

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can you just give me the highlights of the proposed bylaws changes?

Certainly! The following changes are being proposed to the LeadingAge Kansas Bylaws:

- New section outlining a set of shared values that association members must strive to uphold
- Expanding our membership criteria to include any provider of aging services in Kansas that strives toward our shared set of values and is approved by the LeadingAge Kansas Board of Directors
- Requirement that a majority of the LeadingAge Kansas Board of Directors remain nonprofit
- Requirement that a quorum is not met unless the majority of Directors at a meeting are also nonprofit
- New member expulsion process for those members who fail to meet membership requirements, including a failure to live up to association values
- Technical changes to increase clarity and remove duplicative or outdated references
- More detailed description of the CEO role at the association

Why does the Board want to make these changes?

Membership Trends: The voice and influence of a trade association is only as strong as its membership. And our membership numbers in LeadingAge Kansas have been in a long period of decline, largely due to sales and closures of nonprofit providers. Faced with the decision to craft a strategy around shrinkage of our membership base or growth – the Board has chosen a growth strategy. This strategy will allow LeadingAge Kansas to evolve with the many changes in our field, and grow our voice, while preserving our commitment to strong values and high quality.

Market Forces: New markets are playing a larger role in our field, bringing new players, new investments and disruptive new ideas. More and more businesses in all sectors are trending toward a mission-driven approach, bringing values and purpose to for-profit operations. We have a growing number of our own members who are starting for profit businesses and partnerships that remain values driven.

LeadingAge National: In 2021, LeadingAge National, and an increasing number of state associations like ours, opened their membership to both nonprofit and for profit providers. LeadingAge and a number of states made this change based on the belief that a commitment to quality and the power of strong ideals outweighs tax status, and that representing a larger diversity of providers only strengthens the voice and influence of LeadingAge. Through our proposed bylaws changes, we would like LeadingAge Kansas to expand its membership in the same way, bringing us in alignment with LeadingAge National.

How will these bylaws changes benefit my organization?

By expanding our membership to possibly include a percentage of for-profit organizations, LeadingAge Kansas will gain influence, greater reach, broader perspective and increased financial strength. There is strength in numbers, and our advocacy position is made more robust by representing more providers across the continuum of care. We're also expanding our ability to lead and adapt in a changing world – the strength of who we are as an association is made greater when we demonstrate progress.

Better financial strength and stability for the association also means that we can invest even more resources into training programs, leadership development, regulatory and reimbursement expertise, and robust networking.

How will we make sure that the nonprofit voice is protected and represented at LeadingAge Kansas?

For 70 years, LeadingAge Kansas has been committed to leading our field with integrity and a mission-driven approach. That commitment will never change, and thankfully, we have an enthusiastic and engaged member base who are empowered within our association governance to make sure we uphold those commitments.

The Board has also incorporated new language in the bylaws to ensure that nonprofit senior care providers will continue to be a strong voice at LeadingAge Kansas – see the requirements for a majority nonprofit Board of Directors, and majority nonprofit meeting quorums.

Who decides what organizations can become members of LeadingAge Kansas?

Membership in LeadingAge Kansas is not automatic. Providers seeking a membership with our association must make application and be approved by our Board of Directors. If these proposed bylaws are approved, the Board of Directors will be developing specific membership criteria policies to help guide the membership decision process.

Are we the only LeadingAge affiliate broadening our membership criteria?

No. Two years ago, LeadingAge National opened up its membership to both nonprofit and for profit providers, and several state affiliates have since followed suit, with others in the process of discussing. Some state affiliates, such as LeadingAge Minnesota and LeadingAge Colorado have allowed for profits members for decades and have been very successful in navigating those issues.

What happens if we let new members in and they do not uphold our shared values?

Currently, we have no removal process for association members. With these proposed bylaws changes that would no longer be the case. The Board of Directors would have the power to remove a member for a variety of reasons, including a failure to demonstrate commitment to the common set of ideals we are proposing as part of our bylaws change.

What happens if we change the bylaws and decide later that it is not working well?

Association Bylaws are meant to be a living document that evolves along with the association and members' needs. If the proposed changes in these bylaws end up not working well for the association, the Board of Directors can propose new bylaws for approval by the membership.

Why can't we just keep our membership the same and concentrate on getting more nonprofit members?

LeadingAge Kansas membership represents well over 90% of the existing nonprofit provider market. Even if 100% nonprofit member recruitment was achievable, the number of nonprofits left to recruit will not make up for the long-term decline in our membership base. Purely nonprofit providers are a shrinking part of the aging services universe, and without a more diverse membership base our association voice will continue to shrink.

More and more businesses in all sectors are trending toward a mission-driven approach, bringing values and purpose to for-profit operations. We have a growing number of our own members who are starting for profit businesses and partnerships that remain values-driven. These bylaws changes will allow us to embrace a wider diversity of membership opportunities while preserving our commitment to ensuring the strength and vitality of our collective missions.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposed bylaws changes.

Additional questions can be directed to Rachel Monger at rachel@leadingagekansas.org