



Chapter Leaders Manual

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URISA Chapter Leaders Manual
Section 1: Introduction

Section 1: Introduction

URISA has more than twenty state, provincial, and regional Chapters. Chapter meetings, workshops, conferences, and social events occur regularly throughout the United States and Canada.

This manual contains the requirements for starting and running a regional Chapter or local section of a Chapter. It also presents techniques that have proved successful in URISA Chapters over the last decade.

Starting or supporting a local URISA Chapter allows individuals to experience the benefits of URISA, in a more intimate, year-round environment. URISA Chapters benefit the geographic areas they serve by helping local professionals meet the needs of area residents. Chapters also attract new members to URISA through local meetings, giving added breadth and strength to the organization.

In 1992, URISA established a Chapter Relations Committee to promote the health and growth of regional Chapters. This Committee continues on today.

Chapter Relations Committee—A Mission Statement

The Chapter Relations Committee (CRC) is the liaison between URISA International and its Chapters. The CRC has five specific responsibilities:

- Maintain contact with active Chapters (through email, phone calls, etc.).
- Provide information and assistance requested by Chapter leaders, support new Chapter development, and evaluate requests for affiliate status.
- Communicate Chapter needs to the URISA Board, and recommend Board actions.
- Train and support Chapter leaders by conducting the annual Chapter Leaders Forum and maintaining the Chapter Leaders Manual.
- Issue the Outstanding Chapter Award (annual award to recognize innovation, education, outreach and community impact).

Chapter Relations Committee Structure

CRC representatives are appointed from candidates who have had Chapter leadership experience. The committee position is a three-year term. The CRC consists of six Chapter representatives. Two members rotate off the Committee each year. Each member is assigned a region that may consist of a number of Chapters.

The Committee holds monthly conference calls and meets prior to and following the Chapter Leaders Forum at the Annual Conference. URISA International funds some of the costs associated with CRC meetings.

Chapter leaders interested in serving on the CRC should notify their CRC representatives.

Section 2: Starting a Chapter

Organizing a core group of interested members is the key to starting a URISA Chapter. A group of three to six people is usually enough to get things rolling. This section discusses the steps necessary to organize and activate a new Chapter.

The Start-Up Process

Notify URISA

The first step is to notify URISA Headquarters or a member of the Chapter Relations Committee that the group is interested in forming a Chapter. See the current CRC roster for contact names and phone numbers or refer to URISA's Web site at www.urisa.org. URISA Headquarters or the CRC representative will provide start-up information and will advise the group of potential problems, including the possibility of conflicts with existing Chapters that may serve the region.

Hold a Start-Up Meeting or Event

To kick off the formation of the Chapter, the core group should organize meetings and local events to attract Chapter members. It is important to develop a good list of potential members. This includes URISA members who live in the area (available from URISA Headquarters) as well as other lists that the core group can obtain through their professional contacts. After making arrangements for the first meeting or event, the core group should mail a promotional flyer and cover letter explaining the beginning of the new URISA Chapter. Follow-up phone calls will help ensure a good turnout.

Petition for Recognition

To form an official Chapter, the organizing group must submit a written petition to the Executive Director of URISA. The petition must be signed by ten (10) URISA International members in good standing (dues paid) from the chosen geographic area.

There is no official format for the petition, but it must address the following items:

- Chapter name and geographic area to be served
- Name(s) of contact person(s)
- Chapter goals and proposed Chapter activities for the coming year
- Dates, topics, and attendance figures for previous start-up meetings and events

The petition may also request start-up funds from the URISA Board. See Appendix D: Sample Petitions for Recognition as a URISA Chapter, for examples of petitions.

The URISA Board considers petitions at their meetings. Upon approval of a petition, a Chapter is recognized as having *organizing status*. (Grounds for disapproval might be conflict with an existing Chapter in the area, proposed goals that are inconsistent with URISA goals, or failure to obtain signatures from ten URISA International members in good standing.)

While in organizing status, the Chapter will continue to work with a CRC representative and can obtain general assistance from Headquarters. Organizing status continues at least until the first Board meeting of the calendar year following the approval of the petition for recognition.

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Section 2: Starting a Chapter

Resolve Business Issues

Once assigned organizing status, the new Chapter should begin carrying out its proposed goals and activities. This includes the following:

- Draft and approve Chapter bylaws consistent with URISA's Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws (see Appendix E).
- Elect officers
- Resolve other organizational and business matters (discussed later in this section)
- Investigate and Register the Chapter as a not-for-profit or other applicable legal with the appropriate local state or provincial authorities.

Request Active Status

At the end of its first calendar year in *organizing status*, the organizing Chapter must file an Annual Chapter Report. This report should be submitted to the Executive Director along with a cover letter requesting active status. Upon its acceptance by the URISA Board of Directors, the Chapter will be granted active status. Chapters will not be assigned active status until they have resolved administrative issues and demonstrated that they are sponsoring regular meetings and events.

Organizational and Business Matters

Chapter Area

The Chapter area can be based on state or provincial boundaries, groups of states or provinces, or portions of very large states or provinces. The Board of Directors must approve the geographical boundaries of the Chapter when the petition for recognition is approved.

Sections Within Chapters

Some geographically large Chapters (particularly those made of several states or provinces) have active sections. Sections are usually formed around metropolitan areas. Sections develop as a Chapter matures, offering increased services to members in a smaller geographic area. Sections are very much a part of their parent Chapter; they simply offer a chance for members to gather more frequently to discuss more local issues. See Section 12: Sections within Chapters, for a more detailed discussion.

Chapter Name

The name should contain the word URISA and should clearly indicate the geographic area. Most Chapter names refer simply to a single state or province or to a group of states or provinces. The following are some examples: Georgia URISA, URISA – Alberta Chapter, Chesapeake Chapter-URISA. The URISA Board of Directors must approve the name chosen at the time the petition for recognition is approved. In some areas, local laws should be consulted when a name is selected.

Logo

The URISA Association has used URISA printed in script as its logo for many years, and registered this as a legal trademark. Because image is of great concern to the Association, URISA has adopted several policies covering how Chapters may use URISA's logo in the Chapter's logo, publications, and publicity.

Chapters are encouraged to incorporate URISA's logo into the Chapter logo to foster overall recognition of both URISA and the Chapters. Chapters wishing to do so shall submit an artist's rendering of the proposed Chapter logo to the Board for approval, along with a letter acknowledging that Chapter use of the logo does not give to Chapter any rights, title or interest in

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Section 2: Starting a Chapter

the logo. Once the board has granted approved, the Chapter logo should be used on all Chapter publications and on the Chapter website.

In using the URISA logo, Chapters must be careful to use it for the benefit of URISA and in a manner consistent with URISA's principles and interests. Chapters shall not use URISA's logo to imply that the Chapter represents the parent association in an official capacity. Chapters should not use URISA's logo in any way that interferes with or diminishes URISA's rights in the logo.

Officers

Proper management of a local Chapter requires elected officers and appointed leaders such as committee chairs. Depending on the Chapter structure and size, the executive body may include only the elected officers and the committee chairs, or it may be comprised of the officers, committee chairs, and elected directors. The Chapter offices, including the duties and terms of office, should be defined in the Chapter bylaws.

Elected officers must be URISA members in good standing. All new officers are encouraged to attend the Chapter Leaders Forum held at the beginning of each annual conference. This workshop offers a chance for new officers to learn from experienced URISA Chapter leaders.

Bank Accounts, Tax Exemption, and Bulk-Rate Mail

Immediately upon formation, a Chapter will need to open a bank account, decide when to file for tax-exempt status, and set up a means of communication among members. These matters are covered in Sections 6, 7, and 9 respectively.

Section 3: Membership

This section of the manual discusses requirements and alternatives for structuring Chapter membership.

Chapter Membership and URISA Membership

Although **Chapter officers must be members of URISA's international organization**, this requirement does not apply to other Chapter members. This policy allows Chapters to attract members who might not otherwise join URISA. However, URISA strongly encourages Chapters to promote URISA International membership because this strengthens the parent organization, which in turn helps the Chapters.

Membership Categories

Chapters may establish different membership classifications in their bylaws. The most common membership categories are regular, student, and corporate. Chapters may provide different benefits and assess different dues to each membership category.

Benefits of Membership

Chapters should document their membership benefits and distribute this information to potential members. Benefits may vary by membership category. The following are examples of benefits offered by some of the existing URISA Chapters:

- Newsletter (electronic or printed copies)
- Discounts on local events (for selected categories or all members)
- Membership directories (sent to all members)
- Exhibit booth at Chapter conference (free or reduced rates for corporate members)
- Conference publications (sent to all members)
- Local networking opportunities (for all members)

URISA has produced an electronic brochure highlighting the variety of benefits of URISA membership to potential individual and corporate members. This brochure is available from Headquarters. Chapters may use the text of the brochure as they see fit within their own promotional materials.

Dues

Chapters' dues policies vary widely. Some Chapters charge no dues at all; some charge only non-URISA members; and others have a range of dues and associated benefits for different membership categories.

Charging no dues often helps an organizing Chapter grow. This encourages more people to attend events and makes people feel free to visit Chapter meetings and events to see what the group offers. In addition, URISA can help by co-sponsoring a local non-conference workshop or other event. This event could be an effective fund-raiser for the new Chapter. Once it is more firmly established, the Chapter can start to charge dues. Dues should not be so high that they discourage participation.

Regular membership dues are usually less than \$50 per year. Dues for full-time students are generally offered at a 50% discount off the regular rate. Dues for corporate or sustaining members often range from \$100 to \$300.

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Section 3: Membership

Member Recruitment

Headquarters can provide each Chapter with both an international membership list and a prospect list. The prospect list is made up of people who have registered for both Association and Chapter events but are not URISA members, people who have made an inquiry to the Association, and people from related professional organizations. These lists can be provided in hard copy or digital files.

Important areas for local recruitment are academia (both faculty and students), government, corporations, vendor companies, and related professionals.

Member Database and Mailing List

Chapters should maintain membership lists that include complete contact information. The most efficient way to track member data is in a digital database or spreadsheet. In addition to basic contact and dues information, Chapters may wish to keep records on offices held, events attended, honors awarded, committees served, and personal preferences for meeting locations, dates, and times. Chapters may wish to track past members and other prospects as well as active members. Large Chapters will find that a sophisticated, normalized database is very helpful in planning Chapter activities and organizing membership drives. Chapters that implement sophisticated member databases should utilize software that can import and export ASCII files.

Smaller Chapters (and Chapters that are not quite sure what “normalized” means) are advised to use spreadsheets, word processors, or very simple database software to implement a digital membership file. Table 1 illustrates a model of a simple member file structure.

It is important for Chapters to keep their membership databases and mailing lists up-to-date (particularly email addresses). This includes adding new members promptly, dropping or changing the status of former members, deleting duplicate names, updating addresses and business titles, and correcting errors reported by members. Some Chapters have an officer or committee chair whose sole or primary duty is to maintain the database and mailing list.

Chapters are encouraged to maintain lists of prospective members. People on this list should be sent literature on all Chapter events. This will help raise attendance, increase revenues, and attract new members. URISA can provide mailing lists from areas close enough to draw attendance to Chapter events.

Headquarters will provide Chapters with URISA International member and prospect records upon request. From time to time, Headquarters will request copies of the Chapters’ lists. Information sharing will strengthen both the Chapters and the international organization.

Fiscal and Membership Years

URISA encourages Chapters and sections to use January 1- December 31 as the membership and fiscal year. This follows the same plan as URISA International and using it helps improve coordination of services between Headquarters and the Chapter. It also helps improve record keeping at Headquarters and promotes better coordination of mailing lists.

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Section 3: Membership

Table 1: Model Member File Structure

Column Name	Type	Size	Example
Membership Number	Integer	8	97001
Last Name	Text	50	Doe
First Name	Text	50	John
Middle Name	Text	50	Don
Name Suffix	Text	5	Jr.
Job Title	Text	50	IS Director
Organization	Text	50	City of Metropolis
Salutation	Text	4	Dr.
Address1	Text	50	IS Department
Address2	Text	50	JQP Building
Address3	Text	50	123 Main Street
City	Text	50	Metropolis
StateProv	Text	50	Alberta
ZipPostCode	Text	50	T2P 2M5
Country	Text	50	Canada
Phone	Text	50	(403)-555-1000
Fax	Text	50	(403)-555-1001
email	Text	64	jdoe@metropo.ci.gov
httpaddress	Text	64	www.metropo.isd
ChapterDues	Currency	8	26.75
DuesPaid	Currency	8	26.75
DateDuesPaid	Date/Time	8	07/01/97
Expires	Date/Time	8	06/30/98
MembershipType	Text	1	S
MembershipStartDate	Date/Time	8	07/01/88
VotingRights	Text	50	yes
Officer	Text	50	Past President
URISAFlag	Yes/No	1	Y
URISAIDNumber	Text	10	3000976
NationalAttendance	Yes/No	1	Y
Affiliation1	Text	50	DPMA
Affiliation2	Text	50	ASPRS
DateUpdated	Date/Time	8	07/05/97

Committees

Topical committees increase local participation, and broad participation is essential for the long-term health and growth of the Chapter. Examples of topical committees include Public Policy, Transportation, Internet GIS and Standards. Chapters may also organize functional committees to plan conferences or attract new members.

Visibility and Stability

Chapters need to establish a stable contact point that will ensure that membership queries are addressed, that open communication is maintained, and that follow-up take place. This contact should be easily accessible via the phone or e-mail. People often sit on membership applications for weeks or months, carefully evaluating an organization before making a decision to join. There are many organizations competing for people's time and support. A Chapter must continually communicate the value of its member services to both potential and current members.

Section 4: Elections

Properly held and well-planned elections give members a feeling of confidence in Chapter leadership and help to prevent cliques within the executive committee. The following are guidelines for holding Chapter elections.

Nominations

According to the Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws a Nominating Committee prior to the Chapter's annual meeting must nominate all officers and directors. Additional nominations may be made from the floor when the slate is presented to the membership for approval. Nominees for President, Secretary, and Treasurer must be active members of URISA in good standing. No member can hold more than one elective office during a term.

It is recommended that a Nominating Committee be established well in advance of any proposed election. The committee should be appointed by the President and approved by the Chapter Board of Directors. It is recommended that the committee take action at least three to four months ahead of the election in order to identify suitable candidates.

In addition to approaching potential candidates directly, the committee should invite interested members to submit their names or the names of others through the newsletter and other promotional material.

The Chapter should require potential candidates to confirm their willingness to serve before their names are placed on the ballot. It is, of course, preferred that at least two candidates vie for each position, although this is not always possible.

Election Frequency

Normally, elections are held annually. In a start-up period, it is common for initial terms to be extended to 18 or 24 months while the Chapter is being established and incorporated.

Procedures and Schedule

Timing

Holding elections in the spring (the same time as the international association) benefits Chapters because their newly elected officers can participate in the Chapter Leaders Forum at URISA's annual conference at the start of their terms.

Mail-in Ballots Versus Annual General Meeting

Unless the Chapter is located in an area where members have easy access to the general meeting, it is recommended that mail-in ballots on a designated schedule conduct the election. A means of uniquely identifying ballots as originals should be established.

Secret Ballot

If the election is to be part of the annual general meeting, a show of hands is not recommended. The Chapter should utilize a secret ballot method and should retain records that can be audited.

Voting Privileges

Each member usually has one vote. Voting rights must be established for corporate or associate memberships if these membership categories are available from the Chapter.

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Section 4: Elections

Ballots

A committee of at least two persons from either the nominating committee or a separate committee should count the ballots.

Terms of Office

The term of office must be for a period not to exceed two years. Officers should not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Transition of Administration

After the election, there should be an immediate meeting of the old and new executives to resolve old business and to make a smooth transfer between officers. This is especially true for the duties of the secretary and treasurer.

Reporting

The results of the election should be brought forward at the annual general meeting and circulated to all members in the newsletters. A list of new officers should be sent to URISA Headquarters within one month of the election.

Section 5: Chapter Activities

Successful Chapters offer a variety of activities to their members. The range extends from very simple programs to complex and complicated conferences. These activities are offered at a range of costs to both members and non-members. They can be organized solely by the Chapter, or in conjunction with URISA International or other organizations.

Outstanding Chapter Award

Each year, URISA recognizes an outstanding Chapter that has sponsored particularly effective activities or has otherwise excelled in serving its membership and the community. Outstanding Chapter Award criteria include:

- Innovation
- Education
- Outreach
- Community Impact

One-Day Events

Many Chapters have offered successful, one-day mini-conferences, often with a particular theme. Another possibility for one-day events is to allow corporate members to present technical sessions and/or demonstrations that are not sales presentations. Each corporate member can be given an equal amount of time or can be allowed a speaker's position on a panel. In this approach, the rules must be applied equally to all to prevent conflict. One-day events are easier to organize than longer conferences. If held regularly, these events may evolve into larger regional conferences as the Chapter matures.

Workshops

Many Chapters have successfully staged full-day educational workshops. Chapters can do this independently if members have the time and qualifications to prepare a workshop curriculum and materials. Chapters can also sponsor official URISA workshops. The material for these workshops has been prepared and reviewed by teams of experts in the international association. URISA-certified instructors must teach these workshops. Student Activity Hours can be earned by taking workshops that are used towards GISCI professional certification.

CRC representatives can provide Chapters with lists of available URISA workshops and instructors. If there are no instructors in the Chapter's area, URISA encourages the Chapter to identify potential instructors and team them with certified instructors at the local event so that they can gain experience with the curriculum and receive certification themselves.

There are two ways to bring URISA certified workshops to your area:

1. License and run URISA certified workshops. Choose the facilities, timing and location, or hold a workshop in conjunction with a regional conference. URISA will provide the workbook masters, materials and instructor listing. The Chapter selects the instructor(s) from the listing, pays all expenses and keeps all revenues. The Chapter pays URISA a license fee of \$500 per workshop or \$400 each for three or more workshops at one time. Travel and honoraria are negotiated separately between the instructor(s) and the Chapter.
2. Host a URISA Professional Development Program in your area. URISA will run the workshop for the Chapter, from arranging and providing facilities, instructors and workbooks to promotional literature and registration. URISA assumes all financial risks. A minimum attendance guarantee is required.

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Chapters that are interested in sponsoring a workshop should contact their CRC representative or Headquarters well in advance to make arrangements and to request a list of available workshops and instructors.

Steps for Organizing a URISA Workshop

1. Decide tentative date(s) well in advance of workshop event(s).
2. Determine how much the Chapter is willing to charge for attendance.
3. Decide whether the Chapter wishes to offer participants continuing education units (CEU credits).
4. Call CRC Representative to request updated list of topics and instructors.
5. Choose desired topic(s).
6. Contact certified instructors from list to determine their availability and whether they will charge honoraria or require expenses to be reimbursed.
7. Evaluate the workshop budget. Multiply expected attendance by the amount to be charged and compare this to total expenses. Expenses may include the workshop fee, speaker expenses and honoraria, duplication and binding costs for the workbooks, location and equipment rental, liability insurance, meals and refreshments for breaks, and printing and postage for promotional flyers. If expected revenues are less than anticipated expenses, the Chapter needs to re-think its workshop fee and number of workshops, or it needs to pursue additional funding. For example, local vendors may be willing to subsidize certain expenses in exchange for recognition at the event. The Chapter might also consider structuring the event as a “brown bag” in which participants bring their own lunch and the Chapter provides coffee, tea, and soda.
8. Select instructor(s) and confirm the date(s) and time(s) in writing. Be sure that the Chapter and the instructor(s) are in agreement as to what presentation equipment (such as video screens, overhead projectors, data shows, and microphones) the Chapter will provide at the workshop site. Adjust the budget as necessary to accommodate equipment requirements.
9. Make arrangements for room(s), presentation equipment, and meals and refreshments. See the section below on Conferences for more details on dealing with hotels and conference centers.
10. Contact CRC Representative or Headquarters to:
 - Obtain workbook originals.
 - Organize CEU material (if workshop is for CEU credits).
 - Arrange for payment of administrative fees.
 - Arrange for advertising of the event in general URISA calendars and publications, including the URISA home page.
 - Arrange for URISA to process all pre-registrations (if desired).

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11. Prepare promotional flyers and other advertising directed at Chapter members. Include pre-registration forms. If the Chapter is processing its own pre-registration, determine whether receipts and confirmation letters will be mailed or whether receipts will be distributed at the event. Be sure to factor any additional postage into the budget. Also, keep in mind that many public sector employees require six to eight weeks to get approval and cash advances for workshop pre-registration. Material should be mailed at least ten weeks before the event.
12. Process pre-registration payments (or allow URISA to process them). Adjust plans and budget based on number of pre-registrations.
13. Prepare evaluation forms for participants.
14. Organize and conduct on-site registration.
15. Hold the workshop, issue certificates, and collect the survey forms.
16. Pay all bills (and keep complete records of payments).
17. Evaluate the event.

What if there are no certified workshop instructors in our area?

URISA requires Chapters to use certified instructors to teach official URISA workshops. These instructors are experienced in delivering the workshop and have been evaluated positively by previous students. URISA takes pride in the strong reputation of its workshops throughout the industry, and the instructor certification process is a method of ensuring that workshop material is always delivered effectively.

URISA recognizes that there are many qualified professionals who are familiar with particular workshop topics but have never taught a URISA workshop (and therefore have not been certified to teach a workshop). By team-teaching a URISA workshop once or twice with a certified instructor, these qualified professionals can become certified themselves (assuming they receive positive evaluations from students and co-presenters). URISA is always seeking new instructors for all its workshops. Chapters are urged to identify candidates from within their membership to gain certification for a wide variety of workshop topics. Local instructors mean lower costs when Chapters sponsor workshops.

New instructors can team-teach at Chapter-sponsored workshops, at URISA's annual conference, or any time a URISA certified workshop is taught. Chapters should contact their CRC representatives to help get new instructors certified. The specific criteria used to certify new instructors are as follows:

Required

- Membership in URISA
- Current curriculum vitae or detailed resume on file at URISA
- Practical experience related to the workshop topic(s)
- Favorable evaluations from attendees at previous workshops

Preferred

- Advanced academic degree
- Previous experience as a session speaker or panelist in the workshop topic area
- Prior workshop experience
- History of publications in the topic area

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Can we create our own workshop?

URISA is always interested in fresh ideas for workshop topics. Planning and designing a new workshop is a lot of work, but it can be very rewarding. Chapters interested in developing a new workshop might consider forming a special committee or task force to develop the materials. This is a process that usually takes 6 months to a year. The basic steps are as follows:

- Contact the URISA Workshop Committee to recommend a topic area. Your CRC representative or Headquarters can put you in touch with this committee. The Workshop Committee will determine if this topic can stand on its own or if it overlaps too much with an existing workshop.
- If your topic overlaps with an existing workshop, you may be invited to review and update the existing workbook and curriculum to address your areas of interest. Teams of experts in their topic areas review workbooks periodically, and URISA is always looking for volunteers to assist in these reviews.
- If your topic is accepted for a completely new workshop, the first step is to prepare an outline of the curriculum. The outline should contain enough material to fill a full-day session. When the outline is completed, it should be submitted to the Workshop Committee for peer review.
- URISA workshops reflect the thinking of the industry rather than the individual viewpoints. For this reason, it is important to identify workbook contributors with different backgrounds and perspectives. Contributors should be willing to devote 80 to 120 hours for initial workshop development. The lead workbook compiler(s) should be willing to devote 120 to 160 hours. All contributors should review the outline, and the lead compilers should assign topic areas to different contributors for workbook development.
- Once the outline is approved and the material is developed, the workbook compilers should organize all materials, including all visual aids and supporting documentation, into a draft workbook. The full draft should be circulated among contributors for review and revisions. The revised draft should be submitted to the Workshop Committee for final peer review and approval.

Workbook materials are reviewed against the following criteria:

- No sales pitches for products, services, or companies are permitted.
- No claim of copyright by persons or corporations is attached to any part of the workbook except by URISA.
- Any copyrighted material contained in the workbook is used only with explicit permission of the owners.
- Author biography paragraphs are included at the beginning.
- Section and page numbers are centered at the bottoms of the pages.
- The Table of Contents has a logical flow.
- Appropriate references are provided.
- The content of the text is consistent with title.
- Overlap with other workshops is strictly limited.

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- The content is consistent with URISA philosophy and other URISA workshops.
- Text is clear, comprehensive, and current.
- Graphics are clear, illuminating, and support the text.
- There are no misspellings or grammatical errors.

Co-sponsored Activities

Many Chapters co-sponsor activities with local Chapters of related professional associations, such as APA, APWA, ASPRS, IAAO, and GITA. This approach recognizes that in some areas there are more conferences and workshops than the market can support. This approach can also reduce risk, provide more interesting or varied programs, encourage interdisciplinary communication, and offer enjoyable and profitable networking opportunities.

Sponsored Activities

In some areas, local or regional government agencies have co-sponsored Chapter activities that are of importance to their employees. In some cases, the costs have been carried by the agency and attendance has been free. These efforts have succeeded where there is a strongly felt need for education or training in the area.

Conferences

The most ambitious activity offered by Chapters is the local or regional conference. These conferences can span two to four days and can be conducted solely by the Chapter, in cooperation with other associations, or with help from URISA Headquarters.

The following Conference Planning Checklist is a very high-level guide to assist Chapter with conference planning. The guide is not all-inclusive and is intended only to aid those who have not had experience in organizing Chapter conferences.

In planning a local or regional activity such as a workshop or conference, many factors should be considered. These include the experience of the members of the Chapter in conference or activity planning, the number of volunteers, the Chapter's financial status, and the need for or interest in such an activity. If there are questions in any of these areas, advice can be obtained from Headquarters or the Chapter's CRC representative.

Headquarters Assistance

URISA Headquarters can advise Chapter leaders and can even help plan and conduct all or part of the function. This includes coordinating registration, producing the program, and distributing promotional material. These services can be provided to the Chapter at cost, or the Chapter can invite the international organization to co-sponsor the conference and share in the revenues. Chapters that are sponsoring their first conference or that have lost the participation of their most experienced volunteers are strongly encouraged to use the services of Headquarters.

General Event Planning

In order to plan effectively for a regional or local event, it is a good idea to conduct a survey to determine such things as location preference, session topics of interest, desired workshops, guest activities, and types of educational tours. Committees or subcommittees should be set up as soon as possible to address such issues as site selection, technical sessions, workshops, publications, external relations, exhibits, finances, registration, educational tours, and social

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arrangements. In addition, the theme of the conference or event needs to be determined as soon as possible. Chapters may also wish to consider obtaining event liability insurance.

Conference Setting

One of the first things to do is to establish the setting (time and place) of the local or regional event. Convenience, accessibility, quality of facility, quality of service, and cost are all primary factors in the site selection process. A date and time for the event should be determined. Be sure to consider holidays and dates of other local and national conferences that can have an impact on your planned event. It is best to have more than one set of possible dates before taking the next step, deciding on the place.

Before shopping for accommodations for the conference or event, the scope and projected attendance need to be considered so that space and function requirements can be determined. Issues to be considered include:

- The number of sleeping rooms per night,
- The number of session and/or workshop rooms needed per day,
- The number of people,
- The number and size of booths,
- The number of food functions and the number of people at each,
- Large room requirements for such things as plenary sessions
- The number of people.

With this information in hand, the Chapter can then shop for a hotel or other location that can accommodate its needs, including space, quality, cost, and location. A year to eighteen months ahead is required to book a facility for a conference of any significant size. If the Chapter is attempting to hold a smaller conference or a low-budget conference, it may wish to investigate the use of public facilities such as local government assembly halls or schools.

After getting as much information as possible via telephone calls, the Chapter should visit three or four promising sites before selecting the conference location. After the decision of time and place has been made and the contract has been signed with the hotel, several activities need to happen concurrently:

- An event announcement should be sent as soon as possible.
- An invitation to exhibit should be sent to the vendors.
- The technical sessions and speakers need to be determined.
- Workshop arrangements need to be made.
- Educational tours need to be arranged.
- Social functions should be planned.

Publications

A Publications Committee should first send an event announcement flyer to prospective attendees with the basic information of theme of the event, time, place, and costs. Notification of the event should reach as many people and in as many ways as possible. Methods to accomplish this include:

- Make announcements at your Chapter meetings.
- Notify URISA Headquarters and adjacent Chapters.
- Advertising in local newspapers and in trade journals.
- Put a notice in URISA News and in the URISA online meeting calendar.
- Contact local colleges and universities.
- Have your corporate members advertise it.
- Announce it in your own Chapter newsletter and on your Chapter website.
- Print flyers for your members to distribute at their workplace.

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- Mail an event announcement flyer.

This flyer should be sent out three to six months prior to the event and could take the form of a simple postcard or a tri-fold brochure, depending on the amount of information known at that time.

The second mailing should be a preliminary program with the event details as follows:

- Conference theme
- Time and place
- Program of technical sessions (topics, speakers, and times)
- Descriptions of any educational tours, special workshops, and social events
- List of exhibitors and exhibit hours
- Event registration fees and pre-registration forms and deadlines
- On-site registration hours
- Hotel accommodation information

The preliminary program should be sent out two to four months prior to the event.

The final program should be printed to hand out on-site at the event registration and should contain the daily program of events, including the final program of technical sessions, educational tours (if any), workshops (if any), the final list of exhibits with the exhibit floor plan, and social functions.

Show Decorator

The conference center or hotel staff can recommend show decorators for the Vendor Exhibit Hall. Before selecting the show decorator, a Chapter should get the cost proposal in writing, ask for references, and visit a current show put on by the decorator. After the selection of the show decorator, the Chapter should develop a floor plan and prepare a list of prospective vendors or exhibitors. A vendor package should be sent as soon as possible and should include the following:

- Letter of invitation (on Chapter letterhead and signed by the Chapter president)
- Show decorator's exhibitor service manual, customized with the Chapter's event name, dates, and contact person
- Exhibit area floor plan
- Booth registration form
- Conference registration form
- Membership application
- Exhibitor information sheet stating such things as booth charges (what is included), how booths are assigned, exhibits set-up and tear-down hours, exhibit hours, cancellation policy, and any additional information.

Technical Sessions

General topics, or tracks, need to be determined by a Technical Sessions Committee based on survey results. In order to secure the best speakers, early planning and arrangements are crucial.

Workshops

In almost all cases, it is recommended that Chapters make arrangements for their workshops through URISA. The speakers and workshop materials are already in place and can be brought to the Chapter's desired location, provided the Chapter makes arrangements early. (See information above on workshops.)

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Educational Tours

Private companies, governmental agencies, and colleges and universities may have systems related to the theme of a conference, and most are happy to “show off” their efforts. Early coordination and arrangements are critical. Attention to details is very important. These include duration and schedule of tours, coordination between the URISA Chapter and the company/university, the group size, transportation, etc. (Note that liability insurance is a must if you provide transportation for tours.)

Social Functions

Social functions help set the tone of the conference or event and can contribute to the long-lasting impressions of the quality of the event. It is important to have an icebreaker function early in the event time span to allow for friendly networking. Attendance policies need to be determined in advance and controlled through the issuance of tickets. Vendors will be attracted to conferences that promise to hold social functions in or near the Exhibit Hall.

Event Budget

If carefully planned, a conference can be both a service to members and non-members within the region and a source of funds for future educational activities sponsored by the Chapter. In order to accomplish this goal, however, a detailed budget must be established early in the event planning process. The use of a computer-based spreadsheet is a real help in this process, as it can be easily modified as numbers change. The spreadsheet can also be utilized for cost comparisons between different hotels and/or conference or event sites. A sample budget is included at the end of this section.

Many hotels and conference facilities require organizations to hold liability insurance before signing a contract for a major activity. Liability insurance protects the facility and the Chapter against claims of bodily injury caused by negligence of the organization. If the Chapter has a general liability policy, this may or may not be adequate, depending on the policy and nature of the event. Most conference facilities can provide assistance in obtaining the necessary event policy. Otherwise, Chapters should contact URISA Headquarters. When preparing the event budget, be sure to investigate whether event liability insurance should be included.

URISA International's general liability insurance may be sufficient for your Chapter event. This coverage is available if URISA International co-sponsors the event and signs the contract with the event facility.

Conference/Event Planning Checklist

The following can be used as a checklist for planning and implementing a regional or local conference or similar event.

1. Preliminary Analysis

Should we or shouldn't we? (Go/No Go Decision)

- Determine need or interest.
- Estimate potential attendance.
- Review Chapter' financial status.
- Ascertain Chapter's conference planning experience.
- Identify dependable volunteers.
- Consult with other organizations that may wish to co-sponsor the conference.

Deliverable: Yes or No decision

2. General Design

Lets Get Started!

- Obtain Headquarters support or ask URISA to co-sponsor the event.
- If desired, team with local co-sponsors.
- Establish conference or event sub-committees:
 - ◆ Site selection
 - ◆ Publications
 - ◆ Technical sessions
 - ◆ External relations
 - ◆ Finances
 - ◆ Registration
- Conduct member surveys
 - ◆ Location preference
 - ◆ Topics of interest
 - ◆ Exhibits preferences
 - ◆ Workshop preferences
 - ◆ Educational tours
 - ◆ Guest activities
- Determine the scope of the conference or event
 - ◆ Topic areas for technical sessions
 - ◆ Workshop topics
 - ◆ Vendor exhibits
 - ◆ Technical sessions
 - ◆ Educational tours
 - ◆ Co-sponsors

Deliverable: General Scope of Conference or Event

3. Detailed Design

Let's get organized!

- Evaluate survey results.
- Poll corporate members.
- Define co-sponsors.
- Finalize the conference or event theme and logo.
- Finalize scope of conference or event.
- Form other committees:
 - ◆ Workshops
 - ◆ Exhibits
 - ◆ Educational Tours
 - ◆ Social Functions
 - ◆ Guest Activities
- Decide on conference facility and dates.

- Sign contract.
- Estimate cancellation fee.
- Produce first conference announcement.

Deliverable: Conference or Event Announcement

4. Construction

Work and more work.

- Maintain communications with any co-sponsors.
- Organize the socials.
- Set up the technical sessions, including topic tracks, session topics, speakers, moderators, and a schedule.
- Arrange for the workshops.
- Contract with the Show Decorator.
- Organize the exhibits.
- Set up educational tours, including sites, transportation, registration, and fees.
- Arrange for door prizes from vendors.
- Develop the preliminary program.

Deliverable: Preliminary Program

5. Implementation

The Payoff

- Complete the final program.
- Arrange for conference evaluation forms and speaker evaluation forms.
- Conduct registration.
- Conduct and monitor the event (the conference chair should maintain communications with all subcommittee chairs throughout the event).

Deliverables: Final Program and the Conference or Event

6. Post Implementation Review

How did we do?

- Process conference evaluation forms and speaker evaluation forms
- Account for all revenues and expenses
- Conduct a post-conference meeting for all subcommittee chairs

Deliverable: Conference/Event Evaluation

Developing a Conference Budget

One of the first steps in planning a conference is the development of a proposed budget. The model below was developed based on budgets used for several statewide conferences. These were two-day conferences with approximately 750 registrants and speakers and 150 vendor representatives. Line items can be deleted or reduced for smaller meetings. For example, the Florida Chapter has an annual meeting with just under 300 registrants with a budget of approximately \$24,000. A description of each line item follows the model budget.

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Expenditures

Facility Rental	\$ 6,000
Meals	15,750
Breaks	7,200
Equipment Rental	3,500
Audio-Visual Technician	200
Security	350
Graphic Artist, Typesetting and Printing	6,000
Postage, Mailing, and Supplies	2,000
Speaker Travel and Honoraria	3,000
Exhibit Hall Set-Up	3,600
Electrical Work	3,600
Telephone	500
Temporary Clerical Assistance	3,500
Total	\$60,200

Revenues

Registration Fees	\$34,500
(500 registrants @\$50)	
(150 registrants @\$60)	
(50 students @\$10)	
Vendor Booth Rental Fees	35,000
(50 booths @\$600)	
(10 booths @\$500)	
(5 booths @\$0)	
Other Contributions	2,000
Total	\$71,500

Explanation of Expenditures

- Facility Rental - Chapters have several options when selecting meeting locations. The estimate above is based on rental fees for a city-owned conference center for one set-up day and two days of meetings. It covers two very large rooms for the plenary sessions and the vendor exhibit hall as well as five concurrent session rooms seating 100-200 persons each. A hotel facility might waive part or all of the rental fees if a certain number of sleeping rooms are booked. Most facilities do not charge for rooms where meal or social functions are held and the facility caters the event. Be sure to investigate whether the facility will require a separate event liability insurance policy as part of the contract.

- Meals/Breaks/Socials - Food is usually the largest expense in a conference budget. Catered meals in a facility are usually expensive, but not providing lunch can be risky, especially if there is a shortage of restaurants in the area. It simply takes too long out of the conference schedule for attendees to leave the facility. Vendors in the exhibit hall usually expect their heaviest traffic during lunch and breaks and are reluctant to display at a conference that does not provide these opportunities. The estimate above includes a box lunch, held in the exhibit hall, and a sit-down luncheon, both for 900 people. (Note: NEVER consider a buffet lunch for more than 100 people unless you have plenty of time or the caterer is willing to set up several lines). Break costs will vary depending on what is served. The above budget is calculated on \$7.50 per person for 900 persons for the whole conference with continuous coffee and soft drinks in the exhibit hall, four coffee and soda breaks (two with pastries or cookies) outside the concurrent session area. The social includes heavy hors d'oeuvres only, with a cash bar.

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- Equipment Rental - This cost also varies widely, depending on the sophistication of the equipment required. At a minimum, each meeting room should have a slide projector, overhead projector, screen, and microphones (if needed).
- Audio-Visual Technician - Some facilities require that their staff be used for certain equipment. This is usually an hourly charge.
- Security - With the large amount of expensive equipment located in most conference exhibit halls, it's a good idea to hire a security guard, at least during the time when the conference is not in session. Most facilities will assist you in hiring an off-duty policeman for this purpose.
- Artist/Typesetting/Copying and Postage, Mailing and Supplies - The costs here are heavily dependent on the number of mailings and other printed matter produced for the conference. Often a single printing/ mailing firm can provide all of these services as a package.
- Speaker Travel/Honoraria - Many speakers are willing to pay their own travel costs to the conference. It is important to weigh the value of the speaker against any travel costs a Chapter might have to reimburse. Some speakers require a fee. It is nice to offer an honorarium (\$200 - \$500) to major speakers.
- Exhibition Hall Setup/Electrical Work - The conference typically pays for a minimum set-up for each booth rented by an exhibitor. The amounts above represent \$120 per booth for 70 booths and include piping and draping, a sign, one draped table, two chairs, and two electrical outlets. Information should be provided to the vendors concerning additional equipment and services available at their cost for the show decorator and/or facility.
- Telephone - It is helpful to have a phone at the registration desk and in the exhibit hall. Data lines for exhibitors or presenters may also be required.
- Clerical Assistance - The amount needed for temporary clerical assistance depends on whether there is a group or agency providing administrative support for the conference. The more dependent the conference is on volunteers, the more hired assistance is needed.

Explanation of Revenues

- Registration Fees - These amounts are based on a \$50 early registration fee, a \$60 late/on-site registration fee, and a \$10 student fee (no meals). Each vendor booth includes two free registrations, and some conferences offer free registration to all speakers.
- Booth Fees - This estimate is based on \$600 for the first booth rented by a vendor and \$500 for each subsequent booth rented. Free booths can be offered to organizations, government agencies, universities, etc.
- Other Contributions - Vendors can be asked to contribute additional funds in exchange for recognition in the program or elsewhere. For example, one or several vendors might sponsor a break or provide equipment.

Section 6: Finances

It is essential for Chapters to establish and maintain a good financial base. The executive board is responsible for the Chapter's financial well-being. All financial transactions other than use of petty cash should require approval of the executive board or the Treasurer. Expenditures should always be documented by written requests and receipts. This section of the manual presents guidelines and alternatives for managing Chapter and section finances.

URISA's Chapters have a tradition of independence. In that spirit, URISA's constitution, bylaws, and policies, disclaims all responsibility of URISA for any actions or commitments of the Chapters.

Accounting

Various methods of accounting are available to Chapters. It is recommended that a simplified process be chosen. It is strongly recommended that accounting be done on a cash basis and that debts not be incurred. For ease of keeping records, it is recommended that the fiscal year coincide with the membership year.

Accounting Software

Software programs such as Quicken or Microsoft Money allow for a centralized and controlled record keeping function. The added benefit of such a system is that it is easily portable when Officers (Treasurer) change.

Bank Accounts

Chapters need bank accounts to manage their funds and to accept start-up financial assistance from Headquarters. To open a bank account, U.S Chapters must first obtain an IRS Employer Identification Number or *EIN* (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). URISA strongly advises against any individual opening a bank account on behalf of a Chapter.

The Treasurer will normally make deposits as money is accumulated. Withdrawals should always be made by check. Two members of the Board, usually the Chapter President and Treasurer, should sign each check. Provisions should also be made for an alternate in the event that the President or the Treasurer is unavailable for any reason.

Chapter bank accounts should serve the needs of all sections within the Chapter. Sections should not ordinarily maintain their own accounts. Depending on the banking situation and the type of account used, canceled checks may be used to keep track of financial transactions. The use of checks helps make financial record-keeping more accurate and provides a means of monitoring expenditures. While it is not customary for non-profit organizations to accumulate large sums of money, excess funds can be invested in short-term bank certificates in order to maximize Chapter income.

Petty Cash

The Chapter executive may need to buy items that involve small sums of money (for example, stamps). Since it is not always practical to pay for them by check, the Chapter may wish to create a petty cash fund. This fund can be established with the approval of the Board. The fund is opened by writing a check to the Treasurer for petty cash. Chapters may also wish to establish separate petty cash funds for their sections.

The Treasurer (and designated section leaders where applicable) are responsible for paying for small purchases from the petty cash funds. When most of the fund has been paid out, it is important to account for all expenditures by presenting the receipts and bills for all purchases at

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an executive meeting. With approval, another check is authorized to bring the petty cash fund back up to the agreed upon amount.

Guidelines for Reimbursing Expenditures

Expenditures incurred by a member of the Chapter for activities in support of the Chapter should be reimbursed; however, no officer or member of the Chapter should receive remuneration for services.

Guidelines for Waiving or Refunding Fees

Members may withdraw from the organization at any time. However, Chapters should not refund any portion of membership fees after they have been collected.

Conferences and other events that have registration fees should have cut-off dates established for cancellations that are eligible for rebates. These dates and the amount of the administrative fee for cancellation should be clearly stated on the registration form.

Chapters may choose to waive registration and event fees (with prior approval of the executive board) for Chapter officers, invited speakers, or event volunteers. If the Chapter is uncertain about conference revenues, it may be more appropriate to offer volunteers financial assistance for attendance at future conferences.

Keeping Records

Chapter financial records must be open to the membership, the executive board, and the URISA Board, upon request.

Accounting Software

Software programs such as Quicken or Microsoft Money allow for a centralized and controlled record keeping function. The added benefit of such a system is that it is easily portable when Officers (Treasurer) change.

Receipts

Accounting software provides for detailed record keeping; which is desirable. All moneys received by the Chapter should be entered into the program. Entries should include as much detail as possible, including the date, amount, source, and reason for income.

Expenditures

Bills should be paid by check whenever possible. Normally, the accounting program records transactions. When entering expenditures in this record, Chapters should give as much detail as possible, including the payee, amount, date, and reason. Chapters should obtain a statement, receipt, or invoice to cover every item that requires payment, even in the petty cash fund. This will facilitate clearance by an audit committee.

Budget

It is advisable that all Chapters develop an annual budget to cover anticipated Chapter activities. Organizing Chapters that wish to apply for a start-up grant from URISA must have detailed budgets. All Chapter expenditures should be tracked against the budget. A chart of accounts can be easily set up in the accounting program used. .

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Accounting Ledger

The accounting software doubles as the Accounting Ledger.

The Chapter Treasurer should maintain a single General Ledger that includes all Chapter and section transactions. Sections may wish to maintain unofficial ledgers as well.

Reporting

Treasurer's Reports

Each quarter, the Treasurer should submit a written report on the financial standing of the Chapter. The use of accounting software makes this task simple. In addition, the Chapter should prepare an annual financial statement. Although not required, URISA encourages Chapters to submit their treasurer's reports and annual financial statements to Headquarters. Financial statements will assist the Treasurer in completing forms for taxing authorities.

Auditors

For the protection of each Chapter, the financial records and accounts should be audited on an annual basis. Law may require this if the Chapter is incorporated. It is the duty of the auditors to review all financial transactions and prepare a formal report to the membership. When ready to conduct an audit, be sure to have available the following items: record books, bank statements, canceled checks, all receipts and statements, bank deposit books, and a copy of the previous year's audited financial statement. If an audit is done, the results of the audit can be forwarded to Headquarters.

Annual Report to Chapter Members

Chapters should provide an annual financial report to the membership at the annual general meeting. Chapters may include the report in the first newsletter after the annual general meeting, or they may choose to circulate it independently if the newsletter is sent to non-members or if there is no newsletter.

Fund-Raising

Chapters require funds to carry out their activities and to cover unforeseen events. Several opportunities exist for raising funds:

Membership Fees (Dues)

These fees should be high enough to cover all administrative expenses, including mail-outs and newsletter publications.

Some organizations offer incentives for recruiting new members. If meetings are held regularly, new members and their sponsors can be tracked. Then an award of a Chapter mug or similar prize can be given to the person who sponsors the most new members. Awards in the form of money are not recommended.

Corporate Sponsors

Corporate members and members' employers may be a source of funds and other resources, including the following:

- Donation of Office Resources – URISA encourages Chapters to use employer resources for mailings, newsletters, meeting facilities, and so on. Most companies and public agencies are

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Section 6: Finances

quite willing to provide this support. For government agencies, it is a good idea to have a formal request letter on file.

- **Corporate Membership**—Companies may be willing to pay elevated dues to become corporate members, particularly if they receive recognition in the newsletter, space at a local conference, a list of members, and related benefits.
- **Seed Money**—If approached, some companies and government organizations may be willing to provide up-front money to encourage an event that may be of interest to them. For example, if a local conference is planned on the topic of GIS and utilities, local utilities may provide some start-up money to ensure the success of the conference. Care should be taken to acknowledge all support in brochures and conference programs

Chapter Activities

Many Chapters have found that workshops, particularly official URISA workshops, are a reliable source of funds. Luncheons, on the other hand, are usually break-even events.

Advertising Space in Newsletter

This can be charged separately or included as part of a corporate membership. If a Chapter charges for advertising space, it is important to document rates and circulation information. It is also customary to provide a copy of the newsletter to each paying advertiser. Advertising revenue is Unrelated Business Income (UBI) and is subject to tax even for a tax-exempt organization.

Conference Booth Space

Most vendors are interested in participating in a conference and having the opportunity to meet members. Booth fees are a good source of revenue. Vendors may also be willing to sponsor meals and breaks, which can help defray the costs of an event.

Tax Implications of Fund-raising Activities

U.S. Chapters should be aware that federal regulations require filing additional tax forms if more than \$1,000 gross income in a year from an unrelated trade or business activity such as advertising revenue or mailing list sales. Contact URISA Headquarters for more information.

Section 7: Legal Issues

Legal issues are becoming increasingly important to URISA Chapters. The CRC, in cooperation with the URISA Attorney, is attempting to deal with these issues on a prioritized, step-by-step basis. Consequently, this section may change from year to year.

Incorporation

URISA encourages Chapters to incorporate and seek tax-exempt status. Chapters should consider the following advantages and disadvantages, which are adopted from *Fundamentals of Association Management*, published by the American Society of Association Executives.

Advantages of Incorporation

- **Limited Liability**—As a legal entity, the non-profit corporation is liable for any debts incurred, and for court judgments or settlements against it. A non-profit corporation can sue and be sued in court. Generally, the reach of its creditors and the courts is limited to the corporation's assets. Individuals affiliated with the corporation - its founders, officers, executive, and members - are not personally liable. Liability can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, however, and individual laws on liability should be reviewed.
- **Tax Exemption**—A non-profit organization may be eligible for tax benefits. The organization should apply to the appropriate taxing authority to determine qualification for tax exemptions. Recent tax law changes should be investigated before securing tax-exempt status. Chapters should be aware of any related restrictions on lobbying that may affect their goals and activities, particularly if members are interested in promoting certain public policies.
- **Legal Life** – A non-profit corporation is a legal entity with a life of its own, existing separate and apart from the people who helped create it. It is guaranteed all the rights and powers that a natural person would have under the laws of the home jurisdiction.
- **Continuous Existence**—An incorporated non-profit organization has substance and permanence even though its members may come and go. Because of this stability, banks and other financial institutions usually view an incorporated organization more favorably than a non-incorporated group.
- **Organizational Formality**—Incorporation places the purpose and structure of an organization above the personal interest and differences of its members. To incorporate, a Chapter must formally organize with written articles of incorporation and bylaws.
- **Low Postage Rates** – In the U.S., a qualified non-profit corporation can use U.S. Mail at substantially lower rates. This requires filing a special permit with the U. S. Postal Service.

Disadvantages of Individual Chapter Incorporation

- **Cost** – It costs money to create and incorporate or register a non-profit organization. The registration and filing fees vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In addition, it may be necessary to hire an attorney to process the incorporation paperwork.
- **Paperwork**—As a legal entity, the Chapter is subject to certain official documentation obligations that can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In most cases, the state or provincial authority responsible for the registration or incorporation of societies has procedural manuals or instructions.
- **Lack of Flexibility**—A registered society or non-profit corporation is subject to all the laws of the jurisdiction in which it is incorporated and therefore is held accountable to operate in accordance with its chosen bylaws and articles of incorporation.

Tax Exemption and Tax Obligations

U.S. Chapters

For several years URISA attempted to obtain a group tax exemption for U.S. Chapters. The IRS ultimately denied the request. Thus Chapters are not covered by URISA's tax-exemption-profit status. **Each Chapter must file and obtain state and federal tax-exempt status on its own.** URISA Headquarters will assist Chapter leaders in completing the necessary paperwork. URISA Headquarters has prepared a lengthy general summary of the various tax obligations a Chapter might incur, going into some detail on the federal taxes. The officers of every Chapter should familiarize themselves with this report. Contact URISA Headquarters if more specific advice is needed.

Tax-exempt organizations must file legally required forms with taxing authorities annually. The URISA Headquarters will assist Chapter treasurers in completing the necessary forms. Chapters should make provisions for their treasurers to provide training to elected successors.

Chapters that fail to obtain state and federal tax-exempt status, and to submit required returns, risk liability for back taxes, penalties, and interest against the Chapter and possibly the officers personally. Chapter leaders are urged to contact URISA Headquarters with questions, and to ensure that Chapter tax obligations are met.

Canadian Chapters

Canadian Chapters often apply to the provincial ministries responsible for agencies and societies in order to be recognized as non-profit agencies. This registration requires renewal on an annual basis along with the submission of the current list of officers to the ministry. Annual tax returns should also be filed with the federal government.

If a Canadian Chapter acquires a Business Registration Number (BRN) for the collection of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the receipt of GST credits, quarterly GST returns must also be filed.

Liability

Increasingly, both Chapters and the Association are concerned with the question of liability as it relates to conferences, workshops, and other events. The primary purpose of general liability insurance is to protect an organization from claims by members of the public alleging bodily injury caused by the negligence of the organization. Chapters have the following alternatives in limiting their liability:

- Buy event-specific policies for regional conferences.
- Include URISA International in Chapter events, and ask URISA International to contract with the conference hotels using its own liability insurance.
- Associate with a local, regional, or state agency for major Chapter events, and ask the agency to make the arrangements with the hotels.
- Buy a general liability policy for the Chapter

Section 8: External Relations

Affiliate Organizations

In 1995, the URISA Board of Directors adopted a different way to work with existing state and local organizations that are not currently URISA Chapters. This partnership is called an affiliate relationship. It is a new kind of relationship in which state and local organizations and URISA can find mutually beneficial ways to share resources.

In an affiliate relationship, the state or local organization and URISA agree to share mailing lists, provide access to business partners, and share intellectual resources such as publications, speakers' bureaus, and workshops. For the state or local organization, becoming a URISA affiliate means expanded access to similar organizations across the country, URISA workshops and publications, and speakers' bureau. For URISA, the affiliate provides a mechanism to encourage organizations with missions similar to URISA's to network worldwide.

If an existing organization is interested in URISA affiliation, they should work with the local Chapter to send a letter describing the group and its interest in affiliation to Headquarters. Someone from the CRC will follow up with the local organization.

Memorandum of Understanding

Many Chapters find that there are other organizations in their area of jurisdiction that offer services and programs similar to those offered by the Chapter. Some Chapters have chosen to develop agreements with these organizations documenting a relationship that will be mutually beneficial. The content of the agreement is the responsibility of the organizations involved. These agreements are called Memorandum of Understanding. See Appendix F: Model Memorandum of Understanding for an example.

Relationships with Corporate Members

Many Chapters experience the need for funds to sponsor a special event such as a regional conference or a newsletter. There are opposing points of view on corporate sponsorship. One idea is that because corporate sponsors pay URISA International dues, local Chapters should not solicit them for money. Another point of view is that the local Chapter is another vehicle for corporations to reach potential customers and get product exposure. Many Chapters think this decision should be left up to the individual corporations.

The opinion expressed by one Chapter is as follows: "Corporations can be valuable sponsors for a newsletter and can entice people to a conference they might not otherwise attend. The local group should offer something in return for the sponsorship of a corporation (for example, advertisement space in a newsletter). On the other side, the local Chapter should not become the marketing arm of a vendor and focus either conferences or articles on one vendor."

The best way to encourage corporate participation is to maintain a list of vendors that serve the region and to contact these vendors periodically to offer the benefits of corporate membership. Chapters should start with the corporate sponsors of URISA because some of them may have local offices. Chapters should also review their membership databases to determine if any members' employers are candidates for corporate sponsorship of the Chapter. Another way to spot potential corporate members is to review newsletters and journals that serve the urban and regional information systems community.

Relationships with the Academic Community

One way to involve people from this community is to actively solicit members from colleges and universities. Chapters can elect an academic representative to the board or organize a meeting at an academic institution. Academic scholarships are another way to entice academic participation. Some organizations have designed pilot projects that involve university students. The academic community is a valuable resource to a Chapter.

Other ways of encouraging academic involvement include inviting department heads who share an interest in URISA issues to speak at Chapter meetings or conferences. Consider the continuing education needs of academic departments and associated professions. The academic community may be interested in putting on a joint seminar. Address with them how URISA workshops may be offered for academic credits. Investigate the possibility of the Chapter functioning as a conduit for internship opportunities or independent research projects with the URISA community. Finally, encourage a Student Section in the Chapter and offer student scholarships.

Government Assistance

The Canadians are the most adept at getting direct financial assistance from government entities. In the United States, implicit in the law is the separation of non-profit organizations and state. However, a recent trend in government is to foster entrepreneurial activities, which can lead to co-sponsorship of conferences and other events. Government entities in the United States may not give direct financial sponsorship to events, but they may encourage employees to attend local conferences or be willing to excuse the employees from their jobs to participate at a conference. Although a URISA Chapter may not get a direct subsidy from a government entity, most often the bulk of the participation at an event will be either from government agencies or people who want to sell to government agencies.

Section 9: Newsletters

Chapter newsletters are a great vehicle for communicating with members and prospects. However, they require a lot of hard work and commitment on the part of editors and contributors. It is a good idea to form a newsletter committee or board of editors rather than assigning the newsletter to one volunteer. This approach will distribute the workload and keep a variety of ideas flowing. A newsletter committee is also a good way to get (and keep) the membership involved in Chapter activities.

Getting Started

Before starting a newsletter, the Chapter should clarify its purpose. The newsletter committee should document specific goals and a plan for funding the publication. The committee will need to decide on the number of issues it will produce and the size and format of the newsletter. It should also define milestones that can be used to evaluate the success of the newsletter.

The newsletter committee should prepare a detailed plan for each issue, including a theme and list of feature articles. One individual should serve as the chief editor and layout person. This person should also be responsible for soliciting advertisements, both for corporate members' products and services (if accepted by the newsletter), and for announcements of Chapter-related activities and calendars. Others can write or edit articles, either alone or with a member who would receive the byline for the article. Decisions on roles and responsibilities for production of the newsletter should be made in light of stated goals and timetables.

Here are some tips to keep in mind for the first issue:

- Consider making Newsletter a part of your Web Site or distribute it electronically.
- Stick to a simple two-column format unless the editor has previous layout experience and access to publishing software.
- Develop a recognizable masthead that incorporates the Chapter logo.
- Include links to relevant sites.
- Email or Mail notice of New Issue Postings.
- Include a calendar of events and a list of Chapter contacts.
- Offer space for member articles or commentary.

Many Chapters reprint articles from other publications. Before doing this, be sure to get permission from the original author and/or publisher.

Newsletter Finances

The average cost of publishing an eight-page black-and-white newsletter with a subscription base of 500 at six issues per year can be as high as \$3,000 (US). This includes printing and postage only. The time spent by contributors and editors is voluntary.

Chapters that are starting newsletters should budget enough money for the first three issues without advertiser input. Potential advertisers may be reluctant to buy space until the Chapter establishes a track record of producing a quality newsletter on a regular schedule.

Many Chapters Post Quarterly Newsletter Issues as a part of their Web Home Page or distribute them electronically, as a means of avoiding printing and postage costs.

Advertising and Sponsorship

Advertisements can help offset the cost of producing the newsletter. One form of advertising is the use of business card ads. The size is roughly 2" x 3.5" (5.08 cm x 8.75 cm). However, Chapters may need to shrink this a bit as the number of sponsors grows.

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Section 9: Newsletters

A high quality newsletter and good circulation statistics are attractive to advertisers. Chapters may be able to generate revenues in excess of their publication costs.

Chapters should be careful about using a single private-sector sponsor because readers may assume that sponsor controls the newsletter content.

A public sector organization may be willing to defray the cost of printing and/or mailing the newsletter. If the Chapter wishes to pursue this option, it is a good idea to obtain a written commitment. This protects the employees of the agency and assures the Chapter that it will be able to fund its newsletter for a known period of time. Chapters may have to forgo advertising revenues if a public agency defrays newsletter costs, so this approach can limit the revenue-generating potential of the newsletter.

Assembling the Newsletter

Paper Size

Newsletters generally have an 8.5" x 11" (21.6 cm x 27.9 cm) format for each page, which makes registration crop marks unnecessary. Newsletters are usually produced in multiples of four pages (using the front and back of 11" x 17" sheets). By reproducing the newsletter on 11" x 17" paper, it can be folded into an easy-to-read "booklet" that does not require a staple. The booklet can then be folded in half for mailing. If not using envelopes for the mailing of newsletters, remember to reserve room for the mailing address, the return address, and the postal permit or stamp in the newsletter layout. Postal rules determine the design and placement of the permit and other features, as well as the mailing size.

Newsletter Masthead

The masthead is a typographic element used on the first page of a newsletter to display the title of the publication. It is the most important visual element on the page and sets the tone for the newsletter.

A newsletter's masthead should include the Chapter logo, the name of the publication, and a tag line with the volume number and date.

Contents

When the newsletter committee plans an issue, it should strike a balance between different types of articles. For example, a newsletter might be planned as 30% regional news, 20% section news, 25% vendor activities, 5% editorials, 5% President's messages, 5% Chapter news, and 10% events calendar and vendor ads.

Solicit articles from the membership base, including input from the public, private, and academic sectors. Look for a mix of projects and new technology that will be of interest to the general membership.

Chapters should solicit members input on newsletter topics and format. This can be done by publishing a "comments form" or editor contact information in a regular spot. Member input will help the newsletter committee satisfy readers' expectations.

Publication Timetables

Set up a timetable for producing the newsletter. First, prepare a list of everything that needs to be done. Next, indicate the time required for the completion of each task. Note on a time chart the calendar date that each task is to be finished. If this is the first issue, allow contingency time for delays. If available, consider using project management software to keep things on schedule.

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When preparing the production schedule, be prepared for authors to be late in submitting promised articles. Set deadlines accordingly. Editors should set aside time to follow up with authors as the deadline for articles approaches.

Events Calendar

A calendar of Chapter activities is an important element of the newsletter. It helps members schedule time to attend the events and place budget requests for registration fees. To add dimension to the calendar, list URISA International events and other activities that may interest the membership. A complete schedule of URISA activities is available on the URISA home page or from Headquarters.

Newsletter Circulation

Some Chapters treat their newsletters as membership benefits and circulate them only to members in good standing. Others send newsletters to prospects in the hope of attracting them to Chapter events and securing their membership dues.

URISA encourages Chapters to send copies of their newsletter to Headquarters, their CRC representative and other Chapter leaders. This fosters communication within the organization.

Web, E-mail and Fax

Traditionally Chapters have printed paper newsletters and mailed them. Costs and logistical complexities, however, are causing many Chapters to fax their newsletters, e-mail them, or post them on a web site.

Web based Newsletters are becoming easier to create with most word processing software. Be aware of the layout of a portion of the Home Page devoted to the Chapter Newsletter. Digital pages can be one column, with an article index and a table of contents.

Mailing Labels

Member databases are useful in generating mailing labels. Chapters may wish to augment their databases with the names and addresses of other newsletter recipients (such as URISA Headquarters, Chapter CRC representative, and other Chapter presidents). Alternatively, Chapters may wish to keep these records in a separate file.

Chapters that do not have the facilities to print their own mailing labels can request them from Headquarters.

Postage

There are several ways to mail a newsletter. The selected approach determines the cost of postage and the amount of effort required preparing the newsletter for mailing.

The first method is to use first-class postage. This approach provides the fastest delivery. It is also the most expensive and time-consuming method. If the newsletter weighs more than one ounce (28.3 gm), the cost per piece will be higher than the cost of a first class stamp.

The second approach is to use bulk-rate postage. Contact the postal service for minimum requirements or to obtain a permit. In general, obtaining a permit requires:

- completing the paperwork for non-profit status (providing bylaws and other proof of activity),

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- drawing up a bulk-rate notice with the number provided by the postal service in place of the stamp,
- keeping an account at the post office to cover all mailings, and sorting the mail by zip code (which is made easier by printing mailing labels from a sorted digital database).

Bulk postage rates are about half of first-class rates. However, the postal service requires an annual fee for the bulk rate permit. The discount on postage may not cover the cost of the permit if circulation is low or publication is infrequent.

A third option is to share a bulk mail permit with other organizations in the region in order to meet the minimum postal service requirements. This requires careful coordination of publication schedules.

Finally, a Chapter may wish to use the services of a mailing agency. In some cases, these agencies will also print, fold, and label the newsletter. This method often obtains a sponsor to fund the distribution.

Section 10: Headquarters Assistance

Chapters benefit in tangible and intangible ways from international recognition of the URISA name and the logo. Association with the parent organization provides Chapters with a reputation that attracts potential corporate and individual members.

In order to maintain active Chapter status and to keep an open line of communication between Chapters and URISA, the **Chapters are required** to file the following with Headquarters:

- Chapter bylaws and all subsequent revisions, which must be approved by the URISA Board of Directors
- Names and contact information for newly elected officers, which should be submitted immediately after Chapter elections

URISA also encourages Chapters to submit their annual financial statements to Headquarters.

Chapters are encouraged to call URISA Headquarters with any questions and concerns. URISA Headquarters offers assistance to both active and organizing Chapters. Assistance can include, but is not limited to, the following.

Start-Up and Operations Assistance

Start-up Grants for New Chapters

URISA will provide a one-time grant of \$200 to new Chapters to assist with the costs of Chapter startup or will provide mailings and other recruitment services to assist the Chapter in recruiting members.

Administrative Support

Headquarters can provide a variety of services to Chapters, including providing mailing lists, mailing labels, bulk rate mailing services, assistance (at direct cost) with conference and meeting administration, and Chapter event publicity. These services are provided on a cost-recovery basis.

Workshops

Chapters can sponsor workshops similar to the ones held at the annual conference. Headquarters will provide assistance by identifying potential instructors and providing workbook originals. A complete brochure is available from Headquarters on request, explaining the several options available to Chapters for hosting URISA Certified Workshops. See Section 5 (Chapter Activities) for more information on URISA workshops.

Joint Development

Headquarters has developed several joint membership promotion options that benefit Chapters. Contact URISA Headquarters for additional information.

Conference Management

Headquarters can provide a variety of conference and meeting management services to Chapters, from hotel contract negotiations to registration and on-site management. This allows the Chapter volunteers to concentrate efforts on program development, rather than logistics.

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Section 10: Headquarters Assistance

Model Constitution and Model Bylaws

The CRC developed a Model Constitution and Model Bylaws that can save work and research for those starting new Chapters.

Employer Identification Number

All new Chapters in the United States should have an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Chapters can obtain an EIN from the IRS by completing form SS4. Having an EIN will enable the Chapter to open a bank account in the Chapter's name. Headquarters will answer any questions about filing form SS4.

Legal Issues

Tax Exempt Status and Tax Returns

Headquarters has developed a manual on this subject to help ensure Chapters are in compliance with all applicable tax laws. These were mailed to all Chapter Leaders in 1997 and 1998. If you need a copy of this document, which includes sample forms, please contact URISA Headquarters.

Incorporation

Incorporation is an essential step in protecting Chapter officers against legal action arising from Chapter activities. Headquarters will provide assistance in determining how to apply for incorporation.

Liability Insurance

The primary purpose of Directors and Officers Liability insurance is to protect individuals who serve in a leadership capacity from personal claims arising from the duties performed in an official capacity for the Chapter. Effective September 1998, URISA has made special arrangements to provide coverage of this nature to Chapter Officers and Committee members. To be eligible for this coverage, the individual must be working in an official appointed or elected capacity for the Chapter and must be a member of URISA International.

Organizational Umbrella Liability insurance protects the Chapter's assets when bodily injury or other damage is alleged due to the negligence of the organization. Claims of this nature often arise out of conferences or other events that are attended by members and non-members. Chapters who provide conferences and other events should consider obtaining coverage to protect the organization's assets. Chapters can obtain one-time event coverage for conferences and meetings (usually required by hotels and conference facilities) through Headquarters and URISA's insurance broker.

Education and Leadership Development

Chapter Leaders Forum

During the URISA Annual Conference, URISA sponsors a Chapter Leaders Forum (CLF). The Forum gives Chapter leaders an opportunity to share experiences and gain valuable information about Chapter programs and administration. There is no fee to attend the Chapter Leader's Forum, however regular conference registration fees apply if Chapter representatives want to attend the remainder of the conference. (The URISA Board in recent years has generously offered one complimentary conference registration for an officer of each chapter.)

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Section 10: Headquarters Assistance

Chapter Leaders Manual

The CRC developed this Chapter Leaders Manual as a reference guide for all Chapters. Each year, the CRC updates the manual, and Headquarters produces copies for the Chapter leaders. It is also available electronically.

Chapter Profiles

The CRC has compiled detailed information on each Chapter, including information on Chapter membership and activities. This information is updated each year and published in a Chapter Profiles Book that is made available to all Chapter leaders as a reference book. Condensed, one page profiles are also produced. The one-page profiles are distributed at the annual conference to prospective Chapter members. Chapters can use these profiles in their own promotional material. URISA compiles, publishes, and distributes the profiles as a service to the Chapters.

Standards and Policy Guidance

A number of initiatives are underway, such as the work of the URISA Standards Committee, which deal with issues of interest to Chapters. Chapters can provide input to, and receive information from, these committees.

Chapter Booth

URISA provides a free Chapter booth at its annual conference from which the one-page profiles are distributed. Chapter leaders and CRC members volunteer at the booth and encourage conference attendees to join their local chapter..

Web Access

URISA provides a WEB site <<http://www.urisa.org>> with links to conferences, resources and Chapters.

This site also provides a portal for members to view previous conference proceeding papers. This searchable repository is available by typing in a user name and password.

Section 11: Model Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules that define the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of the officers and members of an organization. They guide the organization in carrying out the purposes for which it was formed. A Model Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws were developed by the CRC (formerly called the Chapter Task Force) in June 1992 and revised in June 1996. They have been approved by the URISA Board of Directors and are available on diskette from Headquarters.

See Appendix E for the Sample Model Constitution and Chapter Bylaws.

Section 12: Sections within Chapters

Sections are geographically distinct sub-units within existing, active URISA Chapters. Their sole purpose is to provide a forum for serving the professional development needs of Chapter members within smaller geographic regions.

- Development of sections can be advantageous if the geographic area covered by the local Chapter is large and members find it difficult to attend regularly scheduled meetings because of travel time and distance.
- Development of sections can be disadvantageous if the benefits of increased ease of access to regular meetings no longer outweigh the costs of increased time commitments of Chapter leaders and additional Chapter bureaucracy.

Budgets and other commitments often make attendance at local URISA Chapter meetings difficult enough without the added burden of extensive travel to get there. Therefore, the development of sections within the existing Chapter structure is beneficial when the geographic region covered by the Chapter makes regular attendance at meetings and events difficult or impossible for Chapter members.

It is important to note that, at this point, only geographic considerations should be used to decide when to develop sections. Sections should not be used to accommodate special interest group (SIG) initiatives within the Chapter.

Purpose of Sections

Provide professional development

Sections function similarly to Chapters by offering regular meetings with topics of interest to members. A section may organize day-long seminars, tours, speakers, and/or social events that are of general or specific interest.

Communication

A section is a conduit for communication between its members and the Chapter organization. It also provides members with local networking opportunities. However, sections should invite all Chapter members to their events. This can be accomplished through the Chapter's newsletter and supplemental mailings to members.

Section Guidelines

- Section members must be Chapter members.
- Sections should not charge or collect dues. The Chapter should fund section activities out of the Chapter budget. In its section plan, a Chapter should identify how funds will be collected from, and allocated to, sections. Chapters should budget specifically for planned section activities.
- Sections are encouraged to contribute regularly to the Chapter's newsletter. The Chapter leaders responsible for the newsletter should actively seek participation from section leaders. In the interest of holding down postage costs and ensuring that all Chapter members are aware of section activities, sections should not circulate their own newsletters. If the needs of the section become such that a newsletter is required, the section may wish to consider becoming a Chapter.

Developing a Plan for Sections

Chapters interested in forming sections should develop a Section Plan. This should be done before authorizing any new sections and should fully utilize the ideas of those individuals interested in starting the section(s). The Chapter should submit its Section Plan to URISA Headquarters for review and comment. The Chapter should also submit significant changes to the Section Plan to Headquarters. Chapters that have already formed sections should also consider developing Section Plans. By planning for section development, a Chapter can better serve the needs of current and future members, while adapting to growth.

Following are guidelines for a Section Plan:

Geographic Requirements

The plan should identify current and anticipated activity within the Chapter's geographic region. Since sections exist primarily to ease the burden of travel to meetings, sections should be planned around centers of activity. Note that this does not preclude the possibility of moving meetings from site to site to provide changes in venue and professional development opportunities.

Membership Requirements

Section members must be members of the Chapter. In the Section Plan, a Chapter should indicate whether section membership is assigned based on member address or member request. Chapters permitting memberships in more than one section will need to adopt more complex accounting procedures for allocating funds.

Organizational Structure

Since section development will vary from Chapter to Chapter, a flexible officer structure is recommended.

Each section must have a presiding officer or leader. The Chapter's Section Plan should define this position and indicate whether the office is elected by the membership or appointed by the Chapter Executive Board. The presiding officer of each section, or a designated liaison, should sit on the Chapter Executive Board. A Chapter may require a section to have other officers. Chapters should state in their Section Plans whether Chapter officers could simultaneously serve as section officers. A Chapter may approve different organizational structures for each of its sections as long as this is documented in the Section Plan.

Chapter-Section and Chapter-Headquarters Relations

- **Use of the Chapter Name and Logo**—Before using the URISA name or logo, or the Chapter name or logo, the section should consult the Chapter about the specific event or publication. The Chapter must ensure that the URISA name and logo are used properly. The Section Plan should identify procedures for approving the use of names and logos.
- **Coordinating Chapter and Section Schedules**—In the Section Plan, a Chapter should assign an officer to be responsible for coordinating activity schedules. Sections must consult with this officer prior to setting dates for section events.

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- **Managing Funds**
 - ◆ **Legal/Tax Exempt Status of Section.** Chapters should consult local laws to determine if their sections qualify for tax-exempt status under the Chapter umbrella. If all Chapter activities are coordinated and funded by the Chapter, this is probably the case. However, Chapters are encouraged to discuss this issue with local legal counsel or Headquarters. This issue should be addressed during the development of the Section Plan.
 - ◆ **Budgets.** Section activities, including projected expenses and revenues, should be included in the Chapter budget. This budget is the responsibility of the Chapter Treasurer and must be approved by the Chapter's Executive Board.
 - ◆ **Accounting procedures.** All Section revenues and expenses should be accounted for as Chapter revenues and expenses for the purpose of the Chapter's annual report and financial statements. Cash flows should be itemized by section for internal book keeping. Sections may wish to track their own cash flows as a quality control measure.
 - ◆ **Bank accounts and cash management.** Chapters should manage a single bank account to serve the needs of all sections as well as the Chapter itself. The Chapter Treasurer may issue petty cash checks to section leaders, but the Chapter Executive Board should approve major expenses and using checks signed by designated Chapter officers.
- **Mailing Lists and Other Headquarters Services—**Sections should act through the Chapter to request Headquarters services. The Chapter should designate a contact person for such actions.

How a Section Becomes a Chapter

Sections are not encouraged to become Chapters if this will harm the Chapter organization. Each Chapter should therefore include within its Section Plan provisions addressing this eventuality, with the process to be followed by the section clearly defined.

In order to qualify as a Chapter, a section must initially meet all existing URISA International requirements for the establishment of a Chapter. Sections wishing to become Chapters should submit a formal request to URISA Headquarters fully documenting the reasons for seeking Chapter status. Each request will be evaluated independently, based on the submitted documentation.

Section 13: Maintaining Active Chapter Status

In order to maintain active Chapter status, a Chapter must conduct activities and manage its finances. Occasionally, due to changes in geographical needs or because of diminished interest, a Chapter's organizational status must be reconsidered. Reasons for this re-evaluation might include:

- A membership base that has become too small to continue to provide a workable pool of meeting participants and/or Chapter leaders, resulting in burn-out for those staying active within the organization.
- A geographical division of the Chapter that no longer fits members' needs, whether it be too big or too small.
- A lack of activity due to competition from other professional organizations.

When one of these situations arises, the Chapter can work closely with its CRC representative, Headquarters, active and potential members, and other professional organizations to bring about the appropriate level of change. In some cases, these efforts can revitalize the Chapter. In other cases, it may be necessary to dissolve the Chapter.

Dissolution Process

Through regular communication with Chapter leaders and annual updates of the Chapter profiles, CRC representatives become aware of Chapter's desire to change its service area or may discover a lack of activity for an extended period of time.

Upon recommendation from the CRC representative, the CRC will conduct a study of the Chapter with regard to activities during the past year, as well as plans for upcoming events and activities. In addition, every attempt will be made to contact known Chapter leaders and URISA members within the geographic region served by the Chapter, soliciting their advice as to what should be done. If there continues to be no activity, or if the existing Chapter is soliciting the change, the CRC will then prepare a recommendation to the URISA Board of Directors.

Whether the recommendation is the result of members' desire to change or because of inactivity, the following steps will be undertaken upon recommendation of the CRC:

1. The CRC will formally recommend that the URISA Board of Directors assign *inactive status* to the Chapter. This is similar to the *organizing status* incurred during the start-up of a new Chapter.
2. The Board will approve or deny the request.
3. URISA will notify the local Chapter leaders and URISA members within the Chapter area, by mail or by an announcement in the URISA News, of the change in status.
4. Following the Board's recommendation, during a period of approximately six (6) months, the Chapter will have the opportunity to renew itself, or to make plans to join with another Chapter.
5. If there has been no activity, the CRC will recommend that the Board formally dissolve the Chapter. Upon dissolution, the Chapter must return any remaining treasury funds to Headquarters, as specified in the Bylaws, in order to protect previous Chapter leaders from liability.

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Section 13: Maintaining Active Chapter Status

There may be other special circumstances that would result in the dissolution of a Chapter. The CRC and Headquarters will handle these situations on a case-by-case basis.

What URISA Will Do To Help

The CRC and Headquarters have resources available to help Chapters that are interested in renewal. Besides as much moral support as URISA can muster, these resources include the following:

- Mailing lists of known URISA members and prospects in the geographic area served by the Chapter.
- Copies of the *URISA Membership* brochure for distribution.
- Limited assistance with financial management.
- Contact lists of other Chapter leaders throughout the US and Canada.

Once *inactive status* is assigned, a Chapter may be considered anew for start-up grant assistance for mailings and other activities.

If continuation of the Chapter is desired, members should consider the wide variety of means available to boost membership. This could include something as simple as a luncheon meeting to gauge interest, or combining forces with a university or vendor for a mini-seminar, or a one-time joint meeting with another professional organization. It is the CRC's intent to encourage activity within the Chapters, not to see them dissolve.

Appendix A: Sample Petitions for Recognition as a URISA Chapter

Following are two examples of petitions for recognition as a URISA Chapter. These petitions are the simplest and the most complex on file. Both are acceptable; however, most petitions fall somewhere between the two examples.

Example 1

We, the undersigned, do hereby petition URISA for organizing status of the Oregon Chapter.

Example 2

A group of members and non-members of URISA have held three meetings to discuss the possibility of forming a Quebec Chapter of URISA.

There are already other organizations interested in the field within Quebec such as the Montreal and Quebec Chapters of the Canadian Association of Cartographic and Geodetic Sciences, the Quebec Association of Municipal Geomatics, the Quebec Association of Municipal Information Systems, the Quebec Order of Professional Land Surveyors, and the Quebec Management Information Federation, but none of them acts as an umbrella association as far as geomatics are concerned. We have had discussions with representatives of the various groups, and there are representatives of most of these groups among the team members in good standing who have signed the request to have a Chapter created.

A. 1990-1991 Activities

The activities of the first year of operations will be centered on the setting up of a calendar of events to be held by the Chapter and other organizations as well as the holding of at least three events before the conference in San Francisco. The meetings to be held in conjunction with other organizations are:

- Two-day study session in March
- One-day information session on May 1st with the Quebec Union of Municipalities
- Exhibit on new technology on May 8-9
- Meetings with the users group of the Quebec Government
- Meetings to get ready for submitting support documents to promote the future hosting of the URISA Conference in Montreal

Other activities will be developed as soon as we receive organizing status.

B. Request for "Start Up" Grant

We would also like to request a starting up grant of \$200 to help us get organized to be made to the order of the Quebec Chapter of URISA.

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Appendix A: Petitions for Recognition

C. 1990-1991 Budget

Revenues

1.Member Dues (100 members x \$10 Can)	\$ 1,000.00
2.Start up subsidy (\$200 US)	\$360.00
3.Registration at Chapter's Conferences (300 participants x \$30)	\$9,000.00
4.Taxes on Items 1 and 3	\$700.00
TOTAL	\$11,060.00

Expenses

1.Meeting Expenses and Secretarial Work	\$3,000.00
2.Postage and Office Supplies	\$1,000.00
3.Conference Expenditure	\$3,000.00
4.Tax Refund to Government	\$700.00
TOTAL	\$7,700.00

D. Officers

The persons mentioned hereunder were appointed as officers until the first annual meeting of the Chapter to be held sometime in the spring of 1991:

E. Formal Petition

President: Clause Langlois
Vice President: Jean-Jaques Chevallier
Secretary and Treasurer: Luc Larocque
Clause Langlois
1, Place du Souvenir
C/O. 442, Succ. St-Martin
Laval, QC
H7V 3Z4

REQUETE POUR FORMER UN CHAPITRE
DU QUEBEC D'URISA
ATTENDU que le Québec compte actuellement
72 membres d'URISA
ATTENDU que la promotion des objectifs
d'URISA auprès de ses membres résidant au
Québec pourrait être grandement améliorée si
un chapitre du Québec était mis sur pied
ATTENDU en particulier que la géomatique
connait un essor important au Québec et qu'il
est nécessaire de bien informer les membres
des réalisations dans ce domaine
IL EST RESOLU PAR LES MEMBRES
SOUSSIGNES
DE DEMANDER au Conseil d'administration
de l'Urban and Regional Information Systems
Association de créer un chapitre du Québec de

REQUEST FOR THE FORMATION OF A
QUEBEC CHAPTER OF URISA
WHEREAS there are presently 72 URISA
members in good standing residing in the
Province of Quebec;
WHEREAS the promotion of the URISA
objectives to the URISA members residing in
the Province of Quebec could be greatly
improved if a Quebec Chapter were created;
WHEREAS geomatics is being strongly
developed in Quebec and there is a need to
inform the URISA members of the experiences
in this field;
IT IS RESOLVED BY THE UNDERSIGNED
MEMBERS
TO ASK the Board of Directors of the Urban
and Regional Information Systems Association

l'Association.

| to set up a Quebec Chapter of the Association.

Appendix B: Model Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws

Model Constitution

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these Constitution and Bylaws, this Chapter is organized and operated exclusively for educational, charitable or scientific purposes as meant within the meaning of section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, including for such purposes the making of distributions to organizations exempt from Federal taxation under section 501 © (3).

The Chapter shall not carry on any other activities inconsistent with URISA's tax-exempt purposes or not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any further Federal tax code) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future federal tax code).

No part of the net earnings of the Chapter shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the Chapter shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of section 501 © (3) purposes. No substantial part of the activities of the Chapter shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Chapter shall not participate on, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

All of the property of this Chapter, and accumulations thereof, shall be held and administered to effectuate its nonprofit purposes. Upon the dissolution of the Chapter, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the Chapter, dispose of all assets of the Chapter to such organization or organizations as the Board of Directors shall select, which are organized and operated exclusively for charitable, scientific or educational purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 © of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code).

URISA Chapter Leaders Manual

Appendix B: Model Constitution and Model Chapter Bylaws

Model Bylaws

ARTICLE I. CHAPTER NAME

The name of this organization is the _____ Chapter (hereinafter referred to as the Chapter) of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (hereinafter referred to as URISA).

ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Education. Recognizing a need to stimulate, encourage and otherwise provide for the advancement of an interdisciplinary approach to planning, designing, and operating urban and regional information systems, the objectives of URISA and the Chapter are (a) to provide an objective educational forum without political, social, financial or national bias, (b) to foster the exchange of ideas and studies focused on the planning, operation, and consequences of such information systems, (c) to promote professional interaction, stimulate research, encourage publication, and generally aid the advancement of its members and other organizations having related objectives.

Section 2. Equal Opportunity. Being mindful of the undesirable effects of institutionalized discrimination, the Chapter shall conduct its activities on a fair and equitable basis without bias. Further, the Chapter shall encourage and promote equal opportunity participation in all Chapter activities.

Section 3. Political Activity. The Chapter may provide testimony or participate in limited lobbying to influence legislation, but shall not expend a substantial part of its budget in these matters; nor shall it participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. It is the responsibility of individual Chapter members, officers and duly appointed representatives participating in any legislative process to be aware of legal and professional limits, and to seek necessary authorization and duly report such activity to URISA.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility. Any responsible individual or organization with a serious interest in the field of urban and regional information systems, in agreement with the mission of URISA, and approving of the objectives of the Chapter shall be eligible for membership in the Chapter.

Section 2. Categories. The categories of Chapter membership are:

- a) Regular or Individual
- b) Student
- c) Corporate
- d) Sustaining

Optional Memberships:

- x) Affiliate
- x) Associate
- x) Subscriber
- x) Complimentary
- x) Institutional
- x) Agency

Section 3. Duration. All members shall hold membership for a period of one year unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. The Chapter's membership year shall be from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the next year. (Optional: The Chapter's membership year shall be from January 1 of one year through December 31 of the next year.)

Section 4. Rights and Privileges. All dues-paying members shall have full voting and office-holding rights. Members shall be informed of the activities and progress of the Chapter through annual or more frequent reports, newsletters, and/or Chapter meetings.

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ARTICLE IV. CHAPTER MEETINGS

Section 1. Meetings. The Chapter shall hold regular meetings at a time and place as determined by the Chapter's Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as "the Board"). At least one meeting shall be designated as The Annual Meeting of the Chapter. Special Meetings of the Chapter may be called at any time by the President, at the request of a majority of the Board or upon the written petition of ten percent (10%) or more of the members in good standing.

Section 2. Quorum. At any meeting of this Chapter, a quorum shall consist of ten (10) or ten percent (10%), whichever is greater, of the members in good standing.

Section 3. Voting. At all meetings of the Chapter membership, all members not otherwise restricted by a special membership category and in good standing, shall have one (1) vote. Unless otherwise specifically provided by these Bylaws, a majority vote of the members present and voting shall govern.

Section 4. Rules of Order. The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* governs this Chapter in all parliamentary situations that are not provided for in the Chapter Bylaws.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Section 1. Elections. All officers and directors shall be nominated to office by the Nominating Committee prior to the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor when the slate is presented to the membership for approval. The nominees for all officer positions shall be active members of URISA in good standing and shall reside and/or work within the defined geographic area of the Chapter. No member shall hold more than one (1) elective office during a term.

Section 2. Tenure of Officers and Directors. Officers and Directors shall assume office at the close of the Annual Meeting. (Optional: Officers and Directors shall assume office at the beginning of the following membership year.) The President Elect shall be elected to serve one year as President Elect, one year as President and one year as Past President. (Optional: The President shall be elected to serve one year as President and one year as Past President.) Other officers and directors shall not serve more than two (2) successive terms in any position. The period of time an officer or director may serve, in completing the unexpired term of another officer or director, shall not be included when applying the foregoing limitation of terms. Officers and directors shall serve without compensation.

Section 3. Vacancy. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, other than expiration of tenure, the President Elect (Optional: the Vice President) shall automatically succeed to the Presidency. Vacancies in any other elective office may be filled for the balance of the term, by the Board at any regular or special Board meeting.

Section 4. Removal. Any officer or director may be removed from office by the Board if, after due and proper hearing, he or she is found guilty by the Board of neglect of duty, improper conduct, violation of these Bylaws, or other causes as defined by the Board. Removal of any officer or director shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all Board members.

Section 5. Duties of Officers. The officers of the Chapter shall minimally consist of the four following positions:

- a. The President shall be the chief elected officer and the official spokesperson for the Chapter. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the Board and Chapter membership. He or she must be an active URISA member in good standing.

(Additional option: The President shall appoint all committee chairpersons, and shall be an ex-officio member, with the right to vote, on all committees except the Nominating Committee.)

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(Additional option: The President may make and sign contracts and agreements, in the name of the Chapter, with approval of the Board and in accordance with guidelines set forth by the Board.)

- b. The President Elect (Option: The Vice President) assumes the duties of the President in the absence of the President. He or she performs other duties as the President and Board recommend. He or she must be an active URISA member in good standing.
- c. The Secretary shall prepare accurate minutes of all proceedings and meetings of the Chapter and Board. He or she must be an active URISA member in good standing.
- d. The Treasurer shall be responsible for managing the Chapter finances and shall handle the Chapter funds in accordance with procedures established by the Board. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the verification and filing of the Annual Chapter Report, which includes the Chapter's financial statement, and shall be responsible for all other reports and filings as required by other agencies. He or she must be an active URISA member in good standing.

Section 6. Board of Directors (Board). The Chapter Board of Directors shall be the principal governing body of the Chapter with full supervision and control over all Chapter business affairs. The Board shall be composed of the Chapter's officers and additional directors as defined by these Bylaws. The Board shall meet at least once a year at a time and place determined by the Board. Special Meetings of the Board may be called by the President or upon written petition signed by three (3) directors. The meeting shall be held at a time and place designated in the notice of the meeting. Actual notice shall be given to each Board member at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall state the purpose of the meeting. Business transacted shall require a majority vote of the directors present, unless a different vote is required by these Bylaws. The Board may transact business at a meeting, by a telephone conference call, by a telephone ballot, or by facsimile ballot. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

The following Section is optional:

Section 7. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be composed of at least three (3) elected officers including the President, and may include additional members as appointed by the President. The Executive Committee may act for the Board on all matters of business unless otherwise restricted by these Bylaws. Such actions shall be subject to ratification by the Board. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the President, or upon the call of two (2) Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee may transact business at a meeting, by a telephone conference call, by a telephone ballot, or by facsimile ballot. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

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ARTICLE VI. STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committees of the Chapter shall include a Nominating Committee appointed by the President and approved by the Board. Additional special and standing committees dealing with special topics including, but not limited to, finance, membership, publications, and conferences may be established as needed. The President, with approval of the Board, shall establish the duties and membership of such committees as appropriate to support the Chapter's needs.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended, revised, or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board, with subsequent approval by the URISA Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII. CHAPTER ADHERENCE

As duly chartered, the Chapter adheres to the URISA Bylaws and Constitution at the risk of the loss of its charter. URISA Bylaws supersede Chapter Bylaws. Use of the URISA name and logo by the Chapter must comply with URISA guidelines.

Appendix C: Model Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding

WHEREAS the Ontario geomatics community's interests are better served by co-ordinated and non-duplicative efforts by various non-profit organizations;
WHEREAS the Parties acknowledge that such co-ordinated action will ultimately strengthen these organizations' credibility individually and collectively and contribute to maximum retention of membership support; and
WHEREAS the Parties agree that mutual benefits can result from collaborative efforts;
The Parties, therefor, have reached the following understanding:

- **ARTICLE ONE**

The objective of this MOU is to establish a framework for co-operation between the Parties on the basis of mutual respect and benefit.

- **ARTICLE TWO**

Co-operation under this MOU may include the following areas of interest where appropriate:

- Co-ordination and co-sponsorship of program activities such as local branch/chapter meetings and conferences;
- Collaboration on the planning and implementation of member education initiatives, such as seminars, workshops and courses;
- Offering of preferential event registration fees to each other's members, upon mutual agreement of the event co-sponsors; and
- Other areas of mutual interest to be specified from time to time by the Parties.
-

- **ARTICLE THREE**

In order to implement co-operation under this MOU, the Parties will designate appropriate representative to identify specific co-operative activities and the details of implementation. With mutual consent, the Parties may enter into specific arrangements on the general provisions of the MOU.

- **ARTICLE FOUR**

Co-operative activities under this MOU will be subject to and dependent upon the financial support and human resources available to the Parties. No cost incurred by one Party will be assumed by the other Party unless otherwise agreed to in writing. In no event whatsoever shall either of the parties have authority to legally bind the other party.

- **ARTICLE FIVE**

This MOU will become effective upon signing by both Parties, and remain in force for a period of five (5) years, unless extended or terminated. This MOU may only be amended or extended by written agreement, and may be terminated at any time by either Party upon three (3) months written notice to the other Party.

