



Modern Military Association of America

Chapter Requirements, Expectations, and Code of Conduct

1. Eligibility

Each group must designate at least one Chapter Leader (CL) to represent the chapter within MMAA and as the public-facing chapter representative .

CLs must be stationed or have their primary duty station in the geographical region of the chapter they represent - or be a veteran or spouse living in the area.

2. Elections

Each chapter may choose their leadership through voting or by appointment. Chapters are encouraged to set term limits to encourage diversity of voice within the chapter. Leadership changes must be shared with MMAA HQ and noted in the [Chapter Quarterly Reporting Form](#) and maintained in the [Chapter Information Form](#).

3. Expectations

I. General

Chapters are expected to be active representatives of MMAA through local community involvement providing positive representation of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and families. This includes:

- Representing the interest of your members – and LGBTQ+ service members generally – in dealing with local commands and serving as a resource to local VAs/command structures to better understand LGBTQ+ issues.
- Facilitating positive discussions in online forums or social media channels. Each chapter is responsible for moderating the content in its online forums or social media groups. Chapter leaders should be reviewing posts and ensuring there is no bullying, harassment, or other harmful conduct occurring in virtual chapter spaces.
- Annual reporting to MMAA on number of members, number of events/activities hosted, and other notable accomplishments. More frequent reporting is encouraged so MMAA can share successes on our social media, e-newsletter, magazine, or other communication channels.
- Engaging with media when MMAA receives requests from local, regional, or national news outlets who are looking to share stories about LGBTQ+ military experiences for service members, veterans, or their families.
- Alignment with MMAA's mission, vision, and values. Chapters do not have to agree with every decision made by MMAA or its board of directors, however, they must align with



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MMAA's core purpose. Public disagreement which may discredit the organization, or its chapters is inappropriate and may result in chapter membership being revoked.

- Staying informed on relevant issues. Your ability and confidence will be greatly enhanced by staying informed on relevant LGBTQ+ issues such as military policies, school policies, healthcare policies, and local, state, and federal legislation.
- Utilizing MMAA chapter resources and community resources. Seek out and learn from MMAA, other chapters, and other local community groups serving the LGBTQ+ community. Attend webinars/trainings, read the publications, and communicate with other chapter leaders and organizational allies.
- CLs must be living openly as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender members of the military community (active duty, veteran, or spouse). This is important as CLs are the public face of the chapter and may be called upon to make public remarks, be available for interviews, share the organization's goals and stances on LGBTQ+ military advocacy service, and be publicly available to members and potential members of their chapter.

II. Participation

- **Complete the [Start a Chapter Form](#).**
- **Facebook.** Historically, MMAA chapters have maintained a virtual presence on our private Facebook groups, located [here](#). CLs are encouraged to have a Facebook account, maintain the corresponding chapter Facebook group, and post consistently on chapter meetings, relevant local events, and MMAA HQ updates. CLs without a personal Facebook account must appoint another chapter leader to run the Facebook group and ensure that person's leadership information is on the [Chapter Information Form](#).

Facebook group admins must respond to timely requests from prospective members, monitor conduct, share chapter updates, and repost information from the Chapter Leader Group or MMAA HQ. Each private Facebook group must include a MMAA HQ representative as an administrator to ensure the group's continuity. The MMAA HQ representative is not there to monitor CLs, run the chapter, or manage conduct. CLs should check into your chapter's Facebook group regularly to provide effective oversight.

- **Chapter Leader Group.** MMAA maintains a [Chapter Leader Facebook group](#) for all of its chapters' leadership. CLs are encouraged to make positive contributions to discussions and attend quarterly meetings with MMAA HQ's Chapter Chair. CLs should log into the CL Facebook group at least once a week to review posts.

For access, go to the [Facebook group](#) and answer the membership questions. MMAA HQ will verify that you have submitted the [Start a Local Chapter Form](#) and then approve your request to join. CLs can add co-leaders, who must also be approved by a group



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admin. When adding someone to the group, please send a message to a group admin so they know to approve it.

- **Chapter Networks.** CLs are encouraged to join the [MMAA Service Members Private Network](#) or [MMAA Military Families - Support Network](#) to pass on relevant information from those groups to your chapter. You may also encourage your members to independently join these groups.
- **Email.** Important information is shared via official modernmilitary.org email to your chapter's email address. CLs must set up a standardized gmail: MMAA(Chapter Name)@gmail.com, for example [MMAASanDiego@gmail.com](#), [MMAANorthCarolina@gmail.com](#), [MMAAFortGregg-Adams@gmail.com](#), etc. CLs should log into this account at least once weekly. The login and password information should be included on the [Chapter Information Form](#) so it can be passed to future CLs.
- **Meetings.** CLs must make every effort to attend MMAA HQ's quarterly leadership zooms and the annual virtual Town Hall. There may be additional virtual or in person meetings throughout the year and MMAA HQ will offer alternate means for participation for in-person meetings, as much as possible.
- **Representing MMAA.** CLs are official MMAA representatives and are expected to represent MMAA in a positive light, uphold official stances on LGBTQ+ policy and advocacy issue areas, provide professional statements when speaking to the media, and support MMAA in its mission.

4. Responsibilities

I. Reporting

- Upon becoming a CL, each person must complete the [Chapter Information Form](#) Google Form to ensure that MMAA HQ knows of the leadership change. This enables the Chapter Chair to update the website and provide training materials to new chapter leaders. New CLs must review the code of conduct, requirements, and expectations policy as well as any additional training materials within the first 30 days.
- CLs must ensure the chapter's private Facebook group has the correct point of contact information for their chapter in a pinned post or in a file saved to the Facebook group page. If you need access to your chapter's Facebook group, please email or direct message MMAA's Chapter Chair or an admin to receive administrative access.
- CLs must update MMAA HQ on chapter events and activities through the [Chapter Quarterly Reporting Form](#) at least quarterly (March, June, September, December). These updates 1) Enables MMAA HQ to promote and maximize visibility for your chapter



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events through our informational channels, 2) Helps us identify chapters doing exceptional work for rewards.

- Anytime a chapter event or media exposure involves external agencies, CLs should inform MMAA HQ's Chapter Chair in advance of the event. This protects the chapter and its members from negative media attention and ensures a unified media presence. (e.g., the chapter has invited local news channels to our Pride event or the local newspaper has requested the chapter write an op-ed about an LGBTQ+ policy issue area)

II. Meetings and events

- CLs must make every effort to attend in-person or virtual meetings and events. Meeting attendance helps chapter leaders engage and improve their chapters as well as share ideas with MMAA HQ and other regional chapters in real time. If CLs cannot attend, they must send an appropriate representative in their place or send advance notice of their absence to the MMAA HQ Chapter Chair.

III. Role within the chapter

- A CL's primary role is to take responsibility for the chapter's activities and promote the chapter within the local community. As CL, you are in charge of day-to-day operations, membership management, mentorship and support for chapter members, and event planning and implementation. A CL's role may be further expanded within each individual chapter.
- CLs are responsible for 1) representing the views of their chapter members to MMAA HQ and 2) carrying messaging, program updates, and event opportunities from MMAA HQ to their membership.

Chapter communications should be conveyed in a professional manner; with organizational messaging or program updates share without editorial comment or criticism. Personal disagreement on issues may be shared within chapters, but the CLs first responsibility is to share information impartially. How you relay information impacts how it's received - your personal beliefs or opinions on organizational policies or decisions must not be a part of that message.

- CLs must be willing and able to deal with 1) local media/press and 2) military officials at bases and installations within the chapter's territory on military LGBTQ+ issues. A CL must be willing to serve as the public "face" of the chapter. If a CL is not able to serve in a public-facing role, then a dedicated media representative should be included within the chapter's leadership. If difficulties arise with regards to official MMAA policy and or business, when communicating as the public face of the chapter, then the CL should refer press or military officials to MMAA HQ staff for future communications.



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5. Code of Conduct

I. General Behavior

All CLs are expected to perform their work with honesty, objectivity, truthfulness, and integrity. Every CL, member, volunteer, and other key stakeholders are responsible for compliance with the Code of Conduct.

A fair, collaborative, inclusive, and respectful workplace is required for chapters to achieve their programming, community outreach, and communication with the public and preserve the organization's reputation. CLs and members must take every necessary action to ensure compliance with these guidelines and to bring problem areas to the attention of MMAA HQ for review. That includes:

- Recognizing when they or others are being subjected to disrespectful behavior.
- Addressing the behavior directly with the person engaging in disrespectful or abusive conduct.
- Bringing the situation to the attention of a CL or MMAA HQ for prompt resolution.
- Immediately addressing all disrespectful behavior once reported or observed.

Disrespectful behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Use of threatening or abusive language, profanity, or language perceived to be demeaning, rude, or offensive
- Bullying
- Making threats, intimidation, or harassment
- Demonstrating racial, gender, sexual orientation, or cultural bias
- Making or telling jokes that are offensive, teasing, name calling, ridicule, or making someone the brunt of pranks
- Using sarcasm or cynicism as a personal attack on others
- Spreading rumors or gossip
- Making actual or threatened inappropriate physical contact
- Throwing objects as an expression of anger, criticism, or threat in a disrespectful manner
- Making comments or engaging in untruthful behavior as a personal attack on others
- Retaliation
- Engaging in disruptive behavior interfering or adversely impacting the quality of services, education, or care

II. Non-discrimination and Non-harassment Policy

All MMAA CLs, chapter members, and volunteers are expected to treat others doing business with MMAA or the chapter with respect and dignity as well as take responsibility to ensure that their conduct complies with MMAA nondiscrimination and non-harassment policy. Any complaint of discrimination or harassment violates MMAA's policy and are not tolerated in connection with MMAA business.



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Discrimination may include any conduct or harassment of any form that is based on an individual's gender, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, other legally protected status, or nondominant identity trait. It may also include discrimination based on retaliation against an individual who has filed a complaint. Disability is considered only to the extent that it bears upon an individual's ability to perform the essential functions of a position, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Discriminatory conduct or harassment includes any behaviors that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward such individual or has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, sexually explicit comments, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct, or visual forms of harassment of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment, or is used as the basis for employment decisions, or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment does not include occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature, or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory employment effect.

Conduct that is prohibited under this policy includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping
- Threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts
- Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group which is displayed in any manner on MMAA materials (e.g., posters, cartoons, drawings), virtual or in-person work spaces
- Physical interference with normal work, or assault
- Innuendo and sexual harassment

Prohibited conduct also includes the viewing or transmission of any inappropriate or offensive communications, data, or messages through the MMAA communication networks and services, including mail, voicemail, email, the Internet, social media or other virtual communication platforms.

III. Whistleblower Protection

MMAA's whistleblower policy encourages and enables CLs, chapter members, and volunteers to report suspected fraudulent or dishonest conduct or problems with services provided so that MMAA can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all chapter representatives to report concerns about violations of MMAA's code of ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern MMAA's operations.



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It is contrary to the values of MMAA for anyone to retaliate against any CL, member, or volunteer who in good faith reports an ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of MMAA. A MMAA representative who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of chapter membership.

IV. Professional Behavior

- As representatives of MMAA, CLs, chapter members, and volunteers are expected to represent MMAA in a positive light, uphold official stances on LGBTQ+ policy and advocacy issue areas, provide professional statements when speaking to the media, and support MMAA in its mission. We understand that dissent and criticism are a necessary part of conversations, but these discussions should remain among CLs and MMAA leadership, and not expressed publicly, to the press/media, or organizational partners. Criticism that brings discredit to the organization is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
- Each CL is entitled to equal respect regardless of military rank, active/veteran status, or military spouse or ally identity. CLs may come from all grades, ranging from junior enlisted to senior officers. Although MMAA avoids the use of rank in discussions, it is important to remember that active service members must remain on-duty and subject to Service rules and regulations at all times.

Every member has an equal voice in discussions, but conversations should be conducted with the assumption that senior NCOs and officers are present, because they likely are. First names are fine within chapter communications, but aside from that, proper respect and courtesy is expected.

- When presenting a question or problem to MMAA HQ, include background and related information so we can help resolve your issue with ease. The more information provided, the quicker we can help you work toward a resolution.
- Disrespectful behavior (outlined above) is not tolerated in the Facebook group or other social media platforms. Inappropriate posts will be deleted from groups and message boards. Additional action may be taken depending on the severity of the behavior.

V. Conflict of Interest

It is MMAA's policy to conduct its affairs in strict compliance with the letter and spirit of the law and to adhere to the highest principles of business ethics. Accordingly, all CLs must avoid activities which are in conflict, or give the appearance of being in conflict, with these principles and with the interests of the organization. The following are potentially compromising or harmful situations which must be avoided.



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- **Confidential Information:** All MMAA representatives must refrain from using or appearing to use confidential information acquired in the course of their work for unethical or illegal advantage, either personally or through third parties.
- **Gifts:** To avoid the reality and the appearance of improper relations with current or prospective clients, vendors and consultants, MMAA representatives should not accept any substantial gift (\$50 or greater) excessive entertainment, favors or payments which may be deemed to constitute undue influence or otherwise be improper or embarrassing to the organization.
- **Bribery, Kickback, and Fraud:** The following conduct is expressly prohibited:
 - Payment or receipt of money, gifts, loans, or other favors which may tend to influence business decisions or compromise independent judgment.
 - Payment or receipt of rebates or "kickbacks" for obtaining business for or from the organization.
 - Payment of bribes to government officials to obtain favorable rulings.
 - Any other activity that would similarly degrade the reputation or the integrity of the organization.
- **Relationships with Public Officials:** Some MMAA representatives do business with federal, state, or local government agencies. All representatives engaged in business with a governmental body or agency must know and abide by the specific rules and regulations covering relations with public agencies. Such representatives must conduct themselves in a manner that avoids any dealings which might be perceived as attempts to influence public officials in the performance of their official duties.

VI. **Lobbying and advocacy:** MMAA chapters may not violate any of the following restrictions:

- Endorsing or opposing individual candidates or political parties
- Participating in political campaigns
- Making contributions to campaign funds
- Issuing public statements in favor/opposition of elected officials or political parties
- Engaging in partisan discussions at meetings
- Conducting campaign outreach at meetings
- Selling chapter member email and/or mail lists to campaigns

VII. **Violations**

Violators of the Code of Conduct will be counseled privately by an MMAA HQ representative about the offending conduct and given an opportunity to discuss the situation. Subsequent violations could include removal as Chapter Leader.



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6. Chapter Management

- **Chapter Autonomy.** CLs are encouraged to run their chapter autonomously. With that in mind, chapters are still representatives of MMAA, and in many cases, may be the only exposure the local community has to MMAA. Your actions as a CL should reflect positively on MMAA as a whole. CLs report to MMAA HQ's Chapter Chair.
- **Chapter Structure.** CLs may structure their chapter to best suit their needs. Depending on your goals and level of activity, you may consider incorporating additional leadership roles to support the work. Some suggested positions are:
 - Assistant Chapter Leader: This position supports the Chapter Leader, steps in to preside at meetings when the CL is unavailable, collaborates on the development of the meeting agenda, and supports the CL in the general organization and management of the chapter.
 - Secretary: This position should manage the paperwork related to the group – keeping records of meetings and decisions made by the group. This position may be combined with other roles if the chapter has an informal leadership structure.
 - Communications Coordinator: This position may be responsible for getting information out to chapter members, MMAA, and other partners about chapter activities. This role may also be responsible for being the public face of the organization and responding to local media/press requests.
 - Advocacy Coordinator: If chapter is interested in becoming involved with advocacy issues in partnership with MMAA, this position would work directly with MMAA's legislative team to learn about current issues and ways to take action.
 - Social/Support Group Coordinator: This position may be responsible for planning monthly in-person social events or work with MMAA to participate in our LGBTQ+ support groups for active military members or their family members.
- **Installation or Private Organizations.** MMAA chapters are not Private Organizations for DoD purposes. Chapters may choose to become recognized as official private organizations on their local installations but must meet and complete a series of standards. Please consult with MMAA HQ if you wish to pursue becoming a private organization for installation purposes.
- **Partner Organizations.** Chapters are encouraged to work with partner organizations that have a presence in their local area. This may include sharing spaces at Pride events, parades, or community-led LGBTQ+ events which can be a great way to save money and establish working relationships.
- **Chapter Finances.** Chapters may raise money from the local community but may not use MMAA's not-for-profit status to request donations. A chapter may choose to apply for independent 501c3 status in order to fundraise on behalf of their chapter.



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- All funds raised by the local chapter may only be used for the local chapter.
- **Setting up 501(c)(3) status.** To qualify for 501(c)(3) exemption from federal income tax, an organization must be organized and operated exclusively for one or more of the following purposes:
 - Charitable (your group will likely qualify under this category)
 - Religious
 - Educational
 - Scientific
 - Literary training for public safety
 - Fostering national or international amateur sports competition
 - The prevention of cruelty to children or animals

They must also have the following four characteristics:

- They must have a public purpose.
- Their governance structure must preclude self-interest and private financial gain.
- They must be exempt from paying federal tax.
- They must possess the special legal status that stipulates gifts made to them are tax-deductible.

501(c)(3) status means that your chapter will be required by law to comply with certain regulations. Those requirements include:

- Keeping record of all financial and non-financial activities to compile in an Annual Report.
- Filing either an annual return with the IRS using Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, or filing an annual electronic notice using Form 990-N. (You will be able to determine which form to submit based on your gross receipts.)
- Filing an Unrelated Business Income Tax form (if applicable).
- Disclosing annual financial and activities reports. Each return must be made available for a three-year period.
- Providing written acknowledgement to donors who contribute over \$250 in a single contribution so that they may claim it as a charitable donation in their tax return.
- A tax-exempt organization that fails to file a required return is subject to penalty. Be sure to thoroughly read the IRS website to make sure you understand the requirements and commitments of having 501(c)(3) status.

The steps and documents you need to apply for 501(c)(3) status include:

- Filling out the [SS-4 tax form](#) (EIN application) which is a free service through the IRS. Even though you don't have employees, you still need to have an EIN for your new status as a 'corporation' and for tax purposes for your nonprofit status.
- Fill out Form 1023 or [Form 1023-EZ](#) for recognition of exemption under 501(c)(3).



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- Read through [these resources and instructions](#) on starting a nonprofit organization.
- Review and sign all appropriate documents. Make sure your forms are signed by an officer/leader who is authorized to sign on behalf of your group. Review your bylaws to confirm who qualifies for this role.
- Mail your completed documents or submit online. When you submit your documents, especially your bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, make sure they are copies. **Do not submit the original documents.** Any application materials sent to the IRS become part of their files and cannot be returned. Similarly, make sure you retain a copy of your final application for your records.
- Make sure your bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and other financial documents are turned over to newly elected officer at the end of your term. Your chapter group should also forward copies to MMAA for the chapter files to help establish a history of the group and provide a central set of records should the chapter's records get lost or misplaced.
- When your application is approved, you will receive a "Determination Letter" from the IRS. This formally recognizes your taxexempt status and provides your public charity classification. This determination letter will be what you use in the future to prove your nonprofit status if you ever apply for grants.
- Any fundraising activity should be submitted to MMAA HQ annually as well as to the IRS.

7. Chapter Branding Guidelines

The MMAA chapter name and logo should appear on all organizational materials to ensure the organization and its work are identifiable. A clear and consistent imaging and messaging campaign is important to publicly connect the organization's vision and mission with its logo, name, and core messages.

All organizational imaging and messaging should be consistent with MMAA's vision and mission. MMAA's work is furthered through images and messaging which includes themes of equity, LGBTQ+ equality, integrity, courage, diversity, and civil liberties. MMAA maintains a strong organizational commitment to a diverse public representation of our work. Whenever possible, diversity of age, race, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and veteran status should be considered when preparing materials for public use.

To ensure consistency in imaging and organizational presentation, it is important to:

- MMAA will provide you access to a custom chapter logo.
- Use the MMAA chapter name, logo, and acronym as often as possible in public materials.
- Use the MMAA chapter logo only with appropriate PMS coloring and fonts.
- Present a diverse representation of the organization and its work whenever possible.



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- Exercise due caution when using the logo, name, or acronym in conjunction with marketing that may conflict with MMAA's organizational values.