



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
California

F A Q

The following are some frequently asked questions pertaining to membership in ACEC California.

Q: *What is ACEC California?*

A: ACEC California is a 50 plus year-old, nonprofit association of private consulting engineering and land surveying firms. As a statewide organization, we are dedicated to enhancing the consulting engineering and land surveying professions, protecting the general public and promoting use of the private sector in the growth and development of our state. Our members provide services for all phases of planning, designing and constructing projects. Member services include civil, structural, geotechnical, electrical and mechanical engineering and land surveying for all types of public works, residential, commercial and industrial projects.

The ACEC California family includes 22 local chapters covering the state, a 61-member Board of Directors (elected by the chapters), 24 Committees, 1 Academy, 5 Affiliated Organizations and a state office staff of 10.

ACEC California is the nation's largest Member Organization in the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). Membership in ACEC California means automatic membership in ACEC, and representation at the national level.

Q: *Who's eligible to join? Are individual memberships available?*

A: ACEC California is firm-based association. Accordingly, only "corporate" memberships are available. However, if a firm is composed of a one-person shop, then it is eligible to join as are firms of any size. In order to join as a regular member, a firm must have a registered licensed professional within the State of California and provide professional design or land surveying services. All employees of a member firm are considered ACEC California members.

Q: *What's different about ACEC California as compared to other associations?*

A: ACEC California is more a trade association than a professional society in that it represents member firms, not individual professionals per se. Accordingly, unlike other associations, a primary ACEC function is legislative advocacy. With a combination of both in house staff and outside consultants, ACEC California staffs 3 legislative advocates who provide representation for the business interests of the industry. Via specific legislative committees, the association reviews thousands of legislative bills put forth every year and determines a position on these based on the views of our voting members. Additionally, ACEC *sponsors* legislation annually both nationally and at the state level. ACEC California was the force behind the passage of Proposition 35 and has also been the lead group to sponsor indemnification reform for design professionals (AB 573 and SB 972) in recent years among other successes. On the other side, ACEC has also been a force that defends the industry against legislation that would prove disastrous not only to the industry, but to efforts to help maintain a safer and more efficient California infrastructure. Traditional issues the association routinely deals with include but are not limited to: compliance with Qualifications Based Selection (QBS), promoting Public Private Partnerships (P3s), preserving the engineering license, working to eliminate or reduce unnecessary and/or ineffective regulations, and fight so that that indemnification requirements to industry firms from public agencies are fair and equitable.

In the legal arena, ACEC is routinely called upon to defend Proposition 35 in the court system. The association will also intervene legally when deemed necessary on other issues, such as when P3s are under attack.

At the local level, there are 22 chapters within California. These chapters generally meet monthly and the programs are geared towards business issues of the industry. They usually will feature local legislators, local municipal officers, or other firms to discuss a potential project with timelines, details and partnership opportunities. Many of the local chapters also have strong liaison functions with local public agencies and officials.

Q: *What are some benefits of membership?*

A: Members get to have an active part of the representation process. While all firms have an opinion on issues, ACEC members have a voice. Members have the opportunity to help determine what positions ACEC will take on a whole array of issues and thus have their voices heard and acted upon.

ACEC also has insurance programs that are extremely competitive and often save our members thousands of dollars annually. These include business insurance as well as health insurance programs.

Members receive major discounted pricing on ACEC publications, which include Map Act updates, CEQA books, standard forms of agreement among others and salary surveys.

Members have access to networking opportunities at the local level via attending chapter meetings. These meetings often have information on upcoming projects and opportunities for members to partner up.

Members receive updates on legislative and regulatory information in one place, without having to search for it.

The membership also has access to various seminars and continuing education opportunities.

Q: *How much does cost to join?*

A: ACEC's membership is tripartite, in other words, it includes the local, state and national level. State/National dues are based on Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) a firm employs within the state of California. This is used as measure of the size of the organization and the thus the relative benefit of membership. There is a specific chart used for this purpose. If your firm is a national member in another state, it's possible that only it will only incur dues at the state level.

By-laws require that a firm join at least one local chapter—there are 22 of them. Each of these chapters has their own dues formula but generally local chapter dues are a fraction of state and national dues.

In order to get an exact quote on dues, our office would need to know the number of FTEs (that include all employees, not just registered engineers) within California, and then the breakdown of FTEs within chapters that the firm wants to join (if there are multiple offices in the state). Most firms with multiple offices join one chapter first and then other chapters later.

The first two years of membership, a firm receives discounted dues as an opportunity to try out membership for some time without committing to full dues. Dues are discounted 2/3 the first year, and 1/3 the second year, with full dues beginning year three of membership.

ACEC California invoices quarterly and a firm can cancel at any time.

Q: *What does a firm have to do to join?*

A: To join, a firm simply completes a membership application and then scans/emails it dmurillo@acec-ca.org. The application will be then be forwarded to the local chapter for approval. The whole process generally takes only a few days. Firms do not have to send in any dues at the time of joining or pay anything upfront; new members are invoiced at the next regular quarterly cycle.