

Florida PTA Frequently Asked Questions

Awards

Q: Where do I find the award applications?

A: Go to floridapta.org, under the Programs tab you will find the easy to complete Award Applications.

Q: How do I submit an award application?

A: It is easy to submit applications. Go to floridapta.org, Programs tab and find the award applications. Just fill in the blanks and remember to submit extra documents on how you did your program/event, about your principal, or other applicable information.

Q: When will the awards be given out?

A: The awards will be given out at the Florida PTA Leadership Convention in July 2016.

Q: Why don't we have a better venue for the awards to be given out?

A: This year we will have a great event to showcase just the Florida PTA Award Winners from across the state. We will have more time to celebrate your winners, information about each award and booklets that describe the program/event, info on the Principal, etc.

Q: Why should I apply for the awards?

A: This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase your local unit, your Principal, your outstanding student(s) and more. We want you to **Shout! Shout! Fill It All Out!**

Cultural Arts - Reflections

Q: What is my due date for the next level?

A: Depends on your county as each county is allowed to set their own timeline.

Q: Where do I find judges?

A: The best judges are those in the arts area field. If you don't know any, check with your local arts agency or arts center. You may consider working with another local unit, trade artwork with them and use your own teachers. Your retired teachers group may be interested in helping. Community college & university students are another great resource.

Q: How many entries can I advance?

A: Depends on your county as each county is allowed to set their own limits.

Q: What kind of prizes should we give our students?

A: Check your budget first. Prizes range from a certificate to a gift. Some chairs like to find something representing the theme. Typically, students are awarded certificates and a medal or trophy.

Q: Where can I get information about running the Reflections program?

A: The state website - www.floridapta.org/programs/reflections

Membership

Q: How much are State/National membership dues?

A: Dues are \$3.50 per member; National PTA receives \$2.25 and Florida PTA retains \$1.25 per member for the services each entity provides to members.

Q: Where can you join PTA?

A: PTA is a membership association and people join a PTA unit each year by paying membership dues. People cannot join PTA at the County Council level. Every PTA member belongs to at least one PTA unit in Florida. If you have children in different schools, you may join at each school. You may also join the Sunshine State PTA, a statewide, at-large, local unit that benefits the Florida PTA.

Q: Is PTA only for parents?

A: No! Remember the T in PTA stands for teachers, and if your unit is a PTSA, the S stands for students. PTA invites school staff, school district staff, grandparents, business leaders and neighbors to become members. PTA membership is open to everyone and does not require having a child in a school.

Q: Can we have “levels” of membership?

A: There is only one level of PTA membership but sometimes PTAs may wish to encourage or recognize financial support or a contribution of differing amounts. The actual per person dues amount, however, must always be specified (standing rules) and members must be allowed to join at that price.

If the PTA wishes to solicit donations with levels of contribution, it is done as a separate project from the membership campaign. The membership campaign invitation should be for membership enrollment only. (Membership dues and donations to the PTA budget should be recorded separately.) For example, a gold donor/patron could reflect a contribution of \$100; a silver donor/patron \$50, or whatever names and amounts the PTA decides. The details of the donation project should be outlined in the standing rules and approved annually by the membership.

A membership drive is not a fundraising project; membership in PTA should be affordable to everyone. A good rule of thumb for membership dues is to collect an amount that will cover per capita for the constituent organizations – National PTA, Florida PTA, and County Council PTA (if applicable). Some county councils apply a small portion of each membership for liability insurance premiums.

Q: What about “Family Memberships”?

A: The Florida PTA discourages group and/or family memberships. The concept of group memberships (e.g., family memberships) must include the payment of per capita dues and a membership card issued to each member. The PTA’s bylaws must stipulate the number of members considered a family. If a PTA unit wishes to include a family membership dues structure, the amended bylaws must be forwarded to Florida PTA for approval.

Q: May we charge students a lower rate of membership dues?

A: Yes, you may have a student membership rate. However, student dues must be listed in your standing rules and must be enough to cover the portion of dues that is forwarded to county council (if applicable), Florida and National PTA. Student members’ dues may not be subsidized by the unit.

Officers & Chairpersons

Q: What are the responsibilities of officers and chairpersons?

A: To ensure a successful term of office, certain responsibilities begin as soon as officers are elected. All board members and chairpersons are expected to:

- Accept office or position only when willing to uphold the policies and procedures of the State and National PTA;
- Accept office only when willing to prepare oneself to fulfill the responsibilities of the office;
- Study and follow unit bylaws and standing rules;
- Attend and participate in meetings;
- Abide by the will of the majority;
- Respect the privacy of the business of the Executive Board;
- Protect members' privacy by allowing no distribution of membership lists to outside interests;
- Meet due dates and fulfill assignments promptly;
- Give accurate and detailed account of all monies entrusted to them;
- Delegate instead of doing everything;
- Develop and strengthen leadership;
- Attend conferences, workshops and conventions;
- Maintain a procedure book to pass on to one's successor; and
- Resign if unable to perform the required duties of the office.

Q: Are we able to have co-officers or co-chairpersons?

A: No. Florida PTA does not recognize co-officers or co-chairpersons. "Co-officer" implies two people of equal rank sharing one position. In PTA, only one name may be listed for each office, and only one individual may vote. It is important to have accountability by designating one individual to manage committee work. Bylaws may be amended to include additional officers to share the workload.

Q: When are elections held?

A: The bylaws provide the month or timespan for the annual election and the date when the term begins. All officers and chairpersons are obligated to study and follow PTA bylaws and standing rules. They are also responsible for reviewing, as well as maintaining while they are in office, the Procedure Book specific to their office.

Q: Where can I find information on being an officer or chairperson?

A: Officers and chairpersons are referred to the Florida PTA Kit of Materials to help in understanding individual and board roles for effective PTA work.

Scholarships

Q: How do I apply for a scholarship if my high school does not have a PTSA?

A: Join the Florida Sunshine State PTA. As a member of the Sunshine State PTSA, you qualify to apply for the scholarship.

Secretary

Q: What should go in the minutes?

A: Most minutes should have the important parts, not everything that is said. You do not have to write it down word for word.

Q: What should be on the top of the minutes?

A: Name of Association, Date, and Location of Meeting.

Q: Do you put the time of start and adjournment?

A: Yes.

Q: When do you sign your minutes?

A: Once the minutes are approved at your next meeting is when you sign and date the minutes. You cannot sign them earlier than your next meeting to make them official.

Treasurer

Q: Does every local unit need to file a 990 report?

A: Yes, each local unit must file the appropriate 990 form(s) and submit to the IRS and send a copy to the Florida PTA office.

Q: Is it required for each local unit to send a copy of the financial review to the Florida PTA state office?

A: Yes, so that the state office can be of assistance to local units in future years, if needed, it is necessary for the state office to have local unit financial reviews on file.

Q: Is it necessary to submit membership dues to the state each month?

A: Yes, this helps keeps an accurate account of members throughout the state.

Q: Are there additional dues a local unit could have to pay?

A: Yes, depending on the county you are in, there could be county council dues that a local unit would be required to pay.

Q: What is a local unit in good standing?

A: A local unit in good standing has met the following requirements: submitted the new and returning officer information, submitted membership dues for a minimum of 10 members, has bylaws that are dated within 3 years of the current date, has filed the appropriate 990 form and submitted their financial review to the state office.

Q: What are the benefits of being a local unit in good standing?

A: A local unit in good standing is eligible for the awards and Reflections program and is not in jeopardy of losing their tax-exempt status.

Q: Does a treasurer need to supply a financial report each month?

A: Yes, it is important for financial transparency and accountability.

Q: Should a local unit have insurance?

A: Yes, this is a standard best practice to protect the local unit and required in many school districts. Having insurance can also protect the Board of Directors.

Q: Should the treasurer be the one who opens the bank statement?

A: No, actually it is the best practice for a non-signer on the bank account to open the bank statement to review transactions for additional financial transparency and security.