

Membership Committee	
Dec. 2, 2025	ACWA Fall Conference
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Location: Sheraton San Diego Resort Room: Marisol

1. Welcome & Introductions **Chair Joone Lopez**
2. 2025 Membership Update **Vice Chair Carrie Parks**
3. 2024-'25 Membership Committee Work Plan Summary **Katie Dahl**
4. Discussion: 2026 Strategic Plan KPIs **Lopez**
5. Membership Committee at Fall Conference
 - New & Non-Member Attendee List - **Dahl**
 - Member Mixer - **Parks**
 - New Attendee Buttons - **Parks**
 - Conference Program, "Diving Deep: An AI Approach to Water Management" - **Lopez**
6. Additional Discussion **All**

Meeting Materials:

- [Committee Roster](#)
- September Meeting Recap
- Membership Committee Work Plan
- Member Recruitment and Retention Plan
- [ACWA's 2025-'29 Strategic Plan & KPIs](#)
- '25 Fall Conference New Member & Non-Member Attendees (printed handout only)
- [ACWA Member Directory](#)

Membership Committee

September 24, 2025 | 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. | Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Committee Members in Attendance

- Joone Lopez
- Carrie Parks
- Bruce Rupp
- Chris Perri
- Jennifere Burke
- Michael Saunders
- Kati Parker
- Kimberly Wall
- Brett Miller

Guests & Staff in Attendance

- President Cathy Green
- Vice President Ernie Avila
- Marwan Khalifa, ACWA Staff
- Katie Dahl, ACWA Staff
- Petra Rice, ACWA Staff
- Matt Overton, ACWA Staff
- Heather Engel, ACWA Staff

Joone Lopez called the meeting to order and facilitated a round of self-introductions.

Cathy Green and Ernie Avila gave an update regarding the Executive Director search and thanked everyone for their participation in committees.

Carrie Parks gave a membership update. ACWA has welcomed 2 new members this year, City of Lincoln and June Lake PUD. ACWA has had 6 drops bringing total membership count to 468 and maintained a member retention rate of 99%.

Lopez provided an update on the 2026 dues, sharing that the ACWA Board approved a 1% increase to dues, a reduction from the Board's initial plan of a 2.5% increase.

Katie Dahl shared that ACWA is currently in talks with two potential members. Katie also reviewed internal protocols when a member drops. Possible ways to encourage agencies to return were discussed.

Katie discussed recruitment strategies – list of nonmembers is in the packet. A suggestion was made to reach out to League of California Cities as a platform to reach cities. It was also suggested to look at cities and special districts that might qualify for JPIA coverage. The California Special Districts Association (CSDA) was mentioned as an additional resource.

ACWA Fall Conference:

- The team discussed ways to provide additional support to new registrants. It was decided to develop a new method for identifying new attendees, replacing the 'Member Ambassador' buttons previously used.
- Conference Panel – focus on AI and water.
 - It was suggested that the panel highlight how agencies are currently using AI, even if applications are not strictly water-related.
 - JPIA is actively monitoring developments in AI and exploring its future applications.
 - Some agencies (Carmichael, Citrus Heights) are investigating the use of AI in pipe inspection and infrastructure repair.
 - A roundtable format was proposed to allow agencies to share their experiences and approaches in using AI.

No additional discussion items were raised.

The meeting adjourned.

Membership Committee Work Plan

2024-'25 Work Plan

Adopted: February 22, 2024

The overall mission of ACWA's Membership Committee is to assist staff in developing membership recruitment and retention programs, make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding membership policies, eligibility and applications for membership and review, and make recommendations to the Finance Committee regarding an equitable dues structure. **The Membership Committee's Member Recruitment and Retention Plan advises the organization on recruitment goals and strategies, and the programs and tactics deployed in support of them.** The Membership Committee will also assist with advancing the goals and objectives identified in ACWA's Strategic Plan.

2024-'25 Goals & Objectives

Goal	Objective	Tactics & Progress
Maintain high member retention rate that supports ACWA's efforts to maintain a net-positive member growth rate.	Provide members with timely information, updates, and resources on priority issues. Look for opportunities to reinforce value of membership to city members.	Regularly provide updates and information on website, through ACWA News and E-News, social media, alerts and advisories. Targeted outreach to city members on ACWA's advocacy against SB 601 to reinforce value of membership to cities. Co-Sponsored SB 454 with Cal Cities that would have created a fund for PFAS. Staff attended Cal Cities annual conference and reinforced value of ACWA membership in conversations. Planning a joint webinar on Water Efficiency with Cal Cities in January, will use opportunity to show value of membership to current and potential members. Encourage participation in City and County Planning Nexus Subcommittee under Local Government Committee.
	Inform and engage members to participate on committees, workgroups, and region leadership positions throughout the organization, striving to fill at least 90% of available governance seats. Strive to have complete regional representation on the Membership Committee	Missing representation on Membership Committee from Regions 4, 6, 7 New members joining Membership Committee in 2025: - Kevin Phillips, Paradise ID, Region 2 - Brett Miller, San Benito County WD, Region 5

	Enhance the member experience at ACWA Conferences to provide a welcoming experience for all members.	Co-host Member Mixers with Past Presidents at spring and fall conferences. Share new and first-time attendee lists with committee members. Engage regional leadership in new and newer member outreach at conferences. Attracted, recruited and developed a diverse member volunteer based that filled committee and region board rosters 93%, exceeding the 90% goal.
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Goal	Objective	Tactics & Progress
Explore options to partner with other water community organizations to maximize membership services and value (i.e. League of Cities, CASA, CSDA).	Explore partnership opportunities	ACWA is a Platinum Member and participates in Association of Women, Water, Energy & Environment (AWWEE). Coordinating with CSDA on ACWA's A.C.E. pilot program. Find opportunities to educate cities on importance of water management through League of Cities. (WUE webinar partnership) Gov Relations Team regularly partners with CSDA, League of Cities, CASA, etc. on advocacy efforts that benefit our memberships. Hosted regular Statewide Association Exchange meetings to share/compare priorities and programs across organizations.

Continue recruitment efforts to support ACWA in maintaining a net-positive member growth rate,	Work to develop relationships with the next generation of water professionals to ensure long-term ACWA members. Encourage their participation in ACWA programs and activities.	Conference programming focused on workforce development, attracting the next generation. Hosted Executive Edge 8/29-30, engaging current and upcoming leadership in CA water. '25 Spr Conf Exe Edge Roundtable
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including a targeted focus on city memberships	Develop strategies to involve region leadership and the ACWA Board of Directors.	Ongoing. Developed role for region leadership in Member Recruitment & Retention Plan. Maintained a 99% member retention rate.
	Share the Committee's Work Plan with the ACWA Board and regularly report membership development at ACWA Board meetings.	'24-'25 Work Plan submitted to Board at June '24 meeting. Membership Report is submitted to the Board at each Board Meeting.
	Utilize ACWA's conferences to recruit new members.	A nonmember attendee report is pulled after each event to assist in generating recruitment leads.
	Develop recruitment material specific to city membership as well as sanitation/wastewater districts.	Surveyed city members for input to value of membership in fall '23. Use information to develop targeted material for cities in '24. ACWA GR Staff working with CalCities staff on opportunities for partnership/collaboration.
	Continue to work with ACWA staff, ACWA Board, and regional leadership on recruitment leads with Committee members striving to engage with two leads per year.	Shared list of non-members with committee at May and Dec meetings, and continue to do so on request. ACWA welcomed a total of eight new members during the 2024-'25 term.

Goal	Objective	Tactics & Progress
Enhance Member Experience	Build an inclusive experience and atmosphere at ACWA.	Connect new members with committee members at conferences. Leverage regions to engage new members at the local level. Utilize "New Wave" pin to help identify new members at conference and welcome them.
	Work to continually promote the value of ACWA to members.	Ongoing. Follow the Committee's Member Recruitment & Retention Plan. Leverage regions to engage members at the local level. ACWA News & ENews, Monthly Priority Issues Update, Regulatory Roundup, Advocacy Alerts & Advisories, Vendor Webinar Programs, etc.



	Support the Council of Past Presidents New Member Outreach & Mentorship Program	Co-host Member Mixer at conferences Develop lines of communication and opportunities for past presidents to connect with newer members.
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Member Recruitment and Retention Plan

Purpose

This Plan identifies ACWA's member recruitment and retention goals and strategies, and the programs and tactics deployed in support of them. This Plan is intended to be a general guide to assist in membership program planning each year. Membership programs inform about and engage members and non-members in the value, benefits, and opportunities available to ACWA members.

Recruitment

ACWA's approach to member recruitment is relationship stewardship. Becoming an ACWA member is an investment by a public agency, with its customers' best interests in mind, to engage in advocacy and relationship building that will help ensure a reliable water supply at home by participating in ACWA at the statewide level. ACWA understands that building a relationship with potential members is foundational to growing a lifelong partnership with new members. ACWA's goal is to obtain net-positive growth in membership each year.

Membership Leads

ACWA staff will maintain a list of potential members. Those included on this list are public agencies who have recently terminated their membership with ACWA, those who have participated in ACWA as a non-member, and recruitment referrals from ACWA Members.

The list of potential members will be shared with the Membership Committee to help guide recruitment efforts. Staff will partner with existing members to coordinate membership discussions with potential members.

Recruitment Outreach

Member to member recruitment is extremely effective. When a member has an existing relationship with a potential member, a testimonial regarding the value they receive from their ACWA Membership is trusted and holds more weight. Once a member has a contact at a non-member agency who is interested in membership, they should refer them to ACWA staff to provide more information and take the next step in the recruitment and application process.

A list of non-member registrations at region events and conferences will be shared with member leadership prior to the event to coordinate recruitment outreach efforts.

ACWA region events are a recruitment opportunity. ACWA staff will work with ACWA region boards to identify non-members from the Potential Member List to extend an invitation and complimentary registration to attend their local ACWA region event. Appropriate follow-up from ACWA staff will take place following the event to continue the ACWA membership conversation.



ACWA Conferences serve as a membership test-drive for potential members. With committee meetings, region meetings, programs featuring water management decision-makers, and numerous networking opportunities spread across three days, non-members can sample a lot of what ACWA has to offer. ACWA staff will work ACWA leadership, including the Board Officers, Council of Past Presidents, Membership Committee, and region boards to extend personal invitations to register for ACWA Conferences. The Membership Committee's role at conference is to advise staff on new member activities and highlights to offer at conference, and to know who the non-member attendees are and make them feel welcome.

ACWA staff will follow up with non-member attendees after all ACWA events regarding any membership interests or questions they may have.

ACWA staff partner with current members to develop Value of ACWA resources for targeted membership segments with custom messaging.

Member testimonials are used in various outreach methods to share the value of membership with non-members audiences.

Retention

ACWA believes member engagement leads to member retention. The best way to see value from any membership program is to participate. ACWA's goal is to maintain its 99% member retention rate each year.

New Member Orientation

ACWA offers a step-up to membership program that extends discounted membership dues to new members the first two years of membership, and does not invoice a member for its full dues amount until the third year of membership. It is essential for these members to feel engaged in ACWA and see value for the membership by their third year of membership. The outreach and orientation plan for this group of newer members includes:

- As soon as they join, a welcome communication from the ACWA Executive Director with an offer to meet
- Annual meetings with an ACWA Regional Affairs Representative to share local challenges and priorities, hear about ACWA activities, and learn about opportunities for engagement in ACWA (i.e. events, workgroups, committees, etc.)
- Annual personal invitations from ACWA region board members and/or ACWA Regional Affairs Representative to attend their local regional event
- Bi-annual invite from the Membership Committee to attend a new member event or activity at ACWA Spring and Fall Conferences
- Membership Committee Members help host newer members at ACWA Spring and Fall Conferences, providing a familiar face and tips on how to best navigate the conference
- ACWA Council of Past Presidents Mentorship Program – *program in development*



ACWA tracks when new general managers join a member agency and move quickly to welcome them to ACWA and engage them in member opportunities. New general managers receive:

- A welcome letter from ACWA
- A request to meet with ACWA staff to help facilitate quick engagement in the organization
- Invitations to attend upcoming regional programs, webinars, and ACWA's bi-annual conferences
- Invitation to attend the Membership Committee's Member Mixer event at ACWA Conferences

Member Engagement

ACWA's Member Outreach and Engagement (MOE) Team is tasked with engaging members in the numerous opportunities ACWA has to offer. MOE tracks member outreach connections and ensures that members regularly hear from ACWA. During these interactions, MOE encourages members to volunteer to participate in ACWA's governance structure and to utilize member resources.

ACWA's Outreach Program engages members in advocacy for California water. ACWA speaks with one voice, as informed and empowered by an engaged membership. Through numerous ways, members are kept informed on issues that impact California water management and how agencies conduct business, and are provided tools and resources to deploy grassroots outreach tactics to connect with state and federal officials on these issues. An Outreach Task Force is appointed by the ACWA President to help guide this program. Members are asked to become Outreach Ambassadors and participate in the program. ACWA Region Boards appoint Outreach Captains to help grow regional participation and coordination in the Outreach Program. Participating in this kind of direct advocacy that brings real results at the state and federal levels reinforces the value of ACWA to California's water industry and fosters member retention.

The Leadership to Leadership initiative was developed to provide opportunities for ACWA leadership to interact with members to gain insightful input to key initiatives and program, enhance value to members overall ACWA experience by offering direct access to the organization's top leaders, and advance goals identified in ACWA's Five Year Strategic Plan. The initiative brings members together in an intimate meeting format, organized by issue or region, to have a dialogue with ACWA leaders about the issues most important to them. These meetings bring value to members by providing access to decision makers at ACWA and making them feel heard.

ACWA staff work with members to identify other members to speak on and participate in programs, helping ACWA to broaden its reach of go-to authorities on subjects and reflect a diverse and inclusive membership.

ACWA is increasing its social media presence to extend its reach into California's water community and connect with new demographics, including the next generation of water leaders. To help with this effort, in the Membership Committee's role as ACWA Ambassadors,



the committee members are invited to engage with ACWA on its various social media platforms. Social media engagement includes “Liking” and “Sharing” ACWA posts with, and posts with personal membership testimonials to extend ACWA’s reach and reinforce the value of ACWA membership.

ACWA Staff partner with region leadership to help with outreach on lapsed membership renewals.

Conclusion

Through relationship stewardship and a proactive member orientation and engagement plan that involves both staff and current members, ACWA’s goal is to maintain a net-positive growth in membership and a 99% member retention rate each year. Members and staff will operationalize this plan through appropriate tactics each year as identified in ACWA’s Strategic Plan and corresponding committee and region work plans.