

# The 2021 StarChapter Parent Association Support During the Pandemic Survey



In September of 2021 we surveyed thousands of board volunteers at association chapter organizations across the country. Overwhelmingly, respondents to our Parent Association Support During the Pandemic survey felt their national organization supported their chapter effectively during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



In fact, we were more than pleasantly surprised by the results of our survey: 85 percent said they were happy with the changes their parent organization made and the services they offered to their chapters. Most parent organizations stepped in to help during a really trying and unsettled time, with support that was “gracious, understanding, and exceptional.” It was wonderful to read the many positive comments that showed how association chapter national organizations understood what their chapters needed and how to meet those needs in times of crisis.

However, 85 percent satisfaction isn’t 100 percent satisfaction. That leaves fifteen percent of survey respondents who weren’t completely satisfied with the support they received. Are you part of that fifteen percent?

How do you feel about the support your parent organization has provided your association chapter board, your chapter and your members since March 2020? If it seems your parent organization didn’t

understand how COVID-19 impacted your chapter, the stress it placed on your members and the effect it had on almost every aspect of their lives, professionally and personally, we wanted to share some of what we heard in the survey comments that could be useful to your chapter and your members.

Read on and consider bringing up some of these ideas with your parent organization.

One association chapter board member said:

*“Our National organization reduced dues, changed the giant conference to virtual and reduced registration fees, and made sure people knew about the dues waiver for recently unemployed members. Perhaps most importantly, our “allotment” - the money we get as part of local section dues - was basically unchanged though our biggest expense (reimbursement of travel expenses for council representatives) vanished due to the absence of travel.”*

Other association chapters shared that their parent organizations:

- **Gave chapters permission to shift to virtual events.** Some chapters need permission to move their events from in person to virtual. If that’s yours, hopefully your parent organization has given you that permission by now, as operating virtually is vital to providing engaging member services. If they haven’t made that shift yet, there’s still time.
- **Provided training for Zoom.** For many, using a virtual platform was a completely new concept. How does that “raise your hand” or chat function work? How do you record your meeting for access later? Having your parent organization sponsor a Zoom training program (or training for whatever platform you’re using) will make it much easier for everyone to engage with your chapter and more easily get the support they need.
- **Offered 2021 national membership at no additional cost.** Since members pay both a national membership fee and a fee to join your association chapter, a year of free national membership can make a significant difference for members who may be struggling financially.
- **Held chapter leader calls.** To see what other chapter boards are doing to support their members, perhaps your national organization could set up calls with chapter leaders throughout your organization.
- **Provided mental health support resources.** This has been a tough time for so many people. Your parent organization may have the resources to find support for your members both in-person in your area as well as virtually or by phone.



## **Ask other chapters how their parent organizations helped**

Before you contact your parent organization, connect with other chapter leadership, both under your parent umbrella as well as in other chapter organizations. What kind of support did they receive from their national organization? Did the parent organization offer support without being approached? Did they ask what kind of help they needed? Or did the chapter reach out to them for help? Getting direction before you approach your parent organization can make it easier to have this conversation and get the help your chapter really needs.

It's not too late. Help from your national organization can still positively impact your chapter and your members, making it easier for you to provide the services your members expect at the level they expect from you. For more information on the StarChapter Parent Association Support During the Pandemic survey, contact [marketing@starchapter.com](mailto:marketing@starchapter.com).

