

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE *of* AMERICA

SOCIETY RESOURCE GUIDES



OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

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I. What is an AIA Society?

An AIA Society is a collection of geographically proximate AIA members that have come together to create a formally recognized local group affiliated with the AIA. Societies support the mission and goals of the AIA and maintain programs, including the National Lecture Program, International Archaeology Day, and a variety of local programs and events.

The first Local Society was established in Boston in 1884. Today, the AIA has over 100 chartered Local Societies and several more in formation. Society members include both professional archaeologists and non-archaeologists and reflects the Institute's unique character as an organization that welcomes both professionals and interested members of the public.

Society organization, activities, and programs vary considerably depending on size, location, and available resources. The AIA website, <https://www.archaeological.org/programs/societies/>, lists all of the Local Societies and provides contact information for each one. Many Societies maintain their own website and/or social media accounts and links to these are also provided on the AIA website. Checking a Local Society's online presence is an easy way to keep abreast of what Societies are doing and how they are organized.

Membership in a Society is assigned when a person becomes a Society level member of the AIA, and is based on geographical proximity. Local Societies enable AIA members to participate directly in the programs of the Institute and to communicate with the national organization and other like-minded people in their communities.

Each Local Society is managed by a board of elected officers who are responsible for various aspects of its operations. The organization of these boards and their overall composition, however, may vary. In some Societies, the majority of the members are avocational, while others are largely comprised of professional members. While each Society is different, the information herein should be useful to all and we encourage you to contact the AIA office in Boston with any questions. It may also be helpful to view the annual [Society Self-Assessment](#) to learn more about Society structures and best practices.

II. Society Governance

The [AIA Vice President for Societies](#) oversees the Local Societies and is assisted by the [Society Trustees on the AIA Governing Board](#) and the Societies Committee. The [Societies Committee](#) is responsible for reviewing programs and benefits offered to the Local Societies. The committee also recommends ways of improving membership benefits to the Governing Board via the AIA Vice President for Societies in support of the aims and best interests of the Institute. In addition, the committee is [charged with overseeing Society membership, lecture attendance, and programs](#). Where it can do so, the committee will provide advice to Societies, and committee members will serve as a resource to Societies that request support.

III. Society Structure

AIA Local Societies are independent entities that exist to support and promote archaeology, its practitioners, and their work. The contents of this guide illustrate how Local Societies and the Institute work together to promote the mission of the AIA.

A. The Operation of Societies

1. Maintaining Active Status

To be considered an active Society in good standing with the AIA, Local Societies are required to maintain a minimum of 35 members, although Societies are encouraged to maintain at least 50 members to ensure the continued viability of the Societies. Society officers will be notified if their membership level drops below 35 members, and they will be encouraged to work with the AIA office in Boston and/or the Societies Committee to increase membership.

An active Society shall have the following rights, privileges, and obligations:

- (1) It is subject to all terms and conditions prescribed by the Regulations, the Council, the Governing Board, the Officers, and AIA office in Boston.
- (2) It is entitled to fully participate in all programs established for the affiliated Societies, including the Lecture Program and any future programs created for the benefit of the Societies.
- (3) It is able to name representatives to the Council. For more information regarding the number of delegates, please refer to the [AIA regulations](#).
- (4) It will be eligible to claim an annual rebate based on its membership count as determined by the Institute on June 30 each year.

If, however, a Society's membership falls to ten or below and remains at that level for **TWELVE** consecutive months, the Society will be considered INACTIVE. Moreover, an INACTIVE Society will not be eligible to participate in any AIA programs offered to the affiliated Societies.

Societies with fewer than 35 but more than 10 members may have their ability to participate in programming restricted at the discretion of the Societies Committee. Program eligibility currently stands as follows:

Chartered Societies, Societies in formation, and inactive Societies working towards active status	Chartered Societies
Access to Society Rosters	In person lectures (for Societies in North America)
Society Officer News	Golden Trowel Award
Complete Society Self-Assessment/receive feedback from Societies Committee member if desired	Poster Award
Eligible to claim annual membership rebates	Website Award
List your Society's events on the AIA website	Publicity Award
Magazine address labels	Foot Soldier Award
IAD Grants*	Life Saver Award
Local lecture grants*	Local Society Publicity on Local or Social Media Award
Society Outreach Grants*	
Access to virtual lecture series and Society promotional materials for virtual lectures	

*priority given to chartered Societies

2. Reinstatement of Active Status

In order to be reinstated as an affiliated Society of the AIA in good standing, an INACTIVE Society must meet the following requirements:

1. Show an active membership of at least 35 for three consecutive months while aiming for a goal of 50.
2. Submit bylaws providing for the election of officers and other local regulations, if not done in the past.
3. Request that the Executive Director petition the Governing Board for reinstatement of ACTIVE status.

If an INACTIVE Society meets all the requirements for reinstatement, the Executive Director will petition the Governing Board to consider its case and upon approval, the ACTIVE status will be reinstated.

C. Membership

1. Levels

[View the current membership categories and prices.](#)

Please note that while ARCHAEOLOGY magazine subscribers are not automatically granted membership to their Local Society, they may be interested in joining, so invite them to move up to a Society level membership.

2. Incentive Programs for Societies

a. New Member Reward

AIA awards extra funds to Societies that see at least 10% growth within the July 1-June 30 fiscal year. The following amounts will be added to a Society's annual rebate check depending on their growth rate in the previous year: Societies with 10-19% growth—\$25; Societies with 20-29% growth—\$50; Societies with 30-39% growth—\$75; Societies with 40%+ growth—\$100.

b. Membership Rebates

An annual Membership Rebate becomes available to claim every September. It is based on the number of active members in your Society as of June 30th of the preceding fiscal year. Societies receive \$3 for each member.

D. Membership Maintenance

1. Accessing Society Membership Rosters

All Society Officers may download a roster of their Society's membership at any time. To do so, first, [log into the AIA website](#). Then, go to [the list of Societies](#), and go to your Society's page. To the right of the Society Contact information, you will see a box with your Society's name, your name, and a link that says "Download Roster." Click on this link, and the roster will be downloaded in Excel format. If you have any questions or are unsure of your login information, please contact membership@archaeological.org.

To avoid confusion and the generation of multiple lists, AIA recommends that one person be in charge of maintaining the local membership list.

By downloading the AIA member list for your Society, you are agreeing to only use it to promote AIA activities affiliated with your group. AIA member lists obtained from the main office cannot be used to promote third party events. Lists should not be shared with third parties with the exception of mailhouses who are sending a mailing out on your behalf.

2. Increasing and Keeping Members

Veteran Society Officers have offered several suggestions about how to increase membership and retain your current members:

a. Increasing Membership

1. Actively recruit new members. Create and actively maintain a website and/or a social media platform for the Society. Maintain a mailing list to communicate regularly with members and prospective members. You may consider using online tools, such as MailChimp, to regularly email this list. Remember to keep contact information up to date. We recommend having a sign up sheet at all of your events for members and non-members to sign up and to update their information regularly. If you choose to host a virtual event, require registration to ensure you have contact information for attendees.
2. Advertise lectures and special events in local papers, community calendars (both print and online), social media, and radio and TV stations. Many of these local resources are free.
3. Increase Society visibility to the community by organizing outreach programs; volunteering at schools and museums; and sponsoring joint symposia or other programs with local museums or universities. See the [Society Programs Guide](#).
4. The AIA Membership Department can generate labels for Society members or for local ARCHAEOLOGY subscribers once per year for free. These can be used for newsletters, flyers, and other publicity mailings. Please provide the AIA office in Boston with the postal codes for the areas in which you are interested. Note: These lists may only be used for one mailing, and the AIA cannot legally provide email addresses for subscribers.
5. Send lecture announcements and invitations to local people who subscribe to ARCHAEOLOGY magazine and are not Society level members.

b. Keeping Members

Once someone becomes a member of a Society, it's important to keep them engaged so that they will renew one year later. Here are some ideas to keep the members excited about the Society:

1. Keep in touch. Announce lectures on the Society website, social media pages, and local newsletters. Write personalized emails or letters to members. Welcome new members with a

letter as soon as they join, informing them of forthcoming events. When members have not renewed, send them an email reminder and let them know what they will be missing.

2. Host social events/gatherings for members. For example, the Los Angeles County Society regularly has a new members' garden party.
3. Welcome new members at lectures. Introduce yourself and invite them to the reception following the lecture.
4. Organize study groups. For example, the Long Island Society offers small study groups on certain archaeological topics. These small sessions are held at members' homes.
5. Organize activities, like tours to local museums and archaeological sites.
6. Have a Society officer personally call or write to any lapsed members.

If you have been successful in attracting new members and/or providing increased programs for your members, please share your ideas and comments with the AIA! The AIA monthly email Society Officer News is geared specifically for Society officers. It features updates on Society news, ideas for Societies, and helpful strategies. It can be a valuable resource for Societies. Please send your comments and ideas to membership@archaeological.org.

E. Working Models

Every Society of the AIA is unique with considerable variation in sophistication of structure and programs. Some Societies in the United States have become incorporated or have a letter of tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Canadian Societies may register as nonprofit organizations. Others function more as clubs or as special interest groups within a college or university structure. In many cases, a host institution (academic or museum) may absorb some of the expenses incurred during the year's programming; other Societies fund their programs independently. However, all Societies have certain elements in common, such as elected Society officers, bylaws, and access to lectures provided by the National Lecture Program.

1. Society Officers

The AIA office in Boston requires certain information from the Societies on a periodic basis, ranging from a Society's preferred lecture topic, to the names and contact information of a Society's officers.

Although the AIA office in Boston does not regulate Society officer titles, the AIA does request that certain officers perform specific duties. When Societies complete the [Officer Update form](#), please keep the following guidelines for officer positions in mind and include the information for the person whose duties most closely resemble those listed below:

- President: Oversees the Society.
- Vice President: Assists the President.
- Program Coordinator: Plans the programs of the Society and takes care of all local details involved in hosting AIA lecturers in conjunction with the AIA office in Boston.

- Secretary: Maintains the records for the Society.
- Society Contact: Responsible for disseminating the Society's activities to the public. Note that the Society Contact's name, phone number, and email address are published on the AIA website.
- Treasurer: Manages the Society's funds.

Some Society officers may have overlapping duties, and in some instances, a person might fill more than one position (ex. Treasurer/Vice-President). Please indicate on the [Officer Update form](#) all the duties for which an officer is responsible.

A Local Society may also wish to have additional members of the administrative committee of their board who serve various functions unique to the Society's particular needs. Other officers may include: Student Board Member, Newsletter Editor, Outreach Chair, Membership Chair, Fundraising Coordinator, Legal Advisor, Social Chair, Past President, Webmaster, or Refreshment Chair.

All officers are elected by the members of a Society. Other members of the board are generally elected by Society members but could be appointed by the elected officers. The terms of office vary among Societies; some hold elections annually, while others elect officers for multi-year terms.

IMPORTANT: Please keep the AIA office in Boston informed when your Society elects new officers via the [Officer Update Form](#). **All Society Officers must be active AIA members.**

2. Bylaws

In compliance with the policies outlined for the operation of Societies, each chartered Society should have a copy of its bylaws on file at the AIA office in Boston.

Bylaws are a set of rules adopted by an organization chiefly for the governance and regulation of its affairs. A set of bylaws should include the following:

- a. the full, official name of the organization
- b. the purpose of the organization
- c. the definition of membership in the organization
- d. the officers, their duties, method of their selection, terms of office, and method for removal of officers
- e. when meetings will be held and how often
- f. when elections will be held
- g. how committees will be chosen
- h. how the bylaws can be changed
- i. dissolution clause

PLEASE NOTE that all Society bylaws must include the following Article verbatim defining the Society's relationship with the national organization.

Article II Affiliation

1. The Society is an independent entity.
2. The Society is affiliated with the Archaeological Institute of America (hereafter referred to as the AIA or the Institute) through the granting of a Charter issued by the AIA after an acceptance vote by the AIA Council.

3. The Society has agreed to the following stipulations:
 - a. To promote the AIA's mission;
 - b. To function within the guidelines of the AIA and not to adopt any regulations that conflict with those of the AIA;
 - c. To engage in no activity that would damage the name of the AIA or undermine its mission, including engaging in transactions that remove artifacts from public and scholarly access.
 - d. To maintain a membership consisting of a minimum number of persons as required by the AIA, currently 35.
4. The Society understands that failure to follow these stipulations can result in the revoking of its Charter by a vote of the AIA Council. If its Charter is revoked, the Society loses its affiliation with the AIA and the right to use the AIA name.

ALL BYLAWS MUST INCLUDE THIS ARTICLE. If your Society already has a set of bylaws, they can be amended to include the required article concerning affiliation. For Societies' convenience, the AIA has provided [templates for a set of basic bylaws](#). There are three versions (long, medium, short). Select the one that would be most applicable to your situation.

3. Articles of Incorporation

Some Societies may elect to incorporate as a nonprofit organization. Please see federal and state or provincial guidelines for information on how to register.

F. Communications

1. Society Newsletter

A newsletter focusing on local events and activities is a useful tool for promoting Society events, highlighting local members and relevant archaeological discoveries, and making announcements, especially for those who cannot attend all the local meetings. These newsletters can be posted online or sent electronically (via free services, such as MailChimp), and their frequency is determined by the needs of the Local Society.

2. Email, Society Website, and Social Media

Using email is a quick, easy way to reach members of Societies. At a Society meeting or lecture, provide an email sign-up sheet for members and give them an email address where they can contact a Society officer. It is useful to create a free email account strictly for the Society (i.e. *yoursociety@gmail.com*), as this email address (and log-on information) will remain the same, even if there is a change in officers.

We encourage all Societies to create and maintain a webpage and/or social media account(s) where officers can announce upcoming events and post information relevant to members. Social media in particular is helpful for familiarizing non-members with a Society and its activities. Make sure that the Society website information is available to the AIA office in Boston, so a link can be placed on the AIA website.

G. Society Awards and Contests

The AIA Societies Committee manages and distributes the following awards. Please visit [the Society Awards page of the AIA website](#) for further details and deadlines for all the awards. The awards are given out each year in January in conjunction with Society Sunday or the AIA Annual Meeting.

1. The Golden Trowel Award

2. Best Society Event Poster Award

3. Best Society Website Award

4. Local Society Publicity on Local or Social Media Award

5. Foot Soldier Award

6. Life Saver Award