chapter Report and submit it to the National Office.

If you need to update Chapter Officer positions, primary contact, or anything else, you can do so by emailing the updates to the National Office at amsn@amsn.org.

Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Your chapter will need to establish an Employer Identification Number or EIN (sometimes called a Tax ID) from the IRS. This is essential to prevent any officer's personal social security number from being attached to the Chapter's bank account. Applying for an EIN can be done directly through the [IRS website](#).

Bank Account

Once you have obtained an EIN, you can open a Chapter account at a financial institution of your choosing. The bank should provide you with the information they will require to establish your organization's account. The Personal Information from all persons having access to the account will have to be provided to the bank. It is recommended to have your Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer be the authorized signatories on the account and they should be available to answer any questions the bank may have.

Recruiting New Members

Recruiting and retaining volunteers can be very difficult tasks. Prior to recruiting volunteers chapters must:

1. Clearly identify volunteer needs and positions

Chapter officer positions and descriptions should be defined. See Appendix A for sample Chapter officer descriptions. Many chapters find they need additional volunteers for positions such as program planning and newsletter/social media communications. Clearly stating the position and the work expectations, time commitment, and length of term will help while recruiting. As additional needs arise, be prepared to write the position descriptions with the necessary information. It is important to assess the needs of the chapter and capitalize on the volunteers that are interested in serving. Exciting new volunteer opportunities can emerge from informal conversations with fellow members, volunteers and colleagues. Utilize the strengths of the volunteers who are attending meetings and show an interest. Those volunteers may be able to help with different aspects of your chapter. If you are a new chapter or a small one, creating a position such as a “member-at-large” may work best to meet the needs of the chapter for the time being.

Chapter leadership should be open to ideas from membership who may be looking for volunteer positions that tap their creativity, present a challenge, or provide the opportunity to learn new skills. Other individuals may want to support your chapter, but need a break from the demands of their nursing jobs. By identifying a range of positions requiring different skills, abilities, backgrounds, and levels of commitment, chapters can appeal to a wider range of potential volunteers. Chapter leaders need to set expectations for the potential volunteers. Chapter committees may be formed if multiple chapter members are needed to assist with a program or task.

When writing volunteer position descriptions, here are some areas you might want to include:

- Position Title – a specific, descriptive title that gives the volunteer a sense of identity and helps other volunteers and members understand the assigned role.
- Volunteer Impact – is the purpose of the overall project and/or program and how the volunteer’s work will impact the project’s outcome, clients, or mission.
- Responsibilities and Duties – can clearly define what the volunteer is expected to do on the assignment.
- Qualifications – be clear and concise to include education, personal characteristics, skills, abilities and/or experience required.
- Commitment – in terms of minimum length of service, hours per week/month, and any other special requirements.



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2. Prepare your existing volunteers for new involvement.

A checklist to keep in mind:

- ✓ Current volunteers have shown their support for volunteer placements and initiatives.
- ✓ Everyone is fully knowledgeable about their role in volunteer placement.
- ✓ Policies, procedures, and record keeping systems are in place.
- ✓ Current volunteers are ready to respond to inquiries of potential volunteers.
- ✓ Current volunteers can speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the mission and work of the organization.

3. Sell your chapter and AMSUN inside your chapter

The best recruiters for a local chapter are the current membership and leadership. Offer members recruitment rewards, such as gift cards to those who recruit others. Sell events and promote work that current leadership and members are doing. Ideas that work for chapters include:

- ✓ Empower your current volunteers to recruit and mentor.
- ✓ Put your new volunteers and projects done by volunteers in your newsletter, eblasts, or annual report.
- ✓ Be proactive, responding to any perceived 'barriers' to recruiting new volunteers.
- ✓ Gather and pass on success stories – AMSUN chapters are a great place of mentoring and professional growth – sell this to potential volunteers.
- ✓ Start small and build on your strengths – work with those current volunteers who are already supportive of this initiative.

4. Advertise Chapter Events and Share Chapter News

The National Office would love to hear what's new with your chapter. Complete the form [here](#) to update us on your chapter or provide details on upcoming chapter events. AMSUN staff will post your event on the events calendar on the website. As a reminder, any updates or changes to chapter leadership must be provided to the National Office in a timely manner.



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Chapter Assessment & Evaluation Survey

All Chapter members must complete an assessment and evaluation survey annually. The purpose of this survey is to improve the Chapter member experience. The survey provides Chapter leaders and AMSN staff an understanding of how members engage with their chapters.

Annual Report Submission

To maintain your active chapter status and have your chapter displayed on AMSN's website as an active chapter, all chapters **MUST** complete an annual report of activities and submit it to the National Office.

AMSUN runs on a calendar year, and chapters are required to submit a report of chapter activities by March 1st of each year, covering activities between January 1st to December 31st of the prior year.

Chapters that do not submit their annual reports as required will be deemed non-compliant with their chapter charter.

What Happens if My Chapter is Non-compliant?

If your chapter is deemed non-compliant, the following actions will be taken:

1. You will be notified that your chapter is non-compliant and will be placed on probation.
 - a. You have 60 days to bring your chapter into compliance, or risk dissolution.
2. Your chapter will be removed from the AMSN website.
3. You must cease use of the AMSN logo.
4. You cannot hold educational events or membership meetings.
5. You risk permanent dissolution of your chapter.

4: Educational Programming

Chapter meetings are an essential way to connect with chapter members. Meetings can be held in-person if space is available or via virtual conferencing. Free accounts can be set up via Zoom or Google Meet. Please note that basic Zoom accounts only allow 40-minute meetings. You can also request a Zoom room link from the National Office by emailing amsn@amsn.org. Agendas, objectives, and handouts can be shared with those who will be attending. This allows each participant to have all the information needed to be part of the discussion. When planning education programming, consider the following options.

- Roundtable discussions: Select a topic and have each speaker provide content on one objective in a roundtable format. This encourages discussion and sharing, decreases formality of presentation, and encourages participation.



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- Reading club: Select an article, read it together, and have a discussion on the content relevance to your practice and ideas that were brought out. Have one person take the responsibility for reading it and preparing questions to lead the discussion.

5: Financial Management of the Chapter

The following section highlights financial guidelines provided for Chapters. If you have questions, please reach out to the National Office at amsn@amsn.org.

Chapter Dues

You may consider collecting dues for Chapter membership. Chapter Dues are the annual payment paid from the AMSN member directly to the chapter. Chapter dues are separate from the annual AMSN membership dues. Each Chapter sets their own dues amounts. Chapters should set up a cadence on when dues are due to the chapter and instructions on how dues can be paid.

Financial Facts

- The Chapter Officers should be involved in setting financial goals for the Chapter and in preparing and approving the budget.
- The Officers should review the budget to ensure that the projected income (revenues) and expenses are realistic.
- The Treasurer is responsible for making sure that financial records are accurate and maintained.
- Chapters cannot share the national organization's tax-exempt status. Each local chapter must apply for individual recognition of exemption from income tax.

Financial Records

The treasury files should contain the following items:

- Copy of the approved budget
- Receipt book to acknowledge money received
- Checkbook to disburse funds as authorized
- Treasurer's accounting books (e.g., bank statements, deposit slips, cancelled checks)
- Up-to-date roster of members, officers, and terms
- Tax records (if any)
- Physical document with the EIN
- Letter from IRS with determination of tax-exempt status (if applicable)
- Fundraising records
- Inventory of goods in stock



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Tax records, your EIN, and letters from the IRS should be kept in your files indefinitely. Financial records also should be kept indefinitely. Separate financial records, bank statements, and annual reports should be kept with the Treasurer's files for seven years. These records must be shared with the National Office, upon request.

W9 Forms

When a vendor donates something (money, goods, food, etc.) to your Chapter, they will ask you to fill out a W9 form. This form is filled out by the Chapter and allows the vendor to take the donation as a business expense. The National Office recommends that you complete a new one annually and have it saved for your convenience.

Some frequently asked questions about the W9 form include what each line corresponds to with regards to the Chapter. Here are some easy answers:

- **Name:** Name of the Chapter
- **Business Name:** Do not need to complete
- **Other:** Professional Association
- **Exempt Payee:** Do not check
- **Address:** Typically the Treasurer's or your PO Box
- **List Account Number:** Do not complete
- **Social Security Number:** Do not complete
- **Employer Identification Number:** Your Chapter EIN (Tax ID) number

Form 990-N

The IRS Form 990 is an annual information return that organizations claiming federal tax-exempt status must file every year. All AMSN Chapters must file an annual information return with the IRS via a Form 990 regardless of how much revenue was collected during the year. The Form 990 must be filed with the IRS on the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of its fiscal year. AMSN Chapters must complete the 990-N form by May 15 of each year. Ahead of this due date, AMSN Staff provide instructions on how to file.

6: Dissolution

Sometimes Chapters need to close for any number of reasons. In this case, AMSN requires Chapter Officers to contact AMSN and to complete the Chapter Dissolution Agreement located [here](#). Any unused funds should be sent to the National Office by check or ACH. If you have any questions, please reach out to amsn@amsn.org.

Appendix A: Role Descriptions

President

The President is the chief elected officer of the chapter, presiding at all meetings, and serves as an ex-officio member of all committees. The President conducts all business meetings by using the parliamentary authority chosen by the chapter; Robert's Rules of Order serves as the parliamentary authority for the Association.

As the chapter's chief elected officer, the President holds responsibility for all chapter business. They ensure that decisions, orders, and resolutions of the Board of Directors are delegated and carried out, and that all required correspondence and reports are submitted. As Chapter President, you are primarily responsible for:

- Motivating, supporting, and guiding your chapter leadership
- Identifying and developing future chapter leadership (including your own successor)
- Representing your chapter at the national level and locally to the medical-surgical nursing community
- Managing the business of the chapter and ensuring the chapter remains in compliance
- Keeping your chapter members informed and connected to AMSN National Office news and programs

In addition, the President will have the following, specific duties:

1. Elect the following Officers (election by Chapter membership):
 - a. President-Elect
 - b. Secretary (Secretary and Treasurer may be combined into one position)
 - c. Treasurer
2. Appoint the following leadership positions/committee chairs as needed:
 - a. Membership Manager
 - b. Education/Program Development Manager
 - c. Awards Manager
 - d. Communications and Social Media Manager
3. Notify AMSN National of all new officers within 30 days of their election.
4. Notify AMSN National of all new chapter leadership positions.
5. Conduct the business of the Chapter.
6. Prepares the agenda for all meetings.
7. Call special meetings as needed.
8. Serves as an ex-officio member of all committees.
9. Ensure that all chapter requirements are completed with AMSN National (Chapter Petition; Policies requiring Officer's signatures; Chapter Reports (including the Annual Report with budget information; Affiliation Agreement).
10. Serve as the signatory on all documents for the Chapter.
11. Turn over Chapter records/property immediately to successor upon completion or resignation prior to end of term or in the case of Chapter dissolution to AMSN National.

President-Elect

The President-Elect has authority as, and assumes the full duties of, the President in case of the President's absence. If there is a President-Elect, they automatically assume the presidency in the following year—chapters elect a President-Elect, but do not elect a President (after the initial Chapter President), because the President-Elect succeeds to the office.

In addition, the President-Elect will have the following, specific duties:

1. Become acquainted with all the duties of the President and other Officers.
2. Become acquainted with Chapter operating procedures and requirements.
3. Chair at least one Chapter Committee, if applicable.
4. Become familiar with the duties of all Chapter Committees, if applicable.
5. Act as liaison with the Chapter Committees, Board of Directors, and AMSN National, as needed by the President.
6. Perform duties as assigned by the President.
7. Turn over Chapter records/property immediately to successor upon completion or resignation prior to end of term or in the case of Chapter dissolution to AMSN National.

Secretary

The Secretary serves as the record-keeper for the Chapter and ensures that the Chapter remains in compliance.

In addition, the Secretary will have the following, specific duties:

1. Prepare and distribute accurate and timely minutes of all Chapter meetings.
2. Prepare correspondence, at the direction of the Chapter President.
3. Maintain Chapter correspondence and program files. A permanent file shall be maintained to house founding documents as well as updated copies of Annual Reports, Chapter Affiliation Agreements, and like documents and will be provided to Officers upon request. AMSN National shall retain a copy of all documents.
4. Act as a witness and/or second signatory if required on documents signed by the Chapter President.
5. Turn over Chapter records/property immediately to successor upon completion or resignation prior to end of term or in the case of Chapter dissolution to AMSN National.
6. Other duties, as assigned by the President.



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Treasurer

The Treasurer serves as the fiscal Officer for the Chapter and is responsible for all funds which includes the maintenance of all financial records, collection of debts, and execution of payments authorized by the Chapter, AMSN Board of Directors, and/or AMSN National.

In addition, the Treasurer will have the following, specific duties:

1. Provide the President with financial information needed from Chapter records for the Annual Report and other reports as may be required.
2. Maintain the Chapter's financial recording system and recommend improvements as necessary.
3. Deposit all Chapter receipts in a timely manner.
4. Assist in preparation of the annual budget and monitor Chapter expenditures.
5. Record checks and invoices in a timely manner.
6. Prepare monthly and quarterly financial statements.
7. Turn over Chapter records/property immediately to successor upon completion or resignation prior to end of term or in the case of Chapter dissolution to AMSN National.