



*End discrimination based on
sexual orientation and
gender identity*

Forming an Equality Kansas Chapter

Who We Are

Equality Kansas is the leading statewide LGBTQ advocacy organization in the state. We actively lobby state and local governments, school districts, and governmental agencies for LGBTQ relationship recognition, inclusion in non-discrimination laws and policies, and the repeal of discriminatory legislation and policies enacted in past years. We also defend the Kansas LGBTQ population against the passage of new laws and policies that seek to marginalize and isolate us as second-class citizens.

Membership in Equality Kansas

We are a grassroots organization whose members reflect the diversity of Kansas. Membership in Equality Kansas is open to all who choose to join. Members in good standing support our mission and are current in their dues.

Equality Kansas Chapters

Equality Kansas is organized into chapters made up of members living in a given chapter's counties. Each chapter is represented at the Chapter Conference (our equivalent to a state board of directors) by two members appointed by the chapter. The Chapter Conference, in turn, collaborates on setting policies and goals for the statewide organization, and coordinates and supports activities within each chapter.

Chapters are autonomous and governed by a local board of directors elected by the chapter's membership. Although each chapter is governed locally, all Equality Kansas chapters share our statewide mission, adopt identical bylaws (with options for local preferences), and meet operational and organizational standards set by the Chapter Conference.

Membership Dues

Membership dues for each chapter are paid annually and are split equally between the Chapter Conference and the chapter to which a member belongs. To be eligible to vote in leadership elections or serve on any Equality Kansas boards or committees, members must be current in their dues.

Forming Your Chapter

There are three basic ways to form an Equality Kansas chapter:

1. **Restart a chapter where one has previously existed but has become dormant.** All Equality Kansas chapters are led, with varying degrees of success, by local volunteers. Life events and other challenges to maintaining a volunteer organization will sometimes leave a chapter without leadership or local interest in continuing.
2. **Create a chapter in an area where no chapter presently exists.** This can be all or a portion of an area where a chapter once existed but has gone dormant, or in an area where a chapter has never been organized.¹
3. **Split an existing chapter into geographically smaller areas.** This option is available only when the existing chapter to be split agrees to, and the Chapter Conference approves, the split.

If you are interested in forming a chapter, or restarting a dormant chapter, where you live, please contact our office. Call us at 316-683-1706 or email info@eqks.org. We will be more than happy to assist you and guide you through the process.

Timeline and Milestones in Chapter Formation

1. To facilitate chapter development in your region, the Chapter Conference will consider appointing one person representing your area as a voting at-large member of the Chapter Conference.
 - a. Your term as an at-large member will expire in 120 days, or when your chapter is given provisional admission to Equality Kansas, whichever comes first. If your chapter has successfully formed, it will appoint two of its members to serve at the Chapter Conference.
 - b. As an at-large member committed to developing a chapter in your region, you are asked to oversee the chapter formation and transition steps outlined below.
2. In your first 60 days as an at-large member, you must notify current and former Equality Kansas members who live in the area in which you are forming your chapter.
 - a. You should also notify all local progressive and/or LGBTQ-friendly organizations, affirming/welcoming churches, area media, etc., of the formation of the new chapter. Include in the notification an invitation to become a member, and a notification of the first meeting.
 - b. Equality Kansas staff will provide access to area membership lists, and will assist you in identifying community organizations and media contacts.
3. Within 30 days of your initial community notification, conduct your first meeting. At that meeting, you should begin the process of chapter formation:

¹ At one time or another since Equality Kansas' formation, all Kansas counties have been assigned to at least one chapter. As of May 2020, 30 Kansas counties are organized into five chapters.

- a. **If you are creating a new chapter (as opposed to resurrecting a dormant chapter), choose a name.** Our bylaws require chapter names include the name of the statewide organization combined with a regional identifier. Examples of chapter names are “Equality Kansas of South Central Kansas” and “Equality Kansas of Metro Kansas City.”
- b. **Enroll members in your new chapter.** Equality Kansas staff will provide membership forms for your use.
- c. **Collect dues from new members.** If you do not yet have a bank account opened for your chapter, new members may make checks payable to “Equality Kansas.” Our office will process the dues, and your chapter’s share of the dues will be returned to your chapter once your bank account has been opened. *Do not use personal bank accounts for Equality Kansas business!*
- d. **Elect or appoint an interim board or steering committee.** This board/committee should have at least two members: Chair and Secretary/Treasurer.
- e. **Elect or appoint two interim representatives to the state Chapter Conference.** These positions may be filled by the same individuals as those on your interim board.
- f. **Appoint one or two chapter members to be “web administrators.”** Your chapter’s web admins should be reasonably comfortable with computers, email, the internet, social media, and blog posting via WordPress. Web admin responsibilities include posting chapter news, events, and calendar entries, and maintaining public and private social media pages and groups.
- g. **Obtain a permanent, public mailing address.** Chapters may not use personal home addresses as their mailing address. Rent post office box from the US Postal Service, or a box from a private vendor, such as a UPS Store, that provides mail services.

On reaching these milestones, your chapter may request provisional admission to Equality Kansas. Provisional admission will give your chapter the right to cast two votes at Chapter Conference meetings, and to fully participate in all committees of the Chapter Conference. Your chapter’s membership in Equality Kansas will not be considered final until completion of the rest of the tasks described below:

4. Create your social media / internet presence.
 - a. Chapters are encouraged to create one public-facing Facebook “page” and one closed Facebook “group.” The group should be a forum for your chapter’s members to discuss issues concerning your chapter. You may also create private groups for use by your chapter board, chapter executive committee, and any other committees your chapter establishes.

- b. **Do not** create email addresses or websites for your chapter. The Chapter Conference provides all chapters with at least one email address and its own “home page” on the EQKS.org website.
 - c. **Important:** The Equality Kansas Chapter Conference chair and the state Executive Director **must** be given administrative access and/or passwords to all of your chapter’s accounts. We use this information in two ways:
 1. Posting of urgent statewide action alerts. In the past, this has happened two or three times a year, primarily during the Kansas legislative session.
 2. Emergency recovery in circumstances where chapter leadership is unavailable.
5. Within 30 days of your first meeting, you must file:
- a. State of Kansas Articles of Incorporation. A fillable PDF can be found on the Kansas Secretary of State’s website at this link:
https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/business_services/AI.pdf
 - b. IRS Application for Employer Identification Number (EIN). The IRS provides an online process for application here: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>
 - c. Important: Please contact Equality Kansas staff for assistance with these forms. Incorrectly completed forms are difficult – if not impossible - to fix.
6. Once you have filed and received certified copies of your Articles of Incorporation, and have been issued your IRS EIN, open a bank account.
7. Within 60 days of your initial meeting, you must call an official meeting of your chapter’s membership. Prior to that meeting, please repeat the community notification steps outlined in Step 2, described above. At this meeting, you should be prepared to:
- a. Adopt chapter bylaws. Chapter bylaws templates are provided by the Chapter Conference, and may not be modified beyond those portions highlighted for local preferences.
 - b. Elect a permanent chapter Board of Directors.
 - c. Appoint your chapter’s representatives to the state Chapter Conference.
8. Each month, we ask that you report your progress to the state Chapter Conference. Your reports should include a roster of officers and board members, copies of required filings, and a report on paid memberships.

Successful completion of all steps in this document makes your chapter eligible for permanent membership in Equality Kansas. Welcome, and congratulations!