

Steps to Develop a State Chapter RFS

Outlined below are suggested steps that may be helpful when starting a state chapter. These are simply guidelines and are open to modification as each chapter may face different hurdles compared to others. Guidelines are broken down into four categories: (1) Establishing a new RFS outlines early steps to lay groundwork for chapter formation; (2) Implementation deals with organizing the chapter, formally establishing chapter leadership, and recruiting RFS members; (3) Promotion outlines the next steps for getting a chapter active; (4) Financing provides some suggestions for securing additional funding resources for social events, educational activities, etc.

Establishing a New Resident Fellow Section

The initial steps may vary widely according to the geographic size of the state and number of programs within the state. Initial steps may include:

Approach your state radiological society (ACR Chapter) with the idea of establishing a Resident and Fellow Section

It is extremely important to have the support of the existing state chapter members behind the idea of establishing an RFS. The chapter often may provide administrative support and in some cases financial support for developing an RFS. Present to them the [benefits](#) of having an RFS within the state.

Determine the Training Programs within the state of interest

- Contact the ACR to obtain a list of residents within the state of interest. ACR staff support is provided by Trina Zeberlein, Assistant Director, Member Services. Trina may be reached via e-mail at tzeberlein@acr.org or (800) 227-5463, ext 4998
- Use the American Medical Association (AMA) Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database (FREIDA) which provides a list of accredited resident training programs in diagnostic radiology and radiation oncology, including contact information for program chairpersons or directors. This is particularly helpful for larger states which have multiple programs with significant geographic separation. Be wary that some of the contact information may be outdated, but it is a good starting place to identify training programs. (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2997.html>)
- The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) also lists accredited residency and fellowship training programs (<http://www.acgme.org/adspublic>)

Identify a contact person within in each training program

Once the programs within the state are identified, identify a contact person within each training institution to notify about the plan to establish a state RFS. Contact persons may include the department chair, the program residency director, a program coordinator, chief resident, or another resident or fellow within the program

- As mentioned above, the ACR can provide a list of residents at each training institution. Email residents directly at the program to recruit members.
- The Internet is an extremely valuable tool for finding current contact information within specific programs at the individual training institution sites. Use a search engine, such as Google (www.google.com) to search for specific institutions and locate home pages for the individual departments.
- Utilize resources within the state radiological society (ACR Chapter) to establish contacts and promote the idea of forming an RFS.

Make initial contact through an introduction letter Send a letter outlining the intent to develop an RFS section to the contact person(s) at the programs within the state. A shotgun approach is often helpful. The letter may include highlights of issues currently being addressed by the ACR

RFS. Wait for responses and follow-up as needed.

Implementation

The next steps will focus on chapter organization including developing routes of communication, forming RFS leadership, and recruiting new members.

Identify and recruit interested members to the RFS

Once individuals are identified that are interested in getting involved and forming the RFS, it is important to recruit representatives to help form the RFS. Some state chapters, especially those with geographic separation and multiple training programs, are organized by representatives at each institution. It is helpful to solicit two residents, one more senior and one more junior, with leadership qualities and interest in ACR issues to be the representatives at the respective institutions. This ensures continuity once the senior representative graduates.

Develop Chapter Leadership and an Executive Committee

It is important to encourage active participation from interested members and recruit leadership positions for the RFS. Organizing a small group of motivated individuals will make the group more successful than if you try to single handedly organize the RFS chapter. Be sure to delegate tasks and responsibilities within this small group. It is very important to have the assistance of a senior chapter member (state chapter liaison to the RFS) to give advice and assistance during the early formation of the RFS. Ask the state chapter leadership to suggest one interested member that can assist in conference calls and include them in email communication. It would be beneficial to have one of the state chapter executive committee members as the liaison to provide feedback to the state chapter membership and executive committee. Establish an RFS executive committee, including designated offices such as President/Chair, Vice-President, Secretary, and others as needed. Assign specific tasks to each office to divide responsibility. (Guidelines for offices can be found in the Sample Guidelines document).

Establish regular routes of communication

Set up regular (but not too often to be burdensome) communication routes between the executive committee and program representatives. This may be in the form of conference calls (often the state chapter can assist with the formalities of setting up conference calls). If geographically possible, face-to-face meetings are the best way to accomplish things early in the chapter formation. Alternatively, regular email communication and distribution lists (with all representatives' emails) can be used and are very effective.

Plan for an Annual Meeting to coincide with the State Chapter Annual Meeting

The culmination of the RFS chapter formation should be a meeting that coincides with the state chapter's annual meeting. There is no substitute for a face-to-face meeting which may include educational programs, discussion and open forum time to address resident issues, and RFS business related issues, such as elections. In addition, it is important to discuss issues facing the ACR and ACR RFS to foster discussion among attendees. Prior to the meeting, representatives should try and recruit residents and fellows from their programs to attend the meeting and become new members.

Promoting a New Resident Fellow Section

Once there is organization, governance, representation, and communication established, it is time to promote the RFS and recruit new members.

Regular communication

As mentioned under implementation, regular communication via conference calls, emails, or periodic newsletters is effective to discuss topics of interest to residents, including ACR issues, educational issues, and resident related issues, such as call, residents' benefits (i.e. educational funds, etc) that may vary from program to program. Meeting minutes should be regularly recorded by the Secretary and made available for all RFS members to review.

Plan the Annual Meeting

One of the most effective ways of ensuring attendance is to provide a program that is interesting to residents and fellows and one that may not be part of the regular radiology curriculum. Some ideas may include a session on job opportunities (private practice vs. academics), issues related to private practice employment such as contracts and how to evaluate potential employers, and a forum on legal liability. Make sure to incorporate an open discussion forum and facilitate discussion with important issues facing residents and fellows. It may be helpful to poll attendees prior to the meeting through a questionnaire that targets issues of interest which can serve as discussion topics, such as self-referral, call-issues, moonlighting, and radiology education. A successful annual meeting will ensure regular annual attendance and assist in recruiting new members.

Encourage Attendance at the ACR Annual Meeting and Chapter Leadership Conference (AMCLC)

One of the goals of the RFS state chapters is to have as many delegates as possible attend the ACR AMCLC (typically held in Washington D.C. in the spring). This meeting often provides ideas and examples as a basis for the state annual meeting. Ideally, one representative from each program in the state should attend the annual meeting, however funding for resident attendance may be an issue. Some states have been successful in petitioning the individual programs to support a resident financially to attend. The state chapter may assist in petitioning department chairs to financially support resident and fellow attendance at the AMCLC.

Plan other activities to recruit new members

Social or educational activities outside of the annual meeting are a good way to promote the state RFS and recruit new members. Additional financial support may be necessary for these activities (see Financing a Resident and Fellow Section).

Develop a Web site

A web site for the RFS is also an effective way to promote the RFS and recruit new members. The site can be part of the state chapter Web site, or can be independent. In addition, some states have incorporated a discussion forum specific to state issues.

Financing a Resident Fellow Section

Organization and implementation of a Resident Fellow Section does not require a financial commitment from the state chapter, however it is often helpful to have financial support from the chapter if possible. Funding may be necessary for the annual meeting or other social and educational activities.

Costs associated with the development and maintenance of a chapter RFS may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff support services and office supplies
- Regular meetings (including conference calls) of the RFS membership and Executive Committee
- Sponsorship or stipend allowance for resident or fellows to attend state annual chapter meetings
- Sponsorship of a chapter RFS delegate to the ACR AMCLC
- Production and distribution of newsletters and publications
- Conferences, local organizational meetings
- Resident workshops

Residents should be aware of all expenditures by the state chapter on behalf of the RFS. Specific information regarding the costs associated with various activities such as meetings, newsletters, mailing brochures, etc. should be made available to the RFS. The RFS should have the opportunity to provide input on the allocation of funds and the implementation of an appropriate

dues structure, if one is necessary. It is recommended that you coordinate with your chapter regarding funding for the RFS as the chapter is likely to have the infrastructure set-up to accept and distribute funds from sponsoring organizations

Potential funding sources may include, but are not limited to:

- State chapter funds
- External sources, such as radiological equipment suppliers
- Dues
- Training programs

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- [Sample Guidelines for Organization of a RFS \(pdf\)](#)
 - [Sample Resolution \(pdf\)](#)

Benefits to State Chapters of a Resident Fellow Section

The ACR, in conjunction with many state chapters, often financially sponsors a resident from the state to attend the ACR Annual Meeting and Chapter Leadership Conference (AMCLC). The resident serves as a liaison from his/her state to address issues particular to residents in that state and to participate in discussions on issues facing the ACR and ACR RFS as a whole.

Parent State Chapters, in return for supporting an RFS in its early growth stage, stands to gain from its investment in several ways:

1. **Increased Membership** – an organized and well-run section attracts new members. Resident and fellow physicians represent over 5,000 ACR members in-training and will respond to the unique opportunity that access to policy development offers. In addition, many residents and fellows are introduced to policy making and issues facing the ACR and the profession of radiology through the state chapter meetings and communications that they would not be exposed to in their training programs. Increased awareness of issues is important for recruitment of new members into organized medicine.
2. **Continued Membership** – The earlier physicians can be attracted into organized medicine, the better the chance that membership will remain important in their professional lives. This is particularly true of residents and fellows that plan to practice within their state of training.
3. **Leadership Growth and Development** – Leadership qualities are developed during medical school, refined during residency, practiced by radiologists and applied in your chapter and the ACR Council. A state chapter RFS helps to foster leadership at an early stage. These leaders are important to the future of the parent state chapter. Involvement at this early level allows residents and fellows to influence and learn from organized medicine.
4. **A Broadened Membership Base** – RFS members may have more diversified perspectives and input to state chapter discussions than available in the existing membership. In addition, RFS members are the ones with the most vested interest in their specialty as they are at the beginning of their career.

Benefits to residents and fellows of a State Resident Fellow Section

There are also many benefits that residents and fellows within a state can reap by establishing a state RFS. Some are highlighted below.

1. **Communication** – The RFS serves as a means to disseminate information that is important to residents and fellows, both relevant to their future career and particular issues facing members in training. In addition, it serves as a means to communicate issues and experiences particular to the state RFS to the national RFS. Having a well organized state RFS keeps the communication lines open and established. This is particularly true for larger states that are unable to meet regularly due to geographic separation. In addition, the ACR RFS has regular communication distributed via email which that addresses issues specific to residents and fellows (monthly RFS E-News). Many state RFS also have regular publications (i.e. newsletters) or discussion forums online that permit regular communication between RFS members. Fellow members often may serve as excellent resources to find out “how things are done” at different institutions.
2. **Socialization with Peers** – Radiology, while being one of the larger medicine specialties, is still a relatively small community. The RFS gives the opportunity to meet and socialize with other members-in-training to share experiences and friendship outside of the training institution.
3. **Involvement in organized medicine** – Involvement in a state RFS is usually one of the first introductions to organized medicine within radiology for many state RFS members. It is comforting to realize that organizations such as the ACR are lobbying on behalf of radiologists and promoting the field of radiology.
4. **Awareness of political, economic, and governmental issues** – Often issues facing practicing radiologists are not recognized by members-in-training because of the “protected environment” of academic institutions and training centers. A state RFS allows exposure to issues that radiologists face in practice and that will ultimately shape the field of radiology for members in-training; this is particularly true of issues facing individual states, which may be different than those facing the ACR on a national level. In addition, it allows exposure to the policy making body of radiology, including how policies are created and implemented.
5. **Education** – Educational programs are often incorporated into state chapter meetings. Equally important are issues related to employment, business, and legalities of practicing radiology that are not taught in training programs. Understanding issues such as employment contracts, liability, and practice structure are vital to finding employment after training. Many state RFS programs offer educational opportunities to increase awareness for residents and fellows on these issues.
6. **Contacts/Networking** – Getting involved in the ACR at both the national and state levels fosters relationships with ACR members that may create opportunities in the future for employment, education, or friendship