



ACS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What's the distinction between being an INDIVIDUAL and an ORGANIZATIONAL member of ACS?

A: Individual Membership is designed for industry professionals who seek educational opportunities, networking, online resources, and **professional development opportunities for personal growth and career advancement**. Each Individual Member receives one vote. This is a Professional Level membership open to Producers and Trade Affiliates. An Individual Membership is solely and exclusively for the member named, and is non-transferable.

Individual Members do not have access to the following benefits that are exclusively for Organizations:

- Enter products into the ACS Judging & Competition
- Exhibit products at Meet the Cheesemaker
- Sample food products at, or provide food products for, any ACS or ACS-affiliated events
- Become an ACS Authorized Education Provider
- Purchase and send Member-2-Member marketing emails
- Be listed in the searchable Organizational Member directory

Organizational Membership is for companies that wish to **provide their owners, management, staff, and employees access to education, networking, and professional development**, and that wish to **promote their business, products, and/or services**. Organizational Members receive one vote per company, allocated to the designated Primary Member. This is a Professional Level membership open to Producers and Trade Affiliates.

As an Organizational Member, you can select the level that reflects the number of employees you'd like to receive benefits, from 1 person to unlimited representatives! Organizational Members may transfer benefits to different people, should employees at the company change.

Organizational Memberships include all Individual Membership benefits for between 1-5 representatives from your organization, plus the ability to:

- Enter products into the ACS Judging & Competition
- Exhibit at Meet the Cheesemaker
- Sample food products at, or provide food products for, any ACS or ACS-affiliated events
- Become an ACS Authorized Education Provider
- Purchase and send Member-2-Member marketing emails
- Be listed in the searchable Organizational Member directory

Q: What if I'd like more than 5 people to take advantage of ACS membership benefits?

A: If you'd like more than 5 representatives from your company to receive membership benefits, additional membership options exist at the Corporate PLUS and Corporate SUSTAINING levels. See more details about these levels on the following page.

Corporate PLUS Membership includes:

All benefits of Corporate 5 Membership, plus unlimited representatives beyond the first 5 receive discounted pricing on ACS Conference registration, ACS Certified Cheese Professional® Exam application and exam fees, and other select programs and services.

Corporate SUSTAINING Membership includes:

All benefits of Corporate PLUS Membership, plus unlimited employees beyond the first 5 can register as additional company representatives with **full access to all membership benefits including:**

- Unique personal username and password for full ACS online access
- Access to FREE members-only webinars and Conference session recordings
- All ACS digital and print communications including important Member Updates and Alerts
- Eligibility to serve:
 - on ACS Committees and the Board of Directors
 - as Speakers, Judges, and Subject Matter Experts
 - in other key volunteer roles
- Discounted Member pricing on all ACS products and services including but not limited to:
 - Annual Conference Registration
 - ACS Certified Cheese Professional® Exam application and testing fees
 - Online Food Safety for Artisan Cheesemakers course through North Carolina State University
 - Dairy Practices Council Guidelines
 - PartnerShip FedEx and Yellow Freight shipping
 - Renaissance Associates merchant services
 - Hotel Engine hotel bookings

SUSTAINING members also receive year-round recognition of their generous support on the ACS website and in select annual media placements. SUSTAINING membership is a great way for your company to add a new employee benefit – let all of your interested employees join for one all-inclusive flat fee!

Q: How much are annual dues?

A: The 2018 pricing structure for membership dues reflects member needs as well as the way members utilize ACS benefits. Most members will see no real change to their annual dues this year, some will see a DECREASE in dues, and a few others will see a slight increase – still others may choose to join at a higher level now that additional benefits and visibility exist. Below are the dues rates for 2018:

Individual Membership	\$175 (a 12% decrease!)
Organizational Membership	
Small Business 1	\$ 225
Small Business 2	\$ 400
Small Business 3	\$ 600
Corporate 4	\$ 800
Corporate 5	\$1,000
Corporate PLUS	\$1,250
Corporate SUSTAINING	\$3,000

The goal of updating and streamlining ACS membership is to be proactive in serving members in the way they have asked to be served. ACS wants to be a relevant partner to you and your business. Our goal is that you'll never say "I can't afford to be an ACS Member," only "I can't afford NOT to be an ACS Member."

Q: I am just starting a creamery and don't yet have products eligible for the ACS Judging & Competition – can I join as an Individual Member?

A: YES. If you are a creamery-in-planning or in start-up mode, feel free to join as an Individual Member. Once you are up and running and want to enter our Annual ACS Judging & Competition or sample your products at Meet the Cheesemaker, you can move to an Organizational Membership at any time.

Q: I'm currently an Individual Member but I'd like to enter my product(s) into the ACS Judging & Competition – do I need to become an Organizational Member?

A: YES. You'll need to become a member at the Small Business 1 level and complete the necessary information when you renew this year. This will ensure that you are ready to go when our entry period opens this spring, and will streamline your entry process.

Q: I'd love to offer access to ACS's valuable online educational tools and resources as an employee benefit to my company's 200 team members. Is that possible?

A: YES. With a Corporate SUSTAINING Membership, one flat annual dues rate of \$3,000 allows you to name a Primary Member who holds your company's voting power, plus four additional Members, and an **unlimited number of company representatives** who will receive full access to all ACS products, services, benefits, and discounts. It's an affordable way for you to attract and retain your employees while keeping them informed and educated on what's happening in the industry.

Q: I'm currently a Corporate Member with five employees receiving benefits. At Conference time, I like to send 7 or 8 staff members to attend. At what level will I need to renew so that all of these employees receive discounted member pricing on Conference registration?

A: You'll want to join at our Corporate PLUS level. This allows for a Primary Member who holds your company's voting power, plus four additional Members, and discounted member pricing for an unlimited number of your employees to attend our Annual Conference.

Q: I'm an educator/academic, where do I fit?

A: If you work in any capacity other than producing cheese or cultured dairy products, you should join as a Trade Affiliate. This category is very broad and encompasses all industry professionals other than Producers. Based on how you use your ACS benefits, you might join as an Individual, or your university, school, or company might join as an Organization. Use our [Membership Decision Tree](#) to find the right level for you.

Q: I love cheese but don't work in the cheese industry. Can I join ACS?

A: YES. You'll want to join in our Associate (Non-Professional) category as an Enthusiast member. If you're a student, you can even submit your valid student ID for discounted Student member pricing!

Q: I would like to purchase an ACS membership as a gift for someone. Do you offer gift memberships?

A: YES. Please call the ACS office to determine the right membership level for your gift recipient.

Q: Are the annual membership dues based on the calendar year or on time of joining/renewing?

A: ACS's membership dues are based on the calendar year and run from January 1 through December 31 annually. So, no matter when you choose to join or renew, your 2018 membership will remain valid through December 31, 2018. In order to take advantage of a full calendar year of benefits without any break in service, we encourage you to renew your ACS membership as soon as you receive your renewal notice.

I have more questions!

To learn more and see examples of how your particular needs can be met, please visit the [ACS website](#) or give us a call at 720.328.2788 and an ACS team member will be happy to help you out!