Chapter Resource Kit
(Updated January 2024)

This Chapter Resource Kit is designed to provide new chapters with a set of procedures to put in place and assist established chapters in maintaining their presence in the community. Included are the ways in which SfN can provide support and resources to chapters, and links to important information. Topics cover chapter management, governance, financials, membership, eblast guidelines, FAQs, and quick links.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recommended Practices for Chapter Management

SfN recommends these practices to manage your chapter.

- Hold at least one meeting per year.
- Reappoint or elect a chapter representative by a majority vote of the membership yearly.
- Submit a Chapter Annual Report once every two calendar years in order to remain an active chapter of SfN.
- Create a shared location for maintenance of Chapters files (e.g., tax filings, annual reports, rosters, bylaws, etc.).

Chapter Governance

SfN recommends these actions to govern your chapter.

- Hold at least one meeting per year.
  - Encourage active participation in activities run by your chapter and SfN
- Reappoint or elect a chapter representative by a majority vote of the membership yearly.
- Chapter representatives should serve terms no longer than three consecutive years. At the end of the three-year term, members must elect a new chapter representative by a majority vote.
- Adopt an organizational structure that includes a president or chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.
- Elect officers by a majority of votes. Bylaws should define election procedures.
- Appoint/elect a council or committee to help with special programs and activities.
- In times of leadership transition, ensure outgoing and incoming officers work together to exchange important information, including any existing files and establishing a "training period" for the new officers.

Chapter Financials

SfN recommends these protocols to manage your chapter's finances.

- Email chapters@sfn.org prior to soliciting funds to determine whether the supporter made an earlier commitment to SfN (this is a must).
- Seek matching funds for support from various foundations and local companies.
- Include all foundations, companies, and noninstitutional contributors that support SfN chapter activities in the Chapter Annual Report.
- Soliciting chapter donations:
  - Share with potential donors a list of activities needing sponsorship, such as travel awards, receptions, meetings, poster sessions, Brain Awareness Week activities, etc. Include details on sponsorship pricing.
  - Develop a list of benefits organizations would receive in return for their donation, such as acknowledgment in event marketing materials, name recognition, etc.
  - Prepare a legal contract (Donation Letter of Agreement Template) binding the institution to the commitment after an institution has agreed to make a donation. Include:
    - Sponsorship amount, including the duration of sponsorship

- Date sponsorship amount is due
- Details on sponsorship benefits
- Permission for chapter to use company logo for any advertisement related to sponsored activity
- Rights of both the institution and chapter in regard to said activity
- Liability if activity is cancelled or postponed
- Options in renewing sponsorship from institution
  - Overall, make the case that donations contribute to the education and development of neuroscience and the community.
- Consider nominating members of your chapter for the [Next Generation Award](). If chosen as a recipient, your chapter could win money from SfN.

Chapter Member Recruitment and Engagement

SfN encourages these practices to engage and recruit chapter members.

Target Students

- Share job opportunities within the field, scientific findings, and other updates.
- Volunteer to speak to college groups.
- Contact college career centers and student advisers to share new developments in the field and participate in college student job fairs.
- Co-sponsor events on campus or offer internships.

Establish a strong and active governance group

- Encourage members to volunteer for chapter leadership.
- Ensure leadership transitions are smooth.

Foster member contributions

- Ask members for their opinions.
- Use surveys to gather information on preferences and why they joined the chapter. Use meeting time wisely.
- Keep meetings short and effective.
- Adhere to an agenda to ensure meetings are concise and well-prepared.

Collaborate with others

- Join with other programs to co-sponsor [Brain Awareness Week]() and other activities.
- Look outside the neuroscience community; faculty/students who have a science background outside neuroscience may attend lectures/seminars.

Chapter eBlast Guidelines

SfN requires chapters to follow these instructions when submitting eBlast e-mail requests.

Chapters are able to request SfN to distribute information regarding chapter news and events to local SfN members via e-mail. E-mail Blasts traditionally include annual chapter meeting details, chapter lectures, and chapter outreach activities. Please note that all requests must be submitted by an official chapter representative or chapter officer with chapter representative approval.

Requests should include the text for the body of the e-mail message, a subject line for the message, a contact person for the information in the e-mail, any relevant attachments (e.g. a PDF), and the zip codes or range of zip codes in which the members who are to receive the message reside. Please note the text and attachments are subject to approval. Chapter eBlast requests must be sent to chapters@sfn.org.

To ensure fairness to all subscribers, SfN has established guidelines and operations for all eBlast submission requests. Please confirm that your correspondence meets our standards below before submitting your request.

Contact chapters@sfn.org. if you have general questions about our policies.

Submission Formatting

- Submit text in an **attached Word document**.
- Provide a suggested **subject line** for your email blast.
- Provide a **reply-to email address** affiliated with your institution or organization. Mass emails dispatched from Gmail, Yahoo, and other domains often filter as spam. As a result, all subsequent correspondence sent by SfN may be filtered as junk mail.
- Provide a **sender name**, usually is the name of your Chapter.
- Images can be inserted into the body of text, though we may edit this copy for clarity, length, and structure. Please attach the image files to your email request. Do not append them to the attached Word document.
- You will receive one preview of the email to review.
- We **cannot** transmit any attachments in our email blasts, such as PDF files.
- We **can** include hyperlinks to your event page, program, or website. Include them in the Word document.
- If possible, please provide a branded header measuring 600 pixels long and 100 pixels high. This will be positioned at the top of the email blast. Note, an SfN header will not be used.
- Identify your specific SfN geographic region and/or target audience. Include the **postal codes** for the areas you would like to reach.

Submission timing

- Provide a **five-day date range** within which you would like your email sent. You **may** also select a particular send date within this time frame. While we strive to fulfill all requests, please understand that SfN may adjust your communication

date if it conflicts with our internal email calendar. We will notify you with necessary changes as soon as possible.
- Please send email requests at least **five business days** prior to the earliest desired send date.
- **Blackout dates:** SfN **cannot** send member messages **four weeks preceding** or **one week following** our annual meeting.
- SfN will not send more than one chapter message within a two-week period and may need to adjust the timing if multiple requests are received. We will accommodate Chapters on a first come, first served basis.

Chapter Frequently Asked Questions
Here are answers to the most frequently asked questions by chapters.

Is my chapter required to file an annual return in the United States?
Yes, all U.S. chapters must comply with all federal nonprofit filing requirements. Current federal regulations are as follows:

Status	Form to File	Instructions
Gross receipts normally ≤ $50,000 **Note:** Organizations eligible to file the e-Postcard may choose to file a full return	990-N	User Guide for Form 990-N
Gross receipts < $200,000, and Total assets < $500,000	990-EZ or 990	Instructions
Gross receipts ≥ $200,000, or Total assets ≥ $500,000	990	Instructions
Private foundation - regardless of financial status	990-PF	Instructions

All 990s (EZ, N, or regular 990) must be filed every year by the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of your tax year. Note that you should file your forms directly with the IRS. A copy must be provided to SfN, with a statement verifying that it has been submitted to the IRS.

The chapter is also required to comply with state and local reporting requirements. It is the responsibility of the chapter representative to know the requirements and ensure the chapter is complying with these requirements. While SfN does not request a copy of these records, the chapter representative must verify that these requirements have been met when submitting the annual report.

I lead an international chapter, what are our reporting requirements?

SfN requires international chapters to follow all applicable national/regional/local laws in their country. Furthermore, SfN requests a copy of any tax submissions to be included in the [Chapter Annual Report](#).

How can my chapter get a federal EIN?

All U.S. chapters will need to apply for a federal EIN if either the old federal EIN is no longer valid (from disuse) or your chapter has never had one. The federal EIN must be unique to the Chapter; do not use an institutions or other partners EIN. Chapter leadership is responsible for applying for a federal EIN from the IRS. Directions can be found on their website. When selecting 'organization type', please select 'Other Non-Profit/Tax Exempt Organizations'. Once your chapter has received your federal EIN, submit it to chapters@sfn.org with a request to be added to SfN's 501c3 as a subordinate to receive non-profit status with your EIN.

Chapters outside the U.S. do not require an employer identification number (EIN).

Can my chapter file under another institution's federal EIN?

No, chapters may not file under a different institution or partners's federal EIN. The federal EIN must be unique to the Chapter. The chapter must file under the federal EIN that is a subordinate to SfN. If your chapter has previously filed under a different federal EIN, provide a copy of this tax submission to chapters@sfn.org and request a new federal EIN.

Chapters outside the U.S. do not require an employer identification number (EIN).

What financial records are my chapter required to maintain?

The chapter representative is responsible for maintaining, keeping on file, and passing along all records when there is a change in leadership. While some of these records may be available from the SfN chapters department, it is not guaranteed. Chapters are responsible for maintaining these records within their chapter. This includes all applications to become an organization in your state, bylaws, organization returns (all years' Form 990s), the Chapter Agreement with the Society for Neuroscience.

The chapter representative is responsible for submitting their [chapter annual report](#) to SfN once every two calendar years. One requirement is completing the section regarding chapter finances. The chapter is responsible for reporting: all income to the chapter, including grants from SfN fundraising; member dues; in-kind support; all expenses for chapter-sponsored events; and the remaining balance.

What if the chapter has been inactive?

If you are reactivating a chapter, complete the chapter reactivation form, and request the federal EIN from chapters @sfn.org to restart your chapter's financial records. The chapter representative will be responsible for gathering state and local information and beginning the process complying with all requirements.

Does SfN have my chapter's roster for membership?

Each chapter is responsible for maintaining the roster of participating members. SfN may have a copy of your chapter's roster if provided within your chapter's annual report.

Can SfN provide me with contact information for members in my chapter's region?

SfN cannot provide contact information for its members. If you would like to send an **eblast** to notify SfN members in your area about an upcoming activity or your chapter in general, please email chapters@sfn.org and provide all of the ZIP codes you are interested in capturing and the message to be included.

Does SfN have copies of my chapter bylaws?

Chapters are responsible for maintaining a copy of their bylaws as well as ensuring that their bylaws are passed on to the succeeding chapter representative. SfN may have a copy of your chapter bylaws if they were submitted to chapters@sfn.org.

Can my chapter use the SfN logo and where can I find it?

An active chapter may use the SfN logo for any chapter-related activities, such as a Brain Awareness Activity. Email chapters@sfn.org for approved logo files**.**

Chapter Quick Links
Here are links to information mentioned in this Resource Kit.

>   **Chapters Main Page:** Society for Neuroscience - Learn about Local Chapters (sfn.org)

>   **Chapters Directory:** SfN Chapters

>   **Chapter Resources:** Society for Neuroscience - Resources for Chapters (sfn.org)

>   **Awards and Initiatives:** Society for Neuroscience - Awards (sfn.org)

>   **Next Generation Award:** Society for Neuroscience - Next Generation Award (sfn.org)

>   **Start or Reactivate a Chapter:** Society for Neuroscience - Start or Reactivate a Chapter (sfn.org)

>   **Neuronline:** Society for Neuroscience - Neuronline (sfn.org)

>   **Brain Awareness Campaign:** Society for Neuroscience - Brain Awareness Campaign (sfn.org)