

Commitment Handbook

The ACYO guide to active engagement,
according to the ACYO-WD Central Council.





Welcome

to the ACYO Commitment Handbook

The Armenian Church Youth Organization of the Western Diocese of North America (ACYO-WD) actively integrates its members into the life of the church by providing opportunities for Worship, Service, Education, and Fellowship in Christ according to the doctrines and traditions of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The ACYO-WD Central Council has created this handbook as a guide to fostering and encouraging youth engagement in the Armenian church and to fulfill their goal of persevering the four pillars of the ACYO.

In Christ,

The Armenian Church Youth Organization Central Council

Contact Information



Armenian Church Youth Organization
3325 N. Glenoaks Blvd. Burbank, CA 91504



acyowd@gmail.com



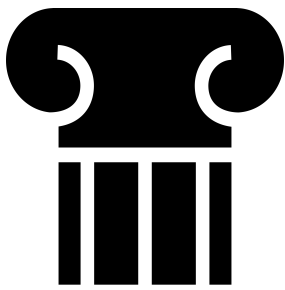
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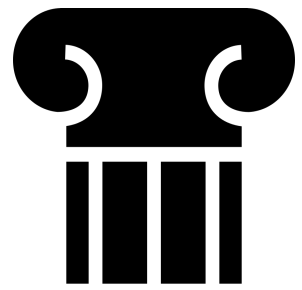
ACYO Western Diocese



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Pillar I: Worship

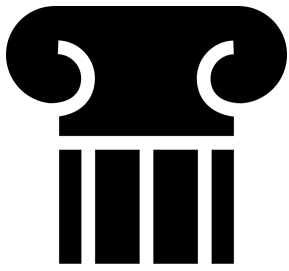


Worship

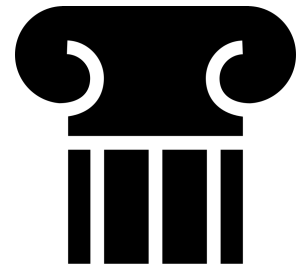
Members of the Armenian Church of the Western Diocese shall practice and exercise the teachings of Christianity according to its doctrines and traditions of the Armenian Church and through appreciation of Armenian culture. Below are some ways to become and continue to become actively involved in the church in order to grow in your faith.

- Pray
 - At home
 - At church
 - Utilize the ACYO prayer before and after General ACYO Meetings
- Attend the Divine Liturgy
 - Serve in the altar
 - Sing in the choir
 - Light a candle
- Attend Sunday School
 - Encourage young kids to attend Sunday School
 - Volunteer as a Sunday School teacher
- Bible Study
 - Ask your parish priest to start a chapter Bible study
 - Do a Bible reading before ACYO meetings





Pillar II: Service



As ACYO members, we have a duty to give back to our communities. These can include the local communities we live in, the Armenian people and homeland, and especially our home parishes. We are the next leaders of our churches and communities and one of the best ways to learn what's necessary to become the leader is to get involved now. To do so, you can start by volunteering with peers during parish-hosted events or hosting fundraising events at your parish to raise money either for local causes or for Armenia.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

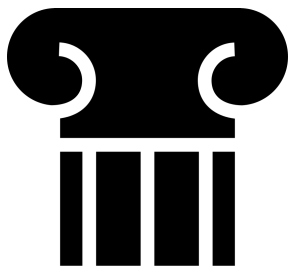
Galatians 6:10

Service Ideas:

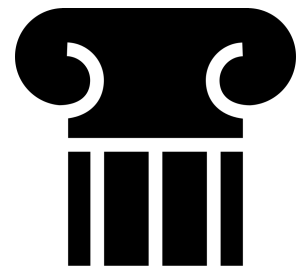
- Serve at church on the altar or in the choir
- Volunteering at food banks or at shelters
- Collecting/donating backpacks/school supplies to Armenia
- Collecting/donating food and basic necessities for the homeless
- Volunteering for key roles at your parish's food festivals
- Help Ladies' Society/ Sunday School / Parish Council

Fundraising Ideas:

- Car wash
- Host events at your parish
 - Senior Night
 - Mother's/Father's Day Breakfast
- Bake Sale



Pillar III: Fellowship

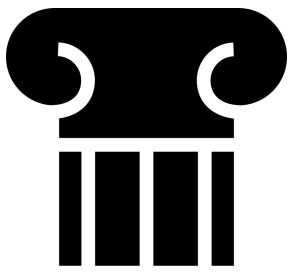


The ACYO centers on reaching out to others and building relationships with friends. Participating in ACYO will not only present lots of fresh opportunities but also provide plenty of time to make connections and create lifelong relationships. Participate in ACYO, visit activities hosted by other groups in your church and community (Parish Council, Ladies Society, Sports Weekend, etc.), fundraisers, and general socials.

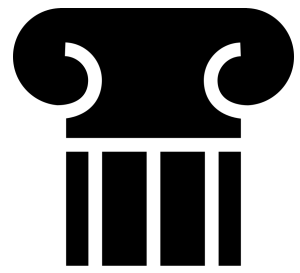
Prayer:

You are an unbeatable light born in the evening dusk and peace, O my Lord, God. I walk towards you with new hopes, renewed feelings and expectations, because I know for sure and with eagerness, that in your hands, O Lord, my life will start a new journey. You are the beginning, but not the end; my soul which ever seeks you and thirsts for you.

- Attend the Divine Liturgy
 - Serve in the altar
 - Sing in the choir
 - Light a candle
- Attend Saturday/Sunday School
 - Encourage young kids to attend Saturday/Sunday School
 - Volunteer as a Saturday/Sunday School teacher
- Education
 - Deacons Training
 - Choir Trainings
 - Teacher Assistant in Saturday/Sunday school
- Events
 - Movie Nights
 - Hiking
 - Lock-Ins
 - Baking (choreg/simit)
 - Game Nights (bowling, ping-pong, tavloo)
 - Career Fair
 - Barbeques



Pillar IV: Education



description

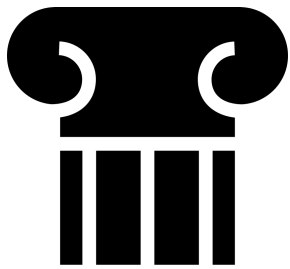
Prayer:

Jesus, wisdom of the Father, give me the wisdom to think, to speak, and to do what is good in Your eyes; keep me away from evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy on Your creatures and especially on me, a great sinner.

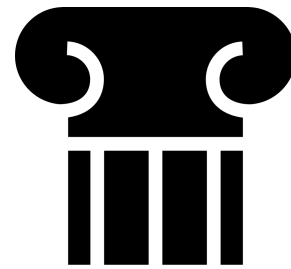
- Attend Bible Studies
 - Serve in the altar
 -
- Attend Saturday/Sunday School
 - Encourage young kids to attend Saturday/Sunday School
 - Volunteer as a Saturday/Sunday School teacher
- Education
 - Deacons Training
 - Choir Trainings
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 - Career Fair
 - Barbeques

Education:

Deacons training, fellowship night (st gregory started look into that), sunday school



Mission of ACYO-WD



Our mission as ACYO-WD is to bring us closer to Christ and build a foundation for the rest of our lives and for the future lives that will benefit. As ACYO members, we all have a special role in this organization, that ranges from volunteers, officers, executive members, and all that participate in ACYO events. We each bring something to our community that helps us stay connected with one another which helps bring us all closer to Christ.

Part of growing as an organization is asking questions that challenge ourselves and give us guidance in what we should do next. Questions like why do we care? Why join ACYO? Are we important and relevant? These questions help guide our youth to better ACYO and challenges us to bring our best to the table. We need to care for ACYO not only to better ourselves but to ensure a bright future for the next generation, we want to leave something behind that can be carried on.

“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:30-31

ACYO-WD Board Member Guide:

Part 1: Building Strong Walls Out of the Foundations We Have

As a board member, you play a crucial role in upholding and advancing the mission of our organization. This guide will help you understand our mission, core values, and the expectations for your role.

Know and Understand Our Mission

As board members, it is essential to know and understand our mission statement and the core pillars that support our foundation.

Who are we? We are a youth organization rooted in the traditions of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

What do we do? We offer opportunities for members to engage in Worship, Service, Education, and Fellowship.

How do we do it? Our programs and activities are designed to align with our church's doctrines and traditions.

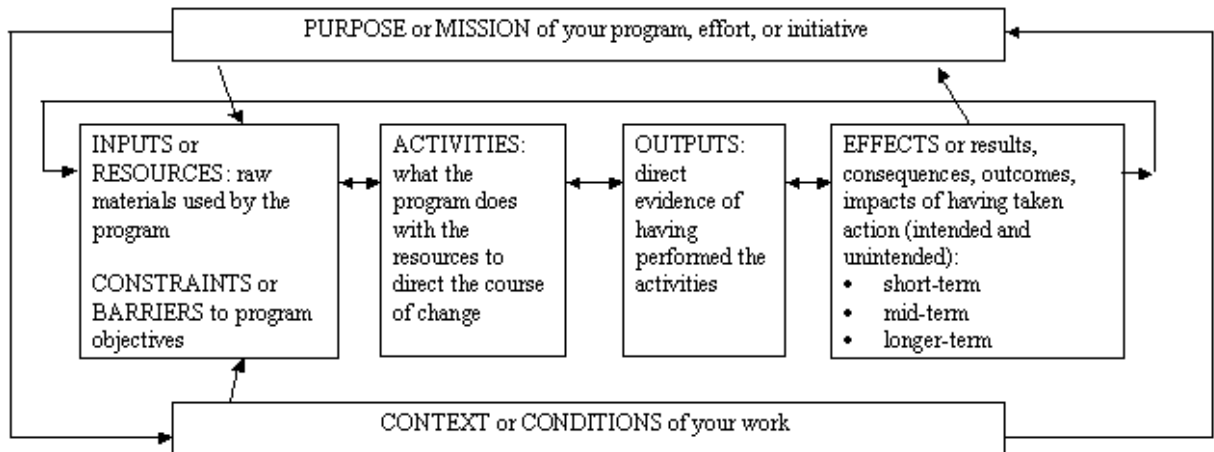
- **Gap Identification:** A key area of focus is ensuring that all members are aware of and adhere to these pillars. This is crucial for maintaining alignment with our mission and enhancing the effectiveness of our programs.
- **Program Goals:** Every activity or program should have a clear goal. It's important to understand not only how a program will be executed but also why it's being undertaken and how it aligns with our mission and pillars.

Encouraging Involvement:

- Regular members should be motivated to contribute actively. Provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful ways that align with our mission.
- **Address Participation Gaps**
 - Identify why members might not be participating as expected and work on strategies to increase their engagement.

Guide to Strategic Planning Using [Logic Models](#) & Setting [SMARTER goals](#)

What is a Logic Model? A logic model is a visual representation that links resources, activities, and outcomes to help plan and evaluate programs. It shows how and why a desired change is expected to occur, making it easier to manage and assess the effectiveness of your initiatives.



Inputs/Resources There are lots of resources available within the Armenian Church. Here are some examples

- Facilities: utilize the church grounds for events and such
- Priests: engage with clergy for spiritual guidance and involvement
- Parents: utilize their professional expertise and support
- Central Council
- Funds/ finances
- Social media pages
- **Yourselves**: each member has a different talent that can be incorporated into the organization

Activities These connect inputs with outputs. Ensure that every activity aligns with the overarching goals and outcomes. Avoid engaging in activities that do not support your strategic objectives. These should always incorporate the four pillars of ACYO.

Outputs These are the immediate results from activities. Do not confuse this with outcomes which are long term impacts.

Impact (or effects) These are the long term goals of your organization. What do you see in 10 years? 5 years? 3 years?

Tips and tricks:

- Work backwards through the logic model. Start with your impact and work your way back to resources.
- Remember that the resources of our communities are infinite. The hardest part about a resource is figuring out how to bring it in
- Easiest way to come up with an impact is to look for gaps that you see today. Start with the desired outcomes and identify current gaps.
- Be very specific. The more specific your goals, the easier it is to create targeted activities and outputs.
- Include members when planning. They are your future too. If they don't share the same vision as you, your goals won't be achieved.
- If you haven't seen any progress, that doesn't mean you scrap your plan. Figure out why it isn't working and make adjustments as necessary.
- Do everything with a purpose, otherwise you will be wasting time, energy and resources
- Constantly refer back to the logic model when planning any events or making any decisions

Having a vision/dream is vital in the continuation of our ACYO. Without a clear target, you're unlikely to achieve meaningful results. Let's work together to build a strong, purposeful organization that honors our heritage and fulfills our mission.

What are SMARTER goals? Smarter goals are a criteria for goal setting. They provide a more comprehensive framework to ensure goals are well-defined, actionable, and adaptable.

Specific: Goals should be clear and precise, leaving no room for ambiguity. They should answer the questions: What do we want to accomplish? Why is this goal important? Who is involved? Where will this happen? What resources or constraints are involved?

Measurable: Goals need criteria to measure progress and success. You should be able to quantify the outcome or use indicators to track progress.

Achievable: Goals should be realistic and attainable within your resources and constraints. Consider what is feasible given current circumstances.

Relevant: Goals must align with broader organizational objectives and be pertinent to the current needs and priorities of the organization.

Timebound: Goals should have a specific timeframe for completion. This includes deadlines and key milestones to track progress.

Evaluated: Regularly assess and review goals to ensure they remain relevant and achievable. Adjust goals and strategies based on performance and changing conditions.

Reward/**R**ecord: Recognize and reward achievements to maintain motivation and engagement. Record successes and failures to keep track of what works and doesn't.

Part 2: Boosting Member Engagement

Maintaining member engagement has been a constant struggle across ACYO for generations. However, by understanding and connecting with our members on a deeper level, we can create lasting impacts and foster a strong, devoted community.

Remember that our mission is to integrate our members into the life of the church. Retention isn't in reference to keeping numbers high or participation active, BUT rather that members are showing up to A church, even if it isn't their home parish. We want to create a loyalty and devotion to the Armenian Apostolic Church that will last a lifetime.

To gain new members, do the research. Identify and highlight households with children in your community. Reach out to them through cold calls and mail and make your presence known.