

Community Ally Membership Category Frequently Asked Questions

*Purpose: To grow and strengthen NEA by uniting our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education. The steady disinvestment in public education and ongoing attempts to privatize, voucherize, and dehumanize public schools have negatively impacted students for far too long. The nomination of Betsy DeVos was a rallying point for tens of thousands of public school supporters and our union. These allies joined us in opposing the nomination because they believe in public education and support educators who work each day to ensure **EVERY** student access to a great public school. They did not stop at sending emails; they joined us on picket lines, at state capitals, and at walk-ins across the nation. They looked to us as the voice and strong advocate for public education. And, they asked over and over again, "How can we be members of NEA?" We know we are stronger together. By strategically welcoming and engaging individuals who believe in our mission, vision, and core values we can elevate our message and activate our allies. Adopting the proposed Constitution and Bylaw amendments will allow us to enhance communications and engage public school supporters to grow our movement and build the schools students deserve.*

This FAQ outlines the proposed eligibility criteria; rights and benefits; implementation process and timeline; and other logistical issues. Your NEA Board members voted to support these action items and are available to answer any additional questions you might have.

Eligibility

- 1. What would be the criteria for Community Ally membership?** Community Ally membership would be reserved for individuals who demonstrate support for advancing the cause of public education and advocating in support of the mission, vision, and core values of the Association.
- 2. What process would be used if NEA seeks to terminate a Community Ally's membership?** NEA's General Counsel will develop a draft due process procedure for individuals not upholding their commitment as a Community Allies. The draft will go to the NEA Board for approval if the 2018 NEA RA adopts the Constitution and Bylaw amendments.
- 3. How would we prevent the undermining of NEA member identity and the misuse of membership by opponents?** Any Community Ally member who violates the membership criteria requiring support for public education will have their membership terminated using the process recommended by the General Counsel and approved by the Board.
- 4. Would Community Ally membership be open to individuals who are eligible for other membership categories?** No, per our guiding documents, this category would only be open to individuals not eligible for any other membership category.
- 5. Would Community Ally membership be open to organizations?** No, this category would only be open to individuals.

Benefits Provided to Community Ally Members:

- 6. What other Services and Programs will be available to Community Allies?** Community allies will have access to online publications and communications to stay informed on issues impacting students, educators, and public education – including political issues we currently cannot communicate because of rules regarding communicating with non-members. NEA will also communicate electronically through email and social media opportunities available for Community Allies to join NEA and our partners in actions to promote our mission, vision, and core values.
- 7. Would Community Ally members be allowed to participate in meetings, conferences, and other Association events?** This would vary from conference to conference. Community Allies would not be permitted to participate in events requiring Active membership or other membership categories. In some instances, they might be asked to pay a different rate to attend conferences.
- 8. Could Community Allies be delegates to the Representative Assembly?** No. RA delegates are elected governance positions; Community Allies would not be permitted to hold any elected office.

9. **Would Community Allies be eligible for NEA legal services?** No, Community Allies would not be eligible for NEA's Unified Legal Services Program.
10. **Could Community Ally members propose Constitutional amendments or Bylaw amendments?** No. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws can only be submitted by individuals via petition of at least 100 Active members from two or more states, or petition signed of at least 50 certified delegates. Community Ally members would not be eligible to be RA delegates and will not be Active members.
11. **What NEA MB programs and services would be available to Community Allies?** NEA Member Benefits is reviewing all programs and policies to clarify what services would be appropriate and how they would be accessed.

Implementation Process (if RA passes the amendments):

12. **How would individuals apply for Community Ally membership?** The NEA General Counsel will develop a draft application that reflects the membership criteria. This draft will go to the NEA Board for approval should the 2018 NEA RA adopt the Constitution and Bylaw amendments.
13. **What would be the process for setting Community Ally dues?** Dues would be set by the Board of Directors at a level reflecting their limited rights and benefits and in accord with IRS and DOL policies.
14. **When would the Community Ally category go into effect?** Should the RA adopt the Constitution and Bylaw amendments, the new category would be effective September 1, 2018. Implementation could take up to a year before it is fully operational and a meaningful number of members are enrolled.

Miscellaneous

15. **Why create a new membership category, instead of allowing individuals to become "benefactors" or provide some other category of support?** NEA is limited in communicating with non-members. Creating a membership category will allow NEA to communicate with Community Allies about our priority work and engage them in our political and lobbying campaigns.
16. **What should be Community Allies' relationship to state and local affiliates?** While there will not be a unified membership, NEA will work with affiliates to align closely with any existing affiliate membership categories. We will share information about Community Ally applicants and members, and find opportunities to collaborate and engage Allies in the Association. Incentives that encourage Community Allies to join as Associate-type members at all Association levels will be jointly explored.
17. **How would Community Allies be recruited for membership?** Supporters of public education would be encouraged to become Community Ally members. Community Ally members would be solicited and processed primarily online – starting with individuals who have demonstrated support for – and engagement in – the Association's priority areas. The primary recruitment mechanisms would be social media, the NEA website, and other NEA digital properties.
18. **How would NEA communicate with Community Ally members?** The primary contact would be through digital engagement. Suggested communication methods include a designated NEA site; relevant information, stories, and links on nea.org; targeted use of social media; e-newsletters, including the NEA Today digital app; legislative updates and calls to action; and electronic resources to assist in advocacy and supporting students and public schools.
19. **How would Community Allies be engaged in political work?** Community Ally members would be treated as all other members in political action and engagement. NEA would be able to send them political communications and would develop guidance to assist affiliates in soliciting PAC donations from Community Ally members.
20. **What costs will the Association incur in vetting Community Ally members?** We recognize there will be some costs associated with the application and vetting process and with providing benefits and services to Community Ally members. However, costs can be limited through use of electronic systems for application, vetting, and communications with Community Allies. The Board believes the benefits outweigh costs.