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GETTING STARTED

What is an IAFN Affiliate Chapter?

The mission of the IAFN is to provide leadership in forensic nursing practice by developing, promoting, and disseminating information internationally about forensic nursing science. The local chapters will serve as local forums to accomplish this goal globally.

What Do Chapters Do?

- Provide a vehicle for professional and public education.
- Foster interaction and networking among professionals and groups of people who share common interests or concerns.
- Encourage resource and information sharing.
- Have an increased ability to affect local policies and regulations.
- Provide a base for leadership development.

Home Office Assistance: Should you have any questions during the organization of your chapter, be sure to call the IAFN Home Office. The Home Office is always willing to help.

How Do I Start an Affiliate Chapter in My Area?

1. Assess the need and interest in your area. Discuss the idea with current IAFN members, and other forensic nurses, friends

and colleagues. Discuss the chapter's purpose and goals, and benefits of local membership. Emphasize the contributions the chapter could make in providing varied educational and networking opportunities for forensic nurses in your area.

2. Decide collectively if there is enough interest to form a chapter. Discuss a timeline, goals, and level of participation needed.
3. Review this document, Affiliate Agreement, IAFN Bylaws and IAFN Chapter Bylaws template. These documents will be the guiding or governing documents for your chapter's operations.

NOTE: IAFN understands that the chapter model it has developed is based on the United States system of laws, regulations and values. IAFN realizes that this model is not a one size fits all and therefore can be flexible on all Chapter Related materials for those Chapters outside of the United States. If a chapter is desired outside of the United States, please call the IAFN Home Office, first, to discuss options for your particular location.

4. Request a free electronic listing of all IAFN members in your area by emailing the Home Office at: mraso@forensicnurses.org or calling 410-626-7805 ext. 101
5. Plan Your First Meeting. Once you have about 5 to 10 people interested in forming a chapter, begin your plans. The first meeting for the prospective affiliate chapter is a very important step in the organizational process. You must capture current IAFN member and potential members' interest and motivate them to actively participate and potentially volunteer.
**Chapter members and officers must be current members of the IAFN in addition to the chapter.

6. Use the following guidelines and sample agenda to be sure you have covered all bases in your planning process.
 - a. Establish your meeting environment. Select a sight that is centrally located for your chapter members. Take into account that traveling a great distance may discourage chapter members. Consider utilizing alternative means for meetings, i.e., internet chat room or teleconference.
 - b. Prepare an outline of the first meeting and what you expect to accomplish.
 - c. Plan to review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.
 - d. At the close of the first meeting, summarize the meeting and future action steps. Seek feedback from the attendees regarding the meeting. Assign tasks to prepare affiliate chapter application packet. Choose one person to spearhead this process.
 - e. Review the date, time, location and preliminary agenda for the next meeting. Ask how many members plan to attend the next meeting.

Sample Agenda:

Remember, this is a sample agenda and you may make any changes or additions necessary to suit your chapter's needs.

- Get acquainted session (usually one -half hour including sign-in with refreshments).

- Selection of a temporary chairperson to lead the meetings and secretary to record minutes.
 - Define the purpose of the meeting and the potential chapter goals.
 - Discuss activities related to the chapter goals.
 - Preview future meetings and activities. Inform prospective chapter members what the benefits are by belonging to this local chapter.
7. Send an announcement of your introductory Chapter meeting (include the location, date and time) to medical centers, local IAFN members and prospective members in your area. You can even send an announcement to alumni and graduate nurse associations, schools of nursing, other local nursing association chapters, local newspapers, television and radio stations.
 8. Have the meeting! Don't forget you can call Home Office if you need support!
 9. From the meeting, develop your outcomes and objectives.

Formal organizations operate by developing outcomes and methods to attain those outcomes. These outcomes and strategies provide the focus of the organization's efforts to meet the needs of forensic nurses. In developing your strategic plan, it is important that your discussion include the following:

- Reason(s) for existing as a chapter.
- What you hope to accomplish as a chapter.
- How you plan to accomplish your outcomes.
- The needs of forensic nurses in your area.
- Opportunities and threats that exist in your area.

10. Elect Your Officers

The IAFN and all affiliate chapters' fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31. The chapter's Board of Directors term begin on January 1 and end December 31. The four essential chapter officers are: President, President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary. In some cases, it may be necessary to combine the Secretary and Treasurer position.

President - The President provides leadership to the Chapter. It is the President's responsibility to lead the Board of Directors, committees (if any) and members toward the outcomes previously developed. The President supervises and directs the activities of the chapter and is subject to the control of the Board of Directors and implements the plan established by the chapter.

President-Elect - The President-Elect provides the continuity in the chapter leadership. The President-Elect becomes familiar with the responsibilities of the President in preparation for succession to the presidency.



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Secretary - The Secretary is needed to facilitate open communication between the Chapter Board of Directors, IAFN Home Office, committees (if any), membership and the community. The Secretary provides the continuity in Chapter proceeding through record keeping of all activities.

Treasurer - The Treasurer supervises all of the financial transactions and maintains all financial records for the chapter. Note: ALL chapter Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to the chapter.

The Chapter Board of Directors establishes and reviews plans for the Chapter. Board members have specific legal and fiscal responsibilities to the members of the Chapter and to the Association as a whole. If planning to establish Director at large positions, there should be enough members to make the total number of Board Members uneven. This will ensure a majority vote and will not cause a stalemate when deciding on issues.

11. Define Your Committee Responsibilities

Committee formation may be an important part of the chapter. Committees have the function of doing the ongoing work of the Chapter. Through committees, the chapter accomplishes its outcomes. When no committees are present, tasks are delegated from the President to chapter members or the President can delegate to oneself.

12. Apply for your Chapter's EIN (Chapters in the US)

Chapters will have their own federal identification number. The U.S. Employer Identification Number (EIN) is a nine-digit identification number for businesses and organizations and is similar to the Social Security Number (SSN) which serves as an identification number for individuals in the US. The Internal Revenue Service requires that all non-profit organizations and their subordinate groups within the U.S. (i.e. Chapters must obtain an EIN).

To obtain an EIN, Go to the following link:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>

It can be done online and you should receive the EIN # within minutes of filing. When the provisional charter is received, the Board grants permission on behalf of the Association for the Chapter to be included under its Group Exemption Number (GEN). When the EIN statement is received, send a photocopy of the statement bearing the Chapter's EIN to the Home Office.

13. Understanding Tax Exemption

For those chapters operating in the United States, the most common *misunderstanding* about tax-exemption is that it exempts the Association and its chapters from all taxes. However, this is not the case. Tax-exempt status means only that the Association and its chapters do not pay federal tax on income from activities that are related to the organization's purpose – education. However, if income is generated by an activity unrelated to the organization's purpose,



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the Chapter may have to pay tax on that income. Chapters shall

disclose if this type of income is generated in their annual renewal documentation.

Donations. Many Chapters solicit and receive donations from corporations and other sponsors to launch and support their activities. While no restrictions exist to obtaining such funds for the chapter, those donations are **not deductible** by the donors as charitable contributions as defined in section 170 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

Gambling. A number of Chapters may sponsor raffles at their meetings as a means of generating income. Since many local area laws prohibit gambling, a raffle's validity will depend on the gambling laws in the area where the raffle is held. If you do not know what the laws are for your area, you should contact the appropriate state or similar authority.

14. Organize Your Chapter Finances (Chapters in US)

Chapter Dues – dues are used to fulfill the plan of the chapter which supports the mission of the IAFN. Dues are set at \$30 and may be increased by a majority vote of all the Chapter Representatives through IAFN. Chapter Dues will be collected by the IAFN Home Office and remitted to chapters on a quarterly basis with a full listing of those members who have paid or renewed. Chapters shall extend reciprocity to members transferring from other chapters.

Once the chapter has received its first chapter related revenue, open a bank account under the Chapter's name and with the Chap-



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ter's EIN number. Many banks waive account fees for non-profit organizations. There should be at least two current bank signers on the account at all times. In addition to two local chapter officers, the Executive Director will also be a signer on the Chapter account.

Once the officers have signed the bank signature card, please forward to the home office for the ED's signature. Bank signature cards must be updated as chapter officers change.

Accurate records are essential. IAFN Home Office will provide chapters with documentation to track the chapter's revenue and expenses. IAFN also recommends the use of some kind of accounting software to maintain Chapter financial records. Chapters will be responsible to keep track of all credits and debits to the chapter. The treasurer will keep all bank deposit receipts and monthly statements. **Documentation must be kept for seven years.**

No chapter member may reimburse themselves for costs incurred. The treasurer should approve all reimbursements and checks. In the case where the Treasurer needs to be reimbursed, the Chapter Board President should approve. Please see the IAFN Policy on Reimbursement of Members for further clarification on what expenses are allowed or not. Chapters should not participate in the use of a debit card linked to their checking account. **On all checks over \$1500, the chapter shall require two signatures on that check.**

Consider whether the bank is conveniently located and if it has several branches throughout the geographic area. This is of particular importance to current fellow officers and those who succeed them. Avoid making a conscious effort to selecting an institution simply because it is convenient to the current officer if others will have to commute long distances to get to that bank.



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All chapter funds must be used for the specified purposes of IAFN and the chapter as outlined below. All IAFN Chapters are organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes and no part of

the accumulations, gains or profits of the chapter shall benefit any private individual, except as provided below:

1. to grant educational scholarships to deserving chapter members or to nursing students for attendance at professional nursing programs.
 2. to purchase books, audiovisual aids and computer-assisted instruction for other forensic nursing-related educational endeavors.
 3. to produce community educational programs
15. Apply for Your Affiliate Chapter Status

All affiliate chapters must be chartered by the IAFN. Now that you have begun the formation of your chapter, you need to submit documentation for your Chapter Charter. The following information needs to be completed to process your charter.

- Fee - \$75 initial fee payable to the “IAFN” is USD
- List of Chapter Officers (see form)
- List of Chapter Members with IAFN membership numbers
- Introductory chapter meeting minutes
- Copy of the chapter bylaws



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- Signed copy of the Chapter Affiliation Agreement by the Chapter President
- Chapter goals